

GIVSEPPE TVCCI

TIBETAN  
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ROMA ▾ MCMXLIX



TO  
SIR BASIL GOULD  
AND TO  
PROFESSOR F. W. THOMAS  
FRIENDS OF TIBET  
A  
FRIEND OF TIBET



# **PREFACE**



**T**IBETAN PAINTING has not met so far with the same appreciation as that received by its Indian and Persian counterparts. In a way this is not surprising, as collections of Oriental art are rich of too many modern Tibetan paintings of little merit, in which the same subjects appear over and over again. For this reason it has been difficult to overcome the impression that Tibetan painters have little originality and are so subservient to the rules of iconography that they are hardly able to give individual forms to their own fancy. They follow a certain number of fixed patterns, but are hardly able to display any creative power. All this is true to a certain extent, but it cannot be denied, as Grousset justly remarks, that Tibetan painting is imbued with a spirit of serene simplicity and a devout and naive grace which not infrequently suggest a natural affinity with the Italian primitives. In fact, the visions unfolding before the artists' wondering eyes are the same, and we are always confronted with the same choirs of saints and the same meditative ecstasy. Of course, it is true that the loftiness and grace of Italians is not equalled, on the whole, by Tibetan painters and many schools follow the hieratic models of Indian miniatures so closely that they degenerate into a sort of expressionless and lifeless Byzantine manner. I am also ready to admit that, even with the best artist, the weight of iconographic tradition is dominant to such an extent that the figures occupying the centre of a picture are as flat and motionless as if they were copied from a bloodless model. It is, however, the manner in which Tibetans treat colour that should engage our attention, and the value of their work lies in the skill and wisdom with which they grade their shades and place them near one another, conferring to the whole the iridescent life of a rainbow. The merit of this painting is entirely in its artlessness and in the mastery of colour; nor should we overlook the simplicity of its religious inspiration which bestows on every picture the character of a divine evocation. Tibetan painting reproduces the Tibetan soul like a mirror in which we can discern what this people have learnt from India, China or Central Asia and what they have created on their own initiative. When we look at one after another of these specimens we can see reflected in the images they present the culture and the spiritual history of a people who lived for ages and is still living under the domination of religion. Thus, this painting is an unfolding panoramic vision of Tibetan soul, its religious life and its history. For this reason the meaning of these images cannot be grasped fully unless we visualize them in their own environment. We must, therefore, be familiar with at least an outline of the spiritual background of their development. That is why my detailed explanation of the various tankas, as these paintings are called in

*Tibetan, is preceded by a summary of Tibet's history and culture in general. I have given, often relying on new, hitherto unused sources, an outline of Tibetan events from the 12th century down to the establishment of Chinese supremacy, followed by a sketchy picture of Tibetan literature. This picture is restricted, of course, to religious works, because technical subjects like medicine or astrology would require a special treatment. This is followed by a chapter on the history of historiography, which gives concise and essential data concerning the works I possess or am acquainted with. This part can easily be developed in the near future as other works become known to us, but for the present it has been sufficient to make a beginning in order to state clearly what we have been able to ascertain concerning Tibetan culture with the means at our disposal. Next comes a brief sketch covering the most important monuments of Central Tibet, used as a chronological reference to fix the date of many tankas and to identify many schools. I was able to study these monuments in the course of my travels in 1939 when I visited Saska, Žalu, Nor, Tashilhunpo and Lhartse, all places that held a great religious and political importance during the centuries I am dealing with. There I had the good fortune to find important documents which induced me to undertake once more, this time in the light of new and fuller information, the study of events and alternating ups and downs that took place in Tibetan history from the rise of Saska pa power to the triumph of the Yellow Sect which came as a consequence of Mongol armed intervention under Gušri bstan adsin.*

*I have confined myself chiefly to the gTsañ region, one of the provinces into which Tibet is divided, because this region is well known to me. I crossed it twice, using different itineraries, and thus visited many of the places I mention. As, however, the history of gTsañ cannot be separated from the history of dBus, consideration is given to the events of the whole of Central Tibet, even if the part concerned with gTsañ is dealt with more thoroughly and in greater detail. As I said before, however, Tibetan culture is religious, in the same way as Tibetan art is exclusively religious; it expresses, through symbols, the complex intuitions which Tibet has largely inherited from India, often enriching them with its own experiences. Hence, it was necessary to give the reader an idea of Vajrayāna, i. e. of that particular aspect of late Buddhism which, having early become extinguished in India, was transplanted into the Country of Snows and, taking a firm root, prospered there.*

*Having thus given a broad outline of the main aspects of the spiritual world in which Tibetan painting originated, I was able to approach my subject and to discuss the origin and characteristics of this painting, its relations with that of neighbouring countries and the influence of iconometric rules. Next, after having described the liturgies of consecration which impart life to these tankas and make them worthy of worship, I attempted*

to classify them into groups and schools. After that I proceeded with the illustration of the single tankas. This work covers in all 172 of them. They were mostly collected one by one during the seven journeys I made in various provinces of Tibet, or purchased in Nepal or from antique dealers in India, where I resided uninterruptedly for six years. Some of them belong to private collections to which I was given access.

The fourth part of my work is devoted to sources. The foremost among them is the portion of the Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama containing the genealogies of families who by then had risen on the horizon of history: princes and vassals rapidly ascending and as rapidly vanishing. Next comes the pedigree of the princes of Gyantse, followed by that of Žalu. It would be desirable to find the genealogical tree of aP'ag mo gru pa, if only to obtain further detail of the vicissitudes of Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in Tibetan history. However, this loss (which may not be final) is compensated by the fact that the fifth Dalai Lama must have used these family documents very extensively.

I next give some diplomas and edicts of the age of the Mongol emperors or of their Tibetan vicegerents, which I discovered in the Žalu monastery. We may add to these the definitely authentic edicts preserved by history, like, for instance, the one of C'os rgyal of Gyantse, or other documents which for good reasons can be considered authentic, or, at least, reproduced with a remarkable degree of accuracy, even if we find them in literary works.

The translations of chronicles and pedigrees are reduced to essentials, i. e. to the passages having a true historical value. They do not take into account legends, visions and rhetorical embellishments which were particularly abundant in the fifth Dalai Lama's florid prose and which would form a useless encumbrance to the present work. As a tribute to the memory of a great orientalist, this collection of sources and documents opens with Paul Pelliot's translation of an imperial decree of Qaisan, which I discovered in Žalu. As to the appendices, the second is an investigation into Bon po survivals in family pedigrees, and an attempt to throw some light upon this intricate problem with the help of new material.

A word concerning the method of transcription I have used here will not come amiss. For Tibetan I have kept to the one adopted in Indo-Tibetica; in the index the words should be looked for like in dictionaries; for instance, Klu and Blon-po, but gYun and rTse. As to Chinese, I have followed Wade-Giles. Mongol names are reproduced as they appear in Tibetan texts, but the names of Emperors and geographical names are given according to Hambis's transcription, except, of course, certain spellings which, like Genghis Khan for Čingis qan, though not strictly scientific, have been consecrated by usage.

*This book was originally written in Italian, and thanks are due to Dr. Virginia Vacca to whose painstaking and scholarly labour this English version owes its present form. The second Appendix was written by myself directly in English. If I had here to give public thanks to those Kalyānamitra who in various ways cooperated in the completion of my book, I should not know with whom to begin. In the first place I must thank the British Authorities who always took an interest in my travels and strove to facilitate them, my Indian friends who encouraged them, my Tibetan collaborators who gave me their illuminating advice and the disciples who willingly assisted in research work and proof-reading. I must also thank Prof. Prassitele Piccinini, that worthy continuator of the humanistic tradition of Italian physicians, who took a great interest in my researches and made their completion possible by his generous munificence.*

*Much gratitude is also due to the Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, which in difficult times has printed this work in a form worthy of Italy's noblest publishing traditions.*

GIUSEPPE TUCCI

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AKL – *Avadāna Kalpalatā* by KSHEMENDRA, edited by S. CHANDRA DAS and P. H. MOHAN VIDYABHUSHANA. *Bibliotheca Indica*, voll. 2, Calcutta, 1890.
- BEFEO – *Bulletin de l'école Française d'Extrême-Orient*.
- BUSTON – *History of Buddhism* by BUSTON, translated by E. OBERMILLER. Heidelberg, 1931.
- CHAVANNES, *Contes – Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripitaka chinois* par E. CHAVANNES. Paris / Léroux, 1910-1934, voll. 4.
- CLARK L. P. – *Two Lamaistic Pantheons* by W. E. CLARK. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1937, voll. 2.
- DT – *Deb t'er sñon po*.
- EDEL – *Tāranātha's Edelsteinmine* übersetzt von A. GRÜNWEDEL. *Bibliotheca Buddhica*, XVIII, Petrograd, 1914.
- FRANCKE, *Antiquities – Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Part I – Personal narrative by A. H. FRANCKE. *Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series*, vol. XXXVIII, Calcutta, 1914.
- FRANCKE, *Chr. – Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Part (volume) II. *The Chronicles of Ladakh and Minor Chronicles*, edited by F. W. THOMAS. *Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series*, vol. L, Calcutta, 1926.
- GNB – *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* by A. GETTY. Oxford / Clarendon, 1928.
- GRÜNWEDEL, BM – *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei* von A. GRÜNWEDEL. Leipzig / Brockhaus, 1900.
- GT – *Grub t'abs kun blus*.
- HAMBIS – *Le chapitre CVII du Yuan che* par L. HAMBIS. Supplément au vol. XXXVIII du T'oung Pao, Leiden. / Brill., 1945.
- HJAS – *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.
- JA – *Journal Asiatique*.
- JISOA – *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*. Calcutta.
- JRAS – *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
- bKa' agyur – Lhasa edition.
- LALOU, *Index – Répertoire du Tanjur d'après le catalogue de P. Cordier* par M. LALOU. Paris, 1933.
- MASI – *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*. Calcutta.
- MC – *Myan c'uñ*.
- Ming shih – Ming shih*. Po-na-pen edition. Commercial Press, Shanghai.
- MMT – *Āryamañjuśrīmūlatantra*, edited by T. GAṆAPATI SĀSTRĪ. Trivandrum, 1920-1925.
- OZ – *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*.
- PETECH, *Ladakh Chr. – A study on the Chronicles of Ladakh (Indian Tibet)* by L. PETECH. Calcutta, 1939.
- PTY – *Le dict de Padma. Padma Thang Yig – Ms. de Litbang* traduit par G. CH. TOUSSAINT. Paris / Léroux, 1933.
- RC – *Rin c'en gter māsod*.
- ROERICH, BTP – GEORGE ROERICH, *Tibetan Paintings*. Paris / Geuthner, 1925.
- Siddhi – Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi – La Siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang* traduite par L. DE LA VALLÉE POUSSIN, voll. 2. Paris / Geuthner, 1928-1929.
- SM – *Sādhanamālā*, edited by B. BHATTACHARYYA. Baroda / Central Library, 1925, voll. 2. Gaekwad's Oriental Series.
- SP – Sumpa Khan-po ye ce pal jor, *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, edited by S. CH. DAS. Calcutta, 1908.
- bsTan agyur – sNar t'añ edition.
- TARANATHA'S – *Tāranātha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien* von A. SCHIEFNER. St. Petersburg, 1869.
- THOMAS, *Lit. Texts – Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents concerning Chinese Turkestan* by F. W. THOMAS. Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, vol. XXXII. London, 1935.
- TOHOKU, *Cat. – A Catalogue-Index of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons* (Bkaḥ hgyur and Bstan hgyur). Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934, voll. 2.
- TP – T'oung Pao.
- WALEY, *Cat. – A Catalogue of Paintings recovered from Tun-Huang* by Sir A. Stein by A. WALEY. London, 1931.
- Yüan shih – Yüan shih*. Po-na-pen edition. Commercial Press, Shanghai.
- ZDMG – *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*.



**PART ONE**

**THE HISTORICAL CULTURAL  
AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND**



# A SHORT HISTORY OF CENTRAL TIBET FROM THE XIII<sup>th</sup> TO XVIII<sup>th</sup> CENTURY WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO THE PROVINCE OF cTSAÑ

## I. CENTRAL TIBET FROM THE FALL OF THE DYNASTY TO THE MONGOL INVASION

**T**he royal dynasty had been founded by Sroñ btsan sgam po in the VII<sup>th</sup> century; when king Glañ dar ma was murdered in 842, his dynasty fell, never to rise again. The tribes, not always on good terms with one another, had been welded into temporary unity by the authority of Sroñ btsan sgam po († 650), K'ri sroñ lde btsan and Ral pa can: this union now broke down. Under some of its kings, Tibet had fought China for Central Asian territory, it had victoriously held out against the T'ang dynasty and had tried to interfere with Northern Indian affairs, forcing the Pāla kings of Bengal to pay K'ri sroñ lde btsan a tribute; <sup>1)</sup> this military power now vanished. The royal family, however, was not wiped out with the end of the dynasty, indeed Glañ's descendants succeeded in founding new kingdoms in the farthest regions of Tibet.

From the descendants of Ñi ma mgon, the grandson of 'Od sruñ (Glañ dar ma's son) who had sought refuge in mNa' ris, sprung three branches: Mañ yul's, Guge's and Pu hrañ's, all of which had offshoots spreading into the neighbouring countries, like Ladakh and Zanskar. The descendants of Yum brtan, Glañ dar ma's other son, spread over rLuñ šod, ṛP'an yul and mDo K'ams. The sons of bKra šis rtsegs, Glañ dar ma's other grandson, settled in gTsañ, gYas ru and Ñañ stod.<sup>2)</sup>

Thus runs tradition, which may be founded on fact, even if the many legends bound up with it have only one object: to flatter the ambitions of the local nobility, which was anxious to connect its origin with the glorious family of the first kings.

Tibet, as the power which had kept it united broke down, reverted to its former conditions: it split up into a number of self-governing states, <sup>3)</sup> nearly always at loggerheads. It is perhaps too ambitious to call them states: they were simply wealthy families, owning much land and pastures, which with their offshoots, kinsfolk, clients and retainers, exercised sovereignty over a whole region. These families formed a local aristocracy, whose power was based on the resources of the territory under their control; they claimed a divine origin, tracing their ancestry to ancient heroes, and could count upon armed forces which were the true foundation of their power.

We do not say that those same families which had risen with the dynasty were still on the horizon of history after its collapse; many of them had already disappeared, or had faded into the background after some attempt on their part to oppose one of the kings or to resist their policy of strengthening authority at the centre. Indeed, if one considers the vicissitudes of the Tibetan dynasty, one cannot avoid seeing that the main cause of its decay is to be found precisely in the never-ceasing struggle between one family possessed of supreme power, and the surrounding aristocracy, which refused to submit to its

paramouncy and strove to escape its control. The dynasty attempted to subdue such a natural conflict by choosing its ministers from the most powerful families by turns, thus binding them to the fortunes of the state, but this remedy did not always work; for instance the clashes between the house of mGar and the reigning family show that the kings' policy was incapable of smoothing out friction and jealousy; they became, perhaps, all the more dangerous as strife and intrigue were brought into the court itself. Between the royal dynasty and the Prime Minister's families a pledge of mutual respect had been taken; in the *Ma ni bka' abum* we find the promise, given by mGar pa to Sroñ btsan sgam po, and Bacot,<sup>4)</sup> who was the first to call attention to it, rightly finds it extremely significant: "We will not seek a more powerful lord, we will not promise our faith to another, ..

When Buddhism began to spread in Tibet, a difficult situation arose, the same which developed, almost at the same time, in Japan. The new religion, having found favour with a section of the aristocracy and being opposed by another section faithful to ancient customs and ancestral tradition, had roused the Soga's rancour against the Nakatomi, hurling Japan into the turmoil of war. These two clans had not taken up arms one against the other solely because of their zeal for Buddhism or of their attachment to the old religion; religion was rather a pretext to justify ideally a clash of interests. In the same way, in Tibet, two religions confronted each other; on one hand Buddhism, favoured by the Court, was slowly gaining ground and spreading over the Land of Snows, with Śākyamuni's words, an echo of Indian culture; on the other hand Bon, the indigenous Shamanism, was determined to resist at any cost the new doctrines which it rightly considered a menace to national customs and to a type of society evolved through the experience of centuries.

The conflict was long and ended with the triumph of the Indian religion, continually

renewed by exchanges of apostles and missionaries between Tibet and India. According to Tibetan tradition, the violent struggle between the two currents, conservatives on one side and converts to Buddhism on the other, broke out in Glāñ dar ma's times. Although many tales are told concerning K'ri sroñ lde btsan's piety, it is obvious that, even in his lifetime, the Bon po's power and prestige were by no means over. Bon po tradition, preserved in the *Bon po rgyal rabs* and echoed in Padma-sambhava's literary cycle as well as in the chronicles, records the strife, both open and covert, which troubled men's minds under that king, wavering between the two schools and disposed to tolerate both religions on equal terms.

In the Lhasa inscriptions no explicit trace of Buddhism has so far been found; this means that the dynasty had not yet made an official declaration as later tradition would have us believe.<sup>5)</sup>

Centuries went by and the old aristocracy, little by little, disappeared; the lists of the most prominent families given by the *bKa' t'an sde lha*, compared with the information of the *Myañ c'uñ* or with works of the Mongol period, show another aristocracy on the historical horizon: the K'yuñ, the aDre, the aGos no longer have any political power; instead of the eminent ministers of former times, they produce teachers and translators of sacred texts (lotsāva). At the dawn of the Mongol epoch we see Tibetan history once more reduced, as in ancient times, to strife between families, which indeed has now become more acute, in the absence of an authority capable of checking the jealousy of rival factions. But as Bon, by this time, was declining, and Tibetan Buddhism had split up into several different currents, those families now took sides on behalf of religious schools; the political struggle drew its vigour from rivalries between sects. Thus a dangerous alliance had been concluded between religion and laymen: it was to bring the aristocracy

to its final eclipse and the monasteries will be the gainers: waxing powerful and aggressive, they soon became the arbiters of Tibet's destinies.

Monasteries, those huge buildings, harbouring a multitude of monks, partly addicted to worship and ceremonies, partly concerned with the management of ecclesiastical property, partly idle, sometimes ready to take up arms, are the result of an evolution developing through several centuries.

In the oldest times, religious life had been led not in these sacred citadels, but in small shrines and hermitages where ascetics, *lotsāva* and teachers sought refuge from life's turmoil. Up to K'ri sroñ lde btsan's reign (second half of the VIIIth century) no Tibetan had taken monastic vows; the first to enter the order had been the seven *sad mi*,<sup>6</sup> and the event was considered so important, that chroniclers have recorded it as the true beginning of the introduction of Buddhism into the Country of Snows.

The troubled years which followed were certainly not favourable either to the spread of the doctrine or to the development of monastic life; almost two centuries had still to elapse, before a new apostolic zeal, in the eleventh century, impelled Rin c'en bzañ po, Mar pa, and with them many other *lotsāva*, to go to India, almost simultaneously. Translating the principal texts of Buddhist doctrine, they transplanted into Tibet a religious tradition which the ups and downs of history were slowly extinguishing in India. But even then it was not an easy work; the Bon po religion still held out, the masses turned to the Buddhist masters seeking exorcisms and protection against fiends, moved hardly at all by an intimate conviction and a true acquaintance with abstruse Buddhist mysticism. Buddhism thus spread, even at the dawn of this period, thanks to solitary ascetics and theologians, not by virtue of a monastic organization; the latter, as we shall see, was formed but slowly and did not reach its full development before

the XIth and XIIth centuries, when the first Sa skya monasteries, ṅBri guñ and sTag luñ were founded: great for those times, but surely of moderate proportions, as compared with those built at a later period.

From the fall of the royal dynasty up to the Mongol epoch, rivalries between sects were therefore alien to Tibet; the sects had not yet developed any well-defined individuality. If we knew the course of events in their details, we should still find only wars of families against families, caused by raids, disputes about pastureland and mutual jealousy. Thus struggling, many families were weakened to the point of disappearing from history or becoming absorbed by other more powerful clans. But already in the XIIth century, religion had taken hold of men's souls to such an extent, that the aristocracy sought for new prestige under monastic robes, giving origin to dynasties of abbots, who claimed temporal and spiritual power together, transforming their convents in fortresses and royal palaces and uniting into their own person political and religious authority. For this reason, when the Mongol peril began to be felt on Tibet's frontiers, only a few clans were predominant, and these had identified themselves with the foremost monastic institutions, in the meantime raised to power. Little by little the causes of strife also changed: it was no longer a question of raids, passing animosities and sudden conflicts, such as used to arise in the troubled period of anarchy which followed the dynasty's downfall. Such disturbances, breaking out suddenly, quickly passed away following the interplay of passions: no plan was carried out, there was no aim in view. Now things had changed, the struggle had taken on a political meaning and had well-defined purposes in view, it was a fight for hegemony and for paramouncy. The old unitarian ideal, which, in the days of the kings, had induced Tibet to recognize a single chief, was revived. Hard pressed by China, each clan, then each prominent monastery tried to seize power by

obtaining official recognition from the Yüan and later on from the Ming, who on the other hand, using the pretenders' ambitions for their own ends, fostered rivalries between one family and another, nipping in the bud any chance of unification. Unity was also endangered by rivalries between the sects, unheard of in former times. The sects, having acquired by this time great authority, had become a new power side by side with the aristocracy, and were gradually replacing it; the convents monopolized privileges, land and riches, and commanded respect not only through armed bands, warrior monks and the resources of their earthly power, but also by invisible and far more awe-inspiring weapons: if not their alleged sanctity, then surely their spiritual intimacy with occult divine forces.

Anyone who examines the traditions and pedigrees of the families now appearing on the horizon of Tibetan history, will certainly find that, notwithstanding an admixture of fables and legends, this aristocracy mostly boasts of descent from North or North-Eastern frontiers: to quote a few instances, the princes of Gyantse considered themselves related to the clan of the Ge sar king of K'rom; the ṅPyoñ rgyas pa to the Bhaṭa Hor; the ṅNam riñ pa to the Mi ñag (Tangut); the lords of gNas gsar,<sup>7)</sup> a small principate in the ṅNañ c'u valley between Gyantse and Shigatse, claimed descent from the 'A ža.

This spread of racial groups from East to West naturally brought in its wake the absorption and the disappearance, at least from a linguistic point of view, of other peoples who had preceded them in those regions. Tibetan tradition indiscriminately calls Mon the populations which Tibetans met with on their way, as they expanded southward and westward. Mon is, of course, a general term, applied to populations of various languages and descent; it is therefore difficult to investigate what ethnical groups may be hidden under this name. Even when the Tibetans

specify, as they sometimes do: *skal mon*, *ka la mon*, etc., such further determinations do not help us to identify any particular people.<sup>8)</sup> If we wish to specify, somehow, the ethnical group predominating under this general name of Mon as regards Western Tibet we cannot but think of the austro-asiatic stock to which the Muñḍā, Khol, Santāl and Oraon belong: these not only spread South of the Himalaya, but crossed it and expanded northwards, especially in the provinces of Western Tibet, where the presence of an important ethnical group, pre-existent to Tibetan penetration, is proved not only by tradition and by place-names, but also by the well-defined memory of a particular language known as Žañ žuiñ from the place where it was spoken. It is impossible to say how far this language of Žañ žuiñ extended, but it is not unlikely that it reached much further eastward than the present Guge district, up to the frontiers of Central Tibet; it is, for instance, worthy of notice that the most famous Sa skya temple, the same founded by ṅK'on dKon c'og rgyal po, should have been called sGo rum,<sup>9)</sup> i. e. by a name the Tibetans considered to be of the Žañ žuiñ language.

The population of Tibet is thus far from homogenous. Confining my statements to Western and Central Tibet, which I know directly, although at the present day religion and language are the same and customs identical, the more we proceed westward and southward the greater variety we find of bodily traits so conspicuous as to strike the most superficial observer; and this, notwithstanding centuries of admixtures and common life, which have amalgamated stocks of different origin.<sup>10)</sup> Besides the Mon, recognized by the Tibetans themselves as alien groups, though finally inserted, in course of time, into their community, other tribes coexist which differ from the mass of the Tibetan people on account of their way of life: to the Bod pa, forming the settled population, tradition has opposed the ṅBroḡ pa, i. e. the nomads. It is true that the

term "settled population", is rather vague: in many places the people live in villages or caves dug into the rock only in the winter months, while in the milder season they look after their live-stock, whose needs influence their lives to a much greater extent than does agriculture, always poor. This is the rhythm of life prevailing over many parts of Tibet.<sup>11)</sup> Nomads, on the other hand, have no fixed abode at any time of the year; they normally live in tents, which they shift from one place to another according to the seasons' course. They speak a peculiar dialect, undoubtedly akin to those of K'ams or of the Northern highlands (Byañ t'añ), a district from which some of their groups seem to be prevalently derived. In the old censuses which will be mentioned later, Bod and aBrog pa are regularly kept distinct, almost considered opposites.<sup>12)</sup>

This composite population of Tibet, into which different groups have been blended and whose speech is an all but uniform "koiné", was ruled by an aristocracy mostly drawn from the North or from the extreme Eastern provinces; its vicissitudes, rivalries and ambitions were, for many centuries, the centre of Tibetan history. The documents of such a scanty history have been handed down by this same ruling class in the form of a varied and luxuriant crop of legends, which furnish themes and subject-matter to the later monastic chroniclers. These chroniclers related the development of families and sects fancifully and with partiality, nevertheless their compilations throw some light on political events and allow us to reconstruct, at least in its main lines, Tibet's political horizon on the eve of the Mongol conquest.

This history can therefore be reduced to the vicissitudes of families and monasteries, it is never the history of a people. The people suffers it, but takes no part, it submits to history. Events are guided by a few personalities, representing the interests of aristocratic currents or of some particular sects.

The first attempt at unification, after the dynasty's downfall and the disturbances which followed, is represented by the rise of Sa skya theocracy. It is no longer the case of a family whose strength lies entirely in its temporal power: we have a clan in whose hands earthly authority and the prestige of religious sanctity are united. Buddhism had progressed greatly since Glan dar ma's times, vanquishing Bon. Perceiving that it was not possible completely to erase from the people's minds all traces of those ancient beliefs, it had linked them with its dogmatic schemes, and the Bon po deities had been disguised as acolytes of the Buddhist pantheon and called upon to defend and guard its temples. Smothering the primitive religion with its metaphysical and dialectic exuberance, Buddhism forced Bon po to accept its own logical structure, to change its raiment and thus to become half Buddhist. The Bon po, it is true, still held out stubbornly in the frontier provinces, and had at least succeeded in so permeating with their practices some sects, as that of the rÑiñ ma pa, that it was difficult to distinguish popular Buddhism from the aboriginal religion of Tibet, as lamented by Lha bla ma Byañ c'ub 'od:

"Since exorcism spread, sheep and goats have no more rest; since yoga practices spread, unlawfulness and immorality mingle; since the use of medical ingredients for magic purposes spread, living dogs and boars are killed; since necromancy spread, cemeteries receive no cult; since offerings are made to the *stin po* and to the *sa za*, diseases of men and cattle develop; since smoke is spread without the proper incantations (?), gods and Klu of the country are indigent. Can this kind of behaviour be called the "Great Vehicle?,, This behaviour of yours, the exorcists of the villages, if it is heard of in other countries may cause astonishment to others, but this behaviour that you state to be Buddhistic

is less merciful than that of the Las kyi srin po.

“If one worships gods, who are pure, with ordure, urine, semen and blood, one is to be pitied, since he will be reborn in the mud produced by the corruption of corpses. If one blames the Law contained in three sets of scriptures, one is to be pitied since he will be reborn in the hell Avīci. By the ripening of the sin consisting in the killing of living animals on account of exorcisms, one will be reborn among the Las srin po. This is stated in the Great Vehicle. By the ripening of the sin consisting in a behaviour infected by lust on account of yoga practices, one will be reborn as *mñal srin po*.<sup>13)</sup>

“This is stated in the Great Vehicle. If one presents to the three jewels offerings of flesh, blood and urine, one is to be pitied since he will be reborn among the impure *srin po*... If by such a behaviour you can attain Buddhahood, all hunters, fishermen and butchers could obtain illumination. You, exorcists of the villages, do not say that you are followers of the Great Vehicle. Forsaking this wrong view, practice the law expounded in the three sets of sacred scriptures which is absolutely pure ...

But in dBus and gTsañ the Bon po had lost ground: here the new religion had prevailed, profiting by its proximity to India and by a constant exchange of apostles and pilgrims between those districts and the land of Śākyamuni.

It is not out of place to recall that, at this time, monasteries were no longer simple communities gathered round some chapel, as they had been in the past; this can be seen for the three most important convents which, at the dawn of the period we are studying, vie for the Mongol emperors' favour and equally aspire to supremacy: Sa skya pa, ʼBri guñ pa and Ts'al pa.

The Sa skya pa and the ʼBri guñ pa are the two monastic orders holding out, up to our times, against the ups and downs of history:

the first, as we shall see, boasts of being the depository of an esoteric tradition revealed to its forerunners by the ascetic Virūpā; the others are a branch of the bKa' brgyud pa, i. e. of a school introduced into Tibet by Mar pa. The Ts'al pa, born as an order where civil and religious authority was handed down from uncle to nephew, passed under the control of myriarchs descended from mGar, Sroñ btsan sgam po's celebrated minister; for this reason civil and military power prevailed over religious authority.

Even before the Sa skya pa had succeeded in gaining the first place, through the Mongols' favour, we possess information concerning a chief of Ts'al, who must have been considered the supreme authority of Tibet, since Gengis Khan received from him and from another chief the submission of the Country of Snows, while he was about to invade it. I allude to the plan for a military expedition in 1207 (*me yos* - HUTH, p. 24 wrongly 1206), not to the expeditions of 1194 and 1227, aimed against the king of the Mi ñag, i. e. of the Tangut, rDo rje dpal or T'o c'e, called by the Mongols Śidurhu.

The latter had made his submission for the first time in 1194, but having broken his pledges and not having taken part with his troops in the conquest of Khwārazm, Gengis Khan, in 1227, sent a punitive expedition against him and deprived him of his territory and of his life at the same time. His end is related, in great detail, by Sayang Sācān (*op. cit.*, p. 99 ff.) and in the *Secret history of the Mongols* (transl. by HAENISCH, p. 138 ff.).

But in this case we are on the edge of Tibet, far from the region of dBus and gTsañ, the particular object of our research, against which Gengis Khan was planning to move in 1206 (*me stag*, SP, p. 258). As soon as they were informed of his military preparations, the Tibetan chiefs called a meeting to decide what they should do in this emergency. A consultation or parliament like the Mongol *quriltai* was held,<sup>14)</sup> and all the responsible chiefs of Tibet

agreed upon the course they would follow. *a*Jigs med rig pai rdo rje's narrative is important; it proves that Tibet had lost its unity and had been divided between an uncertain number of chiefs, religious and laymen, who ruled by right of succession or of election over different territories, but, in case of need and when the interests of the entire territory were threatened, decided matters of peace and war on the base of a common agreement. Naturally this parliament recognized some supreme authority, capable of reconciling conflicting opinions and of inducing the members to accept this or that proposal for a solution; in the present case such an authority was represented by the *s*De srid Jo dga',<sup>15)</sup> of the Yar klun family, and the *Ts'al pa Kun dga' rdo rje*, on whom had been conferred, perhaps by election, the task of caring for the public weal; with how much effective power over the local nobility, we do not know.

This parliament, assembled in the face of an invasion, decided to send ambassadors to offer Gengis Khan an unconditional surrender: *m*Na' ris, the four districts of *d*Bus and *g*Tsañ, the Southern provinces and *K'ams*, i. e. the whole of Tibet, were thus ceded to the *Qaghan* of the Mongols, with the implicit pledge (even though our sources say nothing about it) of paying a regular tribute.

It would therefore seem that in Gengis Khan's times the *Ts'al pa* were the most powerful of all the clans. But when *Godan's* troops made their first raid, the Mongols found that, besides the *Ts'al pa*, also *a*Bri guñ and the *Sa skya* prevailed; indeed the latter enjoyed such a prestige that one of their abbots was invited to the Mongol prince's camp.

In 1239 (*sa p'ag*) *Godan* (*Ködön*), *Ogo dai's* second son, sent some of his troops, under *rDo rta nag*, to attack Tibet; the *Hor* then pushed as far as *Rva bsgrën* (*Raring*, to the North-East of *Lhasa*) and *rGyal lha k'añ*, causing great havoc.<sup>16)</sup> The Tibetans were dismayed, but the following year, either

*Sañs rgyas skyabs*, of *P'ag mo gru's* family, succeeded in convincing the Mongol general to abandon his plans (as related by chroniclers) or the Mongols themselves, having acquired loot, preferred not to be involved in a serious campaign: anyhow it is certain that *rDo rta nag* retired. His retreat did not mean he renounced the conquest of Tibet, but in the meantime his expedition had served to convince the Tibetans that they were not capable of resisting the Mongols. Negotiations began, about which we know very little. The Tibetans, in this perilous moment, turned to the *Sa skya* abbot, the *Sa pañ*, who seemed possessed of the greatest authority and influence in the whole country, and empowered him to deal with *Godan*. On the other hand, *Godan* on the advice of the two Mongol generals *rDo rta nag* and *rGyal sman*, invited the *Sa skya* master to his camp. The meeting took place in 1247, but already, two years before, two nephews of the *Sa skya* abbots, *a*P'ags pa and *P'yag na*, had preceded him,<sup>17)</sup> either obliged to answer *Godan's* summons, or led away as hostages.

Tibetan historians record this event and the first contact of the still barbarous Mongol hordes with the light of Buddhism which the great master, in a self-sacrificing spirit, brought into their midst. They also speak of prodigious cures which lengthened *Godan's* life and induced him to look favourably on Buddhism. Actually his favour was a consequence of the awe he felt for those mysterious powers which he feared would emanate from the rites and incomprehensible formulas of the new religion the Tibetan abbot had revealed to him for the first time.

Nevertheless the *Sa skya pañdita's* journey was not apostolic: it took place, as I have said, on a command from *Godan*, to avoid the worst, and was concluded in fact with a second delivery of Tibet, through a Tibetan delegate, into the Mongol prince's hands. The Land of Snows confirmed its submission to the Mongols, already accomplished in

Gengis Khan's times, and recognized their paramountcy.

On his way back the abbot sent a letter to the civil and religious authorities of Tibet; owing to its importance, we translate it in full: <sup>18)</sup>

“Sa Paṅ's Letter to the Tibetans.

*Om svasti siddhī.*

Homage to the master and to the mGon po aJam pai dbyāns.

Communication <sup>19)</sup> of the glorious Sa skya paṅḍita to the spiritual preceptors in dBus, gTsañ and mÑa' ris, to the chaplains with their patrons (*yon mc'od*).

Having in mind the Buddha's teachings in general and (the good of) all created beings, and particularly <sup>20)</sup> what may be to the advantage of the Tibetan-speaking populations, I have gone to the Hor. The great patron was much pleased with me, whom he had invited. <sup>21)</sup> I had thought that aP'ags pa who had taken with him his so small brother and his retinue would have been enough. But he said to me: 'Among my subjects, <sup>22)</sup> I consider you as the head, the others as the feet. You have been called by me, the others will come through fear. Do I not know it?

Before coming here, aP'ags and his brother were acquainted with the law of Tibet, and even now aP'ags pa studies the law of Tibet and P'yag na rdo rje studies the Hor scriptures and language. I, protecting (the world) with the law of men, <sup>23)</sup> you <sup>24)</sup> protecting it with the law of the gods, <sup>25)</sup> will the Buddha's teachings not spread over all the world, as far as the ocean which is the earth's external boundary?'

This king is a bodhisattva, who has the greatest faith in the Buddhist teachings generally, and in the three gems in particular. <sup>26)</sup> He protects the universe by good laws, and particularly he has a great attachment for me, far above the others. He said (to me): 'Preach religion with a tranquil mind, I will give you what you wish. I know that you do good, heaven knows if I do so also'.

Above all he has a great attachment for aP'ags pa and his brother. Knowing how to govern freely, he has the good intention of being useful to all peoples.

'In a special manner, teach the Law to your men, the Tibetans; I know how to lead you to happiness'. So he says. The king and the members of the royal family asked to apply themselves diligently to the observance of the rites concerning prayers for a long life. By the way, the armies of this Hor king are numberless. I think that all the aDsam bu gliñ has submitted to him. Those who agree with him take part in his adversity and prosperity. If one does not listen sincerely to what the king says, he cannot be called his vassal. And in the end the king will cause his downfall. Until the kingdom of the Yu gur was overthrown, he took <sup>27)</sup> men's riches and himself appointed (literally: made) chancellors, <sup>28)</sup> administrators and *bu dga'*. <sup>29)</sup> The Chinese, the Mi ñag, the Sog po and other peoples, although they had been forced to pay a tribute before being vanquished, because they did not listen to what he said, were defeated and hence, no longer having anywhere to go, became his vassals. Having finally listened to his words, now the *bu dga'*, the administrators, the generals, chancellors, etc. all of these (the most important officials) are appointed by him. Having come into conflict with our wicked population, he withdrew in various manners, but without going very far; then, engaging them in a battle, he defeated them: thus by artifice, stratagem and deception he destroyed them. His various vassals are many; owing to the war against the Tibetans, (who had been) bad to him, serfs and dependants excepted, nobody is to be seen, besides a hundred (persons), on whom the dignity of a dPon had been conferred. Although Tibetan vassals are many, nevertheless, as tributes <sup>30)</sup> are scanty, the dignitaries, in their hearts, are not satisfied. In the past, for some years, no (Hor) soldiers came to upper Tibet. (This happened because I) having taken (with me) *bi ri*, <sup>31)</sup>

did homage as a vassal. As this vassalage was successful, the upper mNā' ris, dBus and gTsañ did homage as vassals. Various *bi ri* too having become vassals, up to this day no soldiers have come (to our country); hence great advantages resulted.

There are some men in upper (Tibet) who have not recognized all this. In this circumstance, he declared war on those who, though they had done homage as vassals, did not pay the tributes and were not faithful; he destroyed the people's riches; you have heard all this. Those who fought, princes, heroes, soldiers, able archers with solid armours, he defeated and overthrew them all. Men think that the compulsory services and war tributes which the Hor (enforce) are smaller, and the compulsory services and war tributes of others larger, but the compulsory services and the war tributes that the Hor (enforce) are greater than those of others. Compared with these, those of others are small. Now hear what he says: ' (In) your country, (in the) lay communities of your districts, whoever the various officers may be upon whom (office) has been conferred, let him (continue as before to) occupy it. I have called the Sa skya pa, who have the golden letters and the silver letters, and I have conferred the office of *da ra k'a c'e* upon them; this is just.

On the base of this recognition (*no p'rod*) many useful messengers who come and go have been established: therefore let three (copies of the) list of the census officials' names, of the number of laymen, and of the tributes be made; let one be brought to me, one taken to the Sa skya and another kept by the various officials, and let it be clearly distinguished: this one is a vassal, this one is not a vassal.

If this distinction were not made, there would be danger of defeating vassals together with those who are not such. He who is in possession of the Sa skya pa golden letter, let him consult the officers of each country, and let him do what is good for all created beings, without any thought of increasing his own

authority: and also the officers of the (various) countries, let them never act on their own initiative, without consulting him who is in possession of the Sa skya pa golden letter. If one acts on his own initiative, without taking counsel, he is lawless. If one has committed a fault, he will be pardoned with difficulty. On this we are all agreed. If you follow the Hor laws, good will result; go to meet those who are in possession of golden letters and serve them. Those in possession of the golden letters, before asking anything else of those who come to them, must ask, above all, if (the above mentioned) are runaways or have quarrelled, if they have properly served the possessors of golden letters, if they have performed the personal services, if the vassals remain firm (in their allegiance). If those in possession of the golden letters are not satisfied, it is certain that there will be a chance of meeting with damage, if they are satisfied advantages will accrue. It is difficult to see anyone able to accomplish anything without listening to those possessing the golden letters.

Hence noblemen<sup>32)</sup> and those who bring tributes (as vassals) will find themselves well. With the purpose of doing each a good deed, let my officials to levy the government tributes collaborate with the Sa skya pa men. They advise: this is the tribute which must be paid. I also have advised them concerning this. Hence, when they come to the country (assigned) to them, it will be to every one's advantage.

In a general manner, when I sent you (my) men last year, I made a show of advising you that by acting thus it would be well with you. But it is just that you too should not do (as you have done heretofore).

After having been defeated, either you will listen to what (the Emperor) says, or else you have not understood what he says.

Generally speaking, do not say: 'it does not profit me that the Sa skya have entered the Mongol confederation'. I have entered the Mongol confederation with thoughts of love

towards others, for the advantage of those who speak Tibetan. If you listen to what I say, it will be to your advantage. When one does not see how this may happen, it is very difficult to trust those who know. Therefore it seems to me that now this is profitable: we have long enjoyed (earthly) happiness, (now) suddenly gloom and oppression have set in, as when one is trampled upon. It is necessary that the people of dBus and gTsañ should enter the Mongol confederation. I, whatever happens, good or evil, will not repent. It is possible that (all) may go well, through the blessings and the grace of the Masters and of the Three Gems: let all of you pray to the Three Gems. The king is bound to me as he is to no one else. For this reason, great men, spiritual preceptors of China, Tibet, Yu gur, Mi ñag or of other countries, listen to the Law with great wonder and feel great devotion.

I need not trouble concerning what the Hor will do to those who will come here; I wish all to feel confidence. As far as I am concerned, let all be tranquil. Concerning the tributes: gold, silver, ivory, large pearls, carmine and ruddle, *ru ta* (= *ru rta*, *kuṣṭha*), bezoars, tiger, leopard, wild cat, otter skins, Tibetan wool, fine dBus wool, here these things are right. Generally speaking, concerning the property (to be paid as a tribute) when one's riches (*nor rtsis*) be scanty, one is allowed to pay with those articles that are the best in one's country. If there is gold, think that there may be as much as you wish of it.

Let the Buddha's teachings be diffused over all the Mongol regions. May all receive good ..

In this letter the Sa pañ speaks like "one of Godan's subjects ..". One can see that he had negotiated the country's submission, and indeed the Mongol troops, while submission was expected, had not penetrated into his country ("for some years, no (Hor) soldiers came to Tibet .."). But the warning is clear: Godan is too powerful, the Uigur and the Chinese have had to bow before him. Nothing can be done, it is necessary to submit

and to pay the tributes he may enforce. In exchange the Sa skya abbot had obtained for himself the "golden patent ..", and had thus become one of Godan's officials; Tibet had been handed over to the Mongols, but the Sa skya pa acted as their viceregents in Tibet.

It is enough to read the last part of the letter to perceive that the Sa skya abbot could not have acted otherwise; he endeavours to persuade the recipients of his letters that in the future they will have occasion to praise his wise decision of entering into the Mongol state.

Not all Tibetan chiefs, however, accepted this surrender: some obstinately stuck to their independence, refusing to pay the tributes agreed upon, and as soon as the Sa skya pañḍita died, they shook off the yoke. Consequently in 1251 a fresh army entered Tibet and did much damage.

Thus, at Godan's hands, the Mongols effectively took possession of Tibet for the first time. Qubilai followed up and completed Godan's policy most ably, also relying above all on the Sa skya. Above all, but not exclusively, for besides showing favour to aP'ags pa, he was greatly devoted to another prominent lama and master of esoteric doctrines, namely C'os adsin Kar ma bakši. The latter belonged to the bKa' brgyud pa sect, and had come to the Mongol court in Mongka's times; he had thus preceded aP'ags pa; actually Qubilai, who had him at his court, was long undecided as to which lama he should choose for his master.

But the Emperor, whatever his increasing interest in Lamaism, continued to follow his predecessors' policy and claimed Tibet's complete subjection. His conduct towards the Country of Snows clearly shows that he considered it one of his provinces and an essential part of his dominions. First of all, he had a census of Tibet taken on various occasions, to ascertain the numbers of its population and to fix its tributes.

The first mission sent to Tibet with this purpose was led by Ta men, who made a

general survey of the country and applied a first division in *ajam*; from the Chinese frontier to Sa skya, they were 27 in all, of different sizes, according to their various resources and to the produce of the soil.

The source used by S. CH. DAS, JRASB, 1904, extra number, p. 97, says that these *ajam*, each depending from a *ajam dpon* or "head of a district", were divided as follows:

mDo smad	7	
mDo stod	9	
gTsañ	7	Saskya, Šog, Tsi mar(?), Shag (Žag?), Sha po (? Ža), Koñ, Goñ gсар (dGoñ gсар)
dBus	4	Tog (T'og ?) Tshong dui (Ts'on adus) Darlung (Dar luñ) T'om darañ (Kr'om...)

*ajam* is not a Tibetan word, it is Mongol and means "post, station";<sup>33)</sup> it shows that this division had nothing to do with the division into myriarchies and *c'ol k'a*, which we shall mention later: it follows the enforced stations lying along the caravan roads which, from the extreme frontiers between China and Tibet, branched off throughout the country. This of course implied a firm administrative organization, because the districts through which the highroads passed were obliged to furnish personal services, contributions, means of transport, which the Mongols claimed from vassal or subject territories.

On the other hand it is clear, if there were any need of dwelling on the different character of the division into *ajam* and of the division into myriarchies, that the two systems do not correspond in any manner, neither do they cover the same territory.

In fact, while the division into *ajam* comprises also the most Western provinces, the 13 myriarchies (*k'ri skor*) as I have shown in a preceding work,<sup>34)</sup> include only dBus and gTsañ, and not even the whole of their territory. The effective division into 13 *k'ri*

*skor* was made at a second stage, when aP'ags pa was honoured by Qubilai as his spiritual preceptor; a confirmation has been found in Tibetan tradition, which recognizes a temporal succession in the so-called donations made to the Sa skya pa abbot, and recalls that each represented a particular offering of the Emperor's to his teacher, on the occasion of the three religious initiations he had received.

In the meantime between Ta men's mission which defined Tibet's administrative division for purposes of taxation, and the vaunted handing over of the 13 myriarchies to aP'ags pa, the Yüan had not neglected Tibet: they had sent Ijilig there, conquered the region of Kökönor and Amdo, annexing it to China. Later, when mDo K'ams was assigned to Tibet, Ijilig was appointed as the Mongol government's representative in Tibet.

But the territorial division into *ajam* must not have been considered final, since in the year earth-dragon 1268 we hear of a new mission sent by the Mongol court with the object of carrying out another accurate census. The census was an old custom of the Mongols' and marked the definite taking possession of a territory and its inclusion in the Mongol state. The practice was imitated later by the Tibetans themselves, who considered the census a sign of conquest, hence the expression *rtsis len*, "to carry out a census", passed into literary use to express submission. This census of 1268 was performed by two commissioners, A Kon and Mi gliñ, to whom was added the dPon c'en Ša kya bzañ po as Tibetan representative; on this occasion he received the title of *Zam gru guñ miñ dben bu*;<sup>35)</sup> they all had jurisdiction from mNa' ris to Ža lu, while in the other provinces Su t'u A skyid was charged with the same functions<sup>36)</sup> (S. CH. DAS, Se tu a K'yi get).

The first temporary census was followed, twenty years later, by another one, carried out by Do šu A nu gan and Ar mgon (Hosha and Oonukhan in S. CH. DAS, *ibid.*, p. 101, year *me p'ag*, 1287): in this circumstance they

had recourse to the division into *ajam*, already adopted for the preceding census; the territories were nevertheless divided, according to the density of the population, into large and small *ajam* (*ajam c'en-ajam c'un*). mNa' ris and gTsañ comprised four major *ajam* each, under a *mGo* or chief, and other lesser ones, among which a *dMag ajam*, probably designed to provide soldiers and war contributions.<sup>37)</sup>

In what manner the census was taken, is told by the *Sa skya* chronicles, which use the same documents as the author of the *rGya bod kyi yig ts'an*. As the passage is interesting for anyone wishing to gain an idea of the administrative division adopted by the Mongols, it will be well to give a translation (*Chronicle*, p. 65):

“As an offer for his initiation, the king said that the thirteen myriarchies (*k'ri bskor*) should be given to him (*aP'ags pa*); each of them numbered four thousand religious (*lba sde*) and six thousand lay communities (*mi sde*). As a second offering, he said that the three districts (*p'yogs k'a*) should be counted to him as one field, giving up to him at the same time the lay communities and the religious communities (*bandbe = lba sde*) of the three districts of Tibet, with the sacred white shell *rgyan grags* at their head. Concerning this, to begin from mNa' ris skor gsum up to Sog la skya'o, is the district of the Law; from Sog la skya'o as far as rMa c'u k'ug pa is the district of men; from rMa c'u k'ug pa to rGya mc'od rten<sup>38)</sup> dkar po is the district of horses called Gyad gliñ. The word: field (*ziñ*) commonly means a house having six pillars, i. e. husband and wife, two; son and daughter, two; man servant and maid servant, two, six all counted. And besides two animals, a horse and an ass, cows, sheep, goats and enough land for 12 mongol *k'al* of seed. They call it a small *bor dud* (*bor dud c'un*); twenty-five of these make a large *bor dud* (*dud c'en*); two of these are called a horse's head (*rta ngo*), two of these are called a hundred (*brgya bskor*); ten of these a chiliarchy (*ston bskor*), ten of these a myriarchy (*k'ri bskor*); ten of these a serpent *klu*;<sup>39)</sup>

ten of these a region. From Se c'en, king of the Mongols, depended eleven fields,<sup>40)</sup> and although the three *p'yogs k'a* did not suffice to form a field, as they represented the seat of the *bla ma* and at the same time that of the holy teaching, he gave them as a gift to *aP'ags pa*, counting them as if they were a field ... As a last offering for the baptism, according to the Lama's prescriptions, he gave him *Mi yur c'en po*<sup>41)</sup> in China ..

Thus the census was taken on the base of a unit called *dud* or *bor dud*. The two words are equivalent, and we are not to suppose (as I said by mistake in *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 89) that the diversity of names implies a difference in the populations comprised in the census: *bor dud* is the same as *bor du*, which is the Mongol *ordu*; *dud* is its abbreviation, formed on the analogy of *dud*, which means smoke, to signify a family unit, because smoke distinguishes a tent, and each tent houses one family; the three expressions, then, are equivalent and are indifferently used for the unit on which the census is based.

But it is now time to treat of the so-called donation of the thirteen *k'ri skor* and of the three *c'ol ka*, which Qubilai conferred upon the great abbot *aP'ags pa*. This was not a real donation, as Tibetan sources would have us believe; it was rather a nominal viceregency, over Tibetan territory, on the Mongol Emperors' account; the abbots, in a word, were not sovereigns and lords, but officials, elected and confirmed every time by a seal and a decree of the Court. Anyhow, as *Ti shih*, imperial masters, they enjoyed great honours: they sat, as the *Yüan shih* tells us, at the Emperor's side, and they designed the chief of the *Hsüan cheng yüan*, which, under the original name of *Tsung chib yüan*, was founded in 1288 and was assigned to the direction of a Buddhist monk. The latter, on assuming this office, received the rank of vice-minister, and controlled all business connected with Tibet and Tibetan religion. What the Tibetans consider a donation is thus only the conferring

of an office which, out of respect for the Sa skya, was confirmed for several years to a P'ags pa's descendants; they were thus obliged, as Ti shih, to go to the Chinese court very often in order to take possession of their office; the Emperor received them with flattering honours, and gifts were liberally bestowed upon them.

The *Yüan shih*, chap. 202, has preserved the list of the lamas who succeeded one another on Ti shih's seat, up to Nam mk'a' bkra šis; by his help we can thus reconstruct it.<sup>42)</sup>

#### THE "TI-SHIH," OF THE YÜAN SHIH'S LIST

1. B.: PA-SSU PA 八思巴 (P'a-k'o'ssu-pa 帕克斯巴)<sup>43)</sup> returned to Tibet in the eleventh year of Chih-yüan (1274) and was succeeded by his brother:
2. B.: LIEN-CHEN 亦憐真 (Lin-ch'in 琳沁)<sup>44)</sup> who died in the nineteenth year of Chih-yüan (1282) and was succeeded by:
3. B.: TA-ERH-MA-PA-LA-CH'I-LIEH 答兒麻八剌乞列 (Ta-erh-ma-pa-la-shih-li 達爾瑪巴拉實哩)<sup>45)</sup> who died in the twenty-third year Chih-yüan (1286) and was succeeded by:
4. B.: I-SHE-SSU-LIEN-CHEN 亦攝思連真 (I't'e-cha-shih-lin-ch'in 伊特扎實琳沁)<sup>46)</sup> who died in the thirty-first year Chih-yüan (1295) and was succeeded by:
5. B.: CH'I-LA-SSU-PA-WA-CHIEH-ERH 乞刺斯八斡節兒 (Ts'e-la-shih-pa-o-erh-chia-lo 策喇實巴鄂爾嘉勒)<sup>47)</sup> who died in the seventh year Ta-te (1303) and was succeeded by:
6. B.: NIEN-CHEN-CHIEN-TS'ANG 聿眞監藏 (Nien-cha-k'o-chie-lo-ts'an 年扎克嘉勒藏)<sup>48)</sup> who died in the following year (1304) and was succeeded by:
7. B.: TU-CHIA-PAN 都家班 (To-erh-chi-pa-lo 多爾濟巴勒)<sup>49)</sup> who died in the second year Huang-ch'ing (1313) and was succeeded by:
8. B.: HSIANG-ERH-CHIA-SSU 相兒加思 (Sang-chia-i-cha-shih 桑嘉伊扎實)<sup>50)</sup> who died in the first year Yen-yu (1314) and was succeeded in the following year by:
9. B.: KUNG-KO-LO-KU-LO-SSU-CHIEN-TS'ANG-PAN-TS'ANG-PU 公哥羅古羅思監藏班藏卜 (Kun-k'o-no-erh-pu-la-shih-chia-lo-ts'an-pa-lo-ts'ang-pu 衮噶諾爾布喇實嘉勒燻巴勒藏布)<sup>51)</sup> who died in the third year Chih-chih (1323) and was succeeded by:

10. B.: WANG-CH'U-ERH-CHIEN-TS'ANG 旺出兒監藏 (Pan-chu-erh-chien-ts'ang 班珠爾俄藏)<sup>52)</sup> who died in the second year Tai-ting (1325) and was succeeded by:
11. B.: KUNG-KO-LIEH-SSU-PA-CH'UNG-NA-SSU-CHIEN-TS'ANG-PAN-TS'ANG-PU 公哥列思八冲納思監藏班藏卜 (Kun-k'o-i-shih-pa-t'ung-la-shih-chia-lo-ts'an-pa-lo-ts'ang-pu 衮噶伊實巴綱喇實嘉勒燻巴勒藏布)<sup>53)</sup> who died in the same year 1325 and was succeeded in the second year T'ien li (1330), by:
12. B.: NIEN-CHEN-CH'IH-LA-SHIH-SSU 聿眞吃刺矢思 (Nien-cha-k'o-ts'e-la-shih 年扎克策喇實)<sup>54)</sup>

The orders issued by these Ti shih were in the name of the supreme imperial authority, from which they received their power, and precisely for this reason, according to the rules of Mongol protocol, the letters I have found in *Ža lu* all begin with the usual ceremonial formula, "By order of the Emperor, . . . From the same documents we see that not all the Ti šri, (Ti shih), were abbots of the Sa skya sect and that there was an interruption in their series, when the bDag n̄id c'en po was led to China in exile and the office of Ti šri was occupied by Ti šri Grags pa 'od zer, his chaplain, who did not belong to the Sa skya family.

The control exercised for some time by the Sa skya abbots over Tibet should not then be considered an effective possession or dominion. This of course does not mean that the Sa skya pa had not their own particular property and did not receive special grants from the Court, according to a custom extended to all particularly favoured lamas or to the most loyal and devoted officials.

These lands, the Sa skya family's estate, their private property, enjoyed exemptions and privileges according to usage, but over the *k'ri skor* or *c'ol k'a* they ruled as high dignitaries of the Mongol court, elected or confirmed from time to time, alternating, when the Court thought it proper, with lamas of other families and other sects.

Qubilai, in short, did not renounce those rights over Tibet which his grandfather had

claimed; he naturally remained the overlord of the Country of Snows, entrusting his delegates with government in an absolutely vicarious manner. Indeed, as can be seen from the *Ža lu* letters and from references we meet with in the chronicles of this period, all the measures taken by the Sa skya and their successors were always warranted by an imperial order (*luñ*), on which their authority was founded. The Court acted directly also when feuds and privileges were established, altering the territorial divisions, above all when it came to appointing officials of the highest rank and in the very first place the dPon c'en, i. e. the commanders-in-chief (elected in addition to the Sa skya) whose functions were mainly military and penal. They are called by the Tibetans *Du dben ša*, i. e. *Tu ynan shuai*, depending from the *Hsüan wei shib*, military office of the department for Tibetan affairs, and they controlled the thirteen myriarchies, concentrating temporal power into their own hands, and leaving spiritual power to the abbots.

Let us, then, lay aside the monastic exaggerations of our orthodox sources, compiled with zeal and piety in the quiet of convents: reality was different. The Sa skya abbots certainly enjoyed great prestige with the credulous Court, thanks to the belief that they held absolute sway over the world of occult forces by their magic liturgies or their mystical doctrines; but, as a matter of fact, their authority was rather apparent than real.

The Mongols soon began to distrust the Tibetan monks who aimed at overruling political authority through their enchantments: speculating on the Emperors' simple credulity, they monopolized dangerous privileges and forgetting the austerities of renunciation and the vanity of all earthly things, which the Śākya saint had preached, they amassed riches and carried on intrigues, impatient of all rules and discipline. The arrogance of some lamas was so harmful and dangerous that the *Yuan shib* has denounced them

with execration to history. This explains why the Mongols tried in every manner to limit the religious chiefs' authority, either by putting military power and administration in the dPon c'en's hands, or by distributing favour and privileges to the abbots of other monasteries, with the object of increasing rivalries and strife between the various schools, so that men's minds might be divided and no sect should prevail on the others.

On the other hand the Yüan Emperors were not so blindly devoted to Tibet's religious chiefs as to abstain from military measures, every time there was an occasion for them. Mongol armies invaded the Country of Snows more than once and destroyed fortresses and monasteries. In 1267 the Hors killed the Prince of aDam ma ri, in 1277 the Prince of Zañs c'en, in 1281 the dPon c'en Kun dga' bzañ po in Bya rog rdson, following the Sa skya *nai so*'s accusations. In 1290 a Hor army aided Ag len in the attack and destruction of aBri guñ. This time the Hor army was led by an imperial prince, Tämür buqa and the battle fought at dPal mo t'añ caused great bloodshed.

aBri guñ pa's army consisted entirely of levies from the myriarchies, but they had called in to assist them troops of the upper Hor (Hor stod), which were defeated in that battle; what few troops survived were destroyed by a snowstorm, which religious tradition alleges to have been produced by Zur Ša kya señ ge's magical arts; hence both the chief of the Hor stod, the hierarch Rin c'en of aBri guñ and the sGom c'en aBri guñ pa, were taken prisoners.<sup>55)</sup>

Thus the Sa skya abbots did not succeed in forcing their rule either on all the great monasteries or, as we shall soon see, on the greater myriarchies. There was no lack of disaffection and attempts to shake off their yoke; they were speedily put down with reprisals as long as the Mongols were able to look after Tibet, as in this case of aBri guñ's rebellion. Anyhow subsequent events show the

peace to have been purely fictitious; men's minds were not in harmony, the Mongol court's supreme delegate did not enjoy general recognition. On the contrary, dissent was fostered by the fact that temporal power had centered, even tho but formally, in the hands of a sect: no political strife is ever so deep and violent as when stimulated and fed by theological hatred. Rivalry between the schools made the rift between temporal interests more and more difficult to bridge: aBri guñ revolted against Sa skya and gave in only before the force of arms.<sup>56)</sup>

### 3. THE P'AG MO GRU PA

As the chronicles themselves admit, the Sa skya's power was shortlived: it lasted less than a century, to be exact 75 years, during which twenty dPon c'en alternated with the abbots. Finally it broke down when a rival of great military strength appeared in dBus and first became independent of the Sa skya pa, then reduced them to subjection.

Sa skya theocracy was feudally dependant on the Mongols: since Sa skya pañdita's first meeting with Godan, and later since aP'ags pa had inspired Qubilai with awe for his miracle-working powers, receiving favours and honours from that Emperor, the Sa skya had been increasingly bound to the Mongol court. Many of them had been elected Ti shih and Kuo shih, they had ruled over the thirteen myriarchies as vice-regents. By reason of their office and conforming to a custom which had acquired the force of tradition, they often went to China, and through these constant relations with the court, acquired foreign habits and spread them at home. Tibet was gradually led to renounce some of its old usages and to follow Mongol laws. Furthermore the Sa skya pa, as we have remarked, were the heads of a sect, and this was not to their advantage: other schools were linked to equally respected masters, and boasted revelations received through

celebrated divine epiphanies. Thus the Sa skya's political supremacy, inseparable from their character as religious chiefs, stimulated jealousy and enmity in the other schools, which were not disposed to bow their heads only because the Sa skya had an investiture from the Mongol court. Nor was the old nobility as yet eclipsed; it saw, with increasing suspicion, the rise of the monasteries' prestige; they acquired worldly property, they sought privileges and exemptions, they grew stronger, in fine, for the sake of mundane interests. The monks were no longer wrapped up in glosses, liturgies and contemplation; they left the cares of the spirit and the depths of mystical wisdom to the chosen few, and became desirous of those possessions which Buddhist doctrine despised and considered vain and transitory. The monasteries were no longer simple hermitages, born as self-contained communities round solitary masters, but huge buildings with towers, harbouring an unruly crowd of monks, always ready to leave their sacred office and take up arms. Side by side with the abbots, more or less surrounded with divine prestige, the administrators of convents were only bent on keeping their riches by any means and on increasing their power.

The nobility, which in many places had already been obliged to serve the great monasteries and to become its secular arm, feared that the time was drawing near when its own privileges would be over and it should be reduced to nothing more than the clerics' handmaid. It finally took action.

From the castles of Lhasa and Yar klün, the glories of the ancient kings were still eloquent; as times grew harder and those glories remoter, so much the more did legends cast their light upon them and lend colour to the ghosts of the past. Nearly all the noble families boasted of their descent from ministers, generals and counsellors of the old kings; their pedigrees sung of wars fought on their side, recalled Tibet's greatness, when the armies of

the Country of Snows had laid low the power of China, now ruling over them through its soldiers and officials. The heart of Tibet was in dBus either in the Yar kluñ valley or near the hills of Lhasa; there the glories of the race were centered, thence the royal ancestors had moved, to weld the scattered and warlike tribes into unity and lead them to power. The capital was in dBus; gTsañ, in those ancient times, was a province of the great kingdom founded by Sroñ btsan sgam po, which his successors had enlarged and strengthened by the arts of war and their wisdom as lawgivers. It was necessary to resuscitate the old kingdom, a new C'os rgyal was needed, whose strong right hand should firmly and justly remould Tibet, torn and shaken as it had been by invasions and internal strife. dBus, the heart of the Land of Snows, must once again unite under its authority the provinces now ruled by the Sa skya through their dPon c'en, as representatives of the Mongol court.

These ideas were not openly expressed, but their active presence can be inferred in the events we are about to relate, and they brought to maturity the policy of one of the most remarkable figures in Tibetan history, as Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an certainly was. In the course of a few years he put an end to Sa skya hegemony and brought under his rule most of the thirteen myriarchies. The times were favourable: the Mongol empire had grown feeble and, going into a rapid decline, it lacked both the strength and the means to interfere with Tibet's stormy fortunes. Tibet was at that time a prey to anarchy and trouble. Some princes conferred upon themselves the offices of myriarchs, without waiting for the Emperor's appointment or approval, others rebelled against the dPon c'en; the whole nobility, taking advantage of such disorder, often took up arms to claim rights or avenge injuries. On this stormy background, the P'ag mo gru pa came to the fore. They took their name from the district of P'ag mo gru, in the Lokha region; from

this place had originated the surname of rDo rje rgyal, one of the greatest figures of Tibetan esoterism, of the aBri guñ pa, a subsect of bKa' brgyud school. Of course the abbot's descendants must not be confused with the family who for several decades was the centre of temporal power; the latter had belonged to the rLañs clan, for a long time having settled in that place, while rDo rje rgyal po had come from K'ams (see *Deb t'er, ña*, p. 66 a, and *bKa' gdams c'os abyun*, p. 11). But relations between the aBri guñ pa and the P'ag mo gru pa remained extremely intimate for a long time, because the latter recognized the former's religious authority, belonged to the same sect and hence shared their dogmatic positions.

The P'ag mo gru pas too had reached power through a few generations of abbots, the founders of a monastery round which the family's authority had been built up. The ups and downs of the P'ag mo gru myriarchy are extremely complex and it is not easy to understand them up to the time when one of the rLañs assumed the title of K'ri dpon and thus attained political authority.

The P'ag mo gru's power grew but slowly, through the increased prestige of some noble ascetics and masters, and was founded not so much on politics as on their religious glories; temporal power was born at a later time, when spiritual power had already given the abbots fame and riches. Their favour opened heaven's gates and their wise advice guided or pacified men's ardour; little by little they too felt the attraction of earthly allurements, watched over the vast territory of the myriarchies, appointed or dismissed myriarchs and finally took possession of political power; not for themselves, for they presumed to remain aloof from any contact with earthly affairs, but for their family. The same process was repeated which had brought the abbots of other sects to power: thus the Sa skya had aspired to supremacy, the aBri guñ pa and the Ts'al pa to effective dominion over their own myriarchy. If monastic

rules hindered interference with earthly affairs, nevertheless the family did not renounce its ambitions. In this family one of the sons was consecrated to a religious life, in order not to extinguish the light of a spiritual tradition embodied in the clan through ancient generations of masters, but another son had the duty of continuing the family, divided between this double office; hence on one side a spiritual succession was established between uncle and nephew (*k'u dbon*); this was also the case for some time in aBri guñ.

The rLañs' prestige began with the son of sGom c'en rGyal skyabs, named Grags pa abyuñ gnas. He was a disciple (*ñe gnas*; DT, *ñā*, p. 75) of the C'os rje of aBri guñ, in whose see he discharged delicate functions, like the office of secret personal attendant (*ibid.*); for this reason he was known by the epithet of *spyān sna* "he who stands before another's eyes"; it continued to be applied to his descendants, invested with religious authority. The famous rDo rje rgyal po, who had come from K'ams to dBus and then to gTsañ, had retired to a hermitage; from this hermitage he took the name under which he is known in history, P'ag mo gru pa, or aGro mgon, "Protector of the World". In the last years of his life he had been the master of the C'os rje of aBri guñ (DT, *ñā*, p. 85 b).

On his death, his disciples built over his relics a small temple which gradually became larger; indeed in the space of 64 years between the death of the aP'ag mo gru pa (1170) (DT, *ñā*, p. 70 a) and the appointment of Grags pa abyuñ gnas as abbot (1234) that temple had become such a well known and important monastery, that a violent quarrel broke out for its possession between the C'os rje of aBri guñ and the C'os rje of sTag luñ. Finally aBri guñ pa obtained it for himself and sent Grags pa abyuñ gnas to reside there as vice-regent of the C'os rje of aBri guñ. In the year *sa brug*, 1208<sup>57</sup>) (DT, *ñā*, p. 74 a) Sañs rgyas consecrated the old connection

with the abbot of aBri guñ, keeping for himself the title of *spyān sna*,<sup>58</sup>) transmitted, as I have said, to P'ag mo gru's successive dignitaries, even after they had taken possession of the P'ag mo gru monastery.

During his regency of the P'ag mo gru monastery, the Mongol armies twice invaded Tibet making a great havoc.

The raids had begun in the year *sa k'yi*, 1238; they were renewed in the following year *sa p'ag*, 1239, by Do rta nag, the Mongol general who had been ordered by Godan (DT, *k'a*, p. 13 a; *ñā*, p. 77 a; fifth D. Lama's Chr., p. 53 b) to attack Tibet and was, as we have said, much more violent. The abbot nevertheless interceded with the Mongol generals, that the country might be spared, and saved the life of his sGom c'en; this was then the name of the administrator of the aBri guñ convent's property; he had not yet attained the dignity and power he was to possess a few years later. It seems, indeed, that in the beginning the country's government was entrusted to a sPyi dpon, but as he ruled badly, rGyal ba rin c'en, who in the year *sin lug*, 1235, had taken possession of P'ag mo gru (replacing his uncle Grags pa abyuñ gnas, then transferred to aBri guñ), substituted his own person for the imperial authority, by himself appointing a new myriarch: this was the dPon rDor rje dpal, a K'ams pa man. The event is very important: it was an attempt to detach the P'ag mo gru from the Sa skya pa system, implicitly from the Mongols, and at the same times gives us to understand that the rLañs family had attained great prestige. The measure was not merely temporary: for a certain time the myriarchs continued to be elected by the P'ag mo gru pa.

I shall not repeat here the series of the myriarchs which succeeded one another in the P'ag mo gru myriarchy, referring the reader to the appendix where the subject will be treated.<sup>59</sup>) But I cannot help recalling that these dignitaries, largely related to one

another, did not prove good and were deposed; there was even a sort of regency council established. Did I not fear to say what is not explicitly stated in our sources, but can be easily guessed from facts and corresponds to the conditions of Tibet in those times, I would add that the Sa skya probably had a hand in such manœuvres and dealings; the rise of the P'ag mo gru pa had aroused their suspicion, and it is natural that they should try to limit and hamper their dangerous ambitions.

We must not forget that the most strained relations ever observed between Sa skya and aBri guñ belong to this period, and that the P'ag mo gru pa could hardly keep out of it, for an old tradition bound them to the second monastery, particularly now that the whole of Tibet was induced by its own interests to side with either of these convents. A short time after aBri guñ's destruction at the hands of the Sa skya pa general Ag len, a compromise was reached: Grags pa rin c'en, appointed Ti šri by Tāmūr (1295-1307), joined in his own person ecclesiastical dignity to civil authority and was elected *bla dpon*, i. e. lama invested with temporal power. I will no longer dwell on the details of this succession to the myriarch's office, or on the accession of new dignitaries, rGyal mts'an dpal bzañ po and rGyal mts'an skyabs, to the coveted post, but will pass on to the first enterprise undertaken by Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, under whom the P'ag mo gru reached the height of their power. It will also be well to recall this constant succession of myriarchs, who never obtained, as in other myriarchies, a confirmation of the office tacitly handed down from father to son. This aroused the Sa skya's fears, and hence they manœvered to avoid that this myriarchy should ever become the privilege of a single family and to see that it should pass from hand to hand. They succeeded in this until Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an made it a safe and lasting possession for himself and his family.

Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an had been born in the year water tiger (1302), had taken monastic vows at the age of nine and began his career at the Sa skya court; although already declining, the Sa skyas still represented the highest authority in Tibet, drawing its dignity from the Mongol court's favour. aP'ags pa's grandsons saw storm-clouds gather on their horizon, but their court still attracted the flower of Tibetan aristocracy: by frequenting it, being employed there and attracting notice, they hoped that the abbots and the dPon c'en would bring them to the Mongols' attention, that they might obtain honours and office. Thus Byañ c'ub rgyal too, scarcely out of his teens, was sent to Sa skya on his apprenticeship. But his stay there was short.

The abbot's relations with the ambitious youth were friendly, but he was soon implied in rivalries with the court officials and came into conflict with the dPon c'en.

We have at our disposal only meagre lists of facts, hardly helpful for a reconstruction of the atmosphere, not enough to reveal the friction of men's tempers and the interplay of their interests; nevertheless we are convinced that P'ag gru, from his very first years, stood out as one of the strongest personalities in Tibetan history.

Impatient of the Sa skya court, we find him after a certain time back in his territory, in the environs of dBus, having succeeded, as myriarch, to rGyal mts'an skyabs, who had been dismissed for misusing his authority by Kun dga' blo gros, the Sa skya abbot, just back from China with jurisdictional powers.

Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, as soon as he assumed office in 1338, began to put the administration in order and to improve the conditions of his myriarchy. But he was beginning to loom as a menace on the troubled horizon of Tibetan history. The other myriarchs took precautions, thinking it a matter of prudence to extinguish this dangerous personality, from whose ascent they anticipated nothing but harm.

Naturally the fifth Dalai Lama, whose preference for the P'ag mo gru pa is well known, considers the events occurring in rapid succession as a result of intrigues and manœuvres on the part of the two myriarchs of gYa' bzañ and Ts'al pa. This is only one side of the situation; what Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's conduct may have been and what act of his caused strife to break out, is not explained. But there must have been a motive, if the dPon c'en, secular arm of the Sa skya abbots who had conferred office on the myriarch, brought him to judgement and pronounced him guilty.

Recourse to arms was unsuccessful, Tibet's greatest temporal authority pronounced judgement against him; but Byañ c'ub rgyal did not submit and challenged the dPon c'en rGyal bzañ. Having lost his authority as a myriarch, he was arrested but escaped. A truce between Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an and the myriarch of gYa' bzañ did not last long: again they took up arms and this time P'ag gru was the victor. It seems that the Sa skya abbot's intrigues had something to do with his success; the fifth Dalai Lama, as usual, is not clear, but from his words it would seem that there was an understanding between Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an and the abbot, and this is not improbable when we think of the rivalry between the abbots and the dPon c'en's spiritual power and temporal authority, often openly displayed. But Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, victor though he was in battle, was again worsted: the unforgiving dPon c'en imprisoned him and treated him as a criminal. This time too he emerged scatheless from his grievous trials and returned to dBus, but enmity between the two powers was by now so violent, that it could not help running to extremes: the dPon c'en dBañ brtson who in the meantime had succeeded rGyal bzañ, lost no time in attacking the rebel; after several engagements, in which Byañ c'ub was stoutly aided by his faithful general gZon

nu bzañ po, the P'ag mo gru pas were victorious: not only did they defeat the dPon c'en's army, but they enlarged their territory, pushing out towards the South and later, as no agreement with the dPon c'en was possible, invading even the Sa skya territory and taking the castle of Goñ dkar.

These events, which Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an had either set in motion or been forced to cope with, troubled the peace of Tibet which had not been very steady before; they had shaken the Sa skya dPon c'en's already declining authority, by pitting an underling, as myriarchs were, against the supreme temporal authority. Byañ c'ub, whatever his motives, had taken up arms against the dPon c'en as a rebel, and had twice ignored a sentence passed upon him. As regards the imperial authority, his revolt was all the more serious inasmuch as his myriarch's office had been conferred upon him by the Emperor, in whose name the Sa skya abbots distributed offices. For this reason Byañ c'ub, as soon as he was safe in his dominions, having finally defeated his enemies, sent envoys to the Mongol court to justify the action he had taken and ask for an official confirmation of the investiture which the dPon c'en had so obstinately tried to deny him. The confirmation duly came, with its diplomas and silver seals. Thus his claims were granted and his conduct, whatever may have been its motives, was immediately justified. But the struggle was not yet over; the aBri guñ, weakened by their defeat at the hands of the Sa skya pa general Ag len, but not entirely exhausted, attacked P'ag mo gru, concluding an alliance with gYa' bzañ. The event deserves notice: in the face of temporal ambition, the spiritual links existing since their beginnings between aBri guñ pa and P'ag mo gru, gave way. The sect's unity broke down in the presence of the two myriarchies' contrasting intrigues.

Having a common rival, Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an and the Sa skya pa, as was to be

expected, came to an agreement, even if temporary; the Sa skya's enmity for the aBri guñ pa was not yet extinguished.

Thus it came to pass that, when rNam grags of aBri guñ attacked Šaṅs, Byañ c'ub, who in the meantime had become master of gÑal and forced gYa' bzañ to surrender, sent his troops to the dPon c'en's aid against aBri guñ pa, and the latter were defeated. The chronicle does not furnish explicit information, but it would seem that this time there was an agreement between the dPon c'en and Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, against the Sa skya abbots. Otherwise it would not be possible to explain why the latter had the dPon c'en arrested; he was freed by P'ag mo gru's troops sent to his aid.

In the midst of so much warfare and such a crafty web of intrigues, Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's power increased; once his territory had been enlarged, comprising the greatest part of dBus, he took up arms against gTsañ, the Sa skya pa's stronghold. Although the two regions had the same language and religious traditions, and had been united for centuries by political events, a bitter rivalry survived between them, and was now slowly increasing, so that hegemony was shifting from gTsañ, where the Sa skya pa had ruled, to dBus where the P'ag mo gru pa were rising. The greatest part of gTsañ then passed under the new chief.

The Mongol emperors, also on the decline, were satisfied to ratify Byañ c'ub's claims. They were by this time too weak to interfere with Tibetan affairs, and no course was left them but to favour the strongest; thus they conferred upon him the titles of Da ra ka c'e<sup>60</sup>) and of T'ai si tu. But the rivals did not desist: aBri guñ pa made a second attempt and failed again and in Sa skya an internal rebellion, in which Kun spañs was killed, caused serious disturbances throughout the country. Hence the Si tu, as we shall now call him by his new title, started for gTsañ as a peace-maker and sent for the dPon

c'en, but the latter was killed in Lha rtse by the rival party and Sa skya was racked by the most serious agitation.

This event furnished the Si tu with a pretext to put down the disturbances which for several decades had broken out in the shadow of that powerful monastery, echoing throughout Tibet. Sa skya, by now, was breathing its last: the Si tu in his triumph withdrew the Sa skya pa's diplomas and letters-patent and submitted them all to a close scrutiny, punishing those who had usurped authority over and above what was authorized by official documents. This was a timely measure, since prevarication probably was not rare; in the letters of investiture I have found in Ža lu the holders of official diplomas are often recommended to avoid any abuse of power and not to overstep the boundaries laid down in their investiture.

Thus Sa skya not only lost its paramouncy, but also its independence; its abbots, although they continued to be respected as masters of esoteric doctrines and depositaries of mystical experiences, came in reality under the control of Tibet's new lord.

The Lha k'añ c'en po, the great temple still to be seen with all its towers on the left of the Grum c'u river, in the Sa skya plain, was held by Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an as a gage and garrisoned by his troops. In fact a short time after the strict revision of the Sa skya pa diplomas, the prince of Lha rtse of Byañ declared war on Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, and dPon c'en of Sa skya dBañ brtson attacked the Lha c'en; his troops were routed and he was taken prisoner. Retribution was swift and harsh. The force of arms, intrigue and revolt had not availed; on the contrary they had contributed to increase the Si tu's power and authority; he now ruled unchallenged over the whole of Central Tibet, uniting under his sceptre dBus and gTsañ.

His rivals, defeated, humbled, deprived of a large part of their territory, could then do nothing but appeal for justice to the

Mongols, who still claimed paramountcy over Tibet. Accordingly Kun dga' rgyal mts'an, the myriarch of gYa' bzañ, the myriarch of Ts'al pa and others sent a protest and an accusation to the Court. But the Mongols' downfall was at hand; they had more pressing questions at stake, and they confirmed the T'ai Si tu's rights, making them hereditary and transmissible. The rLañs family's power was thus founded on a firm base, and the territory under its rule was garrisoned and fortified in its most important strategical points, with castles committed to military commanders (*rdson dpon*) chosen from the Si tu's most faithful supporters and the most devoted instruments of his rapid ascent. Many of these castles were not simple fortresses, successively commanded by military officers, but feuds assigned by inheritance to certain families, which thus formed a powerful class of clients round the rLañs; from this class they drew their generals and their ministers. Another aristocracy was thus being created, which in a large measure replaced the old one; but out of it, as had always been the case in Tibet, would result conditions apt to bringing P'ag mo gru's hegemony to a swift decay.

As we have said before, the chronicles give us only the outlines of fact, and a great deal concerning complex spiritual movements, interests and rivalries, out of whose friction Tibetan history was born, escapes us. Nevertheless, lack of information cannot hide the Si tu's greatness: he is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable men Tibet ever produced. Ruthless or yielding, pitiless or generous, according to circumstance, able in the choice of his collaborators and treating them liberally, he achieved his dream of greatness with unflagging firmness and constance. It was his aim to give Tibet a political consciousness, to pacify the internal struggles which had torn it asunder so long, to free it from subjection to China. He aspired to restore the ancient kings' monarchic ideal, to revive national laws and customs, and he

enacted a code by which up to our days justice is administered in Tibet.

The office and the name of dPon c'en, belonging to the Mongol empire's administrative structure, then disappeared; he renounced the title and assumed another, *sde srid*, "regent,, , i. e. for the ancient kings, whose ghosts he felt moving about him and whose glory he proposed to revive.

This conscious rebirth of ancient traditions, this humiliation for present misery, appearing all the greater as compared with past glories now evoked, was attended not only by a renewal of historical studies and a vast production of chronicles, but also by research for documents, real or presumed, which might revive, as a reminder, the age of the kings. In this period the gTer ma, as we shall see, flourished anew, and O rgyan gliñ pa especially boasted he had found and put into circulation the *Pad ma t'an yig* and the *bKa' t'an sde lña*. In this case, particularly as far as the second book is concerned, it was not only a question of serving the interests of any one particular school. True, a master was glorified who now for the first time was considered the greatest apostle of Lamaism, an implacable foe of the enemies of religion, the king's wise counsellor, i. e. Padmasambhava, but through his glorification Tibet's golden age was recalled, when the Land of Snows sent its armies into all surrounding countries and fought China victoriously.

In those times Tibet had not been rent by strife between one family and another, one monastery and another, it had not been weakened by internal struggles, which tempted invaders to violate its territory; the country was united round its king, governed by capable ministers, guarded by the great master's blessing, and it had defeated China, whose vassal state it had now become. This is the dominant note in these prophecies: the Hor menace, their havoc, the people's humiliation before foreign customs, national glories and traditions forgotten. They condemned the

present times, they cried out against the corruption of men's souls, and there was no lack of allusions to the Sa skya pa, who had handed over Tibet as a vassal to the Hor.<sup>61)</sup>

It was not an antiquarian's curiosity which inspired research for these *gter ma*, true or presumed discoveries of ancient documents, which might prove the kings' wisdom and their conquests, or reveal the admonishing genius of the great abbot Śāntirakṣita or of the invincible miracle-worker Padmasambhava. It was an awakening of national consciousness, from which the P'ag mo gras' ambition had sprung; their ambition was supported and justified, prophecies recognized it as an unavoidable event, fixed in the course of time by the fatal maturing of destiny. Thus literature, either by truly discovering and publishing forgotten documents, or by attributing to old masters texts compiled in this spirit, prepared and accompanied the new movement of Tibetan history. If we lost sight of this, we would not understand the true meaning and value of the *gter ma*, whose essential character appears in those circulated in this period, not in the endless imitations produced later with a doctrinal or sectarian purpose.

#### 4. BYAÑ C'UB RGYAL MTS'AN'S SUCCESSORS AND THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE P'AG MO GRU PAS AND THEIR MINISTERS

But the prestige of the rLañs, thus founded by Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, did not long survive the Si tu. Their power gradually crumbled for the same reasons which had prevented the birth of a strong central government in Tibet: the nobility he had himself created became detached from its chiefs, who no longer possessed the Si tu's moral and political superiority; the sects continued in their ruthless struggle, striving after earthly power; frequent raids and internal dissections which

loosened the family's ties, brought on, by degrees, the downfall of the P'ag mo gru. Let us briefly sum up the details of their progressive decline and extinction; they will necessarily be meagre notes on the last days of a slowly but fatally impoverished family.

Byañ c'ub rgyal was succeeded by his grandson aJam dbyañs gu śri, also known by his religious name Śā kya rgyal mts'an; he resided in the sNeu gdoñ palace, received from the Mongol emperor, together with many titles, like that of Kuo shih, an investiture over three *c'ol k'a* and saw his prestige much increased (1372). His investiture spelt final decay for the Sa skya pa, now completely ousted.

The Yüan dynasty had also passed away. Their successors, the Ming, represented China's political and spiritual renaissance after subjection to the Mongols; they naturally leant on the Confucian tradition, and with the exception of a few Emperors, did not feel the same preference for Buddhism that the Mongols had shown. But this did not induce them to renounce their pretensions over Tibet, on the contrary they continued to claim the same rights as the Mongols. But acts of paramountcy and actual interference with Tibet's internal affairs had become more and more feeble, occasional and ineffective under the last Mongol Emperors, and now they were not resumed with the same show of undisputed authority.

The heads of monasteries and the representatives of the families enjoying the greatest political influence continued to go to Court, to offer tributes and to ask for the confirmation of privileges, but the links which had bound Tibet to the Mongols in the times of Qubilai and his successors were very much weakened.

Chinese sovereignty was then limited to the *de iure* recognition of privileges and authority already existing *de facto*: the Ming naturally wished to revise the diplomas given by the Yüan; they confirmed almost all of them, and gave their sovereign recognition

to the succession of the dignitaries; only in some cases, for reasons that are not stated, they hesitated or altogether refused to accept the designation of those who legitimately held some office. But these were exceptions; normally confirmations met with no special difficulty.

Convalidation of office was nearly always accompanied by the renewal of more or less high-sounding titles, which varied of course from one person to another, in the sense that those conferred upon a princely clan or a series of abbots, were not allowed to others; hence in Ming history Tibetan dignitaries are usually designed and distinguished according to the official title that they had received from the Chinese authorities; this is nearly always a religious title, in most cases conferred upon abbots, because lay families continued to decay, while the power of monasteries was growing and consolidating, and the hegemony of the Yellow Sect was being prepared.

The *Ming shih* mentions some families or heads of sects and monasteries, and gives each of them a title, which appears to have been transmittable, for instance:

1. Shan chiao wang, "Prince of the doctrine of meditation,, for aBri guñ pa abbots;

2. Shan hua wang, "Prince who instructs through meditation,, for the P'ag mo gru pas;

3. Ta ch'eng fa wang "King of the Law of the Great Vehicle,, for Kun dga' bkra šis rgyal mts'an the Sa skya pa;

4. Hu chiao wang, "Prince defender of the doctrine,, for the monks of sTag ts'añ;

5. Fo pao kuo shih, "the precious Master of the kingdom, the Buddha,, for the To kan (mDo K'ams) princes.

Besides these titles, conferred on the heads of the nobility or on abbots of convents, the *Ming shih* records other titles given to lamas held in particular veneration by the masses, as for instance Ta pao fa wang, "the prince

of the Law, greatly precious,, given to Kar ma De bžin gšegs, on the pattern of the title conferred upon aP'ags pa by the Yüan, and Ta tz'ü fa wang, "the King of the Law, the great compassionate,, given to Ša skya ye šes better known by the name of Byams sems rdo rje.<sup>62)</sup>

These particular titles were usually conferred by imperial decree to chiefs or lamas when they were invested with traditional authority, temporal or ecclesiastical; they had nothing to do with the most common and frequent titles of Ti shih, Kuo shih, Kuan ting, Si tu and T'ai si tu, occasionally but abundantly distributed to monks or noblemen. Ming China's interference in Tibetan affairs was thus confined to these things: conferring investitures and titles, receiving tributes every three years. The Chinese court was satisfied with this formal recognition of its authority; when too frequent missions of Tibetan monks and dignitaries, taking advantage of the favour shown by some Emperors to Buddhism, repeatedly appeared in China and went to Court, ostensibly to bring tributes and receive letters-patent, but also aspiring to imperial gifts and trading to enrich themselves, the Chinese government was obliged to take severe measures. A limit was then put both to the number of the Tibetans allowed to enter Chinese territory and to the periods in which missions were allowed to pass the Chinese frontier and tributes could be presented to the Court: not more than once every three years. Their itinerary was also laid down for them, so that a strict control might be exercised on the frontiers.<sup>63)</sup>

The only Tibetan province in which the Ming continued to take a direct interest was To kan 朵甘, i. e. mDo K'ams, the most Eastern region of Tibet, at the very gates of China: they were obliged by motives of propinquity and safety to keep an eye on it. But my researches do not extend to this region.

When the Ming occupied the Chinese throne, they showed particular favour to the

P'ag mo gru, the most powerful family of the Tibetan aristocracy, and confirmed the titles they had received from the Mongols. This took place following a successful mission undertaken by bSod nams bzañ po, aJam dbyañs' father; as a recognition of his good offices between China and mDo K'ams in 1375,<sup>64)</sup> he was appointed chief of the myriarchy and of Tibet. But the Ming, although they confirmed and renewed those titles, showing themselves well disposed towards some P'ag mo gru princes, never recognized them as kings of Tibet. When we read the chapter of the *Ming shih* on the P'ag mo gru, we find nothing which leads us to suppose that China encouraged or supported their pretensions to become sovereigns in the Country of Snows.

Nevertheless the P'ag mo gru pa were convinced of their own power, and moved by the same dream which had prompted Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, they assumed the title of Lha btsun, the same worn f. i. by the ancient kings of Guge.<sup>65)</sup>

Not even aJam dbyañs' government could avoid rumours of war: the struggle went on with those very clans who had been his uncle's rivals, and above all with Kun dga' bkra šis of Sa skya, of the Lha k'añ branch (1349-1425).

There was no doubt concerning the issue of the struggle which had sprung up again between the Sa skya pa, who were breathing their last, and the P'ag mo gru, at the height of their power; the dBus troops met with little resistance and Sa skya was vanquished once more.

On the death of this Lha btsun, power passed to C'os bži pa Grags pa byañ c'ub, who keeping his religious vows all his life and refusing to marry, occupied the throne of sNeu gdoñ, the civil capital, while gDan sa t'el continued to be the religious capital.

The C'os bži pa assumed power and preserved his ecclesiastical dignity: he was a King-lama and could assume the title of *bla dpon*: "chief lama „. The chronicles have

nothing to say about him as a statesman, but they speak at length of his religious merits. He is also mentioned by the dGe lugs pa and bKa' gdams pa, as one of Tsoñ k'a pa's masters;<sup>66)</sup> the latter had learnt from him Nā ro pā's five laws.

Grags pa byañ c'ub was succeeded as fourth Lha btsun by bSod nams grags pa, his brother on the father's side. The Chinese Emperor in 1388 conferred the title of Kuan ting upon him; in 1388 he abdicated in favour of Grags pa rgyal mts'an. As can be seen from the pedigree I have compiled, power then reverted to the main branch, descended from bSod nams bzañ po, namely to Ša kya rin c'en's first son, called Grags pa rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po (born 1374).

This prince seems to have mainly followed peaceful and religious pursuits; the Tibetans have given him the name of C'os rgyal and recall the copies of the *bKa' agyur*, in golden letters, which he caused to be deposited in the 13 main fortresses of his kingdom. On the other hand the Chinese annals speak well of his relations with the Court and of the latter's sympathies for him and record his efficient contribution to the task of repairing Chinese and Tibetan highroads and making them safe for traffic. During his reign communications between the Chinese provinces and the Tibetan capital were as speedy and safe as in the Mongol period.

Chinese influence appears also in the strict distribution of offices and emoluments and in the accurate choice of particular uniforms and emblems for the officials of various ranks, so that each official had a particular type of dress and emblems. In his relations with the local aristocracy, he confirmed the feuds and privileges granted by Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an to faithful generals and ministers.

So, after Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's troubled and restless period, Grags pa rgyal mts'an seems to have devoted his energies to works of peace and to the country's prosperity.

Like the C'os bži pa, although he was a lama, he resided in the capital sNeu gdoñ, while his younger brothers remained in the rTse t'añ or T'el monasteries.

During this prince's reign no remarkable events seem to have taken place, except a revolt headed by Rab bñtan kun bzañ aṗ'ags pa of Gyantse, a dignitary of the P'ag mo gru pa court.

The cause of the revolt is not recorded, neither is it mentioned in Gyantse memoirs. Nevertheless we should not forget that these Gyantse princes were bound by an ancient tradition to the Sa skya pa, now forced to submit to the new lords of Tibet. The Sa skya's glories were still too fresh and living a thing: their abbots could not adapt themselves to such a condition of servitude, almost of destitution, all the more humiliating because of the garrison which P'ag mo gru had forced upon the sect's greatest temple. Even in Grags pa rgyal mts'an's times the temple had remained under the command of Nam mk'a' rgyal mts'an, rdsoñ dpon of Rin spuñs.

