

THE SBA BZHED

The supplemented testament of sBa on the activities concerning sūtra and tantra during the period of Emperor Khri srong lde btsan and learned master Padma

bTsan po Khri srong lde btsan dang mkhan po slob dpon Pad ma'i dus mdo sngags so sor mdzad pa'i sba bzhed zhabs btags ma

INTRODUCTION

The narrative begins shortly before the birth of Tri Song Detsen and recounts numerous struggles between those promoting and opposing the Buddhist religion and its monuments. The activities of gSal snang, minister of the sBa clan and supporter of Buddhism, are prominent. Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava are invited to Tibet. After the defeat of the Bönpo, the construction of the temple of Samye (bSam yas) is initiated. On completion of the temple the first Tibetan monks are ordained. Although some ministers object to the new ordinations, the king promises to provide for the needs of the monks. Two queens and 300 people adopt the religion. At this point the king makes laws. He elevates the monks above the laity. The text continues with political and diplomatic events, which include further opposition to Buddhism, and it recounts the complicated events that follow the death of the king.

EXTRACTS

The Tibetan text and page numbers are reproduced from the Beijing edition (2009: 1–79).

During the infancy of Tri Song Detsen and after the death of his father, there are conflicts over the new religion.

[p. 6-7]

ཀུལ་བྱ་སྐྱེ་ནར་མ་སོན་པས། ལྷོན་ནག་པོ་ལ་དགའ་བས་ཁྲིམས་བྱ་རྒྱུ་བཅས་ནས་ཚོས་གཤེག

As the prince had fallen ill, malevolent ministers established minor laws and destroyed the dharma.

[p. 8]

དེའི་དུས་སུ་ཡུལ་ངན་ཆེན་མོ་བྱུང་ནས། འབངས་གུམ་པ་ལ་ཚེ་བཤྱིར་མ་གནང་བའི་ཁྲིམས་བྱ་རྒྱུ་བཅས་པའི་འོག་དུ་བ་

ལམ་རྒྱགས་ན་སྤྲོད་གསལ་སྤང་གི་བྱ་ཚེ་མིང་སྲིང་གཅིག་དུས་གཅིག་ལ་གུམ།

At that time, great calamity befell the country. As for the death of the subjects, in the destructive path under the minor laws—which did not preserve life—the children (brother and sister) of sBa gsal gngang died at the same time.

Three translators are employed by Tri Song Detsen and they are threatened by the ministers sTag ra and Zhang ma zhang. They say:

[p. 10]

འཇིགས་སུ་རྒྱུང་ལས་ཚོས་བྱས་པོ་རང་དུ་གཏན་སྡུག་པ་མ་ཐོས་སམ།

Have you not heard that Buddhist practitioners and bachelors are to be completely banished under the minor laws?

The Bönpo have been defeated and it is decided to limit their activities and to encourage Buddhism. The statue of Sakyamuni is brought back to the Ra mo che and the foundations of Samye are laid.

[p. 25]

ཡོས་སུ་ལོའི་དབྱིད་བསམ་ཡས་ཀྱི་མང་འདིངས་པར་ཆད་ཙ་ན། གསལ་སྤང་གིས་སྲོན་དུ་སྐྱེག་མདའི་ལྷ་ལང་ཚིགས་ནས་
སྤྲོ་བ་ཚན་ཚོས་ལ་བཀོད། འབའ་ལྷ་གཟིགས་ཀྱིས་མུང་རོས་ཀོང་ལ་དགོ་བའི་བཤེས་གཉེན་བྱས། འཇིགས་རྒྱ་ལྷ་
ཕོག་མུང་རིགས་དཀར་པོར་བཏང།

In the spring of the male hare year [763 or 775], they decided to lay the foundations of Samye. First, gSal snang built the *gLag mda'* temple, and the sBa clan were established in the *dharma*. 'Ba' Lha gzigs became spiritual guide of Myang Ro Kong. He bestowed the five rules¹ and guided the Myang family towards virtue.

There is a meeting of the king, with his ministers, in order to discuss the construction of Samye monastery, which is opposed by some.

[p. 26]

ཇི་འོ་བཀའ་གཉེན་པས། བཀའ་འཇིགས་དང་བཀའ་ནན་འགས་ཏུ་གསལ་ལ་བར་འདེམ་ཀ་བོར་བ་སོགས་པ་སྐྱོག་ཏུ་ཆད་ནས།

¹ *Inga* for *rnga*. *Inga* is found in the *dBa' bzhed* and in the version reproduced by mGon po rgyal mtshan (1982).

