

THE DBA' AND SBA BZHED CHRONICLES

Chronicles of the dBa'/sBa clan

INTRODUCTION

This group of texts primarily concerns events which took place under Tri Song Detsen (Khri srong lde btsan) (r.742–c.797), including the Samye (bSam yas) debate of the early 790s. They are written from the point of view of the dBa' (or sBa) clan, but the authors are unknown.

A number of publications exist, containing several different texts. The extracts contained here are from two distinct versions, which have generally come to be known as the *dBa' bzhed* and the *sBa bzhed*, which are the names used here.

What seems to be the earliest complete version of the *dBa' bzhed* has passages which have been dated to the eleventh century (see Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger 2000). However, the discovery of fragments in the Dunhuang caves containing closely related text suggests that at least the core of the narrative, concerning the events that took place under Tri Song Detsen, dates from no later than the early eleventh century (see van Schaik and Iwao 2008). Whether or not the same is true of the opening section, reproduced here, which describes the creation of law by Songtsen Gampo (Srong brtsan sgam po), is another question.

The text known as the *sBa bzhed zhabs brtags ma* (the *sBa bzhed*), primarily concerns events that took place under Tri Song Detsen, including the visit and activities of Padmasambhava. It ends with the activities of Atiśa, meaning that it must have been written after the middle of the eleventh century. Although dealing with similar events, the content is substantially different from that of the *dBa' bzhed*, including the passages concerning the making of the laws.

Sources

The following are the sources used for the extracts reproduced here.

Stein, R.A. 1961. *Une chronique ancienne de bSam yas*. Paris: Publications de l'Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises.

[This reproduces a handwritten version of the *sBa bzhed*, which was created in Lhasa for Hugh Richardson.]

Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger. 2000. *dBa' bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

[This contains photographs of a manuscript held in Lhasa.]

rBa bzhed phyogs bsgrigs. 2009. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

[This contains four texts, including the version of the *sBa bzhed* found in Stein (1961), at pp. 1–79 and a transliteration of the *dBa' bzhed* reproduced by Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger (2000), on pp. 237–81.]

TBRC: W1KG6259.

References

For a useful discussion of the multiple different versions of the texts, see the blog post by Michael Willis: <http://dogankoy.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/notes-arising-from-collation-of-dba.html>

Blondeau. 1980. Analysis of the Biographies of Padma Sambhava according to Tibetan Tradition. In M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds) *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. Warminster: Aris & Philipps, pp. 45–52.

Denwood, Philip. 1990. Some remarks on the status and dating of the *sBa-bzhed*, *The Tibet Journal* XV (6): 135–48.

van der Kuijp, Leonard. 1984. Miscellanea to a Recent Contribution on the Bsam-yas Debate, *Kailash* 11/3–4: 149–84.

Macdonald, Ariane. 1971. Une lecture des P. tib. 1286, 1287, 1038, 1047, et 1290. In *Etudes tibétaines dédiées à M. Lalou*. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, pp. 283, 288–89, 370–71.

van Schaik, Sam and Kazushi Iwao. 2008. Two fragments of the *Testament of Ba* from Dunhuang, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 128: 477–87.

Stein, Rolf. 1986. Tibetica Antiqua IV: La tradition relative au début de bouddhisme au Tibet, *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 75: 169–96.

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Tucci, Giuseppe. 1958. *Minor Buddhist Texts, II*. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.