Revolts and attempts to seize power were probably frequent, favoured by the nobility which had remained loyal to the Sa skya pa and fearful lest a new hegemony, menacing their political independence, should be founded. Rancours were so deep and the Sa skya pa's yearnings for independence so obstinate that we shall see them break out afresh even in the following century, in Kun dga' rin c'en's times, when sNeu gdoñ was also on the decline and effective power was passing to Rin spuñs. The whole of gTsañ, impatient of its sudden subjection and anxious to get rid of dBus hegemony, then gathered round the Sa skya or under their flag.

In this period the causes of the P'ag mo gru pa's decline began to mature, and the process we have noticed more than once in these pages was again repeated: Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an had reached power, as we have seen, with the aid of many families who had fought on his side to free themselves with

him from subjection to the Sa skya and the dPon, or to obtain new prestige in the turmoil of wars which transformed Tibet's political horizon, or to attain greater power. The winner had rewarded them, either by confirming them in their dominions or by allotting new feuds, or enlarging their territory, or conferring on the most faithful of them a prime minister's office. The most important of these families are the same whose history is recorded by the fifth Dalai Lama; to mention the most important, the Rin spuñs family and another one tracing its descent to Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's lieutenant, namely gŽon nu bzañ po of aṗ'yoñ rgyas.

The office of a rdsoñ dpon, at least for the principal rdsoñ, was not hereditary; perhaps in the beginning it had been conferred for life, but did not pass from father to son. We have an instance of this in the case of the rdsoñ of bSam agrub rtse, which later became the capital of the future kings of gTsañ. We actually know at least three rdsoñ dpon of different families in this important stronghold commanding the roads to dBus and gTsañ and the issues towards the gTsañ po. First of all Hor dPal abyor bzañ po of aṗ'yoñ rgyas (*Chronicles of fifth Dalai Lama*, p. 643), then Don grub rdo rje of Rin spuñs (*ibid.*, p. 641) and finally dPal ldan c'os skyoñ of sNel (*ibid.*, p. 645).

The office of rdsoñ dpon therefore had nothing in common, at least in the beginning, with the allotment of feuds (*gžis ka*) given as a temporary or permanent apanage to families who had deserved well of the sDe srid, or to monasteries to whose masters the latter might be particularly attached.

Of course, as the P'ag mo gru pa family became weaker, some vassals who had contracted marriage ties with it and thus increased their authority, tried by intrigue or arms to get a permanent hold on feuds conferred upon them temporarily by reason of their office.

Such was the fate of bSam agrub rtse which the princes of Rin spuñs never handed back.

Some of these families, in the first place that of Rin spuñs, growing in power and having forgotten their ancient ties with the P'ag mo gru, tried to overcome them and were the cause of their decline. Another cause of the P'ag mo gru's weakness was the rift which broke out within the family, between the Lha btsun invested with effective temporal authority and succeeding one another in sNeu gdoñ, and the true abbots who succeeded one another in T'el and rTse t'añ on the abbatial throne. While the former, after Grags pa rgyal mts'an, assumed the pompous title of Goñ ma, belonging by an old tradition to the Emperors of China, the abbots were surrounded with great religious prestige and continued to be called sPyan sña, like their ancestor, the Grand Lama of aBri guñ.

Serious disagreements broke out on Grags pa rgyal mts'an's death, exposing the rifts which had weakened the P'ag mo gru's power. The grave danger of wars due to sNeu gdoñ's succession was actually of importance to all the feudal clients who could not, without damage, remain mere spectators of an unstable political situation. But it is difficult to throw light on these complex events and to unravel their meaning and their import, because our sources do not give sufficient information concerning them; sometimes the chroniclers were themselves unable to reconstruct the true meaning of certain events, sometimes the facts so lived in all men's memory that there was no need of dwelling upon them.

The information contained in Ming history has a certain weight, because it is taken from official documents; on the other hand the uncertainties of Tibetan sources reveal a doubtful tradition. The pedigrees of Kloñ rdol ('a, p. 14) compared with that of the fifth Dalai Lama and with the brief notices of the *Deb t'er sñon po* prove that in this period a split broke out between the three branches of the family: the one exercising political authority and residing in sNeu gdoñ, then

the *spyan sña* or spiritual masters of the abbot's see in T'el and rTse t'añ, and finally those who are called by Kloñ rdol the *gduñ rgyud aḍsin pa*, i. e. the preservers of the family, those who perpetuate the rLañs stock. The *spyan sña* had a prevaillingly religious rather than a political character, at least in appearance, while the military chiefs, called Lha btsun, Goñ ma and, after Grags pa aḅyuñ gnas's times, dBañ, were at the same time invested with power over the thirteen myriarchies. The same process which had led the Sa skya pa to break up into four Bla brañ or palaces, was now being repeated by the rLañs: the myriarchs had greater military and political power, but the *spyan sñas* relied on their own religious prestige and on the authority they enjoyed as the heirs of an ancient sacerdotal tradition. It was not impossible to occupy both offices; this we have seen in the case of the C'os bži pa Grags pa byañ c'ub, called precisely *bla dpon*, and it was repeated in the case of Naḡ gi dbañ.

The *gduñ rgyud aḍsin pa* were neither myriarchs nor *spyan sña*, save a few cases like that of Naḡ gi dbañ who was at the same time religious chief, myriarch and head of the family; they had to watch over the fortunes of their clan and to ensure its continuance.

This system had worked quite well up to the Goñ ma Grags pa rgyal mts'an, but on his death the harmony heretofore prevailing broke down under severe shocks.

Let us now continue to relate the course of events. On Grags pa rgyal mts'an's death the *spyan sña* bSod nams rgyal mts'an proposed that the system used for family successions should be followed, handing on power from uncle to nephew, and he designed Grags pa aḅyuñ gnas, the son of Grags pa rgyal mts'an's younger brother. The *spyan sña*'s authority and prestige were such that in his lifetime no one dared object.

But things took a different turn when the *spyan sña* passed away: his brother *gduñ rgyud aḍsin pa* Sañs rgyas rgyal mts'an impeached

the validity of this succession. The motives are not mentioned: probably because no provision had been made to design also those who should have been the heads of the family's monasteries, in T'el and rTse t'añ. Indeed the fifth Dalai Lama says that Grags pa abyuñ gnas exercised his religious activity in the palace of sNeu gdoñ, although he continued to consider T'el and rTse t'añ as sacred places of his clan. Hence he held conjunctly both religious and political power, against the family's custom, thus furnishing a pretext to the hostility of his father and of the country's notables, and to Yar klun's revolt.

This centering of civil and religious power in the same person destroyed the dyarchy which up to that time had guided the family's fortunes. The abbatial chair of the *spyān śāa*, surrounded with the prestige of their sanctity and learning, gave way before the throne of sNeu gdoñ; although Grags pa abyuñ gnas kept up his pretensions to an abbot's dignity, in point of fact political power prevailed in his person over religious authority; the family's monasteries, especially T'el which had been the family's cradle, were left in the condition of vacant sees.

On Grags pa abyuñ gnas' death, Sañs rgyas rgyal mts'an, his father, assumed authority and was succeeded by his younger son Kun dga' legs. The latter restored their independence to T'el and rTse in agreement with his father, and put on the abbot's throne Nag gi dbañ po, who was barely sixteen (1454). In the meantime the family's internal situation was becoming difficult;<sup>67)</sup> the abbot's authority having been restored, it seems that there was nobody to succeed to the myriarchy; hence, following a family council, it was decided that temporal office and abbatial dignity should once more be joined. This time it was the *spyān śāa* who became *goñ ma*, so that the clan should run no danger of becoming extinct; thus the *spyān śāa* was freed from his monastic vows and obliged to marry. On his decease, his son being under age, the regency was

given to the *spyān śāa* C'os kyi grags pa, who thus assumed at the same time the two dignities of *spyān śāa* and *sde srid*.

Internally divided, the P'ag mo grus could not trust their ministers, particularly Rin spuñs, who plotted against them; they were on the verge of their decline. C'os kyi grags pa's regency was one of the most troubled and serious periods the tottering dynasty had ever faced; the same may be said of Nag dbañ bkra śis grags pa's reign.<sup>68)</sup> The P'ag mo gru saw their power crumbling and already passing into the hands of the lords of Rin spuñs, who since Kun dga' legs's times had tried to take advantage of the internal discord which weakened the P'ag mo gru pa. While in this period the P'ag mo gru pa families seem to suffer a dearth of great men and worthy successors of the T'ai si tu, the Rin spuñs' destinies were in the hands of ambitious and unscrupulous men like Don yod rdo rje and mTs'o skyes rdo rje; this since Kun dga' legs's time, when a violent quarrel broke out between that chief and his wife, who was a Rin spuñs princess. His vassals had then sided with either of them, and mTs'o skyes rdo rje had taken possession of mK'ar t'og in Yar klun; <sup>69)</sup> Don yod rdo rje had then invaded the sNeu feud in dBus.

This war is related in the *Reu mig* for the year 1481 (p. 68), exactly during Nag gi dbañ po's reign, as a military enterprise undertaken by Žva dmar against dBus. The event is important for several reasons: first of all because we see for the first time the Žva dmar, i. e. the "red", sect of the Kar ma pa, allied to the Rin spuñs; then because gTsañ's attempts to get even with dBus, which were to become more and more decided and violent, can already be anticipated. Finally, as the power of the Rin spuñs pa and later of their ministers (who were to proclaim themselves kings of gTsañ) grew apace, so the Red Caps, adverse to the Yellow Caps, prevailed. Already since 1436 many

lands in gTsañ had detached themselves from sNeu gdoñ and had gathered under the Rin spuñs princes, who transferred their capital to bSam aḡrub rtse (now Shigatse), in that same year conquered by Don grub rdo rje. He had wrested it from the aPyoñ rgyas (SP, transl., p. 653) to whom the fort had been confided under Hor dPal abyor bzañ po, by the C'os bži gsar ma.

It was now clear that Rin spuñs was trying to supplant the P'ag mo gru in the government of Tibet. It actually began by giving back its independence to gTsañ; when Nāg gi dbañ died, leaving a son, bKra šis grags pa, in his childhood and the regency was taken by the *spyān śāa* C'os kyi grags pa, mTs'o skyes rdo rje, between 1481 and 1495, tried to seize power by getting himself appointed as the regent's viceregent.

This mTs'o skyes rdo rje wished to leave a nominal regency to C'os kyi grags pa, putting into his hands only the religious authority and keeping for himself effective government over Tibet. His attempt was only half successful, and things became apparently normal following the assumption of power by Nāg gi dbañ bkra šis, although Don yod rdo rje of Rin spuñs tried to invade sNeu gdoñ and approached as far as sK'yid šod.

In this period Tibet was again a prey to anarchy and disturbances. The rLañs had to fight their rebellious ministers, who refused to recognize their authority and took up arms to occupy new territory; vassals, descended from the T'ai si tu's old counsellors, gathered some round sNeu gdoñ and others round Rin spuñs. Among those who kept faith with the rLañs, is remembered the prince of dGa' ldan, who protected by the exorcisms of sMon dpal lam (K'ri t'og of dGa' ldan, *šin rta*, 1414 - *lcags p'ag*, 1491; *Vai đūr ya dkar po*, p. 64, SP, p. 290) beat back Don yod rdo rje attacking sK'yid šod in 1481.

Tibet was full of wars and military movements. Jealousy between sects and contrasting religious currents, more and more

hostile, began to centre round the noble families' rivalries and to foster their quarrels; on one side the Kar ma pa, who had become chaplains of the Rin spuñs princes, put their prestige and their exorcisms at the service of their patrons, hoping that in the hour of need they would prove their secular arm, the defenders of the sect's interests; on the other hand the rising church of the dGe lugs pa, founded by Tsoñ k'a pa, gathered around itself the dBus aristocracy, threatened by the Rin spuñs's expansion and the religious sects who did not side with the Kar ma pa's corrupt formalism.

From this moment Tibetan history cannot be written without taking into account the contrast between the Red and Yellow sects, between tradition and reform; it becomes more and more acute and the nobility, little by little and almost without being aware of it, no longer fights for its own interests defending its own ambitions; it becomes rather an instrument of religious schools. The latter prevail, move the passions of men's souls, sway their minds through the awful secrets of their liturgies or their masters' wisdom; Tibetan history is moulded by them. In this struggle the nobility is weakened and exhausted, it rules itself out, and the monks of all sects profit by its ruin; they gradually occupy the deserted castles; the strongholds, once loud with the noise of arms and the turmoil of passions, now turned into hermitages and chapels, echoing with the priests' psalmodies.

By adhering to the Žva dmar, the Rin spuñs princes cut themselves off from the P'ag mo gru also from a religious point of view; the latter, in fact were the chiefs of a current akin to the bKa' brgyud pa's school, with precise derivations from the mystical and theological currents hailing back to Atiśa, which go by the name of bKa' gdams pa. When the new Yellow Sect began to prosper and gradually to dominate over the other sects, the P'ag mo gru sided with orthodoxy and with

the reformers' zeal and raised to prominence those masters which its own religious tradition had in common with the rising school.

Little by little the feudal lords of Rin spuñs were also disappearing from the horizon of Tibetan history, but from the new court of bSam agrub rtse, in the heart of gTsañ, which they had conquered since 1435, some of their ministers issued with a brave self-confidence, to take up, with greater daring, the dream of their masters. They intended to lead gTsañ in a victorious offensive against dBus, now represented not by the sNeu gdoñ chiefs, reduced to a feeble appearance of power, but by the great monasteries of the Yellow Sect.

Having thus outlined the political situation in Tibet, we need no longer consider historical events under the angle of the P'ag mo gru pa's vicissitudes; this family had kept only its glorious name, but its power had vanished and its prestige come to nothing; there would be no reason to follow the details of its history.

## 5. TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION DURING THE SA SKYA PA AND THE P'AG MO GRU PA PERIODS

It is not easy to reconstruct how the administration functioned in Tibet during the years we have been surveying. First of all it is necessary to make a distinction between the Yüan period, and particularly Qubilai's epoch, and the successive period, when the Ming succeeded the Mongols. In the first period interference with Tibetan affairs was greater and sharper. On the other hand the reader must remember that, in my attempt to reconstruct the main lines of Tibetan history, I have limited my field to the region of gTsañ and occasionally of dBus, whose boundaries I will not overstep.

In Mongol times there was in the Chinese capital an office for Tibetan affairs, exercising supreme management and control over the

country's political administration. It was a well-ordered office, whose duty was to oversee and provide for Tibet's military and civil organization, to supervise its relations with the Court; and it disposed of a large number of officials. An outline has been preserved in various passages of the *Yüan shih*, and it will be useful to translate it, to make the relations clearer between the central administration and the provincial administration, as regards Tibet (chap. 202, A, p. 3; B, pp. 4, 6).

"The Yüan dynasty had its beginnings in the North, and already followed the Buddhist religion. Later it conquered the countries West of China, and Qubilai Qa'an owing to the vastity, distance and difficulties of that region, inhabited by a wild and warlike population, decided to rule it in accordance with (local) usage, so as to subdue the people. He accordingly divided up Tibet into various districts, and established various dignities, under the Imperial Master, Ti shih; next he founded the "*Hsüan cheng yüan*," where the office of Vice Minister was always reserved to a Buddhist monk chosen by the Imperial Master; the *Hsüan cheng yüan* was the central office for (Tibetan) affairs. In Tibet Buddhist monks had the same rights as the laymen to be appointed State officials, both military and civil (excepting the *Yüan shuai* and the *Tu yüan shuai*). Hence the orders of the Ti shih, Imperial Master, and of the Emperor, were equally valid in Tibet. For a hundred years (namely during the Yüan dynasty) the Emperors showed the greatest respect and confidence for the Imperial Master. The Empresses and all the princes took the vows and used to salute the Imperial Master, kneeling to receive his blessing. In the Court gatherings, when the different officials took the place allotted according to their rank, the Imperial Master sat next to the Emperor. Each Emperor, on ascending the throne, publicly addressed a message of praise and protection to the Imperial Master, and was bound to order the office of the Imperial

treasury to present him at the same time with pearls arranged to form a design as of words. In such a fashion he showed his respect for the Imperial Master.

"When the Imperial Master was about to arrive (in the capital of China) the Emperor ordered the Prime Minister and other officials to go forth to meet him with hundreds of persons on horseback. In the places through which the Imperial Master passed (on his journey to China) the local government of each region received him with great festivities on his arrival, offering him a generous hospitality, and besides (provided for) the expenses of his journey and honoured him on his departure. When he reached the capital, the Emperor ordered the governor to prepare half of the guard of honour pertaining to the Emperor to accompany him, and ordered the officials of the various Ministries and public administrations to offer him ermine robes, to do him honour.

"Every year, on the eighth day of the second month, the Emperor received the (lama as a) Buddha and sent people to meet him with the greatest honours. He then ordered the Minister of Rites and the under-secretaries to make special arrangements for this ceremony. When the Imperial Master died and his relics were carried to Tibet, the Emperor ordered the various officials to follow the funeral procession even outside the city and to offer sacrifices for him. In the ninth year Ta-tê (1305 A. D.) when the Ti shih's relics were carried to Tibet, the Emperor sent Tämür T'ieh Mu Erh 鉄木兒, Vice Prime Minister, as a special envoy to escort and protect them, and further he offered 500 ounces of gold, 1000 ounces of silver, 3000 notes worth ten ounces of silver and 1500 bolts of silk, for the funeral expenses.

"In the second year Huang-ch'ing (1313) he increased his offering for the Ti shih's funeral expenses to 5000 ounces of gold, 15,000 ounces of silver, and 17,000 bolts of silk of various kinds. When the Ti shih's

relatives travelled in China, the local governments through whose territory the Tibetan guests passed, paid for travelling expenses and had to see that they lacked nothing. During the T'ai-ting era (1324-1327) when Kung-ko-i-ssü-chien 公哥亦思監, the Imperial Master's younger brother,<sup>70)</sup> was about to arrive in the capital, the Emperor ordered the Prime Minister to go forth and meet him outside the city and to prepare a banquet. The Imperial Master's elder brother, So-nan-ts'ang-pu 瑣南藏卜 (bSod nam sbañ po)<sup>71)</sup> married the Imperial Princess and was appointed Prince of Pei-lan; he received the golden seal and the special badge; then his disciples, one after the other, were appointed Sse-kung, Sse-tu, Kuo-kung etc. and all of them received seals of gold or jade...

In another passage of the same work (chap. 87, A, p. 5; B, p. 8), the administration concerned with Tibet is explained in even greater detail.<sup>72)</sup>

"The *Hsüan cheng yüan* 宣政院 belongs to the first class of the second rank; he controls affairs pertaining to the Buddhist religion and to the Buddhists. The administration of Tibetan territory also depends on this office. When emergencies arise in Tibet, a separate Court is formed, which goes to Tibet and puts things right; it possesses a seal of its own. In case vast military operations are needed, this Court takes counsel with the *shu fu* 樞府 concerning the measures required and selects the persons to be employed; those it chooses have civil and military powers: monks and laymen may be equally employed. In the beginning of the Chih-yüan period (1264) a *Tsung chih yüan* 總制院 was founded, at whose head a Kuo shih was put. In the 25th year (1288) as, due to what had been established in the T'ang's times, Tibetans were received at the court of the Hsüan cheng palace, the name of this office was changed into that of Hsüan cheng yüan.

“There were then established two *yüan shih* 院使, two *t'ung chih* 同知, two *fu shih* 副使, two *ching li* 經歷, two *ts'an i* 參議, four *tu shih* 都事, one *kuan kou* 管勾, one *chao mo* 照磨. In the 26th year (1289) four *tuan shih kuan* 斷事官 were established. In the 28th year (1291) the *ch'ien yüan* 僉院 and *t'ung ch'ien* 同僉 were increased by one post; in the first *Yüan-ch'eng* year (1295) the posts of *yüan p'an* 院判 were increased by one; in the fourth *Ta tê* year (1300) the post of *tuan shih kuan* was suppressed. In the beginning of the *Chih ta* period (1308) one of the *yüan shih* posts was suppressed; in the third *Chih chih* year (1323) there were six *yüan shih* in office. In the second *T'ien li* year (1329) the *kung te shih ssü* 功德使司 was suppressed and his functions were conferred on the *Hsüan cheng yüan*, whose administration was thus established: ten *yüan shih* of the first classes of the second rank, two *t'ung chih* of the second class of the first rank, two *fu shih* of the second class of the second rank, two *ch'ien yüan* of the third class of the first rank, three *t'ung ch'ien* of the first class of the first rank; three *yüan p'an* of the fourth class of the first rank; two *ts'an i* of the fifth class of the first rank; two *ching li* of the fourth class of the first rank; three *tu shih* of the seventh class of the second rank; one *chao mo* and one *kuan kou*, both of the eighth class of the first rank; 15 *yüan shih* 掾史 redactors; two Mongol redactors *pi she ch'ih* 必闌赤; two Moslem redactors; four Mongol translators; two inspectors of the seal 知印; fifteen messengers and the office-boys. “In Tibet and in other places there was the post of *chao t'ao shih* 招討使 of the third class of the second rank; it comprised two *chao t'ao shih*, one *chih shih* 知事 and one *chen fu* 鎮撫 with their dependants. Over Tibet and the other districts there was the office of the *Hsüan wei shih* 宣慰使 to whom was also assigned the military function of *Tu yüan shuai fu* 都元帥府. It comprised four *Hsüan wei shih*, two *t'ung chih*, one *fu shih*, two

*ching li* and two *t'u shih*, three *pu tao kuan* 捕盜官 and two *chen fu* 鎮撫, (chap. 87; A, p. 7 b, B, p. 11 a).

The *Ming shih* is much briefer concerning Central Tibet, but dwells at great length on the districts of Eastern Tibet and particularly on mDo K'ams (To kan) and the frontier zones, placed under the control of Chinese officers and of local princes more or less subject to the same domination.

Thus from the central office of the *Hsüan cheng yüan*, established by the Mongols, depended the officials who looked after the affairs of Tibet and of the Buddhist religion, and with them the officials whom the Mongols sent to Tibet, or the same ones they had elected among the Tibetan notables, with titles and privileges corresponding to the rank conferred upon them. We have seen that these posts were civil and military, like those of *Hsüan wei shih* and of *Tu yüan shuai*, sometimes also held by Tibetans. We read indeed that a dPon c'en Sa skya pa rGyal ba bzañ po was elected *Hsüan wei shih*,<sup>73)</sup> while there is a great abundance of Tibetan dignitaries appointed *Tu yüan shuai*, a title which the Tibetan documents and chronicles constantly transcribe *du dben sa*. If we needed a confirmation, we might say that a *Ža lu* document furnishes a proof that the dPon c'en are in fact *Hsüan wei shih*, because Ag leñ, the famous dPon c'en Sa skya pa receives that title in the document.

Naturally we cannot say that effective power always went with these titles: they often had only an honorific character and were conferred by the Chinese court to particularly deserving persons, without implying a regular exercise of the corresponding function. Our sources therefore not infrequently state, when they mention personages who had received such honours, that they were granted at the same time the honour and the office (*min dan las ka*); this means that often it was a case of mere honours, capable of satisfying the vanity of their recipients, but without

any real and well-defined content. Moreover some titles, like those of Si tu and T'ai si tu, were only honorific, with no corresponding and precise office.

It would be out of place to repeat what we have already said concerning the Ti shih: they lived at Court, wearing a halo of great dignity, they issued orders and conferred diplomas and privileges in the Emperor's name, they represented a channel between the Court and Tibet. Real power was in the hands of the *Hsüan cheng yüan* department, and, in the Tibetan provinces, of the *Tu yüan shuai*, chosen among laymen, not among monks; two of them resides in mNa' ris skor sum and another two at the head of the Mongol troops stationed in dBus and gTsañ; next came the *Hsüan wei shih*. The dPon c'en Sa skya and perhaps also the sGom c'en of aBri guñ had the title and rank of *Hsüan wei shih*.

The dPon c'en, at least as long as the Sa skya's power lasted, exercised control over the myriarchies; the myriarchs were obliged to report their activities to them, while the dPon c'en (as may be seen from Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's adventures) could call the myriarchs to judgement, and if their acts warranted it, they could not only depose them and deprive them of their papers of appointment, but also jail them and punish them according to the law.

These dPon c'en, to judge from the letters I have discovered in Žva lu, received office through a proclamation on the part of the Ti shih, who in the Emperor's name announced their appointment to dependant officials, from the *Hsüan wei shih* downwards.

In fact the office of the dPon c'en disappeared when Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an extended his power over the greater part of Central Tibet, and the P'ag mo gru pas conferred upon themselves the title of regents, *sde srid*, to which our sources sometimes substitute another more pretentious title: "Kings of Tibet"; theirs was in fact a national claim and a statement of independence.

The letters of investiture, called by a word taken from the Chinese *ba' bu*<sup>74</sup>) (Chinese *cha fu*), with which the Mongol sovereigns confirmed privileges or allotted office to the individual abbots or to the Tibetan nobility, were nearly always ratified by the gift of a seal, which the Tibetans called *dam k'a*, a word taken from the Turkish through the Mongol. These seals were of gold for the Ti shih and of jade for the officials holding office in Tibet, like the one given by Qubilai to aP'ags pa on conferring upon him the title of *Kuan ting kuo shih*. The seal accompanied the conferring of office; those possessing the seal of the highest class were thus invested with supreme authority, hence it could not be given to two dignitaries at the same time. So that when bSod nams rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po asked for a jade seal as a descendant of aP'ags pa, the Ming Emperor did not consent, with the excuse that it had already been given to Nam mk'a' dpal bzañ po.<sup>75</sup>)

For inferior offices the seals were of rock crystal, like those given to Nam mk'a' brtan pa of aBri guñ, both as *gui guñ* (*kuo kung*) and as *Ta dben gu sri* (*ta yüen kuo shih*) (*Chronicles*, pp. 44-45) or to bSod nams of dGa' ldan as Minister of Justice (*ibid.*, p. 149) or to Rab brtan kun bzañ of Gyantse when he was appointed T'ai si tu (*Gyantse genealogies*, p. 13).

Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an also, when he was made a myriarch, received a silver seal, the symbol of that dignity. Other insignia are mentioned together with the seal, namely the "gem of the third degree, with a tiger's head,". The Blo bzañ rgya mts'o chronicles (p. 632) allude to it once; another allusion is in the Gyantse chronicles; in the first case the gem was conferred upon Nam mk'a' brtan pa of Byañ, in the second case upon Rab brtan kun bzañ. This gem of the third degree was one of those tablets which during the Mongol period were conferred as an emblem and as a sign of authority to the highest officials. In Chinese they are

called *Hu t'ou p'ai* 虎頭牌 "tablets with tiger's head's"; they were, according to circumstances, of gold, silver, gilded silver, or even gilded copper and conferred on the persons entitled to wear them particular privileges, fixed each time by the Emperor's special decrees.<sup>76)</sup>

It would be useful to know how the State administration was organized in this period we have been dealing with, which posts existed and what their duties were. But the Tibetan literature to which I have access lacks any information which might correspond to the administrative details given by the *Yüan shih*. In the Sa skya pa chronicles I find a list of offices, but as may be seen from the following schedule, they are Court officials, which give no idea of state organization.

- |    |  |                  |
|----|--|------------------|
| a) | master ( <i>dpon</i> ) of ceremonies   | ( <i>gsol</i> )  |
|    | .. of the abbot's chamber              | ( <i>gzim</i> )  |
|    | .. of rites                            | ( <i>mc'od</i> ) |
| b) | .. of receptions                       | ( <i>mjal</i> )  |
|    | .. of writings                         | ( <i>yig</i> )   |
|    | .. of the treasury                     | ( <i>mdsod</i> ) |
| c) | .. of the kitchen                      | ( <i>t'ab</i> )  |
|    | .. who introduces guests               | ( <i>adren</i> ) |
|    | .. of seats                            | ( <i>gdan</i> )  |
| d) | .. of transports                       | ( <i>skya</i> )  |
|    | .. of horses                           | ( <i>rta</i> )   |
| e) | .. of mdso (yak and cow mongrel-breed) | ( <i>mdso</i> )  |
|    | .. of dogs                             | ( <i>k'yi</i> )  |

More abundant information we draw from the Chronicles of Gyantse and above all from an edict they contain, which speaks of exemptions from compulsory labour. Local varieties in the inner set-up of the different principalities certainly existed, but they are not such as to suggest that there was not a certain analogy and similarity of organization between one state and another. It was a case of local applications or interpretations of ancient usages which had ruled the Tibetan nobility ever since its beginnings and which sprung from common principles; only details differed.

The highest official of the state according to this edict of Gyantse, was the *Nañ so*; this dignity, in its administrative organization, was certainly modelled on the Sa skya pa's organization of the state; the Gyantse princes, for several generations, had held the office of *Nañ c'en*, i. e. of *Nañ so c'en mo*, at the Sa skya pa court. But from the Dalai Lamas' biographies we see that this office was also to be found in other states, and in fact continued ancient traditions. The *Nañ so* presided over the administration of justice (*Gyantse genealogies*, p. 34) and was a sort of Prime Minister; the King's or the abbot's orders were made executive by this official, who naturally was also their first counsellor.

Side by side with the *Nañ so* a *P'yi so* is also known to us, namely an official concerned with external affairs; hence it is clear that both offices were modelled on the administrative system followed by the kings of Tibet, who ruled with the assistance of the *Nañ blon* and of the *P'yi blon*. These two names, although they correspond to modern expressions, cannot be rendered with "Home Secretary", and "Foreign Secretary"; the *Nañ blon* was rather a prefect of the Court, who helped the king in his work, after the manner of absolute governments, while the *P'yi blon* was rather the head of the executive machine, an overseer of state administration. Round the sovereigns, whether they were the Sa skya pa abbots, or the P'ag mo gru pas or the lords of Gyantse (and, in a lesser measure, round all the families with any territorial jurisdiction), a petty court was gathered, headed by these *Nañ c'en* or *Nañ so* or *Nañ blon* or, generally, *Blon po* or *bKa' blon*. This court was called, collectively, the *Druñ ak'or* or *Las ts'an*, and had its "officials", or "officers". One of the members of this Court, always present, was the *Yig dpon*, i. e. the secretary and chancellor, whose office it was to write documents and official letters and to look after the files. Then came the *Dam gñer*, keeper of the seal, which

witnessed to the validity of his lord's investiture and privileges.

State authority was absolute; subjects had to obey their lords blindly. They were also obliged to furnish personal services (*mk'ar las*, or by its Turkish name *'u lag*), namely to work under compulsion, either on civil or military constructions, or to complete religious buildings planned by those same families.

For instance the entire community of the principality of Gyantse helped to build the sKu ḅum, certainly not of its own free will; the temples and monasteries of P'un ts'ogs gliñ were enlarged or restored or built by Tāranātha with the cooperation of the princes of bSam ḅrub rtse and of Nam riñ, who to this end enforced compulsory work for periods of varying length.

There was, besides, an intricate system of taxation; the taxes had various names according to the different headings, and were permanent or temporary; the first were regularly inscribed in the books of normal state revenue, the others were occasional and enforced every time funds were running short or it was necessary to money for warfare or building activities.

Taxes could be paid in money or in kind, as tithes on crops, on wool or butter (see *Ža lu* documents). This power the state had, of increasing the contributions of its subjects as it pleased, easily gave occasion to resentment, and probably it was not rare that, due to fiscal oppression, people emigrated elsewhere, hoping to find a less harassing system. When discontent was rife, governments cut down their exactions, they proclaimed a partial and temporary reduction of some taxes, explaining their generosity with motives of mercy. Thus, for instance, the Gyantse edict was proclaimed. Naturally the greatest sufferers from this system were laymen and village communities, collectively responsible on behalf of their chief for the enforcement of state exactions, which were much heavier in places along the highroads of busiest traffic

or caravan routes, like those to or from China. In some cases the amount of contributions in the shape of horses, forage or labourers were strictly defined, and they seriously damaged agriculture and cattle-breeding; moreover officials bearing letters-patent and government briefs very often overstepped the prescribed bounds and oppressed the populations, exacting much more than they were bound to supply. All these practices were a cause of revolt.

Thus Tibet too was acquainted with a complex system of extortions and, as the country was poor, it felt its weight more than other lands.

The fiscal machinery from which the state and its officialdom drew their means of support and their riches was extremely complex: its agents were numerous officers who ruthlessly presided over the collection of taxes; they went from the *gñer pa* or "intendants", of the first and second class, residing respectively in the larger and lesser centres, to the actual tax-collectors, graphically called *sgo ñal*, "those who sleep on the threshold", an allusion to their peevish stubbornness.

Monasteries naturally were in a different position; they had gradually succeeded in taking the upper hand, and guiding the political life of Tibet. The nobility was influenced by the monasteries and by the chiefs of sects. Tibet, little by little, had extended, making it almost universal, that system of immunities which in Mongol times had been granted in China to religious communities; they had slowly monopolized a privileged condition, not only by claiming exemptions, but also by frequently soliciting from the lay authorities the cession of land, with the pretext of using their revenue for the celebration of religious ceremonies, according to foundation-charts compiled in each case. It is probable that in this manner land confiscated or seized when someone died without legitimate or recognized heirs passed into the hands of monasteries.

The administration of justice was strict, although it was possible to compound bodily punishment by adequate bail in money or kind. Justice was administered according to usage, more or less arbitrarily traced back to Sroñ btsan sgam po's laws, up to Mongol times; probably at that time the Mongol penal code was introduced into Tibet, either the *Yasa* of Gengis Khan or more probably its successive elaborations and adaptations, incorporated into the Yüan laws. These laws were harsh and strict, they had no great consideration for human life and applied the death penalty to the pettiest transgressions. They were introduced into Tibet by the Yüan and found the Sa skya pa ready to accept and enforce them. With the decay of their authority and the renaissance of a national spirit embodied in Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, there was a return to ancient laws and traditional usage: Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an boasted that he had restored Sroñ btsan sgam po's code, which was indeed a penal code, but was also, first and foremost, a collection of moral principles. In this field too he delivered Tibet from foreign subjection; taking advantage of the Yüan's decline and of their constantly decreasing interference with Tibetan affairs, he returned to national customs. His code is not the only one compiled in those times. Another one was written in Ts'al, perhaps the work of his rival Kuñ dga' rdo rje; a third was compiled by Kar ma bstan skyoñ:<sup>77)</sup> but the P'ag mo gru's code prevailed and, after being revised by the fifth Dalai Lama and the *sde srid* Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o, is still used in Tibet.

We do not know how and through what organs justice was administered. We can only say that culprits were brought before a court and that there were high dignitaries at the head of the judicial system, called *K'rims dpon*, or by a more honorific title *K'rims kyi k'a lo sgyur bai blon*, *K'rims sgyur bai blon po*. It seems that in the lesser states the Nañ c'en supervised the administration of justice.

Throughout the long-lasting warfare which for several centuries covered Tibet with blood, as monasteries and nobles never tired of taking up arms, the military organization was mostly modelled on the Mongol army. The latter was organized according to a ten-unit system which, beginning with the elementary unit of the *decuria*, culminated in the *tümän*, an army of 10,000 men. By reason of its scanty population, Tibet could not assemble such large armies; documents mention the *bcu dpon* and the *brgya dpon* (decurions and centurions) and also the *ston dpon* and the *k'ri dpon*, (commanders of 1000 and 10,000 men), but while the first two are real military ranks, the last two should rather be referred to the exercise of political authority: the military equivalent of a force implicit in the wording of those titles was purely theoretical. Indeed the military engagements mentioned in the chronicles are nearly always encounters between a few hundred men; only the onslaught of Tartar invasion sometimes caused more numerous troops to assemble; they were collected by the different myriarchies, under the menace of imminent havoc.

The armed forces of the single states, mounted (*rta pa*) or on foot, were commanded by generals (*dmag dpon*) who, as may be seen from Gyantse's example, occupied a high rank in the Court hierarchy.

The state territory was split up into a series of divisions: *sde*, under a *sde pa* or governor, whose functions were political; the *sde* was divided into *rdsoñ*, under a *rdsoñ dpon* or prefect. The *rdsoñ* was a fortified city having strategical importance, hence the *rdsoñ dpon* united in his own person civil and military functions, while the administrative part was always in the *gñer pa*'s hands.

The heads of myriarchies and any other holders of temporal power, were entitled to invest their dependants and vassals with particular offices, confirming their privileges with seals and letters-patent. The *rdsoñ dpon*

or prefects and the commanders of frontier fortresses were selected with particular care, because these offices, when they were exercised in rich or strategically important districts, not only represented a much-desired privilege, but carried with them an actual increase of power, which might seriously threaten the state and foster aspirations to independence and power. For this reason the office of *rdson dpon* was alternatively conferred by P'ag mo gru pa to dignitaries of different families, so that none of them should gain a firm footing and become powerful in the district under his jurisdiction, using the post he occupied to extend his own dominions.

These temporary dignities must be kept distinct from the permanent concessions of territories or feuds either to private families or to religious communities, to the former in recognitions of particular merits and to the latter, according to a custom mentioned above, as an act of homage to chaplains or masters, or as an endowment in order that regular ceremonies should be performed according to the donor's wishes, for the repose of his soul or that of his relatives.

In both cases the feuds became an inalienable property of the family or convent they had been given to, and in general enjoyed exemption from taxes. Instances of both cases are not lacking: as for religious donations I recall those mentioned in the Gyantse chronicles; for the others I will quote that made by the Sa skya, perhaps by aP'ags pa himself, to the dGe bñes Rin c'en brtson agrus, as a reward for his brave defence of Sa skya pa interests at the Mongol court; he was given Drug p'ya mai adab sgo, Ts'on' adus k'a leb, Grañ k'an' ga ra,<sup>78)</sup> P'ul gyod.

The myriarchies and in general every other territory over which some family exercised authority and jurisdiction, were in a certain fashion closed territory, because, as a passage of the fifth Dalai Lama's chronicles seems to imply, it was not possible to pass

from one state into another without a regular passport, *lam yig*, issued by the myriarch or by the *sde pa*.

Those who travelled on service, as bearers of the Chinese or Mongol Emperor's orders, or on behalf of their viceregens or of other officials, enjoyed special privileges and prompt and free assistance of all sorts. This was a cause of abuses and exactions, which an attentive reader will find hinted at both in the *Za lu* letters and in Rab brtan kun bzai ap'ags pa's edict.

Governments do not seem to have taken a great interest in public works, not even in the upkeep of roads. The bridges built by T'an ston rgyal po were all due to his personal enthusiasm, though his biography does not forget to mention the intelligent cooperation of some princes who, moved by his insistence, enforced compulsory work to complete the ascetic's plans.

There is hardly ever any mention of road-control of the Mongol type, to make communications between the provinces safer; a single exception is recorded in the times of Gags pa rgyal mts'an, who, as the Chinese sources also state, took measures once again to improve and protect communications between Tibet and the Chinese frontier, by establishing, along the caravan roads, an appropriate stage service, with well-defined obligations resting on the village communities.

We must reach Tāranātha's times to find records of new measures to make communications easier on the gTsañ po river, by building landings for the boats. Up to that moment navigation on this river, particularly on the Lhartse-Shigatse tract, took place by means of rafts, made out of bamboo and yak skins, which are used to this day.<sup>79)</sup>

But it is natural that these public works should hardly ever be mentioned in the biographies, because they were considered unimportant and left to the initiative of single villages, obliged to attend to them when the needs of travel and traffic required it.

As in the Mongol state, also in Tibet the nobility prevailed over the rest of the population; by nobility I mean those families which through an ancestral tradition occupied public offices and enjoyed recognized privileges.

The literature of these times has a special word for them: they are called *drag žan*, a collective name designing the greater and the lesser; sometimes we find in its place *drag btsan*,<sup>80)</sup> which means "the powerful ...". The *drag žan* are the free men, those enjoying civil rights; they are distinguished from the *mi sde*, the village people subject to duties and enforced labour (*'u-lag*), also called *mi dmanis*, "helots ...".

Thus our different sources show that Tibetan society had for a long time an aristocratic organization; the old noble families, succeeding one another, preserved and defended their privileges, keeping themselves aloof from the mass of shepherds and husbandmen obliged to serve them, on whom the weight of exactions and services rested.

Noblemen, whatever their office in the social organization, whether they exercised an actual jurisdiction or whether they served more powerful lords and were their representatives, in point of fact divided up state posts among themselves, certainly not on the base of the abilities they had shown, but by reason of acquired privileges, of marriage alliances or of common interest.

This monopoly of the most important and well-paid posts enabled them to obtain, and to preserve by the same means, economic prosperity; they were entitled to collect tolls on the roads, and they enjoyed privileges of traffic. But gradually, as their political prestige declined, their fortunes became exhausted; riches and trade passed into the hands of more enterprising persons, possessing in a high degree that talent for speculation which is inborn in Tibetans. Little by little a merchant class developed, which gathered the country's riches into its hands and became open to new recruits, often drawn from the monasteries

since, as it is often the case even now, many a monk tired of convent life, yielding to his mercantile instincts, left his monastery and became a merchant. On the other hand the growing development of convents, and above all the spread of the Yellow Sect founded on new principles, caused feudal society to crumble after having ruled so long. The equality between all the monks within the great monastic family, influenced the social order: in the eyes of abbots and incarnated, no difference existed between men of the people and noblemen. Their spiritual prestige levelled everything and demanded the same homage and reverence from everyone.

With the advent of the great monastic organizations, the aristocracy vanished, and on its ruins the religious chiefs' prestige grew up unhampered.

## 6. "REDS", AGAINST "YELLOWS",

Since the XVth century Tibetan events centre round the fortunes of a new power, prodigiously ascending and destined to change, by degrees, the political horizon: I allude to the *dGe lugs pa*. In a few years' space they had extended all over *dBus*, where *dGa' ldan* was built in 1409, *aBras spuñs* in 1416, *Se ra* in 1419. They penetrated as far as *gTsañ*, founding *Tashilunpo* in 1447, and they flung vast outposts as far as *K'ams*, where on its extreme frontier they founded the *Chamdo* monastery in 1437.

Thus, from the first years of the XVth century, Tibetan history no longer gravitates round the struggles of rival families, now worn out and reduced in number; it has its centre in the rivalry between the "Reds", *Karma pa*, supported by the lords of *gTsañ*, and the "Yellows", *dGe lugs pa* who, ably plotting, form coalitions between noblemen and enter into alliances. From now on Tibetan events are bound up with the greatest figures of the Yellow Sect and precisely with the

first five so-called Dalai Lamas, because they are men who do really tower on the dark horizon of Tibetan history; our sources are therefore full of information concerning them. Nevertheless, though these records place the Dalai Lamas in full light, so that other persons seem obscure and unimportant by comparison, they cannot blind us to the noble character of some of their rivals, who were not resigned to defeat and fought to the very last for their beliefs and their independence.

The Yellow Sect's expansion and its rapid spiritual conquests aroused the rival sects' suspicions; thus it happened that, as Sum pa mk'an po relates, the Kar ma pa built near Se ra and aBras spuñs two monasteries, the Yellows' strongholds, one for the Black Caps and one for the Red Caps, as a threat and a counterpart to their rivals' power. Later the King of gTsañ built a temple-fortress at the back of Tashilunpo. When war broke out, many monasteries far from the Yellow Sect's main strongholds were obliged to change their faith and to go over to the Red Sect.

A still more serious measure was taken: in Lhasa (which had not reached the splendour it was destined to attain a little later, but was nevertheless hallowed by the memories of its first Kings, the earthly incarnation of Tibet's supreme protectors), in Lhasa, the Se ra and aBras spuñs monks could not take part in the great new-year ceremonies from 1498 to 1518. Lhasa was closed to the dGe Lugs pa; sNeu gdoñ had no authority over it now, it had become a dependance of the gTsañ princes, the Red Caps' declared patrons, who from their palace in bSam agrub rtse watched the rival sect's expansion with suspicion.

In the time of dGe adun rgya mts'o (1475-1542), considered the second Dalai Lama by orthodox tradition, rivalry between Reds and Yellows came out into the open: dGa' ldan, Se ra and aBras spuñs had grown to the point of representing a menace for

the Kar ma pa; strife broke out on the occasion of the new year festival, sMon lam, founded by Tsoñ k'a pa, which was celebrated every year in Lhasa. It had been a custom, ever since this ceremony was instituted, that the abbot of aBras spuñs should celebrate it, but ever since, in 1498, Rin spuñs had taken possession of sKyid šod,<sup>81</sup> it passed into the hands of the gSañ p'u monastery and of the Kar ma pa, who continued to celebrate it up to 1517 (*me glañ*). What had happened in 1517? Evidently Rin spuñs was for the moment in a decline after a Goñ ma Nāg gi dbañ bkra sis grags pa's victorious campaign, which had restored the P'ag mo gru pa's prestige against Nāg dbañ rnam rgyal's intrigues. Even the meagre information given by the *Reu mig* confirms this hypothesis; it simply says that, to begin from the year iron-mouse<sup>82</sup> (1507), the Rin spuñs's power had begun to go down and the dGe lugs pa sect, or more precisely the abbot of aBras spuñs monastery, had acquired prestige. The feast then returned to the sect who had founded it, with the authorization of the Goñ ma c'en po, who had conferred new splendour upon his family, and claimed for himself the right to regulate Tibet's political life.

Thus the Yellows returned once more to Lhasa and the sMon lam being once more entrusted to them, they could celebrate their renewed glory with visible pomp.

The sects tried to snatch the celebration of this feast one from the other, not only on account of its religious meaning, but because of the prestige accruing to those whose office it was to organize it; and the Yellows could never have quietly given it up, because it was one of the most certain proofs of their master's fortune and of his preaching. Thus the reinstatement of the sMon lam coincides with a new political situation and shows once again that while the Rin spuñs's fortunes followed those of the Kar ma pa, the Yellows had found their supporters in the P'ag mo gru pa, who although declining, still represented

supreme power in Tibet,<sup>83)</sup> and could resist, by armed force, any attempt to overrule them.

The sMon lam's restoration took place in 1517, with the participation of 1500 aBras spuñs monks and 300 Se ra monks; this also shows that the situation in aBras spuñs and in dBus generally had become much more peaceful. That during all the period in which the feast was taken from the dGe lugs pa, times were not easy for the sect, is proved by the fact that dGe aḍun rgya mts'o was never in his monastery in those years. He left it as soon as the disturbances broke out in sKyid šod in 1498, and returned in 1517, following an invitation from the Žal sño of Lha ri and from the sPyi so of aBras spuñs.

In 1498, when the horizon began to darken, he had taken refuge in 'Ol k'a, whose princes had adhered to the new sect ever since the times of its founder; actually Tsoñ k'a pa had accepted 'Ol k'a's repeated invitations, and stopping in rDsiñ p'yi (or: ji) he had restored both Jo bo's effigy, built by Gar mi yon tan gyuñ druñ, which was venerated in that temple, and the paintings; indeed, as the paintings had been obliterated by time, he had them done over according to the aspect under which the gods they represented used to appear to him during ecstasy.<sup>84)</sup>

dGe aḍun rgya mts'o had already visited several places, both in dBus and in gTsañ: rDsiñ p'yi (in 'Ol k'a), Gya' ri rdsoñ, Yer pa, Rva greñs, K'a p'u, K'am luñ, Po to, sNeu zur, C'u mig gсар pa, Lha rgya ri, aPyoñ rgyas, Glañ p'u, E, Ri bo dga' ldan, Bya yul, Dvags po, rGyal me t'og t'añ. He pushed as far as gTsañ, whence he went to bKra šis lhun po, Po doñ e, sNar t'añ, gNas rñiñ, Ža lu, dPal ak'or c'os sde (Gyantse), aBroñ rtse, K'ro p'u. Except for a single brief stop, he had never returned to aBras spuñs. This absence from his see, beginning with the disturbances followed by the exclusion of the Yellows from the celebration of the sMon lam, and ending with the resumption of the same ceremony by the aBras spuñs

monasteries, was not due only to motives of propaganda. Its coincidence with those events and its long duration, on the contrary, do not leave us any doubt that the cause must be sought in some more serious reason, namely the political hegemony still exercised in dBus by bSam agrub rtse's regents, and consequently the favour they showed the Reds in Lhasa itself.

dGe aḍun rgya mts'o, who later was honoured as the second Dalai Lama, was at that time nothing more than the spiritual head of the reformed sect and the chief abbot of their monasteries. Unlike the Reds, who were sure of the favour of a powerful family and of most of the gTsañ aristocracy, he had to obtain, slowly and laboriously, adequate clients; failing this he needs must take the place of the temporal power which was absent during the P'ag mo gru pa's decline, induce the sect to take the initiative of a new orientation which should restore its prestige to dBus and at the same time ensure a predominant position for the school.

Through this action the school was necessarily led to supplant an aristocracy which had become incapable of looking after its own destinies. The task was long and difficult and the third Dalai Lama's times were to come before the Yellow Sect's fortunes began their ascent unhampered.

The third Dalai Lama bSod nams rgya mts'o dpal bzañ po bstan pai ñi ma p'yogs t'ams cad las rnam par rgyal was born in 1543 (c'u yos)<sup>85)</sup> in the territory of sKyid šod in dBus ru, and precisely in rTse k'a K'añ gсар goñ, under sTod luñ (*Biogr.*, p. 10a), from a family which boasted its descent from rMa Rin c'en me'og, one of the seven Sad mi, and which during Tibet's division into 13 myriarchies, in the Yüan's times, had been included in the rGya ma myriarchy; his ancestors had been great dignitaries in the Sa skya times, and remained such under the P'ag mo gru pa; later they were appointed rdsoñ dpon of rGyal c'en rtse (p. 10a).

His father was the sDe pa rNam rgyal grags pa and his mother dPal ajom bu k'rid was a daughter of the dKon gñer of P'ag mo gru, the exorcist dBaṅ p'yug rin po c'e Kun bzañ rtse.

We do not know by which vicissitudes and intrigues the child was recognized as dGe ḍadun rgya mts'o's incarnation: his biography written by the fifth Dalai Lama says that it was due to a reincarnated lama (p. 15 a) and that the recognition happened in 1544, but he was confirmed later, by Qutuqtu bSod nams grags pa's intervention. The latter watched over his early years and was responsible for the Yellow Sect's fortunes; bSod nams rgya mts'o was then considered as the incarnation of the C'os rje of aBras spuñs (p. 17 c). In other words, during these early developments the dGe lugs pa were identified with their greatest convent.

bSod nams rgya mts'o's life does not interest us as to its personal elements: entrance into aBras spuñs, tonsure, ordination, the discipline of his studies, visions and miracles; we gladly leave all the religious events and experiences, related with a wealth of detail by his credulous biographers, to those investigating Tibetan hagiography.<sup>86)</sup> But I believe that even such scholars would not be amply rewarded for their pains, because they would always find the same schemes and legends repeated, which form the unflinching foundation of all the rNam t'ar (biographies). If anyone, out of curiosity, wished to have an idea of this, he would find a brief summary in Schulemann's work, and even more in the original sources: both in SaYang Säčän history of the Eastern Mongols and in ḍJigs med rig pai rdo rje work, which we have often quoted.

Let us rather try to reconstruct, through the ecclesiastical biographer's meagre hints, the events which were in the meantime maturing in Tibet, the friction between schools, the impact of new currents on the old ones, internal factions, and on this troubled background,

the Yellow Sect's movements, what progress it made, how it gained ground and was more and more impelled to contract an alliance with the Mongols. We must not wonder that the unreformed schools, Kar ma pa, Sa skya pa, bKa' brgyud pa were first suspicious, then hostile: they could not remain indifferent before this extremely rapid progress of Tsoñ k'a pa's followers, who in a few years' time had spread everywhere and found enthusiastic adherents among the people.

The reasons of this rapid fortune are not far to seek. As always in the first beginnings of new ideas or fresh institutions, the dGe lugs pa showed an activity and an apostolic zeal which had become extinguished in the other schools. The latter securely relied on their clients, they enjoyed the favour of devoted patrons, they leant on pious and powerful families, supported by a century-old tradition. Conservative and suspicious of any novelty, they basked in a self-satisfied indolence.

On the other hand the dGe lugs pa, stimulated by the preaching of Tsoñ k'a pa and of his first disciples, who had thrown themselves into the task of purification with an equal ardour, not depressed but excited by the other schools' hostility, attracted the masses. In every clime the people are fascinated by new ideas; the Tibetans saw with joy that the stolid formalism of the sects and the corrupt monkish life, were being shaken by a surge of new life, a healthy spirit; in their hopeful credulity they therefore listened to the miracles of the Ye šes mgon po, the *yi dam* of the dGe lugs pa, who protected the sect and Tibet together.

It is natural that in the presence of such good fortune the old schools should not hide their ill-will; they would have done better to revise their position, now too much bound to earthly property, and to shake off the impurities that too greedy contacts with the world had let into their spirit, overruling the ancient masters' sincere intentions.

Monastic rules had slowly ceased to be applied, most of the monks married and led

a sluggish life, poverty and abstinence had become nothing but vague words. Moreover, in the principal sects, the monasteries had fallen into the hands of real dynasties, so that ecclesiastical dignity was not transmitted to the worthiest, but handed on to sons or nephews as a birthright. Tsoñ k'a pa had reinstated the disciplinary rules in all their austere value: the principle of reincarnation, which he and his disciples had dogmatically rehabilitated, made it easier to choose well-born persons, and guaranteed a severe and scrupulous education.

Progress was rapid; even in the heart of gTsañ, when bSod nams rgya mts'o visited Gyantse, he found the dGe lugs pa already prospering in the place which had been one of the Sa skya pa citadels. Owing to the ups and downs of the times, wars, the decay attending every human institution, the old sects declined, their patrons' power waned, the temples, often burnt or destroyed during wars and raids, were deserted. The dGe lugs pa were ready to take up the succession and to occupy the place left vacant by others, to restore the temples in ruins, to celebrate their ceremonies in those shrines which monks of other schools had abandoned. The second and third Dalai Lamas were inspired in their missionary work by these motives. While he was still a boy, bSod nams rgya mts'o was taken from one place to the other in the gTsañ region; grown in years and having finished his studies, he not only took long journeys to Lho (the regions South of dBus, which we shall mention later), but travelled in all directions throughout dBus, visiting convents, receiving homage, consecrating temples and images, preaching and conferring blessings. His biography, written by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o on authentic documents which follow the main events year by year, records the stages of his journeys.<sup>87)</sup> Although the fifth Dalai Lama, exclusively concerned with the religious biography of his predecessor, neglects political events, or only alludes to them if they serve to throw light on his

sanctity and his moral figure, nevertheless the brief relation of these travels, during which bSod nams rgya mts'o was invited, entertained and received as a guest, show us a country divided into many dominions, according to temporary and shifting relations of friendship, vassallage or ties of blood. It may be said that each district had its chief, enjoying complete autonomy and contriving to preserve it, seeking support with one or the other of his more powerful neighbours or with the monasteries aspiring to guide the fortunes of Tibet. These chiefs had various titles, they were called now *rgyal po*, now *sde pa*, or *sa skyoñ*, *nan so*, *sku žañ*, sometimes simply *žabs druñ*.<sup>88)</sup>

Some of these princes seemed to gather round the Yellow Sect's rising fortunes, upholding its aims and becoming in a certain sense its patrons; these are the lords of rTse t'añ, Goñ dkar, rGya ri, side branches of the P'ag mo gru pa, to whom Altan Khan will send gifts on the occasion of his meeting with bSod nams rgya mts'o, and also the princes of 'Ol k'a, who in the course of this biography appear as devoted followers of the new school.

The P'ag mo gru pa were still the overlords of these nobles, but only a shadow of their ancient power was left them and already on the horizon the lucky stars of the new Kings of gTsañ were rising after the decline of the Rin spuñs family; sNeu gdoñ still kept up its pretensions as capital of Tibet;<sup>89)</sup> empty claims to be exact, for events had taken quite a different course. The real capital had been transferred by Ñag dbañ grags pa to Goñ ri dkar po; he had taken up his residence there and entered into a sincere friendship with bSod nams rgya mts'o and with the dGe lugs pa continuing, as it were, an old tradition of his family.

The *dGa' ldan c'os abyuñ* says in fact that P'ag mo gru and Tsoñ k'a pa had been *bsTan pa gñis*, "two doctrines", but they had: *srog gcig* "the same spirit"; and we know

that Tsoñ k'a pa himself had been a disciple of the *C'os bži pa*.

The power of the rulers of gTsañ founded by Žiñ bśag Ts'e brtan rdo rje was gradually increasing at the expense of sNeu gdoñ; they were strengthened by the support of the Red Caps to whom they were bound by a common policy, about to become a real alliance. Hence it is perfectly reasonable that sNeu gdoñ should in self-defence seek the new school's help and repair under the wings of its rapidly growing prosperity. When, soon after, a serious disagreement broke out, and an attempt followed to overthrow the dGe lugs pa by the force of arms, the Žva dmar and their patrons were not alone: they had found allies in a sect which we have seen at the height of its power at the beginning of the historical period we have been reconstructing, and had then been pushed into obscurity by more fortunate rivals, namely the aBri gruñ pa; belonging to the same esoteric school as the Žva dmar, they drew inspiration from the same mystical revelation and recognized the same masters, both Indian and Tibetan. In 1537, taking advantage of dGe aḍun rgya mts'o's absence, they had pushed as far as Koñ with an army, but when they got to 'Ol k'a, still loyal to the Yellows, they had been forced by Don yod to retreat on Gru mda' and turn back without reaching their intent, the destruction of dGa' ldan. Nevertheless they had wrested eighteen convents from the dGe lugs pa compelling them to change their faith.<sup>90)</sup>

An echo of war and discord does then sometimes penetrate the edifying narratives of the fifth Dalai Lama. And not without reason: Tibet in those years was extremely restless and troubled; war was raging at the very doors of one of the new sect's main strongholds, dGa' ldan. Its princes had favoured the new school since its beginnings, and little by little they had become its patrons, probably owing to the monastery's proximity to their castle and to the pressure

of common interests. Nor had dGa' ldan's sincere friendship for the P'ag mo gru pa ever failed; it had proved extremely valuable on several occasions, ever since, after 1481, Don yod rdo rje of Riñ spuñs had been beaten back by Nam mk'a' rgyal po. The good offices of bSod nams rgyal po had also been recognized by the Goñ ma c'en mo or Naḡ dbaṅ bkra śis grags pa, who had conferred upon him the office of rdoñ dpon of sNeu gdoñ and Minister of Justice in that same place. But precisely in bSod nams rgya mts'o's times there had been a parenthesis, when the Nañ so Don grub rgyal po had invaded sKyor mo luñ, already assigned by the same Goñ ma c'en mo Naḡ dbaṅ bkra śis to the prince of Yar rgyab; great resentment was already brewing and broke out on this occasion: in 1553 open war began and lasted over a year, so violent that it was not even possible to perform the usual yearly ceremonies in Lhasa.

According to his biographer, dSod nams rgya mts'o's attitude, whatever intrigues the monks surrounding him may have contrived, seems to have been prompted by a desire for peace. As a consequence of his high ecclesiastical dignity, he was often asked by contending parties to interpose his good offices, to pacify and reconcile rivals; this had been the case in 1547, when disturbances broke out in Yar kluñs and, as bSod nams rgya mts'o was still young, the regency intervened, on the aP'yoñ rgyas chiefs' instigation.<sup>91)</sup>

But these changes in the political horizon, the breakdown of the old order, the rise of new interests and of new political and religious groups, boded no good to those who hoped for a lasting peace.

In 1563 (*Biogr.*, p. 28) Tibet again took up arms again, this time because of internal dissent among the P'ag mo gru pa: on one side reigned the Goñ ma c'en po, Naḡ dbaṅ bkra śis grags pa, on the other his grandson Naḡ dbaṅ grags pa rgyal mts'an strove with him for power. The latter had established his capital

in dGoñ ri dkar po and opposed his obstinate grandfather. On this occasion the prince of dGa' ldan, Don grub rgyal po, sided with the grandson, whose sympathies for bSod nams rgya mts'o and for the dGe lugs pa generally induced the fifth Dalai Lama to place him in a favorable light, although it would seem, from the very facts he relates, that he was actually a rebel. Anyhow, whatever the reason, these disagreements met with so many reactions that the country was involved in a war. Out of this war the old branch of P'ag mo gru emerged in a state of greater weakness, while the power of dGa' ldan pa was increased. Meanwhile the latter conquered sTod luñ.

In this circumstance the abbot of dGa' ldan, the dGa' ldan k'ri pa and dGe legs bzañ po, together with the dignitaries of aBri guñ, sTag luñ, P'ag mo gru pa, 'Ol k'a, sTod luñ and bDe c'en (p. 72 b) tried to interpose their good offices and to reach an agreement, but to no avail. Their aim was attained later when the prince of dGa' ldan had succeeded in enlarging his territory, as bSod nams rgya mts'o's biographer relates.

The third Dalai Lama's intervention for peace was sought once more in 1564, on the death of the King of Tibet, as the fifth Dalai Lama calls him by an evident exaggeration, namely old Goñ ma c'en po, Nag dbañ bkra šis grags pa; then new disturbances broke out and Tibet's horizon darkened once more, the succession being disputed between the Goñ ma c'en po's son, who continued the dynasty in sNeu gdoñ, and the Žabs druñ Nag dbañ grags pa of Goñ ri dkar po.

The P'ag mo gru had now definitely split into two branches: on one side that of sNeu gdoñ, which preserved the pompous title of Goñ ma; on the other that of Goñ ri dkar po. Representatives of both branches are mentioned indiscriminately in the fifth Dalai Lama's biography. The family's power had now dwindled to little more than a memory, but Blo bzañ rgya mts'o persisted in calling the prince of Goñ ri dkar po King of Tibet.

This kingly title was now vain and only persisted through the stubborn inertia aristocracies show in holding fast to their old honours, when nothing else is left to them. But as we saw, a new family laid claim to the title of King of Tibet and still more to real power over gTsañ and dBus; the chiefs of gTsañ still resided in Rin spuñs, in the same place where the successors of Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's ministers had broken faith with their old pledges and rebelled against the P'ag mo gru pa. But the family was no longer the same: it was crestfallen and declining, after the victorious resistance Nag dbañ bkra šis grags pa had put up against his rebellious minister and vassal. Nag dbañ rnam rgyal's son, a scholar and a literary man, was deprived of power by one of his counsellors, belonging to the gNags clan, namely Žiñ bšag Kar ma Ts'e brtan. The chronicles of Blo bzañ rgya mts'o are very reticent concerning the history and vicissitudes of this bold and brave dynasty, which sapped the P'ag mo gru pa's power at the roots, threatened the Yellow Sect's nascent fortunes and became the secular arm of the Red Caps, obstinately and warily guiding gTsañ's rescue against the prevailing dBus.

In the year 1565 Kar ma ts'e brtan, waging war with his son Pad ma dkar po as his associate, conquered bSam agrub rtse, a feud of sNeu gdoñ, once assigned to aP'yoñ rgyas, and later to the princes of Rin spuñs, who held it by force. bSam agrub rtse, corresponding to present-day Shigatse, was a very important place, lying in a fertile valley and commanding the highroads which met there between Northern gTsañ and dBus and the regions North and South of the gTsañ po (Brahmaputra); thus not only it had a great strategical value, but it was enriched by a prosperous market.

The possession of bSam agrub rtse meant not only that the P'ag mo gru had been finally excluded from gTsañ, but also that dBus was more than ever exposed to invasion by the lords of gTsañ. In 1575 they actually

attacked gTsañ roñ, camped in sGal and then having occupied sGal, Byañ and sMon, marched on sKyiḍ sod, where they were stopped, the fifth Dalai Lama says, by the magic formulas of the sKu žañ of Kun bzañ rtse of rTse t'añ (p. 89 a). In that same year 1575 we find bSod nams rgya mts'o as a peacemaker between the Žva dmar and Yar kluñs.

As we have seen, no event is recorded which does not show, against the background of military events echoed in the biography and in pious narratives, the watchful and suspicious action of the two sects, now pitted one against the other in the fight for supremacy: the Yellow and the Reds.

## 7. gTSAÑ AGAINST DBUS

If the Yellow Sect's prestige grew in Tibet from year to year, their fortune, as we have seen, awakened new suspicion on the Reds' part; they watched the course of events and were fatally led to strengthen their ties with the greatest military and political force then existing in the Land of Snows, the successors of the chiefs of Riñ spuñs, now settled in bSam aḡrub rtse.

On the other hand the dGe lugs pa, playing for safety, relied on the Mongols, thus encouraging their desire for expansion; at the same time, they flattered their vanity by naming them paladins of the faith and patrons of a culture much superior to their own, for which they felt a recent convert's boundless devotion. The dGe lugs pa at the same time claimed to be the apostles of the Buddha's word and believed they were renewing with Mongolia the daring of those Indian missionaries who, several centuries earlier, had brought the Buddha's word into Tibet's desert highlands.

Indeed Mongols and Tibetans have celebrated bSod nams rgya mts'o as an apostle; historians speak of him as a brave propagator of the faith, who introduced a spirit of love

and charity into hardened Mongol hearts and by his preaching inspired those restless tribes with mildness.

There is no doubt that his work was a result of evangelizing zeal; the golden times of Tibetan Buddhism were still a living example in men's memories and a monk educated on those glories would naturally be proud to vie with them, but the third Dalai Lama's mission was also inspired by considerations of a more worldly character. We must remember the conditions of Tibet at the time, torn by strife between sects and parties, broken up into a large number of principalities mutually jealous and always ready to take up arms.

Hence dSod nams rgya mts'o's journey to Mongolia could not be simply an apostolic tour, but must be explained mainly by the Tibetan situation and the interests of the dGe lugs pa who had resolved to obtain help from the new converts, as soon as the threat against them should be about to break out violently.

When the Mongol prince Altan Khan and bSod nams rgya mts'o met, they believed they were living over again Qubilai's and aP'ags pa's experiences. Both the Mongol chief and the abbot of aBras spuñs were flattered by this return of the past: the former believed himself predestined to his ancestor's glory, while the latter anticipated he would obtain, in that troubled period, the support of a new power appearing on Tibet's frontiers. In whatever direction internal events and their relation with the Reds and with gTsañ might develop, it was meanwhile to the Yellows' advantage to secure in Mongolia faithful devotees, who should descend upon Tibetan monasteries no longer as invaders but as pilgrims, not to prey but to offer gifts. Thus bSod nams rgya mts'o's apostolic task was not an exclusively religious mission: it determined Tibet's future political and historical destinies and we must therefore briefly follow its events, which we already know in

their main lines; the subject is amply treated both by the Mongol historian Saṅg Sācān and by aḡjigs med rig pai rje. The former was a great-grandson of one of the most eminent cooperators in the spread of the dGe lugs pa among the Mongols, namely Sācān Hung taiji.

The third Dalai Lama's biographer relates the same events sometimes alluding to details the other historians ignore; hence, by comparing the different versions, it will be possible to appraise more accurately bSod nams rgya mts'o's religious and political action. Owing to him and to his counsellors, the Yellow Sect finally gained the Mongols' support for its cause. We do not mean to say that the Mongols had not already come in contact with Lamaism, which on the contrary had reached several tribes and made converts among them; but conversions were sparse and wavering, divided between the Red Sect, which had a larger number of followers, and the Yellow Sect, which had appeared later and had not been so fortunate in its spread. A case, then, of limited infiltrations, incapable of influencing the Mongol way of life and of overcoming Shamanism, which reigned supreme: at the best, Buddhist islands, which would not prosper, abandoned to themselves in alien and often hostile surroundings, until they should be protected and fostered by the power of the strongest.

The first contact between Tibet and the Ordos had not been peaceful: already in 1573 Altan Khan had led an expedition against North-Eastern Tibet; this conflict however had led to spiritual contacts, for Altan Khan had brought back to his country some Lamas, who had planted the first seeds of faith in the Mongol chief's heart. Even earlier, in 1566, Qutuḡtai Sācān Hung taiji of the Ordos had led another expedition, or rather a raid, against Tibet; according to Saṅg Sācān (p. 212) its spiritual fruit was that some Lamas were taken by him to his camp. These are the meagre facts chroniclers tell us: we can only guess what exchanges may then have come about

between Tibet and the Ordos, what network of interests may have been established, what prospects of future gains, not merely spiritual but political, were opened up before both Mongols and Tibetans. It is certain anyhow that the Qutuḡtai Sācān Hung taiji was influenced by Lamaism to the extent of convincing Altan Khan himself that its doctrines deserved to be received with greater favour. We know only the bare facts, but it is beyond doubt that at a moment when a new situation was being established in Mongolia strong political reasons must have backed the religious conversion. In 1573 the first mission to aḡBras spuḡis took place; beside the monks already mentioned, aḡDso ge A seḡ bla ma had arrived in 1571 (*lcags lug*) in Altan Khan's headquarters (p. 88 a) and had spoken to him of the Yellow Sect's newly incarnated chief. Acting on this monk's advice, Altan Khan now sent a mission with gifts and letters containing a formal invitation. bSod nams rgya mts'o, after seriously taking counsel, answered by sending to the Mongol chief's court the master of monastic rules brTson aḡrus bzaḡ po.

In 1577 new envoys arrived from Altan rgyal po (p. 90)<sup>92)</sup> and announced that the King, who was then in mTs'o k'a (Kökönor) was again insisting that bSod nams rgya mts'o should come to him and preach the Buddha's word; thus repeatedly invited, bSod nams rgya mts'o set out.<sup>93)</sup>

His meeting with the King took place on the 15th day of the 5th month of the year earth tiger (1578). On this occasion Altan rgyal po was prodigal in his gifts to the lama: a maḡḡala made of 500 ounces (*sraḡiḡ*) of silver; a golden bowl full of precious stones; white, yellow, red, green and blue silk, twenty bolts of each kind; a hundred horses, ten of which were white, their saddles ornamented with precious stones.

On this occasion the famous proclamation was made of the ethical laws laid down for the Mongols, modifying their cruel customs,

forbidding the worship of “*öngön*”, or images of the deceased and bloody sacrifices, particularly of horses and camels buried with the corpses of chiefs. Then, in the same spot where the King and the Lama had met, a temple was built, which took the name of T’eg c’en c’os ak’or gliñ: the C’os rje of sToñ ak’or Yon tan rgya mts’o was regularly ordained on this occasion.<sup>94)</sup>

Next an exchange of titles took place: bSod nam rgya mts’o received from the King the title of Da lai bla ma vajradhara, and the King from the Lama that of C’os kyi rgyal po lhai ts’añs pa.<sup>95)</sup>

The Dalai Lama had been covered with gifts, but Altan Khan did not forget the temples of Tibet and the great dignitaries faithful to the new school: he sent A señ bla ma at the head of a mission charged with the distribution of gifts to the Jo bo k’an in Lhasa, to the monasteries of Se ra, aBras spuñs and dGa’ldan, and finally to the princes who had become the Yellow Sect’s greatest patrons, namely to those of rTse t’añ, Goñ dkar, rGya ri, dGa’ldan (p. 97*a*), while invitations and honours were multiplied.

Then A señ bla ma returned from Tibet, bringing letters from lamas and dignitaries, insisting that bSod nam rgyal mts’o should come home. The Dalai Lama did not consent, he wished to carry out his mission to the end. Altan rgyal po went back to the Sog po country and bSod nam rgya mts’o went on as far as Li t’añ with the object of founding a monastery there, and named as his representative in the Mongols’ country the sTeñ ak’or c’os rje, Yon tan rgya mts’o. In the eighth month of that same year embassies came from the Emperor Wan li,<sup>96)</sup> bringing him a diploma duly sealed: he conferred upon bSod nam rgya mts’o the title of protector of all lands, and invited him to his Court.

This is the Tibetan version of the event; the Chinese version is less detailed: as a preceding attempt to get in touch with the Dalai

Lama’s predecessor had miserably failed, the Court became careful and waited, according to the dynastic histories, until bSod nam rgya mts’o induced by Altan Khan, should himself seek the Emperor’s favour and send him the prescribed gifts. But the Prime Minister was cautious and hesitated to accept them before the Emperor’s consent had reached him. The memory was still fresh of Liu Yün’s adventurous expedition: he had left Tibet to do homage to the other “living Buddha”, dGe adun rgya mts’o, and in consequence of the Tibetans’ suspicions his mission came to grief: many officials of his retinue were killed, the survivors fled. Permission was now given to receive gifts, but nothing is said of titles conferred upon bSod nam rgya mts’o, although it is recognized that the effective power of the Dalai Lama’s office began with him and that the authority of other Tibetan chiefs, lay or ecclesiastical, declined and vanished before the Dalai Lama’s prestige.<sup>97)</sup>

Truly this is the very beginning, almost the premise, of the Yellow Sect’s future power. Once having established the principle of incarnation, on which the theological domination exalting the chief of the new sect was founded, bSod nam rgya mts’o remained nevertheless the abbot of aBras spuñs; his prestige as a lama was far superior to his political authority, still scanty and questioned. Rivalry between sects had not been pacified nor the turbulent nobility’s restlessness silenced. The function of Dalai Lama practically began only with Blo bzañ rgya mts’o when, in a certain sense, Gu śri Khan renewed in his favour the endowment conferred by Qubilai on the Sa skya. Tibetan tradition is therefore mistaken when it carries the institution of the Dalai Lamas back to dGe adun grub’s times, even before the title itself had been officially conferred, as we have seen, on bSod nam rgya mts’o.

Let us go back to the latter and to his journeys. We see him now continuing to

travel to Li t'añ (Litang), sGar c'en in mDo K'ams' country, honoured on the way by As dpal no yon, and then install the C'os rje brTson agrus bzañ po as slob dpon of the P'un ts'ogs rnam rgyal gliñ monastery. Passing through Bya nag t'añ (p. 100 a) he consecrated the temple of Li t'añ, which had been built by the King of aJam Sa t'am c'e,<sup>98)</sup> on whom he conferred the name of T'ub bstan byams sems p'yogs t'ams cad las rnam par rgyal ba. The same King, in the year 1580, sent two envoys, Kva pak ši<sup>99)</sup> and Bya kva, to invite him to his country. Then he went to dMar k'ams (Markam) where he converted some Bon po; next to C'am mdo Byams gliñ, lDan c'os ak'or gliñ and to the temple of Gloñ t'añ sgron me (p. 102 b) where he was in 1582.

In the meantime, according to the last desire of the King, who had died a short time before, Mongol messengers came to the Dalai Lama to take him to mTs'o k'a; bSod nams rgya mts'o set out again for the North. Passing through Kumbum (*sku abum*) where he founded a school for the explanation of sacred texts, Bya k'yuñ brag, Ri bo dañ tig, (p. 102 c), mDso mo mk'ar where Byams c'en c'os rje had dwelt, in 1584 he arrived in mGal dgon pa; he then crossed aP'ags šiñ kun,<sup>100)</sup> where he concluded a peace between warring Chinese and Hor, and Bag ras, and got to mTs'o k'a. There he was met by a delegation of about a thousand horsemen, headed by Dayan noyan. Having travelled on the territory ruled by the dPon of the Ordos Säčän Hungtaiji,<sup>101)</sup> in the year 1585 he led Dayan noyan to a deeper understanding of the Law.

The lord of Gur dkar "the white tents", of the 40 great clans of the Sog po, invited him into his domains together with Jo k'or no yon;<sup>102)</sup> on this occasion, beside preaching the Law he conferred baptism upon these neophytes. In 1586 he received messengers from Altan Khan's son Du riñ (Dügüräng) anxious to meet him; he took up his journey again

towards the Mar c'u and arriving in Kökö hoto (mK'ar sñon), inhabited by Tibetans and Brog pa together, he consecrated the images that Altan rgyal po had built, putting the sacred formulas (*dhāraṇī, gzuñs*) into them. The biography then tells how Na mo t'ai Huñ t'ai ji of C'a dkar (Čahar) came to meet him,<sup>103)</sup> how he then continued towards the right wing (*gyas ru*) of the Tümat (*mt'u med*) where he consecrated many temples. Having accomplished the funeral ceremonies in honour of Dügüräng who had died that year, he was loaded with gifts by rDo rje rgyal po of the Halha<sup>104)</sup> (K'ar k'a) and received envoys from Jo ak'or no yon of the Urat and the chief of the K'ar c'en (Qaračin) for whom he consecrated a temple.

In 1588 messengers from the Emperor of China finally arrived inviting him to his court and conferring upon him titles and the patent of Kuan ting t'ai gu śri. He was ready to accept the invitation, when in that same year death struck him down far from his country.

Thus the task dSod nams rgya mts'o had undertaken with such enthusiasm abruptly came to an end. He had established personal relations with many chiefs, consecrated statues and temples, spread the Buddha's word. In the course of a few years the princes of the most important Mongol tribes had officially embraced Buddhism. At the moment of taking leave of Altan Khan, he had named a representative in the person of the Qutuqtu of sToñ ak'or, considered as an incarnation of Mañjuśrī; the King of Tümat's example had been followed by the Čahar chiefs and then by the Halha, with whom he installed the "Maidari", Qutuqtu. Thus the Yellow Sect had spread among the Mongols with a speed which shows how easily permeable they were to new ideas and how slight was the opposition of Shamanism, which partly crumbled and partly became associated with the demonology and the exorcisms of Lamaism. But however great bSod nams rgya mts'o's

success may have been, it cannot be said that his task was completed. The foundations had been laid, but they had to be made fast, lest the fruits of his apostolic labours should be lost.

At that moment recourse was made to the theory of incarnation, so that the supreme ruler of the dGe lugs pa might carry out his task. No sooner had he died than he was said to have been born again in 1589 as the great grandson of Altan Khan.<sup>105)</sup> We are certainly not in a condition to reconstruct the intrigues, which led to this birth of the Yellow Sect's supreme authority in the heart of the Mongol tribes, but the persons guaranteeing the incarnation to be authentic, the presence of the Tibetan court which had accompanied the deceased bSod nam rgya mts'o to that same country during his journey, the official recognition by the envoys of the K'ri rin po c'e of dGa' ldan and by other dignitaries of Tibet proper, are facts from which we may desume that the dGe lugs pa sect had come up with well-laid plan.

The task begun by the third Dalai Lama had not yet yielded its fruits. The abbot of aBras spuñs's rebirth in a princely family of Mongolia served above all to weld still more firmly together the relations between the Yellow Sect and its patrons and to lead towards new developments the alliance between the young but already triumphant school and the power of Mongol arms. It was certainly not an unimportant event that the head of Tibetan Lamaism should now for the first time see the light in a Mongol tribe; thus the barriers existing between the Country of Snows and the new converts' homeland were broken down at one blow; neophytes became the equals of their masters in the identity of religion; differences of race, language and tradition were annulled and the numerous disasters which the Mongol hordes had repeatedly inflicted on Tibet with their sudden raids were forgotten. The Yellow Church received into its *oikoumene* even those frontier tribes which Tibet, up to that time,

had feared or despised, and the tribes prided in the official recognition of their religious maturity, on which the Dalai Lama's incarnation placed an unchallengeable seal. The new Dalai Lama's kinship guaranteed to the dGe lugs pa a powerful support in case of need: the Mongols had by now enthusiastically accepted the Buddhist preachings, reaching them through a double channel: the Reds and the Yellows. The prestige conferred upon Altan Khan's descendants by the birth in their midst of the supreme pontiff of a powerful and constantly ascending sect guaranteed the support of their arms, in case that Church were attacked, to which they were now bound by a link more direct than simple devotion.

The newly incarnated Dalai Lama's education was entirely Tibetan, as his guardians were Tibetans; but that the Mongols were flattered by the fact that one of the greatest Lamaist prelates should be of their race, is shown by the honour they did him; first of all, in 1591, the King of the Tūmāt.<sup>106)</sup>

In the eighth month of that same year the sku žaň rin po c'e of Kun bzaň rtse, many Tibetan *bhande* and Sog po headed by Mañju C'os rje (p. 14 a), kings, queens and Hung taiji arrived, each of them to invite him to his own country; finally messengers came from the king of Čaħar, and later, when the child had reached mC'od rten dkar po (p. 14 ba), dKon mc'og t'ai ji. In his first years, his principal tutor was the Rin po c'e Kun bzaň rtse pa, who in his turn was a fast friend of the P'yag mdsod Gu řri dPal ldan rgya mts'o (p. 16 a), namely the P'yag mdsod of the third Dalai Lama, to whom the King of China, in 1579, when bSod nam rgya mts'o had received his various titles, had given a Gu řri's diploma (see *Life of the third Dalai Lama*, p. 99 b).

To bear out the miraculous rebirth, according to the prescribed rites, a conclave of the Yellow Sect, on the advice of K'ri rin po ce of dGa' ldan, i. e. dPal abyor rgya mts'o of rGyal k'aň rtse (p. 16 a) sent this same

P'yag mdsod as the most qualified person to verify if the child were really an incarnation of the deceased Lama, with whom he had lived in a continued familiarity, as no one else had. The P'yag mdsod then left dBus, with many delegates of the main dGe lugs pa monasteries and of the nobility, now supporters of the new sect. Among others there were envoys of the prince of sNeu gdoñ, Goñ ma Mii dbañ p'yug Mi p'am dbañ agyur rgyal po Nag dbañ bSod nams grags pa rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po of the clan of Goñ ri dkar po, lord of all Tibet (*gais can rnam kyī mgon gzig*) and of the *žabs druñ* of Šun, the *sa skyoñ* of rGya ri, the *sa skyoñ* of dGa' ldan etc. and many other *sde dpon*, who all arrived in mK'ar sñon (Kökö-hota, p. 16 b) to meet the incarnated Lama and officially ratify his identity. This took place in the year *lcags glañ*, 1601. It is obvious that, once the recognition had taken place, the child must be taken to Tibet; not only to receive there an education suited to his dignity, but also because he was the abbot of aBras spuñs and as such it was incumbent upon him to take possession of his monastery. There he would lose all traces of his Mongol origin in the impersonal discipline of monastic life; but the Church would always be ready to use his kinship, if political circumstances required it. The Mongol alliance was now concluded and Tibet's future was marked.

The young Lama, following the road which runs outside the Great Wall of China, arrived in mTs'o k'a (Kökö-nor) where he stayed for three months as a guest of the King K'o lo c'e; next, although our sources do not give his itinerary, he was in Rva sgreñs (p. 21 a) and sTag luñ. As he got nearer and nearer to his see, acts of homage became more frequent: the *sa skyoñ* of dGa' ldan gYul rgyal nor bu came to meet him, with his son, then the dPon gñer sKu mdun rin po c'e C'os bzañ ap'riñ las pa of dGa' ldan palace (p. 22 b), the Žal sña nas dGe adun rgyal mts'an. When he arrived in dGa' ldan rnam rgyal

gliñ and Ra sa ap'ruñ snañ gi gtsug lag k'an, the *sa skyoñ* bKra šis rab brtan invited him in the feud of dGa' ldan k'an gsar, while the prince of sNeu gdoñ Nag dbañ bSod nams grags pa and rGyal bzañ pa did him great honour (pp. 23-24).

Having taken possession of the dGa' ldan throne in the temple called P'yogs t'ams cad las nam par rgyal bai gliñ, with a great concourse of monks from Se ra, aBras spuñs, dGa' ldan, sKyor mo luñ, he then went to Lhasa where he was solemnly initiated before Jo bo's image by dGa' ldan k'ri rin po c'e Zur pa Žal sña nas Sañs rgyas rin c'en, who acted as abbot (*mk'an po*), by the K'ri rin po c'e of dGa' ldan as master (*slob dpon*) and as officiating priest (*las t'og pa*) the Žal sña nas dGe adun rgyal mts'an (p. 27 a). He then took the name of Yon tan rgya mts'o.

The fifth Dalai Lama and the biographers from whom he draws his narrative relate only the young Lama's triumphs and solemn receptions; but it is not certain that every one applauded this incarnation of the dGe lugs pas' supreme chief among the Mongols, which had suddenly called a foreigner to occupy the abbatial throne of the sect's greatest monastery. It is, perhaps, not improbable that the K'ri rin po c'e of dGa' ldan, when he used his great age as an excuse to avoid travelling to Mongolia with the object of confirming the new Dalai Lama's incarnation, did not entirely approve of what had been prepared. Probably it was for this reason that he sent the P'yag mdsod gu šri in his stead. But as soon as the Dalai Lama came to Tibet, even if such doubts were felt, nothing transpired.

It is natural that the Red Caps and the rulers of gTsañ should be surprised and uneasy when they saw how the Yellow Sect was spreading among the Mongols, how the most powerful Mongol chiefs went over to them and what favour the new school enjoyed among them. The situation had completely changed; while the Mongol supporters of

the Reds were steadily decreasing and the sect's former penetration among them had given no fruit, we see in the course of a few years, since Altan Khan's invitation, Tūmāt, Čaḥar and Ordos under the dGe lugs pa's influence. Their religious dependence implied the possibility of political developments whose consequences could not but preoccupy gTsañ. Up to what point could the Yellows turn their converts' devotion to their own advantage, to get rid of their rivals once for all? It was no longer a case of friction between internal forces, which might have balanced each other; new possibilities were coming to the fore. Might not the Mongols invade Tibet on their new patrons' invitation, and become their temporal arm? This being the case, gTsañ went warily, for by this time it could only count on Tibetan forces and on noble families and convents hostile to the dGe lugs pa. The object was to gain time. No wonder then that the supreme representatives of the Red Sect did not abstain from congratulating the new Dalai Lama. The fifth Dalai Lama relates that the sGar c'en nas Žva dmar sGar dbaṅ C'os kyi dbaṅ p'yug<sup>107</sup>) wrote him a letter of congratulations (*legs byai žu šog*; Yon tan rgya mts'o biogr., p. 29b) which, as we shall see, gave occasion to the conflict which violently broke out a little later between the two sects. The letter was written according to the subtlest rules of rhetoric, in which the Žva dmar was past master, but it contained certain passages covertly urging the Dalai Lama to study deeply; these aroused the Yellow Sect's resentment. The Dalai Lama, they said, will take complete vows at the age of twenty, and he will certainly study under the masters chosen to instruct him, but as an incarnation of his predecessor, his knowledge is complete and needs no offers of guidance. Thus the letter, whether it had been written with a disparaging intention or not, hurt the dGe lugs pa's feelings; although well versed in logic and religion, they had no one capable

of rivalling the Žva dmar in rhetoric, hence, after long debates, rTse k'a pa sde pa rGyal c'en pa and the bŽu k'aṅ rab ḅyams pa dGe lugs lhun grub were called upon to compose an answer (*ibid.*, p. 31).

Meanwhile Yon tan rgya mts'o, according to the example of his predecessors and accepting invitations from princes and monasteries, began to travel throughout the whole of Tibet.<sup>108</sup>) The object of these journeys was propaganda: to establish direct relations and surround the head of the Yellow Sect with sympathies and support, which might be counted upon when the crisis, which was felt by all to be impending, should break out. That the above-mentioned families had invited him, does not mean they all definitely sided with the dGe lugs pa; in Tibet the heads of monasteries, reincarnated personages and famous lamas enjoy such prestige, and their miraculous powers excite such awe, that any clan able to do so is anxious to receive them as guests and to load them with gifts, no matter to which sect they belong. No wonder, then, that the young Dalai Lama should also tour in gTsañ, which was ruled as a feud by its chiefs, now completely independent from dBus, which had become increasingly powerful and menacing. The invitation naturally came both from the ecclesiastical authorities of bKra śis lhun po and from the lay authorities living under the new monastery's influence. The latter sent as its official envoy dGra ḅdul of Šar rtse. Yon tan rgya mts'o naturally had many good reasons not to ignore this invitation: bKra śis lhun po was the Yellow Sect's outpost in gTsañ, the symbol and the bulwark of the much-opposed school, in a country where the old convents were gaining new vigour, supported by the prudent generosity of the new kings ruling from bSam ḅrub rtse; bKra śis lhun po's fortunes would naturally have a great interest for the chiefs of the dGe lugs pa; this journey furnished them with a pretext and an occasion to watch closely the *sde srid* of gTsañ's

ventures, to get an idea of his intentions, to see if it was possible to reach an agreement or whether open war was unavoidable.<sup>109)</sup>

Let us omit the religious events, ceremonies and sermons recorded on this occasion: the fifth Dalai Lama dwells on them at length and aJigs med rig pai rdo rje accurately summarizes them. But it is worth recalling that during this visit Yon tan rgya mts'o is said to have converted to his doctrine the wife of the sde srid of gTsañ, P'un ts'ogs rnam rgyal; she belonged to the Yar rgyab family (p. 38 b).

From these times on, bKra šis lhun po's position in the general plan of the Yellow Sect appears clearly: the Pañ c'en rin po c'e, as its abbots were called later on, held aloof from any effective political activity, which he left to the monasteries of dBus, particularly to the one in aBras spuñs, which up to the foundation of the Potala by the fifth Dalai Lama, remained the dGe lugs pa's active capital. The Pañ c'en claimed for himself supreme spiritual authority, he became the Dalai Lama's guide and master, but he left the management of political affairs to the latter and to his monasteries in dBus. This policy, which later became traditional for the abbots of Tashi-lunpo, is certainly due, in part, to the fact that it was in a territory far removed from the school's centre, in the country most hostile to the Yellows, a short distance from bSam<sup>110)</sup> agrub rtse, the capital of gTsañ.

When Yon tan rgya mts'o got back to aBras spuñs, he met there the K'ri rin po c'e dKkon mc'og c'os ap'el,<sup>111)</sup> who was to have such a share in future events, as the fifth Dalai Lama's assistant, while from Kökö-nor new visitors arrived, like Lha btsun c'e ba, the son of K'o lo c'e, and Se tsen tai ji.

Meanwhile friction with the Kar ma pa became more acute; as it is always the case when suspicion and ill-will stand between opposite parties and groups, on both sides every pretext was taken to excite men's spirits. Since 1605 (*šin sbrul*) the P'ag mo

gru pa, together with the Žo dkar nag and others, had raided the camp of the sde pa of sKyid šod. The latter then had recourse to arms, making the situation more tense, and furnishing new motives for spite between the adverse parties, who took this occasion to vent their accumulated ill-will. We have already seen how, when Yon tan rgya mts'o had come to Tibet from Mongolia, the Žva dmar had written him a gratulatory letter in verse which, rightly or wrongly, had been taken in bad part by bŽu k'añ rab abyams pa dGe legs lhun grub; the Žva dmar and his secretary (*druñ yig*) aJam dbyañs retaliated, when they got to Lhasa, by writing on silken scrolls hung in front of the Jo bo's statue some obscure hints, in an enigmatic form, which were interpreted, when the news was brought to aBras spuñs, as an insult to the Yellow Sect.<sup>112)</sup>

Everyone understood that any chance of an agreement had vanished, for the rivals were far too embittered; an open conflict might break out at any moment, any pretext would have sufficed. So the quarrel was renewed concerning certain land in sNeu, which Don yod rdo rje, many years before, had annexed at the instigation of the Žva dmar C'os grags rgya mts'o, founding upon it the dgon pa of Sa nag mar. Hence the dGe lugs pa had suffered great anxiety: they considered that gTsañ garrison, in the very heart of their country, a serious menace against their stronghold (see SP, p. 653). Strife was again breaking out on account of that monastery: the prince of dGa' ldan gYul rgyal nor bu tried to get back the land and to take possession of the convent; peace was broken: the fifth Dalai Lama lays the initiative at the door of the sde srid of Yar gTsañ, but it is natural that, ruling over those lands, the latter should take up arms when confronted by an attempt to wrest them from him. Indeed elsewhere Blo bzañ rgya mts'o openly says that in the year c'u byi (1612)<sup>113)</sup> an armed coalition was formed by sNeu gdoñ rtse against the ruler

of gTsañ, P'un ts'ogs rnam rgyal; Lha rgya ri, Bya, Yar rgyab and aP'yoñ rgyas took part in it. But sources belonging to a different faction, like that of the Sa skya pa, protected and favoured by the chief of gTsañ, say that in 1607 this had recourse to arms in order to beat back an army of Sog po who had been invited to invade Tibet by sKyid šod, and that, although he conquered in 1612-13 a large part of Tibet, from Byañ and Ñañ stod to La stod and dBus, he could not lay down his arms because his rivals continually broke the peace; this was to be secured only in 1622-23.<sup>114)</sup>

The P'ag mo gru pa had the worst; they lost their old capital sNeu gdoñ and were obliged to give up their feud of Sa c'a rdoñ. But the appearance of the Mongols on the frontier put an end to the military operations which the old nobility was carrying on with the idea of supporting its own interests, while it was actually playing into the hands of the great religious sects.