བོད་འབངས་ཀྱི་ཚོགས་ཏེ་བཀའ་སྤྱི་བཏུ་ལ་པ། འཇམ་གླིང་ན་བོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་མི་ཆེ། བོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ལ་ང་ལས་ཆེ་བ་ནི་སྤར་
 མ་བྱུང་། ང་ལས་ཕྱག་རིས་མེད་པ། ཕྱག་རི་ཞིག་བྱེད་པས། རྩོད་བོད་འབངས་འཇམ་པ་རྣམས་སློང་ཅེས་པ་གསུངས།
 སློན་པོ་བྲི་བཟང་ལངས་ནས། རྗེའི་བཀའ་སྤྱི་བཏུ་དེ་ལས་གཉན་ཉན་། །ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་ལ་ཅེ་ནི་གུང་ལས་མཐོ། ཕྱག་
 རྗེས་གང་མཛད་པ་བཀའ་ལུང་ལྟོ་མཆོ།

In a stern speech, the lord said, ‘The firm and explicit edicts and commands (*bka’ khrim*s dang *bka’ nan*), which eliminate choice, have been secretly ignored. All the Tibetan people have been gathered and given orders (*bka’ stsal*). The kings of Tibet are great men in this world, but there has never been a king of Tibet greater than me. Mine are the only [important] written documents (*phyag ris*). Since I have written a document, you—the learned people of Tibet—should discuss it’. Minister Khri bzang got up and said, ‘The order (*bka’ stsal*) of the lord is heard² by the demons and the peak of the law is higher than the heavens. Whatever the lord writes, please proclaim it orally (*bka’ lung*)’.

The text describes the layout of Samye.

[p. 34]

དང་པོ་རྣམ་དག་ཁྲིམས་ཁང་གླིང་ལྷ་གས་ཏུ་བྱས་ཏེ།

First, a complete law building was built in the semi-circular area.

After the consecration of Samye and the promotion of teachings, the first monks are ordained, although some ministers object. The king promises to support the monasteries. Two queens and three hundred people take vows.

[p.45]

བཀའ་ཤོ་ཆེན་པོ་བྱུང་ཚེས་ཀྱི་ཁྲིམས་བཅས། དེ་ནས་པོ་མིག་མི་དབྱུང་བ་དང་། མོ་སྣ་མི་བཅད་པ། མཚང་ཅན་མི་ཀུམ་
 པ། སླེ་བོ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་རྗེའི་བཀའ་ཉན་པ། རྗེ་འབངས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་བ་དབྱུང་ཕྱུང་ལ་ཕྱག་དང་མཚོད་
 གནས་བྱ་བ། དེ་ལྟར་བྱ་བའི་ཆེད་ཏུ་བཅོན་པོ་ཡབ་སྐུ་དང་། སྣ་ཆེན་པོ་མ་གཏོགས་པས་བློ་བོར་རོ།

[Khri srong lde btsan] made a great legal edict (*bka’ sho*) and religious laws (*chos kyi khrim*s),

² *nyan* for *gnyan*.

according to which men’s eyes were not to be put out, women’s noses were not to be cut, and wrong-doers were not to be killed. All people were to be obedient to the king. Those among the lords and subjects who were ordained as monks were to be placed at the head to be venerated and offerings were to be made [to them]. The men of the king’s family and the high ministers took an oath that they would ensure that these things happened.

After Tri Song Detsen dies, his youngest son is considered to be too young to govern, so interim measures are put in place.

[p. 59]

སློན་འཇུག་པ་བསྐོས་ལ་བྲིམས་བུ་རྒྱུ་བཅའ་མཛི།

A wise minister was appointed and told to establish the minor laws.

There is further discontent under the later king, Ralpachan (Khri gtsug lde btsan)

[p. 66–67]

དགོན་མཚོག་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་འཇུག་པ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཚོས་བྲིམས་མཛད་པས། ཞང་སློན་ནག་པོ་ལ་དགའ་པ་རྣམས་གྲོས་
བྱས་ནས་ཚོས་བྲིམས་གཤེག་པའི་སློག་གྲོས་བྱས་ནས། དེ་ལ་སློན་དུ་བཅའ་པོ་མ་སྐོངས་ན་ཚོས་བྲིམས་མི་གིག་ཟེང་།

The religious law (*chos khrim*s) was created in accordance with the decisions of the eighty rare and supreme ones (*dkon mchog*). The Zhang ministers, who were inclined to evil, conferred and had a secret discussion about destroying the religious law. ‘For that to happen’, they said, ‘we must kill the emperor, or we will not destroy the religious law.’