

## GRAGS PA GLING GRAGS

### INTRODUCTION

There are several texts, sometimes known as *Grags byang*, which contain a history of Bön in Tibet. They were probably created in or after the 12th century, although they drew on earlier sources. Each text takes the form of a short passage in twenty-five lines, and what is presented as a longer commentary. Although the texts contain similar content, the relationship between them is still unclear.

The texts describe the cosmic history of the world and the location of Tibet and of Mount Kailash within it. They describe former ‘teachers’ and give a detailed account of the coming of the first king to Tibet. They then describe the Bönpo nature of the earliest kings, their relationship with the *gshen* priests, and the happiness of the realm during this period. They recount problems that emerged when Buddhism was introduced, and then reintroduced, under Tri Song Detsen (Khri Srong lde btsan).

### Sources

#### Manuscripts:

The Dolanji ms. 37 fols.

This manuscript originates from Dolpo in Nepal and the first half is damaged. The manuscript was photographed in the 1980s.

The Oslo ms. 95 fols. *Bon chos dar nub g[y]i lo rgyus [bs]grags pa rin chen gling sgrag[s] ces bya ba dmongs [rmongs] pa blo'i gsal byed.*

(The Chronicle of the Rise and Fall of Buddhism, called *Grags pa rin chen gling grags*, Enlightening the Minds of the Deluded). This manuscript is a copy, made in 1919, at the behest of the Sikkim Political Officer Major William Lachlan Campbell, C.I.E. The original may have come from the Bön monastery in the Chumbi Valley (Dromo), although it could also have originated in central Tibet. It is now held in the East Asian Collection of the Oslo University library.

The Nagchu ms. 69 fols.

This is a xerox copy, illegible in places, of a manuscript said to originate in Nagchu.

The Lhasa Tenjur version, published by Sog sde bstan pa'i nyi ma in Lhasa in 1998.

This version is found in vol. 72 of Karmay and Nagano (2001: 627) (see below for the full reference). It consists of 95 folios in manuscript form.

Printed versions:

*g.Yung drung bon gyi sgra bsgrags rin po che'i gling grags*. 2013. In Don-grub lha-rgyal and gZhon-nu nor-bzang (eds), *Bon gyi lo rgyus yig cha phyogs sgrig*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, pp. 123–89.

[This is based on the Oslo, Nagchu, and Lhasa Tenjur manuscripts, referred to above.]

*Three Sources for a History of Bon: the Rgyal rabs of Khyuñ-po Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan, the Bstan 'byuñ of Kun-grol-grags-pa, and the Bstan 'byuñ of Tenzin Namdak*. 1974. Delhi: Khedup Gyatso.

[This contains two different texts, *g.Yung drung bon gyi rgyud 'bum*, (pp. 1-46) and *Sgrags pa gling grags* (pp. 48-71), which are discussed by Blondeau (1990) (see below for full reference), along with the Oslo manuscript (referred to above).]

Dan Martin has transliterated these texts, which can be found at

<https://sites.google.com/site/tibetological/grags-pa-gling-grags>

TBRC:

Two texts can be found on the TBRC web-site, but it is not clear how they relate to the manuscripts:

*bsGrags pa gling grags dang bon ri'i dkar chag*

This is described in the catalogue as, 'The history of the spread and collapse of Bon religion by Khopo Lodoë Thogmed (13th cent.) and the sacred site Bonri in Kongpo, written by a Bon master Youngdruk Puntsok (19th cent.)'

TBRC W1KG3814

*bsGrags pa rin chen gling grags*

Found in the *Bon gyi chos 'byung*

TBRC: W1CZ2330

## References

Karmay, Samten. 1972. *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon*. London: OUP.

Karmay, Samten and Yasuhiko Nagano. 2001. *A catalogue of the new collection of Bonpo Katen texts*. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.

Blondeau, Anne-Marie. 1990. Identification de la tradition appelée *bsGrags-pa Bon-lugs*. In T. Skorupski (ed.) *Indo-Tibetan Studies*. Tring: The Institute of Buddhist Studies.