Meanwhile, as these events were developing in rapid succession, Yon tan rgya mts'o had gone back to Se ra (p. 42 a) and then in 1611 (*lcags p'ag*) to aBras spuñs, where he performed, together with other lamas particularly versed in the rites of exorcism, great magical ceremonies to ward off incumbent perils.

In Tibet the frontiers between the real and the imaginary are so vague, that an admixture ensues: the invisible forces of prayer and magic ritual are considered more powerful and efficient than material weapons. In moments of extreme danger, men invoke the protection of the Lamaistic pantheon's supreme deities, particularly the terrific deities which obey the manifestations of aJigs byed represented in a warlike aspect as a defender of Tibet's menaced faith. Hence we must not wonder that the Yellow Sect, in such a moment of extreme peril, when the ruler of gTsañ seemed extremely powerful, had recourse to magic in order to obtain the help of the secret forces regulating the world's

destinies. And the incumbent danger was truly serious. In 1611 the chief of gTsañ, P'un ts'ogs rnam rgyal, attacked and defeated the prince of Yar rgyab (p. 55 a) and came to Lhasa, threatening many monasteries, which were barely saved by dKon mc'og c'os ap'el's intervention.<sup>115)</sup> He came to Lhasa not as a conqueror but rather as a visitor to his own domains; the city had passed under gTsañ rule a long time before and did not definitely come into the Yellows' hands until the fifth Dalai Lama's times. It must not be forgotten that the Red Caps excluded the dGe lugs pa from the celebration of the new year *smon lam*; this sentence must have been confirmed by some measure on the part of temporal authority, which can have been no other than the kings of gTsañ, zealous patrons of the Kar ma pa. Should we stand in need of further proofs, they are to be found in another passage by the same fifth Dalai Lama who says that (perhaps with the intention of improving relations between the Kar ma pa and the dGe lugs pa) gTsañ, in 1612 (*c'u byi*)<sup>116)</sup> gave Lhasa to the dGa' ldan P'o brañ. He had the power to do so, because Lhasa was his territory, ruled by one of his *gñer pa*; one of them was Rab abyams pa c'os dpal.

Having thus come to Lhasa, the *sde srid* of gTsañ wished to be initiated into the 108 rules of Ts'e dpag med. By thus propitiating the heads of the Yellow Sect, he wished to consign to oblivion the ill-will that war was arousing, and to obtain the good graces of the dGe lugs pa, who were already preparing to bind an alarming alliance with the Mongols. The ruler of gTsañ's request caused a great sensation among the dGe lugs' followers, who had gathered in Lhasa on this occasion; Yon tan rgya mts'o's court was wavering, but finally decided to refuse, because the Rab abyams bSod nams grags pa stated that the *sde srid's* request could not be granted, since he was an enemy of the dGe lugs pa doctrines. Though the biography does not say it so plainly, the consequence

was that Yon tan rgya mts'o had to seek a safer abode; we accordingly find him in bSam yas, seeking refuge in the reliable protection of his tutelary deities, the bsTan srñ and dPe kar (p. 43 a). Confronted by an armed foe, the lamas had no allies except the almighty divinities on whom, since Padmasambhava's times, the defence of the Law had been conferred, according to legend.

Meanwhile dKon mc'og c'os ap'el lost no time in gathering round the dGe lugs pa other monasteries having a noble history in Tibet's religious tradition. Due to this policy, in 1614, the sDe pa of dGa' ldan invited and got in touch with the Žabs druñ of sTag luñ, Nāg dbañ rnam rgyal.<sup>117)</sup> sTag luñ was one of Tibet's most ancient convents, it had a glorious history and unlike other Tibetan holy places had remained untouched by the invasions which at various times had laid the country waste. What is more, it was a bKa' bryud pa convent, which had kept faith with old traditions, but without going to extremes and still preserving many contacts with the bKa' gdams pa; this made an understanding with the dGe lugs pa easier, and their relations had become very close ever since the times of bSod nams rgya mts'o.<sup>118)</sup>

While these events were taking place, some great religious dignitaries from Mongolia, on the Chinese frontier (rgya sog), mDo stod and mDo smad, arrived in Lhasa (p. 45 b). Among them was rGyal ba rgya mts'o, žabs druñ of sToñ ak'or, ap'ags pa c'os kyi rgyal po, ap'ags pa Lhun mc'og, the incarnated of Ba so and others.

Their visit was a matter of politeness and homage; they brought gifts and asked for religious initiations, but the bare lists of visitors preserved by chronicles hide more important events; we can easily imagine, even if information is so scanty, how many relations were thus established, how many messages were exchanged through visitors and how many agreements were entered upon, while the ruler of gTsañ and his troops

penetrated the dBus region, an impending menace for the Yellow Sect and an obstacle to the fulfillment of its ambitions.

Meanwhile Yon tan rgya mts'o had grown in years, but kept aloof from these rapidly occurring events: studious and addicted to a life of devotion he seems to have left all negotiations and intrigues in the hands of the court dignitaries, who acted on his behalf and perhaps apart from him.

In 1614 (*šin stag*) he received the supreme ordination and finished his religious education under the Pañ c'en rin po c'e, the K'ri rin po c'e Sañs rgyas rin c'en, the K'ri rin po c'e dGe adun rgyal mts'an, the Žal sñā nas C'os gñer grags pa, the gZims k'añ goñ sprul sku and many other famous scholars and masters (p. 46 b). A little later the sToñ ak'or sprul sku aJam dbyañs rgya mts'o (p. 48 b) arrived with many pilgrims. But internal strife showed no sign of subsiding; in those years bDe c'en brag dkar and other places were incorporated by the sDe srid of gTsañ, who was then at the height of his power. The menace of its rivals was closing round the Yellow Sect; a large part of the dBus nobility, fearing for its own fortunes, hesitated (p. 48 a).

In 1616 (*me abrug*) according to the biographer, an embassy arrived, headed by bSod nams blo gros, whom the Emperor of China<sup>119)</sup> is said to have sent to Yon tan rgya mts'o to confer upon him the title of *K'yab bdag rdo rjei sañs rgyas* with its diploma. The envoys, who naturally brought precious gifts, were received in the assembly-hall of aBras spuñs (p. 59 a). We find these things in the Tibetan chronicles, but the *Ming shih* has no record of the embassy.

Tibet's internal situation was growing worse: the sDe srid of gTsañ was carrying out his hegemonic plans with tireless energy; the Yellow Sect saw many of its patrons conquered and trampled on by the armed forces of gTsañ. In 1616 the whole territory of sKyiid šod had been brought into subjection

and sNeu gdoñ had submitted, so that a large part of dBus and most of gTsañ were under the *sde srid*'s unchallenged sway.

The Yellows were in a difficult position: it was due to their insistence that a Mongol army commanded by two of K'o lo c'e's sons entered Tibet and induced the *sde srid* of gTsañ to behave less aggressively; it does not seem that any fighting occurred.

During these happenings, while many misgivings and fears were abroad, Yon t'an rgya mts'o died, still young in the twelfth month of 1616, during a very dangerous crisis for the Yellow Sect's career.

The events we have related all centre round the vicissitudes of a few eminent families or of the greater convents, but we must not let them delude us into a belief that the small states whose names do not appear in these pages lived peacefully. Even if they did not side with one or the other warring sect or faction, these lesser states were moved to take up arms by long-standing enmities. We can learn many things of this kind from the biography of Kun dga' rin c'en, the Sa skya pa lama, who is remembered in history as the reconstructor of the Sa skya pa temples and monasteries damaged by warfare or crumbling with age. Reading the story of his life we can see that gTsañ, in the middle of the XVIth century, was torn by continual guerrillas.

The Sa skya pa, remembering their former greatness, had claims to support; among their obstinate rivals we see the *sde pa* of Lha k'añ c'en mo and the *sde pa* of Lha sa rdsoñ. The former was the governor of the Great Monastery which had been turned into a fortress, in the plain to the South of the Grum c'u, which crosses the city of Sa skya. Was this governor an official of the P'ag mo gru, as in the times of Byañ c'ub rgyal mtsan and of his immediate successors? We have no reason to deny it, but no way of ascertaining it. Neither can we reach any certainty regarding Lha sa rdsoñ, unless we are to identify this place with Lha rtse on the gTsañ po,

not far from Sa skya, to the West of Shi-gatse. But whoever these enemies of Sa skya may have been, we see them so much more powerful, that they could force the Sa skya pa abbot Kun dga' rin c'en to flee from his see and repair in dBus, accepting the abbatial see of another monastery in Nalendra;<sup>120)</sup> we also find the ancient sympathies for the Sa skya stubbornly surviving the vicissitudes of those times, and the princes of Byañ and Gyantse levying troops and rushing to defend the head of the sect, vanquish his enemies, overthrow Lha sa rdsoñ, restore his former possessions to Kun dga' rin c'en and then Pa snam, Nor bui k'yuñ rtse, and aBroñ rtse join in the fight. We then see that friendship waning on the death of the princes of Byañ and Gyantse, the latter passing for a short time to other alliances, and while the might of Gyantse was crumbling, become the patron of the Sa skya pa lamas Žiñ bšags [Ts'e brtan] rdo rje, lord of bSam a grub rtse, the ancestor of the future gTsañ dynasty. In these pages we also find interesting information concerning other wars in which a large part of the Nñañ region was implied, for the succession to the throne of Pa snam;<sup>121)</sup> several princes tried to seize it by armed force, while the abbot of Nor dKon mc'og lhun grub protected it. We also find in these records proof of the progressive disappearance of the smaller states absorbed by the larger ones. In the restricted horizon within which these historians and hagiographers moved, every petty incident disturbing their lives acquired a particular relief, and they inclined to consider it a great event, but in reality these wars were simple encounters between a few armed bands, and the occasion of these warlike exploits was very often quite insignificant: quarrels over grazing rights or limits between different estates, usurpations of pasture grounds (*abrag*). In the biographies such small episodes troubling the life of feuds and petty states, reflect the illusion that some aftermath of their ancient greatness was still left to them, and thus arouse

a certain interest. Anyhow, whatever way one looks, in dBus and gTsañ, peace is nowhere to be found. Nor were internal struggles lacking, like those which had shaken the P'ag mo gru pa and substantially contributed to their rapid decay. Even in lesser states, like Byañ, north of the Brahmaputra, at the end of the XVIth century internal strife broke out, through the enmity of two factions: mDar and gDoñ, related by marriage to the dPon of Byañ's family; they ended with the defeat of the mDar who, having been vanquished in battle, had the city and their estates sacked by the gDoñ; the latter, according to the pious biographer who is my source for these events, were protected by the magic arts and defensive ceremonies of the Sa skya pa lama, bSod nams dbañ po.<sup>122)</sup> Not even Gyantse, now reduced to a small principate in the shadow of its great monastery, was spared internal quarrels, like that recorded by Tāranātha in his autobiography (p. 46), which furnished the powerful lords of bSam agrub rtse a pretext to set things right by a military expedition; as they had already done with Nor bui k'yuñ rtse, a citadel ruled by descendants of the celebrated C'os rgyal of Gyantse, whose possession had strategical value (*ibid.*, p. 27).

Thus on one side we see dBus more and more attached to the Yellow church, the old local nobility, weakened and without a chief, gathered round the sect, and the latter spreading among the Mongols and finding there new patrons and defenders. On the other hand gTsañ was cutting loose from the P'ag mo gru pa, becoming independent, associating with the Reds and taking up its position against the Yellows, lending a religious colour to conflicting interests and political rivalries. At the same time the aristocracy did not disarm or give in, indeed it clung almost stubbornly to its old enmities so that, when the moment came to unite for the defence of its very existence against invasion, it was found to be weakened, exhausted and failing.

## 8. THE TRIUMPH OF THE YELLOWS

The choice of the fifth Dalai Lama was perhaps an attempt to bring together the Yellows and those families which belonged by tradition to another school. It was decided to choose the incarnation of the new sect's supreme authority from a clan closely bound to the P'ag mo gru pa. And in reality Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, the future fifth Dalai Lama, born in 1617 (*me sbrul*) from Hor bDud adul rab brtan<sup>123)</sup> and Kun dga' lha mdsas, belonged to aP'yoñ rgyas' family, which, as we have seen, had furnished ministers to the P'ag mo gru pa for several generations. His mother was a descendant of the sNa dkar rtse clan, which had given birth to the famous dPon c'en Sa skya pa Ag len. But the circle into which Blo bzañ rgya mts'o was born remained under the influence of the Reds, whether Kar ma pa or aBrug pa; the principal officials of that small court and the commander of its troops, were professed followers of the Reds.

Even before he had been recognized as an incarnation of the Yellow Sect's supreme ruler, the Kar ma pa had tried to monopolize him, stating that he was an avatāra of the rGyal ts'ab Kar ma pa, or of the bLa ma aBrug pa of Lha rtse (p. 25 b). But this is not all: aP'yoñ rgyas's family boasted its descent from Za hor in India, but in an indirect manner, because Dharmapāla, whose late progeny it claimed to be, was said to have transferred himself to the hermitage of Bhaṭa Hor, in the Hor country, presided over by King Pe dkar. By accepting this legend the aP'yoñ rgyas princes recognized and proved their relations with the C'os skyoñ of bSam yas, namely with Tibet's official defender, whose abode was in the temple inaugurated by Padmasambhava; the temple had remained, before it was handed over to the Sa skya pa and then controlled by the dGe lugs pa, the glorious centre of rÑiñ ma pa tradition.

Indeed the bulky works of Blo bzañ rgya mts'o show his culture and his writings to have been deeply influenced by the religious education of rÑiñ ma pa inspiration he had received in his early years. These writings reveal a deep knowledge of rÑiñ ma pa and Kar ma pa doctrines, and this is a unique case in the literature of the Yellows, which in course of time had become more and more uncompromising and exclusive.

Nevertheless the family had shown at an early date its sympathies with Tsoñ k'a pa's reform. Since the times of Hor dPal abyor bzañ po, who had been master of ceremonies (*gsol dpon*) and then general (*dmag dpon*) of the *spyan sna* bSod nam's grags pa (1359-1408) and who was appointed *rdsoñ dpon* of bSam a grub rtse in Nañ smad (today Shigatse), good relations begin between the reformed bKa' gdams pa and the aP'yoñ rgyas' family. That prince, according to the biography (p. 16 a), was a pupil of dGe a dun grub and so completely conquered by the new doctrine, that he began to protect it to the point of becoming one of the main contributors to the construction of bKra šis lhun po. The same relations of liking and friendship continued in dGe a dun rgya mts'o's times.

The aP'yoñ rgyas pa's sympathies for the reformed school thus seem undeniable, and are easily explained when we remember what has been said above concerning contacts and relations between bKa' brgyud pa and bKa' gdams pa. But on the other hand it cannot be denied that Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, writing when the triumph of the Yellows, recognized as bKa' gdams pa's successors, was a certainty, may have stressed this ancient orthodoxy of his own family.

The future fifth Dalai Lama, whose complete name was Kun dga' mi agyur stobs rgyal dbañ gi rgyal po (*Biography*, p. 23 a) was recognized as an incarnation by the Pañ c'en rin po c'e and by the Žabs druñ of gLiñ smad dKon mc'og c'os aP'el, with whom were associated the Ts'a ba bKa' bcu pa of

dGa' ldan p'o brañ Sañ rgyas šes rab, and some officials (*mi sna*) of Lha btsun and Huñ tai ji (p. 27).<sup>124)</sup> The position taken up by these dignitaries and by the Mongol chiefs they represented towards the new incarnation is extremely significant; it shows that the relations established in bSod nam's rgya mts'o's times, and made still closer by Yontan rgya mts'o, had by now closely linked the fortunes of the dGe lugs pa with the armed support of the Mongol tribes. On the contrary it seems that the sDe srid of gTsañ, Kar ma bstan skyoñ (p. 27 b) was absent from the first initiation. Or rather, since he was still very young (sixteen in the year 1621, when these events took place), his government, in the hands of the Nañ blon mGon gñer Boñ goñ pa and of the p'yi blon sGañ jug pa lba, was adverse to sending representatives to the newly incarnated Dalai Lama, being suspicious of the good relations the Yellow Sect kept up with the Mongols. Relations between the Yellows and gTsañ were already extremely strained, when in gTsañ the rumor spread of a fresh Mongol invasion supported by the Yellow Sect. In fact, in 1621 the Mongol troops commanded by Lha btsun and Huñ t'ai ji descended in dBus but were opposed by the King of bTsañ, who was defeated in the battle fought in brGyad t'añ sgañ. He then withdrew and took refuge in the lCags po ri of Lhasa which he fortified; the aggressors besieged him there.<sup>125)</sup> The Tibetan troops amounted to about ten thousand men, but they were overcome and soon defeated; being worn out, they were about to surrender. Then the dGe lugs pa intervened: the Pañ c'en of Tashilunpo and the dKon mc'og c'os aP'el offered themselves as peacemakers, and saved the gTsañ army and its chiefs from certain massacre. But a crafty plan should not be mistaken for generosity; first of all they traded upon their task as go-betweens and they got back most of the feuds the king of gTsañ had annexed to his

dominions and the monasteries that had been obliged to change their sect by the advice of his *Žva dmar* chaplains. Next they did not wish that the only armed forces Tibet possessed and on which it could count should be annihilated. The chiefs of the Yellow Sect were in excellent relations with the Mongols and their policy was to increase the Mongols' devotion and obedience; but they knew that the sympathies of the *Sog po* chiefs might change. Therefore they thought it would be well-advised to save, for the time being, *gTsañ's* armed forces, as a precaution and a defence against all possible danger of invasion.

In the meantime young *Blo bzañ rgya mts'o* was growing up, under the Mongols' watchful protection. In 1622 the child, accompanied by the *Pañ c'en* and other personages from Tibet and Mongolia, arrived in *āBras spuñs*, and was received by the monks of *Se ra* and *āBras spuñs*, headed by the *Žal ño bSod nams rab brtan* (concerning whom see *Biogr.*, pp. 26 b, 29 b, 30 b, etc., 31 a etc.; cfr. *KLOÑ RDOL BLA MA*, 'a, p. 15 b, which instead of *Žal ño* calls him: *p'yag mdsod*).

The most authoritative Mongols, who supported the youthful lama and the Yellow Sect, were as we have seen, *Lha btsun Blo bstan ādsin rgya mts'o* (who on p. 30 a, is stated to be a descendant of Gengis Khan *C'en gis gan gyi gduñ*) and *Huñ t'ai ji*.<sup>126</sup> In 1625 *T'ab pa t'ai ji* (*Toba Taiji*) the son of *Ji non rgyal po*, prince (*bdag po*) of the white tents ("*gur dkar* „)<sup>127</sup> and he also a descendant of Gengis Khan, arrived in *āBras spuñs* (p. 39 b). He was at the head of 40.000 soldiers of *Tümät* (of *mK'ar sñon*, *Kökö Hota*) (p. 40 a) and was attended by a large retinue, comprising great dignitaries and authoritative monks (p. 50 b).

The relations, more and more close, between the Yellow Sect and the Mongols, the uninterrupted arrival of Mongol notables and pilgrims, and the rich gifts offered to the new church, proving the barbarians' favour and

respect for *Tsoñ k'a pa's* school, increased the *gTsañ* prince's jealousy and suspicion. He too sought help outside Tibet, but above all he contracted a system of alliances which should have isolated the Yellow Sect and pitted against it a strong coalition of lay and religious communities. We must not forget this confidence the prince of *gTsañ* felt for the Tibetan forces. He found himself in the position of a rival of the last *P'ag mo gru pa*, by now carried away by the course of events; nevertheless, in a certain sense, he took up again and continued that same task of upholding Tibet's national cause, which had inspired the great *Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an*. As the latter had shaken off the *Yüan's* yoke and had broken loose from the foreign influence accepted or submitted to by the *Sa skya pa*, so the king of *gTsañ*, seeing the dangers resulting from an alliance with the Mongols, gathered around himself the old nobility, fearful of new events, and the old religious communities who looked with suspicion on the Yellow Sect's expansion. In 1631 *Kar ma bstan skyoñ*, acting before danger developed or hoping to avoid it, began to plot against the *dGe lugs pa*, apparently with success, since the *Dalai Lama* and the *Žal ño* sought refuge in *sNeu gdoñ* with *Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's* now feeble descendants.

Nevertheless the arrival in *āBras spuñs* of several Mongol dignitaries made him more cautious. A thousand *Halha* then arrived (p. 66 c), headed by *A k'ai dai c'in*, 300 *Oirat* led by *Ma rgan No yon*, 300 *Tümät* officers of *Lha btsun c'un ba* and *Huñ tai ji* mentioned above, escorting some pilgrims of *Kökö-nor*, headed by *Dar k'an C'os rje* of *Co ne* and the *Em c'i* of *Brag ti c'u skor* and *rDo rje señ ge*, an officer of the *Ba ran k'ar* (right wing). On the occasion of their arrival a great celebration was made, during which the Mongols themselves showed their ability as swordsmen in feigned battles. Suddenly the *sde srid* mobilized (p. 68 b) much to the surprise

of the dGe lugs pa, who repeatedly took counsel, to prevent the situation from coming rapidly to a head.

Their fears were justified: the dGe lugs pa were not sure of being the winners if the battle was fought in Tibet exclusively with local troops; the sect had not yet reached such power as to fight the military nobility and the rival convents who defended not only the prestige of their own doctrines, but also their ancient privileges. All these reasons induced the dGe lugs pa to gain time, all the more so as the hasty return of the Mongols to their country cleared up the horizon, at least for the time being.

A short time later the Mongols' afflux began again: in 1633 (*c'u bya*) Tūmāt and Ordos pilgrims appeared, asking to be initiated into the mysteries of Lamaism. But from Mongolia others were coming with less pious intentions. In 1632 raids of Lower Hor (*Hor smad*) robbers are recorded, and some Halha chiefs got as far as aBri guñ, but retired immediately.<sup>128)</sup> Patrons of the sect also arrived, like that dPon of the Yuñ ši yi bu<sup>129)</sup> (p. 69 b) (called Yuñ ši yi bu kar ma yil da, p. 74) a follower of the bKa' brgyud pa, who had now come to Tibet as a consequence of the ruin of his reign at the hands of the King of Čaḥar, Legs ldan khan. He visited Lhasa, aBras spuñs and mTs'ur p'u, and the Yellow Sect tried to convert him to its doctrines.

Meanwhile a more serious menace was gathering over Tibet, and precisely, at least in its initial period, against the Yellow Sect. In Mongolia several events had matured which made the tribes' constant warfare more acute and created new coalitions, thus causing the hordes to be always on the move. Hence many beaten and persecuted clans found their way to Tibet. As the fifth Dalai Lama says (*Biography*, p. 77 a) for the year 1634 "Heretofore the six clans of the Sog po had made but one body, and outside the damage derived from continual warfare,

there was no iniquity in them, but Legs ldan of C'ar k'ar and C'og t'u gave the example of many iniquities „

This time the menace came from the Sog po of C'og t'u of the Halha, whose son Ar sa lañ (*Ārslān*), in the autumn of 1635, invaded Tibet. He had descended upon Tibet to loot it; his first victims were the Kar ma pa. Imminent peril and the approach of the Mongol hordes induced the two rival factions, Yellows and Reds, to bid for the invader's good graces and to draw him to their side. The Reds were the first to approach him; they were sent or encouraged by the king of gTsañ, with whom Ārslān, as soon as he got to Lhasa, allied himself, following the advice and sollicitations of the Rab aByams pa Žva dmar.<sup>130)</sup>

So Ārslān proclaimed himself an enemy of the dGe lugs pa, but remained indifferent to the lesser schools, like the Sa skya pa. Acting thus he conformed to the instructions of his father, a Reds' patron, who had succeeded in drawing to his side also Legs ldan khan of the Čaḥar,<sup>131)</sup> formerly a supporter of the Yellows. Legs ldan had motives of his own to change his religious policy; he saw the Oirat Gu śri khan's power grow more and more menacing; the latter's sympathies for the Yellows were well known, while the Mongol tribes, having become impatient of his tyranny, more and more frequently deserted Legs ldan.

The alliances upon which the Tibetans could found their hopes were then very uncertain, and faith was easily changed according to political circumstances; not all the tribes among which the dGe lugs pa had made converts could be safely trusted: intrigues of opposite sects and changing circumstances, reasons of opportunity, might suddenly alter the balance of political understandings and support. The dGe lugs pa did not give up, and, ably manoeuvring, they succeeded in getting round Ārslān, so that he gradually changed his attitude and finally reversed it.

Towards the end of 1635 the Mongol right wing, led by Er ke Jai sañ arrived in aBri guñ, whence it marched southward, taking with it prisoners which they sent on towards aP'an yul; a detachment of about 200 men got as far as Lhasa and then to aBras spuñs, setting fire to the village. The Zur pa, whose life has been written by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, did not loose courage, and bravely marched against the invaders, obtaining that dGe ldan should be spared; he succeeded in converting Er ke Jai sañ to the dGe lugs' doctrine. While the right wing of the Mongols changed its allegiance and passed from the Red to the Yellow school, Ārslān was doing the same. He was then in Yar aBrog, but he had already changed his mind. This should not seem surprising: Ārslān had no religious zeal: indifferent to any spiritual call, he was only keen on plundering the country. He accordingly sent his left wing against the king of gTsañ, took gŽi (dkar) rtse and Gyantse, spreading terror everywhere, but when he got to the sGam pa la, Huñ t'ai ji fell upon the scanty troops which were killed or dispersed, while the survivors were cut down by small-pox, which spread all over Tibet. This time also an invasion, laying waste a large part of the country, had passed over it, while the two rival churches, Yellows and Reds, did not personally take part in the strife. The only victim was Ārslān, whom the Rab aByams pa Žva dmar denounced to his own father as a traitor; he was murdered by the latter's order, together with three of his officers (1636).

A short time after these events C'a k'ar C'og tu's power in Mongolia was over: Gu śri khan of the Oirat, having become allied with Pā t'ur Huñ t'ai ji (p. 84 a), had dealt them a deadly blow when he destroyed, in 1637, their army of 3000 men.

Having vanquished his rivals, the Gu śri dPon po arrived in Lhasa in the guise of a pilgrim; he was followed by the C'os rje of Co ne and by the Sa skyoñ of the T'og

rgod (Törgüt) rNam rgyal (p. 84 b), a thousand persons all counted. On this occasion Blo bzañ rgyal mts'o conferred on Gu śri the title of *bsTan adsin c'os kyi rgyal po*, and the latter in his turn gave various titles to the dignitaries of the fifth Dalai Lama's court (p. 85 b): to the Žal ño he gave the title of Da lai p'yag mdsod, to the Groñ smad nas that of Jai sañ sde pa, to Byañ ños nas bKra šis p'un ts'ogs the title of Ul cin sde pa, to Mer gen gŽon pa that of O t'o c'i, to sTar sdoñ nas that of Jo rig t'u dar k'an. Having gone back to Mongolia, Gu śri Khan, in 1638 sent new envoys to invite the fifth Dalai Lama; among them were Mer gen dka' pa Šes rab rgya mts'o, Jai sañ Me dei c'i and Jai sañ gu śri (p. 89 a). But the invitation was not accepted, on the advice of the Žal ño, and the Dalai Lama's departure was put off. Meanwhile events rapidly succeeded one another; in 1640 (*lcags abrug*) the Sog po had reached central K'ams on an expedition against the Prince of Bi ri, <sup>132</sup>) who held out against the Gu śri and protected the Bon po, persecuting Lamaism in all its schools and sects; the King of gTsañ, still powerful, was always a serious menace for the new sect.

I call these Princes of bSam a grub rtse Kings, because they claimed supreme power in the environs of gTsañ, and also rights over dBus. And in reality both SaYang Sācān and the Chinese sources call him Qa'an, but orthodox Tibetan historians give him the more unassuming name of *sde srid*, i. e. regent or simply gTsañ pa "the man from gTsañ". Thus they did not recognize him as a king. The C'os rgyal, the king ruling according to the Law and enforcing respect for the Law, still continued to be for them, as we have said, the P'ag mo gru pa prince. The rulers of gTsañ, successors of the princes of Rin spuñs, are his treacherous ministers. Their claim to hegemony was not recognized by the Yellow Sect, which had remained faithful to the P'ag mo gru pa, its protectors in early

times. The *sde srid*, going beyond their duties and misusing their authority, were considered usurpers of royal power, who had rebelled against their liege lords. But they did not concern themselves much with this opposition; in dBus too they had their supporters, and it must not be forgotten that Lhasa had been governed by their officials.

The rulers of gTsañ placed their chaplains (*mc'od gnas*)<sup>133</sup> in many dGe lugs pa temples (p. 96 b); their spiritual guides and their favourite lamas belonged to the ancient schools, more or less hostile to the dGe lugs pa: Sa skya pa, Kar ma pa and Jo nañ pa (p. 96 b) representing a painful thorn in the flesh of the Yellows.

The rulers of gTsañ's aversion for the Yellows does not mean that the former were impious and irreligious: histories belonging to the prevailing sect show Ka rma bstan skyoñ dbañ po under a bad light, but it is clear that their better judgement was obscured by dogmatic hatred and by ill-will born of political rivalry. That prince protected the old tradition, he continued it and defended it; the country's conservative forces gathered round him, and he, though events forced him not to refuse his eventual help to Sog po converts to Red Lamaism, nevertheless was at the head of the party which opposed any outside interference in Tibetan affairs, and very nearly represented in his personal currents and orthodox tradition.

His hostility for the Yellow Sect, which became more and more strong and threatening in dBus, induced him to give all his support to gTsañ's declining monasteries, over which the hurricane of war had passed, or which were sinking into squalour and poverty in the general decline of once flourishing sects. So we see him reconstructing P'un ts'ogs gliñ in the environs of Jo nañ, restoring sNar t'añ, bSam sdiñs in Pa rnam and T'ar pa.<sup>134</sup>

Meanwhile gTsañ (Yar gTsañ or gTsañ stod) not only had to resist the Yellow

Sect's threatening spread, it also had to fight a new enemy in the West, namely Señ ge rnam rgyal, king of Ladakh. The events of this war are briefly summed up in the Ladakh chronicles, from which we gather that this military expedition turned out badly for Señ ge rnam rgyal; nevertheless things remained as before. The king of gTsañ had more serious worries in the environs of dBus and could not give much attention to the parched Western lands: Señ ge rnam rgyal, who had been defeated in Shi ri kar mo (*Chronicles of Ladakh*, p. 40) obtained that the old frontiers should be preserved, that his dominions, increased by recent conquests, should reach as far as the doors of gTsañ, namely up to Nam riñs on the Charta<sup>135</sup> river. The causes of this useless war are not known: perhaps it broke out because of frontier differences, or perhaps because the king of gTsañ was called on for help by the surviving princes of Guge, whose relative he had become, if we are to believe that the king of Guge sued for the hand of the gTsañ ruler's daughter for his heir.<sup>136</sup>

This king of gTsañ, who fought so tenaciously to uphold his hegemony on the eve of his fatal and final downfall, became known even in Europe. His name is closely bound up with the brief but glorious vicissitudes of the Catholic mission in Central Tibet, which Cacella and Cabral tried to found between 1626 and 1632.

The various fortunes of this apostolic attempt in the centre of Tibet have been told with ample details by Father Wessels,<sup>137</sup> and it is useless to repeat what is already known. We shall only remind the reader that from the narratives of missionaries, both de Andrade in Guge and Cabral in Shigatse, it appears that this prince was hospitable towards these priests who, by their arrival, showed him the unsuspected vastity of the earth and suggested new revelations of God.

The portrait traced by Cabral of this young prince, whom he met in 1626, when

he was 22, is extremely flattering. He describes him as handsome, pious and generous to the poor. He lived in his palace in Shigatse on the top of a mountain, where the Chinese fortress now stands; the palace was built like Portuguese fortresses. There he lived with his court and his guards in great luxury; his rooms were gilded and painted, the king's apartments were worth seeing, particularly that part in which he collected curios which, being rich, he gathered on all sides. There are curtains both of Chinese damask and of other qualities, which may vie with the Portuguese silks (WESSELS, pp. 3 and 4); but he adds that the king did not greatly esteem the monks of Tsaparang, who lived in a monastery not far from Shigatse, that is in the mNa' ris grva ts'an in Tashilunpo.

But let us resume the course of events. The King of gTsañ's decided attitude could only induce the Yellow Sect to side more and more with the Mongols, now converted to its ideas, and on the other hand to favour, in every possible manner, the ambitions of the new and very powerful chief whose redoubtable hordes were so near its frontiers, and whose piety and devotions enjoyed a more or less exaggerated prestige. Not only did messengers come and go between the Yellow Sect's supreme authorities and Gu śri Khan, but the dGe lugs pa monks were often mobilized to perform religious services to propitiate divine favour for the Mongol monarch's arms.

The war against Bi ri delayed the invasion of Tibet, and in full agreement with the Yellow Sect, whose chiefs advised the King to defeat Bi ri first of all, and to get rid of the danger hanging over the sect in Eastern Tibet. The dGe lugs pa were probably induced to do so by the fear that Bi ri would come to an understanding with gTsañ, so that aBras spuñs, Se ra and dGa' ldan, attacked on two sides, would be in danger. Such, according to Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, was the Bon po king's intention (p. 98 b). On the other hand Gu śri Khan too had every intention

of ruling out any possible surprise against his rearguard; hence the precedence of the expedition against Bi ri was according to the plans both of the Mongols and of the Yellow Sect. Gu śri Khan's expedition into Tibet and his wars with the *sde srid* of gTsañ were thus the conclusion of the Yellow Sect's policy, which had begun ever since bSod nams rgya mts'o's times; the religious propaganda which the dGe lugs pa had carried out among the Mongols, supplanting the Reds' propaganda, served to find there some support in order to affirm their sovereignty over Tibet. Even after some time, foreign informers well acquainted with Tibetan affairs could assure that Gu śri Khan's intervention was requested by the Dalai Lama and by his court, who did not hesitate to call upon foreign aid in order to get rid once for all of a combative rival.

“Le grand Lama, justement irrité contre le Roi, dont il commençait à être méprisé, appela à son secours les Tartares de Kokonor ses voisins... Le Prince Couchi kan, avec le secours de Hong tai ki et des autres Princes de sa famille, entra aussitôt avec une grosse armée dans le Thibet, attaqua le Roi Tsampa et après quelques combats le défit dans une bataille générale et l'ayant fait prisonnier il le fit mourir peu après. C'est à ce Prince que le Grand Lama fût redevable de la souveraineté du Thibet...”<sup>138)</sup>

In the year 1641 (*lcags sbrul*) Gu śri Khan finally brought under subjection the six sGañ (sGañ drug) in K'ams; their head was precisely the prince of Bi ri who, defeated in battle, tried in vain to save himself by flight. Buddhism triumphed once again in the provinces lately governed by that obstinate defender of Tibet's native religion; many Buddhist monks he had kept in prison were freed, and it is possible that the Bon po in their turn, were victims of the victors' revenge, instigated by Lamas under the Mongol King's protection. Once K'ams had been pacified, Gu śri Khan could deal with Tibet proper.

By a stratagem, in order not to arouse the gTsañ's suspicions, he called back in dBus the Pañ c'en residing in Tashilunpo who might have fallen into the king's hands; then, in agreement with the chiefs of the Yellow Sect, he had it noised abroad that he was leaving for mTs'o k'a, Kökö-nor. At the same time the Žal ño joined the Mongol army. Gu śri Khan left for gTsañ, while his two wives were entrusted to the care of Se ra and aBras spuñs. The sDe srid then sent one of his officials, Roñ pa rTa mgrin pa, to procure information on forthcoming events and above all to find out the moves and intentions of the Žal ño, who, as we have said, seems to be the principal actor in all this episode, as he certainly was gTsañ's most implacable enemy. But the mission was fruitless, while the Yellow Sect's intelligence service was better organized in the gTsañ region. Meanwhile the Mongol armies began to approach: Bodon gu yen with his troops, passing through sTag luñ, cut off the highways. The signal of war had been given, the various princes secretly siding with one or the other faction were obliged to come out into the open; the Žal ño displayed a great activity; to draw those of Lha rgya ri and other Southern populations on the Yellow's side, he sent influential envoys, persuaded and organized. Events were coming to a head in rapid succession; all Central Tibet was implied in this war, which by now appeared to be decisive for the fortunes of Tibet and of the rival sects. The fifth Dalai Lama hardly mentions the battles fought by the Mongols, he only dwells on the conduct of the nobility and on the Žal ño's deeds. After the gTsañ pa had been defeated in Brag dkar and then in Me t'og t'añ by the Mongols, the war nevertheless continued for another seven months, as Kloñ rdol relates (p. 15 b).

Finally, in 1642, the end of the war approached: after an obstinate resistance bSam a grub rtse, the capital of the rulers of gTsañ, standing where the castle of Shigatse was built

later, was taken, and Kar ma bsTan skyoñ was taken prisoner and killed. This event, which opened a new period in Tibetan history, became known in Europe: Father Gerbillon who arrived in China in 1687, writing many years after these events, speaks of Kar ma bstan skyoñ as of the greatest temporal authority in Tibet, and briefly sums up the events which caused his death:

"... il n'y a pas plus de 60 ans que le Thibet, qu'on appelle indifféremment Toubet, Thibet et Tangout, était gouverné par un Roy naturel du pays nommé Tsanpa han, que les Chinois appellent dans leurs histoires Tsan pou.

"Ce prince était autrefois très puissant...; bien que le grand Lama qu'on nomme ici Dalai Lama demeurât dès lors dans Poutala, que nos voyageurs ont appelé indifféremment Botala, Lassa et Barantola, il n'était pourtant pas souverain temporel du pays; c'était Tsan pa qui régnait alors, et qui perdit la couronne de la manière que je vais raconter.

"Les Mongols, qui révèrent le Dalai Lama comme une divinité sur terre, jugèrent que Tsan pa ne le traitait pas assez honorablement et que c'était à eux à venger sa dignité des mépris qu'on en faisait; le Roy de cette troisième espèce d'Eleuths dont nous parlons, joignit à ses gens ceux que Patourou hum Taiki lui amena; il attaqua ensuite le Roy de Thibet, le défit en bataille rangée, le fit prisonnier, et l'ayant fait mourir, il donna le Royaume de Thibet au Grand Lama..."<sup>139)</sup>

Gerbillon wrote in China, where these events were followed with great attention. Before the conclusive war broke out, the contending parties had in fact explained the situation and stated their claims to the Manchu Emperor Ch'ung-tê.

In the tenth month of 1642<sup>140)</sup> a large Tibetan delegation guided by Ilayuqšan Säcän C'os rje arrived in Mukden, bringing letters from the Dalai Lama, the Tsan pa han, i. e. the King of gTsañ, and the Kar ma pa, the Red Caps, whose patron the latter had

become. The occasion seemed favourable for many reasons. The Ming dynasty was collapsing, and was being succeeded by the Manchu dynasty of the Ts'ing. Tibet, laid waste and torn asunder by internal warfare, now garrisoned by the Mongols, understood the dangers of a policy which had opened up the country to foreign invasion.

The rulers of gTsañ, hoping to find help or compensations from the new power which had already taken possession of the largest part of China, and the Dalai Lama hoping to counterbalance Gu śri Khan's interference, had recourse to that ancient patronage which China claimed over Tibet. Incapable of reaching an agreement, the rival parties thought of appealing to the Manchu Emperor's supreme judgement. Since 1639 the Emperor had sent envoys, bearing non-committal letters, to the Dalai Lama and to the ruler of Tibet. The letter does not contain the king's name, and asks for monks able to preach the Law; a second letter was sent to the Dalai Lama.<sup>141)</sup> Probably Ch'ung-tê, being aware of Tibet's uncertain and critical situation, had purposely been vague, in order to become informed of the course of events from his ambassadors' spoken word.

The Tibetan delegates of 1642 were received with great honours by the Court and remained in Mukden eight months. Finally they departed bearing various letters, whose tone was different according to the persons they were addressed to. To the mission had been added other persons named by the Emperor (nearly all monks *ko lung, dge sloñ*).

In these letters precedence is naturally given to the Dalai Lama, who as a consequence of the latest happenings had become the supreme authority in Tibet. But the Emperor did not wish to take sides: the information he had received from the delegation or obtained through other channels, showed him that Tibet was divided into factions in bitter strife, which gave a religious colour to irreducible clashes of interests; it wavered

irresolute between two powerful sects, both supported by lay forces. Therefore he did not commit himself, but sent generous gifts to the Dalai Lama, and in his letters to him he employed more outspoken terms than he had used with the others; he complacently praised his good intentions for the diffusion of the Buddhist religion. To the Kar ma Žva dmar (*Ko eul ma*, the red-cap lama) he promised to respect the Buddhist monks according to the traditional toleration of the Buddhist laws. But the gifts he sent them were inferior to those he had sent the Dalai Lama.<sup>142)</sup>

With the Tsan pa kan, i. e. Kar ma bstan skyoñ, he was very evasive; the news of his death had not yet reached China, but his reverses were known; therefore foreseeing his ruin but still doubtful of the course of events, the Emperor asked for a report on the facts and urged him to do his duty.

When writing to the Gu śri Khan, his tone is even more vague. He was keeping an eye on his movements. Meanwhile he held aloof from quarrels between the sects and when he asks for lamas to be sent to him to preach the Buddhist religion, he recommends that no preference be shown to Red or Yellows and that only persons of merit be sent.

In none of these letters, as we have seen, is there any allusion to diplomas or titles: no investiture was given either to the Dalai Lama or to Gu śri Khan. The Emperor confines himself to answering the letters he had received and returning the gifts fixed by ceremonial, without taking sides. Also the chiefs of other sects received letters from him: the Sa skya pa, the aBrug pa, the sTag luñ pa. He was careful to be impartial; China does not interfere with quarrels between schools, indeed from the Chinese court issued wise and serene words of peace.

We are now in a position to establish the precise chronology of events: Schulemann (p. 138) was inclined to accept 1640 as the year of the King of gTsañ's defeat; Köppen (pp. 152-156) preferred 1643; Rockhill (*The*

*Dalai Lamas of Lhasa*, T'oung Pao, 1910, p. 8, n. 2) fixes the date between 1641 and 1643. S. Chandra Das, in his *Journey and Csoma de Kőrös, Grammar*, p. 190, gave 1642, which is the right date, because the indication of cyclic years in Blo bzañ rgya mts'o and in Sum pa mk'an po leaves not the shadow of a doubt that Kar ma bstan skyoñ was defeated in 1642 and that in this year, together with his life, ended the kingdom he had defended to the last with the force of arms. His rival having disappeared from the world's scene and Tibet having been pacified for the time being, the Dalai Lama received from the Gu śri Khan many gifts and the investiture over the 13 *K'ri skor* (p. 106 b).

The dGe lugs pa sect thus emerged victorious out of these events, and the winner, posing as a patron and defender of the faith, returned to them, at least nominally, their temporal power. The Yellow Sect was triumphantly installed in Lhasa, which once more became the capital of the Country of Snows, and young Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, now wearing a halo of inviolable prestige, occupied the throne of the Potala, a gift of foreign military power and of his court's diplomatic abilities.

The outstanding figure of the events we have been relating is not the fifth Dalai Lama; he was still too young in years to enforce his own will or to cope with such complex situations. In this stormy and decisive period the dGe lugs pa happened to be ruled by crafty and experienced persons, like the Žal no bSod nams rab brtan, whom we have often mentioned, and the P'yag mdsod dKon mc'og c'os ap'el, who manœuvered with great skill and steered the sect's fortunes and its future to safety over the stormy seas of the period.

Ambitions were many, but the sect's actual strength was still small; its enemies were strong and they were not inclined to come to terms; the only way open to the dGe lugs pa, if they were to found their power on a safe base and overcome their enemies, was

the use of political plots and of foreign aid. The latter was surely the speediest and the most certain, but, as it is usually the case when recourse is made to external arms, would finally have deprived Tibet of its independence, under the appearance of an artificial unity, protected first by Mongol, then by Chinese armies.

Thus peace, while silencing internal strife, brought to Tibet the invasion of its territory and loss of independence; the Dalai Lamas themselves, no longer sure of their authority and of their lives, bowed before the will of foreign generals and officials.

## 9. THE LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE

With the donation of the thirteen *K'ri skor*, made by Gu śri Khan to Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, the situation was renewed which had arisen in the XIIIth century, when ap'ags pa, appointed *Ti shih* by Qubilai, received the nominal investiture over Tibet. The example of the great Emperor and of his chaplain was thus repeated; that alleged donation at the same time inspired the Yellow Sect's policy and flattered the Mongol chief, anxious to emulate his great ancestor. But circumstances were changed and the agreement made between Gu śri Khan and the Dalai Lama took no account of China, which could not renounce her claims over Tibet. It is true that Chinese control was reduced to exacting a few tributes and confirming the nobility's privileges, but these were rights acquired since Yüan times, and China would not have given them up for any reason whatever. The Ming dynasty was then drawing its last breath and the Tibetan chiefs, as we have seen, were already in touch with the Manchus: as soon as the latter had become firmly established, how could they suffer another power to interfere with Tibetan affairs? Did not the Dalai

Lamate's policy mean that Tibet was about to suffer calamities much worse than those war and small-pox, long prevailing, had spread over the country? It is clear that the Yellow Sect, only intent on strengthening its own power at the Reds' expense, was not far-sighted: it encouraged dissension and merely taking thought of the present, did not measure the consequences of a temporary triumph.

This time too, triumph was simply nominal. It is true that Gu śri Khan's power was not to be compared with that of Qubilai, so that the Dalai Lama might easily obtain a fair measure of self-government for Tibetan administration. Nevertheless, as Qubilai had appointed, side by side with the Ti shih, the dPon c'en who united civil and military power in their hands, the Dalai Lama had now at his side a *sde srid*, sometimes also called *sa skyoñ*, practically with the same functions.

This *sde srid* was chosen by the Mongol chief and represented him; the same king elected and confirmed the local chiefs (for instance c'os rgyal bKra śis stobs invested of Byañ in gYas ru, *Biography, c'a*, p. 141). A new struggle was thus brewing between the Dalai Lamate and political paramountcy, and if the former had the upper hand, this was due above all to Gu śri Khan's unfortunate succession. But in the meanwhile the Tibetan nobility could not see with favour its own independence thus implicitly abolished, while the Reds and all the sects which had sided with the rulers of gTsañ could not help new grievances against the Yellow's policy: to take possession of the vanquished party's feuds and convents, substituting themselves to it.

The King of gTsañ's death had not entirely extinguished the struggle, and this proves that though he had personal ends in view, he represented much broader interests and had bound them up with his policy. These interests did not subside, indeed they lasted, with some ups and downs, until Tibet fell under Chinese control. In that

same year 1642, the sGar pa once again took up the struggle. The Pañ c'en risked being taken prisoner; the *nañ so* Nor bu, the representative of the Dalai Lama in gTsañ, was obliged to abandon Gyantse and saved himself by flight; the rebel troops commanded by Žo k'a pa besieged rDsiñ p'yi (rDsiñ ji), but Gu śri Khan's ready intervention restored the situation. After this, Mongols and Yellows, starting from 'Ol k'a, which had thus been freed, fell on the enemy's army in K'oñ po, about eight thousand men strong, and destroyed it. Then the Mongol troops advanced from K'oñ po to break up any hostile reaction: indeed the Gu śri Khan and the Dalai Lama were more than ever resolved to place the Karma pa and their supporters in such a condition, that they would be unable to take the offensive, since an order of the sGar pa, found in an amulet (*gau*) of an officer who had been taken prisoner, had informed them as to their rivals' plans. The sGar pa had actually ordered the king to be killed, and the Dalai Lama and Tashilama taken prisoners; the dGe lugs pa monasteries were to be destroyed, aP'yoñ rgyas, Ri sgo and 'Ol k'a, who had been true to the Yellows, were to be given to the rTse, Zur and Žo k'a families, dGoñ dkar to the P'yag mdsod of the sGar pa, and the property of those who had sided with the Yellows were to be seized in favour of those families who had not betrayed the Karma pa faction.

The leader of the Reds' resistance against the Yellows and Gu śri Khan had been the sGar pa. sGar pa is a family name derived from a place-name (in K'ams): to it belonged the famous Don yod rdo rje, the son of Kun bzañ, *sde pa* of Rin spuñs, who attacked dBus in 1481, called sGar pa by Sum pa mk'an po. The sGar pa is again mentioned by the same author when the Mongols stole his horses to retaliate against the offensive epigram the Žva dmar had written against the Yellows. Later we know that the sGar father and son had been

invited by *Žiñ bšag's Ts'e brtan*. They were powerful lamas of the *Kar ma pa* sect. When the royal family became extinguished through *Ka rma bstan skyon's* death, we must suppose those chaplains to have taken command of the *gTsañ* nobility and of the schools which were against the *Yellows*.

Anyhow, through foreign intervention, the internal struggle which had tormented Tibet for years was once more placated. But the peace was not lasting. In 1644 the *sGar pa* was active once more in *Lho brag*, where the *Gu śri Khan* pressed on him. The *sGar pa* succeeded in escaping him and reached *K'ams*. He had evidently taken refuge in Southern Tibet, because there he could rely on help from *Bhutan*; there the *bKa' brgyud pa* sect ruled the country through its priest-kings; from the accounts of European missionaries it appears as already intimately connected with *gTsañ*. *Bhutan* could not keep aloof from a struggle whose outcome, whatever it was, might influence its destinies. This is proved by the expedition sent by *dBus* in 1648 against *Bhutan*, which reached its capital *sPu nag k'a* (p. 140). Through the *sde pa* *Nor bu's* inefficiency, this expedition was beaten and took refuge in *P'agri*. On the other hand men's minds were not at rest; the nobility which had sided with the victorious sect, wished to be rewarded, and sometimes its claims were anything but reasonable; for instance the lord of *sKyid šod* pressed his rights over *Shigatse* (p. 121 b) and took possession of it; but he was later obliged to give it back by the King's order. The war, in a word, had done away with a rival, but had given the country neither rest nor well-being. Foreign troops remained in the country and as they lived on its scanty resources, lands already laid waste by long struggles and disease became poorer and poorer.

The Manchus, meanwhile, had consolidated their power, *T'ai tsung* had died in 1643 and the throne had passed on his death to his son *Shun chi*. The mission the *Dalai*

*Lama* had sent in 1642 had been a dutiful act of homage to those already appearing as Tibet's new lords, but then, as we have seen, the *Manchu Emperor's* intentions as regards the new Tibetan situation, had not been made plain, neither did the *Manchu court* see clearly what course Tibetan events would follow. Now things were changed: the *Emperor*, enjoying internal security, could resume a foreign policy of prestige and penetration, *China's* secular tradition. Thus in 1646 (*me k'yi*) the *Dalai Lama*, as soon as he was informed of *Shun chi's* (tib.: *Sun tsi*) accession, sent a letter of congratulation by the *Mongol O pa si K'i ya t'ai ji* (*Biography*, p. 133). In 1651 (*lags yos*) the *Manchu court* sent an official invitation to *Blo bzañ rgya mts'o* and to the *Pañ c'en*; the latter, taking his advanced age as an excuse, declined, but *Blo bzañ rgya mts'o*, on the 29th of the eighth month, that is little more than a month after the invitation, started for *China* with a retinue of about two hundred persons, among whom many *Mongol chiefs*.

At this point the biography contains an itinerary, describes the meeting with the *Emperor*, the visit to the palace in *Peking* and gives a list of the presents received. The interviews were naturally concerned with the situation (*gnas ts'ul*) in *dBus* and *gTsañ*. Having come into the *Emperor's* presence on the 16th day of the 12th month, *Blo bzañ rgya mts'o* began his homeward journey on the 20th of the second month of 1653 (*c'u sbrul*), having received the title of *Nub kyī lha gnas c'es dge ba bde par gnas pai sañs rgyas bka' lun gnam 'og gi skeye agro t'ams cad bstan pa gcig tu gyur pa agyur med rdo rje ac'añ rgya mts'oi bla ma*, written on a golden seal in Chinese, *Mongol* and *Tibetan letters* (p. 209).

He then returned to *Tibet*, received with festivities and honours at every stage; during his journey he stopped in many places to consecrate new temples or to have those that had been destroyed reconstructed, as was the

case with those built by Altan Khan and bSod nams rgya mts'o and demolished by the King of the Čaḥar.

As soon as he got back to Tibet, Blo bzañ rgya mts'o lost no time in disciplining the vast monastic population he had now gathered under him; the dGe lugs pa school's prestige and power, also enriched by the Mongol chiefs' continual donations, were gaining a foothold, while the other sects, impoverished by warfare, no longer supported by the local nobility, now on the decline or altogether vanished, were obliged to abandon their monasteries.

From this point of view it is very interesting to glance at the catalogue of the dGe lugs pa convents, contained in the *Vai dñ rya ser po*; it shows a slow but uninterrupted passage of celebrated seats of ancient Lamaism to the new sect. But Blo bzañ rgya mts'o was not satisfied with this: he established firm ties between these monasteries and the central government, he appointed *mk'an po* and abbots he could trust; by this time nothing happens without the Dalai Lama's sanction and consent; he deposes at his pleasure the abbots who arouse his suspicions, as was the case with the abbot of Šel dkar (p. 248). Sometimes, to make the ties between the two peoples still firmer, and to prove the Mongol's complete spiritual maturity, we see Mongols appointed as *mk'an po* of monasteries, as in Gyantse, for instance the Erteni Ye šes rgya mts'o, an Urat, i. e. of the same clan as Gu śri Khan.

Moreover he neglects no opportunity of keeping this great monastic population attached to himself; in 1655 he restored the usage of reciting sacred texts and with this pretext he caused the monks of the great monasteries to come to Lhasa by turns. Later, on the occasion of the *sde pa* bSod nams c'os ap'el's death, he called a solemn assembly in the capital: 120,000 monks attended it (p. 273).

Evidently religion and ceremonies were a pretext: the assemblies bearing the character

of military reviews meant to keep in touch with the choice part of Tibetan population, because control of the convents meant domination over the whole of Tibet; thus even monks of other sects were attracted and induced by such a display of power to accept the triumph of the new school as a *fait accompli* and to bow before its will.

On the other hand the war and the autonomy of many monasteries which derived from it, had brought a great laxity of conduct in its wake: monks often gave bad examples and not only sinned against discipline, but against morals as well; this induced the Dalai Lama to carry out an inquiry, which resulted in a census (1663) of the various convents and of the monastic population in general; it was classed on the base of its purity, according as the monks led an honest (*gtsañ*) life or not (*žan*), as their conduct was good or bad, as they applied themselves with more or less zeal to study. In the first place came the monks proficient in the hidden meaning of the Tantra, without exceeding in the practice of exorcisms, then the monks who simply respected disciplinary rules, finally the *ser k'yim* or married monks.

In the first class of pure monasteries, largely dGe lugs pa, were included 750 convents with a population of about 50,900 monks; in the second, of mixed customs, 400 convents; in the third, of the married monks (*btsan btsun*) and ascetics of either sex, 650 convents with 20,000 monks and nuns. We have a total of 1800 convents and 100,000 monks (p. 333).

This census of the monasteries was accompanied by a new fiscal organization of the country: each convent is endowed with its particular income, to be used for the maintenance of its monks and also to furnish means for the normal celebration of religious ceremonies (*mañ ja*). These provisions were made by allotting to each monastery a *gžis ka*, a feud, called *mc'od gžis* when its income is particularly used for cult.

A census is taken of tax-payers, calculated on the basis of *t'eb*, thresholds, and hence called *t'eb aḍsin* (but sometimes, as in the *Vai ḍū rya ser po*, the old expression *dud* appears; see above p. 14). Each feud is obliged to furnish a contribution in kind, called *lag yoñ*, *lag abab*, of a certain number of measures (*k'al*) of barley.

Sometimes other products are substituted for barley, according to the resources of the country: butter, salt, barley flour (*t'ug t'al*).

The contributions in kind were often accompanied by contributions of work, or alternated with them.

Putting together the information furnished by the Biography and by the *Vai ḍū rya ser po*, we have a complete enough picture of the fiscal system imagined by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, which represents the country's economical subjection to theocracy. Thus instituted, it is the economical consequence of the change which had come about in the political field, when a sect not only had replaced the others, but had finally done away with the old nobility, either getting rid of it or reducing it to servitude.

With the same purpose of overseeing and disciplining the monks Blo bzañ rgya mts'o made frequent journeys, followed by his court and by the faithful Mongol chiefs, to all parts of Tibet. The journey he made in 1654, with the Gu śri Khan, is remarkable in many ways: he entered the stronghold of his former rivals' resistance, he saw the country which had taken up arms against him and whose centres of revolt were far from extinguished. Thus many things were put to rights, many contacts established, even many minds might be placated. But the journey came to a hurried end, because Gu śri Khan fell ill. He went back to a Bras spuñs and died there on the 17th day of the 12th month (p. 235).

With Gu śri Khan's death and the advent of his sons and grandsons, greatly inferior to him in political wisdom and personal prestige, suspicious of one another and interested, over and beyond Tibet, in the events

which were beginning to take shape in Mongolia, the Dalai Lama enters upon a still more prosperous period, and is now at the height of its power. In the interior of the country the Reds seemed to have abandoned their opposition; Mongol sovereignty, for the reasons stated, languished more and more; it is true the *sde pa* was left, but he was an insignificant figure, ably guided by the crafty Dalai Lama and his court. He was then bSod nams c'os ap'el but the fact that he is briefly mentioned in Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's Biography, and the praise he received on his death, leave no doubt that he let other govern rather than govern himself.

This title of *sde pa* was however used in a rather broad sense. It was not reserved to the Mongol King's *sde pa*; indeed the same name was given to all the heads of the local nobility, as a recognition of the fact that they no longer ruled in their own name, but by virtue of a paramount power, investing them with authority and confirming their privileges.

Among all these *sde pa*, that of Shigatse, the *nañ so* Nor bu, had acquired a privileged position; he seems also to have assumed the title of *sde srid*. The Biography of the fifth Dalai Lama says that he was the *sde pa*'s younger brother, probably a brother of Kar ma bstan skyoñ, and had passed in good time on the 'Yellows' side, so as to keep at least a shadow of power, without renouncing his family's ambitions. His behaviour during the war with Bhutan was ambiguous: he let himself be defeated and retired. If my idea that he belonged to the family of the rulers of gTsañ is right, his conduct may be explained; it becomes clearer if it is connected with the new revolt he was preparing.<sup>(14)</sup>

Meanwhile, as the work of adaptation and reorganization begun by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o continued, there was no lack of clouds on the horizon; in 1656 a war with Nepal was rumoured, and this induced the *sde pa* to order that the miraculous statue of sKyiḍ

sgroñ, Jo bo ṅp'ags pa Va ti<sup>144</sup>) should be taken to a safe place in the heart of Tibet; the *sde pa* Nor bu then took it to ṅBras spuñs whence it was placed with great solemnity in the Potala.

Furthermore in Lhasa they wished to obliterate all memory of the scarcely glorious enterprise against Bhutan, and to suppress a centre of resistance against the Yellows, which openly sided with the Reds and was hence a constant danger to internal safety. Great preparations were made, not only military, but religious as well. All the divine forces, C'os skyoñ and Yi dam, were called upon to assist; the soothsayer of gNas c'uñ was consulted, and the greatest exorcists in Tibet were gathered to perform propitiatory ceremonies. As soon as the answers of these oracles seemed favourable, in the seventh month of 1646, the army left for Bhutan.

But military operations were carried on very slowly, without taking advantage of the enemy's retreat; the army, after having lingered for a long time in Bum t'añ, was cut down by pestilence, and could not help falling back on P'ag ri (p. 251 ff.). Thus Bhutan once more escaped unhurt. Notwithstanding these military disasters, the Dalai Lama's prestige increased; in 1656 we find records of an Indian king's embassy. The chronicles pompously say that he was the younger son of a monarch ruling over almost all of India, and himself lord of Bengal; his father's name was Śākyaradsa (Śākyarāja), which looks like a corruption of Shāhjahān and his son's Sa ha su ja viz. Shah Shujā' who had been appointed by his father governor of Bengal.

We have said above that the King's death and the weak personality of the *sde pa* he had appointed had allowed the Dalai Lama a growing autonomy. Gu śri Khan had left two sons, bKra śis Ba'adur and Dayan Khan, who in the beginning seem to have ruled together: the Dalai Lama's Biography mentions for many years: *rgyal po sku*

*mc'ed gnis*, the two brother Kings. But they came into Tibet only many years after their father's death, in 1659 after the *sde pa*'s death, on the 28th of the fifth month, to weep over the deceased chief after the Mongol custom, and of course also to see how things were in Tibet; then only did they abandon mTs'o k'ar (Kökö-nor), their headquarters, being surely more worried with the events then maturing in Mongolia than with Tibetan affairs. Their visit to the Country of Snows was brief. They left at once, evidently thinking it dangerous to remain absent for a longer period from their usual residence.

Thus, the *sde pa* being dead and the King absent, the Dalai Lama, in the habit of receiving almost every day tribal chiefs and abbots of monasteries from the various regions of Mongolia, saw his own prestige increase and enjoyed real independence: the military commanders at the head of the scanty Mongol garrisons stationed in Tibet took their orders from him. But precisely when he thought himself safest, gTsañ once more attempted to regain what it had lost, this time at the hands of the *sde pa* Nor bu himself, who prepared and led the revolt from Shigatse. The Dalai Lama and his court considered the situation with dread: the Kings did not seem to be much concerned with Tibetan affairs; when they become pressing, their intervention has to be solicited twice. Nor bu was again supported by the nobility of gTsañ and he did not lack spiritual encouragement from the Sa skya pa hierarch and from ṅBrug pa Pad ma dkar po. Hence the moment was well chosen; the Mongol Kings being absent and absorbed by other cares, the *sde pa*, their temporal representative, dead, the Dalai Lama's egoist policy caused much resentment, while memories of the war for independence fought by gTsañ in the year *c'u rta* (1642) were still fresh.

Nor bu is described by the fifth Dalai Lama as a man designed by nature for command (*rañ bžin lbun gyis grub pai dpon*

po). Although religion had modified his external aspect, his commanding spirit clearly appeared (p. 276). Once more Lhasa had recourse to exorcisms, besides arms: expiatory and propitiatory ceremonies were ordered, and at the same time the troops which were to invade gTsañ were being equipped.

The centre of revolt was once more Shigatse and its rdson. From bKra šis lhun po, the Pañ c'en wrote trying to reach an agreement. War was waged with great hesitation; on one hand Nor bu could no longer count on the troops Kar ma bstan skyoñ had collected in 1642, while the sGar pa was a fugitive in K'ams and could not come back; on the other hand the Yellows were in anxiety because the kings did not make up their mind to come. At last the two kings arrived on the 25th of the twelfth month of 1659. On their arrival the situation quickly came to a head; Nor bu and his men tried to flee through P'ag ri to join their allies of Bhutan, but on the 29th of the same month he fell into his enemies' hands (p. 298).

The new revolt being thus put down, the fifth Dalai Lama began, with increased energy, to make his rule firmer. But events in gTsañ had proved that a *sde pa's* presence was necessary to avoid a renewal of old ambitions and a recrudescence of ancient hatred among the local nobility. For this reason, on more than one side, Blo bzañ rgya mts'o was urged to ordain a new *sde pa*; evidently this appointment belonged to the king, hence the Dalai Lama, though he accepted his counsellors' proposal, had to stand by the king's decision: the king, not the kings, because the chronicles, from this moment, mention only one of them as Tibet's temporal patron, namely Dayan khan, although, for religious motives, both brothers occasionally descended together into Tibet. Therefore the fifth Dalai Lama's messengers went to Dayan Khan, and when he had given his assent, on the 13th day of the seventh month of 1660, Jai sañ was invested most solemnly with the dignity and

office of *sde pa*; on this occasion the name of P'rin las rgya mts'o was conferred upon him, while on that same day the King received the title of bsTan ḁdsin like his father, being called henceforth bsTan ḁdsin Da yan rgyal po (p. 297). The latter came to Tibet at the end of 1660 from ḁDam where his residence then was, the other brother being at Kökō-nor, and met the Dalai Lama (p. 302). No events of any importance took place next; on the 12th day of the second month of 1662 (p. 314) the Pañ c'en of Tashilunpo, Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an, died, and the Dalai Lama at once performed the ceremony for his prompt incarnation. We must now dwell on this point.

Due to a series of circumstances which we have partly pointed out, the dGe lugs pa had spread particularly in dBus, where their chief monasteries were; and from these their ascent had started. In the gTsañ region there was only one large monastery / of course I am not dealing with lesser places / whose foundation was due to one of Tsoñ k'a pa's greatest disciples; I mean Tashilunpo, which had been built by dGe ḁdun grub pa. In the first centuries Tashilunpo's life was unassuming, and its chiefs were obliged to follow a crafty and flexible policy, being an outpost of the Yellows in the heart of gTsañ, while friction between those regions and dBus was breaking out most violently, and the rift between Reds and dGe lugs pa was irreconcilable. The heads of Tashilunpo were for a long time simple abbots, succeeding one another according to the list of the *Vai ḁñ rya ser po* (p. 194 ff.), summarized by SP (p. 325): Pañ c'en bzañ po bkra šis (born *lcags stag*, 1410) who occupied the abbatial throne at the age of sixty six and held it until his death at sixty-nine (1478); the Pañ c'en Luñ rig rgya mts'o, Pañ c'en Ye šes rtse mo, dGe ḁdun rgya mts'o, mNa' ris pa Lha btsun Blo bzañ bstan pai ñi ma rgyal mts'an, Pañ c'en Ša nti pa blo gros rgyal mts'an, Pañ c'en Don

yod rgya mts'o, gNas rñiñ c'os rje C'os kyi rgyal mts'an, Śaṅs ston C'os dpal rgya mts'o, P'yug gžun pa bSod nams dpal bzañ, Nāñ ston (SP: Myañ) Dam c'os yar ap'el, Nāñ ston Lha bzañ blo gros, Paṅ c'en Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an born in the year *me yos* (in the text wrongly *c'u yos*, 1567).

The latter, who had overseen the fourth Dalai Lama's education, and had efficiently helped Blo bzañ rgya mts'o for a large part of his life, giving him the support of his learning and experience, was solemnly placed on the Tashilunpo throne by the fifth Dalai Lama. The series of the Paṅ c'en of Tashilunpo begins with him; his predecessors had been only abbots, succeeding one another as they were designed by them and elected by the recognized chief of the Yellow Sect, who was the abbot of aBras spuñs. But now the Paṅ c'en, designed by complacently discovered gTer ma, as an embodiment of Ts'e dpag med, and hence a reflection of the Law upon earth, is no longer a mortal being; the theory of incarnation is thus applied to him too, and indeed the *Vai dū rya ser po* places no intermediate stage between him and his incarnation Blo bzañ ye šes, but simply says that he assumed the name (*mts'an*) of Blo bzañ ye šes and came to dBus to preach the Law and to confer baptism upon the sixth Dalai Lama. In the same manner SP immediately after having quoted the name of Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an, goes on to say what he had never said before concerning the other abbots; "(then) his *sprul sku* Paṅ c'en Blo bzañ ye šes and (continuing up to his time) now his new *sprul sku* Paṅ c'en Blo bzañ dpal ldan ye šes,,.

This is also confirmed, in a certain sense, by the list of Kloñ rdol bla ma (*Min gi grañs*), who for the first time assigns to Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an the title of Paṅ c'en. We must conclude from all this that the latter must be considered precisely as the first Paṅ c'en, as Waddell (p. 236) and Das (*Dit.*, p. 780) write. Pander (n. 47) and

Schulemann (p. 277) are mistaken when they consider him the third and the fourth Paṅ c'en respectively.

The Biography from now on does not register military events, the only exceptions being a menace of revolt in K'on po quickly put down by the intervention of the king himself, without recourse to arms, in 1663 (vol. *ca*, pp. 330 and 332); Gurkha raids, in the direction of sKyid sgron, beaten back by the lord of Lhun grub sgañ, who was rewarded (p. 338) in the same year. Raids from Bhutan in 1669 (vol. *c'a*, p. 71) and in 1671 (*ibid.*, p. 268) were beaten back and the situation was soon restored without drawing the country into a serious war. Particularly in the second case, they were only local raids, quickly put down by the frontier garrisons.

The fifth Dalai Lama's activity is by now entirely directed towards peace; the army does not seem to have received particular care. Only the frontier garrisons are strengthened, particularly in the localities more exposed to the danger of raids, that is towards Nepal and Bhutan. The Mongol garrisons, mentioned (as in the war against gTsañ) for their participation in warfare, were in themselves a guarantee, in case of serious need.

We are only informed that in Lhasa, in 1667, a *go mdsod* or military depot, was formed in rDo rje gliñ gсар, in which arms and insignia were deposited, together with a book containing lists of the Indian, Chinese, and Mongol arms of K'ams and of the Brog pa (vol. *c'a*, p. 36).

The Biography therefore centres entirely round the administrative and cultural work accomplished by the Dalai Lama, the admirable impulse he gave to the construction of monasteries and temples, his authority growing from day to day, amid the devoted homage of Mongol and Tibetan dignitaries. Every other figure pales before him; awareness of his growing prestige more and more puts other personalities in a subordinate place: the new *sde pa* P'rin las rgya

mts'o (who was to die in 1669) briefly appears to dedicate temples and as a patron of pious works, but his political interference is nil. The same may be said of his successor Blo bzañ mt'u stobs, who passed away in 1676, after having been six years in office, followed by Blo bzañ sbyin pa, elected towards the end of the same year. The latter did not keep his office long; in 1679, in the fifth month, with the excuse that his health was poor, he was replaced by the *a bar* Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o (vol. *Ja*, p. 125). There is no doubt that this took place according to a plan previously arranged by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's crafty son.<sup>145)</sup> Fearing that his father's death was drawing near, he wished to become the actual master of the State, emerge from the shadow and assume an office which up to that time may have implied scanty authority, but in his hands, due to his particular position and his relationship with the Dalai Lama, it might transform the Tibetan State into a really absolute government. The kings who occasionally visited Lhasa, coming down from mTs'o k'a to be present at religious celebrations, distributing large gifts among the communities, do not seem to have been stronger personalities. There is never a trace of real political intervention; the Dalai Lama evidently was anxious to affirm more and more the prestige of religious over temporal power, dominating and enslaving the latter. Dayan Khan having died at the beginning of 1668, his son bsTan ḅsin Dalai rgyal po had succeeded him; he was crowned in Lhasa amid great celebrations, in the third month of 1671, *lcags k'yi*.

With the assumption of Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o to the office of *sde srid*, the Dalai Lama, probably worn out by his extremely intense life, practically retired from government, and power was handed over to the *sde srid* who wisely acted in the Dalai Lama's name. Although no longer actively occupied with political matters, Blo bzañ rgya mts'o was nevertheless still present, with the great prestige

attaching to his person, and surely with his advice. Death claimed him at the age of sixty-six (not sixty-one as in SP, p. 304). His Biography is suddenly interrupted on the sixth day of the ninth month of 1681 (*lcags bya*).

Tibet during his rule was visited and travelled through, by people coming from different places: we have already mentioned some embassies from India. Others are said to have been sent by the prince of ḅDsum lañ, Mon ḅDsum lañ,<sup>146)</sup> who repeatedly sent missions, one in 1667 (vol. *c'a*, p. 34) led by Je tu Bhañdari, one in 1670 guided by Pa p'rañ (?) ra dsa and the interpreter Lhun grub (vol. *c'a*, p. 116), another in 1671 under Dsala bhañdari. In 1671 an embassy arrived from Nepal, sent by Sa lan t'u Siddhi Ku mā la dsa hu, bridegroom (*mag pa*) of the King of Ye rañ's eldest daughter.<sup>147)</sup> In 1671 ambassadors arrived from the King of Yam bu in Nepal (vol. *c'a*, p. 127); in 1670 King Narahari, through Nepal and India, sent as ambassadors Rāmacandra and Yasomantagiri (vol. *ja*, p. 161). Presents were despatched to King Narasiḅha of ḅDsum lañ in 1679 (vol. *ja*, p. 150).<sup>148)</sup>

Side by side with the political missions, there was no lack of Indian scholars, whom the Dalai Lama favoured, aware of the prestige to be derived from them; we find in Lhasa the pañḅita Gokula, who dwelt for several years in the Tibetan capital, acquiring disciples (p. 341) and assisting the lotsāva of ḅDar in his translation of Sanskrit grammars; beside him the chronicles mention other pañḅits of Benares, for instance Kṛṣṇodaya the translator of *Pāṇinidhātusūtra* (vol. *c'a*, p. 159 and vol. *ja*, p. 43), and then Haridāsa and Jayadāsa (*ibid.*, p. 250). Kṣemagiri, a sannyāsi, of Mathurā and Nilakaṅṅtha in 1677 (vol. *ja*, p. 44), the ācārya Dsamakīrti (vol. *ja*, p. 45), Dsivanti of Benares and Gaṅeṣatepari, Sodāsamudra (vol. *ja*, p. 48), Senāsi, Gokulagrīva (*ibid.*, p. 53). In 1681 Pañḅita Govindanātha is mentioned (vol. *Ja*, p. 244); others in 1680 (vol. *ja*, p. 175).

As foreigners flocked to Lhasa for political or cultural motives, it is natural that others should come there for reasons of traffic. The end of the war, greater internal tranquillity and the increased safety of the roads, together with a greater well-being and the large number of public works executed in every part of the country, favoured trade with foreign countries; Indians, Chinese, Mongols, Moslems from Kashmir, met in the Lhasa bazar and exchanged their wares. The Paṇḍita Gokula (vol. *ca*, p. 341) sent a letter from India to a Chinese merchant. The same, in 1661, sent Lilamitra as his commercial agent.

Economic prosperity had also grown; the fifth Dalai Lama's Biography records, nearly every day, gifts that devotees brought him from all parts; they were Tibetan noblemen or merchants, the abbots of convents, but above all Mongol chiefs and pilgrims who uninterruptedly came to pay homage and brought gold, silver, cloth, money; even from China gifts began to flow, but in a smaller measure. All these riches went into the coffers of the State, that is they were at the disposal of the Dalai Lama and his court. But they certainly benefited the country: great public works were undertaken, old convents were repaired, many new ones were founded. The old system of compulsory labour was still applied to them; in this sense nothing had changed, the people was subject to the same limitations and impositions as before, but well-being spread all over the country through this afflux of riches, peace, the pilgrims' largess; trade was resumed once war was over and law and order prevailed. The roads had improved, bridges had been built, often by generous Mongol benefactors, who thought they would thus acquire spiritual merit.

Relations with Nepal, even if temporarily interrupted by frontier skirmishes, mostly at sKyid sgron, became more frequent; from Nepal artists and craftsmen came to decorate temples and convents and to make the abbots' and noblemen's life more comfortable. The

same happened with China. This material prosperity was attended by a renewal of art and culture. The generosity of converts, by stimulating the construction of sacred buildings, or their decoration, caused local artistic tradition, not yet extinguished, to prosper, indeed to compete with Nepalese, Mongol and Chinese artists.

There was a will to renew the ancient lotsāvas' glories; the study of Sanskrit was taken up once again, and while Tāranātha had just had the *Sarasvativṛyākaraṇa* retranslated, the fifth Dalai Lama caused the fundamental book of Indian grammatical science, Pāṇini, to be studied and put into Tibetan. The Dalai Lama spurred others on with his respect for scholars and his boundless learning; he wrote, as we saw, on every branch of Buddhist culture, and his activity is all the more surprising when one remembers that he did not live in retirement, but directed the destinies of Tibet, never sparing his labours.

There is no doubt that Blo bzañ rgya mts'o when he reformed monasteries, had in mind a general revival of study; his son Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o, certainly one of the greatest scholars of his time, proves his vigilant care for the intellectual life of those who surrounded him. This is the positive side of Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's task; Tibetans justly call him "the Great...". The Yellow sect owes him its triumph, which put an end to that internal strife whose chief vicissitudes we have followed in the course of these pages. The secular enmity between dBus and gTsañ was placated, the nobility finally conquered and rendered incapable of renewing its old ambitions. That process of unification and pacification towards which Tibet had been tending for centuries, and which neither Sa skya pa nor P'ag mo gru pa had been able to further, was thus accomplished. Naturally rancour still breathed under an apparent calm, but everything pointed to the hope that time would bring forgetfulness and that Tibet might look forward to a safe future.

But all this was dearly paid for and the fifth Dalai Lama, while he sought his country's greatness, had at the same time prepared its downfall.

The consequence of the alliance Blo bzañ rgya mts'o had made with a foreign power were indeed about to mature; once Tibet had recognized the right of some Mongol tribes to act as patrons over its lands, it could not help being affected by the vicissitudes of precarious political formations succeeding one another on its frontiers, fleeting empires born of their chiefs' craft or courage. The devotion of the Mongols' homage to the Dalai Lama seemed on a constant increase, but in a short time it would become clear how powerless it was to curb the predatory instincts of those nomads which Buddhism had not yet succeeded in pacifying.

With Emperor K'ang hsi's assumption to the Chinese throne, Tibet's situation naturally became more critical. K'ang hsi could not renounce China's now secular patronage over Tibet, while events in Mongolia and the dangerous ambitions appearing on the troubled horizon of its steppes, drew his attention more than ever to his Western frontiers. Thus Tibet was in a delicate position: China and the Mongols did not renounce their aims, Tibet on the other hand, no longer had the strength and the possibility of following an independent policy. Hence the Dalai Lama was driven to endless devices, trying to take advantage of Mongol events and of the rift between China and the new Dsungarian empire, organized under dGa'ldan's strenuous guidance.

The reins of Tibetan politics were now in the hands of the *sde rid* Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o, the fifth Dalai Lama's natural son. He continued Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's policy, still strengthening the Yellows' power and prestige. For some years the situation did not change and no events of any importance were recorded, besides the war against Ladakh, prevalently due to the attitude of bDe ldan

nam rgyal, the son of Señ ge rnam rgyal, towards the dGe lugs pa, when he declared himself in favour of the aBrug pa (see *Vai dū rya ser po*, p. 366). The vicissitudes of this war are too well known to be resumed; it is enough to say that at the end of the expedition (which practically ended advantageously for Lhasa, even though its troops were beaten in Ladakh by the Moghuls' intervention) Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o began to strengthen the monasteries of his sect in the mNna'ris region. Thus the number of monks in mT'o gliñ was increased in 1687, and in 1686 (*me stag*), the monastery of bKra šis sgañ was founded on the new frontiers with Ladakh.

Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's death made the situation still more complex. Times were extremely difficult; the theory of incarnation was in fact subservient to deep interests; when a Dalai Lama passed away, the ambitions of families and parties yearning to see him reborn into their midst, for their own political advantage, were suddenly aroused. We have already seen how bSod nams rgya mts'o had been made to incarnate himself with the Mongols, to conclude the third Dalai Lama's task and serve the interests of the Church in that particular moment. Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o, aware of all these things and seeing that the political situation in Mongolia was far from clear, kept his father's death hidden from 1682 to 1697. But in the meantime he had made sure of his incarnation, which had reappeared in 1683 as Ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'o, getting him baptized by the Pañ c'en of Tashilunpo Blo bzañ ye šes dpal bzañ po (*Vai dū rya ser po*, p. 196).

The reason why he kept secret the death of his father was that Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o had his eyes on Mongolia, where dGa'ldan, educated in Lhasa as a boy, had succeeded in forming the Dsungarian empire. Now that Tibet, placing itself under the Khoshots' patronage, had emerged from its isolation, its fortunes were bound up with the phases of rivalry between dGa'ldan and the Chinese

empire: nothing was left to Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o, except to gamble on one or the other alliance. Those events which led dGa' ldan from triumph to the defeat K'ang hsi inflicted upon him on June 12th 1696 are too well known to be even summarily reviewed in these pages, whose purpose is above all to relate briefly the development of Tibetan history, using Tibetan sources still unknown or insufficiently studied.

Sañs rgyas mts'o made a mistake when he judged of dGa' ldan's power from his first success and thought that by leaning upon him he might cut loose from the Koshots and the Chinese. The error was fatal. Almost contemporarily with dGa' ldan's defeat, Dalai Khan, also called Ratna, Guśri khan's grandson, died, and power passed on to the eldest of his two sons, bsTan ḁsin dbañ p'yug. But the latter's younger brother Lha bzañ, thirsting for power, found no better means of seizing the Khoshot throne than to kill dBañ p'yug. These things all happened when the Dsungarian empire had not yet revived from the Chinese armies' blows, hence at a moment when the threatening clouds, once thick over Mongolia, had been dispelled. Lha bzañ, taking advantage of this situation, wished to recover the supremacy over Tibet which his ancestor had acquired for his family; in this aim he was favoured by China, who had reason to distrust Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o and had not forgotten his sympathies for the Dsungarians and the intrigues to keep the fifth Dalai Lama's death hidden. The failure of the Dalai Lama's new incarnation concurred to make Sañs rgya rgyas mts'o's situation still more intricate. Legend has perhaps taken liberties with Ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'o, too many passions have raged round his person, so that his character cannot be reconstructed with any accuracy, but as even the missionaries who got to Lhasa a few years after his death relate, there seems to be no doubt that he preferred a gay life to the austerities of the cloister. On the other hand,

he did not entirely spurn religious studies; a few small liturgical works are attributed to him, but love affairs and frivolous pleasures kept him away from severe ecclesiastical studies.

Opinion was far from unanimous round Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o; spiritual unity was more apparent than real, it was rather enforced by a triumphant party than freely matured in men's souls. The enemies of the Yellows, the followers of the other party, inclining to friendship with China, stressed the strange conduct of the Tibetan Church's supreme head. A college of lamas, instigated by these political currents, declared that the divine spirit had abandoned the young Dalai Lama. Being thus deprived of his inner divine reality, of his religious personality, he was losing all his prestige. The moment had come for Lha bzañ and for the Chinese to act: the Dalai Lama's spiritual authenticity being questioned, the masses' unanimous belief in his sacred nature broke down: it was no longer a god, the patron of Tibet, which was discussed, but an usurper of divine dignity, even if an involuntary one. On the other hand the Dsungarians had not recovered from their defeat and had so far no intention of opposing China. Reflecting on this, Lha bzañ, with China's full consent, and with a few hundred soldiers, entered Lhasa, occupied it almost without bloodshed (1705), killed Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o and carried off from the Potala young Ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'o. But the Yellow Sect was not going to be deprived of its chief so easily, all the more as the gNas c'uñ oracle had declared him to be the real incarnate. When the Mongol troops with their prisoner passed near ḁBras spuñs, the monks raided them by surprise and succeeded in freeing the sixth Dalai Lama, but Lha bzañ's soldiers again got the upper hand, broke into the monastery and recaptured their prisoner; near Nag c'u Ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'o lost his life.

Concerning these events and those that followed, native and Chinese sources are

supplemented by the writings of missionaries, particularly by Father Ippolito Desideri's narrative of Tibet's intricate vicissitudes while he was in Tibet and immediately before his coming. But the protection Lha bzañ khan extended to him and his intimate relations with people devoted to him, possibly impair, to a certain extent, the impartiality of his impressions and of his judgement on the former's conduct (see *Account of Tibet*, ed. by DE FILIPPI, p. 163). Desideri received his information on Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o from the latter's enemies and to his victor's advantage; hence his moral portrait of the sDe srid deteriorated, to the extent that the Mongol prince's figure improved. According to Desideri, the Mongol prince twice risked being poisoned by the Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o, and this is not quite improbable, as a rift must have taken place early between the crafty sDe srid, aiming at absolute sovereignty, and Gu s'ri khan's descendant. But Desideri himself cannot conceal the treachery that, Lhasa once taken, put Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o into his rival's hands. Nevertheless he drew a flattering portrait of the Mongol prince, pp. 148-149.

These events are also illustrated by the seventh Dalai Lama's biography, which follows Ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'o's painful vicissitudes, beginning on the 17th of the fourth month of the year *me k'yi*, 1706; he is described as ready to sacrifice himself and to follow the Mongols after his deliverance, which took place in a Bras spuñs, to avoid further conflicts, which the monks of Rva sgreñs and the bKa' bcu pa Ñag dbañ dpal mgon seemed ready to sustain. His death is said to have been due to a sudden illness on his journey (p. 10 ff.).

Thus Lha bzañ had succeeded in his intent; he had regained control over Tibet and was master of the situation; evidently his attitude towards the sixth Dalai Lama was not such as to gain him the Yellows' sympathies, or those of most Tibetans. The events in which young Ts'añs dbyañs rgya

mts'o had been a victim, not an actor, his end, the revelation from the gNas c'un oracle, had caused his failings to be forgotten or forgiven. Now popular feeling was veering back to him and his strange conduct was explained by the obscure ways of the gods, who always adapt their behaviour to the karmic preparation of individuals. When Lha bzañ wishing to draw the last consequences from his deed, named as the seventh Dalai Lama a monk of the convent of medicine, on the authority of some lamas devoted to him, who had proved that the transfer of the Dalai Lama's spirit had taken place there, his candidate Ñag dbañ ye šes rgya mts'o received scanty support, notwithstanding the Chinese government's approval (cf. DESIDERI, p. 151).

This anti-Pope, a feeble and inactive type, was made even less acceptable, and Lha bzañ's policy even less popular, because the C'os skyoñ of gNas c'un proclaimed that the Dalai Lama had become incarnated near Li t'añ, near the Chinese frontier (on the 19th of the seventh month of the year *sa byi*, 1708). There was evidently a reason for picking out a country so near the Celestial Empire: of all the powers gravitating on Tibet, China was not only the strongest, she was the one which, throughout a tradition of centuries, had never brought an excessive pressure to bear on Tibetan politics. The descent of this incarnation on Li t'añ seems to be the attempt of a strong Tibetan party resolved to resume the old relations of bland vassalage to China. Moreover, men's minds were still so upset in Tibet, that the incarnate's return to Lhasa would have stimulated violent passions and might have led to painful occurrences, whose memory was still so lively. The Chinese, well aware of all this, together with the new chiefs of Kökö-nor, watched the new incarnate with the greatest attention so that he might become a powerful tool in their hands and further their ambitions. All attempts of Lha bzañ Khan to take hold of the boy, when he

saw that his refusal to recognize him as an incarnation had had no success, failed (*Biography of the seventh Dalai Lama*, pp. 18, 20 and ff.). But the Dsungarian empire was again aroused: Ts'e dbaṅ rab brtan, dGa' ldan's nephew, who in the beginning had rebelled against his uncle, thus inspiring K'ang hsi with confidence, after having defeated the Qazaq Kirghizes, reverted to dGa' ldan's anti-Chinese policy, and turned his attention above all to Tibetan events. Circles hostile to Lha bzaṅ and to China egged him on (DESIDERI, p. 151). The Mongols' celebrated conversion to Buddhism did not allow their chiefs to remain indifferent to the crisis of the Tibetan church; the Lamaism which had spread among the Mongols was prevailing dGe lugs pa, hence a spiritual unity bound those nomads to the country whence the light which had converted them had come. The convents soon built in Mongolia had sprung up as offshoots of Tibet's great monastic institutions; their chiefs had been educated in Tibet, Tibetan was the liturgical language, the names assumed by monks or laymen were very often Tibetan; thus also a cultural unity had slowly become established, and it had the effect of interesting the Mongols in all the events maturing in Tibet, which they could not look upon as alien. And now political intrigue and friction were grafted on to these religious motives: Ts'e dbaṅ rab brtan's plans aimed at eliminating from Tibet the hegemony of the Khoshot and of their Chinese protectors'. Hence, in 1717, he ordered his brother Ts'e riṅ don grub to march on Lhasa.

He counted on the support of the Lamas of the great monasteries, particularly those of Se ra, Shigatse, and ḅBras spuṅs (DESIDERI, p. 143), all in a flutter because the Dalai Lama was not yet allowed to set foot in Tibetan territory, and unwilling to recognize any divine authority except his. These monks represented a great spiritual and political force, also increased by the surviving nobility's

efficient contribution; hence Ts'e dbaṅ brtan could count on a very strong Tibetan party, while Lha bzaṅ had become more and more unpopular; rebellion against him was brewing even in the circles nearest his person, among the Ministers and court officials. Even if the plot was discovered, this simply put off disaster, but did not prevent it.

Lha bzaṅ, taken by surprise near Nag c'u, vainly tried to resist; he was obliged to fall back on Lhasa and shut himself up in the city to put up his last resistance. Betrayal opened the doors of the besieged city on December 1st 1717. On December 3rd the Potala was attacked, Lha bzaṅ fled, but was caught and killed; Lhasa was sacked for three days, neither friends nor foes were spared, the invaders desecrated temples, carrying off the treasures that pious Mongols had accumulated there; not even the fifth Dalai Lama's tomb was respected.

This tale by the Pistoia Jesuit is confirmed by the narrative contained in the biography of one of the most authoritative witnesses of those unfortunate events; I allude to the Blo bzaṅ ye ṣes dpal bzaṅ po. From his *rnam t'ar*, p. 277, we learn that the first intimation Dsungar (rDsoṅ gar) troops were assembling was received on the tenth of the seventh month, and that the first encounters with the invading forces, led by Ts'e riṅ don grub, took place on the first of the eighth month, finally that serious attempts were made both by the K'ri rin po c'e of dGa' ldan and by other great lamas, to reach an agreement; but their interferences did not produce any practical results; the chiefs on both sides spoke in violent terms. After the eight of the tenth month, King Lha bzaṅ came to Lhasa, from ḅDam, and shut himself up in the Potala, where the Paṅ c'en also was. The biography then states that on the seventeenth the Dsungars attacked Lhasa, which fell on the 29th. The city's defenders fled and Lha bzaṅ, on the first of the eleventh month, was killed following an attempt to get out of the

Potala. (*Ša kya dge sloñ blo bzañ ye šes kyi spyod ts'ul gsal bar byed 'od dkar can gyi p'reñ ba*, p. 277 b).

Thus Tibet, plundered by those who should have been its defenders, became the battlefield of powers now openly contending for supremacy over it.

Among the prisoners made in the Potala were not only Lha bzañ's wife and son, but also the old Pañ c'en of Tashilunpo: Ts'e riñ don grub dared not kill the venerable abbot, whose disciple he had been in the Tashilunpo convent; he confined him in a corner of the royal palace (DESIDERI, p. 161) but Lha bzañ's followers were tortured and killed; only the viceroy Tar gum bkra šis was able to save himself, after many vicissitudes related by Desideri, and to help the Chinese to reconquer Tibet.

Ts'e riñ don grub's invasion caused a prompt reaction on the part of K'ang hsi, whose troops re-entered Lhasa in 1720. A little later, at the age of fifteen, the seventh Dalai Lama sKal bzañ blo bzañ rgya mts'o was placed on the throne of the Potala, then being reconstructed. The Chinese went back to their old custom of appointing by the side of the Dalai Lama a *sde srid*, in charge of civil affairs; bSod nams rgyal po, once Lha bzañ's Minister, was chosen. But as a matter of fact Chinese interference in all sorts of affairs was now direct; almost as a sign that freedom was lost, the walls of Lhasa were pulled down.

Tibet's destiny was marked; the old nobility twice tried to reinstate the old order, but all in vain: the first time in 1727 when, with the Dalai Lama's tacit sanction, the *sde srid* bSod nams rgyal po was killed and a plot made to restore full Tibetan sovereignty. But a representative of that same nobility, a prince of gTsañ, bSod nams stobs rgyas of P'o lha, a cooperator of the murdered officer and already invested with honours by the Chinese court, avenged the slain vice-regent and suppressed the plotters, with the help of Chinese forces lately arrived. The attempt at revolt was a miserable failure, the Dalai Lama himself was deported, a substitute was elected head of the Tibetan Church and P'o lha was elected viceroy and was raised to the rank of Prince of the second class 郡王.

The Dalai Lama being taken back to Tibet, bSod nams stob rgyas (who had died in the year *me yos* of the 13th cycle, i. e., in 1747, not 1748 or 1746 as SP and Rockhill say) was succeeded by his son Dalai Bā tur or Gyur med rnam rgyal. Then the nationalist party made a new attempt at restoration under his leadership, but the Chinese amban had him killed, and, although some of the hardships enforced after the revolt of 1727 were lightened, the political and fiscal system which put Tibet under Chinese subjection was definitely organized.

## THE SECTS

In the first section of this part much has been said concerning the sects, although, as it was mainly concerned with political developments, I showed their temporal struggles rather than their religious individuality. It will now be well to consider them again briefly, not with the object of reconstructing the ups and downs of their history, much less to follow up the long pedigrees of those Lamas who governed their destinies. Such a matter could not be exhausted in a few pages and we should have to repeat what is written on the subject in some Tibetan books, from the DT to SP, from the *C'os abyun* by Pad ma dkar po to the *bKa' gdams rñin gsar c'os abyun*. In the following pages I will treat briefly of the fundamental characters of these schools, of their particular position as regards Buddhist thought in general and Lamaism in particular, to clear up definitely those points which may help the reader better to understand the tankas to be studied later. In fact these tankas, particularly those representing masters and scholars, are nearly always marked by some sign of the school they proceed from, either because they place in the first plane one deity rather than another, or because certain personages occupy the foreground, or because the Yi dams, watching over the sacral purity of the tankas, nearly always reveal to which sect they should be assigned.

Sect is not, perhaps, the right word; these schools are designed in Tibetan by the term *lugs*, which means "method"; for instance: *Sa lugs*, the Sa skyas, *dGe lugs*, the Yellows. The organizations we call sects represent, in fact, particular ways of interpreting, either theologically or mystically, the same fund of doctrines; they are parallel currents issuing from the same source: the experience of the Mahāyāna and particularly of the Vajrayāna.

Their diversity consists in the fact that they stress some revelations, rather than some others; they claim a descent from different human or divine masters whom they consider as the source of a spiritual tradition on which rests their understanding of the secret doctrines. We should not forget that this diversity is based not so much on dialectical considerations insufficient, by themselves, to create a school, as rather on particular mystical attitudes, on those liturgical complications or on those esoterisms woven into the Vajrayāna, which are the very essence of Lamaism.

The schools are side branches of one same family, whose features consist in acknowledging this or that master as their ancestor. This master is nearly always an Indian and one of the most celebrated interpreters of the Vajrayana tradition; as a matter of fact the Tibetan schools, even the reformed one of Tsoñ k'a pa, are careful to strike their roots directly into the Indian experience, recording the pedigree of such a succession most painstakingly. Hence they boast of being faithful interpreters and keepers of Indian thought and esotericism. In fact in early times, when contrasting interests had not yet produced misunderstandings between different currents and the urge for political supremacy had not yet contributed to enhance their features to the point of moulding them into real sects, we only observe the branching off of schools, in the true sense of this word: a master from whom his spiritual children (*sras*) shoot off, being designed by his name in the plural, to signify their spiritual descent, or by the name of the place where he resided.

A catalogue has reached us of the temples built in dBus and gTsañ during the period between Glañ dar ma and the Buddhist revival in the times of Ye šes 'od (end

Xth - beginning XIth century), king of Guge; it is a list compiled especially with the aid of oral traditions, therefore it must be used with the caution documents of this sort require. It has come down to us to my knowledge in four principal versions: the oldest, goes back to the Sa skya paṇḍita (*Sa skya gsuñ abum, c'a*), the other to Buston (OB., p. 202); the third to DT, *k'a*, p. 1 ff.; the fourth to the fifth Dalai Lama, not to speak of later compilations as that of SP; in many passages these lists disagree with one another particularly as to place-names. This is partly due to the handwritten tradition, which easily led to an alteration in the spelling of the less important place-names or of those farthest from the convents where the catalogues were copied. But in their broad lines Sa skya paṇḍita, Buston, gZon nu dpal, Blo bzai rgya mts'o and presumably also other historians earlier than Buston, concerned with the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, like Rig ral and gTsañ nag pa (BUSTON, OB., p. 211) all agree in giving some masters the credit for having prevented Buddhism so flourishing in the old kings' times, from being wholly blotted out by Glañ dar ma's persecution.

These masters were five in dBus and five in gTsañ, but as some of them left no descendants, only six are particularly remembered, as spiritual torches which had shed glimmers of light over Tibet, once more overrun by Bon po supremacy.

We do not mean to say that in this intermediate period the Buddhists of Tibet were reduced exclusively to these masters and their disciples: here we speak of actual monks, i. e. of persons regularly invested, according to the precepts of the *vinaya*, by five masters: a chief *mk'an po*, a moral preceptor, an esoteric one and two assistants. And no one could confer vows upon another if he had not himself been initiated for five years at least.<sup>149)</sup> Hence these six persons had all received ordination, they had undergone the prescribed apprenticeship and the practices

of initiation, even if circumstances sometimes obliged them to swerve from the rigid observance of the rules of discipline. Round these monks there was probably no lack of Buddhists; it is unthinkable that Glañ dar ma's persecution had completely rooted out all traces of the Buddhist religion; it had struck at the masters, it had cut off those channels of constant spiritual nourishment through which India regularly sent its pandits and its books over the Himalaya. But it had not been able to smother that Buddhism which had spread among the masses, surely with such an admixture of Bon po magic that it was often difficult to tell what was Buddhist and what Bon po (see SP, p. 176).<sup>150)</sup> So much that one of Ye šes 'od's main motives for sending Rin c'en bzai po to Kashmir was precisely to ascertain in what measure the Tantra were the Buddha's word, such was the extent to which the interpretations given in Tibet by those who professed to be tantric followers had degenerated (BUSTON, OB., p. 212).

The six monks recorded by the aforesaid tradition handed down teachings which, going back to their masters, connected them with the golden days of the first spread of Buddhism; no wonder that some of them considered themselves the inheritors of the schools founded by Śāntirakṣita, Jinamitra and the other great paṇḍits who had gathered in the royal court in the times of K'ri sroñ Ide btsan and of Ral pa can. This was probably a bold presumption, however they already designated themselves as the depositaries of some well-defined doctrines which seem to have been limited particularly to the Vinaya. The three masters whom they attended in K'ams had left Tibet carrying with them a mule-load of books consisting chiefly of the *Karmaśataka* and other *aDul ba* and Abhidharma-works (SP, p. 177). Go roñ Señ ge grags pa in the Mi ñag country gave Rab gsal instruction on the Vinaya and presented him with his copy of the text (DT,

*k'a*, p. 2). Of course we must not think that these rules of discipline were very strict; to begin with, celibacy does not seem to have been always enforced on early monks. From gNas rñiñ's eulogy for instance, we see that abbots married; often the son continued his father's work and teachings. Thus, according to what rñiñ ma pa and bKa' brgyud pa still admit, religious discipline and married life were not irreconcilable.

It must be noticed that these monks went into the K'ams territory in order to be initiated; there, on Tibet's extreme frontiers, some small religious circles had remained, untouched by royal proscriptions; among them gTsañ rab gsal, Gyo dge abyuñ of Po doñ in Drañ c'uñ mdo (according to DT only: Drañ c'uñ mdo) and dMar Śākyamuni of sTod luñ, stand out; the latter, fleeing from gLañ dar ma's persecution, had taken refuge in mNa' ris, and through the territory of Gar log<sup>151)</sup> and of the Hor where they became disciples of Hor dGe bsñen Śa kya šes rab they had repaired in Amdo. They became a spiritual centre which kept Buddhism alive and, by conferring monastic dignity on fresh disciples, preserved its tradition uninterruptedly, their most prominent pupil being dGe rab gsal also called dGoñs rab gsal or Bla c'en, the great lama, born in Tsoñ k'a bde k'ams in a Bon po family in the year *c'u byi*, 892. He died in the year *šiñ p'ag*, 975.

We must focus our attention on these two dates, because on being thoroughly examined they reveal that ambiguity of the most ancient dates, hinted at in *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part II, p. 281 (Appendix by dr. PETECH). gŽon nu dpal, as we then saw, follows a double system of dates for the birth of Sroñ btsan sgam po; this often gives rise to a difference of 60 years, because the two systems obviously jar. This ambiguity is quite clear in the present instance. There seems to be no doubt that Glañ dar ma's persecution took place in 841. If the year *c'u byi* is really the one which came nine years before the persecution of the

faith, as SP maintains on p. 177, it should be 832; hence dGe rab gsal should have died at the age of 84, in 915. But this is contradicted by what we know on the sufficiently certain date of Atiśa's arrival in Tibet, in 1042. gŽon nu dpal himself says on p. 5 that the activity of the six men of dBus and gTsañ developed 64 years before Atiśa's coming, i. e. beginning from 978. This rules out 915 as the date of dGe rab gsal's death. The same information is confirmed by the same author as regards Klu mes (p. 6a), which is equally placed 64 years before Atiśa. Perhaps this shows us where to look for an explanation of the 60 years' difference already alluded to. The schools wished at any cost to show they rooted in the Tibetan tradition of that glorious period when the faith was introduced for the first time into the country, and with its great masters; they did not want to admit that at a certain point direct links with that period were missing. Thus that interval was filled up by a duplication of the sexagenarian cycle. But it is clear that, to determine dates, we must go back to the fixed point represented by Atiśa's arrival.

Apart from this chronological question, this story of Buddhism's new growth after Glañ dar ma's persecution, may give occasion to some interesting remarks. To begin with, it seems to have originated in an Eastern Tibetan environment; very probably for this reason the part these provinces had in the Buddhist renaissance is stressed. We do not mean to underrate this part; the dynasty's downfall was less deeply felt in the remoter provinces, which Buddhism had reached through other channels besides India: I allude to Central Asia, where the Tibetans occupied Turfan up to the middle of the IXth century, and occasionally up to the dynasty's collapse, to China itself and to the Tanguts. But, as I said above, Glañ dar ma's persecution probably did not extinguish the faith altogether, or obliterate all traces of Buddhism. This is confirmed by tradition itself: it relates that

the ten masters of dBus and gTsañ, who had gone to K'ams to strengthen and renew the doctrine, were assisted by the lord of dBus mÑa' bdag c'en po Ye šes rgyal mts'an and by bTsañ po of gTsañ (SP, p. 177). dGe Rab gsal himself, after his initiation, planned to go to dBus, to Žañ c'en dge ba (DT, *k'a*, p. 2) and gave up his design only because of a serious famine prevailing over that district. This shows that in Central Tibet Buddhist traditions were far from extinguished, they only needed reviving and above all purifying. The study of these traditions also enables us to remark another fact, namely that the cultures on Tibet's Northern and Eastern frontiers had an important part in this revival. The three great masters gTsañ Rab gsal, gYo dge abyuñ, dMar Ša-kyamuni, spent one year in Ša skya šes rab's school, in the Hor country. A large part of dGe rab gsal's activity took place among the Tanguts (*Mi ñag*); a Chinese Hva šañ was present at Klu mes's baptism. Neither should we forget that these were also the times when the Tun huang Buddhist communities maintained a close contact with Tibet, as may be gathered from the Li T'ai pin slab (CHAVANNES, *Dix inscriptions de l'Asie Centrale, Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscr. et Belles Lettres*, 1<sup>re</sup> Série, Tome XII, pp. 202, 208, 250, 293).

But let us go back to the masters who had come to K'ams from dBus and gTsañ to renew their faith and to be duly consecrated. After having finished their instruction and being ordained, they returned to dBus and gTsañ, where the political anarchy which followed the dynasty's collapse no longer hindered their preaching and founded small centres which were not convents, but temples, Lha k'añ. There they gathered around themselves fresh neophytes, they initiated them, conferred ecclesiastical dignity upon them, and these in their turn built new chapels. Descent was preserved in the names: members of each school took the family name of their master, often becoming further split according to their

residence, into three lesser groups: high, middling, low. The list of these small communities has given origin to the catalogues referred to above which are a most remarkable document for the history of Tibet in the Middle Ages (see annexed Table).

With the foundation of the great monasteries things slowly changed: political rivalries, as I said above, tend to confer a greater individuality on what originally was but a parallel interpretation, theological or liturgical, of the same fundamental authorities. Furthermore in these monasteries they began to dwell by preference on one Tantric cycle or another, as if turning it into a privilege of their own and claiming the glory of being its most authoritative interpreters. That is why the author of the DT was induced to classify the various branches of Tibetan religious thought in a manner somewhat different from the one which later became usual, and was reproduced, for instance, by Waddell, on the base of native tradition.

Side by side with the bKa' gdams pa and the bKa' brgyud pa, the DT inserts into its list doctrinal trends which start from certain books and are founded on particular liturgies, like the Kālacakra, the Mahāmudrā, the Lam ābras; and even the gKa' gdams pa and bKa' brgyud pa are called after their founders: Jo bo Atiśa and Mar pa, all trends which cut one into the other, because disciples branched off from their masters in every monastery, and their descent is continued uninteruptedly even in schools which later will appear with well-defined features. In a word the individuality of the sects and the consequent dogmatic rivalry between them, begin comparatively late and have never been absolute. The hostility between some sects, for instance the āBri guñ pa and the Sa skya pa, which we have found at the origin of this history, is a conflict between the interests of convents, based, that is, on temporal ambitions, not on dogmatical differences. On the other hand, these schools do not introduce new

gTsañ - two groups (sde)

Lo ston rDo rje dbaṅ p'yug

Lo ts'o stod	Lo ts'o smad	sTod	Bar
<p>From sTag lo Byañ c'ub: the sTag ts'o;                      from rGya Ša kya ban de: the rGya ts'o;                      from sKyo Šes rab rdo rje: the sKyo ts'o.</p>	<p>Kyi { sTod { rBa gTsub c'en became abbot of Grañ c'uñ; hence the community of Grañ c'uñ.                      rGya Ša kya ban de took possession of Nñiñ ro K'oñ brkyañ; hence the community of rGya ts'o.                      Kyi ston brTson abar took possession of Dug c'uñ becoming its abbot; hence the K'ri ts'o.                      Sa rBad took possession of Sa p'ug; hence Sa ts'o.</p> <p>Bar { aK'ris bya skor (B.: ak'ris kyi ac'ad dgon pa).                      bsKyañ skor.</p> <p>sMad { from Gye re glañ ra the Glañ ra community;                      from Myug gi gnas gsar the Ur ts'o community.</p>	<p>Skal skor                      rGyan skor</p>	<p>gNas rñiñ (from Šab kyi lha mo luñ taken by Ts'oñ btsun).                      gNas sar descended from the community of lCañ ra.</p>
<p>Ža lu lCe Šes rab rdo rje became abbot of Ža lu <sup>2)</sup></p>			
<p>r. B. Ša kya yon tan.</p>	<p>brLag (B.: gLag) (S.: Klag) { Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an became abbot of C'u mig; hence the C'u mig skor.                      His friend aGar<sup>3)</sup> took possession of sNems and sNog (Ye šes byañ c'ub) of sPan dkar lha luñ.                      His pupil Ša kya ye šes took possession of rKyañ btsun spra mos becoming its abbot; hence the rKañ ts'o.</p> <p>Glañ (S.: Klač) bTsun byams pa took possession of Kri goñ; hence Upper Glañ ts'o.                      From the community of gTsañ aṅ'rañ (B.: gram) in gYas ru equally taken by him the Lower Glañ ts'o derived.</p> <p>Glañ { Nag rgyan goñ { Pran gyi bya ts'a                      Pa ts'ab kyi ma jo p'ug } later included                      lha k'añ } in Ža lu                      mGur mo Lha k'añ                      sNa ba bži</p> <p>rGyan goñ va mo { sNa ris goñ ma                      Sab kyi aḍar sgañ                      Srad kyi ldañ ldan</p> <p>One branch went to South and was called rGya ts'o.                      Another took dBye lha k'añ and was called sKyo ts'o.                      Another branch went to Lho brag and were called the rTsa ts'o.</p>		
<p>2. Four ka ba (pilasters): Gur, dGa' ba gdoñ, gYus, Ne sa. Six gduñ (beams): K'o re lha k'añ, Re lha k'añ, P'o agal, aDul c'uñ, Ža p'ud, rGya t'an.                      3. B., p. 206, Chag Mi-ga Č'ei rab la ma.</p>			

Ts'ön ts'o

## sMad

Ts'ön btsun took rTsiü kyi yañ ąbañ and gave it over to his *ñe gnas* lCañ btsun; hence the lCañ skor. From these three communities:

- a) rTsis skor called lower lCañ ts'o skor;
- b) the lCe skor and Bye mda' skor called the intermediate;
- c) the upper, viz. the sKyegs skor, the Ze t'añ skor and Soñ k'ur skor.

## Ñañ ts'o

Then A mes ts'ön btsun took the community of Ñañ which he later handed over to his pupils fully ordained: Ra Blo gros bzañ po and K'ams pa Rin c'en bzañ po; hence: the Ra ts'o and the K'ams ts'o. Nur smrig given to Ra by P'yug ts'añ dgra was also called Ra ts'o; Ts'ul c'en 'eg mar taken over by K'ro ba ąbar rgyal mts'an, a pupil of K'ams pa, and Rin gi lcañ ma bar taken by another pupil were called K'ams ts'o. The two were called Ñañ ts'o (S.: Ña ts'o). C'os mk'ar po c'e (of sTag ts'al) was then given to A mes (S.: A mo); he entrusted it to his pupil rGya rGyal bu ts'ul le (B.: šes), who founded Bya c'os nas brañ t'añ; his pupil Kou ye founded dMe; the community from both is called Bya skor. Then, when A mes went to South, a lady, gÑos mo gave him sMon gro and he gave it to Mar pa Ye šes rdo rje: this initiated sNal po (B.: sne po) Grags pa rgyal mts'an and took mk'ar p'ug (S.: mk'an p'ug): one pupil of Mar pa gÑib c'en po took Don p'ug and another rGyus t'añ; hence the Doñ nag skor. Their descendants (Ts'a) took T'uñ brag dmar po; hence the K'a t'uñ skor. C'ön ro took Mañ ra Nañ goñ; hence the Mañ ra skor. The pupil of Ts'ön btsun Žaň pa ts'ab (B.: ts'or) kr'od pa took Ra sogs mts'ar la and gave it to his pupil (rBa) dGe mt'ön with Roñ sa do, sTag ts'al mk'ar sa, rGya mk'ar, rKyañ t'ur; Žaň himself took K'yim ser gyi sgrañ k'rod,<sup>4)</sup> Brag gšoň, bTsan mo ldiñ, rTsi yañ dben: all these were the De ts'o (B. T'o ts'o). When the De ts'o went to K'ams, the sde pa of Sañs dBu dkar and the two brothers of 'O brgyad went along with them: the sde pa then built Grub mo spañ rtsa which was included in the community of the Ts'ön ts'o. The two brothers of 'O brgyad took sDe gañ yañ.

ąBre ston gŽon nu ts'ul k'rims takes rTa nag bye ts'añ: his pupil Krog ge c'un was invested of sTag c'os luñ; hence the sTag c'os luñ skor. From the Bar šaňs kyi bye (B. bya) p'ug the Šaňs kyi ąbre ts'o. Nañ btsun sMon lam rgyal mts'an takes over sTod k'rod; hence sTod k'rod skor. lCañ btsun dKon mc'og rgyal mts'an took K'yel gyi lug lam pa; hence the lCañ ts'o. Mi btsun rDo rje rgyal mts'an took Mar stoñ in ąJad; hence the lower and upper Mi ts'o. From Lam mo bye ts'añ the ąBre ts'o of rTa nag. Va žva Ye šes gyuñ druñ took 'O t'ug gi ra ša, sNam ma ądre sna, sTag gi gnas mo c'e; subsequently K'or re k'añ ąk'or, lDangyi gre šod. The master of Sog ston Yon tan ts'ul k'rims took Ba so t'añ in lDan, K'or gñan pa goñ, K'u luñ lha gral, Ñan smad p'ud k'a, ąDre brdas, Ts'al žabs, and dPag ts'al. The pupil of Sog, Yañ ądul ądsin pa founded sTag gi dpe can; another pupil of Sog dGe bšes žu took Klas po c'e. All these are called Va ts'o. This is the expansion upper wards.

Downwards: ąDsim pa Šes rab 'od<sup>5)</sup> founded ąDsim; hence the lower Bu ts'o. T'añ dmar rtsag took possession of Dur luñ;<sup>6)</sup> hence: Den lag k'as of Sa skor, sGyes luñ of mDo t'añ, Ri c'un of bTsan ąk'or, Roñ t'e lun. Byañ c'ub sems dpa' took possession of Brag c'i luñ dMu rdsin in the upper country, dGun lha sa in the lower country; hence the Byañ c'ub sems dpai skor. ąDul ądsin of Mon gro took possession of Mon mk'ar of A rtha sal; hence the community of the Bu ts'o intermediate: T'o liñ gser k'añ, rGya žiñ gi lha k'añ. K'a c'ar, sNiñ po Na mo, Ña ts'o rig, Ts'a ts'a sgoñ etc. were the Upper Bu ts'o.

5. He was one of the pupils of gZus rDo rje rgyal mts'an a pupil of Gru mar Ts'ul k'rims ąbyuñ gnas:

- 2 bu c'en of gTsañ { ąDsim DT, k'a, p. 7 b.  
sNe p'o.
- 2 bu c'en of dBus { Glan Ts'ul k'rims byañ c'ub  
DT, k'a, p. 8 a.  
sBo c'an, *ibid.*

6. The text seems here corrupt; in fact the places which follow are said to be six but are in fact only five.

Klu mes Ts'ul k'rims

1. first disciple: Gru mar Ts'ul k'rims ąbyuñ gnas builds Sol nag t'añ c'en; the community is called Klu mes skor or T'añ skor.

2. second disciple: Žaň sNa nam rDo rje dbañ p'yug builds rGyal lha k'añ (DT, k'a, p. 11 b); the community is called Žaň skor.

3. third disciple: sDog (B.: rDog) Byañ c'ub ąbyuñ gnas, builds Yer pa pa riñ (B.: rañ); the community is called sDog skor.

4. fourth disciple: Klan (B.: DT; gLan) Ye šes šes rab, builds rGyal gsar k'añ (B.: sgañ; V DL: rgya gsar sgañ); the community is called Klan skor.

7. B., p. 203, Ye šes blo of Sum pa missing the younger sBa. – 10. According to B., p. 203

sBa (V DL: Ts'ul k'rims gros; two tches:

a) from the tel Yuñ dgur DL: luñ, the elder lir of the sBa;

b) from the L. rta bres<sup>8)</sup> (E re mts'ar mda' groi k'añ) the ger sBa lir

dBus – four groups<sup>7)</sup>

<p>sBa (V DL: rBa) Ts'ul k'rim s blo gros; two branches:</p> <p>a) from the temple Yuñ dgur (V DL: <i>luñ gyur</i>) the elder lineage of the sBa;</p> <p>b) from the Lan pa rta bres<sup>8)</sup> (B. Gye re mts'ar snai mda' groñ lha k'añ) the younger sBa lineage.</p>	<p>Rag šis (S.: ša) Ts'ul k'rim s abyuñ gnas; two branches:</p> <p>a) from the temple of Lan pa spyil bu the elder Rag šis lineage;<sup>9)</sup></p> <p>b) from the temple of Go rom ts'ar rna the younger<sup>10)</sup> Rag šis lineage.</p>	<p>ąBriñ Ye šes yon tan (V DL: Ye šes ston)</p>		
		<p>from the temple of Lhas kyi klu mgon (B.: Nan lam pa) the Up- per ąBriñ.</p>	<p>from the temple of sKar c' uñ the intermediate ąBriñ.</p>	<p>from the temple of sNet'añ brag sna the lower ąBriñ.</p> <p>rMa Ša kya byañ c'ub went to the school of Rag šis and sBa and built ąJog poi klu goñ in ąP'an yul.</p>
		<p>His pupils (smad ts'o)</p>		
		<p>Dar Byañ c'ub gsal took pos- session of rDol po 'on ąc'añ rdo rje.</p>	<p>Žañ Ša kya señ ge took pos- session of P'od mod lha k'añ.</p>	

Sum pa missing. – 8. Buston attributes the foundation of this temple to the younger Rag šis. – 9. Which for Buston is the name of the temple founded by ig to B., p. 205, the second branch of the Rag šis took possession of dGe rgyas.

interpretations of Buddhism; the only exception is perhaps that of the rÑiñ ma pa "the ancients", who keeping to the old formulas and liturgies attributed to Padmasambhava's preaching and not aloof from contacts with the Bon po schools, are the most heterodox sect as compared with traditional Buddhism, being the one in which native religious tradition has most abundantly flowed and survived. To conclude, these sects, although they claimed to be descended from different masters, had the greatest respect for one another. Certain revelations, typical of some schools, are not for this reason rejected or denied by the other schools. A remarkable instance is that of the six laws of Nāropā, a celebrated summary of six Haṭhayoga principles; not only is it the fundamental text of the bKa' brgyud pa, but the dGe lugs pa too, in their earliest phase, were interested in it.

Tsoñ k'a pa and his direct disciples had not yet developed a rigid system; they were slowly compiling their theology and could not help starting from the doctrines which represented the common ground of Tibetan religious experience. In their beginnings the dGe lugs pa were linked to the bKa' gdams and to the Sa skya pa, but the bKa' gdams, in their turn, boasted century-old contacts with the bKa' brgyud pa.

Even the Kar ma pa of mTs'ur p'u, a red sect which later was to take up a hostile position towards the dGe lugs pa and to oppose their ascent, was spiritually linked with the bKa' gdams pa, and their relations were so close that Po to pa, one of the greatest authorities of the bKa' gdams pa school, was considered one of their patriarchs.<sup>152)</sup>

Precisely because the sacred texts, particularly the tantric and yoga ones, were little more than symbolical directions, they needed the master's oral teachings to become operative in the mystic's conscience; interpretations of the same book were, therefore, many and often jarring. Neophytes went from one master to another to become partakers of the hidden

meanings of those treatises. So that, even after the sects took on their particular make up, they were being renewed with continual exchanges and passages from one to the other. Hence it is not surprising that in the bKa' gdams pa records we should find, mentioned together, Sa skya pa like the Sa skya Pañ c'en, the founder of aBri guñ, or P'ag mo gru pa. They were all pursuers of the mystical doctrines Atīśa had brought into Tibet from India, preserved and transmitted through a long series of masters and disciples. Theological hatred, fostered by clashes of interests, had not yet opened up deep misunderstandings between the schools; those who thirsted for truth were free to seek out the masters they considered most capable, without arousing jealousy.

Thus the P'ag mo gru pa, although they had had relations with the aBri guñ pa since their beginning and were themselves considered by the bKa' brgyud pa as belonging to their group, (the author of the DT and Padma dkar po place them there), could also be included among the bKa' gdams pa by bSod nams grags pa; in his chronicles he links with Atīśa's and Tsoñ k'a pa's doctrines the great dignitaries of rTse t'añ and of T'el and with them the supreme heads of the P'ag mo gru, like dPal ldan bzañ po and bSod nams rgyal mts'an, Byañ c'ub rdo rje, Grags pa rgyal mts'an, and so forth (*bKa' gdams gsar sñiñ c'os abyuñ*, pp. 92-95).

On the other hand the P'ag mo gru pa's relations with the bKa' gdams pa are also proved by the title of *c'os bži pa*, which they sometimes assumed as in the case of Grags pa abyuñ gnas, and which contains a clear allusion to the four laws whose observance the bKa' gdams pa enforced in a harsh and petulant manner:

"As alcoholic drinks are the root of moral infections, drink them not;

"As woman is the root of moral infections, look not on her;

"As covetousness is the root of moral infections, hoard not (money);

“ As to move about is the root of evil, go not roaming ,,,

(*bKa'gdams gzar rñin c'os abyun*, p. 17a).

The rules prescribed that thoughts should be carefully watched, drawing up every evening the sum of the good and evil ones that had occurred during the day. To do this white pebbles were used for good thoughts and black pebbles for bad ones; those who prevalently collected white pebbles were called *snags pa*, “ exorcist ,,, while those who had a majority of black pebbles were *mñan bgrañ ba*, “ those who count their curses ,,,

This curious custom may best be understood by relating it to Tibetan legends on the trial of souls and the sacred performances which warned the devotees by showing them, in a dramatic form, the fate awaiting good and bad men after death. This trial is mentioned in the so-called *Book of the Dead*, in which we read that when the deceased's soul comes before the God of Death and is disputed between the genius of good and that of evil, the deeds performed during life are reckoned by means of white pebbles for good deeds and black pebbles for bad ones.<sup>153</sup>) As we can see, *bKa'gdams pa* used this very method to bring before their minds the final judgement, from which salvation and damnation depend.

So in ancient times we find mystical and liturgical currents flowing together and acting upon one another, hindering the formation of a rigid system in which the schools should become enclosed and marked out. Tsoñ k'a pa's education shows in what a motley way his mind was formed: he was baptized by a Kar ma pa monk, Rol pai rdo rje (*biogr.*, p. 64), and his masters were both aBri guñ pa abbots and the C'os bzi pa, who initiated him to the study of texts, prevailingly *bKa'brgyud pa*. Next gZon nu blo gros and dBu ma pa dPa' bo rdo rje, with their philosophical solidity and their dogmatic depth, refined his skill in dealing with the subtleties of mahayanic philosophy. This also explains how the

different schools kept up neighbourly relations for a long time, when they were not absolutely irreconcilable, like the rñin ma pa. In sNeu gdon and in rTse t'añ, Sa skya pa and dGe lugs pa monasteries existed side by side, and the same thing happened in Sañs grva ts'añ c'en mo and in Rin spuñs; this is confirmed by Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o. Indeed even today, to quote an example, in Gyantse, Ñor pa, Ža lu pa and dGe lugs pa monasteries are to be found within the same enclosure.

If religious schools and sects remained, in a certain sense, still undefined, laymen were naturally more and more eclectic; it cannot be said that they followed one particular school; rather they were anxious to honour this or that Lama famed for his sanctity. They vied with each other in receiving them as guests on their property, and impartially listened to their teachings, because of a natural awe they felt for their miracle-working powers.

The dPal k'or c'os sde of Gyantse, to quote an instance, founded by Rab bran kun bzañ, is certainly of Sa skya pa inspiration as can be seen from the cycles represented in its paintings, and the Yi dams reproduced in the mGon k'añ. On the other hand we know that the counsellor by whom the prince of rGyal rtse was led to undertake that great work was mK'as grub rje, one of Tsoñ k'a pa's two principal disciples. What does this mean? What we already know concerning the great reformer's spiritual education: all schools had a part in his training as he picked and chose any where and open-mindedly the teachings.

The school had not yet appeared, it was beginning to take shape by receiving the most authoritative experiences from the sect which preceded it.

As time went on these schools stiffened and widened their differences. To prefer one Tantric cycle to another implied that the deities protecting the sects, nearly always the same to whom the revelation of their scriptures was attributed, or round whom the

mystical experience they proclaimed centered, varied from one place to another. We see the *Sa skya pa* adoring *Kyai rdo rje* as their protecting *Yi dam*, and the Indian *Siddha Virūpā* as their first master; but the *bKa' brgyud pa* recognized *Vajradhara*, as their celestial inspirer and as their earthly master *Tilopā*; the *rÑiñ ma pa* on the other hand respectively *Samantabhadra* and *Padmasambhava*, and the *bKa' gdams pa* *Vajradhara* and *Atiśa*.

To these doctrinal splits, others were added, of a disciplinary character, according as the rules of the *Vinaya* were more or less respected, imposing restriction which the other schools did not observe or observed only in part, like celibacy and abstention from alcoholic beverages.

After these considerations of a general character, it will be well to deal one by one with the most important sects appearing in Tibet's religious history.

In the first place we have the school of the *rÑiñ ma pa*, "the ancients", originating from *Padmasambhava*. This miracle-worker has been much discussed in Europe and in Tibet, as we shall see in detail when illustrating the tankas dedicated to him.<sup>154</sup> There seems to be no doubt that he was an historical personage, who came to Tibet in the times of *K'ri sroñ lde btsan*, but we certainly cannot accept all the accounts of his miracles and doings, found in the legends which grew up rapidly and abundantly around him. Through a series of circumstances which are not all clear, he became in fact, in his followers' eyes, another Buddha, and a school which still prospers centered around him. In other words the *siddha Padmasambhava*, an historical personage, must be separated from the *guru rin po c'e*, the second Buddha, which the *rÑiñ ma pa* legend has built round the former personage. SP, p. 382 says that *Padmasambhava* was a contemporary of *Dharmapāla*, King of *Magadha*, and of *Hayalīla* of *Uḍḍiyāna*. He is said to have been the son of *Pri ga dha ra* (?)<sup>155</sup> related to the royal family of *Uḍḍiyāna*. When he had

finished his education, he was called *Padmakulīśa*. Having studied the *Tantras* of the four classes at *Śāntirūpa's* school, he was called *Padmasambhava*. When King *Hayalīla* died and was succeeded by *Akṣalīla*, he was appointed chaplain, much to the Ministers' annoyance, and they attempted to murder him.

He managed to escape and, having given himself up to austere meditations in various graveyards, he attained such powers that he was able to kill, by the strength of his formulas, the King and Ministers who had persecuted him. Moved by a vision of 'Od dpag med, he then went to *Magadha*, in the monastery of *C'os kyi myu gu*, where he met the master *Saṅs rgyas dpal*; having finished his instruction, he was baptized by him with the name of *Padmākara*; he continued his studies on the *Anuttaratantra* under *Saṅs rgyas gsañ ba*,<sup>156</sup> the former's disciple. Having then gone to *Bengal*, to *T'a ru*,<sup>157</sup> to *Tsam par rna* (*Champan*), to *Ka ma ru* (*Kāmarūpa*), and to *Nepal*, he preached the doctrine and practised alchemy. On his return to *Uḍḍiyāna*, as his activity recalled that of *bDe ba c'en pad ma vajra*, he was called *Mahāsukhapadmavajra*. About that time the King of the *sTag gzig* of *Mo la dā na*, (namely *Multān*, conquered by *Mohammed ibn Qāsim* in 713) tried to attack *Uḍḍiyāna* and the nearby *Kaccha*<sup>158</sup> country, but the *Siddha*, by his magical formulas, sank the boats which carried the invading troops on the *Nila* river. He came twice to Tibet, and not only pacified the native deities and gave the King sacred instructions, but he also founded *bSam yas*. It is not true that he remained in Tibet for 50 years, as many *gTer ma* say; he only stayed there 18 months. As may be seen, SP greatly reduces *Padmasambhava's* myth and makes him into a mere *siddha*, particularly given over to magic arts, restless, vindictive, who anyhow remained in Tibet too short a time to leave lasting traces of his activity there. He identifies him with *Padmākara*, *Mahāpadmavajra*, *Mahāsukhapadmavajra*. This

assimilation is not surprising in the initiatic schools, where, as we shall see, a multiplicity of names, resulting from several baptisms conferred, is a very common, indeed we might almost say, a normal, occurrence.

But it cannot be excluded that knowledge of this fact also induced the Tibetans to baseless assimilations. In the *bsTan aḡyur*, under Padmasambhava's name, only one work is inserted, the *Dākinīmaṇḍalopāyikā*, composed by Śāntirakṣita, which Padmasambhava is believed to have translated with his Tibetan disciple Vairocana. The index of the LXXVIth volume contains the names of works not inserted in the collection and merely attributed to Padma; the proximity of these booklets to those put under the name of Vimāla[mitra],<sup>159</sup> often quoted in the same index, might induce us to identify him with Padmasambhava.

In the *bsTan aḡyur*, section *mDo*, there is also a small treatise on *vinaya* which has nothing tantric about it, the *Bhikṣuvarṣāgraprecchā*, (CORDIER, *mDo*, XC, n. 12) attributed by some indexes to Padma aḡyuiṅ gnas dbyaṅs (Padmākaraghoṣa), which the author of the DT seems however to consider as a work of our siddha (*slob dpon padma aḡyuiṅ gnas, ka*, p. 16 b). All this shows how the Tibetan sources themselves waver: the ambiguity of the translation of his name may have addet to it; Padma aḡyuiṅ gnas, in fact, may be either Padmasambhava or Padmākara; mT's'o skyes rdo rje, on the other hand, may be rendered both as Padmavajra and as Saroruhavajra. Anyhow, the historical existence of a siddha bearing this name cannot be doubted, whether he be identical with the other personages bearing a kindred name or differ from them, all the more so as he is mentioned in the Tun huang manuscripts (LALOU, *Inventaire*, n. 44) in a treatise on the transmission of the *p'ur bu* cycle, whose instructions Padmasambhava handed down to a K'ri sroṅ lde btsan according to a common tradition (see DT, *ka*, p. 2 b).

The rÑiṅ ma pa found their doctrine on a vast collection of Tantric texts, whose character is prevalently magical, revealed, according to tradition, by the mK'a' aḡro ma. But the other schools refuse to accept them as authentic and consider them to have been concocted in the course of time by lay exorcist (*k'yim sṅags*) on the basis of an unorthodox tradition and with the insertion of many Bon elements (SP, p. 176). They form a collection called *rGyud aḡbum*, which enjoys great authority with the "Ancients,..". The rÑiṅ ma pa are divided into two main currents: the true rÑiṅ ma pa who represent the less learned section, mostly given to exorcisms and works of magic; for this reason its followers are commonly called *sṅags pa*, "exorcists,..". The other current, boasting great figures of masters and ascetics, bears the name of rDsogs c'en, "the perfect ones,..". But the distinctive trait of this school is the vast place it gives, in its doctrines and liturgies, to Bon po Shamanism, its gods and its beliefs. On this point the other schools criticise the rÑiṅ ma pa; they are reproached with basing their theories on apocryphal scriptures. Like the Bon po, the rÑiṅ ma pa recognize nine vehicles instead of three, viz.: 1. śrāvaka, 2. pratyekabuddha, 3. bodhisattva, 4. kriyāyoga, 5. upāyayoga, 6. yoga, 7. mahāyoga, 8. anuyoga, 9. atiyoga;<sup>160</sup> they do not abstain from animal sacrifices, admit a large number of terrific deities into their Pantheon (*k'rag t'uṅ*, "blood-drinkers,..") and welcome the bTsan, the T'eu raṅ, the Sa bdag, in a word the native deities, more than other schools do; they accept as a symbol of supreme reality Kun tu bzaṅ po, who occupies the same position with the Bon po, and whose *Nirmāṅakāya* is Padmasambhava.<sup>161</sup>

The BK'A GDAMS PA go back to Atiśa<sup>162</sup> who arrived in Tibet in the year 1042 and to Rin c'en bzaṅ po (958-1055); thus they transmit in Tibet the theological and esoteric teachings of the learned Indian tradition, keeping nevertheless to the line of revelation,

without indulging overmuch in the magic and exorcisms which Padmasambhava's followers carried to excess. Not that they denied Vajrayāna, but although they considered it as the supreme expression of those Buddhist teachings which are reserved to a few elect, they equally stressed the other side of the doctrine, as its preparation and propaedeutic, and they restricted Vajrayāna within the bounds of an orthodox interpretation. As regards the bodhisatva's path (*caryā*) they followed Asaṅga, but they took as their doctrinal foundation the dogmatic of void, as it had been elaborated by Nāgārjuna. The bKa' gdams pa diffused most of all the Prajñāpāramitā literature, not only its revealed text in their manifold versions, but also the subtle commentaries which explain its hidden meaning, from Asaṅga's to Haribhadra's works. In this manner the spirit was purified by a progressive ascent which gradually brought it nearer to supreme enlightenment. As regards Tantric experience, the bKa' gdams pa confined themselves particularly to the Tattvasaṅgraha and the other Yogatantra connected with it; this may be deduced not only from literary tradition, but also from pictorial cycles and from the maṅḍalas painted on the walls of temples built under the patronage of this school in Western Tibet. Among the oldest centres of the bKa' gdams pa's diffusion were Toling in Guge and the Rva sgreñs monastery, where the patriarchs of the school succeeded one another and which was finished in the year 1057 by ḅBrom ston; he brought there the remains of Atīśa, who had died in sÑe t'añ in the year 1054 and placed them in a stūpa built by the Indian artist Ācārya Manu (SP, p. 199). The bKa' gdams pa were specially devotees of Śākyamuni, Sphyan ras gzigs, sGrol ma and Mi gyo ba (Kloñ rdol, *ža*, p. 6) and recognized as their patrons the 16 arhats.

The school soon split up into the groups derived from ḅBrom ston's (1004, *šiñ ḅbrug* / 1063, *č'u yos*; so in the *bKa' gdams Č'os ḅbyuñ*,

p. 6: but DT, *ca*, p. 85*b*, *šiñ sbrul*, 1003 / *šiñ ḅbrug*, 1064) three foremost disciples: Po to pa Rin č'en gsal (*lcags lug*, 1031, DT, *ca*, p. 13, *me yos*, 1027, SP, p. 201 / *šiñ bya*, 1105), the founder of Po to monastery, P'u č'uñ pa gŽon nu rgyal mts'an (*lcags lug*, 1031 / *me k'yi*, 1106, DT, *ca*, p. 13) and sPyan sña Ts'ul k'rims ḅbar, (*sa stag*, 1038, DT, *ca*, p. 20 or *č'u bya*, 1033, according to *bKa' gdams č'os ḅbyuñ* / *č'u lug*, 1063) who in the year of the boar 1095 founded the monastery of Lo (DT, *ca*, p. 20). The bKa' gdams pa thus represented the exegetical tradition introduced into Tibet at the beginning of the second propagation of the faith, and they finally disappeared, mixing with the dGe lugs pa, who by proclaiming themselves their pursuers, took the name of bKa' gdams pa gsar ma, namely "the renewed bKa' gdams pa .."

Almost at the same time arose the sect of the bKA' BRGYUD PA, which differing from the preceding school, particularly stresses Haṭhayoga and the severe practices it enforces. The soteriological process thus elaborated is called by this sect the "swift path .., *myur lam*, which bends the body to the spirit's will, transforming it into an obedient instrument of liberation from the ties of cosmic illusion. This school directly continues that of the Siddha, *grub t'ob*, "perfect men .., who through the miraculous exercise of Yoga in this same life, although remaining on earth, cause the purest light of universal consciousness to shine forth in their person.

The sect began in Tibet with Č'os kyi blo gros of Mar, known as the lotsāva Mar pa (since he was thirty one when Atīśa came in Tibet he was born according to DT, *k'a*, p. 5, a in the year 1012, *č'u byi*).<sup>163</sup>) A restless and tenacious spirit, after having studied in Tibet at ḅBrog mi's school, he went several times to India, to be initiated there, by the most famous masters, into the mysteries of Tantric esoterism and into the stiffest asceticism of the Haṭhayoga. He met Nāropā on his first journey and learnt "the six laws,, from

him; after his death (the date *me yos*, 1027, *bKa' gdams c'os abyun*, p. 8, is too early; according to DT, *ñā*, p. 26, he died shortly before Mar pa returned to Tibet when this was 42 years old, 1053) he frequented his disciple Maitrīpā, who revealed to him the mysteries of the mahāmudrā. In Tibet his personality gained such an authority, that large groups of disciples flocked to his school. I shall recall only the most important, those who in their turn handed over the disciplines they had learned from him, giving origin to the future sects. The trends of thought and of yoga derived from him are divided by Tibetan writers, from whom we have no motive to dissent, into three groups: *bśad bka' adsin* or interpreters of the scriptures, *grub bka' adsin* or those stressing mystical realization, *gron jug bka' ababs* or those practising a special yoga through whose virtue a person's conscious principle is transferred into another person's corpse. The secret of this last process was transmitted by Mar pa to his son Dar ma mdo sde who, according to his biography, having fallen from his horse and being about to die, transferred his own conscious principle into the body of a dove which had just been killed by a hunter; having thus immediately restored him to life, he flew to India and once more introduced it into the body of a young Brahman, just dead, whom his relatives were taking to the funeral pyre. Thus the secret teaching of this transmission was broken up with Dar ma mdo sde; the texts remain, but as they are no longer revived by the living words of an initiated master, no active virtue issues from them.

Among those who partook of the interpretation of the scriptures, are particularly recorded C'os rdo rje of rNog (*me byi*, 1036 - *c'u rta*, 1102; in DT, *ñā*, p. 4 ff., his descent is found) and dBaṅ rdo rje of mTs'ur, (also written ṅTs'ur; his biography in DT, *ñā*, p. 8 ff.) from whom was derived a school attended also by Tson k'a pa. The greatest among the followers of the second

current and at the same time the most famous of Mar pa's disciples was Mi la ras pa (or Mid la ras pa). He had, in his turn, two disciples, emerging above all the others, Ras c'uñ rdo rje grags pa (*šin byi*, 1084 - *lcags sbrul*, 1161, DT, *ñā*, p. 16 ff.) and rJe Dvags lha sgam po pa. The first was sent by his master to India *c'u bya*, 1153, DT, *ñā*, p. 22, to learn from Balacandra's school the *gtum mo*, that yoga which produces voluntary hyperpyresis, and from Ti p'u, Nāropā's and Maitrīpā's disciple, the esoterisms of the *lus med mk'a' agro* cycle.

From sGam po pa (*sa lug*, 1079 - *c'u bya*, 1153, DT, *ñā*, pp. 22 b, 26 b), who meditated in a particular manner on Nāropā's six laws and on the mahāmudrā, sprang four main branches, into which the bKa' brgyud pa found itself split up in a later period: ṅBri guñ pa, sTag luñ pa, Kar ma pa, ṅBrug pa; all of them, except the last, take their names from the monastery where they settled and whence they spread. The ṅBRI GUÑ PA are derived from a disciple of P'ag mo gru pa, already mentioned in the course of this book. The second school began with another disciple of the same master, sTag luñ t'añ pa bkra šis dpal (*c'u k'yi*, 1142 - *lcags rta*, 1210, DT, *ñā*, p. 91) of K'ams, called sTAG LUÑ PA from the sTag luñ monastery he founded in the year 1180 and whose vicissitudes are told with a wealth of details by the DT. The ṅBRUG PA school recognizes as its founder Gliñ ras pa Pad ma rdo rje (*sa spre*, 1128 - *sa spre*, 1188, DT, *ñā*, p. 113) also called, from the name of his abode, rNa p'u pa. He was a disciple of P'ag mo gru pa and besides the above monastery he took possession of another much more famous one, Rva luñ. From him is derived a long succession of disciples, some of whom we have met or shall meet with in the course of this book: gTsañ pa rgyas ras pa (*lcags sbrul*, 1161 - *lcags lug*, 1211, DT, *ñā*, p. 115), who had as his disciples Lo ras pa dbaṅ p'yug (*me lug*, 1187 - *lcags byi*, 1240, DT, *ñā*, p. 119), rGod ts'añ pa of Lho brag (*sa bya*, 1189 - *sa*

rtā, 1258, DT, *ñā*, p. 122), in his turn the master of O rgyan pa.

The last bKa' brgyud pa school we still have to mention is the KAR MA PA school, which goes back to a direct disciple of sGam po pa, C'os aḍsin dGe ap'el (SP, p. 369), of K'ams (*ñin byi*, 1204 - *c'u lug*, 1283, DT, *ñā*, p. 37), who after his initiation received the name of C'os bla ma pa. He studied under some direct disciples of Atiśa, like Yol C'os dbaṅ and Śa ra ba; then, having gone to sGam po pa, he learnt the secrets of the *mahāmudrā*; then he founded the mTs'ur p'u monastery. His followers were divided into two branches, which from the colour of their caps took the names of *žva dmar* and *žva nag*, "red caps," and "black caps." The difference between these schools is extremely small and consists in their preference for some yoga exercises, and above all in the different founders from whom they claim descent. Furthermore, according to SP, aBri guṅ pa and Kar ma pa, outside rhetoric, astrology and lexicography, neglected dogmatics proper, bringing all their interest and studies to bear on the mantra, hyperpyresis, breathing practices, in one word the complex Haṭhayoga exercises. The other two schools were distinguished by greater learning, but all recognized Vajradhara as their divine master and as their first earthly masters Tilopā and Nāropā, from whom their spiritual tradition was descended. The Tantric cycles on which they most turn their attention are those of the superior class, particularly Heruka and Śaṃvara. They have dedicated a particular study to the Dohākośa, that symbolic poetry issued from the esoteric schools of medieval India, which exerted a powerful influence, also as regards form, on the whole of bKa' brgyud pa literature, abounding in mystical songs like those of Mi la ras pa. Their Yi dam and C'os skyoṅ are numberless. Among the Kar ma prevail mGom po beṅ, mGon lcam dral, rNam t'os sras mduṅ dmar can, and so forth.

A peculiar bKa' brgyud pa sect, distinct from the four we have just mentioned, is the

ŠAṆS sect, founded by Šaṅs K'yuṅ po rnal aḅyor (born *leags stag* before the starting of the cycle: 990), formerly a Bon po who having gone to India and Nepal, learned the mysteries of the Haṭhayoga under some celebrated masters like Paṇḍita Vasumatī, Atulyavajra, Maitrīpā, Lalitavajra. He specialized in the six laws of the ḍakinī Ni gu, and founded first the monastery of aC'aṅ dkar in aJog po, then the Šaṅs monastery. The aBa' ra pas are descended from this school.

The SA SKYA PA are derived from aK'on dKon cog, who founded the monastery from which they took their name, but the master at whose school he was formed and who may be considered the Tibetan ancestor of the *Lam aḅras* theory, that is of the Tantric cycles stressing the presence in ourselves of universal consciousness, is aBrog mi. The school recognizes to this day a chief of its own, who exercises temporal power over the Sa skya territory and is descended from dKon cog; being at the same time a priest and a sovereign, he is obliged to marry in order to continue his line. The Tantric cycles which the school particularly stresses are those of Hevajra, who is its Yi dam. Its C'os skyoṅ are P'ur bu and mGur mgon.

From the Sa skya pa another school branches off, called NOR after the monastery it is connected with (founded in 1429); in this case the school's individuality is derived not so much from doctrinal differences, which are irrelevant, as from the monastery's importance and the moral prestige of its founder Kun dga' bzaṅ po.

The same may be said concerning the ŽA LU PAS, descended from Buston, who take their name from the monastery where this supreme figure of Lamaism meditated and wrote. But as to doctrine they are something intermediate between the bKa' gdams pa and the Sa skya pa.

It is more difficult to define the individuality of two other sects, the JO NAN PA and the

sTAG TS'AN PA (born 1405). The former, so called from a famous monastery in the gTsañ region, often mentioned in these pages, owe their origin to Šes rab rgyal mts'an (1292-1361), and besides this master, an excellent interpreter of the Kālacakra's esoterisms, they glory above all in Tāranātha, who was the shining light of their school. Sum pa mk'an po, an orthodox writer of the Yellow Sect, classes them rather as heretics; what this means is rather difficult to define, but perusing Tāranātha's works we notice to what a great extent he was influenced by the ascetics of extreme Indian Buddhism, who having crossed the Hīmalaya reached Tibet and met him there. These ascetics belonged to the currents of yoga where one can hardly distinguish Buddhism from Śivaism, and indeed the latter prevails; hence certain interpretations they give of the Vajrayāna may have appeared to differ from the ancient tradition. Tāranātha, when listening to his masters, did not think that in India Buddhism had altered in the course of centuries and that it was not enough to come from India and to profess oneself an ācārya or a siddha to be considered an orthodox interpreter of the most genuine Buddhist experience. But in the eyes of the Yellow Sect, heresy was already in the views of the founder of the sect, since he interpreted the monistic doctrine implicit in the *Uttaratantra* in such a way as not to differ very much from the Brahmanic theories: he in fact went so far as to affirm that there is no distinction whatever between the Buddha and all living beings. So he was strongly criticised by rGyal ts'ab and all the dGe lugs pa interpreters of the *Uttaratantra* and *Kālacakra* (DT, *t'a*, p. 11: a resumé of his view in OBERMILLER, *The sublime science of the Great vehicle*, p. 106). I lack sufficient data to judge the sTag ts'an, but if the founder of Hemis in Ladakh belongs to the same school, as it seems, they ought to be considered a branch of the bKa' brgyud pa, and what has been said about the Jo nañ pa should also apply to them.

We must also consider separately the followers of DAM PA Sañs rgyas an ascetic of Southern India who introduced into Tibet two particular schools called *gcod* and *ži byed*.<sup>164</sup> Drawing his inspiration from a chapter of the Prajñāpāramitā (*Māraka*, p. 385) this master, through a complex meditative process, accomplished in cemeteries and places where corpses are exposed (excellently described by Mrs. David Neel),<sup>165</sup> issued out of his own conscious principle the images of deities, and then absorbed them all again in order to realize that all things which appear, even the gods, are a creation and a phantom of our unconquered thought. The consequence is that everything is unsubstantial, and hence the supreme truth of gnosis is realized by an immediate experience.

Dam pa, who is believed to have been not only in Tibet, but also in China (SP, p. 375) where he spent 12 years, in the year *me glañ*, 1097 (DT, *na*, p. 22 a) settled with his followers in the monastery of Diñ ri, which is the seat of this school even now; there he died 21 years later 1117. One of the chief interpreters of his doctrines was his "mudrā,, Ma gcig lab kyi sgron ma.

Compared with these sects having an ancient tradition, the dGE LUGS PA, better known by the name of Yellow Sect, is much later; they began their life with Tsoñ k'a pa as a reform born out of that same corruption into which the religious communities had fallen, too intent on wordly pursuits which turned them away from meditation and study. The very fact that the rÑiñ ma pa monks and nearly all the bKa' brgyud pa might many (were *ser k'yim*) diverted them from sacred matters and made them too keen on earthly affairs; the privileges they enjoyed, and the fiscal position of convents, at the lay subjects' expense, naturally had a bad influence on popular feeling towards the priestly class. The fire of spiritual bliss having died out, religion degenerated into magic and esotericism; this explains, as I have said elsewhere, the

cause of Tsoñ k'a pa's success. His reform is rather a return to tradition; he restored serious study, he cleared away the luxuriant growth of magic which had found a favourable field in the Vajrayāna, he organized monastic life on a solid base, restoring the Vinaya rules, too often violated by other schools: celibacy, prohibition of alcoholic drinks, prohibition of meat. In monasteries a severe discipline prevailed, in seminaries novices underwent a curriculum which left them no rest; he established courses of study, examinations, titles conferred when examinations were worthily stood. The various parts of Buddhist doctrine were ably graded, and dialectics represented the fundamental base of any deeper study. The *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and the *Abhidbarmakośa* come next; study of the Vajrayāna is a thing apart. I shall not say that this is an innovation, but everything was arranged with a painstaking accuracy and an eye for detail, unknown to other sects. Tsoñ k'a pa continued to restore the purest traditions of Indian monastic life. We have seen how eclectic he was, how his education

had been accomplished in the schools of masters belonging to different currents. To make a distinction, he adopted the yellow cap, while the other schools kept to red caps, and were therefore called 'red caps', indiscriminately, without taking into account their different character.

In the beginning the school did not stand out so markedly as later when, taking advantage of Tibet's political breakdown, its great monasteries aspired to hegemony over the Country of Snows. The apostolic zeal of its first converts, the disrepute into which other sects had fallen, the support of a part of the aristocracy, all these motives which we have discussed above, caused the Yellow Sect to prosper rapidly; in the course of a few centuries they not only prevailed to a very great extent, but replaced the former owners of convents. It is sufficient to glance at the catalogue of the monasteries of the dGe lugs pa sect, included by Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o in the *Vai dur ya ser po*, to perceive that many of them are not newly built: they are old localities, once more opened up to religious observance and consecrated again by the Yellows.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIBETAN RELIGIOUS LITERATURE FROM THE XII<sup>th</sup> TO THE BEGINNING OF THE XVIII<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

**A**rt and philosophy bore their fairest flowers in the Country of Snows in the period whose vicissitudes we have so far related. In those four centuries Buddhist dogmatics, brought into Tibet through numberless translations of sacred texts and commentaries, were definitely assimilated by the Tibetan scholars; historical research gained new strength and prospered, fostered by favourable spiritual conditions. Without anticipating what will be said in a separate chapter concerning historical literature and chronicles, I will now give a survey, and, as I know, only too well, an inadequate one, of what the most authoritative masters, whose memory or whose works are preserved, contributed to the elaboration of Buddhist thought and to the creation of Tibetan literature. They are very often the same masters who will frequently be referred to in the third part of this book, illustrating the paintings; hence when their images are reproduced and their names quoted, their import in the spiritual and literary life of Tibet will be fully understood; the paintings themselves, thus gaining a greater relief, will no longer be cold and lifeless representations of unknown persons.

Tibetan literature was naturally formed round the religion of Tibet; its purpose was to explain the texts translated from the Sanskrit, to analyze experiences, relate the lives of saints, eulogize convents or glorify events which are an expression of religious feelings, such as the consecration of a temple or the building of a mc'od rten. There is no profane literature to speak of, because culture belonged entirely to the monks; even the

laws which ruled Tibet for several centuries, although bearing the names of the kings who enforced them, were almost certainly written down by lamas. It must not be forgotten that in Tibet culture was then, and has remained to this day, the monks' privilege; all knowledge centered in the *Nan rig*, called in India *adhyātma vidyā*, that is, the exploration of the self. As the convents became more and more powerful and were enriched with theological schools, harbouring thousands of monks, the curriculum was organized, but all were not obliged to follow the same path. Even in the education of its ministers Buddhism has respected some freedom of choice; but once certain degrees and titles had been established it was natural that one could not obtain them or aspire to them, unless he had proved a thorough knowledge of given subjects, had mastered given texts and was able to interpret them profoundly and acutely. Religious knowledge was attained after one's becoming proficient in the ancillary sciences, thus scheduled in the *Zab pa dan rgya c'e pai dam pai c'os kyi t'ob yig gan gai c'u rgyan*, which precedes the complete works of the fifth Dalai Lama: monastic rules (*adul ba*), grammar (*ggra*) which might be either Sanskrit or Tibetan, rhetoric (*sñan nags*), lexicons (*mion mdsod*), dramas (*zlos gar*), astrology (*rtsis*), logic (*ts'ad ma*), technique (*bzo*), medicine (*gso*); hence the student passed, through the study of the Abhidharma and of the main systems of the great vehicle, to the intricate forest of esotericism.

No treatises are known originating outside monastic circles, not even for medicine or technique. This happened because the

authoritative texts, upon which the Tibetans moulded their own works, were translations from the Sanskrit, and as such were included in the *bsTan aḡyur*. Furthermore, technical handbooks were used to construct sacred buildings and to model sacred images, whose plan, if not their actual execution, belonged to the monks, while the main medical colleges were dependant on the monasteries, and in the practice of medicine the herborist's task was bound up with that of the lama, the only one entitled to utter the formulas and exorcisms. That, in practice, Tibetan painters of sacred images and Tibetan physicians were and still are very often laymen, does not contradict my statement, because the text-books they both used were translated or imitated from Indian works and compiled in Tibetan convents. The relation between literature and religion is so close and strict that books unconnected with religion, not used as a preparation for religious studies, books, in a word, simply concerned with mundane subjects, are not included in the lamas' compilations, called *gsuñ aḡbum* or *bka' aḡbum*, because they contain all that the lamas have written or dictated.

By looking outside monastic circles, very little would be found: on one hand the elaboration of chronicles and genealogies of noble families, these too, however, dictated by monks, protégés of those same families; on the other hand sacred plays, in the versions circulated among the people, arbitrarily adapted to the people's psychology, temperament and understanding, by actors always ready to modify the literary original, if there was one; finally folk-songs on the occasion of weddings or banquets, love songs, and last of all, epical cycles like the one about Gesar, which anonymous bards constantly enriched, projecting into them the people's feelings and interests and adapting them to various places and to the changes of the times. As folk-literature we should also consider the *aDas log*, very popular all over Tibet, which describes

the experiences of persons, chiefly women, supposed to be dead but visiting during that state the nether world. These books contain as a rule a vivid description of the kingdom of the departed souls and are intended as an advice to men to follow the right path. But in these pages I will not touch upon folk-literature which springs up in an endless variety, quickly develops, and often as quickly disappears, varying from one region to another and scantily influencing art. I will only treat of the most important works, from the pen of the highest figures who shed their first light on the sky of Tibetan thought.

Of course the present summary of Tibetan literature has no claim whatever to completeness; to begin with, it neglects minor works, small treatises on liturgy, which are endless, copied from one another, and add nothing either to Vajrayāna dogmatics or to the knowledge of fundamental Tantric rites. They are modulations of one and the same theme, written without any literary pretension or originality: collections of prayers, lists of formulas, schedules of ritual acts. Out of this literature, most trying to read, I have chosen only very bulky works, the fundamental treatises of the different currents, the commentaries forming the base of the various Tantric systems. All the rest I have naturally disregarded. Another limitation is also implicit in this summing-up, which is almost a catalogue: it examines the works known to me, which I have read or gone over, of which I have gained an idea through direct consultation; sometimes I have taken advantage of bibliographical suggestions which may be gleaned from Tibetan bibliographical collections, the so called *T'ob yig* which record the literary education of the most prominent lamas and are included in their works. In my excursus the works of Sa skya pa, dGe lugs pa and aBrug pa predominate, partly also those of Jo nañ pa. I am the first to recognize the absence of an adequate treatment of other schools, for instance of the

āBri guñ pa and the Kar ma pa. It is well known that every great Tibetan monastery boasts some noble personalities, masters who practised various literary activities: such monasteries have their own printing establishments where those works are cut into wooden blocks and may be printed whenever in repuest. Many other books survive handwritten and these manuscripts are circulated. Naturally the foregoing remarks also apply to this literature, which is still unknown: probably not all of it deserves to be mentioned, but a part of it, at least, is likely to command the attention of scholars.

These pages of mine, then, are meant as a general survey; they aim at giving only a preliminary outline, to which successive chapters may be added, to complete it and bring it up to date. But it was meanwhile necessary to introduce some order and to make known the literary material which I have been collecting and studying in the course of my researches. It is useless to say that in these pages no mention is made of the works already dealt with occasionally in other parts of this book.<sup>166)</sup>

The first Sa skya pa hierarchs flourished as we have remarked above, when the translators' task was almost coming to an end. Buddhist thought in India was now ebbing; the most important works on theology, monastic rules, speculative subjects, sacred doctrines, had been already translated into Tibetan with the greatest accuracy by painstaking lotsāvas, and were now available, in their most significant portions, to Tibetan masters. These scholars then imparted life to the texts through a spiritual participation, almost a direct communication, with their deep and abstruse meaning, fostered by oral transmission through long pedigrees of interpreters, hailing back to the famous chief of some Indian school. Even after the renewal of Tibetan Buddhism at the hands of Rin c'en bzañ po, Atiśa, Mar pa, and of many Indian pandits invited by them to Tibet, or who

accompanied and followed them, impelled by the calamities which had befallen Buddhist communities and universities in India, even then, the Tibetans confined their activity to the translation of new texts, either with the help of Indian masters still resorting to Tibet or by a direct knowledge of Sanskrit, learnt in their frequent journeys to India. Or else the Tibetan masters made converts, they gathered around them disciples and congregations eager to receive their venerated teachings; they interpreted sacred texts according to those oral commentaries called *k'rid* and *bka' gdams*, which can transform the secret words of books into spiritual forces, capable of producing the neophyte's conversion through an inner drama. But they do not yet attempt to follow new paths on their own account, not even in the footsteps of Indian exegetists. Thus the Tibetans were generally precluded for a long time from any intent of elaborating, by their own initiative, the doctrines introduced from India through the centuries by venerable apostles. The Indian pandits who came to Tibet wondered more than once at the wisdom and deep learning of those very monks they had come to instruct; writing came easy to them and they were astonished that the Tibetans, although so learned, should rest content with verbal explanations and compose no original works. When they met the famous translator Dharmabhadra (*C'os bzañ*) they confessed to him that in India men with but a third of his knowledge would already have written treatises and handbooks galore (DT, *ga*, p. 28 a).

A master's perfect virtues are three: *ac'ad*, *rtsoḍ*, *brtsom*: "to explain the sacred doctrines, to discuss them refuting the antagonist's thesis, to put his own system in writing,..." But for a long time the Tibetans, almost as if they feared to vie with the Indian doctors, confined themselves exclusively to the first two tasks, and but rarely composed brief and concise treatises. Even later, after an independent literary activity had begun, their

literature had nothing to show but explanations (*rnam bśad*), commentaries, in a word exegesis which parsed, clarified or elaborated what the Indians had already written on the same subjects.

I shall therefore not be to blame if the historical summary of Tibetan literature which follows is uniform to the point that one writer's personality can scarcely be distinguished from another's, if all the figures seem to melt into bleak and colourless monotony, while the same themes are met with again and again with dull recurrence. I admit that the following pages cannot help producing this impression, but such is Tibetan literature throughout its course, because the writers' personality has become annihilated in that diligent imitation of Indian models which is their object. The pattern they wilfully choose and follow with ruthless discipline allows them no freedom of choice, no sally or brainwave: everything is calculated, measured, dosed in such a fashion, that all sparks of genius, had there been any, would have been dampened and smothered.

A history of Tibetan literature can be but uniform, because this literature itself is uniform, like the development in a straight line, without the least swing, of one single motif. Generally speaking the aim of this literature is the study and the clarification of the principal branches of religion: a) *dbañ*, initiation, viz. the way of arousing in the neophyte the spiritual capacity for understanding and practising the doctrine; b) *luñ*, *āgama* the sacred literature; on one side the revelation *mdo*, *sūtra* and *rgyud*, *tantra* and on the other side the explanations by the doctors and masters *rab byed*, *prakaraṇas*. Subsidiary sciences are grammar, Indian as well as Tibetan, and rethoric, furnishing the writer with the proper means for expressing himself in a dignified manner. These are therefore the subjects with which we shall briefly deal in the following pages, leaving aside medicine, which has little to do with our main research and, medical

literature being very large, needs a special study; nor shall we take into consideration astrology, *rtsis*, though a very important branch of Tibetan learning, occasionally referring only to those works which contain some valuable historical or chronological information. The *bzo rig* of which the art of making images or of painting is a section, has been reviewed in another part of the book.

Among the most ancient models of national Buddhist literature there is little we can enumerate: either letters, like those attributed to Ye šes 'od and to Ži ba 'od,<sup>167)</sup> and Rin c'en bzañ po himself, all of a doctrinal character intended, as they were, to refute a misleading interpretation of the Tantras of the *anuttara* class, or some pieces in verse, on the model of the Indian *stava*, two of which above others became very famous: one, in 30 verses, in honour of Atiśa, written by his favourite Tibetan disciple, aBrom ston, and the other, in the same lama's honour in 80 verses, which Tsoñ k'a pa comments upon in his *Lam rim*, composed by his other disciple Nag ts'o Ts'ul k'rim s rgyal ba (born *lcags p'ag*, 1011). Or we have ritual prescriptions like the *mdo mc'od*, which probably contained directions on how to honour and to use books with the respect due to sacred objects; this work is assigned by tradition to Bla c'en dGoñs pa rab gsal, one of the chief authors of the Buddhist renaissance in the Xth century (PS, p. 181). Naturally there is no lack of lexicons, or rather lists of words in Sanscrit and Tibetan for the use of translators on the pattern of the famous *Mahāvīyutpatti*, like that found in Tun huang and published by Hackin; one of them is attributed to Rin c'en bzañ po (*Ibid.*, p. 182). There were also summaries of doctrines and eulogies of masters, on the model of the *dhyāna* booklet published by M.lle Lalou.<sup>168)</sup>

Evidently some *lotsāvas* did not only translate into Tibetan sanscrit texts but often wrote short commentaries upon them in order to explain their difficulties (*bka' agrel*) or to

point out the right interpretation when discordant opinions were held upon them. Such is the case of the short commentaries written by the Lotsāva of Rva on the cycle of gŠin rje gšed and chiefly upon its maṇḍala of thirteen deities which became in Tibet a standard work.

Among the first we know of who, breaking with tradition, did not hesitate to write according to their own inspiration, there was, as we know, a poet. For Milaraspa, (*lcags abrug*, 1040 - *c'u yos*, 1123, DT, *ña*, p. 12) even if he sings of religion and mystical experiences, is above all a poet.<sup>169</sup>) His poetry is frequently eclipsed by esoteric abstruseness or by the technicalities of yoga, but on the other hand it does sometimes break loose from such patterns and soars in perfect purity on the wings of fancy.

His poetry also is inspired by India, as was to be expected; Milaraspa moves in the subtlest spheres of gnosis, which Vajrayāna had reached through the subtleties of dialectic, the intricacies of yoga technique and the fire of an unquenchable mystical ardour. Milaraspa had found all the subject-matter of his poetry in the songs of the Siddhas known as the Dohākoṣa,<sup>170</sup>) which had also suggested to him the schemes, the grammar of style and form, so to say; he goes back to the Kāṇhu and Saraha schools, but does not passively echo them, rather he pours new life into them, creating by his earnestness and genius Tibetan religious poetry. There is a personal touch in his verses which we will rarely find in Tibetan literature: he often alludes to his hardships, to the misbehaviour of his relatives and to his endurance, which was a difficult conquest of his mystic training: all this gives his poems an interest far greater than that we may feel for his yogic doctrines.<sup>171</sup>)

His example was imitated by two of his best pupils, sGam po pa and Ras c'uñ pa.

To sGam po pa is also attributed a *bsTan c'os luñ gi ñi 'od* which is a summary of the

teachings of Vajrayāna on the basis of the most important texts of Mahāyāna, so that the short treatise looks more like an anthology; the fundamental object is to prove that the supreme reality is pure consciousness beyond any attribute and that it is at the same time the essence of every living being.

The mGur abum, by Ras c'uñ (1084-1161) Milaraspa's favourite pupil, does not display, any particular character by which it may be told from his master's songs; here we find, in the same poetic form, the same mystical doctrines, the same pathetic reflections on the unsubstantiality of all conceptions, an identical ardour for the praxis of yoga, in which alone an ascetic can find salvation. These poems, however, have not the same warmth, they are more doctrinal than Milaraspa's; their lyrical inspiration is stilted, choked by dogmatic reminiscences; the influence of nature is less pronounced; Ras c'uñ's poetic personality is altogether colder and less sensitive than his great master's.<sup>172</sup>)

The mystical handbooks composed by the bKa' gdams pa, and known under the name of Blo sbyoñ, are almost contemporary with the first activity of the bKa' brgyud pa.

They are so many that it is very difficult to give a complete list of them which, on the other hand, could only refer to that compiled by Kloñ rdol bla ma in his *bKa' gdams pa ðaṅ dge lugs bla ma rags rim gyi gsuñ abum mts'an t'o* (complete works, *ra*). Many of them, in the course of time were superseded by the new ones and slowly forgotten, the triumph of the dGe lugs pa greatly contributing to their oblivion. This aboriginal literature began with the *bsTan rim* of Blo gros abyuñ gnas, a pupil of Rin c'en bzañ po, that of Śa ra ba Yon tan grags (born *lcags k'yi*, 1070, † 1141, DT, *ca*, p. 16) and that of sNeu zur pa Ye šes abar (*c'u rta*, 1042 - *sa k'yi*, 1118) and the like; they were parallel with the *dPe c'os* of Po to pa (1031-1105) commented upon by various disciples like sTod luñ pa Rin c'en sñiñ po, better known as gZon nu

‘od (c’u spreu, 1032 / me spreu, 1116, quoted by aP’ags pa, ba, p. 344 and DT, ca, p. 2) and the dGe šes of Brag dkar po. Then the *Be’u bum šion po* of Dol pa rin c’en must be mentioned, commented upon by lCe Šes rab rdo rje, the *Blo sbyoñ don bdun ma* by Ye šes rdo rje of Bya, also known as aC’ad k’a (DT, ca, p. 15, dead at seventy five in the year *šin lug*, 1115) and the *Blo sbyoñ ts’ig rkañ brgyad* by Glan ri t’añ pa (*šin rta*, 1054 / c’u yos, 1123, DT, ca, p. 14).

As may be seen from these works, the bKa’ gdams pa turned their attention to dogmatics; not pure dialectic, but that systematic portion of the doctrine whose meditation frees the mind from the veil of māyā and opens the way to right knowledge.

These *Blo sbyoñ* I was speaking of as fore-runners of Tsoñ k’a pa’s *Lam rim*, are in fact real ascetical handbooks, based on Atiśa’s *Bodhimārgapradīpa*, and sum up in a clear form the basic principles of Buddhism, with a practical purpose: to wash away sin and thus to suppress moral infection, by reflecting on pain (which is the very stuff life is made of) and on the difficulty of being born as a man (the only birth which makes it possible to partake of redeeming truth); by becoming accustomed to the depth of Buddhist doctrines, the only way of destroying ignorance and of guiding men towards the light.

Rin c’en bzañ po (958-1055), Atiśa (arrived in Tibet in the year 1042), aBrom ston (born 1004), the lotsāva of rÑog Blo ldan šes rab (1059-1109, DT, c’a, pp. 1, 6), had introduced, by their important work as translators, the main dogmatical texts, real revelations like the *Prajñāpāramitā* or, more often, exegetical treatises written by Indian masters. But dogmatic literature was extremely ample and the bKa’ gdams pa based themselves mainly on certain fundamental works, the milestones of mahāyānic exegesis: Asaṅga’s *Sūtrālaṅkāra* and *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, Śāntideva’s two celebrated treatises, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (DT, ca, p. 13), Atiśa’s *Bodhimārgapradīpa*.

These magnificent monuments of Indian gnosis and speculation were translated with painstaking accuracy and explained by oral commentaries which transferred into the circles of Tibetan converts India’s exegetical tradition. But little by little, in these bKa’ gdams schools, a native literature was born, if we are to believe gŽon nu dpal’s stories, anticipating and helping that final elaboration which some Sa skya abbots, Buston and Tsoñ k’a pa, were to undertake. Besides Po to pa’s works, which we have quoted, gŽon nu ts’ul k’rims, also in the XIIth century, wrote a commentary on the *Prajñā* and the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (DT, c’a, p. 2); this was followed by the exegetical works of Byañ c’ub grags pa of rGya dmar, with whom the commentaries on treatises of logic begin, and by the works of gTsañ nag pa brTson aṅrus señ ge, who interpreted the *Mādhyamika* system introduced into Tibet by the lotsāva of sPa ts’ab, Ņi ma grags pa (born 1054, *Reu mig*)<sup>173</sup>) and soon commented upon by a large group of interpreters.

Of course the style too began to change: technical terms, dogmatical schemes, were by now well established and not to be altered without a double risk: not only of becoming unintelligible, but also of betraying a sacred and century-old tradition. But to translate from the Sanskrit, forcing Tibetan sentences to follow the alien model, bound by an exacting accuracy, was one thing, and to compose directly in Tibetan was quite a different matter; the language became suppler, was enriched by local words, by idioms taken from current usage, so that, little by little, certain provincialisms became perceptible, and one author could be distinguished from another, born and bred in a different region.

With the Sa skya pa the Tibetans take an extremely active and fruitful place in the exegetical tradition of Buddhism: there is no branch of dogmatics and of mysticism, from logic to esoterism, which they have not made an object of particular studies.

The Sa skya c'en po Kun dga' sñiñ po (1092-1158), had received his training at the hands of Indian masters and of the community founded by Rin c'en bzañ po in mÑa' ris, in that monastery which continued, through several generations of exegetists, the founder's noble tradition.<sup>174)</sup> He clarified, in a series of bulky and well-argued glosses, the esoterism of the Hevajatantra and of the liturgy inspired by that text. It will not seem surprising that this lama and his followers and disciples should so persistently comment upon that celebrated Tantra, when we remember that, according to the Sa skya pa, the theory and the practice of salvation meet in the mystical experiences symbolized by Hevajra, who had become the Yi dam of that school. The structure of these commentaries follows with subtle accuracy the scheme laid down by Indian tradition.

They begin by explaining the purpose of the book, its *prayojana*, they state its contents and then proceed to study each section in detail, accurately dividing and separating the various subjects which, thus focussed, give a certain measure of logic and coherent development even to the apparent intricacy (I had almost said incoherence) of Tantric texts.

Kun dga' sñiñ was no less painstaking in his study of bDe mc'og's cycle, upon which he wrote two large commentaries, *dPal ak'or lo bde mc'og gi rtsa bai rgyud kyi ti ka p'reñ ba* and the *bDe mc'og nag poi lugs kyi bla ma brgyud pai lo rgyus*. The latter work is concerned with legends collected in India, and abounds in useful information on one of the obscurest periods of Indian religious evolution, and particularly on the Tantric schools. The author links up these legends with genuine research on the doctrines, showing how they issue from an initial revelation. This revelation was not obscured in the course of centuries, but remained a living inspiration through a continuous chain of masters and disciples; thus it finally reached unaltered the Country of Snow and the author's own school. This

historical part, accompanying the commentary, justifies the legitimacy of the *sampradāya*, the spiritual current the Sa skya pa belonged to.

bSod noms rtse mo (1142-1182) not only composed bulky commentaries on the Tantric texts, which had nearly become the Bible of Sa skya esoterism,<sup>175)</sup> from the Hevajra to the Samputa: he faced a problem whose influence the Tibetan school must have felt: is it possible to discern some kind of order and succession in the innumerable Tantras which deal with various symbols and suggest various liturgies, in order to obtain a spiritual renewal, a revulsion which may transfer the initiated from the vacuity of the magic plane to oneness with supreme reality? Is there a standard whereby to make distinctions within this boundless literature, selecting among its liturgies, among the aspects of truth hinted at, those most accessible to the various moral and mental aptitudes of the men to be initiated? Whereby to decide which way must be followed, from which experiences it is better to start if the goal is to be successfully reached?

bSod noms rtse mo collects India's exegetic tradition, which had already attempted to bring order into the chaos of Tantric literature, by speaking of four classes of Tantra: *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga* and *anuttara*, and of father and mother Tantra. When the work of translating was not yet over, and the rÑiñ ma pa were always circulating new texts, not all of them genuine, he wrote a *rGyud sde spyii rnam par bžag*, a "general analysis of the Tantra „. This is a strict and detailed classification, which arranges the Tantra not by formal and external standards, but on the base of the experiences they suggested and prepared, with the aim of bringing the adepts to supreme realization and of showing at the same time the place Tantrism occupies in the general development of Buddhism.

A forerunner of aP'ags pa, bSod noms rtse mo wrote a *C'os la ajug pai sgo*, "Door to enter into the Law „, a summary of Buddhist

doctrines, written perhaps with the object of preparing a brief handbook of essential Buddhist principles, to be used for missionary work. He is also the author of a commentary on the Bodhicaryāvatāra.

The same interest for esoterism continued in rJe btsun rin po c'e Grags pa rgyal mts'an (1147-1216), who not only persisted in writing commentaries and elucidations on the Hevajra,<sup>176</sup> the bDe mc'og or Gur mgon cycles, but in a general way also set out to solve the problem of Tantric literature as a whole, and of the experiences derived from it. He wrote a brief: *rGyud sdei rnam gžag dai rgyud kyī mñon par rtogs pai ston t'un sa bcaḍ*, and a very lengthy work: *rGyud kyī mñon par rtogs pa rin po c'e ljon šin*, in which the analysis of Tantric literature is coupled with deep discussions about the relations between esoterism and preceding speculations, particularly those of the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra. He analyses the adepts' various mental types and aptitudes, their different relations with supreme truth and with the two planes on which man moves: the plane of relative experience and the plane of the absolute, wherein he is annulled through a sudden *excessus mentis*. This book is arduous from a dogmatic point of view, but clear and rich in learning and quotations.

The author has also left us an ample commentary on the collection of mystical songs which had inspired Milaraspa's poetry.<sup>177</sup>

He also touched upon other subjects, for instance chronology in the *Ša kya rnam kyī rgyal rabs* (vol. *ta*), which contains much more than might be inferred from its title. It is not simply a list of Śākyamuni's mythical ancestors, but also a pedigree of the Tibetan kings, followed by a very useful, though schematic, history of the main islands of religious culture where Tibetan Buddhism lived, was transmitted and perfected, beginning from Glañ dar ma's persecution, up to the reintroduction of the faith.<sup>178</sup>

As for non-Tantric works, he wrote a commentary on the *Byañ c'ub sems dpai sdom pa*

*gsal bar ston pa šlo ka nī šu*, and a brief handbook of medicine: *gSo dpyad rgyal poi dkor mdsod*, a summary of medical science as it was known to the Tibetans in which a large part is given to mantras.

There is no doubt that Sa skya Pañḍita (1182-1251) ranks among the most noteworthy writers of the Sa skya school. As we saw, with him begins the penetration of Lamaism among the Mongols and the aK'on family's increased power. Without neglecting Tantric literature, the Sa skya Pañḍita composed, with great acumen, synthetical expositions of the Mahāyāna; one of the most remarkable is the *T'u pai dgois pa rab tu gsal*. We must expect no originality: Tibetan masters are preoccupied only with being clear and faithful, they never aimed at any addition to the Buddhist teachings or at any alteration of the doctrine; this and other works are nothing more than handbooks and summaries, in which the Buddha's word and its century-old, traditional commentary are reproduced in the easiest and most complete manner, without the least contamination of doctrines not carefully sifted.

The *gZñuñ lugs legs par bšad pa šes bya bai bstan bcos* is of the same type; its author intended it to be a śāstra; Sa skya Pañḍita wished to insert himself into the Indian tradition and to be linked with the commentators and exegetes of the Indian universities. The book is an epitome of dogmatics, dealing with all the fundamental concepts of Buddhism, from the theory of impermanence (*anityatā*) to the theory of unsubstantiality (*anātmatā*), briefly reviewing the doctrines of his opponents and defining the boundaries of the metaphysical schools (Abhidharma).

The *mK'as pa rnam ajug pai sgo* (in Sanskrit: *Vidagdhāvatāra*) is less strictly dogmatic; it is a small treatise on rhetoric and exegesis, and at the same time it contains a series of precepts on good composition and on the right understanding of texts. Although the author, mostly in the second part, often goes

into subtle details and argues technical points, the book is altogether a propedeutic, on the lines of similar Indian handbooks.

The Sa skya Paṇḍita wrote on grammar in the *sGra la ajug šes bya bai bstan bcos*, and on *nīti* (rules of political science and morals) in the *Legs bśad*, a famous collection of maxims which, even in its title, is moulded on the Indian "*Subhāṣita* „; it aims to be a literary work of an extremely polished style, and at the same time a guide to practical life, which must not be denied, but should be ennobled by virtue and the holy truths of religion.

But the Sa skya Paṇḍita's masterpiece is the book which gained him one of the foremost places in the history of Lamaistic thought, the *Tśad ma rigs pai gter*, an ample and most accurate exposition of Indian logic, based on the *Pramāṇavārttika* and on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* by Dharmakīrti, and on their commentaries. This is a fundamental treatise, written in mnemonical verse and accompanied by a commentary. The Sa skya Paṇḍita had some forerunners in this field, but his work doomed them to oblivion: they are P'vya pa C'os kyi seṅ ge (1109-1169) and gTsañ nag pa brTson agrus seṅ ge, who also lived in the XIIth century.<sup>179)</sup>

They belong to the school which, according to DT, descended from the great lot-sāva Rin c'en bzañ po, that is from the Western Tibet center of learning. It was a flourishing group of scholars in which we find Blo gros abyuñ gnas whom we saw as a writer of Blo sbyoñ treatises and is now recorded as an author of books on logic (DT, c'a, p. 3), rGya dMar pa equally a commentator on Mādhyamika and on logic, P'vya C'os kyi seṅ ge referred to above (DT, ga, p. 38 b, c'a, pp. 1, 2 b) who wrote many commentaries upon the dogmatical books and on logic beginning with the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, (DT, c'a, p. 3 b); gTsañ nag commented upon logic and Mādhyamika (DT, c'a, p. 4 b). It is therefore clear that when the Sa skya masters composed their *gsuñ abum* in which the Tantric section

chiefly predominates, all over Tibet there was a great fervour of intellectual life which represents the real foundation of later Tibetan speculation. Even if later writers succeed in superseding the work of the older masters they cannot help starting from them and acknowledging the great significance of their contributions.

Sa skya Paṇḍita had many disciples, some of whom greatly promoted and renewed the studies on logic, as for instance U yug pa Rigs pai seṅ ge.

As we have seen, the Sa skya Paṇḍita's interests were many and various: he trod a broader path than his predecessors had known and delved into the subtleties of logic, which is one of the hardest branches of Buddhist dogmatics. This persistent labour left lasting traces, which were not obliterated even by the commentators of the "Yellow" school, expert dialecticians though they were; they came after him and often took his works as a starting-point.

With aP'ags pa (1235-1280), Tantric literature and liturgy again predominate. He still examines in a summary manner the experiences of esoterism, and explains how they sprung from the liturgies which the Tantra taught with different methods,<sup>180)</sup> repeating the process through which *māyā*, the world of appearances and duality, is dissolved into the indiscriminate essence which alone remains when the interplay of human passions and delusions is over for ever.

From these works of a general and almost propedeutical character he naturally passed on to something more precise and detailed: an analysis of liturgical and esoteric texts, which the school is proud of preserving and from which it draws its authority. Having made a particular study of the Hevajratantra, he composed the *dPal brtag gñis pai agrel pa dag c'uñ dan spyi don gsal ba* and the *dPal kyai rdo rjei dkyil ak'or du bdag ñid ajug pai c'o ga sñin po gsal ba*; the latter is completed by a most useful list of the Tantras translated into Tibetan up to the author's times.<sup>181)</sup>

He also studied in the same manner other extremely important Tantric cycles, like the *Dus kyi ak'or lo*<sup>182)</sup> and *dDe mc'og's* cycles, perfecting peculiar methods of mystical realization (*Grub t'abs*), expressed by the symbolism of one god or the other.

Going back to the celebrated examples of Nāgārjuna's *Rājarīkatbā*, Mātṛceta's letter to Kaniṣka, and Candragomin's *Śiṣyalekhā*, he composed, in the form of an epistle in verse, a summary of the Law for Qubilai's instruction, called *rGyal po la gdams pai rab byed*, and himself wrote a commentary upon it, in which the subjects outlined in his book are explained in greater detail. This work is a summary of the doctrine, considered in its essential points, hence a sort of duplicate of the *Śes bya*. The epistular form for expounding religious subjects has many examples in the history of Tibetan literature, besides its first specimens attributed to the leading personalities of the Buddhist renaissance in Western Tibet. Many of these letters have not only a didactical purpose, but are polemic in so far as are intended to refute the false interpretations regarding the Tantras that had crept into Tibetan religious circles; for this reason they are even now studied in the seminaries and are collected in one volume: their names and authors are listed by Kloñ rdol bla ma though not all of them can properly be called epistles. The *Śes bya* referred to above is also a summary of dogmatics, written for the Mongol court. The book was dictated in Tibetan and later translated into Chinese by Sha lo pa (i. e. *Śar pa*) and thus included in the Chinese canon.<sup>183)</sup> This is not the only treatise dedicated by him to his patrons; he wrote a pamphlet, also in verse, on karma and its effects (*Las abras gsal bai me lon*) and many detailed instructions to the princes of the Court: to Ji big de mur (Jibik-Tāmür, HAMBIS, p. 75)<sup>184)</sup> and then to the other prince Maṅgala (*Yüan shih*, chap. 107, p. 16 a, HAMBIS, p. 114)<sup>185)</sup> written in the year *c'u spreu* (1272).

The *rGyal po ho ko la gdams*, written in the year *c'u spreu* (1272) for prince Kōkōcū Qubilai's son (*Ibid.*), and the *rGyal bu de gus bho ga la gdams pa*, written for De gus bho ga (his great-nephew, *ibid.*, p. 12)<sup>186)</sup> and the *rGyal bu de mur bho ga la gdams pa zla bai 'od zer*, composed in the same year for Tāmür-buqa; the *rGyal bu jim gyim la sprin*, written in the year *p'ag* (the same as *šin p'ag*, 1275) on the river rMa *c'u* for Jhinghim (who later became emperor Yu-tsung), and many other minor works of the same sort, sent to prominent persons, whose names are given or withheld.

One of the most interesting is the epistle in prose to the monks of dBus and gTsañ: *dBus gtsañ gi dge bai bśes gñen rnams sprin pa*, because, after alluding to the works of his uncle and master, aP'ags pa speaks of his visit to the Mongol court and of Qubilai's devotion to the faith he preached; he ends his book recommending the monks to be zealous and steadfast. This letter was written in the royal palace, in the year of the dog, i. e. *šin k'yi* (1274).

Another of his many epistles is addressed to the Pañḍita Lakṣmīkara, a name we must dwell upon, because Lakṣmīkara was a Nepalese master, who translated into Tibetan, in collaboration with the Lotsāva of Šoñ, rDo rje rgyal mt'san,<sup>187)</sup> the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* by Kṣemendra and Somendra. The Lotsāva of Šoñ is celebrated as a great master of rhetoric (*śñan nag*) and collaborated with the same Indian Pañḍita in translating another book which became extremely popular in Tibet, the *Kāvyaadarśa* by Dañḍin, and a drama by Harṣadeva, the *Nāgānanda*. It was aP'ags pa and also the dPon c'en Śa kya bzañ po who, in these circumstances, wished the translations to be made; we have spoken about the latter personage when reconstructing the events in which the Sa skyas had a part. Under their patronage another celebrated Indian poem was also translated, the *Meghadūta*; another dPon c'en, Nam mk'a' bṛtan pa, wished it to be put

into Tibetan; the same ṅP'ags pa had ordered a translation of Aśvaghōṣa's *Bud-dhacarita*. Thus most of these poems, dramas or treatises on rhetoric were translated at the express command of ṅP'ags pa or of his court dignitaries. The reasons of his interest are plain: he wanted to introduce into Tibet, on a sound basis and with the help of the best-known handbooks and of the most authoritative works containing examples of their teachings, the art of composing poetry (*alaṅkāra*) which had guided and restrained the Indian poets' inspiration according to a century-old tradition.

These translations then must be kept in mind, because they represent an event which will not remain without consequences on the further development of Tibetan style. In the first works we have mentioned, either Milaraspa's poems or rather the Sa skya pa's dogmatical elaborations, the style is simple and direct, there is nothing stilted or artificial about it, no pretentious imitation of the Kāvya's elaborate subtleties, and even the invocations with which every work opens are plain and concise. But when the Tibetans, even without knowing Sanskrit, became accustomed to the rules and intricacies of the *alaṅkāra* through the translations we have mentioned, their writings were immediately affected. The first symptom is perhaps to be found in one of the last of ṅP'ags pa's minor works, the *rGyal po yab sras kyis mc'od rten bžeṅs pa la bśāgs pai sdeb sbyor*; this constantly growing influence is next felt by Buston; in the metrical introduction (*maṅgā-lācāraṇa*) to his history of Buddhism, he uses intricate rhetorical figures, which later became a formal observance in eulogies of convents and in dedicatory inscriptions, for instance those of sNar t'aṅ and of Gyantse. Many rNam t'ar adopted this style, which finally moulded and ornamented the fifth Dalai Lama's prose.

Dogmatics proper had meanwhile been thoroughly studied along with logic in various monasteries and circles. The explanations

on five fundamental sūtras: *De bžin gšegs pai sñiṅ po, gSaṅ c'en t'abs la mk'as pai mdo, Tiṅ ṅe ṅdāsin gyi rgyal po, Sa bcui mdo, Saṅs rgyas kyī sai mdo*, transmitted by different masters had been summarized by the teacher of Ts'a luṅ stod dKon mc'og skyabs in the *T'eg pa c'en poi gži lam*, which was perused by ṅP'ags pa; gTsaṅ nag brTson ṅgrus seṅ ge, whom we have already met, devoted himself to the study of the *prakaraṇas* viz. to the works of the Indian doctors and specially to those of Aśaṅga (ṅP'ags pa's works, vol. *ba*, p. 262 ff.).

Ten years after ṅPags pa's death (1280)<sup>188</sup> Buston was born (1290); he is certainly one of the greatest representatives of Tibetan thought; there is scarcely a branch of the sacred disciplines that he did not cultivate, and the entire spiritual tradition which India had transmitted to Tibet was elaborated anew by Buston.