- Kvaerne, Per. 1993. Religious Change and Syncretism: The Case of the Bon Religion of Tibet. In P. Kvaerne and R Thargyal (eds), *Bon, Buddhism and Democracy*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- \_\_\_ . Forthcoming. A *g.yung drung bon* description of Mount Kailāśa (Gangs Ti-se). In M. Clemente et al. (eds), *Perspectives on Tibetan Culture: A Small Garland of Forget-me-Nots Offered to Elena De Rossi Filbeck*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.
- Blezer, Henk. 2013. The Paradox of Bön Identity Discourses: Some Thoughts on the rMa clan and the Manner of bsGrags pa Bon, and on ‘Eternal’ Bön, New Treasures, and New Bön. In M. Teeuwen and Henk Blezer (eds), *Challenging Paradigms*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 123–57.

## EXTRACTS

The following extracts are from the Lhasa (2013) edition. The translations are based on the four manuscripts listed above, for which thanks are due to Per Kvaerne, who is preparing a critical edition.

The text is here describing the early period, when Shenrab (gShen rab), the founder of Bön, first appears in Tibet.

[p. 148]

དེ་ཙམ་ན་གཤེན་རབ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བོན་ཁྲིམས་དར་མཐུད་ལྟ་བུ་ནི་ཡོད་དོ། གཤེན་རབ་རྣམས་མཁའ་སྐྱང་བའི་མདོག་ཅན་གོང་  
 ཅུ་བརླགས་སོ།

At that time, the Bön laws of gShen rab were like a silken knot. gShen rab resided above, illuminated like a clear sky.

Later, under King Tri Song Detsen, the Indian master Padmasambhava has been expelled from Tibet and the Bön religion is being restored.

[p. 175]

བོད་འབངས་བདེ་ལ་བཀོད་པས་དེར་རྗེ་རྒྱལ་མཉེས་བས། བོན་པོ་ལ་ཆེ་བའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ལོད་པ་ནི། དང་པོ་མིང་གི་ཡིག་  
 ཚངས་བྱིན་པ་ནི།

Having established the happiness of the Tibetan subjects, the king rejoiced. As for the great privileges bestowed on the Bönpos, first, as for the *yig tshang* titles: ...

བཙུན་ཁྲིམས་ཚད་མར་བསྐྱབ་པས་གཤེན་བཙུན། འབངས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིད་སྤྱད་མཁུན་པས་ཡེ་མཁུན་ལོ། མི་བཤེན་གྱིར་  
སོང་ན་ལག་དམར་དངོས་སུ་འབྱུང་བ་དང་། མ་རིན་གསེར་སྤང་སྟོང་དུ་བཅད། ལོར་ཇལ་ནི་དགུ་བཅུ་བཅད་དོ།།

As they faithfully kept the laws of the *gshen*, [they were called] 'noble priests' (*gshen btsun*). As they understood the welfare of the common people, [they were called] 'omniscient'.  
If a priest was killed, the killer himself was handed over. For a wound, gold *srang* were the compensation. Compensation for [stolen] livestock and crops was awarded nine- or ten-fold.

Later, after the final triumph of Padmasambhava under Tri Song Detsen, the Bönpos are expelled.

[p. 182]

རྒྱལ་པོས་ན་རེ། ང་ཡི་མངའ་རིས་ཀྱི་བོན་པོས་འཕྲོག་པར་འདུག། འདིར་ངས་མི་ཐེག་པར་འདུག་པས། ཀྱེད་བོན་  
གཤེན་མཐུའོ་ཆེ་རྣམས་ནི་མཐུ་ཆེ། ང་ནི་དབང་ཆེ་བས་ལུ་བྱ་གཉིས་འདིར་མི་ཤོང་བར་འདུག་པས། ཀྱེད་རྣམས་ཚོས་  
ཁྲིམས་ལ་ཞུགས་ནས་བན་རྟེ་བྱེད་པ་དང་། བོད་རུ་བཞི་ལས་འདས་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་གཞན་དུ་འགོ་བ་དང་། ཆབ་གསོལ་  
དེ་ཀྱེད་བོན་པོས་འདོམས་ཤིག་ཞེས་ཟེར་རོ།

The king said, 'You Bönpos are taking away my authority. I cannot tolerate this. You powerful priests have great magic power (*mthu*). As for me, I have great temporal power (*dbang*). There is no room for both of us here. Abide by the religious law (*chos khrim*s) and become monks, [or] go to another country beyond Tibet, with its four horns, [or] you must choose to drink water [commit suicide]: you Bönpos have to choose.'