An edition of his works, in 28 volumes, was printed by the late Dalai Lama in Lhasa.<sup>189</sup> Buston covered the entire field of Buddhism, from Tantrism to logic, from dogmatics proper to grammar and rhetoric. Many oral traditions, collected in India and later diffused in Tibet by apostles, missionaries and lotsāva, were systematically arranged, discussed and sifted by Buston. There were too many schools, too many interpretations and too many masters claiming to be the depositors of the authentic spiritual tradition and of its correct exegesis. It was necessary to introduce some order into this mass of often conflicting opinions, to discipline them, to found a *summa* of Buddhist doctrine. In *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, I remarked that some works of Buston's are important for the history of Lamaist art and iconography: the same is true of him in other fields. Buston was a critical and organizing spirit: he respected those personal interpretations on which the living variety of Buddhism is based, but at the same time he endeavoured to fix certain boundaries which should not be overstepped without risking heresy or (to

avoid a word Buddhism is very cautious in using) a wrong interpretation of the doctrine. Buston had to deal with a huge quantity of translations already completed and with the various *sampradāya* then flourishing in Tibet; he completed those works and defined those currents which, accurately sifted, had proved unimpeachable. Thus he resisted the diffusion of the apocryphal texts which the schools of the rNin ma pa were introducing and propagating in the guise of ancient books buried in the times of the old Kings and now discovered and brought to light. This is the meaning and the motive of his memorable works: a defence of what was sound in Lamaism against the dangerous leakages of unwarranted currents. Thus were born his revisions of the maṇḍala of the *Tattvasaṅgraha* and of the texts connected with this cycle. The cycle, as I have said elsewhere, fixed the schemes of iconography, according to the example Buston himself had set when he inspired and directed the plan of the *Ža lu* frescoes.<sup>190</sup> He then revised the *bsTan aḡyur* and gave it the final form of a *corpus*, himself overhauling its text, sifting the translations of each work and publishing, after he had thus arranged it, its analytical catalogue. The latter will have to be used, when the history and vicissitudes of this great Buddhist encyclopedia are studied once more.<sup>191</sup>

In Buston's huge life-work, critical and systematical, Tantric cycles naturally prevail: theoretical knowledge, dialectic, dogmatics, have a propedeutical value, they serve to eliminate those intellectual infections which are inborn in the human mind and unavoidable in this world of appearances and conventions. But if we are to leap from the sphere of *māyā* to our only possible salvation, *nirvāṇa*, then all the forces of the spirit must be set in motion; we must possess a deep and living experience of that truth, if a redeeming palingenesis is to ensue. Precisely for this reason the Tantra, as the last phase of Buddhism, are at the apex of the sacred scriptures.

But the Tantra were also, of all sacred texts, those most easily misunderstood and arbitrarily misinterpreted, precisely because they appealed to personal experience and were preferably explained by word of mouth, not through written commentaries; the latter were only a temporary guide, unless the master called them to spiritual significance. Thus Buston's task of sifting, probing and passing judgement on the Tantra was a truly urgent undertaking. None of the main Tantric cycles known to us, has not been discussed and studied by Buston, after he had dealt, extensively and exhaustively, with the general problem of Tantric literature, in its relations with the rest of the Buddhist teachings.

He wrote three general treatises on the Tantra: *rGyud sde spyi rnam bdsus pa rgyud sde rin po c'ei gter sgo aḡyed pai sde mig*, *rGyud sde spyi rnam rgyas pa rgyud sde rin po c'e mdses rgyan*, *rGyud sde spyi rnam aḡriñ po rgyud sde t'ams cad kyi gsañ ba gsal bar byed*, in which he penetrates into the very heart of esoterism in its general and common aspects and classifies according to their contents the various Tantras divided into the four classes, giving the summary of the most important. Turning to particular cycles, he subjected to special research the tradition of the *Kālacakra*. Besides inspiring certain currents of mysticism, esoterism or yoga, the *Kālacakra* had annexed the Indian and Iranian astrological theories, lending them the authority of its text. Buston devoted five volumes, a real encyclopedia of Tantrism, to the *Kālacakra* and to its celebrated commentary, the *Vimalaprabhā*, discussing and explaining, chapter by chapter, its main points, and also attempting to define the experiences met with in this cycle or in the liturgies which are derived from it. The latter develop through six successive degrees, and therefore go by the name of *ṣaḡaṅgayoga* (*sbyor drug*), the sixfold union, i. e. the six manners of becoming consubstantial with supreme reality. At the same time Buston sifted the tradition through which

the Kālacakra had penetrated into Tibet and was transmitted there (*Dus ak'or c'os abyun rgyud sdei zab don sgo abyed rin c'en bees pai sde mig*).

He devoted particular studies to the cycle of bDe mc'og (*bDe mc'og rtsa rgyud kyī rnam bśad gsañ bai de k'o na ñid gsal bar byed pa*), to the Mahāmāyā (*Ma hā mā yāi mñon rtogs rgyas pa sgyu ap'rul abyun ba*), to Hevajra (*br Tag gnīs kyī agreḷ par mdo rgyud kyī luñ drañs pa rnam kyī bśad pa ñi mai 'od zer*), to the Samputa (*Sam pu tai rgya c'er agreḷ pa sñiñ poi de k'o na ñid gsal bar byed pa*), to the Guhyasamāja (*gSañ adus agreḷ pa sgron gsal gyi bśad sbyar mt'a' dag rab tu gsal bar byed pa*), to the Tattvasaṅgraha and to the kindred Tantra I have already examined in *Indo-Tibetica*.

This mastery of Tantric esoterism naturally presupposed an equal command of dogmatics, and in fact we see Buston moving at his ease from the Prajñāpāramitā and the Abhisamayālaṅkāra (*Yum rgyas abriñ bsuds pai don bdun cui gzuñ gi mts'ams abyed šer p'yin lde mig; mÑon rtogs rgyan gyi agreḷ pa dan bees pai rgya c'er bśad pa luñ gi sñe ma*) and from the various aspects of dogmatics (*sPyod ajug agreḷ c'en zla bai 'od zer, Sans rgyas sai mdo agreḷ rin c'en gser gyi me tog, mÑon pa kun las btus pai rnam bśad ñi mai 'od zer*), to disciplinary rules (*aDul ba spyi rnam rin po c'ei mdes rgyan; mDo rtsa bai rnam bśad adul ba rgya mts'oi sñiñ pa gsal byed; aDul bai lag len gyi c'o ga dri med p'reñ ba; P'ai gleñ abum c'en po; Mai gleñ abum*). He left two works on logic, the *rNam ñes agreḷ c'en las mts'an don zur du bkol ba*, and the *rNam ñes agreḷ c'en ts'ig don rab gsal*, which, as may be seen from their title, are elucidations of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. Nor did he neglect medicine, on which he wrote a treatise: *gSo rig sman dpyad sbyor ba brgya bai mc'an*, and he devoted particular care to the elaboration of grammar, taking as a base the *Kalāpasūtra*, which a rival of Byaṅ c'ub rgyal mts'an had caused to be translated at that time, the dPon Kun dga' rdo rje of Ts'al (CORDIER, III, p. 505). His importance as an historical writer I shall speak of elsewhere.

As was to be expected from an author intent on picking out the opinions supported by tradition and purged from all arbitrary deviations, quotations from Indian sources abound in Buston's works, both when he relies on data handed down by the schools he considers well grounded and authoritative, and when, more often, he uses the texts directly, having mastered them with matchless skill. His style obediently follows his thoughts, plain and unadorned, and the splendid tradition of the Indian exegetists lives once more in this Tibetan monk. Buston had absorbed the Indian pandits' mentality to such an extent that, were it not for the language, he might be included among the great figures of Indian Buddhism, to whom he spiritually belonged and whose worthy follower he was.

During the Mongol period Tibetan culture dared not abandon tradition, indeed, thanks to the renaissance of Sanskrit studies, it was more than ever faithful to Indian orthodoxy. Nevertheless culture received a great impulse from contacts with many countries to which historical developments had opened up Tibet. It did not use these relations to attempt new experiences, but rather to deepen and clarify the old ones; they had become a part of the Tibetan heritage to such an extent, that Tibet could now freely think them over and become in its turn their apostle in new lands. In the religious field, which represented its only culture, Tibet would learn nothing from other peoples except the holy land, India; it assumed the task of propagating its own faith, making its principles accessible even to rude and uncouth minds. It was then that Mongolia began to be transformed into a spiritual province of Tibet; facilities for study increased, Sanskrit was learnt thoroughly in Sa skya and also in Ža lu, C'u mig and other monasteries of which little more is left today than a name or late buildings over ancient ruins. The first Sa skya pa hierarchs gathered rich

collections of manuscripts. From the life of Kun dga' bzañ po, the founder of Nor (p. 18) we learn that in the mGo rum, the Sa skya *sanctum sanctorum*, 680 manuscripts were kept, beginning from those collected by the Sa skya Pañḍita, who wrote marginal notes on them (*mc'an*, interlinear gloss): they were given into a responsible custodian's keeping, and an index (*dkar c'ag*) had been made of them.

The codification of the greatest collections of Buddhist scriptures preserved for us by Tibet, goes back to this period. In fact while Buston was editing the final text of the exegetical works known by the name of *Śāstra* and *Prakarāṇa*, already translated into Tibetan, gathering them into the now completed collection of the bsTan aḡyur, another figure, extremely remarkable both for his political activity and for his literary works, namely the K'ri dpon of Ts'al, Kun dga' rdo rje, also called dGe ba blo gros, whom we shall mention again when speaking of Tibetan historiography, submitted to the same revision the translations of revealed doctrine, whether they were sūtras, or tantras or vinaya; he arranged their texts in the collection known as the Ts'al pa bKa' aḡyur, which after having been, according to Kloñ rdol bla ma, the base of the sNar t'añ edition, remained generally speaking unaltered, in spite of a few later revisions and elaborations.

But perhaps Kloñ rdol bla ma's statement is not quite correct, and must be examined in the light of more ancient traditions. It is true that Kun dga' rdo rje cooperated in collecting the bKa' aḡyur, which later represented the sNar t'añ version and was published by the printing-press of this famous monastery; but it is perhaps untrue that he was the first to arrange the collection; both Bu ston's and Kun dga' rdo rje's initiatives had been preceded by a vast work of gathering the sacred texts, carried out with great zeal by the monks of sNar t'añ. Indeed gŽon nu dpal relates that bTsun pa

aJam dbyaṅs, a disciple of sKyo ston, Buyantu's chaplain (DT, *c'a*, pp. 5-6) sent to dBus pa Blo gsal a large present of money, that he might have a copy compiled of the bKa' aḡyur and of the bsTan aḡyur, to place in the temples of sNar t'añ. Conforming to his request, dBus pa Blo gsal byaṅ c'ub ye šes, assisted by the lotsāva bSod nams 'od zer and by Byaṅ c'ub aḡbum of rGyañ ro, began to search for supplementary texts (*p'yi ma*) of the bKa' aḡyur and of the bsTan aḡyur, and having put them together, he placed them in the aJam lha k'añ of sNar t'añ, whence they branched off to other monasteries, Sa skya, K'ab guñ t'añ, Ts'al guñ t'añ, etc. This means that they added new works to a more or less universally recognized kernel, having laboriously collected them in hermitages and convents or from different masters; scattered documents of a century-old activity which had transferred the spiritual heritage of Buddhism into Tibet.

Thus the bKa' aḡyur and the bsTan aḡyur were completed and grew in bulk, reaching the final form under which they have come down to us; with inevitable differences between one version and another, but always of a minor relevance, as for instance the fact that some particular text was present in one version and missing in the other. This first codification of the Buddhist scriptures is an event of great importance in the history of Lamaism and of its sacred literature, and was the point of departure of the canon's successive editions, whether manuscripts or printed editions. gŽon nu dpal always uses the verb *bžeṅs*, which simply means "to dedicate", not the word *par*, "print"; hence in the oldest times manuscript copies were multiplied, printed copies only in later times, with the diffusion of block-printing.

The work done in sNar t'añ was not a light matter; it not only required great critical capacities from those who directed it, and an accurate judgement in choosing texts

and ascertaining their authenticity; it also implied a vast organization and substantial expenditure. This was partly paid, as we have seen, by aJam dbyaṅs, but the Mongol Emperors did not keep aloof; Buston alludes to their liberality when speaking of the first Tibetan codifications of the scriptures. Indeed this anonymous allusion of Buston's to the Yüan's munificence must be linked with the words of the *Hor c'os abyuñ*, which attributed this original compilation precisely to Buyantu's pious patronage, aJam dbyaṅs' fervour having acted as a stimulant.

This canonical collection of sNar t'añ thus preceded Buston, who in Buyantu's times was still too young to possess the experience required for such a difficult work of revision and in fact he started from the sNar t'añ collection for his revision (*ibid.*, p. 6). That was therefore the common trunk from which successive editions branched off; the one ordered by Nam mk'a' rgyal mts'an for Rin spuṅs was placed in the rTse t'añ monastery, on this copy those of Goñ dkar and gDan sa t'el were based. From these many new copies were taken to K'ams and then made in K'ams itself; then those caused to be made by the C'os rje mT'oñ ba don ldan, by the *du dben śa* of dBus, the C'os rje Rañ abyuñ in aTs'ur p'u and in Byams gliñ by dGe bsñen, the dPon c'en of Yar gyab and so on.

The culture of China and of the peoples who had come in contact with her, also had an echo in the great Sa skya convents, where, two editions of the Tripiṭaka in foreign languages were preserved, one in Chinese and the other in Uiguric; this means that there was no lack of people capable of reading these languages and of using that collection; then it was that for the second time, after the royal period, a shoal of Chinese and also of Mongol words penetrated into Tibetan; they are particularly terms relating to administration and secretarial subjects; it is also quite probable that at that time

Tibet had the first knowledge of Christianity which ever reached it; naturally through Mongol officers and officials of the Nestorian confession, who lived there for motives of office, trade or war.<sup>192)</sup>

This literary and exegetic movement had thus developed principally within the Sa skya pa school; it was inspired, and largely produced, by those very chiefs of the great monastery on whom the Mongols had bestowed their favour. But the bKa' brgyud pa and the Ts'al pa to did not keep aloof from that flame of intellectual life, by whose inspiration Tibetan literature was coming into existence. Nor were the rÑiñ ma pa absent, i. e. the followers of those ancient schools who gloried in their interpretation of the religious traditions of the ancient times, and recognized Padmasambhava as their first master.

The persecutions which took place in Glañ dar ma's times and the Bon po renaissance, had interrupted the spiritual continuity of this sect; the vicissitudes of stormy periods had dispersed the schools, but isolated representatives survived their downfall and, through the prestige of their exorcisms and magic formulas, gained the favour of the masses and held their ground for centuries. Their doctrines centred round particular interpretations of the *Guhya garbha*, of the *Māyājāla* and particularly of the *Khasama tantra*, and were traced back to the esoteric teachings of the first Vimalamitra, who came to Tibet in K'ri sroñ lde btsan's times; they represented the foundations of the rDsogs c'en school. Owing to this lack of an organic tradition, the rÑiñ ma pa did not possess a dogmatic base capable of conferring authority and validity on their doctrines. Finally such a base was found in some esoteric textes and formularies, which were said to have been revealed by the Master himself or by gods and mK'a' agro mas and hidden away in certain caves and secret places by Padmasambhava or by other masters of the school. They became the starting-point

of the dogma of the sect. Thus it was stated that the *sÑiñ t'ig*, one of the rDsogs c'en's fundamental texts,<sup>193</sup>) had been revealed by Vimalamitra to Myañ Tiñ ḁsin bzañ po, and that the latter, in K'ri sroñ lde btsan's times, had hidden it in the Žvai lha k'añ he had founded. Its oral tradition (*ts'ig brgyud*), on the other hand, arrived, through a long transmission, to lCe btsun Señ ge dbañ p'yug; he hid his teachings, which were discovered thirty years later, (in the year 1066, *Reu mig*) some by lCe sgom or lCe nag po (not Nañ pa, as in S. CH. DAS, p. 42 and LAUFER, *Roman*, p. 8), and others fifty years after by Žañ ston bKra šis rdo rje (1097-1167; DT, *ga*, pp. 41-42).

This was most probably the time when the large apocryphal literature, the so-called *gTer ma* upon which the rÑiñ ma pa found their doctrine, was compiled. Some of them were said to be in Sanscrit, some others written in unknown characters (SP, p. 389), some in Tibetan; they were then collected in the so-called *rGyud ḁbum* which represents a revelation for the rÑiñ ma pa, but is not accepted as authoritative by the other schools. This increasing number of *gTer ma*, the heretical theories which they contained, the danger of a corruption of Buddhism which might then follow, was the cause, as we saw, of the exegetical work of Buston and of the endeavour, then made, of closing the series of the authoritative works. The danger was so strongly felt that the Sa skya pañḁita invokes the intervention of a temporal power to stop the alleged discovery of the *gter ma* "if there were a royal law (the propagators of) books extracted from hidden places and the doctrines stolen from others should be punished",<sup>194</sup>)

But since these works are generally said to be translations of Sanscrit originals and are the equivalents of the Tantras they should be dealt with when studying the apocryphal literature of Buddhism, which is not at present my task. I shall therefore limit myself to those *gTer mas* which were attributed to Padmsambhava

himself and to his collaborators and whose origin therefore was placed in Tibet.

It is enough to say that those *gTer mas* paved the way to the rDsogs c'en dogmatics which just at this time took on a definite and doctrinary aspect with Kloñ c'en pa, born in 1308 (*sa spreu*, not 1307 according to S. CH. DAS in the *Reu mig*) at gYu ru grai p'u' and who died in 1363 (*c'u yos*, not 1362). A disciple of Kumārarāja, he was the famous commentator of the sÑiñ t'ig, on which he wrote the great *tīkā*, or gloss, taking his place, through this work, as the codifier of rDsogs c'en dogmatics and esoterism. It was not an easy task, because the most authoritative schools of the time seem to have been, in the beginning, rather suspicious of the soundness of these theories, contained in books unrecorded in the Buddhist canon, and in which the penetration of Bon po doctrines was to be feared, sometimes with reason. Kloñ c'en pa himself did not enjoy Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's favour since the latter feared to find him in sympathy with the ḁBri guñ pa, who had by now become his enemies.

With Kloñ c'en pa's commentary, the rDsogs c'en too had now obtained their *summa*, as other schools had created or were creating theirs. It was a subtle doctrine, intended to produce such a living experience of the unsubstantiality of all things, that a sign of having realized its principles was thought to be the melting away into nothingness, without leaving behind any bodily trace.

This theory is new to Buddhism, but it has well known precedents in Bon po which, for instance, possessed tales of the first kings having disappeared through a rainbow in the sky, no bodily vestige whatever left of them on earth. Neither can it be completely ruled out that the greater frequency of relations with China and a more direct acquaintance with Chinese thought, may have influenced the rDsogs c'en masters' theories: it is well known that in the Celestial Empire Taoist

schools aimed at achieving "liberation from the corpse,,,"<sup>195</sup>) physical immortality, through which the saintly man's body left the earth and ascended among the immortals. Once elaborated, this theory was received also by other schools, which often circulated tales of their masters' mysterious disappearance.

After the orthodoxy of the prevailing schools and Buston's accuracy had put an end to the collections of Buddhist scriptures, there was no way left of circulating apocryphal writings and traditions, unless through the "buried books,,,". But these were now occasionally used to support and justify the P'ag mo gru pa's nationalist claims, by renewing the memory of ancient glories and by fostering the urge to be rid of all foreign domination, which spread among the Tibetan people, as it awakened to a better understanding of Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's policy.

The problem of this class of gTer mas, the history of their discovery, research on their sources, relations between these rÑiñ ma pa scriptures and the Bon po school, all this is an extremely fascinating study, but we do not possess as yet all the data which might lead to a certain solution. For this reason I do not wish to approach now the very complex question of the gTer ma as a whole: I will limit my attention to the two principal texts which tradition assigns to Guru Padma-sambhava's collaborators, the *Pad ma t'añ yig* and the *bKa' t'añ sde lña*; these works, on account of their intrinsic value, of the authority they enjoy and of the undeniable antiquity of some parts, are among the most important Tibetan texts.

We read in the Chronicles of Blo bzañ rgya mts'o that bSod noms stobs kyi rgyal po had the *Šel brag t'añ yig* printed. This is a gTer ma which bears, in its present version, the title: *O rgyan gu ru pad ma qbyuñ gnas kyi skyed rabs rnam t'ar*, or else: *U rgyan pad mai qbyuñ gnas kyi skyed rabs rnam par t'ar pa rgyas par bkod pa las pad ma bkai t'añ yig*, or: *Pad mai bkai t'añ yig k'ri sron lde'u btsan bka' c'ems*, and

also (manuscript copy, colophon): *Pad ma bka' yi t'añ yig rnam par skyes rabs rgyas pa*, or (dGa ldan's edition, in 117 chapters): *Padma bka' yi t'añ yig skyes rabs rnam t'ar rgyas pa*.<sup>196</sup>

Blo bzañ rgya mts'o calls this work *Šel brag t'añ yig*, from the place where it was discovered, Šel brag, in Yar klunis district. We are sufficiently well informed concerning this text, from the colophon which ends it, both in the printed edition and in the handwritten copies. Though the form varies, it contains substantially the same data, and hence shows by quoting the same persons and the same events, that the versions which have reached us are derived from a single original, revised by Šes (rab) 'od zer; this is mentioned both by these colophons and by the fifth Dalai Lama's very chronicles. The version he is responsible for was printed in aP'yoñ rgyas at the expense of "a great donor of central Tibet, descended from the king of (Za) hor,,," i. e. precisely by bSod noms stobs kyi rgyal po, designed as the patron whose piety and generosity made the publication possible. LAUFER, the first to mention the colophon in the Peking edition (*Roman*, p. 243), erroneously understands it to mean that the donors were two: the King of P'ag mo gru and his minister, while it is clear that only the P'ag mo gru's minister is mentioned. It is true that he is designed as: Hor, but here Hor has not its usual meaning of Mongol "Mongolen Fürst,,," as Laufer translates;<sup>197</sup>) it is short for Za hor, Bhaṭa Hor, the place from which the princes of aP'yoñ rgyas believed themselves to be descended. Hor is used as a common prefix to the names of members of this family, which, at the time the fifth Dalai Lama was writing, would surely find it flattering to be considered the descendant of a clan now master of Tibet and patron of the Yellow sect, following Gu śri Khan's victory.

Hence this first identification allows us to establish accurately the date when the work was first printed, or the date of its revision at

the hands of Śeś rab 'od zer, which amounts to the same. P'ag mo gru is here out of the question: instead of the XIVth century, as Laufer inclined to date it, we must accept a later date, the XVIth century. This date is confirmed perfectly by what we know concerning Śeś rab 'od zer, whose life is related in the *Zab moi gter dan gter ston grub t'ab ji ltar byön pai lo rgyus mdor bsod pa bkod pai rin c'en vai dur yai p'reñ ba*, contained in the RC, vol. Ka.

He was born in the year *sa stag*, and his educations seems to have taken place entirely in the shadow of the great dGa' ldan and aBri guñ monasteries, or of their greatest masters: nevertheless the biographer who uses a preceding *rnam t'ar* by C'os rje Kun dga' bzañ po, naturally alludes also to his knowledge of the rÑiñ ma pa doctrine, of the bKa' rgyud pa and of their scriptures. In the year *me lug* he had a vision of Padmasambhava, following which he discovered some gTer ma, like the *sGrol t'ig dgoñs pa ran gsal*.<sup>198)</sup> Hence Śeb rab 'od, although himself a *gter ston*, was only the revisor of a text discovered before him and then printed, on his advice, by Hor bSod nams stobs rgyal, who in the meantime had built the dPal ri t'eg c'en gliñ in aP'yoñ rgyas. Śeś rab 'od zer's dates thus depend on the age of bSod nams stobs kyi rgyal po, prince of aP'yoñ rgyas: we know that his father was a contemporary of bSod nams rgya mts'o, and for this reason his son, who is mentioned here, must have lived in the second half of the XVIth century. Hence the year *sa stag*, in which Śeś rab 'od zer is said to have been born, must correspond to 1518; *me lug*, in which the vision is said to have taken place, to 1547 and *ñiñ spre'u* (in the text erroneously *c'u spre'u*) to 1584, when he was 67. This is confirmed by the fact that he was a contemporary of the Sa skya pa abbot Kung dga' rin c'en, who heard from him some gTer ma (see *Sa skya Chronicles*, p. III).

But we must not think that this was the only printed edition, and therefore the only

version, of the famous book (in fact SP speaks often of various *t'an yig: t'an yig la la*). In my collection there is a manuscript of this same work, in which any allusion to Śeś rab 'od zer is lacking; it must be considered for this reason a new independent version. The manuscript, as may be read in the colophon, was copied from an edition which C'os kyi rgyal po sTag rdo rje had printed in the palace of C'os rgyal lhun grub rtse, in Southern Tibet.

To these two versions a third must be added, the one printed in dGa' ldan, which then became the vulgate, one might, say, authorized by the Yellow Sect. This, in its turn, is based on a printed edition of the C'os srid spuñs t'an, a aBrug pa monastery, slightly corrected; but it is not only a material correction of errors and slips contained in the preceding edition; it is rather a new version, in which nothing is found which might offend the new sect's principles and dogmas. That this text, thus revised and corrected, should be considered a real new version, is desumed from the fact that it is no longer attributed to O rgyan gliñ pa, but to Sañs rgyas gliñ pa. It consists of 117 chapters instead of 118 and bears the title: *O rgyan gu ru Pad ma aByuñ gnas kyi rnam t'ar rgyas pa gser gyi p'reñ ba t'ar lam gsal byed*.

But who was the gTer ston, the real discoverer of the text? This is as much as to ask in what epoch the *Pad ma t'an yig* was compiled, because these discoveries of manuscripts must not be taken literally, but should be understood as able compilations, although often done on ancient documents by persons well versed in the sacred scriptures and in the tradition of the schools. We cannot deny that in some mc'od rten or in abandoned temples, or in the archives of ancient families, when men's minds felt the urge of seeking for their country's remote memories, old writings may have been found, whose memory had been lost,<sup>199)</sup> and that the gTer ston may have circulated them as revelations

from Padmasambhava or from persons connected with him. But in other cases we cannot speak of fragments contemporary with the royal dynasty; we must rather consider them legends in which the events of those times were sung with epical embellishments and amplifications; tales in verse or genealogies composed without much caring whether they contradicted one another and ill fitted together, and then assigned, without the least foundation, to the same person or to the same epoch.

In the case of such vast complex works as those here mentioned, full of prophecies and of allusions to times much later than Guru rin po c'e's lifetime, we evidently cannot accept orthodox tradition, which considers them faithful copies of ancient manuscripts, discovered by famous gTer ston, or translations from original scriptures in Sanscrit or in the Uḍḍiyāna language. In other words these gTer ston must be considered, rather than discoverers, the compilers, sometimes actually the authors of the works discussed; thus we see that, once we have established the exact date of the discovery of one of these texts, we have in fact determined the date of their composition.

The compilers' work is visible to careful scrutiny, which indeed reveals various layers, superimposed or pieced together, differing greatly as to style and contents. In the prophecies and in the sections used to connect one story with another, fragments of chronicles or narratives much older than the final arrangement of the text are often inserted. This is especially visible in the *Pad ma bka' t'añ sde lña*, where some parts, for instance the one on Tibet's military division in K'ri sroñ lde btsan's times, belong altogether to an epoch earlier than the times when, according to tradition, the work was discovered or, according to us, finally compiled. These sections contain elaborations of older chronicles, narratives, evocations of the wars with China, allusions to rivalries

between the families of K'ri sroñ ldan btsan's ministers; the same may be said as regards the genealogies and the events of Western Tibet, told in poetical form, although these parts are noticeably more recent with respect to the first; for instance the *bTsun mo bka' t'añ* (LAUFER, *Roman*, pp. 232-234), the *Blon po bka' t'añ* (p. 62, cfr. p. 57 etc.) and the *Lo pan bka' t'añ*, p. 70 are concluded with such allusions.

The more recent parts are at once recognizable, either because they reflect a religious, sectary or disciplinary atmosphere which could never belong to the age in which the events related took place, or because of the many prophecies (*luñ bstan*) they contain.

These prophecies, however, often furnish us with useful points of reference to fix the date of the final composition of the text,<sup>200</sup> when other elements are lacking; in fact it is precisely the prophetic part which may afford one of the principal motives for the circulation of these works. To restrict ourselves to the two works which we are interested in here (the *T'añ yig* and the *sDe lña*), they reveal the sufferings of an epoch which had seen Tibet pass under Mongol rule, while Mongol invasions laid the country waste to a greater extent than official history admits. They also hand down to us an echo of the strife between the Sa skya pa and the P'ag mo gru pa.

Both works therefore express the trouble of a stormy epoch, and are the voice of Tibet's political and religious consciousness, which amidst the turmoil of unrest and under the menace of foreign rule, came back to its primitive traditions, to times when the reigning dynasty was firmly established, the country internally unified, external enemies vanquished, and Tibet prospered, blessed by the great masters of its faith. Indeed this search for gTer ma, the multiplication of their discoveries, passionate love for documents of the past, all coincide and are a sign of the yearning for a restoration of ancient times, a proof of national revival.

Moreover these books contained many things which sounded heretical to the other schools: Padmasambhava is said to be a Buddha; he is the *nirmānakāya* of Kun tu bzañ po; but this assertion contradicts the dogma that not more than one Buddha can live at the same time upon this continent; moreover he is said to have been initiated by Ānanda, so he is made to live many thousand years. All these theories are therefore objected to by other sects and the echo of their criticism is to be found in the bitter attacks against the *rÑiñ ma pa* by Sum pa mk'an po.<sup>201</sup>)

But let us return to the age of the discovery of the two *gTer ma* we were dealing with. They both go back to the same epoch, because the discoverer, in both cases, is always *Ō rgyan gliñ pa*. This master's date may be fixed from the information concerning him, furnished by the book quoted above, where, on page 65, he is said to be born in *gYo ru*, in the year water-boar, and as the author also says that the *T'ai Si tu Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an* was extremely devoted to him, that date can only correspond to 1323.

Thus the *rÑiñ ma pa* tradition that the whole *bKa' t'añ sde lña* was discovered by *Ō rgyan gliñ pa* can be accepted, because the book, although consisting of five chapters, forms a whole, being related to the same persons and times. This tradition however seems to be contradicted by the colophon of the *Lha adre bka' yi t'añ yig*, in the edition used by LAUFER (*op. cit.*, p. 3) according to which this chapter was discovered by *Kun dga' ts'ul k'rim*s. But the Potala edition corrects the statement, and acknowledges *Ō rgyan gliñ* as the discoverer of the first chapter as well, although he was assisted by *Kun dga' ts'ul k'rim*s: "In the year fire-boar (1347), on the 15th day of the month of the tiger, in the evening, from under the tortoise on the right-hand door of the *Bu ts'al gser k'añ gliñ*, *Ō rgyan gliñ pa* of *dGra stod yar c'en* having taken *Kun dga' ts'ul k'rim*s with him, brought it to light ,,

The manuscript was a yellow roll, consisting of only one yellow leaf, its author was *Mandāravā*. The second chapter, known by the name of *rGyal poi bkai t'añ yig*, closes with the sentence: "*snañ srid gtan la aḅebs pai t'añ yig c'en mo zes bya rdsogs so*: Thus ends the chapter of the *T'añ yig c'en mo* in its version adapted to the plane of existence,, and in this case too it is stated that its discoverer was *Ō rgyan gliñ pa*, who took it from the *dGe ba mt'ar rgyas gliñ*; the text was written on white paper by *rTse mañ bdag* who put in writing *Padmasambhava*'s words.

Concerning the third chapter: *bTsun mo bkai t'añ*, it is said that the same *gTer ston Ō rgyan gliñ pa*, took it out of the *K'ams gsum zans k'añ gliñ*.

In the fourth: *Lo pañ bka' t'añ yig* there is a colophon referring to the whole book; it ascribes the discovery to the same master.

The fifth closes with the statement that it was taken by *Ō rgyañ gliñ pa* from the *Yar kluñs šel brag*, from a roll of yellow paper.

These colophons are very interesting, because although the discoverer was the same person, nevertheless they show that the book was composed out of fragments discovered at different times by *Ō rgyan gliñ pa*, and that we cannot speak of its original unity: there are, on the contrary, five different fragments, found at different times, perhaps in the same year, by the celebrated *gTer ston*, and later pieced with one another on the base of analogies in subject-matter and of a certain logical relation between them, with a very large number of interpolations, additions and changes.

The composite character of the *bKa' t'añ sde lña* is proved not only by the fact that the chapters are called sometimes *leu* and sometimes *skabs*, (as in the *Blon poi bka' t'añ*), but above all by an examination of the second book (*k'a*) where the chapters are numbered twice; chapters 1-17 contain general information on the Kings' genealogy, the spread of religion and so forth. Then a new series of chapters begins, so that instead of the

18th chapter, we find once more chapter 1st. These new chapters open with the story of the pillars, on which was engraved the census (*rtsis kyi rdo rins*) ordered by K'ri ston lde btsan and then go on, from 1, to 44, treating of Tibet's political and military organizations in the times of that same king, with various tales about the discovery of sacred books and objects. That these chapters have been inserted there, taking them from other sources, is clearly shown by the colophons which close them: they regularly bear the names of the books from which they were taken, i. e. *K'a byañ mdsod kyi lde mig rgyud* and *gTer byañ mdsod kyi lde mig rgyud*. They are indexes or catalogues: the words *lde mig* indeed mean "key,,," and as such are often found in the titles of catalogues (see for instance the *dkar cag* of the *bKa' agyur*): *byañ mdsod* certainly corresponds to register, book list, cfr. *byañ bu*, *mñon mdsod*, etc.

In the last chapter, the 19th, mention of the source is again lacking, but this chapter is already a prophecy (*pyi mai dus su bstan pa ji ltar qbyuñ pa*) and is linked with the first group, 1-17. Hence all the 44 chapters desumed from the *K'a byañ mdsod kyi lde mig* or from the *gTer byañ mdsod lde mig* are separated from the first and the last section, and form a group by itself, which replaces an 18th missing *le'u*. The *bKa' t'añ sde lña* was therefore compiled about 1347 which is the date found at the end of its the *Lha adre bka' t'añ*.

For this reason, as the discoverer was the same, the date of the *Pad ma t'añ yig* proposed by LAUFER (*op. cit.*, p. 242, note 7) must also be brought nearer to 1347. The year water dragon, in which that *gTer ma* was circulated, is certainly 1352, when Or gyan gliñ was 29; thus it is not one of his first discoveries, because the first works he brought to light were made known when he was 23. Nevertheless the question of the *T'añ yig* is rather confused, because O rgyan gliñ pa's biography mentions, beside the *bKa'*

*t'añ sde lña*, also the *Pad ma bka' yi t'añ yig c'en mo*, which is precisely the title of the work from which bSod nams rgyal mts'an quotes in his *rGyal rabs* some fragments not to be found in the present version of the *Pad ma bka' t'añ yig*.

This difference between the vulgate and the text, however brief, quoted by the *rGyal rabs* entitles us to suppose that an ampler version of the *gTer ma* was in circulation; however I have not yet obtained any information concerning it. It was perhaps a more detailed elaboration, because when we compare the passage of *rGyal rabs* with the *Pad ma t'añ yig* known to us, we see that the difference consist precisely in a greater prolixity and abundance of detail.

Wishing now to sum up what we have said concerning the date and the editions of the two most important *gTer ma*, the present state of the question may be summarized as shown in the table at p. 115.

Of course these are not the *Gu ru rin po c'e's* only two biographies circulating in Tibet. I do not mention, naturally, later compilations written at various times by the *rNiñ ma pa*, but the true *gTer ma*, viz. works nearly always attributed to K'ri ston lde btsan's times and more frequently to Padmasambhava's mate, Ye šes mts'o rgyal. Among these works the *sKyes rabs c'os qbyuñ nor bui p'reñ ba* deserves to be specially mentioned; its discovery is attributed to the *mNa' bdag Ñañ ral pa can*. It is a schematic history, much briefer than the other two but, nevertheless abounding in many doctrinal references and in the never-absent prophecies. The same events are related as in the *bKa' t'añ sde lña* and in the *T'añ yig*, but reducing them to essentials and divesting the narrative from many of those legends and digressions which increase to such an extent the bulk of the other two collections. There are two versions of this work. The one I know is written by hand in 40 chapters and one inserted in the RC, vol. *ka*. The manuscript

PAD MA T'AN YIG	A	B	C	PAD MA bKA' T'AN SDE LNA
Discovery of the gTer ma	1352	1352	—	Lha ḡdre bka' t'añ 1347
Discoverer	O rgyan gliñ pa	O rgyan gliñ pa	Sañs rgyas gliñ pa	—
Chapters	108	108	117	O rgyan gliñ pa
Revisor and editor	Šes rab 'od zer	?	—	?
First edition	In ḡP'yoñ rgyas in bSod nam's stobs kyi rgyal's times, in the XVth century (not the XIVth as Laufer says) Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o's edition dGa' ldan's edition, 1675 (not 1674, as Laufer says) sDe dge's edition Peking edition 1839 Edition used by Tous-saint	Ordered to be made by sTag rdo rje in the C'os rgyal lhun grub rtse, in Southern Tibet	C'os srid spuñs t'añ ḡBrug pa monastery new dGa' ldan's edition	—

version is entitled *Slob dpon pad ma ḡbyuñ gnas kyi skyes rabs c'os ḡbyuñ nor bui p'reñ*, but in the colophons of the single chapters *Slob dpon pad ma ḡbyuñ gnas kyi skyes rabs dri med pa*. Nañ ral is Nañ ral ñi ma 'od zer born about 1124 (*šič ḡbrug*; in the *Reu mig*, p. 46, 1134, but the date of his death in the *Rin c'en gter mdsod* is placed in the year *šič byi*, when he was 68; however *šič byi* = 1204). He was the discoverer of the *bKa' brgyad bde gšegs ḡdus pa rgyud* and of the *mKa'a' ḡgroi žus lan*. In the above-mentioned biography of the gTer ston, p. 48 ff. there is no mention of the *sKyes rabs dri med*. To the preceding works may be added the *O rgyan rnam t'ar dpag bsam bjon šič*, a brief treatise in 10 little chapters, discovered by the same O rgyan gliñ pa.

Among the *gTer mas*<sup>202)</sup> discovered approximately in this time or shortly before, is to be

included the *Bar do t'os grol* the so called "Tibetan Book of the Dead", which was translated by Evans Wentz and to which reference is made later in part three of this book.<sup>203)</sup>

The bKa' brgyud literary tradition is represented in the XIVth century by another famous siddha and poet rGyal mts'an dpal bzañ po of ḡBar ra a contemporary of dPon c'en rGyal bzañ and therefore a witness of the rise of Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an and of the wars which were then fought between the Sa skyas and the P'ag mo gru pas. He wrote a series of *mgur* or sacred songs in honour of his masters or as an expression of his mystic realizations. He is at the same time the author of a treatise on yoga in general, according to the ḡBrug pa's point of view; in it a large part is given to dogmatics, to meditation and its support, to the qualities of the disciple and

of the *guru*, to what places should be chosen for meditating and so on (*sGrub pa ñams su blan pai lag len dgos adod abyun bai gter mdsod*).

Not even the bKa' gdams pa remained aloof from this fervid literary activity.

Their renaissance took place through the works and the reform of Tsoñ k'a pa (1357-1419) who founded the school called "the renewed (*gsar ma*) bKa' gdams", or, under another name, *dGe lugs pa* and later *dGe legs pa*, commonly known as the Yellow Cap school, or simply the Yellow school, from the colour of its followers' caps.

Tsoñ k'a pa's personality is double, although it is difficult, outside practical reasons of study, to separate one aspect from the other. He purified Lamaism, into which too many worldly elements had penetrated; he restored monasteries to a dignified life, he disciplined by a strict organization the monks who had become too restless, and seeing that the multiplication of sects was dangerous, he tried to unite in a single trend the currents into which Buddhism was broken up in Tibet. As strife between families and convents had gradually destroyed and impoverished monasteries, or reduced them to a wilderness, he took possession of them, absorbed them, had them restored to worship or reconstructed. But this apostolic task, which inflamed his disciples' zeal and left such lasting traces in Tibet's political and religious life, was prepared and guided by earnest studies. By virtue of his researches, following and completing Buston's example, he based the validity of his interpretation and the liturgy of Lamaism on the authority of trustworthy traditions, nearly always followed up to their Indian origins.<sup>204</sup>

On the other hand, to give his teachings greater authority, his direct disciples and the circle of his collaborators gave credit to the belief that he was directly inspired by a Jam dpal (Mañjuśrī). Hence his books were considered a revelation, an unimpeachable interpretation of the sacred scriptures communicated to the master during the raptures of ecstasy.

I shall not follow Tsoñ k'a pa's literary activity as far as his lesser treatises, but shall only point out his principal works, those which, by their bulk and importance, are milestones in the history of lamaistic thought.

To begin with Tantrism, it is desirable to dwell on the great commentary to the Guhyasamāja; this is an edition, with glosses, of the *Pradipoddyotana*, which tradition assigns to Candrakīrti.<sup>205</sup> The Guhyasamāja is one of the most remarkable texts in Indo-Tibetan esoterism, and it cannot be excluded that it may have been influenced by non-Buddhist thought: like all Indian mysteriosophic treatises, its interpretation is extremely difficult, both as to its symbolic meaning and as to its reading; such difficulties can only be overcome by a detailed exegesis. The abundance of commentaries, and of glosses on the commentaries, proves to what an extent Indo-Tibetan schools were aware of the abstruseness of these texts and of their importance and how their very mystery favoured the birth of different methods of interpretation.

The depth and clearness of Tsoñ k'a pa's research are such, that his edition and his exegesis are an instrument not to be dispensed with for an understanding of Tantric esoterism.

This major work is followed by lesser treatises which clear up particular points connected with the Guhyasamāja or with its different liturgies; the *rGyud rgyal po dpal gsañ ba adus pa rgya c'er bñad pa sgron ma gsal bai dka' bai gnas kyi mt'a' grod rin c'en myu gu*, the *dPal gsañ ba adus pai gnad don gsal ba*, the *dPal gsañ ba adus pa mi bskyod pai rdo rjei dkeyil ak'or gyi c'o ga dbañ gi don de ñid rab tu gsal ba*. The conclusion of these works is drawn, as regards the mystical experiences to which this Tantric cycle is supposed to lead, from the *dPal gsañ ba adus pai man ñag rim lña gsal sgron*. The latter, going into the technicalities of the Pañcākrama, reconstructs the liturgic drama through which, with the Haṭhayoga's help, the mystic's deliverance is accomplished (see p. 129).

The *rDo rje ac'añ c'en poi lam gyi rim pa kun gyi gnad rnam par p'ye ba* is a very bulky work, one of Tsoñ k'a pa's most significant books. The Mantrayāna, in all its implications, complications and theoretical premises, is set forth with a great wealth of detail, trying to interpret in an orthodox manner the principles and practice of the subtlest mystical experiences of late Buddhism. This was implicitly a polemical task, because the Mantrayāna, during its spread throughout Tibet, had become tainted and altered, had not infrequently departed from its sounder formulations in India. In this work Tsoñ k'a pa penetrates to the very core of the most complex mechanism of mystical ascesis; for instance he deals at length with *utpatti* and with *sampannakrama*. After having discussed at length, by way of introduction, the motives on which the Tantras base their authority, examining anew their divisions, classifications and types according to the doctors' various opinions, Tsoñ k'a pa relates and explains the opinions of the Indian masters or of the most authoritative Tibetan doctors. This work unites mysterious subtleties to the abstruseness of dogmatics; it has the same importance for esoterism that the *Lam rim c'en mo* (Tsoñ k'a pa's other masterpiece, for which he is justly famous) has for dogmatic in general.

Another cycle to which he dedicated an equally important treatise, is *bDe mc'og*, that is one of those on which the mystical experience of Lamaism centres: *bDe mc'og bsdus pai rgyud kyi rgya c'er bśad pai don kun gsal ba*, in 51 chapters. With this treatise is connected the other: *dPal ak'or lo bde mc'og gi miñon rtogs rgya c'er bśad*, and many lesser pamphlets, in which are discussed various methods of interpreting this cycle, according to the two most widespread and well known systems, the one which goes back to Luipā, and the other which can be traced to Ghañṭapā. I have mentioned these two works and these two cycles, because Tsoñ k'a pa has treated

them with a particular insistence and has amply discussed them and written on them. But beside these Tantras, he also studied the Hevajra and the Kālacakra with its commentary, the Vimalaprabhā, on which he wrote a: *sToñ p'rag bcu gñis pa dri ma med pai 'od kyi dka' bai gnas rnam par abyed pa brjed byañ gi yi ge mk'as grub c'os rje la gsan pa*.

But the work with which he obscured Tibet's preceding dogmatical literature and took his place as one of the most faithful and profound interpreters of Buddhism, is the *Summa* of the Mahāyāna, which, like all decisive books, has resisted the action of time and to this day, in the monasteries of Tibet and Mongolia, educates doctors and theologians and forms their minds. I am speaking of the *Lam rim c'en mo*, which he wrote in a solitary hermitage near Rva greñs. As Desideri perceived (who translated it and then confused it from the Christian point of view),<sup>206</sup> this work, which in the dGa' ldan edition contains 481 pages, is perhaps Tibet's greatest contribution to Buddhist exegesis; it is an original elaboration of an outlook of life which, through secular experiences, had become almost inborn in the Tibetan people. As is the case with works of an intrinsic merit, this book could not be dispensed with for study and meditation, and received such a universal recognition that in its turn it soon inspired commentaries, exegeses, syntheses and systems. The dGe lugs pa school, through this treatise of its founder's, had given Lamaism its greatest and final contribution; successive masters could do nothing but follow in his footsteps; the *Lam rim c'en mo* closed the creative period of Tibetan thought, which then turned back on itself and returned to detailed exegesis or to pedantic elucidations of what was already known.

This is confirmed by the fact that after Tsoñ k'a pa there is practically no great lama who does not write some gloss or explanation on the famous book. A glance at the *gsuñ abums* of the Pañ c'en lamas and to those

of the Dalai lamas or even to the indexes of Kloñ rdol bla ma (*op. cit.*) will testify to the exactness of this statement.

The *Lam rim c'en mo* was followed by a *sKye gsum gyi ñams su blan pai byañ c'ub lam gyi rim pa*, which explains the doctrine taking into account the different intellectual capabilities and the varying karmic preparation of each individual, according as he possesses a supreme, middling or inferior aptitude for understanding the truth.

With this book is connected a parallel treatment of the same subject: the *Šes rab p'a rol tu p'yin pai man ñag gi bstan bcos mñon par rtogs pai rgyan agreñ pa dañ bcas pai rgya c'er bšad pai legs bšad gser p'reñ* which, according to its title, is at the same time an explanation of the *Abhisamayālañkāra* and of its famous commentary by Haribhadra, i. e. the classical explanation of intellectual and spiritual ascent through which the bodhisattva realizes the enlightenment of supreme reality.

This work is accompanied by other treatises, which penetrate to the core of Mahāyānic dogmatics and particularly of its most difficult and abstruse conceptions, at its very centre; as, for instance, the conception of essence and non-essence, duality and non-duality, till the intuition is reached of the *stoñ pa ñid*, i. e. the "void", to which Mahāyānic speculation leads. This conception is so difficult to understand, so contrary to ordinary experience, that it can only be understood by degrees: truth is like a serpent, biting those who lack the formula which pacifies it. Truth is manifested in a double aspect: one is conventional (*vyavahāratāh*) for those who are not yet mature, but who are capable of developing further (*neyārtha = drañ*); the other is truth pure and absolute (*paramārbatah*), for those who are already certain of their knowledge (*nītārtha = ñes*). This division is already stated in the *Sandhinirmocana*, and has been developed by Nāgārjuna and his followers.

This fundamental propedeutic to the Great Vehicle's subtleties, is entitled: *Drañ pa dañ ñes*

*pai don rnam par p'ye bai bstan bcos legs bšad sñiñ po*, in which that double aspect of the truth is applied to the *Sandhinirmocana* and to the *Samādhirāja*. Another ample work on this very subject: *dBu mai rtsa bai ts'ig leur byas pa šes rab Žes bya bai rnam bšad rig pai rgya mts'o* deals with Mādhyamika dogmatics, which, thanks to the activity of its founder Nāgārjuna, defines the true sense of the "void", closing and summing up the discursive prolixities of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in a treatise which is admirable for its equilibrium between speculative subtleties and clearness of expression.

Tsoñ k'a pa also dedicated another commentary, the *bsTan bcos c'en po dbu ma ajuḡ pai rnam bšad dgoñs par gsal*, to the *Madhyamakāvātāra*, the other work fundamental for the Mādhyamika school's thought.

Tsoñ k'a pa's mastery of logic is proved by the construction and by the subtlety of his treatises, but he did not write on logic as amply as his disciple rGyal ts'ab; we must mention nevertheless a brief treatise of his on direct perception: *rGyal ts'ab c'os rjes rjei druñ du gsan pai mñon sum leui brjed byañ*, which however, as the title itself shows, is not so much a composition written down by Tsoñ ka pa with his own hand, as a posthumous compilation of notes taken down by the greatest dialectician of his school, rGyal ts'ab, while the master was initiating him to the study of this difficult branch of Buddhist doctrine, mainly on the base of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.

Do Tsoñ k'a pa's books, what has reached us of them, bulky and widespread as they are, represent an original elaboration, or do they condense and resume an exegesis which had matured in some other school? In other words, is Tsoñ k'a pa an innovator, or rather does he continue preceding trends? From his biographers' statements and from his disciples' allusions it appears that he developed and gave greater depth to ideas already elaborated by a great master, at whose school he had his training: gŽon mu blo gros

(Kumāramati) of Re mda' (1349-1412),<sup>207</sup> one of the greatest men Lamaism has had between Buston and Tsoñ k'a pa. He had been a disciple of the Ña dpon Kun dga' dpal,<sup>208</sup> he had commented on the *prajñā* with penetrating research, continuing a tradition derived from the lotsāva of rÑog and his followers; then, after leaving his work as a teacher to meditate in a hermitage, he had particularly studied "Maitreya's five laws,, laying down, on the base of those texts, the principle that cosmic consciousness is the only reality, and that, being inborn in each of us, it represents a necessary passport and the cause of that return to the purity of "the Buddha's essence,, which is identified with nirvana.

rGyal ts'ab (to give him the name under which Dar ma rin c'en is generally known in Tibet), was born in 1364 *ñin abrug*, and died in 1432, *c'u byi*. He continued Tsoñ k'a pa's activity, mainly as an interpreter of dogmatic works. He comes back once again to the Abhisamayālañkāra, with an ample gloss and particularly to the most authoritative commentary written in India on this greatly celebrated treatise of mahāyānic mysticism, Haribhadra's *Ālokā*. He wrote the *Šes rab kyi p'a rol tu p'yin pai man ñag gi bstan bcos mñon par rtogs pai rgyan gyi agrub pa don gsal bai rnam bśad sñin poi rgyan*. This work, composed on the Ri bo dga' ldan, boasts of continuing the tradition of Kumāramati of Re mda', Tsoñ k'a pa's master, and of Rin c'en rdo rje; it guides the reader through successive states of mystical purification and progressive moments of liberating meditation, thus affording a much-appreciated introduction to the clear understanding of the celebrated Mahāyānic text.

Closely connected with the Abhisamaya is the Uttaratantra, also one of the five treatises attributed to Maitreyanātha, now made accessible also to those who cannot read Tibetan, by Obermiller's fine translation. This far from easy book which has a first-rate place in Mahāyānic literature, was commented by rGyal ts'ab, in his *T'eg c'en po rgyud*

*bla mai tik kā*. The main authority to which he refers, the master to whom he acknowledges his interpretation to be due, is once again Kumāramati of Re mda', who, as we saw, had an exceedingly great part in Tsoñ k'a pa's spiritual and intellectual formation.

Students of dogmatics will be equally interested in the *Legs par bśad pa c'os mñon rgya mts'oi sñin po bžugs pai dbui p'yogs*, a clear summary of the Abhidharma. The importance of this work consists precisely in its brevity (215 pages) and in the arrangement of its contents, divided and classified according to categories: it became a most useful introduction to the detailed study of one of the most complex disciplines of Buddhist philosophy, which remained for centuries, in Tibet, China and Japan, the necessary propaedeutic to the long path of theology. rGyal ts'ab links the tradition of this interpretation of the Abhidharma with Kumāramati of Re mda'.

Among his lesser works, less lengthy but not less important, we must record a new commentary to the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*: *Byañ c'ub semis dpai spyod pa la ajug pai rnam bśad rgyal sras ajug dogs*, written in the rNam par rgyal pai gliñ of dGa' ldan, following once again Kumāramati's explanation.

He treated of logic in the *Ts'ad ma mdoi rnam bśad* and in the *Ts'ad ma brjed byañ*. The first is a synthetic commentary on Diñnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, one of the most celebrated works of Buddhist logic, and certainly one of the keenest and subtlest monuments of Indian speculation. Completed, and in many places corrected, by Dharmakīrti, Diñnāga's logical system was replaced by the works of his great continuator, whose gigantic figure looms over the development of Indian logic to such an extent that even thinkers of rival schools, though they did not accept his theories, were obliged for a long time to take into account his monumental works: the *Pramāṇavārttika* and the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. Their fortune as unsurpassed documents of India's logical maturity contributed, I will not say, in

dooming the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* to oblivion, but certainly in classing it as a stage of Buddhist speculation, undoubtedly glorious but nevertheless initial and therefore, in course of time, unavoidably surpassed. The commentary by the same author, inserted in the *bsTan agyur*, thus seemed sufficient, and the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* does not appear to have attracted in Tibet the same attention or to have inspired the same exegesis as Dharmakīrti's great treatise. Hence the importance of these glosses by rGyal ts'ab, whose value is increased by the great clearness of his style. The book, written, like a large number of preceding works, in the rNam rgyal glin, goes back to the same exegetic tradition beginning with Kumāramati which, differently from the Sa skyas, acknowledged Logic as a fundamental part of Religion.<sup>209)</sup>

The *Ts'ad ma brjed byan* is a brief handbook, according to the notes taken at the master's school.

These two books must be considered as an introduction to rGyal ts'ab's *magnum opus*, his commentary on the *Pramāṇavārttika* by Dharmakīrti: *Ts'ad ma rnam agrel gyi ts'ig leur byas pai rnam bśad t'ar lam p'yin ci log gsal bar byed pa*, and on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*: *bsTan bcos ts'ad ma rnam nes kyī tī kā c'en dgoñs pa rab gsal*, ponderous and difficult works in which is summed up all the logical tradition of Buddhism, and the ideas of one of Asia's most powerful minds are illustrated according to his most authoritative interpreters.

As we can see, rGyal ts'ab continued and completed his master's work, dealing preferably with dogmatics and philosophy; he was a speculative and dialectic mind and delighted in distinctions, classifications and plans elaborated by Indian exegesis but carried by the Tibetans to their extreme developments. His works therefore must be read by reconstructing the paradigms which form their geometric base; by keeping them in mind through their uninterrupted process of breaking up into fractions and fitting one into

the other, complex and difficult arguments are simplified and become clear.

His activity in the Tantric field was scanty: he only composed a few short treatises on particular and minute subjects; they are not to be compared with those composed on a single cycle, but one of the most important, by his school-fellow mK'as grub c'os rje (1385, *šin glan* - 1438, *sa rta*) who is remembered in history above all as the subtle interpreter of the *Vimalaprabhā*, a famous commentary on the *Kālacakra*.

Out of studies carried on for many years was born his extremely bulky work entitled: *rGyal t'ams cad kyī rgyal po bcom ldan adas dus kyī ak'or lo mc'og gi dan poi sañs rgyas kyī rtsa bai rgyud las p'yuñ ba bsdus pai rgyud kyī agrel c'en rtsa bai rgyan kyī rjes su ajug ston p'rag bcu gñis pa dri ma med pai 'od kyī rgya c'er bśad de k'o na ñid snañ bar byed pa*. A truly ponderous work occupying four volumes; it reconstructs the historical and legendary tradition by which that cycle was transmitted through centuries; it studies once more the relations between the various moments of the Buddhist preachings, it goes into the details of that complex esoteric liturgy which establishes secret sympathies between microcosm and macrocosm, it discusses subtle astrological questions. This work is said to have been composed in Ñañ stod, in the dPal ri bo mdañs can monastery; it kept to the method of interpretation followed by Buston, who in his turn continues the tradition handed down to the Tibetan school by two great lotsāvas, that of Rva and that of ʔBrog.

Of course this is the most remarkable work written by mK'as grub rje on the *Kālacakra*, but he also dictated many smaller treatises concerning liturgy, experience, the maṇḍala of the same Tantra. Nor did his preference for the *Kālacakra* make him indifferent to other cycles dominating the religious experience of Tibetan mystical schools: it is always a case of parallel spiritual realizations, which do not exclude, but complete each

other, and each of them can be more or less appropriate for single individuals, according to their capacities and above all according to the mystical family they belong to. He therefore did not neglect either the Kyai rdo rje, Hevajra, so diffused in Sa skya schools, on which he wrote the *dPal brtag gn̄is pai rnam par b̄sad pa rdo rje mk̄'a' agro ma rnam̄s kyī gsañ bai m̄dsod*, and the *bCom ldan aḍas dpal kyai rdo rje lha d̄gui dkyil ak̄'or c'o ga bde ba c'en poi ajuḡ dogs*, nor the Guhyasamāja, whose secret meaning he made clear in the *rGyud t'ams cad kyī rgyal po dpal gsañ ba aḍus pai b̄skyed rim dños grub rgya m̄ts'o*, which discusses the liturgy implicit in this Tantra and particularly the method of evoking the divinities understood as symbols through which its teachings are made manifest.

Special mention must be made of the *rGyud sde spyi rnam par b̄zag pa rgyas par b̄sad pa*, which like the works of the Sa skya masters and of Buston, once more examines the difficult problem of the classification of the Tantra and of their relations. He takes as a base for his classification not external or literary standards, but the different experiences they lead up to.

Although mK'as grub specialized in the study of the Tantra and particularly of the Kālacakra, he did not neglect other fields: he wrote two brief treatises on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and its commentary, although it had been greatly studied through a long tradition and subtly examined once more by the master and by his condisciple. One of these treatises must be especially recalled here: *gSal ba don gsal gyi rnam b̄sad rtogs dkai snañ ba*, an elucidation of difficult passages in Haribhadra's work.

It should not seem surprising that Tibetan commentators come back so insistingly to one and the same treatise: the *Abhisamayā* and the *Alokā* are, for the ascetical and theological currents of Lamaism, works so significant and so deep, so saturated with secrets beyond the crystal-clear appearances

of their form, that one cannot wonder at their being continually taken up again, to explain, clarify and subtilize.

The *Zab mo stoñ pa ñid kyī de k'o na ñid rab tu gsal bar byed bstan pai bcos skal bzañ mig aḡbyed* is very important for Mahāyāna dogmatics and for a logical demonstration of the *śūnya*, the irreality of all things. After having shown that the teachings of the Prajñā are legitimate, as a conclusion and a climax of the Buddha's preachings, a particular analysis is made of the arguments the rival schools had used to show their reluctance to admit that all things are void of an essence of their own. These arguments are refuted one by one and the truth of the Prajñā's thesis is upheld, showing that the arguments of its principal organizer and divulgator, Nāgārjuna, are valid. This work is an indispensable guide for those who wish to become familiar with the subtleties of this system, beyond what can be done with the help of Indian authorities alone. This treatise too goes back to Kumāramati's teachings.

mK'as grub wrote on *vinaya* (disciplinary rules) in his *sDom pa gsum gyi rnam par b̄zag pa m̄dor b̄sus te gtan la dbab pai rab tu byed pa t'ub bstan rin po c'ei byi dor*, a subtle discussion of the precepts regulating a monk's life, not in a strictly hināyānic sense, but rather according to the Great Vehicle's broader views; in other words this book is meant for those who follow a bodhisattva's career, rather than for simple bhikṣus.

The tireless polygraphist also wrote on logic in two most remarkable works; the first is a summary, based on the seven logical works of Dharmakīrti and has a double title, Sanskrit and Tibetan: *Pramāṇaśāstrasenaṣaptālaṅkāra: ts'ad mai bstan bcos sde bdun gyi rgyan yid kyī mun sel*.<sup>210</sup>

Also in this book, which aims at being an easy summary of the Buddhist *nyāya*'s abstruseness and complications, in the final form which Dharmakīrti and his immediate disciples gave to it, Kumāramati's school is

continued. In the same way in the other larger book: *rGyas pai bstan bcos ts'ad ma rnam agrel gyi rgya c'er bśad pa rigs pai rgya mts'o*, divided into three sections, respectively dedicated to inference *per se*, *svārbhānumāna* (*rai don*), to *pratyakṣa* (*mñom sum*) or direct perception and to the syllogism, *parārbhānumāna* (*gžan don*), the three corresponding chapters of the *Pramāṇavārttika* are amply commented upon.

The works of these three masters, circulated in Tibet under a single name, in a collection entitled *rGyal ba yab sras gsum gsuñ abum*, "The master's and the disciples' complete writings", do in fact form an organic whole, in which Buddhist dogmatics and Tantric esoterism are once more expounded and elaborated; in it the new school takes up a well-defined position in respect to the other sects and lays down a doctrinal base which confers individuality and prestige upon it.<sup>211)</sup>

The truly formative period of Lamaism seems almost to close with the writings of these three masters: the path of Lamaism was now traced, it could no longer open up new outlets or attempt new interpretations by an impulse of original ideas. Nothing but heresy would have resulted from such a new departure, and nothing is more alien to the Tibetan mind: it can plumb the depth of doctrines imported from India, and go deeper and deeper into them, but it would never venture to modify them arbitrarily.

Thus in Tsoñ k'a pa and his disciples we admire not so much their inventive originality but rather the clearness and proportion, the undeniable aptitude for re-thinking, elaborating and summarizing Indian thought, into handbooks which do not in the least betray those ideas and doctrines, but sum them up in a well-ordered and harmonious manner: Tibetan neophytes are thus helped to an easier understanding of the difficulties and complications confronting them in theology and esoterism.

Grag pa rgyal mts'an (1400-1475) another of the leading disciples of Tsoñ k'a pa, was chiefly interested in monastic questions and in the *vinaya* section of the scriptures; he is in fact known as the *ādul aḍsin* "the disciplinarian",<sup>212)</sup>

He is the author of the *dGe sloñ gi bslab bya c'en mo*, of the *dGe ts'ul gyi ts'ul k'rim s rnam bśad* and other smaller treatises on discipline; but he did not neglect the Tantras. He dealt chiefly with the Kun rig and the cycle of *gŚin rje gśed*.

In the works of *dGe aḍun grub* (1391-1474) we equally find the interest of the writer divided between logic and dogmatics on one side and pure liturgical treatises on the other. He is the author of a big *Ṭikā* on the four books of the *rNam agrel* and at the same time of a *Ts'ad ma rigs rgyan*, another treatise on logic. He is also a prolific writer on the *vinaya*: *aDul ba ṭi kā rin c'en apr'eñ* and comments upon the *Mūlamādhyaṃika-kārika* and the *Madhyamakāvatāra*; but he composes many hymns (*bstod*) in honour of various masters and gods; he is one of the first codifiers of the cult of *dPal ldan lha mo* raised to the rank of presiding divinity of the sect.

The *T'eg pa c'en po blo sbyoñ gi gdams pa* and the *T'eg pa c'en poi blo sbyoñ gi aḳ'rid c'en zad bśdus pa* are written according to the scheme of the *bKa gdams pa* manuals of the same title of which we have already spoken.

The *aC'i ltas brtag grub rgyal lugs keyi ts'e dbaṅ la brten nas ts'e bsrin t'abs sgröl ma dkar moi ts'e sgrub keyi sgo nas ts'e bsrin t'abs nam mk'a' zas su za bai sgo nas ts'e bsrin t'abs ap'o ba sbyañ ba rnams* is a short treatise on the signs foretelling imminent death which are discussed in some Tantras and occupy an important part in the literature of the Bardo, and then on the means of prolonging life when the grace of *sGrol ma* is obtained. To that goddess are dedicated other small books by the same author; another chapter contains his miscellaneous works, *gsuñ t'or bu*.

On the other hand spyan sia Blo gros rgyal mts'an (1392-1470) one of the favorite disciples of mK'as grub dGe legs dpal, is recorded as the author of many Blo sbyon treatises: *T'eg c'en blo sbyon* and its commentary *Blo sbyon gi ban mdsod*, *Blo sbyon bgegs sel*, etc.<sup>213)</sup>

bSod nams grags pa, or rather Pañ c'en bSod nams grags pa, born in rTse t'an (1478-1554), whose *bKa' gdams pa c'os abyun* we shall quote in the chapter on history, is a most remarkable figure, emerging like a giant in the period which immediately succeeded the times of Tson k'a pa and of his direct disciples. One of his works, whose study is compulsory for future dGe sloñ, inserted into the curriculum of theological schools, is the *Dran nes abyed ut pa lai ap'reñ ba*, or to quote its full title, the *gSun rab kun gyi dran dan nes don rnam par abyed pa legs bšad pai sñin po*, which on the lines of a similar treatise by Tson k'a pa, clarifies the important problem of the double meaning of the sacred scriptures. He also wrote bulky treatises on the Prajñāpāramitā and on the Mādhyamika: *P'ar p'yiñ p'yi don*, *dBu mai p'yi don*, *dBu mai mt'a dpyod*; he then commented the *Pramāṇavārttika*, dedicating a volume to each of its four chapters.<sup>214)</sup>

A great grammarian was almost his contemporary. This was the lotsāva of Ža lu, Dharmapāla (1441-1528). He too is a systematiser, since grammatical literature had in Tibet a long and well-founded tradition. A resumé of this literature was given by Csoma de Körös and has then been reproduced by Doctor Schubert. I do not know from where the great Hungarian scholar took his list, but it corresponds fairly exactly to the resumé of Tibetan grammatical literature found in the *rTags kyi ajug pai dka' gnad sñin po rab gsal gyi agreł pa mt'a dpyod danš šel me loñ*. The bases of the Tibetan grammar are, as known, the *Sum bcu pa* and the *rTags kyi ajug pa*, two treatises written according to the method of the Indian grammars by T'on mi sam bho řa of gÑal. These are the only ones

extant of the eight works attributed to him, the name of a third being *Klu dbañ mgul rgyan* (*Nāgandrakantabbārāna*) and the other six having disappeared during the persecution of the Law. When the second propagation of Buddhism took place, and there was a revival of learning, the interest for grammatical studies naturally grew, as shown by the great number of grammatical works which began to be written. Besides those of the Sa skya Pañđita already alluded to, we know f. i. of the following treatises and commentaries: *bsTan pai sgron me* by the lotsāva Nam mk'a' bzañ po the translator of the Meghadūta (perhaps the same as the Nam mk'a' rgya mts'o of Csoma), a work of Blo gsal from dBus<sup>215)</sup> the same as the diaskevasť of the bKa' āgyur already referred to above. Then the great work of Dharmapāla of Ža lu is recorded; it superseded the treatises of his predecessors, being considered as most authoritative. But important as it was, the work of Dharmapāla did not put a stop to grammatical research, as shown by the great many compilations which are recorded after him, the aim of the writers being not originality, but the endeavour to make things easier for students.

So even Dharmapāla, in spite of the great authority which he still enjoys in learned circles, gave place to more recent compilations, first of all, in order of time, to the *sNa byed nor bu* by dKon mc'og grags pa of rNam gliñ, written in the year c'u p'ag of the eleventh sexagenary cycle viz. 1683, then to the *Yul gañs can pai brda yañ dag par sbyor bstan bcos kyi bye brag sum cu pa dan rtags kyi ajug pai gzuñ gyi rnam par bšad pa mk'as pai mgul rgyan mu tig p'reñ mdses* written in the year šin byi of the 12th sexagenary cycle viz. 1744 by the Si tu C'os kyi abyun gnas, then, specially in the lama-series of China and Mongolia by the manual of *Roł pai rdo rje*, recently edited by Schubert.<sup>216)</sup>

After Tson k'a pa and his disciples, the Indian tradition which had enlivened the exegesis of the Tibetan lamas became more and more feeble and remote; the link once

uniting master and disciple was relaxed. Some texts, no longer made to live through the words of those initiated to their secret meaning, were abandoned. By now the other texts had been expounded and commented upon, both orally and in writing, to such an extent, that little was left to say. It was unavoidable that a period of repetition and simplification should set in, or (in the case of logic) that the schemes and formulas of scholastic exercises should prevail, for instance those *yig c'a* of which Kloñ rdol bla ma gives a good list, for the bKa' gdams pa and dGe lugs pa schools, in the book we have already quoted (complete works, vol. ra).

Indeed in the works of dGe ʼadun rgya mts'o (1475-1542) single treatises on the various moments of liturgy, on particular rites, on the manner of constructing maṅḍala connected with this or that ceremony are already predominant; in the midst of so many lesser pamphlets, the only works of a greater importance as to bulk and ideas are a commentary on the *Nāmasaṅgīti*: *mTs'an yañ dag par brjod pai rgya c'er bśad pa rdo rjei rnal ʼabyor gyi de k'o na ñid sñon par byed pai ñi ma c'en po*, in which liturgical subtleties are discussed, but only after having explained the relations between the different cycles, in some introductory pages of great interest for Tantric literature.

The *Drañ ñes dka' agreł dgoñs pa gsal*, a commentary on Tsoñ k'a pa's already mentioned book, is of a general and scholastic type: a treatise of logic and dogmatics at the same time, written when the author was 25, as if to give a proof of the maturity he had achieved during the long and patient apprenticeship of his first youth.

The *dBu ma ajuḡ pai rnam bśad dgoñs pai don rab tu gsal bai rgyan*, which, as its title says, adds a new commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra* to the large preexisting number of such works and explains (with no particular merit, except a schematic clearness) that celebrated treatise of Nāgārjuna's

school; itself a juvenile work, written according to the instructions of the author's master, aJam dbyaṅs dga' bai blo gros and of Nor bzañ rgya mts'o.

Among the most prolific writers of the late Sa skya school must be counted Kun dga' bzañ po, the founder, in 1429, of the Nor monastery. From his pen we have a bulky *gsuñ ʼbum* containing, beside a collection of hymns in verse praising the principal masters of the school, also a *T'ob yig rgya mts'o*. *T'ob yig*, as we saw, is usually understood to mean a list of the works studied by the various schools or by particular authors, but there is also another meaning implied in the word: it is used for lists of the various *sampradāya*, the spiritual currents connecting a writer, through the uninterrupted transmission of an authentic teaching, to the first revealers and interpreters of a doctrine.

Tibetan literature is rich in these *T'ob yig*, containing precious catalogues of the sources which formed the education of the greatest masters: they are all compiled on the same pattern, which goes from a list of books, pure and simple, as for instance those by Kloñ rdol blama to bulkier compilations like the *Zab pa dañ rgya c'e pai dam pai c'os kyi t'ob yig gañ gāi c'u rgyun*, which precedes the fifth Dalai Lama's *gsuñ ʼbum* or the *mDo rgyud zab moi c'os kyi luñ rjes gnañ dbaṅ k'rid t'ob yig gžan p'an rin c'en dbaṅ rgyal lbag bśam pun ʼda ri kai ap'reñ bas spuḍ* by the Pañ c'en Blo bzañ ye šes dpal. In the book by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o there is an endless number of *sampradāya* i. e. transmissions of written and oral commentaries, of the dogmatic and Tantric texts, first according to their four fundamental classes; *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga* and *anuttara*, then taken separately; next of the various initiatic currents justifying Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's baptisms, and finally of the various blessings conferred upon him. Thus these *T'ob yig* are not only, in their schematic brevity, a skeleton of Tibetan literature; they are at the same time an actual record of the masters' genealogies.

which made it possible for the Law to be transplanted from India to Tibet and to be preserved there, pure and faithful to the ancient teachings. Kun dga' bzañ po too follows these examples in his treatises: he reconstructs the genealogy and the spiritual pedigree through which he was initiated into each of the Tantra he had studied. He also incorporated in his work the indexes of the *gsuñ abum*, of the Sa c'en, of Sa skya pañ-đita and of aP'ags pa. This work is thus simply a collection of endless lists of names, which may be extremely interesting for the history of Lamaism, but whose literary value is negligible. His *Lam abras bu dan bcas pai mañ nag gi p'yin ts'ul gsañ nag rin po c'e bstan rgyas pai ni 'od* has greater literary pretensions; it aims at giving a history of the various *sampradāya*, as they abutted into the Sa skya pa school.

The *dPal kye rdo rjei lus kyi dkyil ak'or la rtsod pa spañs pa smra ba rnam ajoms* is a treatise at the same time liturgical and polemic; it discusses the rituals centering round Hevajra's symbol, confuting the objections of other schools to the first Sa skya pa abbots' interpretation of these cycles.

Another great work of Kun dga' bzañ po's deserves to be mentioned, dealing with the mysticism of the Vajrayāna, its symbolism and the complication of its rites. It is entitled *dPal kye rdo rjei sgrub t'abs kyi rgya c'er bñad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla ba*, and in it are discussed the initiatic tradition of this Tantric cycle, its baptisms, the difference between the evocative method and the perfect method; the author goes into details concerning the psychological process called evocative method by the Tantric schools, illustrating its developments and its moments. It is an extremely technical work, which nevertheless brings a remarkable contribution to the understanding of Lamaist exoterism.

This is not the place to mention the many other treatises written by this lama who, though he turned his attention mostly to

Hevajra's cycle, did not neglect other similar cycles, like those of bDe mc'og and of gSañ ađus: they are booklets of varying length, all on ritualistic, about which I may usefully speak in a book on Tibetan esotericism, better than in the present summary of Tibetan literature.<sup>217)</sup>

As Tsoñ k'a pa was not only the founder of the Yellow Sect, but also the one who codified the doctrines on which the sect's teachings and its liturgical and scholastic individuality are based, so Pad ma dkar po (1526-1592) who lived nearly two centuries after him,<sup>218)</sup> when the dGe lugs pa were nearing their final triumph, organized its doctrines from the point of view of the bKa' brgyud pa and precisely of that sect which, from its geographical diffusion, took the name of aBrug pa. Pad ma dkar po's figure eclipsed those of his predecessors, who were more interested in practical mysticism than on the theories upon it, both for the bulk and importance of his works and for the efficiency of his teachings; even today he soars over the aBrug pa's entire literary and dogmatical movement, and his *gsuñ abum* is circulated in the aBrug pa school like a sort of religious encyclopedia whose authority is unchallenged; hence, as may be expected, it is widely diffused in Bhutan where that sect rules supreme and where it was collected and published.<sup>219)</sup> He too is a polygraphist familiar with every field of Buddhism; naturally many of his works reveal, also in their exterior form, his spiritual and doctrinal formation; in some of his *rnam t'ar*, for instance in the one of gTsañ pa rgya ras pa,<sup>220)</sup> one of the best known siddha of the bKa' brgyud pa school which conferred great prestige on the monastery of Rva luñ, (for a long time his abode), he follows the model of Milaraspa's biography and inserts in the biographical narration (if the tale of an ascetic's mystical experiences deserves the name) external events and very frequently *mgur*, songs, in which religious experience is expressed in the form

of the *dobā*, ennobled by Milaraspa's poetical genius. Indeed we may say that the essential part of his *nam t'ar* consists precisely in these songs, which interrupt the narrative with their sudden allusions and suggestions.

Dogmatic proper, aside from Tantric liturgies and esoteric subtleties, occupies a limited place, as compared with the bulk of works on mysticism and yoga, as might be expected of a master intent on the analysis of the most secret ascetic experiences, nearer for instance to the *rDzogs c'en* than to the *dGe lugs pa* and inclining more to the *yogins'* individualism than to monastic organizations. Nevertheless we must record the *C'os mñon pa mdsod keyi bñad pa agrel pa lugs* which, as the title shows, is a commentary on the *Abhidharmakośakārikā* or rather an explanatory summary, an easy and clear paraphrase of Vasubandhu's famous treatise, in which the complex arguments of the difficult *Summa* are clearly expounded.

He wrote on logic, such as it was known to Tibetan tradition in the seven main treatises concluding and defining its elaboration, the *Ts'ad ma mdo dañ sde bdun gyi don gtan la p'ab pai bstan bcos rje btsun ajam pai dbyañs keyi dgoñs rgyan* and the *Ts'ad mai mdo sde bdun dañ bcas pai spyi don rig pai śñiñ po*, two summaries of the principles of logic, inserted in a demonstration and defence of the fundamental ideals of Buddhist doctrine.

Pad ma dkar po dedicated his *sPyod ajug gi abral agrel dbu mai lam gyi sgron ma* to the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, one of the texts most read and commented upon in Tibet, being justly considered the easiest propaedeutic to the attainment of illumination. It makes no new contribution to the understanding of that extremely popular mahāyānic text.

He dealt with the *Prajñāpāramitā* and with the subtle exegeses superimposed upon it from the time when the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* was composed, listing and specifying its manifold implicit meanings and explaining in what way its realization led to oneness

with supreme truth. This is the subject of two works, the *Śer p'yin keyi luñ la ajug pai sgo*, founded mainly on Haribhadra's *Alokā*, which is almost an introduction to the reasoned study of the *Prajñā*, and the *mñon par rtogs pa rgyan gyi agrel pa rje btsun byams pai žal luñ*; as may be desumed from its title, it is an analysis and a reasoned summary of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. Pad ma dkar po was certainly induced to compile these works by the need of giving his school a new commentary, representing the *bKa' brgyud pa's* interest for a text which had now become the *dGe lugs pa's* fundamental handbook. The "Reds", who followed the *Haṭhayoga's* rapid road, could not value it as much as the "Yellows", who were inclined rather to the slow process of meditation unfolding by degrees.

In the same group of works must be included the *Dags pai c'os bz'i nram bñad skyes bu gsum gyi lam ñin mor byed pa*, a general summary of Buddhist doctrines.

We must not wonder that a master of Pad ma dkar po's spiritual formation and learning should give himself particularly to the illustration of Tantric literature, and especially to the liturgical or ascetical sections, or to the yoga, or to those ritualistic details capable of inducing in the mystic's soul a static vision of certain symbols, in which their experiences are represented or summarized according to an inviolable tradition.

He wrote numberless treatises, most of them brief; they are little more than guides and elucidations for ascetics or neophytes. Hence we cannot deal with them in detail; we shall only mention his major works.

To the cycle of the *Kālacakra* he dedicated the *mC'og gi dañ poi sañs rgyas nram par bye ba gsañ ba t'ams cad bñad pai mdsod*. Not only it evokes the history of this mystical-astrological system and its introduction into Tibet and India, but he elaborates the doctrine of the *Ādibuddha* or Supreme Buddha, the hypostasis of supreme reality from which all

things were born. He then goes on to deal with strictly astrological theories and finally closes with the liturgies having their centre in initiatic baptisms and the subtle theories of the mantra. Though this work is derived from the same exegetic origins as the other sects, in several passages it represents the bKa' brgyud pa's particular point of view.

The Cakrasamvara he did not neglect; he dealt with it in the *dPal ak'or lo sdom pai rgyud kyī rnam par bśad pa mk'a' agro dga' ba rgyud sdei sñiñ po*. In it, after putting the Tantra back into its proper class and then defining the fundamental variety of the Vajrayāna's esoteric literature, he discusses with a wealth of detail liturgy and maṇḍalas, particularly the adamantine body, which is geographically localized in India and is made to correspond to the human microcosm.

With the *aBrug pa ro sñobs kyī rnam bśad ku mu da* we go into the technical niceties of the Haṭhayoga of the Siddha's schools, from which the bKa' brgyud pa maintain that their experiences and their particular doctrines are derived.

Pad ma dkar po sums up in the history and the general principles of the *myur lam*, i. e. the rapid path, that revulsion caused by yoga, through which the mirage of phenomenal illusion is dissolved and the sameness and primaeval identity with the absolute is realized: a non-duality which is at the same time the void. This palingenesis is the fruit of a severe discipline, which conquers the psycho-physical complex through the control of breathing and through an appropriate meditation; hence finally the light of truth imprisoned within us, freed from the envelope of illusion, is again united to the Buddha's body. All of the vajrayāna, in its latest expressions, is here contained, as the adamantine songs *vajragītā* and the *dohakośa* point out.

Pad ma dkar po's treatise is a brief, and I should say, indispensable, introduction to the theoretic premises of yoga praxis and to the complex theories on the interplay and interferences of various kinds of vital energy

which intersect one another in our persons, act, are identified with breathing (*prāna*) and link the body's borderland with that of the spirit.

The same doctrine is developed in another book, closely connected with a handbook of the bKa' brgyud pa school, the *Nāro pai c'os drug*, namely the *Jo bo nā ro pai k'yad c'os bsre ap'oi k'erid rdo rjei t'eg pai bgrōd pai sñiñ rta c'en po*, in which is discussed the praxis of the yoga process known by the name of "Great Seal", *mahāmudrā*; it is a method of freeing from the net of cosmic illusion that great light which is a symbol of the void, shining in the "middle channel", in that *avadhūti* or *umā* running along the spinal cord, often transfigured as a goddess and invoked in the esoteric schools' mystical songs.

The same subject is treated more amply in the *Jo bo nā ro pai k'yad c'os bsre ap'oi gzuñ agrei rdo rje ac'añ gi dgoñs pa gsal bar byed pa*, an ample handbook of Haṭhayoga, in which are discussed not only doctrinal principles and the manner of attaining liberation, but also the practices cooperating in this process, from the numerous manners of controlling one's breathing and the mantra to the various meditative processes. It is also treated in the *bSre ap'oi lam skor gyi t'og mar lam dbye bsduś*, which deals in detail with the process of *p'o ba* or transfer, at pleasure, of the vital principle to other spheres of existence or to the plane of the absolute, and lays down the theoretical principles according to which this practice is carried out to this day by the Tibetan lamas. It also discusses on the *gtum mo*, the yoga process causing a voluntary hyperpyresis.

A list of bKa' brgyud pa masters and books, together with the spiritual pedigrees of various initiatic centres, is found in the *bKa' brgyud kyī bka' abum gsil bu rnam kyī gsañ yig*, in which the various currents are followed up to aBrug pa c'en po, the founder of that school to which Pad ma dkar po belonged. It is at the same time one of those *gSañ t'ob yig* which we have already mentioned in the course of these pages.

To remain in the field of esoteric disciplines, inspired by Nāropā's brief and famous little handbook, known as the "Six Laws", we must quote one of his best-known works, and one of the most diffused among ascetics, even those who do not precisely follow Padma dkar po's school: the *dPal pad ma dkar poi rdo rjei glu ap'reñ ba*, which, as the title shows, is modelled on the Vajragītā and on the Dohakoṣa of the adamant vehicle of India's esoteric schools, and hence continues, both as to style and as to conceptions, the Tibetan tradition inspired by Mīlārāspa and by sGam po pa. The songs it contains proclaim the joy of the experiences attained, but oftener the difficult praxis leading to such experiences is alluded to with a wilful obscurity. These poems vary in length, the lines are of eight or nine syllables, nearly always preceded by a brief prose declaration specifying under what circumstances it was recited; the date is often given.<sup>221</sup>)

He discusses monastic rules and more generally the discipline and maxims that men of religion should follow, in: *sDom gsum gyi rgyan*, which is commented upon in a vast *sDom pa gsum gyi rgyan ces bya bai rgya c'er agrel*; naturally neither of them is simply a handbook of monastic rules; they are meant not only for monks, for bhikṣu pure and simple, they also aim at the *slob dpon*, the *ācārya* of the initiatic schools. Hence they do not only speak of disciplinary precepts, taking of vows, abstinence and confession of sins, monkish apparel, but also of baptisms and of the maṇḍala.

Finally Padma dkar po dealt with medicine in his *rGyud bzii agrel pa gžan la p'an gter*, a brief summary of the Āyurveda, whose utility is perhaps in a schematic arrangement of the subject-matter.

Padma dkar po's style, outside his technical and liturgical works, is dignified and elaborate, and his language abounds in new words, taken even from the dialects of Kāms and Bhutan and received into his pages with a broad tolerance; for this reason his writings

are often difficult, also because dictionaries do not help much.

After Padma dkar po, we must mention another great polygraphist: Kun dga' sñin po, better known as Tāranātha, born in 1575.

He belonged to the Jo nañ school, which takes its name from a monastery and a great mc'od rten on the left bank of the gTsañ po; they were the stronghold of his school for a long time, then, following the sect's decline, they passed to the dGe lugs pa.

The Jo nañ pa, and particularly Tāranātha, were intimately related to the bKa' brgyud pa; he came into frequent contact with the convent of sTag luñ, where he found his masters and with which he kept up an exchange of ideas. This spiritual formation inspired the *rje btsun tāranāthai žal gdams mgur abum gyi skor*, which in a metrical form resumes the postulates of Mahāyāna and of Vajrayāna and repeats the well-known principles that right and wrong are figments of our mind, that the origin of the saṃsāra and of pain must therefore be sought in our own thoughts, that any assumption concerning the outer and the inner world is false because everything disappears into the void. They are songs of different length, written in various places and circumstances; some in sNeu gdoñ rtse, others in gYo ru goñ dkar, still others in bSam sdiñs or in Nam riñs, addressed to a number of personages, whose names are sometimes given and sometimes withheld; they are almost metrical episodes, condensing in a few words the essential points of the doctrine.

A follower of the Jo nañ (Jo mo nañ) school, glorying in the name of Dol po pa and of P'yogs las rnam rgyal, the famous interpreters of the Dus kyi ak'or lo, could not remain indifferent to this extremely important Tantric cycle; Tāranātha wrote a brief history of the cycle, proving that the tradition he had received was valid: *dPal dus kyi ak'or loi c'os bskor gyi byuñ k'uñs ñer mk'o ba* which follows the developments and ramifications of the

Kālacakra's exegesis, from its divine origins down to its earthly masters. Next came the *dPal dus kyi ak'or loi sgrub pai t'abs bskyed pai rim pa rnam par bśad dnos grub ñer ats'o*, an introduction to mystical experiences and evocations, leading the adept to them through the liturgies recommended in this Tantra. It contains at the same time references to the various Indian and Tibetan exegetical traditions and subtle discussions on the two methods of mystical realization: the evocative and the perfect method. It then goes into the intricacies of ritualistic and finally interprets the symbolism of the images in the maṇḍalas used in liturgical drama.

This work, in 278 pages, interprets, perfects and makes plain preceding famous commentaries, beginning from Buston's, but on lines often diverging from the views adopted by the "Yellows". As a matter of fact these were inclined to consider heterodox many a theory held by the Jo nañ pa and therefore refuted them. Tāranātha's aim is to defend the position of his masters; although it is a late compilation, its contribution to the understanding of this arduous mystical system cannot be neglected.

The *dPal dus kyi ak'or loi dkyil ak'or gyi c'o gai rnam par bśad pa bđud rtsii rgya mts'o* treats of the complications and niceties of liturgy in the different moments of rituals.

Tāranātha writes at length of mysticism and yoga (I mean particularly the Haṭhayoga) according to the Kālacakra schools, in the *Zab lam rdo rje rnal abyor gyi ak'rid yid mt'oñ don ldan* and still more in the *rDo rje rnal abyor gyi k'rid yig mt'oñ ba don ldan gyi lhan t'abs 'od rgya aqar ba*, which is a sort of commentary of the former; in its theoretical section an historical section is also inserted, because the succession of the masters is particularly developed, dwelling on Vibhūticandra,<sup>222</sup> whom Tāranātha considers one of the Kālacakra's most authoritative interpreters, the remote source of that inspiration he was himself partaking of.

In the doctrinal section he penetrates to the core of the Vajrayāna's dogmatics, and questions of the greatest interest for Buddhist doctrine are touched upon, for instance the theory of compassion and the theory of imagination (*rnam rtog*), the *prāna* (vital energy) and its functions, the mantra and so forth, are discussed and treated with subtlety.

The *Zab lam rdo rje rnal abyor gyi rnam par bśad pa rgyas par bstan pa zuñ ajug rab tu gsal ba c'en po* belongs to the same order of ideas; it examines in detail the symbolism of Tantric liturgy and discusses the relations between the essence or absolute and the visible and transient manifestations of things, between microcosm and macrocosm; then it goes into details concerning the mystical wheels which the Haṭhayoga imagines in the body, with the object of reaching a living and direct intuition of the "emptiness", or void of all things, favoured by the proper application and the precise understanding of mantras and ritual.

From these works, which though dealing with vajrayānic mysticism in general are nevertheless connected in a special manner with the Kālacakra, we cannot dissociate the *dBañ mdor bstan pai agrel pa zab moi don mt'a' dag gsal bar byed pai ñi ma*, which, as the title shows, is a commentary on Nāropā's *Se-koddeśa-ṭīkā*,<sup>223</sup> i. e. a celebrated treatise on the eleven initiatic baptisms through which the mystic must pass, ascending from one degree to the next. In this book are described the rites which accompany each baptism, and the spiritual experiences dawning on each ascent are hinted at.

The *Rim lñai agrel c'en rdo rje aq'añ c'en poi dgoñs pa* is a very interesting work for the technique of yoga practice and the reconstruction of the religious psychology on which the Vajrayāna bases its experiences. It starts from Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*<sup>224</sup> and opens with an examination of the various lists of these methods of mystical realization, variously specified by the different schools. These,

in fact, do not always follow the same standards; now they state that the *krama* included in the perfect method are four, while the evocative method has one, now they use other terminologies or propose other classifications. Tāranātha then explains the meaning of the liturgical symbolisms in the maṇḍala or in the mantra, and points out how these images and sounds hint at different paligenesis of truth; these subtle discussions are supported at every step by frequent references to the authority of the sacred texts, to reconcile apparently conflicting theories, or to complete points of view which are suggested but not defined, or to throw light on complex problems, like the magic body and its relations to the physical body.

The *Grub c'en nag po spyod pai do hai agrel pa zab don lde mig* is linked to the *dohā*, the mystical songs of the Vajrayāna; it is precisely a commentary on Kṛṣṇācārya's *dohā*. In the *Kaḥṇā pai do hā t'or bu rnams kyi agrel pa ño mts'ar snañ ba* the single *apabhraṃśa* words of the text are translated and interpreted as they come, according to their mystical meaning.

The *Zab lam ne gu c'os drug gi k'rid yig zab mo don t'an mar brdal pa*, takes us back to the core of the Haṭhayoga; it is an analysis and an explanation of Nāropā's six laws (also called *Ne gu c'os drug*, from the name of *Ye šes mk'a' agro ma ne gu ma*, on whose meditation centres in a particular manner the ascetical school of the bKa' brgyud pa): *gtum mo, sgyu lus, rmi lam, 'od gsal, ap'o ba, bar do*, i. e. to give them our own names, voluntary hyperpyresis, magical body, dream, colourless light as a symbol of cosmic consciousness, transfer of the conscious spirit, intermediate existence. These are explained one by one in their esoteric meaning, as methods or moments of the mystical process which must produce a violent detachment from the plane of phenomenic experience. This important treatise is followed by shorter ones, treating the same subject or some of its particular points.

On bDe mc'og's cycle he wrote the *bDe mc'og nag po žabs lugs gyi sgrub t'abs rnam par bśad pa rgyas agrel t'un moñ ma yin pa lban cig skyes pai gzi 'od p'yogs bcur rgyas pa*, a commentary on the Saṃvaratantra's liturgy according to Kṛṣṇapāda's method.

The *bDe mc'og bstod c'en gyi rab agrel p'an bdei rgya mts'o*, a commentary on the *bDe mc'og bstod c'en dños grub abyun gnas* written by himself, is a bulky work of over 300 pages, in which, with the pretext of explaining the verses of that hymn, he discusses the esoteric truths symbolized by this god, the liturgies of the Tantric ceremonies and their meaning, the various aspects and moments of religious experience centering on this cycle.

From his studies of grammar he derived the *brDa sprod pa dbyaṅs can gyi mdo*, which consists in the Sanskrit text of the *Sarasvatīvyākaraṇa* with its translation into Tibetan, which was to be superseded by the translation made by the aDar lotsāwa and ordered by the fifth Dalai Lama.

The *rGyal bai bstan pa la ajuḡ pai rim pa skyes bu gsum gyi man ñag gi k'rid yid būd rtsi* is a brief handbook of the principal meditations which guide the Bodhisattvas, the Pratyekabuddhas and the initiated to the light of salvation; on the impermanence of all things, on death, pain, causes and results, complete surrender to the compassion of the Buddhas, the vow to help living beings, whence little by little each person's mental series is delivered from the dross of sin or from the darkness of error and moves towards nirvana.

A very important book is the *Yi dam rgya mts'o sgrub t'abs rin c'en abyun gnas*, in which are discussed the Sādhana or ways of meditating on the principal deities of the Lamaist pantheon. It is well known that the gods are described in their symbols, marks, colours and postures in special treatises, like the *Sādhanamālā* or the *sGrub t'ab rgya mts'o*; this work is the complement of such collections; it has a remarkable interest, both for ritualistic and for iconography.

The *dByid t'ig gi agrel pa nes gsañ rgya mts'oi sñiñ po* belongs to exegesis; it is a rather long commentary on the *Vasantatilaka*, according to Kṛṣṇācārya's interpretation, and explains the most difficult passages, closely following its text.

Among historical works, *C'os abyuñ*, are to be classed not only the *bKa' babs*, already translated by Grünwedel, but also the *rGyud rgyal gšin rje gšed skor gyi c'os abyuñ rgyas pa yid c'os ño mis'ar*, which in fact is inserted by Kloñ rdol bla ma in his list of historical works, together with the *bKa' babs*. But we cannot consider it in the same light, because it is only concerned with the spread and propagation, through different branches, of the cycle of *gŠin rje gšed*, red and black, as they are laid down in the Tantras dedicated to him. Having premised a general introduction on the Tantras and their main classifications and divisions, Tāranātha passes to the Tantric group he is interested in and follows its developments, from its first revelation up to the great master who diffused its esoterisms and secrets in India, namely Lalitavajra. In relating his adventures, Tāranātha treats of many other figures of the Vajrayāna which occur to him, for instance Indrabodhi and Virupā; he then passes to the fortunes of this school in Tibet beginning from the Lotsāvas of Rva and of Zañs dkar and their successive derivations. This work then is a *C'os abyuñ*, but a particular one, because it is limited to one cycle only and does not leave the religious field. For this reason we mention it here, not in the chapter on historical works.

The *bCom ldan ādas t'ub pai dbañ poi mdsad pa mdo tsam brjod pa mt'oñ bas don ldan rab tu dga' ba dañ bcas pas dad pai ñin byed p'yogs bgyar ac'ar ba* is a narrative of the Buddha's life, divided into 125 different sections, each of which speaks of some particular episode of his life, beginning with his descent from the Tuṣita heaven and ending with nirvāna, the division of his relics and the events which followed.

This work cannot help being a compilation, but nevertheless it has remarkable importance, having been often taken as a guide, as we shall see later, for pictorial representations of the Buddha's life.<sup>225)</sup>

*dBen sa pa Blo bzañ don grub* (1505-1566) was a disciple of *dGe ḅdun rgya ts'o* and ruled Tashilunpo. He left a bulky *gsuñ abum*, in which liturgy predominates: the cycles of *bDe mc'og* and *K'or lo sdom pa* occupy the first place, with their maṇḍala and their ritualistic.

The *gtor ma*, offered to each single deity and the liturgical practice of ceremonies dedicated to them, are the particular object of his studies, but he also deals with dogmatic, and in the first place with the *Lam rim c'en mo*, in brief explicative treatises which summarize its doctrines and regulate its comprehension.

The large quantity of small liturgical treatises which we see coming to the fore and filling up a large part of the *gsuñ abum* of the greatest *dGe lugs pa* writers, as the school becomes more and more firmly established, should not surprise us: it is a natural consequence of the desire to elaborate the liturgy of the school anew, so that without breaking with the well-founded traditions of Vajrayāna, indeed purging them from the schools' arbitrary, tendentious and far-fetched interpretations, liturgy might confer an individuality of their own upon the Yellows.

This was a long and patient task, and when political and religious relations with the Mongols became closer, the office was added on to it of inserting into Lamaist orthodoxy certain religious intuitions belonging to those tribes, which did not clash with the fundamental principles of Buddhism: many Mongol deities had the same fate as the native *sa bdag* of Bon; I refer the reader to Appendix two, where some remarkable instances of this process are shown.

The first *Pañ c'en* of Tashilunpo, *Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an* (died 1662) was extremely active. He wrote many small treatises

on the liturgy of the best known Tantras, dwelling particularly on the cycle of gŠin rje gšed and of the eight Ro lañs ma, of Ts'e dbañ, of the Kun rig, of sGrol ma, according to Atīśas's system, of the Dus kyī ṅak'or lo. To the latter, besides some smaller treatises, is dedicated a bulky study meant to explain the Vimalaprabhā; *Dri ma med 'od kyī rgya c'er bśad pa de k'o na ñid snañ bar byed pai sñiñ po bśdus pa yid bžin nor bu*, which before undertaking to elucidate the *realia* which are the object of this difficult tantra and of its commentary, dwells at length on the chronology at its base.

Remarkably important is the *dGe ldan brgyud rin po c'ei bka' srol p'yag rgya c'en poi rtsa ba rgyas par bśad pa yañ gsal sgron ma*, in which, going back to their origins, an attempt is made to find the point of contact between the bKa' gdams pa and the bKa' brgyud pa tradition, and some of the Vajrayāna doctrines, like the mahāmudrā, are elucidated.

For the understanding of the bKa' gdams pa doctrines, the *Byañ c'ub lam gyi sgron mai rnam bśad p'uñ byuñ bśad pai dga' ston* is very useful; it is a commentary on Atīśa's *Bodhi-mārgapradīpa*, written on the plan of the old *blo sbyoñ* mentioned above, to which the author often refers (e. g. *Be'u bum sñon po*). Hence this treatise is a guide to meditation, which leads to enlightenment by reflecting on the causes of the samsāra and on the elements of enlightenment.

Naturally there is no lack of methodical studies on the *Abhisamayālañkāra* (first chapter): *mNon par rtogs pai rgyan gyi sñiñ po gsal bar legs par bśad pai rgya mts'o las skabs dañ poi rnam bśad Byañ c'ub lam gyi rim pai dmar k'rid t'ams cad mk'yen par bğrod pai bde lam* is an introduction to Tsoñ k'a pa's *Lam rim*; it is followed by various brief handbooks of a practical character, meant to point out the rules which must be followed and the virtues to be cultivated; in a word, summary manuals on meditation.

He too went back to a classification of the Tantras, a subject which we have seen being

developed in Tibet since the first Sa skyas; he wrote a *bsTan pa spyi dañ rgyud sde bžii rnam bžag zin bris su byañs pa*, which sums up the position taken by the dGe lugs pa as regards this complex problem.

The *rDo rje p'reñ bai dkyil ak'or c'en po bži bcu gñis kyī sgrub t'abs rin c'en dbañ gi rgyal poi p'reñ* is dedicated to the *Vajrāvāli's* mañḍala; its ground subject is mainly an exegesis of *Abhayākaragupta*.

Nāgārjuna the siddha's *Pañcakrama* is commented upon in the *mGon po klu sgrub kyis mśad pai rim pa lñai rnam par bśad pa zuñ ajug nor bui bañ mśod*. This is one of the Vajrayāna's fundamental works; it classifies and discusses the chief moments of yogic ascent towards reintegration with rDo rje ṅc'añ. Due to its importance and to its difficulty, the book has been several times commented upon in India and Tibet. This work by Blo bzañ c'os kyī rgyal mts'an does not bring any new contribution, except an extremely clear presentation, which enables us to follow the liturgy in all its details and to understand the instruction contained in the brief handbook.

Closely connected with this work are the *rGyud t'ams cad kyī rgyal po ḍpal gsañ ba ḍdus pai bskeyed rim kyī rnam bśad dños grub kyī rgya mts'o sñiñ po* and the *gDam ṅag rim lña gsal sgron gyi sñiñ poi gnad kun bśdus pa zab don gsal bai ñi ma*: the former, starting from the *Guhya-samāja* liturgy, profusely illustrates the first of the two krama, the *utpattikrama* or method of mystical evocation.

In the ponderous *gsuñ ḍbum* by Blo bzañ ye šes ḍpal bzañ po (1663-1737) second Paṅ c'en of Tashilunpo, we observe the: *Byañ c'ub lam pai rim bla mai brgyud pai rnam par t'ar pad ma dkar poi ap'reñ ba*, a brief history of the chief masters recognized by tradition as the forerunners of that current of thought and that special method of interpreting the scriptures, summarized by Tsoñ k'a pa in his celebrated *Lam rim*. This succession of the Buddhist doctrine's supreme doctors begins with Maitreyanātha and Asaṅga and ends,

naturally, with Tsoñ k'a pa and his disciples or followers, up to Pañ c'en Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an. He particularly dwells on the bKa' gdams pa masters, from aBrom ston to Po to po, from P'u c'un to Ša ra ba.

The facts contained in these compilations fulfil the more systematic treatment of the *Deb t'er* or the *bKa' gdams c'os abyuñ*; this gives interest to the present treatise but also induces us to check its contents carefully.

This handbook is almost an introduction to the numerous treatises on the *Lam rim*, which Blo bzañ ye šes dpal bzañ po, according to a custom common among the dGe lugs pa, wrote to summarize, elucidate, reduce to its essential scheme the *Lam rim*'s severe bulk. To its investigation he consecrated: the *Byañ c'ub lam rim pai dmar k'rid t'ams cad mk'yen par bgrod pai myur lam*. It cannot be denied that the Pañ c'en, starting from the premise of the threefold quality of created beings: superior, mean, inferior, has succeeded in his purpose. The result is a version of the *Lam rim* even more schematized than the original, if possible; but in such a way that the study of this far from easy text is made much easier.

The *Lam gyi gtso bo rnam gsum gyi rnam bšad kun gyi gnan bsuds pa legs bšad sñiñ po* is a discussion on the *Lam rim*'s three fundamental subjects: the conception of bliss *ñes abyuñ*, *abbyudaya*, the conception of *bodhicitta* (the thought of enlightenment), and finally the right vision of truth. These three subjects are the three "gtso", bulwarks, on the way leading to salvation, and must be particularly studied by the followers of Mahāyāna. This part, the core of the book, is preceded by a long introduction meant to magnify Tsoñ k'a pa with the object of justifying his authority. This gives the writer an occasion to speak of Tsoñ k'a pa's former life, of the prophecies which announced his coming and of his miracles.

The *sñiñ po don gsum gyi k'rid yig t'ams cad mk'yen par bgrod pai ñe lam* returns to the

same subject; it discusses "the writer's greatness", to prove the authority of the treatise, the essential characters of its instructions, so that the reader may have faith in what it says, and the substance itself of these instructions. It is then a sort of method for the making up of such commentaries, and its justification on the base of traditional schemes of Indian exegetic literature.

The *Pañ c'en blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an gyi rnam t'ar gsal bar ston pa nor bui ap'reñ bai smad c'a* is more than a biography of the Pañ c'en; it speaks of the new construction built under his predecessor's auspices in Tashilunpo and of the works of art enriching this monastery; this offers the author an opportunity of mentioning, besides donors, also the main artists and craftsmen who cooperated in it.

Of course liturgy occupies a large part of his works, among which are found bulky treatises on the dPal gsañ aḍus.

The *sñan ñag me loñ las leu gñis pai dper brjod mts'o abyuñ dgyes pai me t'og* is based, as the title shows, on the second chapter of Dañḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa*, and contains repeated specimens of the figures listed by the Indian treatise, but all adapted to the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas; hence it is, in a certain sense, a repertory in which the schemes of *alañkāra* are applied to new themes, while accurately following the rules of the famous treatise.

We have now come to the fifth Dalai Lama's works. Some of his writings have been already mentioned; we must now speak of some others, leaving out the lesser ones, liturgical treatises, ritual commentaries on tantric cycles (e. g. *dPal aḳ'or lo sdom pa*, vol. t'a) and handbooks on propitiatory methods concerned with various deities particularly favoured by the Yellows, as for instance *rDo rje ajiḡs byed* (*ibid.*).

The *C'os mñon mdsod kyi rnam bšad c'os mñon rin c'en aḍren pai šin rta* (vol. pba) is a large commentary on the *Abbidbarmakoṣa*, one of those most frequently studied in Tibet to

this day; the same volume contains the large treatise on *vinaya*, disciplinary rules, not only for monks but also for lay devotees; it abounds in quotations and references to canonical literature and is entitled: *bsTan pai rtsa ba rab byuñ dañ k'iyim pa la p'an gdags pai las keyi c'o ga mt'a' gcod dañ bcas pa ak'rul spoñ rnam rgyal gser mdog*; it is at the same time a treatise and a polemical work, particularly meant to confute the Žva dmar (Kar ma pa) theories, which greatly diverge from the orthodox *vinaya* traditions, and to prove that the dGe lugs pa's reform was well advised.

The book summarizes the history of *vinaya* in Tibet, and after relating the initiation of the ten men of dBus and gTsañ it speaks of the new introduction of discipline in the times of Ye šes 'od, who caused Dharma-pāla to come from India. From him were derived the three Pāla, Sādhipāla, Guṇapāla and Prajñāpāla, in their turn the masters of Žañ žuñ pa aDul aḍsin rGyal ba šes rab: from the latter the school called La stod aḍul had its origin; a second school was born when Byams pa dpal of K'ro p'u had Śākyaśrī come to Tibet. The latter had three chief disciples: Gro sul pa K'er gad Byañ c'ub dpal, gTsañ pa rDo rje dpal, gTsañ So pa bSod nams mdses, who founded the monasteries of sNe mo tsag mig, Ts'ogs pa, Ts'ogs dge aḍun sgañ; gŽu pa dKon mc'og rgyal mts'an and dBu mdsad bSod nams stobs in their turn founded Bye rdsiñ ts'ogs and C'os luñ ts'ogs.

The book abounds in quotations, e. g. Re mda pa's *Tikā* and the *aDul bai sñiñ po rab tu gsal bai gži smad keyi rnam bñad* by the Lotsāva of sTag ts'añ, Šes rab rin c'en, etc.<sup>226)</sup>

The *T'ogs med drag rtsal nus stobs ldan pai dam can c'os sruñ rgya mts'oi mñon rtogs mc'od aḍul bskañ bšags bstod ts'ogs sogs ap'rin las rnam bži lbun grub* (vol. da) is a bulky work on the Yi dam, C'os skyoñ, terrific deities, the protectors and patrons of the Law and of monasteries; it contains hymns, rites and prayers and is a most useful encyclopedia of the esoteric Olympus of Lamaism.

Although, as we often saw, Tson k'a pa and his disciples had dealt at length with the *Abhisamayālañkāra*, Blo bzañ rgya mts'o does not neglect to comment again upon this *summa* of the Mahāyāna, and he wrote the *bsTan bcos mñon rtogs rgyan rtsa agrel rnam gsal bar byed pa blo bzañ dgoñs rgyan gdon lñai dbañ poi sgra dbyañs* (vol. pa), an expositive and critical work, and at the same time a continued and subtle commentary.

The *K'ruñs rabs keyi Žiñ bkod aḍri ts'ul gyi rtogs brjod k'a byañ dañ bcas pa gsal bai me loñ* (vol. ba) is a metrical treatise, very important because it contains the ascendants of the Dalai Lama's incarnations: it is the first, that I know of, in which the succession has been set down, through which Avalokiteśvara, the first of the series, became incarnated to spread and protect the Buddhist Law, beginning with his initial vow in the presence of 'Od dpag med in the bDe ba can. This series of incarnations was from time to time enriched with new personages, until we come to Kloñ rdol bla ma's list, concluded with the VIIIth Dalai Lama, comprising 58 names: Kloñ rdol's list is the point of arrival and Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's list the point of departure. According to this treatise the incarnations should be: 1. aP'ags pa mc'og spyān ras gzigs; 2. rGyal po aḍig rten dbañ p'yug; 3. dKon mc'og aḍañs sroñ btsan sgam po; 4, 5. K'ri sroñ lde btsan; 6. K'ri ral pa can; 7. aBrom ston rgyal ba; 8. K'a c'e dgon pa pa; 9. Sa c'en Kun dga' sñiñ po; 10. Žañ aḍro bai mgon po; 11. mNa' bdag ñañ ral; 12. Lha rje dge ba aḍum; 13. dGe aḍun grub; 14. dGe aḍun rgya mts'o; 15. bSod nams rgya mts'o; 16. Yon tan rgya mts'o.<sup>227)</sup>

Blo bzañ rgya mts'o was not only a great statesman and one of Tibet's foremost writers; he also contributed, as few had done before him, to enrich his country with great works of art, mostly religious buildings which he was able to erect due to the zeal and piety of the Mongol nobility, continually flocking

to Lhasa loaded with gifts. To sow the seeds of a good karma, the Mongol nobles vied with each other in enriching the Country of Snows with fresh temples and monasteries and embellishing those already in existence. The Dalai Lama was the overseer, director and guide of these works and by his personal action he encouraged the piety of devotees and their generosity. He took part in the consecration of sacred buildings and objects, dictated inscriptions commemorating these ceremonies and other occasions, e. g. the yearly *smon lam*. These inscriptions have been collected in three volumes of his complete works and are a precious collection of contemporary documents which, besides describing the consecrated objects, mention their donors and often quote names of the craftsmen who executed them. The *sKu gsuñ t'ugs rten gsar bžeñs rin po c'ei mc'od rdsas k'añ bzañ gi dkar c'ag dañ t'am p'ud deb k'rims yig gi ago rgyans sde bzii skal bzañ* (vol. *ma-tś'a*) is therefore a precious collection, which the historian of Tibetan and Mongol art and schools in the XVIIth-XVIIIth centuries must consult.

Naturally Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, in these works, follows the precepts of rhetoric more than ever, composing in the most artificial manner prose and poetry, both extremely florid and refined; they are also full of historical and mythological allusions, like those written to commemorate the donation made by the *sDe pa Blo bzañ mt'u* stobs in 1676, which is in reality a history of Tibet and of the spread of the faith.

The *Lha ldan sprul pai gtsug lag k'añ gi dkar c'ag šel dkar me loñ* (vol. *dsa*) is connected with the above work; it is known to scholars through Waddell's and Grünwedel's translations;<sup>228)</sup> and the *rGya bod hor sog gi mc'og dman bar pa rnam la sprin yig sñan nag tu bkod na rab snañ rgyud mañ*, a collection of epistles in verse, written on various occasions to Tibetans, Chinese and Mongols. It contains letters of investiture to the abbots of several monasteries

(for instance Sa skya pa), to princes (for instance *sTag luñ*, 'Ol dga', *rTse t'añ*), letters to the Chinese Emperor, like the one carried by Rab byams pa dÑos grub yon tan, in answer to the embassy of the year *šin lug*, 1655, headed by Ta dben Mañjuśtri and Ta dben Nor bu rgya mts'o.

To the same type of literature, occasional compositions written on the request of prominent personages, belongs the *sMon lam šis brjod brtan bžugs sogs kyi ts'igs su bcad pa rab dkar dge bai c'u kluñ* (vol. *za*), a collection of prayers or "vows", made by donors and pious persons with the purpose that their good works should help them to obtain bliss in the next world. In this case too we find mention of the most noteworthy personages who had frequent relations with the Dalai Lama's court and occupied a pre-eminent place in Tibetan history during the XVIIth century.

It is natural that a writer like Blo bzañ rgya mts'o should study with particular attention the most authoritative handbook on rhetoric known to India, Dañḍin's *Kāvyā-darśa*. The Tibetans had become acquainted with it since the times of the lotsāva of Šoñ, who was the founder of Tibetan rhetorics; from his times on the booklet became a standard textbook and produced a series of commentaries, among which stand out these by Zur mk'ar Blo gros rgyal po, by the Lotsāva of dPañ, by Rin spuñs pa Nag dbañ ajigs grags,<sup>229)</sup> *sNar t'añ pa Sanghaśrī*, etc.

The fifth Dalai Lama once more attentively examined the famous text and wrote an ample commentary upon it. After establishing the importance of rhetoric in the hierarchy of those sciences which a scholar must be acquainted with, he gives a survey of the development of *alāṅkāra* in Tibet. He then begins to expound the meaning of the booklet, often quoting the opinions of preceding commentators and refuting them whenever he thinks they are mistaken. This work is entitled *sÑan nag me loñ gi dka' agreñ dbyaṅs can*

*dgyes pai glu dbyañs* (vol. *va*). It was finished in the year *me spre*, 1656.

The *rTsis dkar nag las brtsams pai dris lan ñin byed dbaṅ poi snaṅ ba* (vol. *va*) is very interesting. It is much more than a simple astrological treatise; it opens with a discussion of the various sciences and their classification, the subject-matter of each science. For instance one section treats of images and iconometry; another gives a list of the subjects with which *lus rig* is concerned (boats, houses, food, clothes, etc.) and so forth; it is an anticipation of the *aṣṣig rten bstan bcos*,<sup>230</sup> attributed to him. Next, going on to treat of its particular theme, the book discusses the various systems of Indian astrology: *dkar rtsis* based on works translated since the times of the Kings, then *nag rtsis*, imported from China in Sroṅ btsan sgam po's times by his Chinese wife. This system is founded on the works of Koṅ tse,<sup>231</sup> the incarnation of aJam dbyañs, who revealed it on the *Ri bo rtse lña*.

According to the fifth Dalai Lama who follows in this case another famous polygraphist already mentioned viz. the lotsāva of sTag ts'aṅ translations of the works of dKar rtsis are divided into three groups: ancient translations, *aByuṅ ba rin c'en kun adus*, *rGyud gab pa gnad gzer*, *Rin c'en spuṅs pa*, *sDod po kun adus*; intermediate translations: *gTer mdsod rin c'en sgron ma*; recent translations: *rGyud stag sna*, *mDo byañ*.

Translations of Chinese works, based on the cult of the *sa bdag* and hence largely diffused among the Bon po, are also divided into three groups: the ancient ones, turned into Tibetan by rGya bza', the wife of K'ri sroṅ lde btsan and by the lotsāva of Dar c'en t'ig le; next those made by Vairocana, Padmasambhava's disciple; finally the translation of the *gSal sgron*, made by the lotsāva K'am pa K'ra mo. From these translations three Tibetan schools developed: the one which followed the ancient translation or Grva p'ug school; the one which continued the system of the intermediate translations by Byañ pa

rigs ldan c'u and sPug ston; the one conforming to later translations and derived from mK'as pa rgya p'rug and Zur mk'ar pa maṅ t'os Blo gros rgyal po. A discussion follows on the month from which each system began the year. The book then closes with a chronology of the Kings of Sambhala, Kulikas, based on the calculations of the Kālacakra.

Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o, son of the fifth Dalai Lama, regent of Tibet for 25 years and after his father's death absolute lord of the country, was not prevented by his responsibilities as a ruler and by intrigue, in which he showed himself past master, from becoming one of the most prolific of Tibetan writers. He mainly deals with science and history; his chief works are four, and all entitled *Vai ḍū rya*, *lapislazuli*, i. e., the *Vai ḍū rya dkar po*, on astrology, the *Vaiḍūrya ser po* on the dGe lugs pa's history beginning with Tsoṅ k'a pa, *Vai ḍū rya sñon po* on medicine and the *Vai ḍū rya gya' sel*, a commentary and an addition to the *Vai ḍū rya dkar po*.

Of the *Vai ḍū rya ser po* we shall speak in the chapter on historical literature; the *Vai ḍū rya dkar po* (some chapters of which we shall come back to in Appendix two) and the *Vai ḍū rya sñon po* are already known to scholars, having been mentioned by Csoma de Körös and S. Ch. Das.<sup>232</sup>

The *Vai ḍū rya gya' sel*, which we have to deal with here, is entitled *bsTan bcos vai ḍur dkar po las dri lan ak'rul snaṅ gya' sel don gyi bžin ras ston byed* and it was written to complete the *Vai ḍū rya dkar po* and to refute some objections raised against its author. This book is an encyclopedic work, containing very important information, often quite alien to astrology proper: it opens, for instance, with a long discussion on the chronology of the Kings, the discordant theories on the duration of their reigns and the identity of some of them, e. g. Mu ne btsan po and Mu tig bzaṅ po. Padmasambhava's date is also discussed, always quoting many sources. The book also contains a treatise on iconometry,

recording the proportions of the eight sorts of mc'od rten. Scholars may glean from it much useful information concerning various problems of Tibetan cultural life.

Saṅs rgyas rgya mts'o's astrological work has eclipsed those of his predecessors; the other schools also made use of his bulky compilations, which do not serve exclusively to discipline the life of laymen, to draw horoscopes and to fix auspicious dates for marriages. *rTsis* was ever, as a branch of scholarship, the handmaid of liturgy, used to ascertain the religious calendar with absolute accuracy and to fix the beginning of the year, the divisions of months and seasons, the various festivities. This explains why *rTsis* concerned with calculating time, *das ts'igs*, is the usual appendix of books on *vinaya*, apart from the independent treatment it received in Tibet; it thus gave occasion to an extremely rich literature and to some schools which have enjoyed a vast popularity, and continue to do so.

In the XVth and XVIth centuries there was a new flow of Indian Pandits into Tibet; we saw that some of them met Tāranātha and were most probably the source of many of his tales. This contact with Indian scholars renewed the tradition of the ancient lotsāva and inspired a growing interest in the study of Sanscrit which had been for a long time slackened. So Tāranātha undertook the translation of the *Sarasvatīvyākaraṇa* and the fifth Dalai Lama sent to India Gokula a pandit from Benares, then in Lhasa, to invite to Tibet his elder brother Balabhadrā. The latter taught the *Pāṇini-vyākaraṇa* to the lotsāva of ṛDar who made the translation and the Tibetan edition of that work. This lotsāva was a so proficient in the study of Sanscrit that when the Dalai Lama thought of editing the *Avadānakalpalatā* and it was found that in the available copy some Sanscrit portions were missing, he attempted to reconstruct them, in the original.

The reorganization of monasteries and seminaries coinciding with the Yellow Sect's

spread and consolidation, the gigantic growth of religious communities which filled convents with a throng of novices and monks, brought in their wake the production of an enormous quantity of text-books, the so-called *yig c'a*, summaries of the various subjects whose study was prescribed by the *curriculum*. Treatises on eristic, *bsdus grva*, are predominant, used to instruct the pupils of seminaries, for three years, in the art of debating, that they might be able to detect logical errors in their oppositors' theses and refute them. This *bsdus grva* literature, codifying a system of instruction which goes back to P'yva pa C'os kyi seṅ ge, whom we already met, consists of innumerable works; it comprises 18 or 21 subjects, chosen for discussion: colour, form, being, one being, similarity, difference, cause, effect, etc.

Nearly all the great lamas and abbots of monasteries have written one of these treatises, but as they all start from the same premises, they generally follow the same plan, without adding anything to traditional logical thought. This is not the place for a treatment of the subject; it will be enough to refer the reader to a booklet by Klon rdol bla ma (*Ts'ad rnam agrel sogs gtam ts'igs rig pa las byun bai miṅ gi graṅs*) and to VOSTRIKOV'S *Critical remarks on the bibliography of Tibet*.

In this ritualistic, hagiographic and dogmatical literature I am speaking about, a curious parenthesis was opened, a worldly note was introduced: joyful songs, celebrating life and love broke into its monotony. The strangest thing is that these songs are attributed to a most unexpected author: the sixth Dalai Lama. We have no means of establishing whether the tradition, generally accepted in Tibet, be true or not; in biographical or historical works written in monastic circles it would be useless to look for evidence of a literary activity the religious sects, in their own interest, were bound to ignore. But Ts'aṅs dbyaṅs rgya mts'o's way of life, in conflict with his sacred dignity and with his divine

nature, may well explain his unexpected poetical activity. Although he died very young and was led astray by worldly thoughts, he had already written some works of a liturgical character, particularly concerning Haya-grīva (Kloñ rdol bla ma, complete works, *ra*, p. 37) and some sacred hymns. Anyhow the profane songs (*glu* or *glu bžad*) attributed to him in the editions known to us (Lhasa, from which is derived the edition of S. CH. DAS, *Introduction to the Grammar of the Tibetan language*, and YU DAWCHYUAN's)<sup>233</sup>) are 55 and 54, but these editions not being identical and each containing songs not to be found in the other, we have a total of 62 songs. We lack sufficient data to determine whether they are all by the sixth Dalai Lama, or whether songs by other authors have been inserted into the collection.

They are simple songs, fresh and artless, imbued with a great feeling for nature: the author calls upon plants and animals to sympathize and feel compassion for the fire burning in his heart. This fire is so violent

that when the poet, seeking to master it, goes to a lama for advice, he is nevertheless unable to overcome it. He is tormented by the struggle between passion and religious scruple, from which there is no respite. The memory of Indian rhetorics and its precepts has not influenced these folk-songs in the least; only on some rare occasions they have a sententious character. They breathe the fragrance of a free and simple life, hence they often touch the noble heights of real poetry:

Was that girl not born from mother,  
 And was she produced on a peach-tree:  
 (Her) love towards a man withers up,  
 Even quicker than those peach-flowers;  
 Although (I have become) familiar with (her)  
     tender body,  
 (I am) unable to fathom the heart of (my) lover,  
 (But we only have to) scratch a few lines on  
     the ground,  
 And the distance of the stars on the skies  
     are correctly computed.<sup>234)</sup>

(trans. by YU DAWCHYUAN)

# A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE HISTORICAL LITERATURE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE SOURCES USED OR QUOTED IN THIS WORK

## I. HISTORICAL WORKS: *C'os abyun*

Tibetans show a particular interest, if not precisely a great accuracy, in recording facts, and this links them to the Chinese, rather than to the Indians. Hence they knew chronicles and annals, bare lists of facts and news, rigorously arranged by years. This inclination for recording the most important events in national life implies a particular mental habit, a sense of the concreteness of things, a positive appreciation of men's actions; life is not a fleeting shadow or a changing phantom of *māyā*. Mahāyāna dogmatics, by teaching the vacuity of all events, will gradually uproot, also in Tibet, this original feeling for history. As the soul of Tibet is more and more deeply conquered by Buddhism, its links with the world become relaxed and the interest it takes in human vicissitudes is less and less warm. The "void", *ston pa ñid*, lays snares for all that men think or do, and destroys it. But in the beginning, owing either to a natural aptitude of its spirit or to the influence of China, with whom contacts were very close even at the dawn of its history, Tibet cultivated this chronographical literature, represented by the chronicles discovered in Central Asia, whose publication is expected,<sup>235</sup> and the others compiled later, if not exactly on that model, at least according to that plan.

Such writings are called *yig ts'an*; the same name was given to the books in which events were recorded. In the Kings' times a

*yig ts'an pa* was an indispensable part of the army; <sup>236</sup> each regiment had one, who wrote down names and facts in his book. One of the most remarkable instances of this sort of literature is the *rGya bod kyi yig ts'an*, "historical memories of Tibet and China", used by S. CH. DAS in his note on the census of Mongol times, some extracts of which have been translated in the course of the present work. It is a compilation in verse which, with schematic brevity, enumerates facts or recalls persons, without the slightest intention of commenting or passing judgement upon them. But partiality is implicit in the choice of material by the compiler according to the interests of the school he belonged to, undoubtedly the Sa skya pa school. The monk who gave a new elaboration to the *rGya bod lo rgyus deb t'er*, mentioned in the *rGyal rabs*, almost certainly belonged to this same school. This work recording events in the order of their succession, had been compiled by Su K'yi han in the times of T'ai tsung of the T'ang dynasty. It was thus a chronicle written by a Chinese scholar and then translated into Tibetan by another Chinese, U Gyan dsu. As there were discrepancies as to names and dates between the Chinese and the Tibetan tradition, Kuo shih Rin c'en grags pa had a revision of these annals made, which was published in the monastery of Šiñ kun,<sup>237</sup> in the year wood-metal. While the first mentioned work, to judge from the fragments we know, went as far as the period of Mongol domination or perhaps was limited to the royal period, these other chronicles elaborated by Rin c'en grags pa treated of the

most ancient times, the period of the Kings, from Sroñ btsan to the apostate prince, and were translated from the Chinese.<sup>238)</sup>

These were not the only annals translated into Tibetan in that ancient period. A chronicle of China and of the Hor: *rGya hor kyī yig ts'an*, is mentioned by the author of the *rGyal rabs* as translated by Cen ts'e slob dpon Śes rab ye śes;<sup>239)</sup> together with the *Ts'al pa deb dmar*, it represents for Tibetan compilers the most conspicuous source of their genealogies of Chinese and Mongol emperors.

Among the most ancient compilations treating of Chinese and Tibetan genealogies, surely derived from trustworthy sources, I must refer to the *Ša kya rnam kyī rgyal rabs* by Grags pa rgyal mts'an,<sup>240)</sup> alluded to above, then to the *Śes bya rab gsal*<sup>241)</sup> by aP'ags pa quoted by the author of the *rGyal rabs*; the historical part is reduced to a brief list of names, lost in a meagre summary of Buddhist dogmatics. Much more important for its dates, though equally schematic, is a chronological booklet by the same author: *Bod kyī rgyal rabs*, containing the most complete list of the Tibetan Kings we know.<sup>242)</sup>

The *Ts'al pa deb dmar* was written by Kundga's rdo rje, a rival of Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an when he became a monk after his plans had been shattered by the iron will of P'ag mo gru's victorious lord. This work belongs to the second half of the XIVth century, and is known under the double name of *Ts'al pa deb dmar*, or of *Hu lan deb t'er*.<sup>243)</sup>

At that time historiography took on a different character; it was no longer a bare chronological record of facts, it became an historical evocation; past events took precedence of the present. This insistence on ancient times, the glorification of the old dynasties and the delight in ancient glories, appeared, as we have already said, in the times of Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, when national consciousness was awakened.

In this manner were born the *Deb t'er dmar po*, just mentioned, and the *rGyal rabs*

*dpag bsam ljon śiñ*, alluded to by the author of the *rGyal rabs* as one of his sources. In this period many other works were also written, of which little more than the name has come down to us; they inserted Tibetan history in the narrative of a particular clan's events, taking the clan as the point of reference and attraction for all the country's events, as if history had revolved around it. Thus the narrative was at the same time a glorification of the family and a scholarly attempt to justify its ambitions and uphold its claims. To this type belongs the *rLañs kyī po ti bse ru p'ag mo gru pai sde srid byuñ ts'ul*, summarized by the *C'os abyuñ mig byed 'od stoñ*, which reconstructs and follows through the centuries the rise of the P'ag mo gru's power, and at the same time outlines a history of Tibet.

But these works are not accessible to me, and only occasional quotations are available; hence we had better pass on to another work which, largely using former histories, has completed and surpassed them; I mean the historical work known as *rGyal rabs gsal bai me loñ*. At least, it is quoted under that name, but in the manuscript copy of Hemis monastery, which I have copied, and which is derived in its turn from another copy written in sKyid śod in dBus, on C'os rgyal dPal abyor rgyal po's commission, the title is *C'os abyuñ gsal bai me loñ*; in the colophon of the original of sKyid śod: *rGyal rabs c'os abyuñ gsal bai me loñ*. The fact that in some cases the title is *C'os abyuñ*, instead of *rGyal rabs* "genealogy of kings", corresponds quite well to the spirit of the book. With this work a new historiography appears: the bare facts, are not listed year by year according to the simple system of the chronicles; they assume decorous literary draperies in which reminiscences of Buddhist hagiography recur. In its architecture the work follows the model of the great mahāyānic compilations: historical events are loaded down by a wealth of miracles and prodigies; reality and imagination

are often inextricably mixed up. The book speaks of the fatal and preordained spread of the Buddhist religion, as if all events were to conform to this design of providence; history is conceived as in the *C'os abyun*, in which the development of the Buddhist idea, the ups and downs of human life, in their changing and various reasons, are seen under the angle of religion. Tibetan history is like the realization of an established plan to serve the Buddha's holy word; the kings and their wars, the events of so many centuries' history are but an instrument through which the divine plan was accomplished on the sacred soil of the Country of Snows. As the author says, in fact, at the end of his compilation, the book aims at giving a narrative of preordained deeds in the service of the Law, accomplished by those incarnations of Avalokitesvara's, the kings of Tibet and their ministers.

The dynasty's history is at the service of religion and proves that the dynasty was an instrument designed by providence for the spread of Buddhism and that the empire's unity, through its power and prestige, served the purposes of the divine mind. The ancient period had been so full of glory because the State was then an obedient instrument of faith. Thus protected and fostered, faith blessed the kings' deeds; when Glañ dar ma apostatized and Buddhism was persecuted, anarchy laid the country waste.

We must now say something concerning the date of this work; it was written, as the colophon declares, by the Sa skya pa monk bSod nams rgyal mts'an at bSam yas, in the year *sa abrug*. Laufer reduced this date to 1328 (*Loan-words*, p. 413, but erroneously to 1327 in *Die Bruža Sprache*, p. 39), I cannot say for what reasons. For motives of style and for the very architecture of the book, greatly differing, for instance, from Buston's *C'os abyun*, which preceeds it, I have always had my doubts on the antiquity attributed to it and on the accuracy of that date. The fact that the book was written

in bSam yas, by instigation of Lha btsun Rin c'en dpal, inevitably leads us to question the solution put forward by Laufer. The fact that a Sa skya monk, who was a rDo rje ʼadzin and therefore enjoyed a high rank in ecclesiastical hierarchy, was instigated to write a historical work on the advice of the prince of bSam yas, means that relations between the Sa skya abbots and that monastery in the heart of central Tibet were very intimate, implying nevertheless the decay of that abbatial clan from its ancient power; this happened in comparatively late times, at any rate when the Sa skya hegemony was over; but in 1328 it was still in full flower.

My doubt became a certainty when I examined the sources quoted by bSod nams rgyal mts'an; among them I found, for instance, the *Deb t'er dmar po* by the Ts'al pa dGe bai blo gros, another name, as we have seen, for Kun dga' rdo rje, a disciple of Buston, a contemporary of Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an, indeed one of his principal adversaries, who had a considerable part in the armed opposition against him, whence a series of conflicts which in 1328 had not yet broken out. The *Deb dmar* is quoted by the author of the *rGyal rabs gsal bai me loñ* as an already authoritative work and this fact of itself rules out contemporaneity. We are led to the same conclusion by a quotation we find there of the *C'os abyun* of Bu ston, later than 1328, because it was written in the year *k'rag skyug* (*rudhironḡārin* = 1347), as we read in the colophon added by the author himself.

Having thus excluded 1328 as the date of the composition of the *rGyal rabs*, we can take another step towards a better and more accurate determination, when we notice that it is also later than gŽon nu dpal, because it quotes the *Deb (t'er) sñoñ po* by this author. As the *Deb t'er* was written in 1476, the *rGyal rabs* cannot have been composed before 1508 (year earth-dragon).<sup>244)</sup>

We can say that with the *rGyal rabs* the new type of Tibetan historiography took on

its final form: hagiographical and mythical historiography, which little by little consigned to oblivion the bare and meagre style of the ancient chronicles. By now the family pedigrees, on which we shall dwell at greater length later, are no longer lists of facts recorded in their schematic chronological succession: they already feel the influence of Tibet's new literary maturity. Ancient legends on the family's heavenly origin and echoes of Bonpo mythology are bound up with the glorification of the faith, miracles of saints, detailed narratives of acts of religious piety on the part of devout patrons, and records of donations of temples built and objects consecrated. Family vicissitudes are thus seen in the light of religion. And even these families' political ambitions, their alliances and wars, are considered as acts of piety, in defence of this or that threatened school, this or that insulted monk. When they presented facts in this manner, the chronicles were not wholly in error, because in the course of these pages we have seen Tibetan history gradually dominated by the strife between sects, which turn the old nobility into an instrument of their own.

But let us go back to the *rGyal rabs*, which I have treated before earlier works, to clear up the erroneous date mentioned above and because this book is at the same time the point of arrival of a literary elaboration and the model of future historiography, in which religious events prevail over political affairs. The prevalence of hagiography over historiography and the general interest for religious developments and the work of the great masters, led by degrees to that peculiar manner of relating events, which is proper to the *C'os abyun*, i. e. to tales on the spread of the Buddha's word. Political history unmistakably gives way to religious history, as was to be expected in a country where every activity is silent before the cares of the spirit, where even in the midst of passions inflaming men's souls, their eyes are not averted from

visions of Amitabha's heaven or of nirvāna's unspeakable peace.

The first *C'os abyun* was the one written by Buston, which has become, thanks to its compiler's authority and to the book's intrinsic merit, a model for the works of later writers. Buston's book opens, by way of introduction, with a general picture of Buddhist preaching in its various moments; this necessarily implies a general survey of Buddhist literature, its dogma and its fundamental works. The Buddha's life is then related; the lives of the greatest interpreters of his doctrines follow. Having thus summed up in all its parts the history of Indian Buddhism and defined its various branches, Buston dwells on the spread of its teachings in the Country of Snows, through the favour of the kings, its propagators and defenders. Political history is thus inserted into the fortunes of the Law, and the powerful men of this world are recalled only as patrons of religion. Buston, as we have said, had many imitators: the *C'os abyun* are many in Tibetan literature. That this sort of composition should be so frequent is not a matter of chance, it corresponds to the pains taken by each sect to prove its descent from well known currents or celebrated masters of India, to the desire of proving uninterrupted relations linking them with the highest authorities of Indian mysticism and dogmatics, and finally to the resolve to follow the developments of those ideas, whole and genuine, through the long chain of their spiritual ancestors. There is no school without its *C'os abyun*.

Over all these works towers, nevertheless, the *Deb t'er snot po* by gZon nu dpal, the lotsāva of aGos (1392-1481), the greatest chronicle and history of Tibetan Lamaism. Excepting the first two chapters, in which Indian and Tibetan dynasties are reconstructed in their main lines, the book follows up the spiritual succession which, through a continued chain of masters and disciples,

carried up to the author's times, in its spotless integrity, the multiple revelation.

In the fifteen chapters of this work, the main schools of Lamaism are followed in their development, like a series of biographies linked together by a relation of immediate and direct communion, and by the identity of esoteric revelations. The author of the *Deb t'er* is chiefly concerned with the spread and perpetuation of mystical inspirations, rather than with dogmatics, theology or logic; with spiritual experiences rather than with dialectics. The masters' biographies are accurate, chronology is strict, dates of births and deaths precise; from time to time the author puts his chronological system to the test by stating the years that intervene between a given event and the date of his compilation.<sup>245)</sup> This chronological scaffolding is also strengthened by frequent references to political events which are alien to the general plan of the book (a doctrinal history) and inserted only for greater clearness or to provide a background. Thus, for instance, Atiśa and Rin cen bzan po offer gZon nu dpal an occasion to reconstruct the pedigree of the kings of Guge, the new esoteric sects (*siags gsar*) give him an opportunity to relate the succession of the Sa skya and of the dPon c'en who governed in their name; while speaking of the bKa' brgyud pa, he collects much information concerning the P'ag mo gru pa, or the aBri guñ pa, or the monastery of sTag luñ, and the events in which the abbots of those convents played an important part. Already in the first chapter, going back to the chronicles of Rin c'en grags and of the Ts'al pa and justly recognizing that the history of Tibet cannot be considered separately from that of neighbouring countries, particularly China, after having summarized the succession of the kings up to Glañ dar ma, he goes on to list the series of the Chinese and Mongol dynasties, noting the years, generally with accuracy.

The gTer ma, mentioned above, should also be considered as historical sources,

keeping in mind that they contain fragments which are certainly ancient, for instance some chapters of the *bKa' t'an sde lña* or alleged prophecies of facts foreseen by Padmasambhava's divining mind, actually inserted by compilers after their true or supposed discovery of the gTer ma. These allusions should hence be used with great caution, as motives of controversy or political passion may have induced their authors to relate events in a manner calculated to further their interests or their theories.

But the rÑin ma pa are not the only ones to have their gTer ma. The dGe lugs pa also know some, namely the famous *Mani bka' abum*, which they consider as one of the chief sources for the history of Sroñ btsan sgam po. This is a compilation made up of different elements, all bent on glorifying the protector of Tibet, sPyan ras gzigs, and his incarnation as Sroñ btsan sgam po. Its chapters, differing greatly as to age and origin, go from *P'yag stoñ spyan stoñ's dhāraṇī*, translated by C'os grub (TÖKOKU, *Cat.*, n. 691), to the *C'os skyon pai rgyal po sroñ btsan sgam poi mdsad pai rnam t'ar* (pp. 185-247), which contains Avalokiteśvara's incarnations and deeds, when he descended into Tibet as king Sroñ btsan sgam po, whose vicissitudes in Tibet and in other continents are related; to the *rGyal bu ajig rten dbaṅ p'yug gi skyes rabs* (pp. 247-261), to the *rGyal poi mdsad pa ñi šu rtsa gcig* (pp. 261-286), followed by a liturgical encyclopedia. This work is thus a self-evident compilation; clearly it is also a dogmatic elaboration, intent on creating a theology and a soteriology round the symbol of sPyan ras gzigs, accurately represented in the second part of the *Ma ñi bka' abum*, dedicated to the development of a complex system on the six-syllable mantra: *om ma ñi padme hūm*. The part more properly concerned with king Sroñ btsan sgam po is explicitly called a gTer ma, which the king ordered T'on mi sam bho ṭa to write in golden and silver letters on indigo-coloured paper and then to hide in the

aK'ra abrug lha k'an (p. 184). This part very probably corresponds to, or is derived from, the *Ka k'ol ma* or *bKa' c'ems ka k'ol ma* we have already found quoted among historical works: it is mentioned by dGe legs dpal in his life of Tsoñ k'a pa, p. 48. It was a *dkar c'ag*, written on a scroll and hidden inside a pillar of willow wood. When the gTer ma was brought to light according to the prophecy made by the mK'a' gro ma to Atiśa, three scrolls were found: a *Zla ba 'od zer* compiled by the Ministers, another *Dar dkar gsal ba* by the Queen and the third containing the King's testament, *bKa' c'ems*.

To these works we must add the *C'os abyuñ bstan pa gsal byed* by Don grub dpal, which however is only known to me through quotations in the DT, ca, p. 31, under the title *C'os abyuñ bstan pa rin po c'e*, and in the *Reu mig* by Sum pa mk'an po, p. 64.

gZon nu dpal's example had many imitators; the different schools did not omit to record the succession of their masters; as the *Deb t'er* had followed up the spread of mahāyānic thought in its many Tibetan branches, which abutted into some well-defined trends, so almost all sects began to write their own particular *C'os abyuñ* and to tread backwards the road of their own history, recalling to memory the masters through whom the original revelation was handed down and propagated.

A good specimen of these *C'os abyuñ* is the one of the bKa' gdams pa: *bKa' gdams gsar rñin gi c'os abyuñ yid kyi mdses rgyan*, fol. 1-103. This is the history of the bKa' gdams pa, written by bSod nam grags pa, whom we already met, sometimes referred to by the fifth Dalai Lama in his chronicles and who is mentioned as the author of another historical work: *rGyal rabs ap'rul gyi lde mig*.<sup>246</sup> I have at my disposal the Potala reprint. Rather than a real history, it is a genealogy of the masters of the sect, beginning with Atiśa, and following its successive ramifications and further developments as far as Tsoñ k'a pa and his immediate

successors. The work, in its bare lists which hardly ever penetrate to the core of the doctrine or of events, has a prevailing chronological value, because for each master, or at least for the most noteworthy, are recorded the dates of birth and death, with references to other well ascertained dates or to the date of the composition of this work, written in the year earth-ox; this, according to the system of chronological correlation used by the author, corresponds to 1529, that is 475 years after Atiśa's death, which happened, according to his calculations, in the year wood-horse 1054, 466 years after the death of aBrom ston (water-hare 1063), 110 years after Tsoñ k'a pa's death, which happened in the year earth-boar, 1419. For this reason the book is complete and supplements the *Deb t'er sñon po*, while it adds more consistent information to the *Reu mig*'s schematic series. The importance of these chronicles is increased by the subsidiary information which the author collects; sometimes he recalls works written by the doctors he briefly mentions; at other times he gives a list of the monasteries they founded, ascertaining their date, finally he sometimes informs us of the number of disciples gathered by the masters in the hermitages or convents where they had retired to preach. For this reason, to those capable of gleaning from it, this work is a rich mine of information concerning Tibet's religious and monastic literature up to the XVIth century, and also concerning the sect's spread in the various Tibetan provinces. To quote an example, the references it contains to monasteries in Ladakh complete the Ladakh chronicles and very often afford chronological points of reference unknown to the latter. Naturally the character of this work does not lend itself to literary embellishments; the style is simple and proceeds without periphrases in its schematic narrative of events recorded with bare accuracy.

Besides this narrative, another one is known, included by Kloñ rdol bla ma in

the list of the historical works studied by novices, the *bKa' gdams c'os abyūñ* by Kun dga' rgyal mts'an of rTse t'an (vol. ra, p. 61).

The example of Buston, who although he was the greatest master of the *Ža lu pa* sect, cannot be dissociated from the *Sa skya pa*, was followed, as far as the *bKa' bgyud pa* are concerned, by Pad ma dkar po, who after having summarized the history of Buddhism in India, dwells at great length on the confluence of the several mystical schools and on the manifold interpretations of Tantric thought in that great sect which, descended from Tilopā and Nāropā, was diffused in Tibet and almost lifted up to a higher prestige by great ascetics like Mar pa, Milaraspa and sGam po pa. The character of this work is revealed, in the long part consecrated to Tibet, by the prevalence given over other currents to the *bKa' bgyud pa* and their subdivisions, particularly the *ḅBrug pa*, which the author belonged to.

The *Nor pa*, who are a variety of the *Sa skya pa* and take their name from a monastery situated in gTsañ, on the mountain road between sNar t'an and *Ža lu*, also had their *C'os abyūñ*. I allude to the *Dam pai c'os kyī abyūñ ts'ul legs bśad bstan pai rgya mts'or ajug pai gru c'en žes bya ba rtsom ap'ro k'a skoñ dan bcas* (pp. 1228). After a long research on the Law, on its characters and divisions, modelled on Buston, follows the history of Buddhism in India and in Tibet, beginning from Śākya-muni's life. Concerning whom, according to the standard of a double truth, absolute and relative, the Buddha is considered in his metaphysical essence and next in his manifestation as a being apparently subject to human vicissitudes. These are summed up, to consider next the developments of his preaching, the branching off of schools, the spread of the doctrine in Tibet, with useful chronological references. The work, as its title shows, is divided into two parts; the author of the first is dKon mc'og lhun grub abbot of *Nor* (born *me sbrul*, 1497, dead [*me*] *sbrul*, 1557),

probably the same as the author of a *Sa skya* Chronicle (see later, p. 155); the second is a supplement beginning on p. 129, and was written by Sañs rgyas p'un ts'ogs, who had it printed in the year *c'u spreu* (*añgira*). The fact that it records events contemporary with the fifth Dalai Lama, and the recognition of the latter as an incarnation of Padmapāni, show that the supplement is a late work, of the XVIIIth century.

But among the continuators of *gŽon nu dpal*, also known as rTse t'an pa or ḅGos lot-sāva, or *Yid bzañ rtse pa*, the one excelling all others and taking his inspiration from him is Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, who honoured him with the epithet of *lo rgyus smra ba kun gyi gtsug rgyan*, "diadem of all historians,, and alludes to him in the very title of his book.<sup>247</sup> The fifth Dalai Lama had wished to lift up to a greater literary dignity the writing of history, always dulled by the memory of bare and brief chronicles, over which an abundant network of hagiographic legends had been embroidered. For the first time Tibet had a continued narration, from the dynasties' mythical origins up to the author's times. And this history began with India because cultivated Lamaist tradition always took pains to find in the Buddha's country the beginnings of Tibetan civilization. But the myths of Buddhism, as they were set out in the *Abhidharma*, were united to those of Bon in a skilful harmony, which nevertheless does not succeed in hiding the different layers and the different origin of the legends thus heaped together. The period of the Kings offers Blo bzañ rgya mts'o an occasion of penetrating to the core of the reasons which impelled him to write this work, that is to follow Buddhism from its first progress at the hands of Indian apostles and Tibetan neophytes, up to the doctrine's decline, the prevalence of Bon po, the dynasty's downfall and the outbreak of anarchy. The Buddhist revival in the times of the second propagation coincided with the fortunes

of a new dynasty: the Kings of Guge, progeny of the ancient dynasty. Faith having been revived by Atiśa's, Rin c'en bzañ po's and Mar pa's preaching, the great monasteries were founded and the ancient nobility was restored, after both had been obliged to bow before the Mongols. Then the Yüan Empire fell and Tibet acquired a greater liberty thanks to Bzañ c'ub rgyal mts'an's bold initiative, but was troubled by interminable wars and rivalries between clans and convents. Over this anarchy prevailed, little by little, on one hand the dGe lugs pa and on the other the Kar ma pa, the latter supported by the rulers of gTsañ; Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, as the chief of the Yellow Sect, saw all that was good on his own side and all evil with the Red Caps; he therefore made the ambitions of the bSam agrub rtse princes responsible for the continual wars which covered Tibet with blood for several years. He does not say, however, that the Mongols were called in by the Yellow Sect to overcome its rivals. The book closes with the triumph of Gu śri Khan or C'os rgyal bstan ḍsin, who having restored order in Tibet with his troops, defeated and killed the ruler of gTsañ, secured the Yellow's lasting domination and, as we read in the colophon of his book, urged the Dalai Lama, as soon as the war was over, to write his chronicles. He imagines history as the preordained development of events which, since the fall of the kings, must fatally lead, through the P'ag mo gru pa's temporary attempt, to the new political unity, under whose protection not only men's minds should be at peace, but the Law should again be enforced in its entire purity. The period which goes from Glañ dar ma's fall to the foundation of the Dalai Lamate, under the vigilance of Gu śri Khan's Mongol armies, is an intermediate period, in which Tibet, troubled by anarchy and internal strife, laboriously sought a way out. This is the outline of that chronicle, the work of a well-informed person. Blo bzañ rgya mts'o had

access to all preceding chroniclers, he could draw his material from all the State and convent archives; he knew all the tales and legends. There was no branch of mysticism or dogmatics he had not treated, but we cannot deny that his historical culture, his knowledge of the biographies of the greatest figures of Lamaism, of myths and epic cycles on the glories of the greatest families, was prodigious, as can be easily seen by perusing the *rnam t'ars* he wrote. To compile his histories he used with intelligence, unfailing judgement and discriminating choice, the works of his predecessors, some of whom he often quotes or confutes: the *bKa' c'ems bka'* (or simply: *ka*) *k'ol ma*, the *Si tu rin po c'ei bka' c'ems*, the *Deb t'er sñon po*, the story of the C'os rje bSod noms grags pa (p. 79), the *T'sal pai deb t'er*, the *C'os abyun mig abyed 'od ston* by the spyan sña bSod noms rgyal mts'an (p. 83 b) the author of the *rGyal rabs*. And of course this list of the works employed is far from complete. He winnows his sources, discusses them and, when an occasion offers, he is quite capable of showing, with hardly-dissembled irony, his predecessors' failings and weak points, particularly in the case of bSod noms grags pa, whom he often confutes and disapproves. But as I have said, Blo bzañ rgya mts'o brought history to its complete form as a literary type according to the Tibetan conception: a pious narrative of the Law's alternate flower and decay, and of its developments, a compromise between spiritual forces and human ambition, between legend and reality, between political events and hagiographic glorification, which give these works a particular character, almost a continual wavering between what is certain and what is impossible. The tone of these narratives is ennobled by a style of sustained dignity, full of images; its sentences have an elegant construction, embellished by scholarly allusions. Blo bzañ rgya mts'o constantly uses "honorific" expressions, but he also introduces a quantity of colloquial terms. The

general effect is of stilted and intricate sentences, made even more difficult by words or meanings not registered in lexicons. The reader has the impression that the author loves to display his knowledge of the rules of rhetoric (*sñān nāg*) deeply studied since childhood in Daṇḍin's classical text and in the many commentators who since the Sa skya's and Buston's times had striven to make clearer the Indian rhetorician's celebrated handbook and to plumb its depths, for the benefit of Tibetan writers. It almost seems as if he avoided setting forth his ideas in the simplest manner; he delights in long sentences imitating the *campūkāvya*; as it is a rule in these, he inserts between every two chapters brief sections in verse, summing up and commenting upon what he has said. A comparison between this work and those preceding it, for instance the *rGyal rabs* or the *Deb t'er*, or even the *C'os abyūñ* by Buston, is enough to show how worried Blo bzañ rgya mts'o was with literature. He is undoubtedly careful of his statements, sets himself a thesis, as we have seen, and upholds it cleverly, with sound documents; he verifies his dates and when evidence for some fact is discordant or contradictory, he tries to throw light on the question and to reach conclusions that are certain. But at the same time he is much preoccupied with form: in him the rhetorician is yoked to the historian and sometimes the former prevails. At any rate, his work, precisely for this trait, was greatly appreciated in Tibetan cultivated circles and met with a warm response; not only his successors turned to him for inspiration, but they copied him freely, as we can see, for instance, in *Sum pa mk'an po* and in *aJigs med rig pai rdo rje*. In Tibet, and throughout the East in general, this habit of borrowing and copying is not considered plagiarism; it is rather a recognition that Blo bzañ rgya mts'o had reached so perfect a style and such sound information that it was not possible to differ from him. Later writers did

not hesitate to insert whole passages borrowed from him in their own writings, but they did so meaning to honour him and at the same time to give a solid foundation and authority to their words.

The books we have mentioned are limited to Tibetan Buddhism, or at least are particularly concerned with it. Of Indian Buddhism, its venerated source, they have little to say, just enough to enable their readers to understand Tibet's spiritual vicissitudes and to make clear its descent from the highest Indian masters. The only writers who had dwelt at length on Indian Buddhism and its evolution had been Buston and dKon mc'og lhun grub, but even they had not treated it independently. Buston had rather been interested in the doctrine's internal development, tracing once more the laborious paths through which the Buddhist canon had been formed, to show how the canon he had garnered in the bsTan agyur was authoritative and unassailable. Tāranātha of Jonañ, in 1608, set out, on the contrary, to expound only the history of Indian Buddhism in India and in the countries near India to which the Śākya saint's word came; the history of the councils, the branching off of sects, the figures of supreme masters he evokes, using the scattered pieces of information he has gleaned from canonical literature or among memories which have survived the passing of centuries, handed down by the schools as if to justify the validity of their teachings, and whose origin is to be found in the tradition of the great Indian universities. A great contribution was also given to his work by Indian masters, the last offshoots of dying Buddhism, who imparted to him narratives handed down in their schools. Precisely these references to oral tradition increase the prestige of Tāranātha's narrative. These traditions, it is true, do not in their integrity survive criticism, many are but tales and legends; but as our penury of information throws such a shadow of mystery over a large

proportion of the Buddhist schools, Tāra-nātha, by gathering and collecting those memories, has at least opened up some chinks, letting in light.

The *dPal mñam med ri bo dga' ldan pai bstan pai žva ser cod pan ač'añ bai riñ lugs čos t'ams cad kyi rtsa ba gsal bar byed pai vai đū rya ser po me loñ* is a very bulky book, occupying 319 pages of the Potala edition; one of the four *Vai đū rya* from the pen of the sDe srid Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o. According to its title, this book is a history of dGal' ldan, the celebrated convent founded in 1409.

It has an apologetic purpose, both as regards the sect and as regards the fifth Dalai Lama; the author proves in various manners that his advent had been announced in a long series of prophecies and *gter ma*. The lives of the dGa' ldan k'ri pas are briefly told, beginning from Tsoñ k'a pa up to the forty-second Blo bzañ don yod, and relating their main events; the same is repeated for the K'ri t'og of aBras spuñs and for Se ra.

He dealt with contemporary history, in which he had been one of the foremost actors, always recalling the names of the principal masters and disciples of the Lamas whose biographies he writes; he gives the years of birth and death, the year of ascent to the abbatial throne. He frequently quotes the principal works written by them and inserts interesting discussions, like the one on those points wherein Tsoñ k'a pa and the other schools differ.

Thus the author collects very important information on the spread of the Yellow Sect and on the monasteries which were gradually being founded. In fact this book is a sort of catalogue of the convents built by the sect or which it took possession of after its triumph. The writer's fame and the wealth of information thus collected, by gleaning most discerningly from earlier sources, explain why this book should still enjoy great authority, so that subsequent writers did nothing but copy it, like Sum pa mk'an po, for instance, whose chapters on the Yellow Sect are

nothing but a summary of this book. It closes with a long chronological index, designed to fix the date of its composition; thus complementing the table of equivalences contained in the *Vai đū rya dkar po* and made known by Csoma de Kőrös. The *Vai đū rya ser po*, so called as a homage to the Yellow Sect, was written eleven years later than the *dkar po* and fifteen years after the birth of the sixth Dalai Lama Ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'o. The same author dealt with the vicissitudes attending the fifth Dalai Lama's incarnation as Ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'o, and then with the latter's brief and eventful life, in two treatises which I have never seen, but which I find mentioned in Kloñ rdol bla ma (*bKa' gdams dañ dge lugs bla ma rags rim gyi gsuñ abum mts'an t'o*, vol. ra, p. 59). One of them is the biography of the sixth Dalai Lama: *rGyal ba ts'añs dbyañs rgya mts'oi rnam t'ar gser gyi sñe ma*, in fol. 19 and 5-13. The other should record how the fifth Dalai Lama became incarnated in his successor; *rGyal ba sku lña pa drug par ap'os bskor gyi gdam rna bai gcud len*, in fol. 110.

Now that we are speaking of Tibetan historiography, it is impossible not to mention the *dPag bsam ljon bzañ* by dPal aByor ye šes, better known by the name of Sum pa mk'an po; I admit it is a late work (the author was born in 1704<sup>248</sup>), but it was composed with a wise and discriminating choice of older sources. Sum pa mk'am po, who belonged to the dGe lugs pa school, also starts from an ancient model, which, more or less, was always before writers of *C'os aByuñ*, namely Buston's *C'os aByuñ*. Like this work, his book is divided into two parts, one treating of India and the other of Tibet. But this is saying too little, for the reader has the impression that he intended to write an encyclopedia, from which an idea could be had of the formation and spread of Buddhist thought. He begins with a description of the world, (like those to be found in treatises on Abhidharma), drawing from canonical works; he sums up the life of the Buddha and of the greatest

masters, he follows the doctrine, through the various branches of its schools, in India, in Central Asia, in Insulindia; he treats of arts and sciences, of logic and dogmatics, pointing out for each subject the main works; then in the second part he deals particularly with Tibetan Buddhism, from the first legends on the origin of man in the Country of Snows and from mythical genealogies, up to Sroñ btsan sgam po, the consolidation of Tibetan power and the afflux of masters from India. In this part he follows the fifth Dalai Lama very closely, as may be seen by comparing the sections dealing with the Sa skya pa, the P'ag mo gru pa and the families of their ministers, in both works. In several cases he copies his model literally, but he continues it up to 1742, relating the troubled events which brought Tibet under Chinese rule. This part, mainly historical, is followed by a narrative of the progressive spread of Buddhism under the Kings' rule, briefly outlined; in the following chapters Sum pa mk'an po dwells at length on the second period of Buddhist propaganda and on its main figures: Rin c'en bzañ po and Atiśa. Upon this background the author traces a brief summary of the principal Lamaist sects, then, through the biographies of ąBrom ston and Po to pa, he goes on to speak of the Rva greñs monastery. The book draws to its conclusion with Tsoñ k'a pa's biography; his preaching, the list of temples built during his lifetime or by his disciples, and biographies of the abbots and the greatest masters, based on the *Vai đū rya ser po*. The book closes with brief references to the P'a dam pa, the rÑiñ ma pa and a list of the principal translators. As may be seen, although the book is a rich encyclopedia, it is less organic than preceding works; due to the author's desire of accumulating information, that harmonious composition is missing which we had admired, for instance, in Buston, Tāranātha or Blo bzañ rgya mts'o. One notices faults of composition: passages

in which the sources used meet but do not blend nor stand out clearly. But the value of the book is precisely this: its purpose to be a *summa* of Tibetan historical traditions, in which chronicles and myths, saints' lives and cosmogonic legends, political changes and religious doctrines (*lugs gñis*) meet; in whose harmony the fortunes of the sacred doctrine renewed by Tsoñ k'a pa's preaching, become reality and are developed.

Among the latest, although diligent, compilers, we must include a celebrated lama, who in the XVIIIth century treated all subjects in a bulky *gSuñ ąbum*, almost an encyclopedia of Tibetan knowledge; I allude to Kloñ rdol bla ma (born in 1729) and his *bsTan pai sbyin bdag byuñ ts'ul gyi miñ gi grañs*, vol. 'a.<sup>249</sup>) He summarizes from the *rGyal rabs*, *gZon nu* and particularly the fifth Dalai Lama's chronicles, and outlines the main points of Tibetan history, reducing it, by an excess of condensation, to little more than a list of names, with hardly any reference to facts. As the fifth Dalai Lama had done, after treating of the Sa skya pa's power, he alludes to the rise and consolidation of P'ag mo gru pa power; then he traces genealogical tables of their ministers' families, who broke up Tibet's political unity. This book could bring no new contribution, but it has some value as an accurate summary of Tibetan events, reduced to their bare genealogical architecture.

Although it treats of the spread of Buddhism among the Mongols, the *Hor c'os ąbyuñ* by ąJigs med rig pai rdo rje (not Nam mk'a', as shown by G. Roerich), edited and translated by Huth, cannot be passed over. It is a late work, written in 1819,<sup>250</sup>) and as the title itself shows, it belongs to the traditional pattern of Tibetan historiography and takes as a model Blo bzañ rgyal mts'o's history from which he sometimes copies. The schematic genealogies of the first part are then succeeded by a treatment of the main theme, namely a record of spiritual contacts between Tibet and Mongolia; the latter is related to

Tibet as Tibet to India, when news of the sacred doctrine first reached it. This effort to cast light on the spiritual ties between Mongols and Tibetans, fully corresponding to the general character of Tibetan historiography, aims, as we have seen, only at religious events or political facts at the service of religion, but it often induces the author to forget the more violent contacts between the two peoples. He is silent, or makes only veiled allusions, concerning Mongol raids; like his predecessor, Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, he sees in Tsoñ k'a pa's reform and in his preaching the spiritual maturity of the Country of Snows and the accomplishment of its mission of civilizing the Mongols, preordained by the Buddha's mercy.

Our brief examination of Tibetan historical literature does not exhaust the subject; great additions to what we have said will be possible when Tibetan literature is better known and our collections of Tibetan books increased. Of course we shall have to turn our attention chiefly to the most ancient sources, whether they are documents or compilations, because as a rule later works simply copy one another; they become more authoritative as they approach the author's times and deal with subjects or relate events whose spectator or contemporary he has been. To show how much might be added to what we have said, I will quote some titles, of historical works, mentioned by Kloñ rdol bla ma or other later polygraphists. Kloñ rdol (*op. cit.*, ra, p. 61) mentions a *C'os abyuñ mk'as pai dga'ston*, by dPa' bo tsug lag; the *rGyal rabs gsal bai me loñ*, by bZu k'an pa Legs pai šes rab; the Lotsāva of mK'ar nag, some of whose biographies the fifth Dalai Lama made use of, as we shall see, was also the author of a *dGa' ldan c'os abyuñ*, also the title of another work by the Pan c'en bSod nams grags pa, the author of the bKa' gdams pa history. aJams dbyaṅs bzad pa, Kloñ rdol's master, also mentions a *sPyi c'os abyuñ* by aJa' mo.<sup>251</sup> On the other hand the *Reu mig*

record, for the first years of the XVth century, a treatise on the chronology of Buddhism by K'ri Rin c'en 'od pa (S. CH. DAS, p. 70), and little more than a century later the *C'os abyuñ* by Ša kya lha dba'i (*Ibid.*, p. 78).

When, towards the end of the XVIIIth century and in the XIXth century, contacts with Chinese culture became closer, particularly in the Far Eastern provinces of Tibet and in Mongolia, and a certain leaning towards erudition and encyclopedical learning was born also among the Tibetan people, summaries of Tibetan historiography were not lacking, as ancient works had by this time become rare. Such, for instance, is the *Deb t'er rgya mts'o* or better *Yul mdo smad kyi ljoṅs su t'ub bstan rin po c'e ji ltar dar bai ts'ul gsal bar brjod pa deb t'er rgya ts'o*, which places before the history of Amdo an *excursus* over Tibetan history in general. This work is known to me merely from a quotation in VOSTRIKOV'S *Critical remarks on the bibliography of Tibet*, pp. 58, 62.

## 2. BIOGRAPHIES AND EULOGIES OF MONASTERIES REFERRED TO IN THIS BOOK

After having spoken of historical works proper, we must now mention biographies (*rnam t'ar*). *rNam t'ar* much resemble the lives of saints widely circulated during our Middle Ages; they must be considered neither histories nor chronicles. The events they relate with a particular satisfaction are spiritual conquests, visions and ecstasies; they follow the long apprenticeship through which man becomes divine, they give lists of the texts upon which saints trained and disciplined their minds, for each lama they record the masters who opened up his spirit to serene visions, or caused the ambrosia of supreme revelations to rain down upon him. Human events have nothing to do with these

works, and how could they, being a vain flow of appearances in the motionless gleam of that void, never to be grasped, into which the experience of truth dissolves and annuls us? If earthly events, wars and strife are mentioned, it is nearly always because some saint influenced their course by his powerful formulas and exorcisms. Kings, princes and the great ones of this world have no place there, or they only appear as helpful and pious patrons. Every happening is thus seen in the light of spiritual triumphs. "A biography of the elect is either a series of their former births or, generally speaking, a narrative of their prodigious virtues on the three-fold plane, physical, verbal and spiritual, which surpass those of common people and, in particular, the method of purification in learning the sacred doctrine and reflecting and meditating upon it ..<sup>252)</sup>

All the rest is a shadow, but those who are capable of investigating can find in these shadows allusions, hints, names, sometimes even dates, which, being put together and throwing light one upon the other, illuminate the dark and still uncertain horizon of Tibetan history. These biographies become still more useful when they insert into their narrative fragments of chronicles, myths or pedigrees, lists of masters, itineraries, dates of the foundation of temples and monasteris. To recognize this is to admit that an historian cannot ignore the *rnam t'ar*. He must resign himself to read them, and go through hundreds of pages to find a point of reference, an allusion, an important piece of information; he must be resigned, I have said, because with the exception of a few lives, noble masterpieces breathing a fresh, serene and robust poetic spirit, as, for instance, Mila-raspa's, these *Legenda aurea* are mostly cast in the same mould, they follow the same models and walk on the same beaten track. In a literature founded on imitation, like that of Tibet, it is not surprising that these compositions should have taken shape with the

conscious purpose of continuing in the Country of Snows a literary *genre* largely cultivated by Buddhists and known as Avadāna or Jātaka. Avadāna, in reality, is the name of parables, or narrations of particular facts capable of elucidating by an example the statements of the sūtras; Jātaka are tales concerning episodes of the Buddha's past lives, but the two types are often blended, inasmuch as the leading figure is always the Buddha. These works may be either in prose like the *Avadānaśataka*, or in poetry like the *Avadānakalpalā* by Kṣemendra, of which we speak later. Hence these biographies are called not only *rnam t'ar*, but also *mñon brtogs*, which is the regular translation for Avadāna; sometimes they are also called *skyes rabs*, Jātaka, because the saint's life is followed in his past incarnations. The difference between Indian Avadāna and these *rnam t'ar* is immediately recognizable: the former relate a particular fact, the latter follow a person's life from birth to death. But in their composition these *rnam t'ar* imitate above all the Buddha's most celebrated lives. To quote an instance: in Indian works the Bodhisattva's descent upon earth is preceded by a fourfold consideration, on his part, of the time, continent place and family in which he shall become incarnate; in these Tibetan *rnam t'ar* also, with a greater or lesser wealth of detail, according to the authors' learning and literary gifts, the circumstances of time in which the saint was born are defined; speaking of the place, very often one meets with a description of the four continents, according to Buddhist cosmology and the well known formulary of the *Abhidharmakośa*; the author then goes on to speak in detail of Tibet and of the particular region in which his hero was born; next, after having explained how the Country of Snows was populated, a list is given of the six, or four, or eighteen tribes in which the Tibetans were divided at the dawn of their history, to connect one of the tribes with the eulogized saint's family. Then the dreams are related, announcing his conception

or his birth, his long apprenticeship as a student and his visions, without neglecting, if an occasion offers, to penetrate into the winding maze of esoteric liturgies or to expound the intricate catalogues of ascetic literature, because according to a rule repeated several times by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, the authors of these biographies do not aim at fame and reputation as writers, but wish to stimulate faith in those who do not possess it and to strengthen it where it is weak and wavering.<sup>253)</sup> This would be a most praiseworthy intention, if precisely in the fifth Dalai Lama's case it was not nullified by a stilted and precious style. As to their formal architecture, the *rnam t'ar* show an endless variety, according to their author and to the public for which they were written; some are plain and simple, written in the spoken language of the people, for the edification of pilgrims; others like those by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, are polished, pretentious, composed according to the most rigid rules of rhetoric. In this case the structure of the narrative, whether in poetry or prose, follows the model of the *Kāvyaśāstra*, I, pp. 14-15: "A union of chapters (*sargabandha*) is called "great poem", whose characteristics are described as follows: invocation, prayer, or summary indication of the subject, form the foreword. It is either derived from the tales proper to the *itihāsa*, or based on some actual fact; it speaks of the spiritual benefits accruing from the fourfold purpose of life: the Law, pleasure, utility and liberation ..."

As a whole, we cannot say that the *rnam t'ar* communicate a lifelike impression of the personality they deal with. In almost every case, personality recedes before a type, it is overruled by some given pattern: the saint, scholar or ascetic are seen in the abstract, not as this or that saint, scholar or ascetic. It is a monastic and edifying literature, the light of human passion hardly ever shines upon it. No spiritual strife ever transpires, and this is natural, since these saints gather the

fruits of good works performed in former existences; that present life, whose events are told, is but the crown of experiences of virtue covering thousands of years; it represents a sanctity already achieved, not a painful struggle to achieve it.

The relation between wars and miracles, military levies and liturgy, however strange it may seem to us, can be explained from the Tibetan point of view; they think that no event can escape the power of a rite wisely performed or of a formula uttered at the right time by the mystic, in a zealous and collected spirit, as he guides the liturgical drama, attracting or conquering secret forces. The Tibetans have always believed that wars are won not so much by the force of arms and the leaders' gallantry, as through the mastery of miracles-workers, whose services the rivals have been able to secure. When war looms large on their horizon, Tibetan princes, before they hire capable generals, strive to obtain the good graces of wise lamas, to perform the exorcisms which ensure victory. Hence it is not surprising that in the midst of so many esoteric subtleties and celebrations of prodigies, the *rnam t'ar* should contain occasional references to historical events which otherwise would not have come down to us.

Further, Tibet has in common with India the urge to accomplish pilgrimages to sacred spots; the *Tirthayātrā*, which is in India a duty for pious persons, has its Tibetan counterpart, the *gnas skor*. From lamas to merchants, from noblemen to leaders of caravans, there is nobody but has visited the famous places of religious tradition; neither, do they think there is a corner of the earth unhallowed by the divine presence, in its three aspects: physical, verbal and spiritual, (*sku*, *gsuñs*, *t'ugs*). Tibetan soil is like a material container into which the vicissitudes of the Law unfold; it receives the masters' relics, it harbours on the inviolate peaks of its mountains mysterious powers; it feeds, in temples built by man, the lamp of doctrine;

it conceals in its inmost recesses the books hidden by ancient seers, that they might enlighten future generations. Buddhism has imagined the revelation of truth as a thunderbolt, flashing from one point to another amid the darkness of *māyā*; those who have had the good fortune to be born as men, should not lose any occasion of purifying their spirit, they should not neglect any contact capable of making them sensitive to the voice of truth and thus more consciously preparing them for supreme renouncement. Hence visits to sacred places are a necessary discipline, an edification of the spirit which cuts men off from life's allurements. Precisely for these reasons the *ṃam t'ar* dwell on pilgrimages performed by saints in their earthly life, and often contain real itineraries, which are very important for the reconstruction of Tibet's historical geography, and to ascertain which places were most popular in different epochs, thus gaining an idea of the sects' insecure fortunes.

As an important source of historical information, we must also mention the *dkar c'ag*, guides or eulogies of monasteries, written for the use of visitors and pilgrims. These also are of varying length and importance, according to the greater or lesser fame of the locality they describe. Some are bare and unassuming, containing little more than formulas, invocations and prayers, while others go into details, follow the vicissitudes of holy places through the centuries, relate the lives of abbots and ascetics with fulsome prolixity, and furnish lists of kings and patrons. Legends and historical traditions are blended together, as in the *C'os abyuñ*, among which these eulogies can actually be included. For what are they if not a record of the flowering of divine grace in some particular place and of the light of spiritual uplift irradiating from it, fostered and comforted by the faith of powerful men? Round the kings' and princes' genealogies unfold accounts of the fortunes of temples, of how they acquired honour and

were decorated with works of art. For this reason eulogies are worth studying; it is possible to discover therein many local traditions, which we would look for in vain in works of a general character. Moreover, sometimes they do not simply deal with one monastery, but speak of a whole region and of its memories, like the *Myañ c'uñ*. I have mentioned this work in a preceding book, and it would be out of place to go back to it; but it is nevertheless necessary to complete what I said at that time, pointing out that it represents a glorification of gTsañ, as regards the Law, the only light shining for created beings in the Buddhist world. And it is a glorification of gTsañ against dBus, made in a period when the two regions, one gathering round the rulers of bSam aṅrub rtse and the other round the nascent Yellow Sect, thought they were fighting to gain an independence or a political supremacy founded on the memory of ancient traditions, while they were actually preparing their joint subjection to a sect, and through that sect to foreign domination. But most of the eulogies, if not all I know, confine themselves to the glorification of one single place of pilgrimage, telling its story and giving a list of its works of art. This, for instance is the case with gNas rñiñ's eulogy, which I mentioned in a preceding volume, and the eulogies of gNas gsar, Ža lu, Sa skya, Lhasa, bKra šis lhun po, which are also good guides for art history and Lamaist iconography. From a literary point of view one cannot say that these works, meant to furnish easy reading-matter to a varied and hardly ever cultivated public, always display an elaborate style and composition. On the contrary they are written in plain language, without excessive literary embellishments, and they show that their authors were anxious to put no difficulties in the way of the crowds of pilgrims who read them, or rather heard them read, while approaching the holy places with growing awe and ecstatic devotion. They are generally

in prose, but in some cases, as with the *rnam t'ar*, poetry is inserted into the prose; this must have been the case with one of the most ancient and authoritative *dkar c'ag* of Tibetan literature, recorded among the sources of the *rGyal rabs*, namely the *Ka ts'igs c'en po*,<sup>254)</sup> from which, very probably, bSod nams rgyal mts'an took his chronicle of the foundation of the Mi agyur lhun grub lha k'añ of bSam yas.<sup>255)</sup>

After this foreword, meant as a general orientation, I shall now deal in detail with the main biographical works or the guides to monasteries, which I have consulted or which in some manner interpret events and persons belonging to the period which is the object of the present research. As to the others, where the historical part is missing or extremely scarce, or from which no concrete fact can be gleaned, they have been referred to in the chapter on literature in general when they were written by authors dealt with in that section. In a word, my list is simply a small sample, limited to the period and the region I am interested in, of a literary genus seemingly boundless, since each monastery possesses biographies of its founders, its abbots, those who dwelt there and increased its prestige, or guides and eulogies. Other works I have briefly mentioned in my preceding works.

I shall begin with the Sa skya chronicles and eulogies, as my book began with this monastery.

The Sa skya pa chronicles are many, but only one of them is now accessible to me, which being printed in Sa skya is destined to a wide distribution. I should rather say it *was* destined, for it seems that the blocks of the woodcuts are now worn out to the point that it is not possible to print legible copies from them. When I stopped in Sa skya for about a month in 1939, I could only find, with difficulty, two copies. This genealogy, *gdun rabs*, of the Saskya clan, written on the model of biographies of the Great Lamas or abbots of monasteries, is entitled:

*aDsam gliñ byañ p'yogs kyi t'ub pai rgyal ts'ab c'en po dpal ldan sa skya pai gdun rāb* (for *rabs*) *rin po c'e ji ltar byon pai ts'ul gyi rnam par t'ar pa ño mts'ar rin po c'ei bañ mdsod dgos adod kun abyūñ*. It is a bulky work in 265 pages, printed as I said in Sa skya; the author is a Sa skya pa lama called snags ac'añ ñag dbañ Kun dga' bsod nams grags pa rgyal mts'an, and he is precisely the last abbot mentioned in the lists, both of those same chronicles and of the fifth Dalai Lama. It is not difficult to establish the date of its composition with absolute certainty, because the author himself has put it in the colophon of the book (p. 264); the year 3762 of the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, 558 from the foundation of the Sa skya monastery and 361 from the foundation of the Lha k'añ c'en mo. Leaving aside the first date, which may be subject to controversy (see for instance CSOMA'S *Grammar*, p. 199) and the third, known only by approximation, the other is well known. Sa skya was founded, as we have seen in *Indo-Tibetica*, in the year water-ox, 1073; from this we desume, according to the usual Tibetan manner of calculating (which, like the Chinese, takes into account both the year started from and the one arrived at), that this work was written in 1630. Naturally we must not believe Kun dga' bsod nams grags pa to have been the first author to attempt a history of the Sa skya family; before him genealogies and biographies of the principal Lamas of the sect existed, from which he drew material for his compilation; and in fact, both in the colophon and in the course of his book, every time an opportunity offers and some moot point has to be cleared up, he quotes his sources, compares them and chooses the one which seems best in the light of criticism. One work above others he follows closely, drawing from it the plan of his book and quoting its verses diffusely, then declaring their subject. This work, known also to the fifth Dalai Lama, who in some points seems to depart

from it, is the: *Sa skya gduñ rab* (sic) *ya rab k'a rgyan*, by mKa's pai dbañ po dKon mc'og lhun grub, who was little more than two generations earlier than Kun dga' bsod nams grags pa (see above p. 145); his work was studied by Blo gros rgyal mts'an, the last Lama but one of the Dus mc'od's clan (p. 238). But these are not the only historical works of the Sa skya. We often find quoted, as being extremely authoritative, the *gDun rabs* by the Dam pa Kun dga' grags, and the history written by a direct disciple of bSod nams rgyal mts'an (p. 111 b) viz. Šes rab rdo rje, and the one by gTsañ byams pa rDo rje rgyal mts'an (also called *Mus srañ pa*, p. 111 b, p. 116 b) and that of the C'os rje Ni lde pa Nam mk'a' bzañ po (*passim*) and finally the one by the Lotsāva of sTag ts'añ Šes rab rin c'en referred to above (p. 134). These works were based not only on oral traditions and those legends which always bloom round the lives of great masters and abbots, but also on the abundant documents preserved in the Sa skya pa archives and which become more and more rich and accurate as one goes back to the times of the sect's greatest prosperity and power. In Sa skya a small court had existed, with its chancellors (*dpon yig*) and other officials; frequent contacts with China had induced them to preserve with care their political documents. It is in fact surprising, to quote an example, that while the dates of early times, often confirmed by Chinese sources, are very accurate, in the case of the last abbots the cyclical years of their births and deaths are very often missing. The sect having become impoverished, and the officials charged with the record of events being fewer or less diligent, facts were committed to memory or to oral tradition, much less dependable. Anyhow, these genealogies furnish us with an outline of the Sa skya clan, from its earliest splendour to its last languishing period. If we put aside miraculous events, prophecies, tales of the abbots' spiritual education, true historical facts are reduced

to a minimum. We must discover them, almost guess them, here and there, hidden in a wilderness of pious tales; nevertheless these chronicles give us a complete list of familiar genealogies, which is like a chronological outline into which the narratives of events are collected and arranged.

On the base of this outline I have been able to reconstruct the pedigree of the Sa skya abbots, from the foundation of their convents to the epoch of the compiler of these same chronicles, thus covering a period of about six centuries. This list is naturally more valuable than that of the fifth Dalai Lama, who did not dispose of the documents and sources which Kun dga' bsod nams grags pa could use; it has the advantage, over the one published in *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. IV, part I, p. 72, of being based on the sect's own works and of coming up to the beginning of the XVIIth century; moreover it shows the division of the family into four main groups, taking their names from the palaces where they resided. As to style, there is nothing particular about it, the book is in prose, but each new subject, for instance the genealogy of the single branches into which the family split up, is introduced by a section in verse, which briefly sums it up (*dañ po la yañ ts'ig bead kyi sgo nas mñor bstan pa*), often desumed from the author's predecessor dKon mc'og lhun grub; a detailed narrative of events follows (*gñis pa dei don rgyas par bñad pa*). According to the customs of hagiographic writers, the author dwells on certain events, like the masters' visions or mystical experiences, corroborating them with quotations of prophecies referred by tradition to those events. The narrative is generally dry, with no wealth of similes or an excessively gaudy style. The author displays great accuracy as to dates, which are painstakingly sifted when his predecessors differ.

*Srid pa gsum gyi bla ma dpal sa skya pa c'en po sñags ač'añ ñag gi dbañ po kun dga' rin c'en gyi rnam par t'ar ño mts'ar rgya mts'o*, fol. 204.

As we can read in the colophon, p. 203, this work was written by the same T'eg pa mc'og gi rnal abyor pa snaḡs ač'añ ñaḡ dbañ Kun dḡa' bsod nams grags pa rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po, a direct disciple of Kun dḡa' rin c'en, of dKon mc'og rgyal mts'an from rDor dkar and of C'os rgyal mts'an from dKon k'añ in the year *rnam aḡyuiñ, vibhava*, earth-dragon 1628.

The book is very important, because not only does it contain ample references to historical events, but it provides information on the great work of reconstruction undertaken by this Sa skya pa abbot, who after the ravages and fires of war, began to rebuild and restore temples and monasteries, precisely the same we admire in Sa skya today. Thus this biography completes the guide to Sa skya, whose legends and descriptions are recited by heart even today to pious visitors by the lamas of that convent, and still attributed to Kun dḡa' rin c'en (1517-1584).

The vicissitudes in which Kun dḡa' rin c'en took part in the first period of his life were so stormy, Central Tibet was then shaken by war disturbances to such an extent, that the narrative of struggles in which Sa skya was implied and whose victim it inevitably became, prevail in many passages. Hence this biography can be placed among the most remarkable historical sources for the age in which Kun dḡa' rin c'en lived.

The book is written unpretentiously enough and the reader does not meet with particular difficulties, except for some idiomatic sentences, evidently borrowed from the spoken language.

*gDan sa c'en po dpal ldan sa skyai gtsug lag k'añ dai rten gsum gi dkar c'ag*, foll. 1-92, manuscript. This is a guide to the Sa skya temples and the implements pertaining to the cult which they contain, recommended to the visitors' attention; a eulogy for the use of pilgrims flocking from every part of Tibet to this place, sacred to Tibetan religious tradition. According to the colophon, the

author should be precisely Kun dḡa' rin c'en, mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The book displays no extraordinary merits as to style; it is a summary description of the chapels, temples and monasteries, but the construction and chief vicissitudes of every building are recorded, giving a list of the books, statues, sacred objects, which make each place particularly venerable. For this reason the eulogy is extremely helpful as an instrument of work, in order to gain a detailed idea of Sa skya pa traditions on the treasures of their churches. In many cases these legends, indiscriminately accepted, would lead the reader astray; at other times they echo traditions deserving to be carefully looked into.

Beginning from the XVIth century, Sa skya did not undergo great vicissitudes, therefore the present guide mirrors a state of affairs which has not changed much for at least three centuries. Although hatred between sects did not spare holy places, many statues and particularly venerated objects were saved from ruin in various manners, so that, as we shall see better in the following chapter Sa skya still keeps many ancient relics, Indian, Chinese or Tibetan, worthy of a scholar's deep attention.

*K'ams gsum gyi adren pa dam pa grub pa mc'og gi ded dpon aḡam pai dbyaḡs bsod nams dbañ poi rnam par t'ar bcud kyī t'igs p'rin rab tu aḡ'el bai dḡos adod aḡyuiñ bai c'u gter*, pp. 1-50.

This is a biography of aJam pai dbyaḡs pa dpal ñaḡ dbañ bSod nams dbañ po grags pa rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po (1559-1621), the son of Kun dḡa' rin c'en, written by sNags ač'añ ñaḡ dbañ Kun dḡa' bsod nams, his disciple (*de ñid žabs rdul spyi bos len*). This work has not the same historical value as his father's biography, from which we have been able to gather valuable information on political events in the gTsañ region. The author is intent on glorifying this Sa skya abbot, who enjoyed great prestige as a miracle-worker and teacher of esoteric liturgies. Divine powers obeyed his command; when he went to bSam yas,

invited by the C'os skyon of the Mi gyur lhun grub lha k'añ, considered as an embodiment of Pe dkar, he recognized Padmambhava's mask, and was therefore greeted as an incarnation of this master, thus sealing that close union between the Sa skya pa and bSam yas which had begun with his father and was destined to last for centuries. As was to be expected in the life of a miracle-worker, the narrative is enlivened with portents and miraculous events; but this transcendent aura is nevertheless pierced by echoes of earthly life; thus here and there the simple, bare pages of this biography briefly throw some light on the political events of those times, clearly showing the close cooperation between the Sa skya pa and the new princes of bSam agrub rtse, destined to become, in a few years' time, rulers of gTsañ. As I said, the book has no particular merits of style; it is a plain narrative, without any literary ornaments.

*rGyal ba rdo rje ac'añ kun dga' bzañ poi rnam par t'ar pa legs bśad c'u bo adus pai rgya mts'o yontan yid bzin nor bui abyun gnas*, pp. 1-66. This is the biography of the founder of N'or and of the sect which took its name from that monastery (if this branch of the Sa skya pa, undistinguished by any doctrinal peculiarity, deserves to be called a sect). The biography was written by dPal ldan don grub in the monastery of Evaṃ (another name for N'or), built by that same Lama in the year 1429, that is when he was 36, having been born in the year water-dog, 1394. The biography contains no reference to historical facts, and this was to be expected, for Kun dga' bzañ po was simply a scholar and an ascetic, hardly touched by political events. So that his *rnam t'ar* breathes a serene religious atmosphere, untroubled by human interests; a survey is made of his studies, a list is given of the works on which he meditated or wrote, the names of his masters are recorded. He perfected his studies in Sa skya, as it was natural, but he also met Tsoñ ka pa, from whose very voice

he heard the *Lam rim c'en mo*. The story of how Evaṃ monastery was built and the description of the statues placed there or of the pictures he caused to be painted on the walls, occupies a large part of the book, whose interest is increased by its records, not only of Tibetan artists but also of a squad of Nepalese artists, called in to decorate the temples.

This master's fame spread widely in Western Tibet, Guge and Mar yul, and the extremely close relations between the N'or sect and certain monasteries of Western Tibet, like Kojarnath (*K'a c'ar*), go back to his times.

We may add to these works on the Sa skya pa sect the *De bzin gšegs pa t'ams cad kyi bgrod pa gcig pai lam c'en gsun nag rin po c'ei bla ma brgyud pa rnam t'ar*, a bulky collection of lives of the principal lamas of the Sa skya pa; it begins with the founder of the sect; the biography of Sa c'en is written by Rin c'en dpal, one of his pupils, that of aP'ags pa by Ye šes rgyal mts'an, that of bla ma dam pa bSod nams by dPal ldan ts'ul k'rims, one of his pupils; then the lives are given of other personalities of the sect even if they were invested with no abbatial throne; the biographies of the N'or abbots follow and those of many other lamas. Though the interest of the writers centers on the spiritual side of their personality, the collection occasionally contains chronological and historical references deserving notice. The collection has been arranged and in its largest part written down in verses by Ts'ul k'rims rin c'en and has been printed in sDe dge in three big volumes.

I am not in a condition to say when the author of this collection lived but he is certainly late; this work is to be mentioned only because it includes older biographies or refers to personages with whom we have dealt in these pages.

The bKa' brgyud counterpart of this collection is the *dKar brgyud gyi p'reñ* containing the biographies of the leading masters and ascetics of the bKa' brgyud sect. My copy contains Chapters *Ka Ji* but I have seen a

larger one. It is composed of biographies of various length, written by different authors and therefore belonging to various times.

They are generally centered on the mystic side of the personage but cannot be ignored by the student of the history of Tibetan sects. The collection was printed in sPuñs t'añ in Bhutan by order of Mi dbañ bSod nams stobs ldan.

*rGyal ba rgod ts'añ pa mgon po rdo rjei rnam t'ar mt'oñ ba don ldan nor bui p'reñ ba.* Manuscript with miniatures, pp. 1-190.

It contains a biography of the famous ascetic bKa' brgyud pa, rGod ts'añ pa mgon po rdo rje of the C'u beal clan (*sa-byi*, 1189-*sa rta*, 1258, DT, ña, p. 121), master in his turn of another great personality of Tibetan esoterism, U rgyan pa, of whom we shall speak next.<sup>256)</sup> The *rnam t'ar* is a compilation by Sañs rgyas dar po who, as we read in the colophon, took the material for his narrative from the works written on the master by many of his predecessors. Among them he quotes the *gNad gtus sgron me* and the *Mya ñan adas c'uñ* of dBañ p'yug rgyal mts'an, the *dGos adod kun abyuñ* of Byañ c'ub 'od, the *K'yad ap'ags bdun ma* of Šes rab gžon nu, the *Yon tan sgo byed* of Lha btsun dSod nams 'od, the *rnam t'ar* written by mK'a' spyod dbañ po and the one by bDe can rdo rje. I cannot say when the author of this compilation lived, but it would be very difficult to place him in an age outside the chronological limits I have set to this book.

The biography, like nearly all those of bK'a' brgyud pa ascetics, contains alternative sections in prose and verse. The narrative of events proper is in prose, while in the *mgur* or mystical songs the saint speaks of his experiences and raptures; they often allude to the mysteries of the Haṭhayoga and to the most secret "diamond doctrines". Hence this work is at the same time a biography and a poetic anthology of the great ascetic, and there is no reason to doubt that these songs, very often impersonal and

deeply doctrinal, are his own genuine compositions. No wonder that in the biography of a bKa' brgyud pa ascetic tales of visions, portents, dreams and mystical experiences should take precedence; nevertheless there are also some quite remarkable pages, like those describing rGod ts'añ pa's journey to Jalandhara, which I have translated elsewhere;<sup>257)</sup> the places visited are mentioned accurately and in a lively manner. Information regarding Tibet is scarce, although rGod ts'añ pa lived in one of the most important periods of Tibetan history. He saw his country invaded and was a witness to the rise and growth of Sa skya pa theocracy; but of all the vicissitudes which shook the Country of Snows in his lifetime, not a trace is to be found, except the Be ri invasion and the struggle against the Hor (p. 103).

*Grub c'en rin po c'e u ryan pai rnam t'ar no mts'ar rgya mts'o*, a manuscript of 1-59 pages, copied from a manuscript existing in Hemis monastery. This is a biography of rGod ts'añ pa's most celebrated disciple, who owes his name to a famous journey he took to the country of U rgyan, namely to Uḍḍiyāna, or the upper Swat valley (*lcags stag*, 1230-*sa bya*, 1309, DT, ña, pp. 129-132). I have already pointed out the importance of this *rnam t'ar*, and I have dealt with it in a small volume: *Travels of Tibetan pilgrims in the Swat Valley*, which was being printed by the Greater India Society in Calcutta when the war broke out.<sup>258)</sup> In this pamphlet I have studied mainly the itinerary of U rgyan pa in India and Afghanistan, adding extracts from rGod ts'añ pa's biography, concerning his journey to Kulu, Chambha and Jalandhara, and the itinerary followed later by another master of the same esoteric school, sTag ts'añ ras pa, the founder of Hemis monastery. The importance of U rgyan pa's biography consists in the fact that it seems to have been written by a disciple called rGyal śri, very close to the great ascetic, and contains many passages written in the first person, particularly

those in poetry, which are the work of U rgyan pa himself; the style of this biography shows that it was not inspired by the least literary ambition; it was written in the colloquial language, with expressions and sentences taken from current usage. The historical references are remarkable as regards parts of India and Swat, poorer for Tibet proper, and this is not to be wondered at, because while the journey into the Swat valley in search of miraculous encounters with the Dākinī in Padmasambhava's sacred soil was considered a prodigy of his ascetic virtues, his abode in Tibet is interesting for his biographer only on account of the experiences and graces he partook of. Nevertheless, not a few pieces of information are valuable: the narrative of the journey to Bodh-Gayā, where King Ram śiñ (in Pad ma dkar po: Rāma-pāla) reigned and where he built a mc'od rten, the story of friction between Tibetans and Nepalese, caused by the tolls exacted by the latter on their frontier, and particularly the account of his visit to Qubilai's court. The page describing his meeting with this Emperor deserves to be translated, to give an idea of the style of this book, p. 43.

"When he arrived at a day's journey from the Śaṅ do<sup>259</sup> palace, many personalities came to meet him, one after the other, then, while the other masters were given beds and were included in the list of those who would be admitted to a visit in a few days, an imperial order came that he should go to his Palace without using a horse. He made himself invisible to the keepers of the door, who were sTag gzig (Persians). Having happily entered, he came into the king's presence. The king had been sitting on a golden throne, but he placed himself on a small seat; the ascetic, speaking to him in Sanskrit, offered him blessed water with the formula of Ts'e dpag med (Ts'e c'u). Although the others did not sit down unless the king ordered them to, he, in the middle of his speech, saying "I have a pain in my loins,, , sat

down. The king was pleased, and the courtiers, wondering, began to laugh ... The Emperor said to him: "It is not right that you should have the title of *gser yig pa* (a civil officer, a man invested with a duty and possessing the imperial diploma); I will call you my *bla ma* ,, , and so he gave him the rock-crystal seal, with the title of *bla ma c'os kyi rgyal po* ,, ,

*rJe btsun aḅar ra pa rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ poi rnam t'ar mgur bum dañ bcas* is the biography of a famous bKa' brgyud pa master (*lcags k'yi*, 1310 - *lcags lug*, 1391, DT, *ñā*, pp. 127, 6). It contains, as the title says, a series of mystical songs, according to the custom of this sect; but between one song and another brief historical notices occasionally appear, as was to be expected in the biography of a person who lived in a far from peaceful period. We find in it, for instance, allusions to the war between dBus and gTsañ, to the siege of the Sa skya Lha k'añ c'en mo by the dPon c'en rGyal bzañ, to the conquest by dBus troops of the territory East of C'u mig, to rDo rje rgyal mts'an's appointment as K'ri dpon of C'u mig, to the conquest of sTag rdsoñ by the dBus troops, etc.

*rJe btsun bla ma tsoñ k'a pa c'en poi ño mts'ar rmad du byuñ bai rnam par t'ar dad pai ajug dogs*, pp. 1-70.

It is a biography of Tsoñ k'a pa, inserted in vol. *ka* of his complete works; it was written by dGe legs dpal bzañ po in Ñañ stod. It sums up accurately the main events in the great master's life, without that luxuriant growth of legends or that dogmatic subtlety which, increasing the bulk of the other *rnam t'ar*, diminishes their historical value. In its brevity it is not silent concerning the most remarkable happenings of Tsoñ k'a pa's spiritual training, and therefore casts much light on the schools from which he drew his most effective and lasting inspirations: from the aBri gun pa to the P'ag mo gru pa, from dBu ma pa brTsoñ grus señ ge and from Kun dga' rgyal mts'an, the abbot of sNar t'añ, his masters for the Mādhyamika system,

to gZon nu blo gros (Kumāramati) of Re mda', one of the greatest figures of the Tibetan renaissance, of Sa skya pa formation, and undoubtedly the lama who, as we saw, greatly influenced Tsoñ k'a pa, and finally to Blo gsal at whose school he deeply studied the Vinaya. His benefactors and protectors are surveyed, beginning from the P'ag mo gru pa Grags pa rgyal mts'an, up to the princes of 'Ol k'a and to the dPon Nam mk'a' bzañ po, who furnished means for the reconstruction or the embellishment of the rDsiñ p'yi (or: ji) temple. There is also a record of the Chinese embassy which in 1414 vainly invited him to come to China, and which is perhaps the same one mentioned in the Gyantse chronicles.<sup>260</sup> Altogether the book is an outline of facts which, having been collected a short time after the master's death by people belonging to his circle, has a remarkable value as a point of departure, from which later biographers started.

mK'as grub t'ams cad mk'yen pai rnam t'ar mk'as pai yid ap'rog, pp. 1-14, included in the vol. ka of mK'as grub rje's works.

This is a biography, or rather the scheme of a biography, written by his disciple bDe legs; as it is very concise, a vast amount of information cannot be expected. After his preceding incarnations, among which are mentioned, for instance, those as Subhūti, Abhayākara Gupta and the Lotsāva of aGos, the biography deals with his birth in P'o brañ dkar po, in La stod byañ, and of his first studies in Sa skya and Nam riñ, where he met the P'an c'en of Po don aJigs bral p'yogs las rnam rgyal. Having completed his instruction with Re mda' pa, he went, being already an adult, to gTsañ, where he assisted the c'os rgyal of rGyal rtse Rab brtan kun bzañ in the construction of the dPal ak'or lo bde c'en. After this comes the narrative of his retirement in the monastery of Ri bo mdañ in gTsañ, of his meeting with rGyal ts'ab and of his subsequent contacts with aBras spuñs and dGe' ldan, until, already

advanced in his studies, he finally entered Tsoñ k'a pa's service.

K'yab bdag rje btsun bla ma dam pa t'ub dbañ rdo rje ac'an dan ño bo dbyer med mc'is pa aJam mgon c'os kyi rgyal po tsoñ k'a pa c'en poi rnam par t'ar t'ub bstan mdses pai rgyan gcig ño mts'ar nor bui ap'reñ ba, pp. 1-376.

This is a bulky biography of Tsoñ k'a pa, written by Blo bzañ p'rin las rnam rgyal in the year wood-serpent. It is difficult to tell the corresponding date, but the fact that the author quotes (e. g. p. 165 b) the fifth Dalai Lama, shows that he cannot be earlier than the XVIIth century (for further datation cfr. part III, p. 417 f.). Naturally the biography has been compiled using many authors who had previously treated the same subject. Without going into details concerning his sources, it will be well to recall that he quotes, among other works, the dGa' ldan c'os aByuñ, the rJe gsañ bai rnam t'ar by mK'as grub rje, Tsoñ k'a pa's biography by Roñ pa C'os grags rgya mts'o, those by the Lotsāva of mK'ar nag, Ni ma bstan pai rgyal mts'an, Kun gzigs Ye šes kyi ñi ma, Kun dga' legs rin c'en dpal, aJam dbyañs c'os rje bKra šis dpal ldan and the rNam t'ar of mK'as grub written by mK'as pai dpa' bo C'os ldan rab aByor.<sup>261</sup> Great historical accuracy cannot be expected from this work, composed at a great distance of time from the great reformer, when the dGe lugs pa, through the Dalai Lamate, already ruled unopposed throughout Tibet. Tsoñ k'a pa's legend had already taken shape: Tsoñ k'a pa appeared as a second Buddha (rgyal ba gñis pa), as Padmasambhava; every event recorded concerning him had to lose its earthly and human characters, to assume divine proportions for a Buddha; the author does not confine himself to his last incarnation, in the land of Amdo: he goes back to his past life, when in India, in Śākyamuni's times, Tsoñ k'a pa took the vow of achieving supreme enlightenment up to his last birth on Tibetan soil. When the dGe lugs pa state that their

master was a second Buddha, they encounter the hostility of opposing schools, especially of the rÑiñ ma pa: the epithet belongs only to Padmasambhava, the earthly apparition of supreme truth, transcending every determination of time. If Tsoñ k'a pa had been what the dGe lugs pa claim, a record would be preserved in the prophecies, in the *gTer ma* where future events are foreseen and revealed; it was not possible that the tidings of a great apostle of holy truth should be passed over in silence. This explains why the author of the present biography takes up many pages to show that Tsoñ k'a pa's advent had been foreseen and announced. The dGe lugs pa found in the *rGyal poi bka' t'añ*, p. 90 b, the following prophecies:

"In the sPrul snañ temple, with his pure vow (*smon lam dag pas*), a bodhisattva will accomplish the good of created beings,,"

In this passage they saw a prophecy of the sMon lam c'en po feast, instituted by Tsoñ k'a pa. And in the *Pad ma t'añ yig* they found another allusion:

"In the holy dGa' ldan monastery, a person will appear called Blo and bzañ, his initiatic name will be: Rab rdo rje bde ba, he will be highest among the learned and learned himself in the Sūtras and Tantras; he, an incarnation of rDo rje ṅc'añ, will teach the esoteric doctrine, and having become a guide to men he will teach the way,,"

The events recorded about him concern his figure as a master and miracle-worker; the author dwells on the prodigious capacities for work and assimilation of this singular mind. Following this intent, the biography contains most important information for those wishing to reconstruct Tsoñ k'a pa's spiritual formation; his masters, his first relations with the Kar ma pa and the ṅBri guñ pa and then, through dBu ma pa's great figure, his plunge into the great sea of Buddhist dogmatics, thus conferring on his experiences a doctrinal solidity Tibet had probably never known since Buston's times.

The style is plain, with no concern for particular ornaments; this long composition serves its purpose of spiritual edification and orthodox guidance through the intricate mazes of the mystical and theological doctrines of Buddhism.

*rJe rin po c'ei gsañ bai nram t'ar rgya mts'o lta bu las c'a śas ñuñ du žig yoñs su brjod pai gтам rin po c'ei sñe ma.*

In the complete works, Potala edition, vol. *ka*, pp. 1-16.

This is Tsoñ k'a pa's secret biography, and contains a narrative of his visions, of his mystical realizations, of the revelations he received from divine masters in dreams or ecstasy; we shall have to quote again this work in part III. The author of this work is dGe legs dpal bzañ po.

The *Śa kya dge sloñ blo bzañ ye śes kyi spyod ts'ul gsal bar byed 'od dkar can gyi p'reñ ba* is an ample biography of the second Pañ c'en of Tashilunpo (1663-1737). When we reflect that he lived during one of the most eventful periods of Tibetan history, a large crop of information should be expected from the present biography. But such hopes prove vain: the writer, as usual, is interested exclusively in religious events: consecrations of temples, of images, and also the donations of the Tibetan and Mongol nobility to the great master and to the monasteries under his jurisdiction. From this point of view the book is interesting on account of the information it offers concerning Tibetan and Mongol personages, a great many of whom are mentioned in its pages. The author alludes, in vague terms, to the suppression of the *sDe srid rin po c'e*, and immediately after his death the title *rin po c'e* is attributed to Lha bzañ. The Pañ c'en's equanimity and his wish to avoid giving offence to any of the contending parties are revealed by this impartiality which might pass for indifference or a calculating spirit, as contrasted with Sum pa mk'an po's frank pronouncement. But events were still too recent and the

horizon too gloomy to allow the biographer an open language. He goes into greater detail in relating the Lha btsan's death at the hands of Ts'e dbaṅ don grub's troops in 1717; it agrees perfectly with Desideri's narrative.

*Sems dpa' pad dkar poi rnam t'ar t'uḡs rje c'en po zlos gar*, pp. 1-126, vol. ka (sect. t'a) of the complete works.

This is Pad ma dkar po's autobiography, up to his forty-ninth year, namely from the year 1526 to 1575. It was written in dPal gyi ri, in the convent of Yaṅs pa can in gÑal. It contains a narrative of the main events of his life, beginning with his incarnation as the son of dPal aḡyor lhun po of aP'yoṅ rgyas stag rtse. Thus he was born in the same territory as the fifth Dalai Lama, who celebrates him as a *sprul sku* of aBrug pa, and this deserves notice, because it shows once again the relations between the house of aP'yoṅ rgyas and the Red sects. He was a contemporary, older in years, of the *sde srid* of P'ag mo gru: ṅag gi dbaṅ p'yug bKra šis grags pa, of mTs'o skyes rdo rje of Rin spuṅs and of bsTan aḡsin nor bu of Bya yul. Having perfected his education, like all Tibetan masters, under the most celebrated doctors and ascetics, we see him dwell in the main places of pilgrimage in central and lower Tibet, received by princes with great festivities and liberality, and bringing a message of peace to the Myaṅ region, then troubled by internal strife in which were implied, as we saw, Sa skya and Rin spuṅs, Pa snam and rGyal tse, aBron rtse and Byaṅ. The narrative of these events, as simple as a diary, without any attempt at style or straining after ornaments, was completed and carried up to the great incarnate's death by ṅag dbaṅ aJigs med seṅ ge, for the space of 18 years, from 1575, wood-board, to 1592, water-dragon.<sup>262</sup> This also is a list of his journeys and of his more or less long sojourns in various monasteries or principalities of Tibet, from Ol k'a and rTse c'en, where the Sde pa Kun bzaṅ rab brtan ruled, to rGyal rtse

and to Šel dkar; however historical references of particular interest are scanty.

*rJe t'ams cad mk'yen pa dge aḡdun grub pa dpal bzaṅ po rnam t'ar ṅo mts'ar rmad byuṅ nor bui ap'reṅ* is a biography of dGe aḡdun grub written by Ye šes rtse mo in Tashilunpo; it contains a few dates and very poor historical information.

*rJe btsun t'ams cad mk'yen pai gsuṅ aḡbum t'or bu las rje ṅid kyi rnam t'ar*, foll. 1-30. In the complete works, vol. ka.

This is dGe aḡdun rgya mts'o's autobiography, from the year of his birth fire-ape, 1476, according to the Tibetan calendar, (wood-goat, 1475, according to the Hor calendar) up to the year *kun aḡsin, sarvadhārin*, earth rat, 1528. It is not so much an autobiography as a diary, which follows the most important events in his life, the life of a religious chief; historical references are scanty. It treats mainly of the masters at whose school he received his spiritual education, of the works he studied, of the monasteries and holy places he visited in his pilgrimages. Moreover important indications are occasionally found. The style is plain and unassuming.

The work is suddenly interrupted, without a close; this means that his disciples published it as they found it, without completing it or adding to it.

*Sai steṅ na aḡran zla daṅ aḡbral k'a c'e paṅ ḡi ta ša kya śri bha drai rnam t'ar*, pp. 1-67.

This is a booklet printed in Grva spyi bye rdsiṅ, in which are summed up the main points in the life of the great Kashmiri master, who having come to Tibet at the beginning of Sa skya pa power, left great traces in the history of Lamaism. We shall come back later on to this book. The author was bSod nams dpal bzaṅ po, who drew his material from the information scattered throughout the works of Śākyaśīrī's principal disciple, the Lotsāva of K'ro p'u Byams dpal bzaṅ po and of the dPal Lotsāva.

*mTs' uṅs med grub pai dbaṅ p'yug lcags zam pai rnam t'ar*, pp. 1-181. This might have

been one of the most important rnam t'ar for Tibetan history, because the ascetic it speaks of is one of the most characteristic figures in the history of Tibetan mysticism. T'añ ston rgyal po, in fact, owed his name *lcags zam pa*, "the builder of iron bridges", to the zeal with which he applied himself to substitute for the primitive ferries on violent and dangerous Tibetan rivers, bridges hanging from iron chains, like the one still in use at Toling, one of the most interesting monuments of Tibetan engineering.

To T'añ ston rgyal po (born 1385, dead 1464), as centuries went by and legends concerning him developed, nearly all the bridges of Tibet have been attributed, even those certainly built after his times or in regions where he had never set foot. His activity as an engineer almost pushed his ascetic perfections into the background. His work could not have been carried out without the favour, aid and cooperation of the families then predominant in Tibet; it was to be expected that his biography should contain useful historical references. But our hopes proved groundless; in this biography actual facts are overcome by legends and accounts of miracles to such an extent, that little can be gleaned from it of which we may be certain. The *rnam t'ar* has certainly not been composed immediately after his death, on the contrary, as the author Ñag gi dbañ p'yug states in the colophon, it was completed one hundred and twenty-five years later in the year earth-mouse (*sa byi*, 1588), in *Evam dga' ak'yil* in the dPal ri bo's dwelling, summarizing an older biography by dKon mc'og bde bai abyun gnas of bSam agrub lha k'añ, belonging to the ascetic's clan.

The bridges were built by collecting iron on orders from the chiefs, or freely by the community, desirous of facilitating communications between one place and another. The work was often performed by compulsion, *'u lag* (in the text: *ul lag*). In his biography the ascetic appears as a restless

man: we see him continually passing from one country to another. We find him in Koñ, in Dvags, in Southern gTsañ, in P'ag ri and gNas rñiñ, with the Mon and the Šar mon, in Mañ yul, Yar kluñs, sTod luñs, Rva greñs, Mi ñag (mK'ar gliñ), gTsañ (rTse c'en, Sa skya, sNar t'añ, Lho šel dkar, where Lho pa Lha btsun skyabs reigned, pp. 1-141). In a year which is not stated, but not much earlier than 1429, a great Hor invasion is recorded; they laid Western Tibet waste, Mañ yul, Guge and gYas ru, so that the rest of Tibet also was shaken by great terror, fearing the hordes would spread abroad. But a short time later the invasion ebbed, and the merit was attributed to the construction of mC'od rten in Nam riñ, inaugurated and blessed by T'añ ston rgyal po, who had followed Padmasambhava's commandments, contained in the ancient prophecies (p. 135). As may be seen, historical reality is wrecked on myths, contours are lost, facts fade away. In this process of conforming to legends and neglecting all details, the style becomes colourless too and impersonal.

*rGyal k'ams pa tā ra nā t'as bdag ñid keyi rnam t'ar ñes par brjod pai deb gter šin tu žib mo ma bcos lhug pai rtogs brjod*, pp. 1-331, in vol. *ka* of the complete works edited in the P'un ts'ogs gliñ monastery. As the title shows, this is an autobiography of the great polygraphist of the Jo nañ sect, Tāranātha or Kuñ dga' sñiñ po, born in 1575 (not in 1573, as Schiefner says in his introduction to the history of Buddhism by the same author), the son of rNam rgyal p'un ts'ogs and of Jo mo k'a rag, in the region of K'a rag k'yun btsun, on the frontier between dBus and gTsañ, from a family boasting descent from the famous Lotsāva of rGya. Tāranātha relates year by year, in its minutest details, the story of his life, speaking at length of his masters, his education, the journeys he undertook, the places where he retired to meditate and finally the construction of the great monastery near the

sKu ḅum of Jo nañ, now known by the name of P'un ts'ogs gliñ. Having lived in an extremely eventful period, when vicissitudes which would change the course of history in Tibet were maturing, he, completely absorbed in religious life, ignored his country's agonies, and only alludes to them when he is called to comfort with his magic works the troops about to leave for camp. A protegee of the *sde pa* of Byañ, he next obtained the favour of the powerful lords of bSam agrub rtse, whose ambition it was to unite the whole of Tibet under their supremacy; hence there was strife between them and their dBus rivals. He met many masters, who in his times still flowed into Tibet out of Western India, from Buddhagupta, whose *rnani t'ar* he wrote, to Premānanda, Pūrṇānanda and Pūrṇavajra of Western India, and the Paṇḍita Kṛṣṇa of Benares, a master of grammar. These pilgrims from India did not all belong to clear-cut Buddhist schools; on the contrary it is quite probable that they were members of those Tantric sects in which the Vajrayāna and Śaivaism met, with common characters, not easily told apart. He went in search of manuscripts and collected some in different places, also in rGyal rtse, taking this as a pretext to verify ancient traditions, as he does, for instance, with the *dBañ mdor bstan pai agrei bśad don dam pa bsdus pa* (CORDIER, I, p. 16) and with the *rDo rje ts'ig gi sñiñ po bsdus pai dka' agrei* (*ibid.*, p. 68) which was attributed to Ya šo bha dra (sñan grags bzañ po), another name of Nāroṭapāda's, given out in the manuscript to be the work of K'a c'e Byañ c'ub bzañ po, i. e. Bodhibhadra. This work, written in the rich style, full of colloquialisms, proper to Tāranātha, has a particular interest, not only due to the personality of this great representative of late Lamaism, but for the history of the sect he revived and of the impulse he gave it, when he restored and built with the help of powerful patrons, important religious buildings in the heart of gTsañ.

*Jo nañ gi gnas bśad*, complete works, vol. *pa* by Tāranātha, foll. 1-12. This is a brief eulogy of the Jo nañ region and of its famous sKu ḅum; after describing the place and celebrating its beauty according to the usual models, Tāranātha relates how the first masters, inspired by the valley's natural beauties, retired there to meditate; then, (here begins the interesting part of the booklet) he speaks of them one by one, giving a list of their series, and recalls the date of the great monastery's foundation, completing the list of the most illustrious masters who succeeded one another there up to his times. He closes with brief accounts of the hermitages to be found in the environs and of the principal ascetics who spent their time there in meditation.

*Rigs ldan c'os kyi rgyal po nam mk'e d' grags pa bzañ poi rnam par t'ar pa bśāgs ldan pai abrug sgra.*

This is a work by the same author, which summarizes, evidently on the base of family archives, the genealogy of his patrons, the princes of Nam riñs of Byañ. The family is said to descend from the Mi ñag and was very influential in the times of the Mongols and of the Sa skya pa regency, when some of its members obtained important offices or titles from the Chinese court. Thus the genealogy comes down to the author's patron and protector, and his merits and enterprises are told. This family was particularly devoted to the Kālacakra, indeed it had circulated a tradition maintaining that the mysterious Śambhala, where that Tantra had been revealed, was precisely above Nam riñs. The importance of the first part, containing in a metrical form the family's genealogy, grows less and less as eulogy prevails.

*Za hor gyi ban de ñag dbañ blo bzañ rgya mts'oi adi snañ ak'rul pai ro rtsed rtogs brjod kyi ts'ul du bkod pa du kũ lai gos bzañ*, vol. *ca-ja* of the complete works (foll. 1-364; 1-281; 1-246).

This is the biography, which has been left interrupted, of the great statesman and true founder of the Yellow Sect's power Blo bzañ rgya mts'o; the author, the sDe srid Sañs rgyas

rgya mts'o relates, year by year, sometimes day by day, the main events of the life of the Dalai Lama, dwelling at great length on his religious education, his contacts with the masters of other schools, the religious works and ceremonies performed according to his instructions. Thus we see passing before our eyes, sometimes barely hinted at, sometimes represented in greater detail so that we can reconstruct their moral portrait and their political importance, monks and laymen, Tibetans and Mongols, the personages which in some way emerged on the horizon of Tibet's political and religious life. This crowd, passing through the pages of this bulky biography, gives us an idea of Tibetan society in the heart of the XVIIth century. If the book cannot be considered an impartial chronicle of the events in which Blo bzañ rgya mts'o had a part or which he witnessed, facts being too often represented in the manner best calculated to advance the Yellow Sect's prestige, it is nevertheless a document of great interest as an evocation, however partial, of Tibetan history on the eve of impending servitude. The author indulges in a great display of learning even in this biography, where quotations and allusions abound, in the first place interesting fragments of the *rGya bod yig ts'an*, of which he gives many extracts. They have a place in this biography because Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o dwells on the history of the family from aP'yoñ rgyas, and also of Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's mother's family (she was born in sNa dkar rtse); thus he finds an occasion of quoting the ancient chronicles and celebrating the glories of both clans, often repeating, in greater detail, what the fifth Dalai Lama had already said in his history. The account of his journey to China has a certain interest; he describes very faithfully the itinerary followed in Tibet, in the country of Tangut (Mi ñag) and finally in the Celestial Empire; he describes the meeting of the Lama with the Emperor and gives a list of his ministers.

*Ñañ ston k'ra ts'an blo gros mc'og gi rdo rje rtogs pa brjad pa ñuñ du rnam gsal*, pp. 1-63. (In vol. *Ta* of Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's complete works). This is the biography of a rÑiñ ma pa lama, born in gYu pa gzuñ, in the environs of sNeu gdoñ, who had been baptized by the name of Ša kya skyabs. The book is almost a treatise on rÑiñ ma pa literature, for it records all the works that this lama studied, meditated or commented upon in the course of his life, with the help of competent teachers. The list of works and the allusion to Tantric liturgies, which he had mastered thoroughly, are occasionally interrupted by accounts of visions and of premonitory dreams, recorded as proofs of this Siddha's divine perfections. Thus, by a casual coincidence, he relates events in which he had a part as an exorcist, because, as I have already said, the Tibetans know of no earthly event which may not be influenced, avoided or altered, by the human will, purified through asceticism and guided by liturgical knowledge. The Siddha is made one with those powers which guide the events of the universe, hence he becomes a worker of miracles, held in great awe. This biography is mentioned here only because of these allusions scattered here and there throughout the book, and also on account of certain quotations from one of Tibet's most authoritative chronicles, the *Ts'al pa deb dmar*, which, as far as I know, is of no easy access to-day. This work was written by the fifth Dalai Lama in dMar po ri, in the year fire-dragon, 1676.

*Rigs dañ dkyil ak'or kun gyi k'yab bdag rdo rje ac'an blo gsal rgya mts'o grags pa rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ poi rnam par t'ar pa slob bśad bstan pai ñi 'od*, foll. 1-20, vol. *ta* of Blo bzañ rgya mts'o's complete works.

This is the life of an ascetic, born in the year iron-ape, 1560, who died in the year fire-tiger, 1626, particularly initiated into the Sa kya pa doctrines and an expert in the sect's esoterisms. The biography takes us through his experiences, recording masters and

divinities in whose meditation he was particularly successful. The *rnam t'ar* does not neglect the pilgrimages he performed, hence it contains fragments of important itineraries in the gTsan region. But the most interesting part of this book is the first, containing the history of the ascetic's family. As it was descended from high official of the Sa skya court, as for instance the dPon c'en rGyal ba bzañ po, important information is gleaned on the Sa skya period. It is particularly valuable because it goes back, with absolute certainty, to the *rGya bod kyī yig ts'ān*. It was written in dMar po ri, in the year fire-dragon, 1676.

*rGyal kun adus pai no bo k'yab bdag he ru ka ñur smrig gar gyis rnam par rol pa gdan gsum ts'ān pai sde dpon rje btsun bla ma dbaṅ p'yug rab brtan bstan pai rgyal mts'an dpañ bzañ poi rtags pai brjod pa bdud rtsii za ma tog*, pp. 1-55 (by the fifth Dalai Lama, contained in the *ta* volume of his complete works). This is the biography of a Lama, educated in the Sa skya pa and Ža lu pa schools; like many other monks he took charge of military operations, for instance the defence of P'ag ri rdsoñ. A contemporary of P'un ts'ogs rnam rgyal of gTsan, he was born in the year earth-horse, 1558 and died in the year fire-rat, 1636. Much of his activity took place in the gTsan region, particularly in Ža lu. This work was written in the Potala, in the year fire-dragon, 1676.

*Dus gsum gyi bde bar gšegs pa ma lus pai no bo k'yab bdag mi c'en bsod nams mc'og grub bstan pai rgyal mts'an dpañ bzañ poi rnam par t'ar pa spyod ldan yid dbaṅ agugs pai lcags kyū*. Another work by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o, contained in vol. *ta* of his complete works, pp. 1-55. This is the biography of a great exorcist, whose activity was displayed mainly in Ža lu, where he also occupied the abbatial throne. The first pages of this *rnam t'ar* are extremely interesting; they relate the happenings of the clan which, on the father's side, is traced back to Bon po masters, coming into Myañ from the province of Guge, when the Bon po were forced to leave that country

following the propagation of Buddhism, undertaken successfully and with the favour of royalty by Rin c'en bzañ po. On his mother's side this Lama was related to a younger branch of the *sku zan* of Ža lu. As was to be expected from a Ža lu pa, his relations with the Sa skya pa are also close.

The booklet is interesting for Ža lu's last vicissitudes, when this monastery still enjoyed some prestige, before gTsan's decay; otherwise it is colourless and feeble. This Lama, a contemporary of the events which led to Gu śri Khan's victory over the rulers of gTsan, was born in the year water-tiger, 1602 and died in the year water-tiger, 1662. Blo bzañ rgya mts'o wrote his book in the Potala in the year fire-dragon, 1676.

*Zur t'ams cad mk'yen pa c'os dbyiñs rañ grol gyi rnam t'ar t'eg mc'og bstan pai šiñ rta*, pp. 1-215, in vol. *ta* of the fifth Dalai Lama's complete works.

This is the biography of a great ascetic, born in the year iron-dog, 1610, who died in the year fire-bird, 1657. He was particularly learned in medicine and in the rÑiñ ma pa's esoteric doctrines. His biography contains only a few references to the historical events and stormy developments witnessed by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o or belonging to an immediately preceding period. The first part is the most interesting; in it the author reconstructs the history of the Zur pa family and gives a list of its principal personages, some of whom have an honourable place in the history of Tibetan mysticism or literature. His narrative begins with a detailed description of the Jambudvīpa, ending up with Tibet and the descent into Tibet of the Indian prince Rūpati, called there Ña k'ri btsan po. This narrative is confirmed by the famous prophecies which Tibetans always quote, concerning the fortunes of Buddhism in their country, namely the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and the *Vimaladevīvyākaraṇa*. After having mentioned the family's mythical origin, its most celebrated scions are recalled, from the times of K'ri sroñ lde btsan up to the particular

subject of this biography. This personage, called by his father *Nag dbaṅ bkra śis*, and after his first baptism *Nag dbaṅ bkra śis kun dga'*, is followed in the gradual attainment of wisdom, in his laborious spiritual ascent up to those miraculous powers which were called upon as the country's bulwark when serious perils threatened Tibet. The author dwells at length, with a particular appreciation, on the prodigies he performed when *Arslān's* troops invaded Tibet. This Lama belonged to a family of *rñiṅ ma pa* masters, but he did not disdain relations with the Yellow Sect and the principal members of its hierarchy, hence *Blo bzaṅ rgya mts'o* did not hesitate to write his biography, which probably had a political purpose (and the following biography even more so): to attempt a reconciliation or at least a rapprochement between the *dGe lugs pa* and the *rñiṅ ma pa* by showing that the new school had not taken up an irreducibly hostile position towards the old school, and there could be understanding between them by placing in their proper light the lofty personalities of masters and ascetics, apart from any discrimination due to the sect they belonged to.

On the other hand *Blo bzaṅ rgya mts'o* never concealed his sympathies for the *rñiṅ ma pa* school, with which his family had entertained lasting relations, and with whose doctrines and liturgies he had long been familiar. On the style of this book we might repeat what was said concerning the other biographies written by the fifth Dalai Lama; this one too is elegant and refined. It was written in the year fire-dragon, 1676, in the *dMar po ri*.

*Dus gsum rgyal bai mk'yen rtse nus pai raṅ gzugs dkyil ak'or rgya mts'oi gtso bo k'yab bdag rdo rje sems dpa' no mgon po bsod nams mc'og ldan bstan pai rgyal mts'an dpal bzaṅ poi rnam par t'ar no mts'ar dad pai rlabs p'reṅ*, foll. 1-102. It is inserted in the fifth Dalai Lama's complete works, vol. *ñā*. This is the biography of a great miracle-worker and exorcist, the author's contemporary, *bSod nams mc'og ldan bsTan pai*

*rgyal mts'an*. He is followed from his birth, which took place in 1603, up to his death in the year earth-boar, 1659, mentioning his pilgrimages, relating his visions and miracles for the readers' edification. *bsTan pai rgyal mts'an* belongs to the *rñiṅ ma pa* school, but he also had many spiritual trends with the *Sa skya pa*; the discovery of some *gter ma* is also attributed to him. The importance of this work from an historical point of view is almost nil; on the contrary it is very great if one looks for a representation of that atmosphere of magic and the expectation of miracles, in which the Tibetans live. When perusing these pages, we see how deeply the Tantric experience had become embedded in the very soul of this people, guiding its every movement and dominating over its relations with men and things. As in *Blo bzaṅ rgya mts'o's* other works, the style follows the models and precepts of Indian rhetoric. This *rnam t'ar* too is a *Campūkāvya*, in which poetry, not always made up of quotations, is alternated with prose.

The work was written in the *dMar po ri* in the year wood-dragon, 1676.

*rJe btsun t'ams cad mk'yen pa bsod nams rgya mts'oi rnam t'ar dños grub rgya mts'oi śiṅ rta*, p. 109, vol. *ñā* of *Blo bzaṅ rgya mts'o's* complete works.

This is the biography of the third Dalai Lama, written by his successor *rGyal dbaṅ lña pa*. Compiled with the same stylistic standards we have observed in the chronicles, it is based on earlier biographies. In the colophon are quoted: *Lhai rgyal po žus pai skal ldan śiṅ rta* by *ṅP'raṅ k'a pa dPal ldan blo gros bzaṅ po*, which goes as far as the year iron-horse (1570), a biography in verse by the same author, going as far as *bSod nams rgya mts'o's* fifteenth year, the itinerary in verse of the latter's journey to *mDo k'ams*, written by *bSod nams ye śes dbaṅ po*, the complete biography composed by *mK'ar nag lotsāva dPal ṅbyor rgya mts'o* and the biography written by *bŽu k'aṅ rab byams pa*, *dGe legs lhun grub*, assisted by the advice

of some other lamas, experts both in the Law and in literature. The fifth Dalai Lama composed this work in the dGa' ldan p'o brañ, in the year fire-dog, i. e. 1646, "except the part in verse,,". This last should thus be attributed to his principal collaborators: rje btsun rDo rje ac'an c'en po aK'on ston c'os kyi rgyal po, dPal aByor lhun grub and Žaň mk'ar lotsāva aJam dpal rdo rje; or else it was desumed from the works of preceding authors which are not mentioned. The chronological indications of events are very accurately ascertained. bSod nams rgya mts'o's life is followed year by year and the years are generally given according to a double system: the Indian one and the sixty-year cycle. Sometimes the Lama's age is also added. For the most important events, even the month and the day are given. This shows that the author and his collaborators had at their disposal accurate and dependable documents, and our regret is all the greater that so much precious information should have been sacrificed to accounts of prodigies, records of the theological subjects studied and descriptions of ceremonies performed.

*aJig rten dbaň p'yogs t'ams cad mk'an pa yon tan rgya mts'o dpal bzaň poi rnam par t'ar pa nor bui ap'reň ba*, foll. 1-52, voll. ña of the complete works. This is a biography of the fourth Dalai Lama, written by his successor on the base of information drawn directly from the spoken word of those who knew and served Yon tan rgya mts'o and on the model of preexisting works, among which Blo bzaň rgya mts'o quotes the biography, in verse, of the Lotsāva of mk'ar nag and the biography: *Dad pai go aByed* by bŽu kaň rab byams pa dGe legs lhun grub. These two works are also quoted, as we have seen, in the colophon of bSod nams rgya mts'o's biography; from this it is inferred that they were not limited to the life of a single personage but comprised at least the fifth Dalai Lama's two predecessors. The work was finished in the country of gTsoň k'a, precisely

in dKar t'aň mar k'ui mts'o mo. It is altogether briefer and more schematic than the other biographies by the same author. The years are not so continually stated as in the other biographies. The style is simple and flowing, without the literary pretensions and rhetoric artifice we find in Blo bzaň rgya mts'o's other works. When we compare it with them, we have the impression that the present booklet has been compiled in a greater hurry, far from the libraries and archives of the great dBus monasteries.

*aJam dpal dbyaňs c'os kyi rje dkon mc'og c'os ap'el kyi rtogs brjod mk'as pai rnam rgyan*, foll. 1-19, vol. na of Blo bzaň rgya mts'o's complete works. This is a brief biography of the celebrated p'yag mdsod and devoted guardian and counsellor of the fifth Dalai Lama. It was written, as we read in the colophon, on advice of dGe adun rnam rgyal, the abbot of rDsiň p'yi, a monastery in 'Ol ka, and was also due to the veneration felt by Blo bzaň rgya mts'o for the man who had cared for his education and had greatly contributed to the Yellow Sects' power. The work was composed in dGa' ldan p'o brañ, in the year wood-ape, 1644. It is thus a juvenile product consisting of a prose narrative in which brief poetical compositions are inserted. Chronological references are limited to the most important facts. Also in this case the great dignitary's religious education prevails over events whose author was in a large measure dKon mc'og c'os ap'el. Altogether it is written in a simple style, without excessive ornaments. It may be seen that the author was still a beginner and did not attempt to force his thoughts into the complex rhetorical architecture.

*rGyal bai dbaň po t'ams cad mk'yen rdo rje ac'an blo bzaň bskal bzaň rgya mts'o dpal bzaň poi rnam par t'ar pa mdo ts'am brjod pa dpag bsam rin po c'ei sñe ma*, pp. 1-58, is a biography of the seventh Dalai Lama, written by Ye šes bstan pai sgron me, better known as lCaň skya Rol pai rdo rje. It is a great work, which throws much light not only on the Dalai Lama's

figure, but also on the events in which he often played a prominent part. Unlike other biographical works, this one, in a certain sense, passes over the lama's spiritual preparation, which is implicit, as the usual reincarnation of the same divine personage. Instead, great importance is given to political events, to Lha bzañ's attitude towards his unfortunate predecessor, to the events which induced him to recognize sKal bzañ as Dalai Lama, to the Chinese expedition against the Eleuthes, his return to Lhasa, the vicissitudes which brought P'o lha stobs rgyas to office as a regent. This book deserves to be carefully studied, because it represents the Yellow Sect's official narrative of events concerning which we are generally informed by Chinese or European sources. It is a mine of biographical information on the Mongol chiefs and their attitude towards China and the Tibetan church.

*dPal mi dbaṅ poi rtogs brjod pa ajig rten kun tu lga' bai gtam*, foll. 1-395. This is the story of bSod nams stobs rgyas<sup>263</sup>) and is preceded by that of his father Padma rgyal po an officer under dGa' ldan Ts'e dbaṅ dpal, the general to whom Tibet's war against Ladakh was entrusted. It ended with the battle of Basgo in 1683 and the peace of Tashigang (see PETECH, *A study on the Chronicles of Ladakh*, p. 156 ff.; FRANCKE, *The Chronicles of Ladakh*, pp. 42-115). The biography was written by Ts'e riñ dbaṅ gi rgyal po, called by another name Ts'añs sras dgyes, a disciple of the Paṇḍita and Lotsāva Dharmasrī. As it is stated in the colophon, the work was written in the year water-ox, 1733. The style is flowery and redundant. Parts in poetry alternate with the prose narrative, but even in the midst of so much rhetoric and ready-made idioms, we can glean from the bulky biography interesting information on the war against Ladakh and Tibetan events at the end of the XVIIth century.

*dPal ldan za lu pai bstan pa la bka' drin c'e bai skyes bu dam pa rnams kyi rnam t'ar lo rgyus ño mts'ar dad pai ajuḡ dogs*, pp. 1-236.

This is the story of Buston, his successive incarnations and his principal disciples; their particular abilities are emphasized: experts on grammar, those who specialized in technical subjects or became perfect in logic, and so on; a list follows of the mk'an po, abbots, who succeeded one another on the famous monastery's abbatial throne. The book closes with brief informations on the abbots of Ri p'ug hermitage, in the mountains to the North-East of Ža lu. The narrative is simple and unassuming. The author has a praiseworthy habit of chronological accuracy, hence he gives, for the principal personalities, the birth and death dates, referred to the succession of cycles. A concise brevity rules out monotonous repetitions of miracles and prodigies, abounding elsewhere. All considered it is a remarkable work for the history of Tibetan sects and their principal masters, particularly when we consider that in Ža lu's shadow lived personalities extremely remarkable in the history of Lamaist thought, as for instance C'os skyoñ ba (Dharmapāla) a celebrated writer on grammar and rhetoric, whose interesting biography is included in this *rnam t'ar*. Its author was Blo grub bstan skyoñ, who finished writing it in the Ri p'ug hermitage, in the year wood-goat of the XIVth cycle, 1835.

*dPal za lui gser k'añ gi gnas yig dad bskor ts'ad p'an yon bcas*, pp. 1-24. This is a manuscript full of serious orthographical inaccuracies. It is a summary of the genealogy translated in this volume; moreover it contains a brief description of the statues admired in the gSer k'añ, and relates both their origin and their miracles. A late work, written for the use of pilgrims, without any literary merit.

*Yid dga' c'os aḡsin gñis pa dpal snar t'añ c'os sdei gnas la bstod pa skal bzañ rna ba bḡud rtsi*, pp. 1-4. A metrical eulogy of sNar t'añ, celebrating the glories of the monastery; this gives occasion to extremely brief references of an historical character; mention is made of gZi 'od aḡbar's statue, brought from India,

in the gSer gliñ chapel, of the foundation of a first hermitage on the part of rje gTum ston Blo gros pa, according to bŠes gñen Ša ra ba's instructions, and finally of the work done there by mC'ims c'en Nam mk'a' grags pa (on the abbatial see from 1254 to 1290, DT, ca, p. 19b). The author is the Pañ c'en Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an.

*sPos ts'ogs c'os sde adi ñid pañ c'en ša kya šri riñ lugs su p'yag btab mdo sñags bzañ abrel gyi lo rgyus rmad du abyuñ ba*, pp. 1-18. It is a

eulogy of the monastery commonly known by the name of sPos k'añ, standing in a gorge which branches off on the right of the Myañ c'u valley, on the Gyantse-Shigatse road, some two stages removed from that city. It is a bare record of events concerning the temple, beginning from its foundation; it also contains brief and useful descriptions of the most important articles of cult, kept or venerated in each single chapel.<sup>264)</sup>

## ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT AS REPRESENTED BY SOME ངTSAÑ MONUMENTS

While literature thus flourished, a corresponding artistic activity developed; during the five centuries we have treated, Central Tibet became adorned with its fairest temples, enlarged its monasteries, perfected its religious, civil and military architecture, refined its taste and definitely assimilated Indian, Chinese and Central Asian influences.

The greater convents, whose political prestige had made them leaders of the country's life, or the ones most celebrated in religious history, were built and embellished in this period, throbbing with an intense life, spiritual and intellectual.

Strife between sects and factions did not spare the convents, often turned into fortresses; according to *gZon nu dpal*, up to his times only the *sTag luñ* monastery had succeeded in escaping the turmoil of war. For this reason the squads of artists and craftsmen were never unemployed. The nobility, by now unable to escape the hegemony of convents, vied in the construction of new religious buildings, to show their piety, to curry favour with their spiritual heads and to gain forgiveness for their sins by the display of a naturally munificent spirit. This movement began with the second propagation of the faith. In *Indo-Tibetica* (voll. I-III) I have shown in how large a measure the Kings of Guge's liberality and piety contributed to the development of Tibetan art, by building temples and having them decorated with frescoes by Kashmiri and Tibetan artists. A short time after Rin c'en bzañ po's patrons had built the chapels of Mañ ñan, Toling, Tsaparang, Kojarnath, the bKa' gdams pa founded Rva greñs; later came Ts'al,

ḅBri guñ, Sa skya, gDan sa t'el and all the lesser shrines irradiated round these major centres of Tibet's religious, political and intellectual life. Buddhist masters, to whom Tibetan piety offered a safer refuge than India's tormented soil, Tibetan pilgrims returning from adventurous journeys to the holy places of Buddhism, or from a quest for Indian masters under whom they might perfect their learning, trade with Nepal and in a lesser measure with Kashmir, enriched these temples with Indian statues and paintings, venerated in Tibet as holy relics, and becoming at the same time a model and an inspiration for the nascent artistic schools of the Country of Snows. Very little is left of the original buildings belonging to this period; warfare and time have more than once destroyed those monuments and forced devotees to build new ones; the statues have largely been saved, but most of the primitive paintings on the temple walls have disappeared. Such was the all but general fate of Tibetan shrines; Lhasa itself was renewed by the fifth Dalai Lama but was shortly after devastated by Ts'e riñ don grub whose hordes took and sacked the city.

The 'Ol ka (dga') temple, one of the oldest in Tibet, was already a ruin in Tsoñ k'a pa's times: one of the pious works his biographers praise was precisely the reconstruction of that temple, which he caused to be decorated with new wall paintings; he personally suggested the subjects and supervised their execution. Nevertheless some convents, far from the beaten tracks or keeping aloof from warfare, or for other reasons unknown to us, escaped ruin, together with the large *me'od rten* with frescoed internal chapels built in great numbers during this period. Until a catalogue can

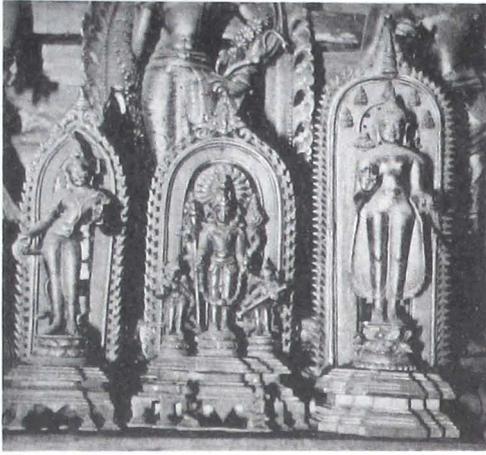


FIG. 1

be made of Tibet's most important monuments, which have survived man's neglect and the action of time, I think it will be useful to continue the research I carried on in Gyantse, and to give a faint idea of other monasteries or holy places I have visited during my travels in 1939. Some of them, like Sa skya, show most clearly the destruction and subsequent reconstructions undergone by the convents which actively shared Tibet's political events and played a prominent part therein. Other convents, which emerged scatheless, throw a vivid light on artistic currents prevailing in the period which is the object of our research. In this manner, in spite of the relatively small number of places I have been able to study, we shall throw some appreciable glimmer of light on the activity of artists and craftsmen in Tibet in the centuries we are investigating. I would also like to pave the way to a better understanding of what I shall say to illustrate the tankas of the present collection.

If time and warfare had spared Sa skya and if Kun dga' rin c'en had not reconstructed it in the XVIth century, or if his repairs had not been continued by his successors, many important documents of the Mongol period would have come down to us. We would have seen the art of India and that of Yüan

China coexisting, as was to be expected in a place where the two cultures met. Surely in temples and on their altars we can admire to this day numberless collections of statues: Yüan images are side by side with Pāla bronzes. Some chapels, like the one of b'Zi t'og, in which only the name of the ancient palace survives, are badly arranged museums, where the religious art of Asiatic Buddhism is displayed with strange juxtaposition; in these rich collections the first place belongs to the Pāla statues, brought back as a precious memento of travel by the pilgrims in the holy land; Indian masters themselves, beaten back by the Moslem hurricane, tried to save them across the Himalaya's impervious barriers (fig. 1). As it is often the case in these haphazard collections, statues of other sects are mixed up with Buddhist images; I have noticed this in the temples of Western Tibet and verified it in this chapel of the b'Zi t'og, where, among images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas representing the multiple aspects of the late mahāyāna pantheon, I have found a fine example of Jaina art (fig. 2).

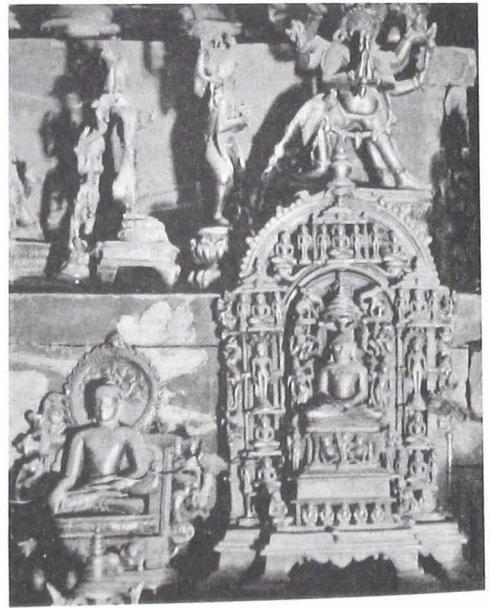


FIG. 2

Very interesting is the large gilded bronze statue of Mañjuśrī “aJam dbyaṅs ‘od zer a-bar ba,, the most venerated object of cult even to-day among those displayed for the worship of devotees in the dBU rtse gsar ma temple. It is certainly the most remarkable work of art admired in Sa skya to-day. None of its details but has been executed with the greatest care and finish. The figures of the nāgas and nāginīs excell all



FIG. 3

the rest: they are worked in *repoussé* on the halo, and have the thoughtful intimacy of India's best work. The tradition incorporated into the eulogy states the statue to be a piece of Kashmiri work and, having examined its style, I am ready to admit it. Remembering the scarcity of bronze images whose Kashmiri origin is certain, the importance of this rare statue, worshipped in the heart of Tibet, increases. Nor is it the only one of its kind, for other statues of the same origin are preserved in the dBU rtse rñiṅ ma (*Eulogy*, p. 27 b). But Bengal too is present with its bronzes; I allude to a magnificent statue, surrounded by a halo in which gods and nāgas are entwined in a noble choir, and to other statues on the border of whose frame, within little circles unfolding in the form of a crown, the pantheon of the Great Vehicle is displayed, with extremely graceful figures. To the same artistic school we must assign a large mc'od rten which, according to tradition, was brought from India, very probably from some convent in Bengal or Behar. While specimens of Kashmiri art are few and so precious that guides never neglect to point them out as the rarest objects of worship, and

Pāla works are not abundant either, Nepalese images of the best style abound: I mean those made before the art of Nepal became confined to those iconographic and decorative schemes which, notwithstanding its ornamental vividness, very often caused it to become cold and conventional. Of course not all these bronzes are of the same epoch and quality: besides the most ancient specimens, in which these faults are still slight and do not smother the simple levity of the style, there are many later works, due not to artists but to craftsmen. To the first class belong some figures and mc'od rten collected in the aDus k'añ or in the dBU rtse (figg. 3-15). They are all works of a great merit, precious remains of artistic currents now extinguished, relics of a religious fervour and an enthusiasm for artistic work which in course of time gradually decayed and declined.

Sculptures in wood also reached Sa skya; a relic of great price remains, the door of the Blo blaṅs lha k'añ, so called because of the architectural maṅḍala of Kyai rdo rje and of the Kun rig. The panels of this door are decorated with the figures of the eight signs of good omen (*bkra šis bgyad*) and of adoring deities

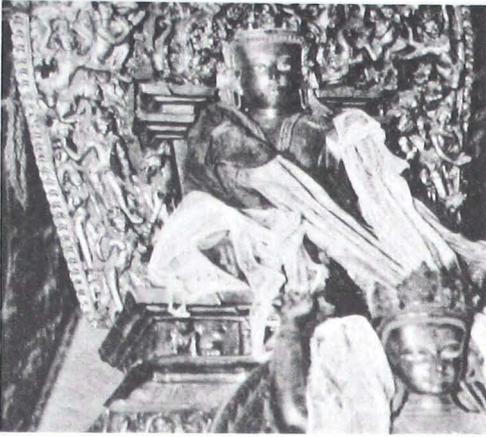


FIG. 4

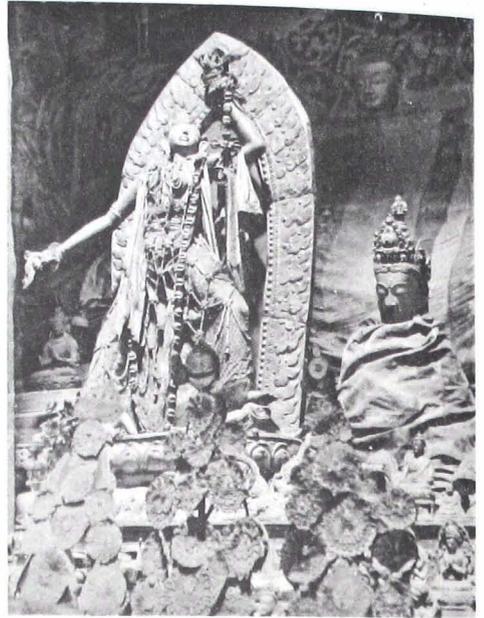


FIG. 7

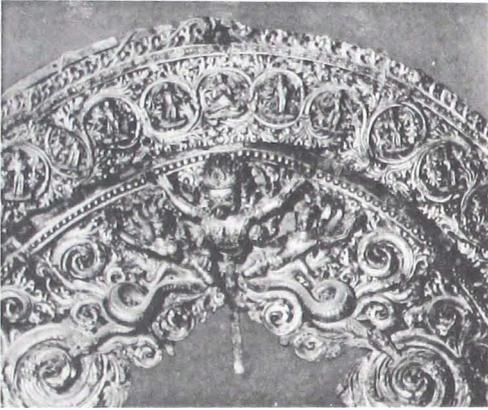


FIG. 5

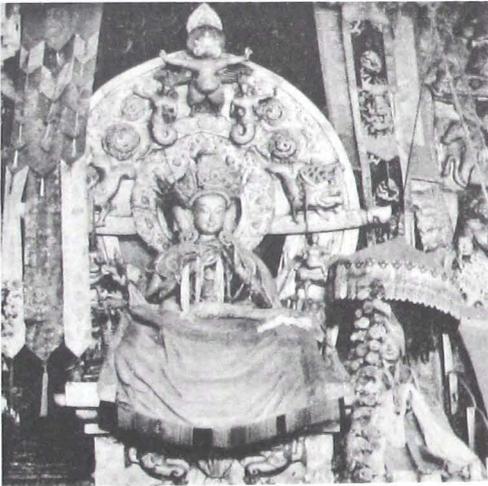


FIG. 6

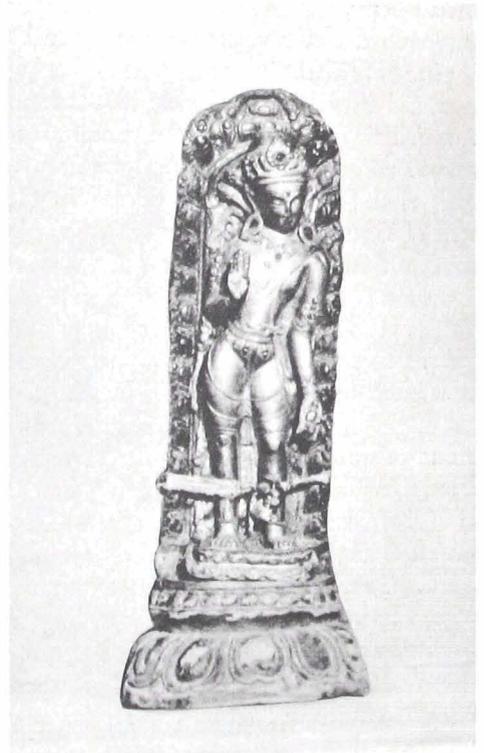


FIG. 8



FIG. 9



FIG. 12

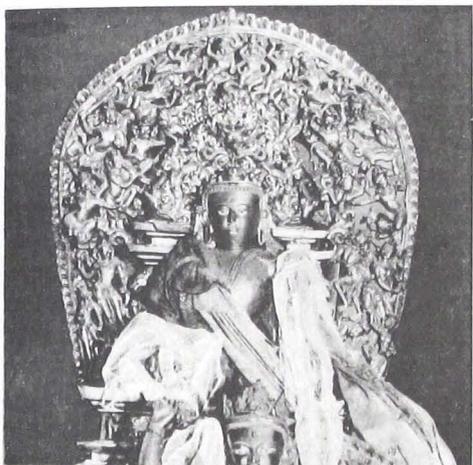


FIG. 10

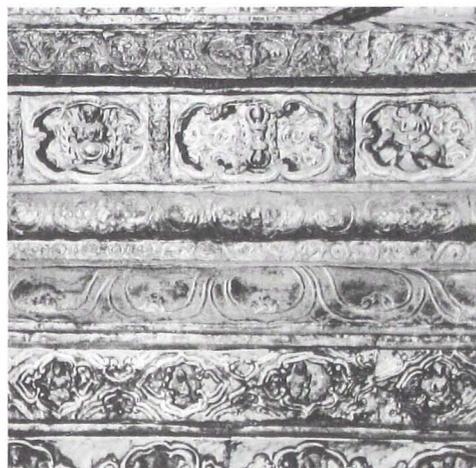


FIG. 13



FIG. 11



FIG. 14

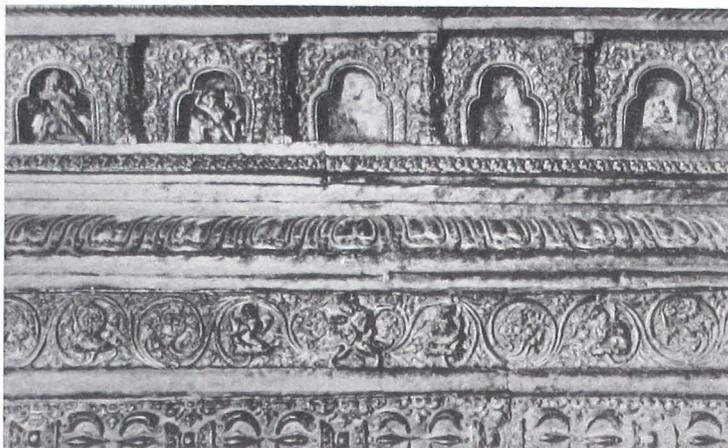


FIG. 15

(fig. 16), but our attention is attracted above all by a warrior with shield and armour, which leads us away from the Tibetan artistic tradition. For the motives stated above, there is no trace of ancient paintings, contemporary with the Mongol period; a few fragments representing *Kyai rdo rje* in the *Blo blañs lha k'añ* I would assign to the XVth century, as they are very close to the Gyantse frescoes. The palaces and temples burnt and destroyed during the wars due to rivalries



FIG. 16

between sects, were rebuilt in a later period. The older monasteries now extant in Sa skya go back, as we have said, to Kun dga' rin c'en's reconstruction, and the mural paintings are also to be assigned to this epoch. It is doubtful that even the figure of Mañjuśrī, a Jam dbyañs 'od a-bar ba (*Eulogy*, p. 66), attributed by tradition to the Sa skya pañḍita, really goes back

to this master's times, as the Sa skya pa monks believe, relying on the eulogy's authority. It is nevertheless possible that the wall on which the fresco is painted may have escaped destruction and that the image should thus be considered a fragment of the primitive decoration of the temple; the soft colours, among which pale green, pink and brown prevail, the well-defined drawing of the outline and the choirs of saints on the sides, echo Central Asian motifs (figg. 17, 18). On the other hand fragments of frescoes in the aDus k'añ, where Chinese influence is evident, belong to Kun dga' rin c'en's period. The manner is completely different, although the paintings represent scenes of aP'ags pa's life and his visit to Qubilai's court, and therefore the background could not help being Chinese; but the accuracy of detail and an unusual breadth of composition reveal that the unknown author was fairly familiar with the Chinese style. But these relics are in contrast with other cycles of painting, like those representing gSañ ba aḍus pa, belonging to the mature Tibetan manner, whose first examples we have found in the sKu a-bum of Gyantse.

In Sa skya, then, notwithstanding the monastery's great importance during the Yüan dynasty and the great artistic and religious

fervour which was consequently quickened there, we do not find any pictorial monument which can be assigned with certainty to the Mongol epoch. Nevertheless in gTsañ at least one temple is left, which was built in the first half of the XIVth century, and was spared by men and time. I allude to the temple of Ža lu, built by the *sku žai* Grags pa rgyal mts'an, (end of XIIIth, beginning of XIVth century) whose maṇḍalas were painted according to the instructions of Bustoṅ; this master wrote their index and dictated the explanatory inscriptions. Thus we are on safe ground. Not all the pictures, but a large part of them, are intact and may be studied; I do not know for how long, as these monuments are entrusted to the care of an ignorant and increasingly impoverished community, so that there is no hope of their survival, unless they are properly and speedily repaired.



FIG. 17

Even seen from the outside, the Ža lu temples take us back to the Chinese architectural environment; the roofs, over which the gilded *gañjira* towers, are covered with glazed tiles of a splendid blue, which seems to vie with the sky. On the central rafter of the roof are vertically arranged, one near the other, square panels on which floral patterns, fruit, animals and deities of Chinese style, vivid in bright enamel, are displayed in relief. At both ends open-mouthed dragons unfold their elegant coils, and seem to be swallowing the central spine; at the corners, rain-water spouts from the heads of sea-monsters (*makara*) (figg. 19, 20). Here is an unusual wealth of ornaments, surely the work of the Mongol artists mentioned in Bustoṅ's eulogy.<sup>265)</sup> Chinese influence is found in Ža lu also in the mGon k'añ, where a statue representing a Buddha (?) is completely detached from Tibetan iconographic tradition, and follows Chinese models very closely (fig. 21). The most important temple for the history of Tibetan painting is the central one known by the name of gSer k'añ, and

divided into two stories. The lower one is called Ts'ogs k'añ "temple of the congregation,, and the upper one is named Yum c'en moi lha k'añ, after the divinity to whom it is dedicated; round both temples run two corridors for circumambulation (*bar k'yaṃ*) on whose walls are painted the hundred moments of the Buddha's life, or are copied some sacred

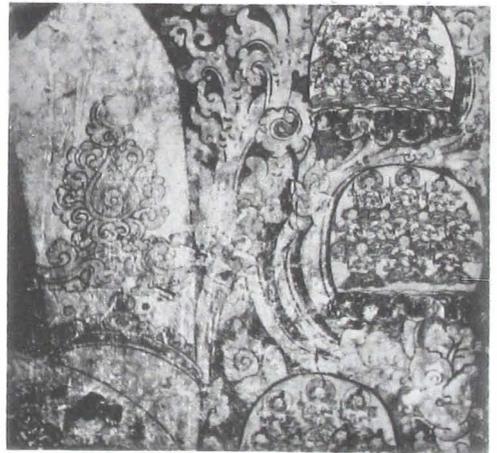


FIG. 18

books: *Pitrputrasamāgama*, chapters of the *Ratnakūṭa*, of the *Avadānakalpalatā*, of the *Jātakamālā*; others paintings are damaged to such an extent that they cannot be identified, nor can the text they are taken from be ascertained. The artists waver between two contrasting currents, alternatively predominating. But the Chinese manner is to a very great extent overcome by the Indian manner, which stands

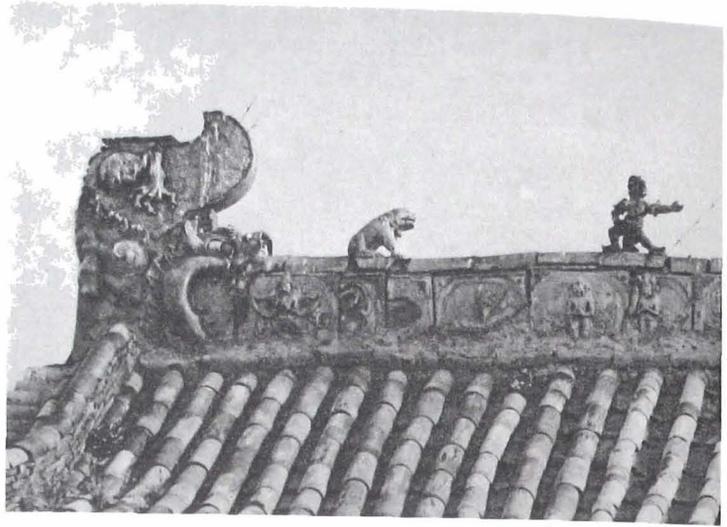


FIG. 19



FIG. 21

out in the division into squares, in the ascetic's postures, in the dress of the figures and in the composition of the scenes. Sometimes the two styles meet, but they do not mingle, as if the artists were unable to extract from those influences some particular pictorial vision of their own. Side by side with lively cavalcades, whose life and motion, derived from familiarity with Chinese art, break the rigidity of tradition, or near figures wearing tunics inspired by Central Asian reminiscences, we find rows of saints enclosed in the usual frames of Nepalese style. Central Asia is still present in some celestial choirs. While elsewhere India is displayed with its

ascetics, absorbed in conversation on sacred subjects (fig. 22) or with its rustic serenity (fig. 23) which sometimes recalls wellknown motifs of Rajput art (fig. 24), on the internal walls of the upper corridor another style predominates: instead of these pictorial legends, are painted great images of the most popular deities: sGrol ma, rNam rgyal, rTa mgrin, sPyan ras gzigs, Byams pa, all from the hand of mC'ims pa bSod nam s'abum, who sometimes signs his works. Here we have a foretaste of the style which later developed in its full vigour and elegant maturity in the sKu s'abum of Gyantse. Ža lu, with these frescoed corridors, where artists of different schools have displayed the many-coloured wealth of their creations, in obedience to the sku Žan's munificent piety, is ideally joined to the other galleries of Tibetan paintings, the great mC'od rten, very frequently built in this period of political passions and of a fervid intellectual life.

The C'os rgyal of Gyantse, when he built his famous sKu s'abum, followed, no doubt, a tradition, which had already inspired great works of the same style, if not quite of the same proportions and magnificence, and was worthily continued after his

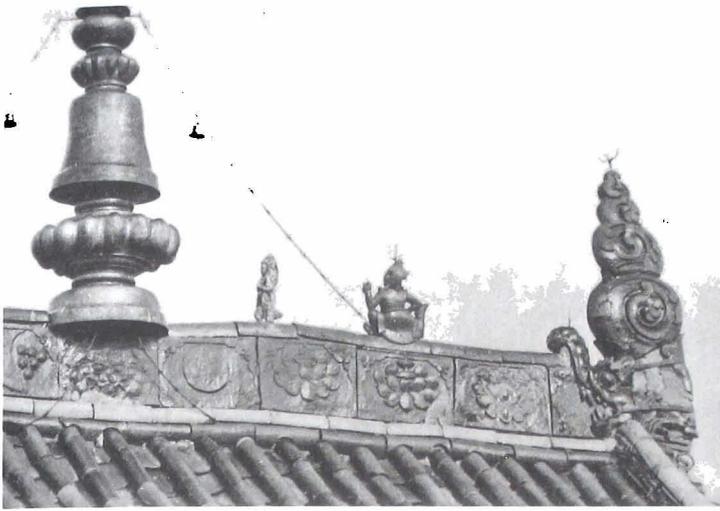


FIG. 20

death. In the first years of the XIIIth century the lotsāva of K'ro p'u, the one who had invited to Tibet the Kashmiri paṇḍita Śākyasī, built in a parched and stony gorge on the Jo nañ-Shigatse road a huge sKu ḅum in the vicinity of the temple where, in 1212,<sup>266</sup> he had dedicated the large image of Maitreya, still venerated in the bKa' bgyurd pa temple near that building. The mC'od rten resists, in its external structure, to the vicissitudes of time, but decay has already set in, excepting a chapel which preserves feeble traces of frescoes resembling those of Jo nañ; but it is difficult to gain an exact idea of them; they are but vestiges, very badly damaged. In all the other chapels water has obliterated any trace of paintings. Anyhow, even if they had been preserved, we would not be certain of finding there documents of the epoch of its foundation,

as the building was restored in Tāranātha's times (*Autobiography*, p. 151).

On the contrary, another large sKu ḅum is extremely interesting for the history of art; the one in rGyañ, near Lhartse, built with the aid of the celebrated ascetic T'añ ston rgyal po, by a Sa skya pa abbot, the sLob dpon c'en bSod nam bkra šis, born in 1352 died in 1417. The Sa skya Chronicles (p. 168) do

not mention the exact year in which this great monument was built, but it was certainly in the second half of the XIVth century.<sup>267</sup> It stands near a small rÑiñ ma pa temple, on the road leading to the grotto called sLob dpon sgrub p'ug, because according to the most widespread tradition Padmsambhava is said to have meditated there for a long time. In this place, famous in rÑiñ ma pa legends, bZañ po grags pa discovered one of the most

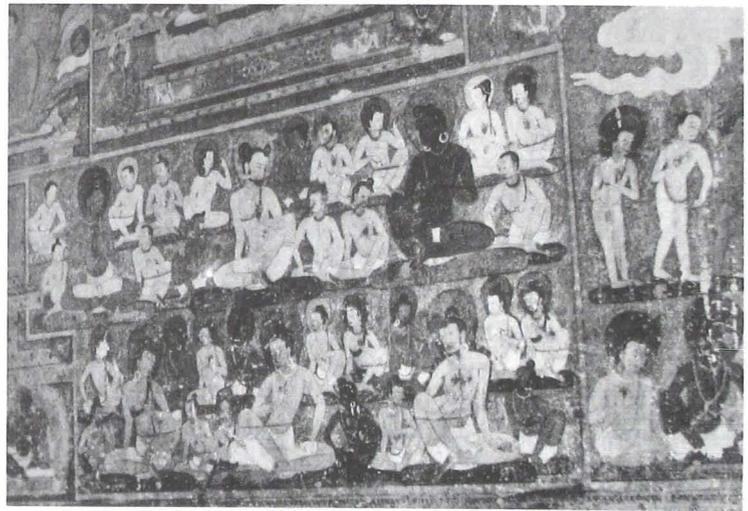


FIG. 22

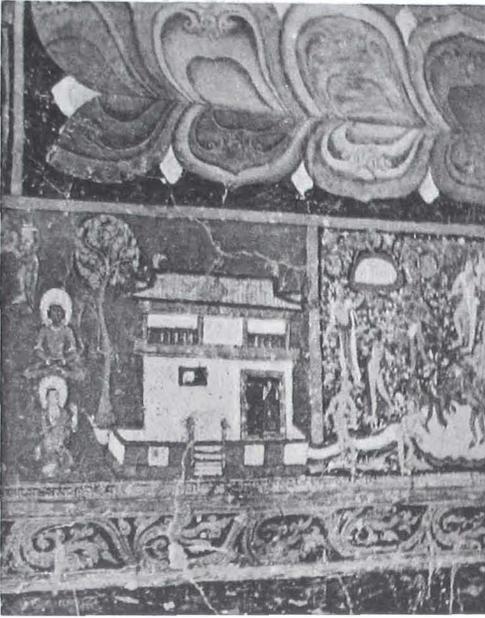


FIG. 23

important *gter ma*, namely a book in seven chapters, *Leu bdun ma*,<sup>268</sup>) which had been laid there by the miracle-worker, entrusting it to sNan dor stin mo, Lha mo's incarnation. The dGe lugs pa have garrisoned this district, building in the environs of the sKu ḅum a monastery and a summer villa for the Tashilama. I received hospitality there for several days, required to examine this monument. The sKu ḅum of rGyañ takes us back to the decline of Sa skya pa power, and is one of the most important documents of Tibetan art. As in the sKu ḅum of Gyantse, the chapels are alternated in the different stories. In the altar's place there are large stucco images, almost all restored

in recent times, while on the walls are displayed interesting pictorial scenes, inspired by the most different Tantric cycles.

I do not wish to give here a detailed description, which would lead me to repeat very often things said in the IV volume of *Indo-Tibetica*; on the other hand many chapels are so badly deteriorated by time, or, what is perhaps worse, so grievously mishandled by modern daubers, under the illusion they are restoring ancient paintings, that a detailed description is not practicable. Instead, I will briefly treat of the few chapels in which the frescoes are so well preserved, that not only we can recognize the sources of the pictorial representations and identify the cycles represented, but, above all, we can gain a true idea of the artistic value of the monument, so as to set it in the place it deserves in the evolution of Tibetan painting.

Let us begin from the entrance chapel, to the South; hence, continuing our visit according to the usual order of the ritual tour, we find on the right, in chapel n. 2, images of Padmasambhava and of dPal ldan lha mo; in reality the deities to whom this small

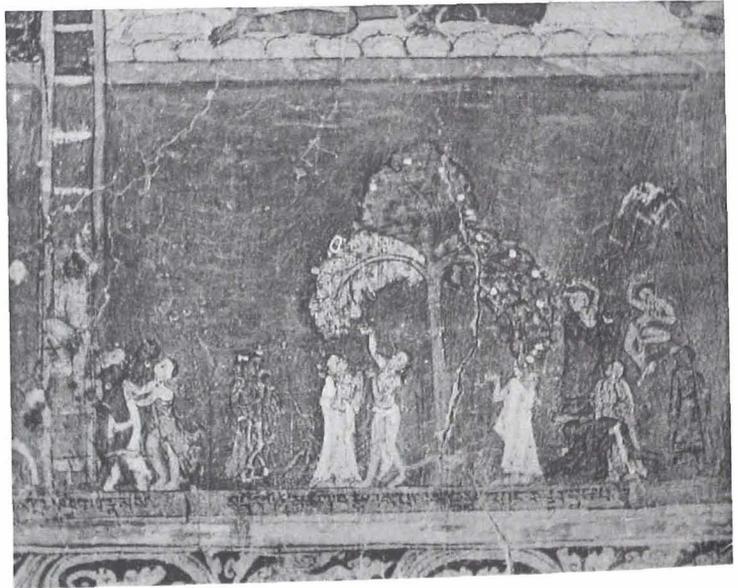


FIG. 24



FIG. 25

shrine was originally dedicated must have been not that miracle-worker, but this Tibetan interpretation of the goddess Kālī. The cycles of the *bsTan ādre brgyad* and *sNañ btsun dmu brgyad* (fig. 25-27), remain, with which is bound up the story of *Nor bzañ*, while on another wall we see the wheel of existence, abominably restored in its lower part. In the 3rd chapel, dedicated to *āDus gsum sañs rgyas* and to eleven-headed *Avalokiteśvara*, the *Potala* is represented, namely the heaven over which the former rules amid choirs of the blest, and the 8 principal episodes of *Śākyamuni's* life (fig. 28); in the fourth *Gur mgon* and *bDe mc'og's* *mañḍala*; in the fifth recent or recently restored images of the 16 *Arhats*. Passing to the Western side of chapel 6, on the wall, *P'ur bu*, coupled; the blue *rTa mgrin* coupled to the *Śakti*; *rTa mgrin* coupled, with his accolytes. The central deity of the seventh chapel is *Śākyamuni*; on the walls *sMan bla*, *Śākyamuni*,



FIG. 26

the 16 *Arhats*, *Mar me mdsad*, *Klu dbañ rgyal po*, the 35 *Buddhas* of the cycle of the confession of sins (fig. 29). The eighth is dedicated to *rGyal ba Byams pa*. On the walls the 12 works of the *Buddha* and *sMan bla*. On the right of the door *rTa mgrin*, *Byams pa*, *rNam rgyal ma*, largely restored. The ninth chapel, dedicated to *Ts'e dpag med*, contains frescoes painted in recent times. In the tenth *sGrol ma ljañ gu's* image is worshipped; the paintings are modern in many parts, of the old ones only a few small figures of *sGrol ma* being left. In the eleventh chapel, the first on the Northern side, dedicated to *Mi k'rugs pa*, are representend the five *Buddhas* and one thousand small *Mi k'rugs pa*.

In chapels 12, 13 and 14 the paintings are modern. In the 15th, dedicated to the *K'ro bo* white *Acala*, a few fragments remain, representing this god's accolytes (fig. 30). The first four chapels of the second storey are restored. The fifth, dedicated to white



FIG. 27

sGrol ma is decorated with representations of the Western paradise. The ninth, in which Mar me mdsad's statue towers, is ornamented with frescoes representing the Buddha's life and Amitābha's heaven. In the tenth the central deity is Ts'e lha lcags ma; on the wall there are many paintings of Ts'e dpag med; in

the third chapel of the third storey are painted, alternately, scenes of Amitābha's heaven and many small images of the same god. Various cycles, like the one of sGrol ma, surrounded by his 21 manifestations, alternate with pictures of Nor bzañ's life, as it is told in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. In the fourth are represented the Buddha's hundred works (fig. 31) which are again the

main theme of the ninth chapel's frescoes (fig. 32). The 16th is dedicated to P'yag na rdo rje, surrounded by the six-armed mGon po and rTa mgrin, sGrol ma white and green, and round them monks and *siddhas* (fig. 33). In the sixth of the 4th storey, round Śākyamuni's images, unfolds the



FIG. 28



FIG. 29

series of the 16 Arhat (fig. 34). The seventh has as its central deity a Jam dbyaṅs and is ornamented with series of Sa skya pa Lamas and scenes of Nor bzai's life (figg. 35, 36). In the eighth the dominant themes are the Buddha's principal works (figg. 37, 38) and in the ninth the principal manifestations of P'ur bu to whom the chapel is dedicated. In the thirteenth we see the images of some Sa skya pa lamas and episodes of their lives.

In the fifth storey, the eighth chapel, dedicated to rDo rje aḥ'aṅ, contains some remarkable portraits of lamas (fig. 39), while in the dome and in the corridor running around it, cycles desumed from the fourth class of Tantras follow one another according to Buston's classification and theories, as the scanty fragments of an inscription confirm, still legible on the entrance of the staircase leading to the dome (*Bum pa*).<sup>269</sup> In the upper storey a *blos blaṅs* maṅḍala of Kyai rdorje.

Buildings as large as the present sKu aḅum are the work of artists from various countries; this happened, for instance, in a precise manner, in Ža lu, and it is no wonder, when we remember that Tibet in those times was open to foreign influences, had continual contacts with China and with Nepal and hence was well disposed



FIG. 30

to receive every form of art and culture. But in the sKu aḅum of rGyaṅ, differently from other monuments of the same kind, I see no painting of which it may be said with certainty that it copies faithfully foreign patterns; even paintings of a clearly Nepalese manner, like those of the dome, are roughly made; their rigidity is in contrast with the assured manner of contemporary miniatures.

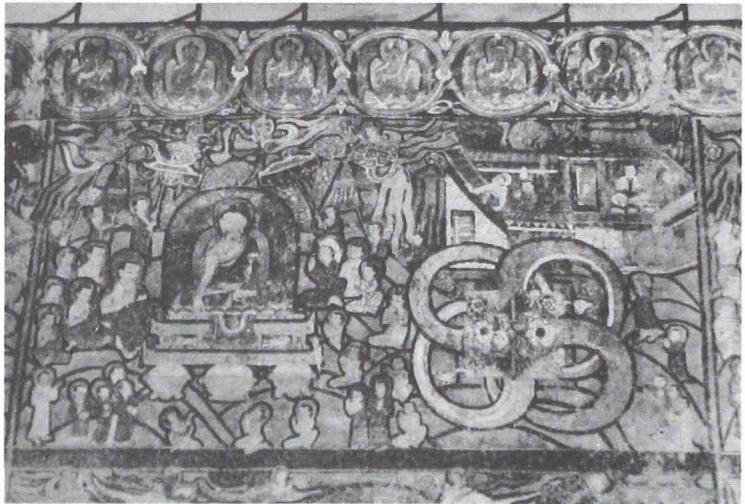


FIG. 31



FIG. 32

The sKu ḅum of rGyañ thus appears to me as the work of local artists, educated in the shadow of the great monasteries of Sa skya, Ža lu, Narthang; they followed in the wake of contrasting currents, penetrating into Tibet from several places, not yet blended into a style which, by assimilating them, might

give adequate expression to Tibetan artistic fancy. As compared to the typical Nepalese manner, in which blue and dark-red prevail and the images are surrounded by semi-circular haloes, Central Asian reminiscences are in evidence without stressing unduly the representation of cycles bound by tradition to Chinese inspirations, like the cycle of rNam t'os sras and the eight horsemen of his retinue, represented in the second chapel. Certain maṅḁala too, framed in a different manner from the traditional models, presuppose languishing Chinese suggestions. Naturally this is a case of reminiscences, affinities, echoes which show in the Tibetan artists a knowledge, perhaps remote, of those styles, but also an immaturity as to means of expression, or at least an inadequate absorption of ideals which, often against their will, seemed almost to force themselves upon them. Such characters predominate in this period and are to be found both in mural paintings and in those on canvas-but they had already vanished, or become less frequent,



FIG. 33



FIG. 34

when the C'os rgyal built the sKu ḅbum of Gyantse. In rGyañ the legends are enclosed in small squares; the little figures are outlined with vigorous lines, broad and well-defined, which encircle them almost within a halo; the trees are reduced to a pattern, as spots of the same colour, without any attempt at defining leaves and branches, while, stressing a habit of Nepalese art, all free spaces are filled up with flowers, small trees and leaves.

The lesser images, those of the acolytes in a Tantric cycle or of the lamas in a mystical trend, succeed one another within a frame of entwined tendrils, which, through Pāla art hence carried into Nepal, go back to Hellenistic motives.

Some paintings of *mC'od pai lba mo* (fig. 40) of Nepalese inspiration remind us of the representations of the same cycle which I found in Tsaparang, and do not attain the composed liveliness of those in the sKu ḅbum of Gyantse. A comparison between the paintings in the Ža lu temple and those of rGyañ suggests some considerations. Ža lu precedes rGyañ. There can be no doubt at all of this chronology; the interval between one monument and the other is at least of three quarters of a century, but it is evident that if

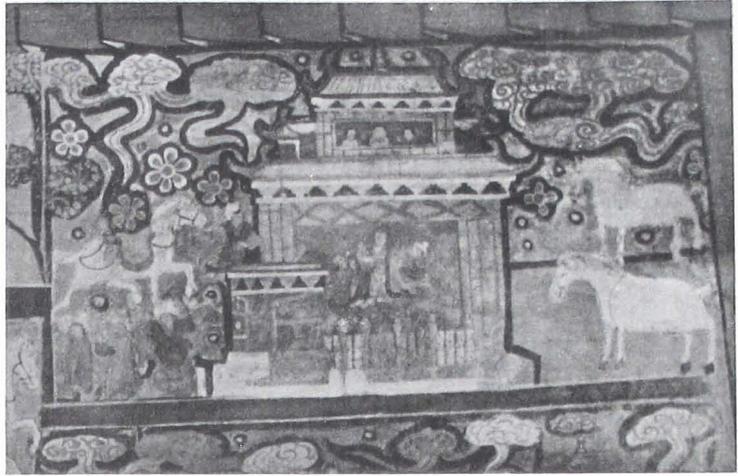


FIG. 35

we were not sure of these dates through other channels we would be induced by a comparison of the paintings to invert this order, so primitive and uncertain does rGyañ seem, taken as a whole, when compared to the Ža lu paintings. But this greater coarseness is a step backwards, perhaps a sign of the Sa skya's decline: they had then been conquered by the P'ag mo gru pa, and were to rise no more. Political decay was attended by languour in art schools.

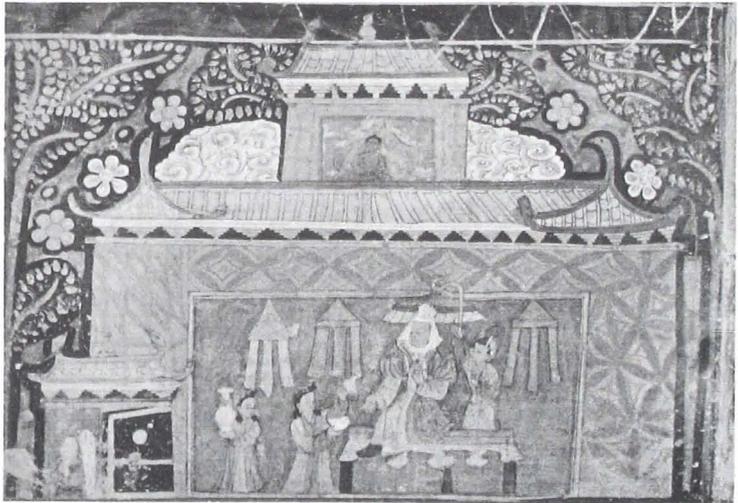


FIG. 36

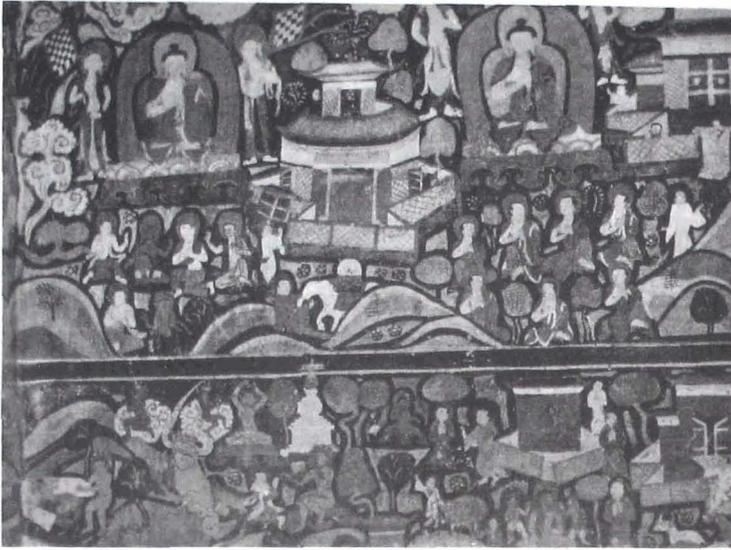


FIG. 37

The sKu ḅum of sNar t'añ has moderate proportions and cannot be compared with the important buildings of K'ro p'u, Jo nañ, rGyañ or Gyantse: it has only two storeys, surmounted by a dome (fig. 41). Also from an architectural point of view it is poor and insignificant, but the judgement we must pass on its frescoes is entirely different: even though they sometimes respond

to the usual Nepalese inspiration, elsewhere, as in the tenth chapel of the first storey, they may be considered an excellent example of the Tibetan manner which has reached its full maturity of expression and therefore they already announce the Gyantse school. In the first chapel of the first storey, the painters follow the style of rGyañ, but while there it appears in all its primitive crudity of drawing, the sNar t'añ artists made it gentler,

under the undeniable influence of Chinese softness, which is visible above all in the figures of the acolytes of the lama C'os kyi rgyal po rin po c'e ḅP'ags pa (fig. 42) and, to a lesser degree, in the adoring monks of figure 43. But the Chinese influence is felt above all in the second chapel of the second storey, having as its central deity the "Great mother",, Gnosis; on its walls a magnificent series of frescoes represents the

hundred deeds of the Buddha. The pictures still keep their ancient lustre; the figures, slender and light, enveloped in rich gilded draperies, swarm in many-coloured crowds; black and dark-red prevail, ably alternating with the white spots of light clouds. India is absent from these pictures. It is not only their architecture which takes us back to a new



FIG. 38



FIG. 39



FIG. 40

environment, as had already been the case in the scenes of Amitābha's paradise, modelled on the Chinese patterns; in the present sNar t'añ pictures, apparel, ornaments, chariots, pageants, small trees, choirs of praying figures (figg. 44-48) show to what an extent the painter had been capable of assimilating the spirit of the Chinese schools from which he could only be distracted by the occasional prevalence of Tibetan landscapes (fig. 49). But outside this chapel, having a particular character of its own, where the artist has wished to prove his skill and his

familiarity with the Chinese manner, sNar t'añ takes its place as the last of the series of sKu ḅbum we have studied. In most of the chapels a uniform manner prevails, in which the various styles and different reminiscences tend to mingle. sNar t'añ preludes to Gyantse, and in reality two of the painters we find named in the Gyantse inscriptions sign their names also as the authors of sNar t'añ frescoes.

Moreover the fact that the sKu ḅbums of sNar t'añ and of Gyantse are contemporaries is clearly proved by the inscriptions



FIG. 41

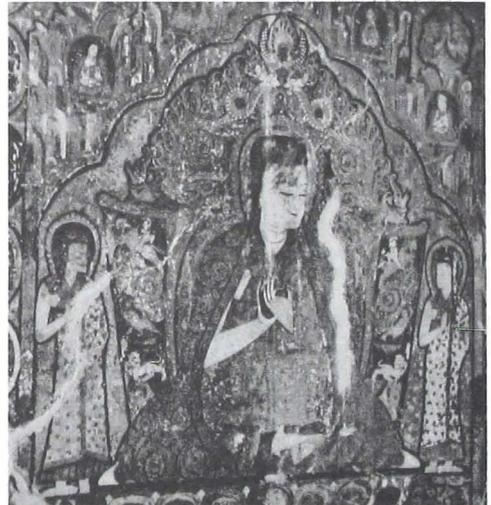


FIG. 42



FIG. 43

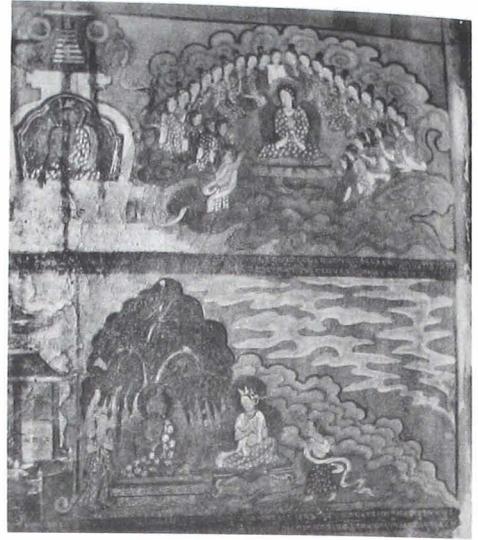


FIG. 44

relating the circumstances in which the pictures were executed. From the metrical eulogies, written in a baroque style, overflowing with metaphors gleaned from rhetorical treatises and not always in good taste, we learn that the monument was built by sNāñ grags bzañ po dpal, to honour the memory of his brother Blo gros bzañ po grags dpal, abbot of the great monastery of sNar t'añ. The

latter is not unknown; he is recorded, under the briefer name of Blo bzañ grags pa, in the list of sNar t'añ abbots by the *Deb t'er sñoñ po* (ca, p. 19), which informs us that he ruled the see for forty years and died 223 years after sNar t'añ's foundation. This date is known to us; sNar t'añ was built by gTum ston blo gros grags, a disciple of Śa ra pa, in the *c'u bya* year. Śa ra pa died a hundred years after Atiśa's arrival and the foundation took place twelve years after his death; all these data induce us to identify the year *c'u bya* with 1153 (not 1152, as S. CH. DAS says in the *Reu mig*).



FIG. 45

The stormy ups and down of history which destroyed countless works of art and unparalleled historical documents, did not spare the sNar t'añ monastery. But it is not difficult to gain an idea of the wealth its chapels once



FIG. 46

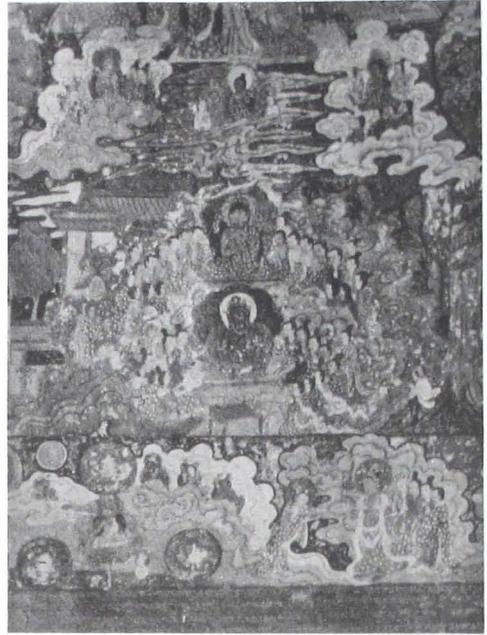


FIG. 47

contained, by seeing, for instance, the halo of a statue representing Śākyamuni, preserved in the *ṅJams pai lha k'añ*, justly pointed out to pilgrims as one of the monastery's most precious relics. The photograph shows the light gracefulness of this rare fragment of Indian art, which may be assigned to the late Pāla period (fig. 50). Our certainty might be greater if, under a favourable light, we could read at least some vestige of the inscription which ran round the base; only a few characters can now be perceived with great difficulty. Belonging to the same school, but a little later, is the base of a statue, preserved in the printing-press,

(fig. 51) while another one (fig. 52) points to other countries than India.

Last of all we have the *mc'od rten* of Jo nañ and P'un ts'ogs gliñ's many chapels.



FIG. 48

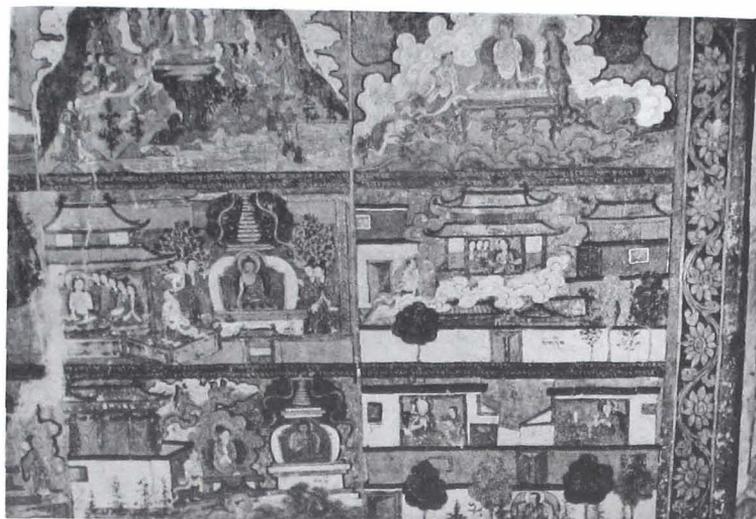


FIG. 49



FIG. 50

The date of the foundation of the sKu ḅum mt'ön grol of Jo nañ, on the frontiers of Ru lag and gYas ru in gTsañ, may be established with a fair approximation. Tāranātha states that the building was begun by Śeś rab rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po, who died in 1360, but it was restored in Tāranātha's times.<sup>270</sup> This monument is conceived "as a synthesis of the world, in which

is gathered the essence of the Buddhas of the ten points of space and of the three times, together with their Bodhisattvas,"<sup>271</sup> It is considered the centre of the school's spiritual traditions. In the chapels and the hermitages which surround it, the most famous and respected masters of asceticism gathered to meditate. Pilgrims flocked there from all parts of Tibet, annual feasts were celebrated with great affluence of princes and commoners.<sup>272</sup>

The mc'od rten, in course of time, began to deteriorate, so that Tāranātha, in the first part of his life and then in 1621, had it restored. His autobiography (pp. 90 and 201) records his loving care for the venerated monument, but does not say how the work of restoring was carried out and to what portions it was limited. His silence increases the difficulty of an artistic study of the sKu ḅum, for we know that paintings of two different epochs may coexist in it, those who go back to the period of its construction and those belonging to restorations made towards the end of the XVIth or the beginning of the XVIIth century. Hence we must proceed with the greatest caution, to avoid the risk of hastily dating certain stylistic manners which do

not correspond to reality, thus destroying the value of these monuments as a chronological point of reference, serving to fix within precise limits the evolution of Tibetan painting. Nevertheless the information gleaned in Tāranātha's autobiography, however meagre, puts us on the right path, as it gives us to understand that not only we can find in the sKu ḅbum of Jo nañ the same coexistence of

Nepalese, Central Asian and Chinese manners which we had found in other monuments, but that we must distinguish in it two different periods. In the first storey we shall find chapels, like the fourth, sixth and seventh (figg. 53, 54) in which the rGyañ style is continued. The paintings unfold in successive scenes, enclosed so as to form a well-defined unity; the figures are limited by accentuated outlines, but the trees, although they are drawn according to these same patterns, show signs of leaves. Space is not so full of floral patterns as in rGyañ. In a word there is more breadth and freedom. The paintings of the eighth chapel of the same storey belong to a different school; some represent a plan of the great monastery of bSams yas (fig. 55) and I incline to assign it to Tāranātha's restoration. On the contrary the frescoes in the ninth



FIG. 51

chapel, representing some of the Buddha's former lives (fig. 56) appear to be after the Nepalese manner and can be assigned to the very period of the mc'od rten's construction. From the second storey onwards we find only paintings assignable to Tāranātha's epoch, but that is not to say that style and schools are uniform.

From the frescoes of the second chapel in the second storey, which seems to be



FIG. 52



FIG. 53

inspired by the old traditions, with evident reflections of Indian motifs (figg. 57, 58); from the fifth chapel, where the Indian

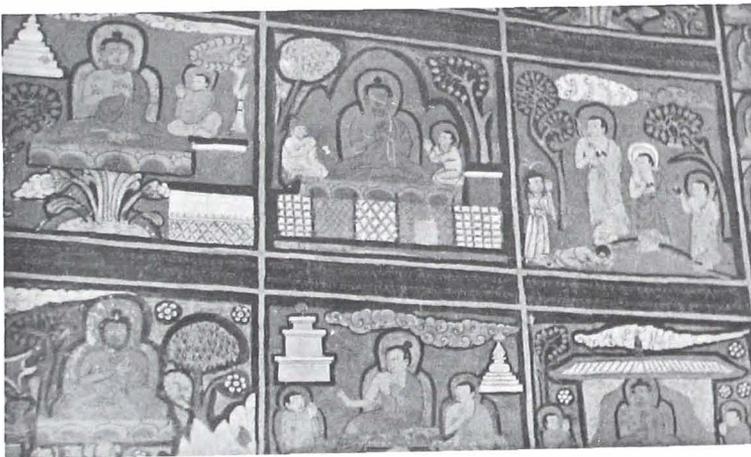


FIG. 54

influence is still manifest, we pass to the eleventh chapel of the same storey, dedicated to 'Od dpag med and painted with scenes from the lives of the Sa skya saints and Jātakas of the Buddha. Here the same manner which we saw reaching its full maturity in the sKu ḅbum of Gyantse, is displayed in a great variety. We defined this manner as the synthesis and meeting-point of several styles which before that time had long coexisted on Tibetan soil, without attaining unification. This very same manner is seen to continue in the first chapel of the third storey, while in the third a choir of Bodhisattvas takes us back to a different environment (fig. 59). Here the Central Asian manner takes the upper hand, while the series of masters and Siddhas is the work of a painter who evidently keeps to the ancient patterns, but not so blindly that a greater freshness and agility cannot penetrate his work (fig. 60). In the ninth chapel the Central Asian manner again appears (fig. 61).

For the use of scholars and doubting that in a few years very little will be left of this monument, where rain continues to efface the paintings and modern daubers paint horrible scrawls after their manner, I think it best to give a summary list of the main cycles represented in the chapels and a copy of the brief inscriptions, with those names of artists which are still legible.

#### FIRST STOREY

*1st Chapel.* - Po lai lha k'an; central deity: sTon pa. On the walls images of ḅJig rten dbaṅ p'yug surrounded by ḅP'ags pa, Pad ma gar gyi dbaṅ p'yug, ḅJig rten mgon po, red, ḅJig rten dbaṅ p'yug, mK'a'

spyod ma, aJig rten  
dбаñ p'yug, T'ugs rje  
c'en po, sPyañs ras  
gzigs with 11 heads,  
white sGrol ma. Tra-  
ces of inscriptions, in  
which the donors' and  
artist's names are read:  
*Ziñ k'ams adii yon bdag  
ajad pa mos ston pa ñi ma  
abum dañ ston ma dбаñ  
p'yug mdses pas bkyis šiñ  
lba bzo ba slob dpon c'os  
rgyal gyis gzabs so.*

2nd Chapel. — Empty.

3rd Chapel. — Cen-  
tral deity: sTon pa.  
A series of lamas.

On the small wall on the left: Buddha.

4th Chapel. — Central deity: Byams pa.  
On the left of the door aJam dbyañs. On  
the right sPyan ras gzigs and various scenes  
representing the bDe ba can žiñ bkod.

5th Chapel. — Central deity: sTon pa.

6th Chapel. — Central deity: Byams pa.  
Above the door sGrol ljañ. On the left of  
the door: rNam rgyal  
ma, Ša kya t'ub pa, Mi  
k'rug pa. The Bud-  
dha's former lives; 'Od  
dpag med surrounded  
by many small images  
of the same deity.

7th Chapel. — Central  
deity: sTon pa. On  
the right: Byams pa,  
Ra mo c'e's palace.  
The twelve Bodhisattvas.  
sPrul snañ gi sgo pa kiñ.  
On the left: sPrul snañ  
gi sgo pa kiñ. Lha sa  
dpal lha mo dañ skyoñ,  
Lha sai klu rgyal gñis.  
On the other walls: bal  
mo bzas bžeñs pai lha  
sai sPrul snañ gi gtsug



FIG. 55

lag k'añ. Sprul snañ gi Jo bo bcu gcig žal,  
K'ro gñer can, K'ro rta mgrin, bDud rtsi  
ak'yil pa, aJam dbyañs, Mar me mdsad,  
twelve Bodhisattvas; over the door Sroñ btsan  
sgam po with his two wives. The Tibetan  
king; Ra mo c'e and its protectors.

8th Chapel. — Central deity: sPyan ras gzigs  
with 11 heads; on the left of the door K'ra



FIG. 56



FIG. 57



FIG. 58

ābrug gtsug lag k'añ, bSam yas kyi dpal ldan lha mo, Dus gsum Sañs rgyas. On the right of the door a plan of bSam yas.

*9th Chapel.* – Central deity: Śākyamuni. On the left of the door the Buddha's preceding life and several small images of the Buddha. On the right, more lives of the Buddha.

*10th Chapel.* – Central deity sPyan ras gzigs with 11 heads; on the walls Śākyamuni, sGrol ljañ, sMan bla, sTon pa.

*11th Chapel.* – Central deity sGrol ljañ. On the walls Śākyamuni and scenes of his life; Jo bo, eight Bodhisattvas.

## SECOND STOREY

*1st Chapel.* – Known by the name of rDo rje gdan. The paintings are not visible.

*2nd Chapel.* – Central deity Śākyamuni. On the walls: the sKal bzañ series.

*3rd Chapel.* – Central deity. Śākyamuni. On the walls: Gur mgon, Lha mo, K'ro gñer can, rMa bya c'en mo, āJam dbyañs, sPyan ras gzigs, K'ro bo mi gyo ba.

*4th Chapel.* – Central deity: 'Od dpag med. On the walls: Ts'e dpag med, Byams pa, rTa mgrin, mGon po with six arms; over the door traces of an inscription containing the names of the donor Nam mk'a' rgyal mts'an and of the painter Señ ge bzañ po.

*5th Chapel.* – Central deity: sPyan ras gzigs. On the walls: sGrol ljañ, the cycle of sKal bzañ sañs rgyas.

*6th Chapel.* – Central deity: āJam dbyañs. On the walls: Śākyamuni, 'Od sruñ, four Tathāgata, the cycle of sKal bzañ.

*7th Chapel.* – Central deity: sPyan ras gzigs. On the walls are painted cycles of the Kālacakra.

*8th Chapel.* – Central deity: P'yag dor; on the walls images of P'yag dor gtum po, P'yag rdor bdud rtsii k'yil ba, P'yag dor mdo lugs.

*9th Chapel.* – Central deity: 'Od dpag med. On the walls images of the Buddhas of the cycle of confession.

*10th Chapel.* – Central deity: Nam mk'ai mts'an can sGrol ljañ. Traces of inscriptions in which the names of the painters Señ ge bzañ po and Kun dga' bsod nams are legible: *myur lam mk'as pa señ ge bzañ po dañ kun dga' bsod nams ak'or dañ bcas pas bris.* Then images of Śākyamuni, P'yag stoñ spyān stoñ, Pañ c'en āgro bai gñen, Śāriputra.

*11th Chapel.* – Central deity: 'Od dpag med. On the walls legends of some Sa skyā



FIG. 59

lamas and the one hundred and one works of the Buddha.

*12th Chapel.* – Central deity: Śākyamuni. On the walls several images of aJam dbyaṅs.

### THIRD STOREY

*1st Chapel.* – Central deity: C'os rje. On the walls sMan bla and the eight Tathāgatas.

*2nd Chapel.* – Central deity: sGrol ljaṅ; on the walls the white and red Tārā with many small images of the same deity.

*3rd Chapel.* – Central deity: Śākyamuni; on the walls rTa mgrin.

*4th Chapel.* – Central deity: 'Od dpag med. On the walls Nam mk'ai sñiṅ po, P'yag rdor, rTa mgrin, K'ro rgyal, aJam dbyaṅs, sGrib pa rnam sel.

*5th Chapel.* – Central deity: Nor rgyun ma. On the walls: Rig c'en ma red, gTsub tor dri med kyi dkyil ak'or gyi gtso bo t'ub pa.

*6th Chapel.* – Central deity: rDo rje ac'aṅ. On the walls: rGyu skar mo rnam rgyal ma, sGrol ljaṅ, rDo rje rnam ajom.

*7th Chapel.* – Central deity: P'a dam pa saṅs rgyas. On the walls the 84 Siddhas.

*8th Chapel.* – Central deity: 'Od dpag med. Many frescoes represent various manifestations of 'Od zer can ma.



FIG. 60

*9th Chapel.* – Central deity: Śākyamuni. On the walls: gSil bai ts'al c'en mo.

*10th Chapel.* – Central deity: Śākyamuni. On the walls the 16 Arhats.

*11th Chapel.* – Central deity: Śākyamuni. On the walls: sPyan ras gzigs, aJam dbyaṅs, P'yag rdor, rNam sras.

*12th Chapel.* – Central deity: Śākyamuni. On the walls: Ts'e dpag med, rNam rgyal and several lesser deities.

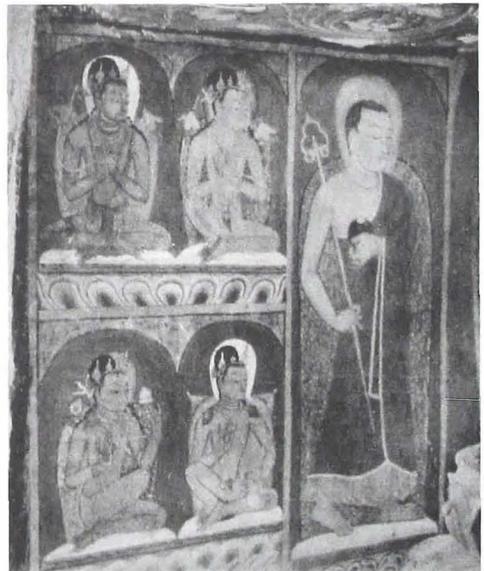


FIG. 61



FIG. 62

#### FOURTH STOREY

*1st Chapel.* – Central deity: rDo rje sems dpa'. On the walls various images of the same divinity, of his manifestations and of his retinue. Traces of inscriptions in which the name of the painter *Señ ge bzañ po* can be read: *señ ge bzañ po ak'or dan bcas pa yis bde gšegs sñiñ poi sku gzugs adi dag bris.*

*2nd Chapel.* – On the small wall on the left: *ak'Kyiñ ak'or ñan soñ sbyoñs rgyud nas gsuñ bai ras bris.*

*3rd Chapel.* – Various images of lamas, rTa mgrin, Ts'e dpag med.

*4th Chapel.* – Central deity: 'Od dpag med. On the walls images of various masters: Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asaṅga.

*5th Chapel.* – On the walls several maṇḍalas and images of P'yag rdor and the mGon po with six arms.

*6th Chapel.* – Many images of rDo rje p'ur bu and other terrific deities.

*7th Chapel.* – Central deity rDo rje sems dpa'; four maṇḍalas, various manifestations and accolytes of the same god.

*8th Chapel.* – In ruins.

*9th Chapel.* – In ruins.

*10th Chapel.* – Central deity: Byams pa. The 5 supreme Buddhas, mGon po and various maṇḍala.

*11th Chapel.* – In ruins.

*12th Chapel.* – In ruins.

#### DOMES

Frescoes are to be found on both sides of the corridor which winds round the dome. It is impossible to give a complete description of the extremely numerous images which cover the walls. They are very well preserved, but as a rule have no great iconographical interest and represent well known deities. On the four niches (*sgo k'yim*): Dus kyi ak'or lo blo blañs, two Byams pa with aJam dbyañs on the right and aJam dbyañs k'ro bo on the left, three rTa mgrin, four Śākya-muni. Maṇḍalas of the four classes of Tantra and of the Dus kyi ak'or lo.

The importance of Jo nañ as an art centre clearly appears in P'un ts'ogs gliñ, a general name given to the many chapels, which not far from gTsañ po formed the stronghold of the Jo nañ pa sect, before the Yellows took possession of it. The Jo nañ's construction was cared for by Tāranātha, assisted by the *sde srid* of Byañ and by the *sde srid* of bSam grub rtse, who helped him with generous contributions and furnished compulsory labour.

In the present summary description I will follow the tour that guides do with visitors, and briefly point out the pictures and works of art admired in the different places. The first thing shown is the mGon k'añ, consisting of two rooms. The walls of the first are covered with paintings representing Lha mo dmag zor ma, Dam can c'os rgyal, Žiñ skyoñ, Dur k'rod bdag, mGon po lcam dral.

The paintings are made according to the style proper to the mGon k'añ, on a black background, with sudden spots of red and yellow. The drawing is extremely accurate, the outline is traced with an harmonious daring and the composition is generally imposing; lights and shades are feebly suggested. Although the frescoes do not depart from traditional iconographic patterns, nevertheless the artist's style has been softened by some contacts with manners and techniques softer and more highly evolved. The second room contains images of the Gur mgon and of the Pu tra miñ sriñ.<sup>273)</sup> Then one is admitted in the aDus k'añ, whose central deity is a Jo bo of gilded bronze, of a good Nepalese make. On the walls, for the greater part hidden by libraries containing the collections of sacred texts written in golden letters on pages coloured with indigo, can be seen with some difficulty the images of the Sañs rgyas rabs bdun, made by twenty Nepalese artists (*Autobiography*, p. 219) and next the cycle of bDe mc'og. The sGrol ma lha k'añ is ornamented with good Nepalese images of gilded bronze of the Yum c'en mo, in the centre, between those of sGrol ljañ and of rJe btsun Tāranātha. The 'Og ma lha k'añ, which like the preceding one is to be found on the upper floor of the aDus kañ, is consecrated to Ts'e dpag med, surrounded by rDo rje ač'añ, aJam dbyañs, Byams pa, P'yag stoñ spyan stoñ and 8 silver mc'od rten dedicated to the eight Buddhas of medicine. Of greater interest are some frescoes representing various hypostases of Lokeśvara; in the grace of their poses and their accurate design they clearly betray the author's familiarity with the best Indian style.

But the student of art will experience the greatest wonder when the doors of the mGon k'añ p'ar open before him, where the masks used in ritual dances are kept. It is dedicated to gŠed dmar, i. e. to Raktayamāri, whose acolytes, gods and goddesses are represented in the mural frescoes. These images have



FIG. 63

no relation with other Tibetan schools that we know of. They represent something so novel that our mind does not seek Tibetan parallels but rather, however strange it may seem, turns to the paintings of some modern Indian schools (figg. 62-65). The clouds and rocks, reminiscent of Chinese models, appear, it is true, in these paintings, but as attenuated as in today's Indian revivals, in which the native tradition is enriched by conscious loans from China and Japan. The figures become slender and move with agility; some rush into space with a sudden impetus; mobility and levity are present to a degree unusual in Tibetan art, the air is bright and luminous, the colours are never too vivid. The other temple in which one is introduced during the ritual tour is the mK'a' spyod lha k'añ. This temple too consists of two cells; the first is well preserved, while the other is damaged to such an extent that almost no trace remains of the decoration. The frescoes of the first represent the cycle called aDus ač'or mc'od lha, namely the adoring deities, according to the Kālacakra's system. They were executed



FIG. 64

between 1631 and 1639 (*Autobiography*, p. 233) and open up to us a new pictorial world. The images traced with great subtlety and coloured a light, pale brown, gradually softened, appear in the pose of the classical *tribhāṅga*, full hips and shapely nudity, their hair rolled up on the nape of the neck. We are carried back to the best traditions of India (figg. 66-69). In this case the artists draw their inspiration from precise Indian



FIG. 65

manners, and direct contacts with them are not unlikely, so lively and fresh in these works is the presence of that style and so remote any attempt to adapt it to Tibetan patterns.

In the Lha k'ān bde ba can, dedicated to Ts'e dpag med, paintings in the traditional Chinese style represent the Western Heaven, while in the lCañ lo can lha k'ān, in which P'yang dor is enthroned, the many images of

this god covering the walls are executed according to the Nepalese manner. To the same god is dedicated the Pad bkod lha k'ān, whose frescoes represent Padmasambhava (restored), Kun dga'sñiñ po, mGon po p'yang drug, sGrol ljañ, sPyan ras gzigs bcu gcig žal, sGrol ljañ. In the atrium is painted Taranātha's life. The style, a well-balanced blending of Indian and Chinese manners, may be called a good specimen of that art in

which the different inspirations and characters of Tibetan taste met and were harmonized.

Leaving the great temple of P'un ts'ogs gliñ, which stands with its many chapels in the plain, surrounded by the village, we ascend a rocky hill overhanging for a long trait the valley and the meandering course of the gTsañ po. On the top of this rock stands, near lesser temples, the rje btsun



FIG. 66

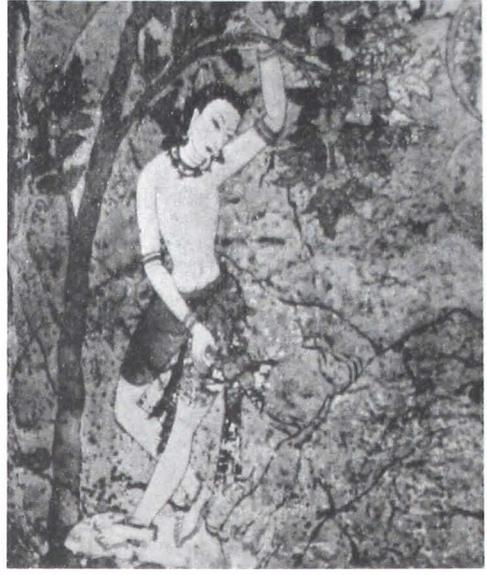


FIG. 67

Tāranātha p'o brañ, also called mNnon dga' gzigs snañ rtse. The atrium has magnificence and grandeur; spacious and severe, it is ornamented with large paintings representing the rGyal c'en sde bži, in the traditional style, although the Chinese pattern, with which the representation of this cycle is bound up in Tibet, has become fainter and gentler; the grim expression of the four keepers of the points of space has softened. The figures are less stout than usual, one sees them moving more lightly. But the visitor's attention is immediately attracted by the figure of a woman playing a drum and of two adoring goddesses (*mc'od pai lha mo*), in the Indian style. The rest of the wall is covered with figures of other deities of the same cycle, all by the same hand. But it is clear that the Indian manner of these frescoes is very different from the one which inspired the artists of the mK'a' spyod lha k'añ. The great figures of the atrium, whose colours are fresh and vivid, have nothing to do with the small and slender figures, drawn more than painted, in the little chapel. The traditions inspiring the unknown author of these

powerful compositions are surely Indian too, but they suggest other schools. Analogy with the styles of Central and Southern India are self-evident (figg. 70-74). In his autobiography Tāranātha often mentions the paintings



FIG. 68



FIG. 69

he caused to be executed in these temples. Indeed we know that a large work of construction, restoration and decoration was carried out about 1617-1618, and that to bring this holy enterprise to an end the abbot was assisted by the political authorities, who obliged the population, for more or less lengthy periods, to work under compulsion (*mk'ar*

*las*). But Tāranātha hardly ever alludes to the artists who did the work. Only once, speaking of the frescoes of the Lha k'an c'en mo, he mentions the master of sPun k'yem, aided by his pupils (sPun k'yem pa dpon slob aga' śas) (*Autobiography*, p. 219) and by other painters of the feud (*gži pai lha bris pa*). sPun k'yem pa, to deserve the honour of a special mention, must have been one of the best known and celebrated artists

of his times, if it was enough to call him simply by his family name. The others were local painters; they belonged to the monastery's jurisdiction. Thus Tāranātha confirms the existence of a flourishing artistic school, indeed such a school was recorded in documents since the times of the C'os rgyal of Gyantse, on whose sKu ḅbum not a few



FIG. 70



FIG. 71

painters from these localities round Lha rtse worked.

Historical tradition states unanimously that one of the most ancient temples of Central Tibet was that of gNas gzar, on the right of the Ñaṅ c'u, on the Gyantse/Shigatse road. Unfortunately it has seriously deteriorated and its ancient aspect is changed to a great extent. It consists of two main chapels, one known by the name

of Yum c'en moi lha k'añ. Although the central deity represents rDo tje dbyiñs kyi mam par snañ mdsad with round haloes, as in the temple of Tabo in Western Tibet, on one side is enthroned a large stucco image of the Prajñāpāramitā, to whom the temple owes its name. More important is the second temple, called rTa mgrin lha k'añ, in which the central deity is Kun rig rnam par snañ mdsad, surrounded on both sides by his cycle. The temple's name is derived from a statue of rTa mgrin, which is placed on the entrance, as door-keeper (*sgo sruñ*). The great gilded figures in this temple (figg. 75-77) take us back to a well known style. They have the same expression, wear the same draperies, as in the Ivang temple; evidently we have before us a work not only of the same epoch but also by the same hand, because there is no other explanation for the



FIG. 72

resemblance down to the smallest details, as in the decorations of dress. We reach the same conclusions when we observe the remaining traces of frescoes; they show the same artistic inspiration followed by the painter of one of the Ivang chapels (fig. 78). In both cases we will easily recognize a Central Asian influence.

The monastery of sPos k'añ or rather sPos ts'ogs c'os sde, in a valley East of the Ñaṅ



FIG. 73



FIG. 74

c'u on the Shigatse (Gyantse) road, has remarkable importance in Tibetan Lamaism, because according to the tradition it was founded by Byañ c'ub dpal bzañ po, a disciple of Śākyaśrī. The foundation took place one year before Śākyaśrī returned to India, namely in the bird-year 1213. The monastery, which according to the eulogy was ornamented by the C'os rgyal of rGyal



FIG. 75

rtse Rab brtan kun bzañ ap'ags pa, has undergone many vicissitudes, and has altogether rather a modern aspect. The paintings decorating the aDus k'añ, all in the Chinese style, cannot be earlier than the XVIIth century, but even in this temple some extremely remarkable relics of the earliest age are preserved: first of all a painting on wood, with Atiśa's portrait, to be attributed to a hand not later than the first years of the XVIth century (fig. 79) and a

statue of Byams pa, a magnificent bronze from Southern India (fig. 80), one of the very few specimens of this school that I have come across in Tibet and finally a beautiful portrait of Śākyaśrī, which in a temple like this one, boasting him as its founder, is held in a most particular honour and furthermore has remarkable artistic merits for its lifelike expression and realistic evidence (fig. 81). Finally a conch-shell must be mentioned, which is sounded to call monks together for solemn ceremonies (*ts'ogs dun*); its silver covering is finely decorated with tiny images of deities. This superb work of a good silversmith shows in its decorations clear reminiscences of ornamental motifs which appear in ancient mural paintings. I allude particularly to the elegant tendrils, enclosing small figures finely chased,



FIG. 76



FIG. 77

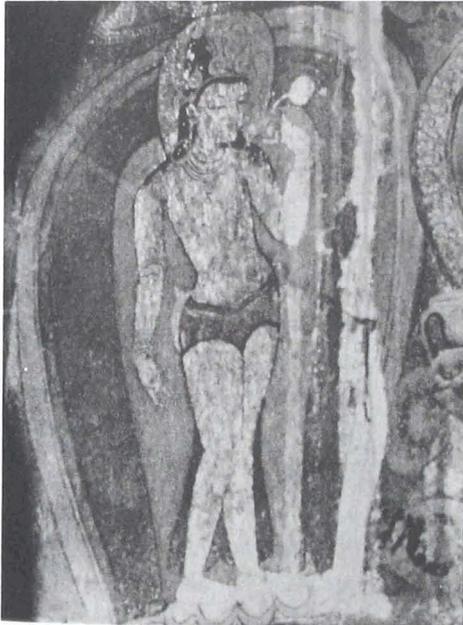


FIG. 78



FIG. 79



FIG. 80

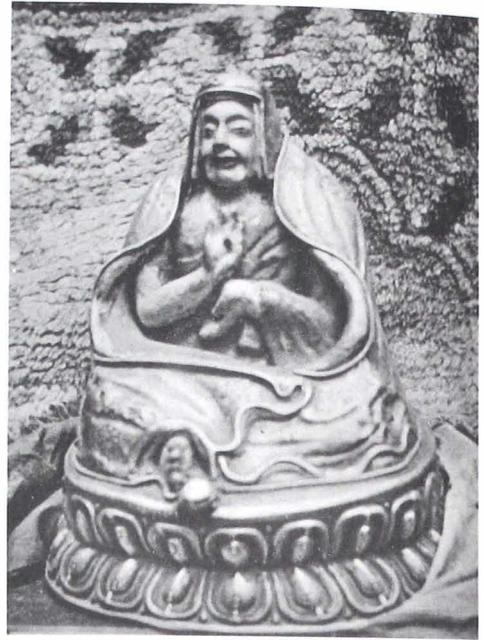


FIG. 81

representing deities modelled on the best Indian patterns (fig. 82).

The sPos k'añ ts'ogs k'añ goes back to the most ancient monastery, and consists of an atrium and a temple proper. The pictures in the atrium are of Nepalese style and represent the cycle of the seven Buddhas (Sañs rgyas rabs bdun); they are now almost effaced. In the interior the central deity represents Śākya-muni surrounded by eight Bodhisattvas; the paintings which form a background for the statues are also of Nepalese style, and all noticeably damaged. On the left wall is a statue of Maitreya, with a halo much resembling the images of Ivang, Samada and gNas gsar. Over the door on the left, and on the left wall, can be admired frescoes of a style very different



FIG. 82

from that of Nepal. They represent Žal bcu gcig, rNam t'os sras, sGrol ma, Kun dga' bzañ po', Gur mgon. The central figure, standing out in delicate colours against a brown background, is surrounded by fluttering clouds, in the midst of which praying Bodhisattvas saunter; or animals' figures are substituted for the clouds, drawn in a masterly fashion. The merit and novelty of these paintings are in the grace and finish of the lines. The pale pink colour, gradually growing fainter and finally vanishing in a pale orange colour, is almost secondary, and appears only to set off the line. The style of the author who signs himself dGe legs bšes gñen, is clearly inspired by China (fig. 83).

Lha rtse, which had remarkable importance during the Sa skya pa period and in successive

times, has now been completely modernized. Its only monument having a great interest is the small Gayadhara lha k'añ, so called after the great Kashmiri pandit.

To be exact, this monument is not a chapel, but a grotto, preceded by an atrium. On the grotto's central wall looms large the cycle of the supreme pentad, centering round Vairocana. The figures are sculpted in the rock, and their archaic stiffness shows them to be ancient. That the chapel was consecrated since remote times is proved by the wooden panels of the door, representing rDo rje sems dpa', having on both sides forest deities (*yaksini*), who touch the branches of the tree on which they lean, and particularly by the sculptures of the lintel on which are seen figures of the Gaṅgā and of the Yamunā, between two devas (fig. 84). In this case, as on the doors of Tabo and Toling, there is no room for doubt. The artist was not Tibetan but Indian, no matter whether these panels were brought directly from India or made on the spot. Anyhow they cannot be later than the XIIIth century.

The monastery of Po ton belongs to the sect of the same name. Its monks are *ser k'yim pa*, viz. they marry. The temple is much damaged and of the ancient decoration very little is left. On the great road between Lha rtse and Tashilunpo, in the environs of Žabs dge ldiñ, many times disputed on account of its position, it was exposed to frequent spoliations and ruin. There are two temples. The larger one, with traces of paintings of an excellent epoch, is contemporary with those of the sKu ḅum of Gyantse, although some are perhaps superior in refined execution and grandeur of composition. The frescoes represent the hundred moments of the Buddha's life and the Sañs rgyas rabsb dun. The other temple is now transformed in mGon k'añ. In the atrium are dimly to be seen traces of badly damaged paintings, representing Sa skya pa lamas, like K'un dga' sñiñ po.



FIG. 83

We know the date of Nor's foundation. It is not one of the most ancient in gTsañ, but thanks to its abbots, who were learned masters of esoteric scriptures, it gathered a rich collection of Sanskrit manuscripts and of

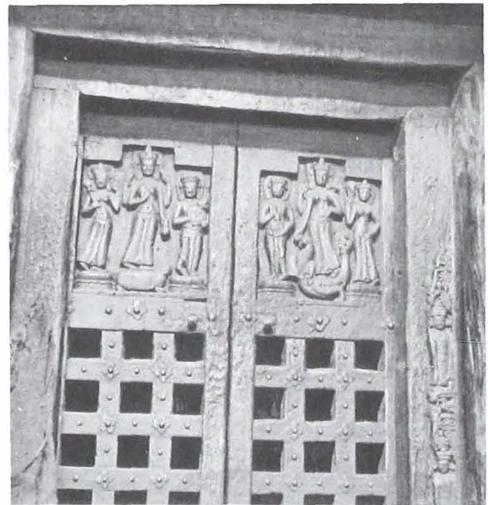


FIG. 84



FIG. 85



FIG. 86

ancient objects of art (figg. 85, 86). Some of its chapels are real art galleries, in which may be admired magnificent examples of Indian sculpture, and no small number of Pāla images.

Only the ruins of the old castle are left in Nor bui k'yuñ rtse, which on account of its strategical position was very often disputed, and hence is often mentioned in historical records of gTsañ; for some time it was governed by a branch of the reigning family of Gyantse. The monastery is now occupied by the Yellow Sect, but originally it belonged to the Sa skya pa. This can be desumed from the Yi dam, whose image is painted in the Nepalese style on the left of the doorway. Altogether the convent and chapel have no great interest, but some fine statues of the 16 Arhats, of Chinese inspiration, extremely expressive, must be mentioned (figg. 87-89).

If, after this summary glance at the most celebrated monuments of the gTsañ provinces, we wished to pass judgement on the general characters of Tibetan painting, as it

can be studied there, we would have to repeat, largely, what I said as regards the sKu abum of Gyantse: that we are confronted in Tibet with a great wealth of schools, generally echoing now one and now the other of the styles which contributed to educate Tibetan taste: India, China, Central Asia. When we say India we mean mainly Nepal, with which gTsañ always maintained an active spiritual traffic.

Each school, although it was gradually opened up to certain general techniques and means of expression, remained enclosed for a long time in its traditions, which always showed, clear and living, the initial imprint received from abroad. The various currents and manners had not yet become blended into a style through which Tibetan sensibility, now experienced and refined, might once more express those suggestions, so that new characters might ensue, derived from that inspiration but interpreting it to their liking. Thus the study of several pictorial monuments in gTsañ leads us to the same conclusions we



FIG. 87

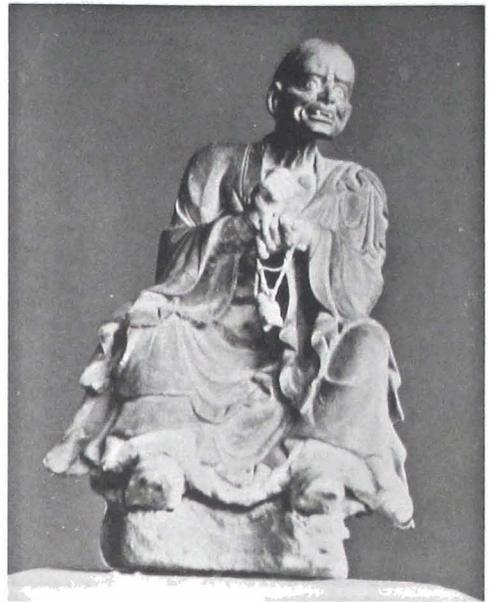


FIG. 88

had reached when studying Gyantse: namely, we find precisely in that sKu ḅbum of gTsañ the first expression of Tibetan artistic maturity, in which are blended the various currents concurring to form it, by adaptation to certain characters which cause Tibetan painting to differ from all others of the East.

In *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 19, I have published a long list of painters, based on the signatures they wrote on the margins of their works. This list can now be enriched with new names.

dPon btsun bKra šis bzañ po	sNar t'añ
dPon btsun of dBus	"
Šes rab dpal	"
rGyal po dar of Gro bo luñ	"
a pupil of dGe ḅdun rGyal	sNar t'añ
brTson mc'og bdag	"
ḅBre Nan (?) bzañs	gNas gsar
mC'ims bSod nams ḅbum	Za lu
Sen ge bzañ po	Jo nañ
Kun dga' bsod nams	"
dPon grub	Nor bui k'yuñ rtse
dGe legs bšes gñen	sPos k'añ

Among these Šes rab dpal is the same as Šes rab dpal bzañ po of rGyal k'añ in Ńug, who often appears in Gyantse (*Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 19), bKra šis bzañ po is also met in the same monument.



FIG. 89

Of other artists only the name is known to us, as of the slob dpon C'os rgyal, author of stucco statues in Jo nañ. Round these artists a class of craftsmen flourished, which since those times was experienced in metal-work, particularly on silver and copper, which Tibetans work with great mastery up to our times, as personal ornaments prove, from the *gau* to the coverings of bowls, temple utensils, and teapots. Craftsmen must have been held in great consideration since those times, if they were able to sign the objects made in their workshops; for instance the Blo brtan bzañ po of sNar t'añ left his name on the doors of Ža lu, aBre aḡar rDo tje of rGyañ ro on the club of the lotsāva of K'ro p'u; rGyal mts'an on the silver covering of the conch-shell of sPos k'añ.

The monuments mentioned in these pages belong to one province only of Western Tibet, to gTsañ, and they are generally earlier than the rising fortunes of the dGe lugs pa; nearly all were built by the Sa skya pa or by kindred sects. Shall we find something different in dBus? New trends and new manners?

A final answer may be given when the most important surviving monuments of dBus have been studied. But I do not think that we should expect to find much that is new there, because throughout Tibet a cultural *koine* had become established, which needs must be reflected also on art; the triumph of the Yellow Sect and the preeminence of dBus over gTsañ derived from it, probably displaced the centre of artistic activity, but did not interrupt it; ancient traditions were not extinguished, they were gathered in the shadow of the great convents built by that sect which, growing in power and prestige, now influenced Tibet's cultural and artistic life. The fifth Dalai Lama, triumphant, embodied for eternity his glory and his ambition in one of Asia's most important monuments, the Potala of Lhasa; Tashilunpo multiplied its chapels to contain

the tombs of the Pañ c'en lamas; the walls of temples lifting their golden pinnacles into the turquoise sky continued to be ornamented with frescoes so deeply influenced by Chinese XVIIIth century art that some of these paintings might seem Chinese provincial art. It was, of course, the same conventional school, which never saw the rise of original personalities. But some painters seem to have been remarked above the others or to have gained the admiration of their contemporaries, since history has preserved their memory. Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o in the biography of the fifth Dalai Lama, for instance, quotes some of them with honour.

In 1648, when the Potala's wall paintings were begun, the work was given to many painters of dBus and gTsañ, among whom the foremost place belongs to the sPrul sku C'os dbyañs rgya mts'o (vol. *ca*, p. 142) and sMan t'añ pa (vol. *ca*, pp. 324, 351) and others of whom we shall speak again. In 1649 and in 1668 we find the name of two skillful *bzo ba*, called E pa sprul sku Hor dar and Bag dro, from whom the Dalai Lama ordered some statues for the chapel of the gSañ snaḡs (*ibid.*, p. 49), and the Ri mo pa dBu mdsad dPal mgon from sTag luñ whom we find at the head of 66 artists working under his orders (*ibid.*, pp. 246, 323 and *c'a*, p. 182). Mention is also made of aBroñ rtse blo bzañ (vol. *ca*, pp. 189 and 223) and of sPun dgos nor bu who painted the stories of the bKa' gdams pa bla mas. The same author quotes the names of various artisans such as Rin spuñs pa Ts'e ri dbañ, dBu c'en rag k'a pa aJam dbyañs dbañ po who worked at the big *sgo sku* (*Biography*, p. 182). Other artists are recorded in the biography of Pañ c'en Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an by Blo bzañ ye šes dpal, p. 15, where mention is made of C'os dbyañs rgya mts'o along with a carpenter (*ññ bzo*) C'os mgon blo gros and a blacksmith (*lcags bzo*) Dar rgyas, p. 31.

## THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS: VAJRAYĀNA

**T**he tankas that we shall illustrate later one by one, all represent religious subjects; they are a pictorial representation of the mystical and symbolical world through which Lamaism finds its expression. Lamaism is the name of the Tibet's religion, from the word *bla ma*, Sanscr. *guru* "master", the spiritual guide. But Lamaism is neither a creation nor an innovation of the Tibetans. Naturally the latter, by accepting the new religion and letting it gradually supplant their original shamanistic beliefs which go by the name of Bon, have conferred a particular aspect on Buddhism, allowing native Bon elements to find their way into it. This was due to the tolerance of Buddhism itself; in its *diaspora*, far from opposing native religions, Buddhism tried above all to absorb and assimilate their intuitions and their divinities, whenever it was possible to do so without harm to its essential dogmas. But in general, as was to be expected from a population overwhelmed by a vision of life and by a culture infinitely superior to its own and whose deeply religious spirit had a great respect for tradition, the Tibetans preserved their Indian masters' teachings most faithfully.

Hence, to have a clear idea of Lamaism, we must establish which type of Buddhism it continues in the Country of Snows. Certainly not the Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle. When Buddhism penetrated into Tibet, and this, it is well to repeat it, took place twice, the first time in the epoch of the Kings (*śāḍa dar*), and the second time (*p'yi dar*) with Atiśa Rin c'en bzañ po, and Mar pa, Mahāyāna, and above all Vajrayāna, the "adamantine Vehicle", was predominant in India.

Thus we are led, if we aim at a proper understanding of the tankas, to look into the religious world which is their base and premise,

without a knowledge of which, the tankas would remain an inexplicable mystery. I have no intention of giving here a detailed account of Vajrayāna; I will only summarize its chief points and general principles, with particular reference to the opinions of the Tibetan masters concerning it.

We are facing one of the most debated points of Buddhist thought: Tantrism is very often considered decayed and corrupt Buddhism. It is clear that, collectively considered, Tantric liturgies and experiences apparently have very little in common with the doctrines we think may be attributed to Śākyamuni or considered essential to early Buddhism; indeed they show the gradual ascent to the surface, the invasion and the spread, of older intuitions, which dig their roots deep into India's spiritual and religious bedrock and hand down from it primitive, sometimes barbarous, ideas. These ideas, nevertheless, are often given a new meaning, thought out afresh into new values and transfigured into symbols. It is precisely this psychological substance which must be stressed, if we are to understand what the Tantras represent in the evolution of India's religious and mystical thought.

In other words, no one can deny that the Tantras, from a doctrinal point of view, are the form most aberrant from scholastic and monastic Buddhism's essential principles; that they represent the latest among its formulations, even if their ground-work is extremely ancient; that they are a particular aspect of Buddhism, an easy bridge linking it with Hinduism. But this does not mean that the Tantras should all be rejected and condemned, for in no other form, perhaps, is the complexity as well as the depth of the Indian masters' psychological analysis so apparent.

That the Tantras are the last interpretation of Buddhism is even admitted by those very schools which base their soteriology on them. Naturally these schools translate this position into mythical terms: they interpret the seeming contradiction between their own principles and the Buddha's traditional word as depending on an esoteric revelation, often going back to the beginning of time, made known to men after other preachings of the Law, better adapted to shallower and more earthly people. As a matter of fact, they say, the Buddha's preaching is not limited to the Lesser Vehicle; the Buddha did not turn the "wheel of the Law", exclusively in Benares. That was his first preaching, meant for persons of an inferior understanding (*bhīṇendriya*), whose senses were blunt. They would not have been able to understand the Law's depth, if it had been revealed to them in its mysterious essence. To persons of a middling understanding (*madhyamendriya*) the Buddha revealed the Greater Vehicle, i. e. the Prajñāpāramitā, in which he teaches that all things are unreal and that reality is only "void",, unsubstantiality, *śūnyatā* beyond all discrimination. But not even the followers of the Greater Vehicle were sufficiently mature to understand the depth of the new way to salvation revealed in the Tantric Vehicle. The Mahāyāna follows the long road of the six perfections, full of terrible renouncements and sacrifices, implying an uninterrupted succession of rebirths, to approach salvation slowly, through grim ordeals. Thus not even its followers are fit for the preaching of the "swift road",, preached precisely in the Tantras. These can abruptly tear men away from the delusion of phenomenal existence and unite them with the eternal, in the space of one life for the chosen few, in seven existences for less capable persons, in sixteen for the tardiest.

The revelation, as a rule, no longer takes place on this earth, or, if it does so, it is a repetition of a revelation already vouchsafed in other spheres, in paradises, to assemblies

different from those of men, to which, nevertheless, the ripe ones can ascend swept away into the concentration of ecstasy.

Some Tantras were spoken on Sumeru, to an assembly of bodhisattvas, or of divine beings. Others in the Akaniṣṭha paradise, others among the Śuddhāvāsa gods and so on. To each of the four groups of Tantras recognized by the Vajrayāna are as a rule, assigned particular places, where they are said to have been revealed.

In other words the Tantric schools follow in the footsteps of the Mahāyāna, which (as we shall often repeat in this book) had also shifted the place of revelation, from the earth to spheres beyond the earth. These spheres, being planes of a particular spiritual maturity, outside time and space, to which the disciple is lifted up by the gradual unfolding of truth and by an appropriate practice, are susceptible of continual multiplications and of ideal rarefactions, growing more and more subtle.

But let us leave to the adepts of esotericism the alleged superiority of their own doctrines over other schools; we shall simply point out that it was impossible for them to deny that their theories represented something new and more recent as compared to other revelations. The Tantras are the third revelation, and a keen observer cannot help remarking the late character transpiring from their style, from an analysis of their composition, from traditions concerning the masters to whom the Tantras were revealed and who were, very probably, their authors. But this late character results, above all, from the subject-matter, displaying all the distinctive traits of gnosis. The Tantras may in fact be best defined as the expression of Indian gnosis, slowly elaborated, by a spontaneous ripening of indigenous currents of thought and under occasional influences from outside, in one of those periods when the ups and downs of history and commercial relations brought India closer to the Roman-Hellenistic, Iranian and Chinese civilizations. This process is slow

and unfolds through those centuries which saw deep changes in the ancient religions and philosophies; foreign ideas planted the seeds of new urges and doubts, the development of vast empires united peoples, heretofore isolated and hostile; attempts at unification between different conceptions at least succeeded in bringing them closer to one another; the beliefs of barbarians and primitive populations were investigated with keen curiosity. As it is often the case in epochs of great change, dissatisfaction with the old order went hand in hand with a great desire for all that seemed strange and unusual. The primitive religious ideas, never forgotten, now spread out and invaded every class and all sects. The slow progress of these spiritual orientations, which were prepared and matured over a lengthy period of time, before being clearly acknowledged and expressed, should make us cautious in fixing on a date for the coming to light of this gnosis. The moment in which such needs become outlined for the first time in men's souls and take on a definite shape in their religious consciousness is one thing, their embodiment in literature is an entirely different matter. Gnosis was born in India a little later than in the West and Iran, and it was born, there is no doubt about it, not only through intellectual contacts and exchanges easily explained in those favourable times, but also by one of those concomitant processes so frequent in history: some ideas emerge and become clarified with a surprising simultaneity, dawning before the human understanding in the same epoch. The Tantras, like the gnostic systems, place experience before knowledge; at the same time they study the way to translate intellective knowledge into an inwardly experienced psychological drama. Indeed, like gnostic systems, the Tantras assume a hostile position towards dialectic knowledge and take the *prajñā*, gnosis, as their centre. The latter, translated into a symbol, becomes transmuted, like the *Pistis sophia*, into a goddess, a divine Mother,

a divine power, *śakti δύναμις, Κόρη, Παρθένος* mother of the Aion.

The Tantras too believe that man, sunk as he is in the slough of ignorance, hides within himself the divine spark, the intimate essence of his being, which is the celestial nature itself, purest light, *bodhicittam prakṛti-prabhāsavaram*. In order to attain gnosis and to redeem man from ignorance, esoteric consecration is needed, a baptism by whose virtue palingenesis takes place.

The Tantras and gnosis both borrow abundantly from the ancient mythologies, but their myths take on a new meaning, they become a symbol of the forces presiding over the destinies of cosmos. The latter is conceived as a *makranthropos*: gods and goddesses are the symbols of its functions, its energies and its will. In the Tantras, as in the gnostic systems, sexual symbology is very important, and this is a natural consequence of the common conception of cosmos as a living being. Both trends are embodied in secret schools whose philosophisms must be kept hidden from the uninitiated, like the complex liturgies and the incomprehensible formulas on which the adept's possibility of redemption is based. Moreover, initiation confers on the neophyte a spiritual brotherhood in the new truth, superior to every link or law of social life.

Many of these elements were extremely ancient in India; the homology between macrocosm and microcosm pervades the whole of yoga and doubtless goes back to the most ancient religious intuitions matured on Indian soil; in the same way the belief that a divine essence or light lives in the depths of man, *antah śarīre jyotirmayah* (Up. *Muṇḍaka* (3, I, 5), and that we are no longer conscious of it because the gloom of ignorance shuts it out from our perception, is already to be found, as we all know, in the Upanishads. In the Upanishads also appears that sense of secrecy and mystery which should envelop the teaching of the truth. The origin of the magical and ritual formulas (*mantra*) used

to invoke or imprison the gods, is equally remote. And the idea that knowledge is useless when it is not transformed into experience was certainly not imported, for all Indian systems boast of being *sādhana*, realization and founded upon *anubhava*, direct experience, in the same way as truth is simply *pratyātmavedanīya*, realizable within oneself. But in the Tantras of an esoteric-logical character, not to speak of those exclusively magical, these elements are ably coordinated with the purpose of causing an immediate palingenesis through an interior psychological process, a wise symbology and an extremely vast liturgy. For these reasons we must come to the conclusion that the Tantras are a spontaneous germination of India; this does not rule out that parallelism and contemporaneity with gnostic systems may have led to loans and facilitated the rise of some special Tantric trends, particularly on India's frontiers, along those caravan highways and trade routes on which ideas were exchanged as well as merchandise. This explains how some Tantric cycles, as their masters themselves openly admit, arose precisely on India's extreme boundaries, some even outside Indian territory.

It is evidently a pious tale, without the least historical foundation, that the *Kālacakra* "the wheel of time", was revealed by the Buddha twelve months after his enlightenment, in the *mc'od rten* of Dhānyakaṭaka,<sup>274</sup> which, for the occasion, became dilated until it assumed the proportions of the universe, symbolized by every stūpa. The scholar who is said to have given a literary form to this revelation was Zla ba bzañ po, an incarnation of P'yag na rdo rje, who put the Buddha's words in writing, and having gone back to his country, Śambhala, and built there a stūpa in honour of the *Kālacakra*, taught his people its secrets. But everything leads us to think that there is much truth in the rest of the narrative; according to it in Śambhala, placed by tradition near the river Sitā, (viz. Tarim) many generations of kings succeeded one another and ruled wisely, handing

down the secret teaching of the *Kālacakra*, until their power was weakened by a raid of the *Kla klo*, coming from *Me k'a* (Mecca), i. e. by Moslem invasion. But a new *rigs ldan*, Drag po ṅk'or lo, defeated the enemy and reinstated the Law which had been threatened. The *Kālacakra* and its commentary, the *Vimalaprabhā*, written by Pad ma dkar po, were then brought into India by a paṇḍita from Oḍiṣā (Orissa) named Cilupā, who after long travels by land and by sea, came to Śambhala, and having become an expert in the Tantric doctrine, spread its esoterisms in India, under the King of Kaṭaka's protection, and transmitted their teachings to Pi to ācārya of Bengal and to Kālapāda of Varendra.

On the other hand, a unanimous tradition links the *Gubhasamāja* to Indrabhūti and Uḍḍiyāna. Uḍḍiyāna is the Swat valley, mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims as a country particularly addicted to magic. Indrabhūti was a prince of this country (according to the *T'ang shu*, in 642 King *Ta mo in t'o ho se* was reigning in Uḍḍiyāna, CHAVANNES, *Documents sur les Tou kiue*, p. 129; this name may contain the name of: Indra) who lived at the end of the VIIth century; tradition is unanimous in considering him one of Vajrayāna's most eminent personalities, and has placed him among the 84 siddhas. The *Gubhasamāja* tradition, preserved by some commentaries, for instance the *De k'o na ñid gsañ sgron rgyud* (TŌHOKU, *Cat.*, n. 2643; BUSTON, *rGyud sdei zab don sgo ṅbyed rin c'en gces pai sde mig, ña*, p. 14) quoting in its turn the *dPal ye šes t'ig lei rgyud kyī rgyal po* (*Ibid.*, n. 422) points out king Indrabhūti, Vajrapāṇi's incarnation, as the one who knew and could explain the *gSañ ba c'en moi rgyud*.

Other traditions, which reached Tibet from the Indian initiatic schools, considered Uḍḍiyāna as the centre from which the Tantras had originated. Buston relates (*ibid.*, p. 15) that according to some Tantric schools, Vajrapāṇi collected in Uḍḍiyāna endless revelations of the Vajrayāna, made by the Buddha,

and gave them to Indrabhūti. Then “the land of Uḍḍiyāna was emptied and became a large lake full of nāgas. Then P’yag na rdo rje wrote down the Tantras and after having converted those nāgas, he gave the Tantras into their keeping. In progress of time the nāgas assumed a human form and on the shores of the lake they built a city. Preaching Vajrāyana, they obtained great realizations. All the men there became heroes “*vīra*, (*dpa’ bo*), and the women fairies, *ḍākinī* (*mk’a agro ma*)”, (see also DT, *ja*, p. 4 ff.). Buxton has recorded the tradition given by Indrabhūti in the beginning of his *bDe mc’og rtsa rgyud kyī agrel pa* (cfr. SP, p. 54) where this very story is told, adding that these books were written with lapislazulī (*vaiḍūrya*) on golden leaves; they are said to have been given to the mK’a agro ma in Dharmagañja, in Uḍḍiyāna, when they were converted by the nāgas.

This tradition, which has all the characteristics of a local tradition, one of those *māhātmya* or eulogies magnifying the glories of a country and tending to assign it a place of honour in Buddhist hagiography, finds its echo in another narrative (*ibid.*, p. 11) according to which, when the Buddha was in Śrāvastī, in Uḍḍiyāna, at a great distance, king Indrabhūti saw some monks soaring through the air. Having asked who they were and heard about the Buddha’s sermon, he turned towards Śrāvastī and prayed earnestly, inviting the Buddha to come. Next day the Buddha arrived; the king asked him whether a means existed by which people like him, not yet detached from the world of sense, might attain liberation. The Buddha then revealed the *Gubhasamāja* to him.

Another tradition, evidently born in the same region or in the same school, generalizes and transplants vaguely to the North-East the place where the Tantras revealed by the Buddha were preserved and transmitted. “After King Indrabhūti, in U rgyan, had received baptism and the Tantra had been explained to him, to the North-East of Sumeru 66.000

bodhisattvas gathered in lCañ lo can’s palace and prayed gSañ bdag; hence the latter collected all the Tantras of the secret mantras and put them down in writing”.

As the reader may have seen, these legends are complex, a mixture of different themes: the theme of a revelation *ab antiquo*, of a written version of the texts, hidden and then found again; of the nāgas who are the depositaries of these texts, as in another narrative alluded to above; of the *mk’a’ agro ma*, who in their turn become the keepers of the texts; of Indrabhūti, implicitly considered present when the first revelation of the Tantras took place, so that his word has the weight of an eye-witness’s evidence. There is no doubt that these traditions are confused, independent of any chronology; they consider Indrabhūti a contemporary of the Buddha and state that he was present when the *gSañ adus* was revealed. There is only one point on which the traditions agree: namely that the *Gubhasamāja* was revealed to king Indrabhūti in Uḍḍiyāna; the meaning of this, for us, is that the *Gubhasamāja* was elaborated in the Swat valley, in or about the epoch of this personage, which seems to be, more or less, the end of the VIIth and the beginning of the VIIIth century AD.

In the *dPal ye šes rnal aḅyor mai rgyud kyī rgyal po* (bKa’ agyur, *rgyud, ka*) Bhagavatī asks the Buddha who will explain this sacred Tantra, in the future, to those who are worthy of it and the Buddha answers that P’yag na rdo rje will do so (p. 64). But in the *dPal de k’o na ñid kyī sgron ma*, which is a sort of commentary on this Tantra, and stands in the same relation to it as the last chapter of the *Gubhasamāja* to the text proper, this P’yag na rdo rje is identified with king Indrabhūti, who is his *nirmāṇakāya*. For this reason the preeminent place occupied by Indrabhūti and with him by the country of Uḍḍiyāna, Swat, in the elaboration of Tantric literature, seems certain and unchallengeable.

This point of reference allows us to fix the date of the *Gubhasamāja* and of the Tantras

connected with King Indrabhūti, which cannot, any of them, be earlier than the VIIIth century; this, for instance, is the case with the above said *De k'o na nīd sgron ma*, in which the same Indrabhūti is considered the most authoritative depository of these Tantric doctrines.

Two facts seem to oppose these conclusions: first of all that Śāntideva quotes a *Tathāgatagūbyasūtra*; next, that the *Gūbyasamāja* was commented upon by Candrakīrti, *Zla ba grags pa*, in a work famous in the Tantric schools: I allude to the *Pradīpodyotana*.

The first objection is worthless: WINTERNITZ himself, in his notes to the English translation of his history of Indian literature, p. 635, was obliged to admit that this text has nothing in common with the *Gūbyasamājantra*. The case of the commentary on the same Tantra, attributed to Candrakīrti, is quite different.

All scholars are agreed that Candrakīrti lived in the VIth century, hence we should have to admit that, already in his times, the *Gūbyasamāja* was considered a fundamental text of the Vajrayāna, consequently one of the most ancient texts of Tantric Buddhism. But the question is not so simple. Are we sure that this Candrakīrti is the same author as commented upon Nāgārjuna's chief works, and is considered one of the greatest authorities of the Mādhyamika? I do not think we can give an affirmative answer; the whole question should be taken up again when a deep study is made of the chronology of the Siddhas and of the chief authors of the Vajrayāna; although an accurate research has been carried on concerning this subject, it still contains many obscure points, as we shall soon show more clearly.

But to determine this Candrakīrti's identity it will be well, even at this stage, to go back to some *sampradāya* or spiritual pedigrees of Tantric masters, contained in different esoteric and liturgical texts, which can clear up some valuable data. I allude to the *sampradāya* of the *Śaḍaṅgayoga*; this list

gives us Nāgārjuna, Nāgabodhi, Āryadeva, Candrakīrti, Śākyarakṣita (CORDIER, *Cat.*, II, p. 163).

The *sampradāya* of the *Gaṇapatīsamayaḡūbyasādhana* (*Ibid.*, p. 221) gives us: Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, Tathāgatarakṣita, Janakaśīla. These lists enable us to determine, with a good approximation, Candrakīrti's epoch, and consequently his identity.

The Nāgārjuna whose follower he is, is not the great Nāgārjuna, but the Tantric Nāgārjuna; he was born at Kañci, and for this reason the second of the texts we have quoted, p. 221, calls him Kañcannara (*sic*); according to some traditions he was a disciple of Saraha, a contemporary of King Dharmapāla, of the VIIIth century.

According to the *sampradāya* of the *Gurugūbyasiddhi*, Nāgārjuna is the immediate predecessor of Tillipā; here we are still on safe ground. Tillipā is the master of Nāropā (dead 1027) and the latter, in his turn, was the master of Mar pa, the Tibetan translator, so that epoch may be placed between the IXth and the Xth century.

Tathāgatarakṣita was at the same time an author and a translator; he worked, besides other lotsāva, with Rin c'en bzañ po; the latter's date is known to us: he was born in the year 958, hence the date of Candrakīrti, Candrapā, must be placed, approximately, about the end of the IXth century. The same conclusion is warranted by another *sampradāya* quoted by DT and referred to down below (p. 231). For these reasons, and for other motives which will be given later, I think that he has nothing in common with the philosopher Candrakīrti; rather he belongs to the current of the Siddhas, among whom the custom became established of considering themselves the incarnations of great ancient masters, so that they reproduced the series Rāhula, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Candrakīrti, following the ancient series. This usage owed its origin to the initiatic names that these masters received when special baptisms were conferred upon them,

as we shall soon have an opportunity of showing in greater detail.

To conclude, I will also mention the *rNal abyor mai bzii k'a abyor zes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po* (bKa' agyur, *rgyud*, vol. pa, p. 354), which, as the colophon says, was extracted from another and an ampler Tantra, come to light in Uḍḍiyāna and arranged and illustrated (*bkod ciñ gsal bar mdsad*) by king Indrabhūti. In the same way the *gSañ ba nor bu t'ig le* (TÖHOKU, n. 493), seems to have been composed in the North-Western part of India; according to this Tantra many secrets concerning the cult of the four Lha mo were revealed, on the request of P'yag na rdo rje, by rNam par snañ mdsad, on the shores of a lake in Northern India (cf. BUSTON, *ba*, p. 155), and it is remarkable that one of these goddesses is called Gāndharī, and hence is, very probably, one of the *naivāsika* deities, who take their names from the land they protect: in the present case Gandhāra.

Other Tantric cycles reveal contacts with frontier populations, living on the outskirts of Indian culture. I have already had an opportunity of remarking (in *Animadversiones Indicae*, VII, JRASB, NS, XXVI, 1930) that in some Tantras, particularly those connected with bDe mc'og, some yoginīs are present, of a monstrous aspect, almost always having animals' heads, some of which bear a strange name, *lāmā*.

I naturally thought of the Tibetan *lha mo*, "goddess", and I supposed that the compilers of these Tantra had drawn the names from a Tibetan population and their native cults, in which feminine deities of a terrific character are not rare.

A short time after, Bagchi published some chapters of the *Jayadrathayāmālatantra*, a text of the VIIIth century (IHQ, 1931, p. 1 ff.), containing words which (although not all of them can be identified with certainty) point to the same region as the centre of their origin. Thus, through other channels, a tradition to which Indian sources, both Shivaite and

Buddhist, clearly bear witness, came to be confirmed: the tradition that Nāgārjuna (evidently the Siddha) introduced into the Mahāyāna a feminine deity, Ekajaṭā, later considered as an aspect of Tārā, taking her liturgy from the Bhoṭa, i. e. the Tibetans. Other kindred Tantric texts further confirm this tradition: for instance, in the *Dākārnavatantra* (bKa' agyur, *rgyud*, ga, p. 225) Tibet, Bod yul, is included in the 24 countries localized in the skeleton during the meditative process: they begin with Uḍḍiyāna and close with Malaya and Pullira. Bod yul is placed near K'a c'e, Kashmir.

Thus we have new instances of the Tantric masters' broad-minded receptiveness, due perhaps also to reasons of propaganda among the backward frontier populations. These masters did not hesitate to insert in their experiences foreign deities, which they purged of their primitive crudeness and transformed into secret symbols, as they daringly built up their complex gnosis.

In course of time this Tantric literature developed unrestrictedly, displaying the same luxuriant growth in the Shivaite and in the Buddhist sects, with natural contaminations and analogies, which cannot seem surprising after what has been said above. Both schools interpreted with the same intentions an identical religious enthusiasm, drew their inspiration from the same experiences and gave the same interpretation to the spiritual urge of the masses, which at that time expressed their intuitions and expectations in that very form. This also explains the iconographic analogy of many of these gods, issuing as from an inexhaustible source, out of the exalted imagination of devotees. Buddhism, when it abandons the human form and multiplies the heads and arms of its divinities, copies Hinduism extensively; certain Tantric images, like Hālahāvalokiteśvara, Nilakaṇṭhāvalokiteśvara, clearly are contaminations with Shiva; Brahmā, on the other hand, has influenced Mañjuśrī, as Foucher had already

pointed out with his keen perception. The same may also be said of Kārtikeya; hence the MMT, I, p. 45, assigns to Mañjuśrī a peacock as his symbol and calls him Mañjuśrikārtikeya. The best known Hindu deities are admitted wholesale into Buddhism, like Indra, Varuṇa, Maheśvara, Skandha, taken as keepers of the four quarters. Kāma himself, the god of love, finds his place in the Buddhist maṇḍala (see *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 222).

In this atmosphere of common visions, in this magic aura, gods are born as by a miracle, out of ritual objects, an act of cult, a name; the maxim *nomina numina* has never been so true as in this fantastic world. Formulas take on an aspect, *vidyās* take on a body, they become Vidyārāja, Vidyādharma; Hevajra, "O vajra", a common invocation of the Tantric ritual, becomes a hypostasis of Akṣobhya and expresses his omnipotence by the multiplication of his heads and arms. The ritual offerings with which deities are honoured during rites are symbolized in the form of divine maidens; thus are born these beings called by Tibetans: *m'od pai lha mo, pūjādevatā*.

On the other hand the initiate, evoking a divinity out of the bottom of his heart and awaiting its epiphany in confidence and awe, interpreted as true revelations the images appearing before him when he had fallen into the trance of ecstasy.

All this explains how gods came to be multiplied and, with them, liturgies, *sādhana*, means of propitiating them and obtaining their beatific vision or their help. Then, when the Tantric schools accepted the religious intuitions still living in the masses, they embraced, with their tolerant universalism, India's native deities and even, as we have seen, those of countries outside India, inserted them into the maṇḍalas and turned them into acolytes of their chief gods. As the diaspora of Buddhism progressed in this direction, Vajrayāna found itself invaded by numberless troops of divine and fiendish beings, not rarely of

a monstrous appearance, very often in a female form: *dākinī, yoginī, yakṣinī, mātṛkā, Śabarī, Cuṇḍā*, the *Ambā* and *Ambikā*, terrible and angry but easily blandished, once their secret nature or propitiatory formulas were known. For this reason in the literary descriptions of the Vajrayāna pantheon late though it be, prehistorical Indian religion survives, with its old deities of the tribes and villages.

They are assimilated to Mahāyāna's more serene and solemn deities and they represent their warlike and esoteric aspect; hence in the Tantras we are confronted with one of the richest mines of Indian folklore, in which the oldest religious fund of India has got a new lease of luxuriant life.

So it is clear that although many Tantras have a high mystical meaning, many others can be forced back to such a purity and depth only by a conscious effort of a prejudiced mind. For, if many Tantras are inspired by the conceptions I have stated, many other remain nothing more than formularies of magic, collections of recipes tending to promote the devotee's prosperity and to harm his enemies: digests of the six *karma*, viz. six magical actions, having nothing in common with the subtleties of gnosis or with soteriological practices. Such, for instance is, largely, the *Mañjuśrīmūlatantra*, in which the Buddha descends to the level of a witch-doctor, revealing *vidyā* by which any miracle, and even any crime, can be performed. In these texts, truly, the formula may be used also to hurt and slay an enemy, and the dialectical ability of the commentators cannot overcome our astonishment at such new and unexpected orientations of Buddhism. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (Taishō, ed. n. 374, vol. XII, p. 382 a) violation of the principle of *ahimsā* is overlooked, if other interests, as the community's very existence, are at stake, it is true, but these Tantric texts place ritual at the service of unclean passion and mean personal advantage.

Such ideas had never become extinct in India, but as it happens in all periods of spiritual exertions, they were now revived more luxuriantly; gnosis, itself the symptom of a deep religious torment, took possession of them. All the Tantras, both Shivaite and Buddhist, are invaded by these ideas. Thus Shivaism and Buddhism met the masses halfway, they conquered the lowest strata of the people and vied with each other in complying with this yearning for mystery, this logic of magic; in the MMT, I, p. 34, the Buddha declares that he has revealed the Shivaite and Vishnuite Tantras as a means of conquering minds which could be converted through those symbols. By these bold statements, Tantric Buddhism allied itself with Shivaism, accepted it as an experience lower than its own but nevertheless not entirely made up of darkness and error, indeed almost as the first step to future redemption. Buddhism, having accomplished its glorious conquest of Asia, approached the humblest classes and the aboriginal populations, where those ideas tenaciously flourished. It accepted their monstrous deities, fearful in their primitive savageness, and gave a name and a clear-cut status to their witchcraft.

At other times the two currents came into violent conflict; the Tantric schools, Shivaite and Buddhist, strove as rivals to conquer the soul of the masses, saturated with those ideas but uncertain as to the choice of symbols. Buddhism mostly accepts the gods of Hinduism, as we have seen, inserting them as acolytes among its own gods; it places them outside and around the maṇḍalas as *laukikas*; being worldly, they belong to the world of passions, to the "becoming", and cannot enter the maṇḍala, which establishes a boundary line between the samsaric plane and the sphere transcending it, the sphere of being. But in other cases, confronted by the hostile attitude of Hindu circles, Buddhism decided to declare its superiority over those gods in a striking manner, by having

its own gods trample upon them: hence bDe mc'og, Hevajra, Vajrabhairava, dance on the bodies of Umā, Maheśvara, Gaṇapati. In these cases the attitude of Buddhism is changed: in the first case a difference of planes had been made, by virtue of which the nirvanic plane transcended the samsaric plane *ipso facto*. In the latter plane gods share the fate of all that is subject to change and are overthrown not as hostile forces but because they partake of an illusive existence, which must be entirely surpassed. But in other Tantras (almost all belonging to the Anuttarayoga class) the relation between the two religions is stated to be one of strife and antithesis, as between two contrary forces. They fight to conquer the world, as for instance in the account of the rivalry between Kālabhairava and bDe mc'og.

In the Dvāpara cosmic aeon, Drag po rdo rje ajigs byed nag po was in the centre of the Jambudvīpa, in Magadha, joined to Dus mts'an mo nag mo, Kālī. Then four gods, descended from heaven, and four Dri za (Gandharva), took possession of eight places in the Jambudvīpa, the places of atmosphere; four gNod sbyin (Yakṣa) and four Srin mo (Rākṣasī) took possession of eight places on earth, which were the earthly places; four Klu (Nāga) and four Lha ma yin (Asura) took possession of the subterranean regions, and these were the four underground places. Then these 24 beings wished to take possession of the three spheres of intermediate, celestial and subterranean existence, so they invited Lha dbaṅ p'yug c'en po (Maheśvara) and did him great honour; but as he did not want to interrupt his copulation with Umā, he sent on earth, as his incarnations, 24 *liṅga* which appeared in the places held by those beings and became the objects of their worship.

As may be seen, the universe is imagined as a maṇḍala, unfolding round Magadha, extending and irradiating, with its partitions, over all the chief and intermediate points of

space: the earth, the Jambudvīpa, is a great Shivaite maṇḍala, of which Maheśvara takes possession through his emanations. But when the time of Drag po ajigs byed nag po's submission came, supreme truth, the Dharmakāya, emanated, as *sprul sku*, Heruka, who miraculously appeared on the top of Sumeru, viz. on a plane superior to the earth, on the apex of cosmos; as an embodiment of the Dharmakāya, the five Buddhas of the pentad came to him, causing miraculous apparitions, which formed his *sprul ak'or*. Then the Sambhogakāya appeared, manifesting himself as bDe mc'og, who trampled Drag po ajigs byed and Dus mts'an mo underfoot. Under such a terrible pressure, they were both converted and their retinue was replaced by the miraculous retinue of the new epiphany. As may be seen, we have here a translation into mythical symbols, expressed in the language of the maṇḍala, of a transfer of possession: the Buddhist cosmos replaces the Shivaite cosmos. The struggle between the two religions is transposed in the mythological field; the expectation is projected by some schools in the remote past, as an actual fact (BUSTON, *rGyud sde spyi rnam gžag bsduṣ pa rgyud sde rin po c'ei gter sgo abyed pai sde mig*, complete works, p'a, p. 50; he takes as his basis Slob dpon rdo rje's commentary on *bDe mc'og űnui dui rgyud*, CORDIER, *Cat.*, I, p. 29, n. 8).

The same struggle between Maheśvara and Vajrapāṇi, which has assumed Humkāra's appearance, is the subject of some chapters in the *Tattvasaṅgraha*, and there too it ends with the defeat of Shiva and his mate; and then with their conversion (see *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. I, Appendix).

On other occasions, on the contrary, there is an absorption by Buddhism, of deities which had nothing to do with it: this is obtained by recourse to a bold mythology, which justifies the insertion of these new divinities among the Buddha's acolytes. A typical instance is that contained in the

*Mk'a' agro ma me lce abar bai rgyud*, *Dākini-agnijibvājvalatantra*, dedicated to the fire-tongued Kālī, Jvalāmukhī. The first part of this Tantra has a puranic character, it tells how in the times of the struggle between the Asuras and the Gods, P'yag na rdo rje, to help the latter, created Umā. Umā became united to Mahādeva (so in the Tibetan text) and gave birth to Mahākāla and Cāmuṇḍī, who with her sword cut off the head of Hirannakeśa (Hiranyakeśa). Then she assumed the name of Parṇasāvārī and Duñ skyoñ ma. The gods laid waste the city of Lañkā; Daśagrīva and his sister rNa la rtse survived the destruction; the latter was given in marriage by her brother to Mahādeva, taking the vow that one day he might become the lord of gods and men. The nuptials took place and Rematī was born; she was placed in Duñ skyoñ ma's service. Daśagrīva in the meantime fell in love with Duñ skyoñ ma and threatened to kill himself if he could not obtain her. The gods went to Lañkā to see the fight between the ape dBal le (Balin) and mGrin bzañ (Sugrīva), and on that occasion Daśagrīva was able to kidnap Duñ skyoñ ma by a stratagem, as she had forgotten Umā's warnings. Umā then cursed the goddess who had disobeyed her, and so the latter, changed into an ogress, fed on human flesh and rode a donkey. The same fate is in store for Rematī, who followed her mistress. They stole Daśagrīva's sword, called *sdiḡ pa can*, and the riches of the Rākṣasa, which they placed in a mongoose-skin bag. They fled, pursued by the Rākṣasa, and after roaming about they came to Mount rDo sol, on the shore of the Ocean, where they ate human flesh and their own adulterine offspring. Then they invoked gŠin rje and took the vow that, on being born again, they would accept the Buddhist faith, one becoming aDod k'ams dbañ p'yug ma, and Rematī as her handmaid. As soon as they had framed this vow, a great and sudden wind threw them into the sea; Duñ skyoñ ma was

born again as the daughter of gŠin rjei lha mt'u can; she was united to gŠin rje ma ru rse and gave birth to bDud k'ram nag po. She also had the tail-eyed ass as her mount.

In the same way Rematī was born in the sea as a sea-monster, but after nine days she died and once more saw the light as the adulterine daughter of the fiend (*bdud*) Ri ti ḡoñ ṅag and of Dran po dbañ byed: to conceal their sin, her parents hid her in a secret palace, on a throne of corpses, placing to guard her door Lag riñ and Nam gru, armed with clubs and other fiends. But Jo mo (Duñ skyoñ ma) went in search of her; Rematī too wished to join her former mistress, so she came out of her hiding-place, taking with her her father's club (*k'ram bam nag po*) and her mother's knife, *gri gu*; then she murdered a shepherdess and made a belt out of her skin.

She lay with a bTsan skya rdo rje zla ba, and got from him as a reward seven black and white dice (*šo rdo*) he had in his hands; then she found Duñ skyoñ ma on the sea shore; the ass *gva pa*, Jo mo's mount, covered a mare with teeth of copper, also of the rāk-śasa's race, which gave birth to a blue mule, having wings of the wind; it became Rematī's mount. They both took the vow of attaining enlightenment and so they went to the brahman mC'og sred, who advised them to turn to Ekajaṭā and to gain her favour by lengthy meditations. They did so. Ekajaṭā was satisfied and finally appeared: she gave Jo mo the name of Mahākālī and her handmaid that of Rematī, conferring upon them lordship over the spheres of desire (Kāmadhātu).<sup>275</sup>

Then the goddesses of the earth, Sai lha mo and Nam gru, with her seven brothers, also submitted (*bKa' agyur*, vol. *ža*, p. 329).

In this struggle for possession of the world, must we see the influence of Iranian conceptions, having their centre in the clash between the principles of good and evil, fatally opposed and hostile? The fact that some Tantras

stressing this struggle, have probably been composed on India's North-Western frontier, might suggest an affirmative answer. But we must not forget what we already said, viz. that the Tantras draw very largely from the inexhaustible fund of Indian folklore and therefore often put us on our guard against rash conclusions; rather they remind us of an ancient subject, the struggle between Gods and Asuras, which ancient Buddhism had toned down. Now, as the old bedrock again came to the surface in this literature and in the prevailing syncretism of those times, the old story again appeared, of course adapted to the Buddhist atmosphere. For this reason, if Iranian influences have been present, they have served to renew ancient traditions, but have become merged with them to such a point, that they are no longer recognizable.

It must be added that all the complexities of Hindu ritualistic, the *pūjā* with its eight or sixteen kinds of offerings, the libations (*boma*), the sacrificial fire lit with a special wood in pits purposely dug (*kuṇḍa*), were now turned over to the Tantric cult which took possession of them and copied them.

The cult to the Tantric Buddhas and Bodhisattvas does not differ in any manner from that by which Hindu devotees honoured their deities, to the exclusion, of course, of the bloody sacrifice, which Buddhism, as well as Vishnuism, always condemns as a sinful practice.

So that this invasion and spread of Tantrism now threatened to transform Buddhism entirely and to consign its fundamental principles to oblivion. The line of demarcation between Buddhism and Hinduism was breaking down. But at this point the masters of Vajrayāna attempted an interpretation of the Tantras which their Tibetan epigones have glossed without adding anything of their own, except, perhaps, greater order and clarity: an admirable effort accomplished by these scholars to impart to a contradictory literature a coherent meaning, adapted to Mahāyāna

philosophisms and to its soteriological theories; they brought order into this chaos, where the noblest depths of gnosis were linked to the most loathsome obscenities and to the crudest superstitions. The scholars classified, interpreted, found allegorical meanings. As Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, in the IIth century A. D., had developed out of the sūtras of the Mahāyāna a coherent system, which laid the foundation of later dogmatics, so the *Siddhas* and the *ācāryas* of Vajrayāna, from the VIIth to the XIth century, put this literature in order and classified it.

Over that misshapen world, blissful and dreadful at times they blew gusts of wind which shattered and levelled every thing: it was the wind of *śūnya*, "void", in which all appearances vanish. Gods and fiends, in reality, do not exist, so the *Bar do t'os grol* says, summing up Indian exegesis transplanted into the Country of Snows; they are a creation of our fancy moved by karma; images, not things. Those masters boldly joined Tantric experience to mahāyānic speculation; they aimed at a theoretical justification of those wavering and subjective intuitions.

Thus the system of the third Vehicle was born and fashioned; it is called by different names: Vajrayāna, Mantrayāna, Phalayāna, Vidyādhara-yāna, Guhyamantrayāna. Vajrayāna, because the supreme reality with which unification is sought is *abhedya*, unbreakable like a diamond, and because the gnosis leading to it is diamond-pure.

It is also called Mantrayāna because the mantras, an essential element of its liturgy, are used therein. And also Vidyādhara because *vidyā* is the secret formula, the knowledge of its power and its use, the embodiment, in sounds, of the god we turn to; only the followers of the tantric schools boast of being its exclusive possessors and masters. Hence the Tantras represent the fourth *piṭaka*, *vidyādhara-piṭaka* "the Collection of esoteric texts,..". The Tantras are also called Phalayāna, because in respect of the Prajñāpāramitā, the quintessence

and the point of departure of the Mahāyānic schools proper, they represent the fruit and the conclusion, while the former is the cause.

Being confronted with such a large quantity of Tantric texts, constantly increasing, the followers of the Vajrayāna not only worked out a system in a coherent form, which should not sharply contrast with Buddhist principles, but they attempted a classification. Although the religious intuition, at the bottom, is the same, and the symbols through which the Tantras find expression are similar, it is impossible not to notice a certain difference in the liturgy they recommend, in the pre-eminence they give to one group of gods and symbols over another, in the way they stress some particular theories. Precisely for this reason these masters divided the Tantras into classes, according to their contents, to the subject-matter, while external and chronological standards, which have never greatly interested Indians, were considered less important. I do not mean that the compilers of the Tantras, whoever they were, when they composed these books circulated later as revelations of the Buddha, had reached certain exact models and schemes and endeavoured to adapt their works to them. Such a classification was made later, when most of Tantric literature was already concluded, and it was based on likenesses between Tantras, justified by the same manner of expressing certain intuitions and of presenting certain rites. So that the classification has a value we might call retrospective and *a posteriori*, it is the fruit of a reflection which was, however, generally accepted. I say generally because not all the schools were agreed on the fundamental types of Tantras and on their characteristics. But, as we shall see, the classification is right, in the sense that it is based on an actual difference of contents and of trends.

The most common classification is into four groups: *Kriyā* (*Bya*), *Caryā* (*sPyod*), *Yoga* (*rNal abyor*), *Anuttara* (*Bla na med*). Respecting

the difference between these groups, Buston, alluding in particular to Śākyamitra's and Ānandagarbha's theories, lays down six points: 1) When the Buddha took for the first time, for each group of Tantras, the vow of enlightenment; 2) how, through the cosmic aeons, he heaped up the merit (*puṇyasambhāra*) which led him to enlightenment; 3) how he attained enlightenment; 4) how and where he preached; 5) who edited the Tantras; 6) how long the teaching set forth in the Tantras will last. The first two points do not particularly differ, as they generally follow the mahāyānic conceptions of *bodhicittotpāda* (framing of a vow to attain supreme enlightenment) and of the indissoluble duplicity of this thought of enlightenment, resulting out of compassion and gnosis joined together. A greater difference is noticeable on the other points. The Kriyātantras say that their preaching takes place in different localities, according as we consider one or another of the mystical families in which they divide the gods: for the Tathāgatas' family the revelation took place in the Akaniṣṭha, for the Lotus family in Potala, for the Vajra family in Ālaṅka, for the Gem family in Sudhana, for the family of prosperity in Kapila, for the worldly family in several places.

For the Caryātantra, after supreme enlightenment had taken place in the Akaniṣṭha, the Buddha is said to have revealed the Caryātantras there, next he revealed the Mantras to the Parānimitavaśavartin gods and on Sumeru; finally, appearing among men in an illusory body, he put into the hands of created beings this instrument of salvation. As to the Yogatantras two theories were current in India: according to Śākyamitra the Buddha attained supreme enlightenment in the Akaniṣṭha, while projecting his illusory body in Bodhgayā; according to Ānandagarbha, the Buddha, who had attained enlightenment since time out of memory, projected himself with an illusory body as Śākyamuni. The revelation of the Yogatantra is said to have taken place

on Sumeru, the Buddha having taken Vairocana's form, or elsewhere under different shapes; next he was reabsorbed into Vairocana of the Akaniṣṭha and on earth, in the Jambudvīpa, he showed, in the body of maturation (*smṛit*) the illusory development of his life.

According to the Anuttaratāntra the Buddha had attained enlightenment since time out of memory; Sarvārthasiddha's figure is his illusory body; the persons mentioned by the tradition of the Lesser Vehicle are all the projections of gods, Mañjuśrī, Lokeśvara, etc. He reveals the Law contained in the Anuttaratāntras wherever there are persons who can be converted through them, but precisely because of the diversity of creatures, the Anuttaratāntras are of three kinds; a) Tantras based on the means (*upāyatantra*) like the *Guhyasamāja*, for those in whom passion is strong, or who incline to the cult of the Hindu gods, like Vishnu; this class of Tantras was revealed in Uḍḍiyāna; b) Tantras based on gnosis (*prajñāt.*) like bDe mc'og or Heruka or Hevajra, revealed in Magadha or on Sumeru; Tantras centering on non-duality (*advayat.*) like the *Kālacakra*, revealed in Śambhala.

For the Kriyātantras, the editor is Vajrapāṇi or Ānanda, who is nothing but a manifestation of Vajrapāṇi himself; this also applies to the Caryātantras; for the others, theories vary. As to their duration, the Kriyātantras will last as long as the Law remains in the world; so will the Caryātantras and the Yogatantras; however these will remain in the Akaniṣṭha when the Law has disappeared from among men. Among the Anuttara, the Upāyatantras will predominate as long as the world lasts and they will perish with it when, at the end of the aeons, it perishes in a conflagration; the others, at the end of the world, will transmigrate elsewhere.

But all these differences are based on external circumstances, hence they are largely a matter of form. There are, on the other hand, differences of substance and contents, which must now be dealt with.

The Kriyātantras are based on an external practices, on formulas, propitiatory rites, magical liturgies, the contemplation of the gods' images painted on *paṭa*; they do not insist on an interior palingenesis.

In the Caryātantras an equilibrium of external practices, physical and verbal, prevails; viz. liturgies and formulas and internal meditation, the exercise of *samādhi*.

The Yogatantras consist in yoga, or praxis (*upāya*) joined to gnosis (*prajñā*), but internally, in the initiate's heart, hence in a meditative principle, so that the mantra is no longer the simple recital of formulas; it is an understanding of the mystical meaning of sound, its vibrations and its cosmical correlations.

The Anuttaratantras stress the identity between *upāya* and gnosis as a reintegration of the absolute through the experience of duality.

Such a classification is not completely arbitrary; it starts from an intrinsic difference in the contents of the different Tantras, which will not escape anyone considering them with attention and comparing them one to the another.<sup>276)</sup>

Clearly this is very important. This variety in the purposes and trends of Tantric literature should restrain us from hasty generalizations concerning the character, contents and age of the Tantric cycles and also concerning the deities on which their experiences are based. So, for instance, all of Tantrism cannot be brought under Vairocana's symbol, (as often is said), which is secondary in the MMT and appears only incidentally in all the Tantra of the Kriyātantra group.

Nearly all the Tantras of the Anuttara class centre round the symbol of Akṣobhya or of his hypostases: Heruka, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja, although, as in the latter's case, oscillations are frequent and the supreme Tathāgata, the germinal point, outside time and space, from which issue the five directions of the cosmogram, symbolized by the 5 Buddhas, may assume the name of Mahāvairocana, Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, etc. Akṣobhya's superiority is shown, in fact in some

maṇḍalas of this class by his appearance over the heads of the other four Buddhas: this pre-eminence is given to him because he symbolizes the *vijñāna*, individuated thought, to which (as to their psychological centre) the other four components of human personality are subjected. But this Akṣobhya, who thus occupies the centre of the maṇḍala, in his turn has over his head an image of Vajrasattva, the supreme source, to point out that the *vijñāna* itself leans on *bodhi* = Vajrasattva = nonduality of "void and compassion," (*Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, p. 42).

Vairocana, on the contrary, stands out unrivalled in the group of the Yogatantras, precisely those introduced into China by Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra; they are more widely known than the others, through their Shingon interpretation and partial studies in European languages on them. The *śakti* or *mudrā*, viz. the god's mate, indissolubly bound to him and cooperating with him in the symbology of the Vajrayāna's soteriological process, generally is to be found beginning from the Yogatantras, while the same *śakti* or *mudrā*, as a necessary element in the liturgical drama, is a peculiar characteristic of the Anuttaratantras.

The various groups of Tantras are next distinguished by the number of *riṅs* viz. the mystical families in which they divide and include their gods, hence implicitly the classes of things and creatures constantly related to them by nature and by inclination.

Such "families," may be five or six. In the Yogatantras they are:

1. Saṅs rgyas (Buddha): Vairocana.
2. rDo rje (Vajra): Akṣobhya.
3. Rin c'en (Gem): Ratnasambhava.
4. C'os (or Pad ma), (Law, or Lotus): Amitābha.
5. Las (action): Amoghasiddhi.

In the Anuttaratantra:

1. De bžin gšegs (Tathāgata): Vairocana.
2. Padma (Lotus): Amitābha.

3. rDo rje (Vajra): Akṣobhya.
4. Nor bu (Gem): Ratnasambhava.
5. rGyas rigs (Expanded): Amoghasiddhi.
6. ʾJig rten rigs (Wordly): Gods and Asura.

The difference between these two lists is very small: the sixth family of the second group is introduced in order to receive into the Buddhist symbology and mythology the Hindu deities and to build a new bridge between the two doctrines. In fact the quinary scheme of the maṇḍala that is, of the temporal-and-spatial expansion of the first principle predominates as usual; this scheme cannot possibly have penetrated and developed in Buddhism before the latter had reached the identification between the Buddha and the absolute Being, consequently conceiving the Buddha as the supreme essence: the quinary series was then symbolically expressed in the image of the pentad, whose iconography developed out of a duplication and multiplication of the image of Śākyamuni obtaining supreme enlightenment: Amitābha is the Buddha meditating in Bodhgayā; Akṣobhya "the unshakeable one,, the Buddha on the Diamond seat as partaking of bodhi, from which there is no decay; Vairocana, the preaching Buddha, diffusing light out of his person; Ratnasambhava, the Buddha as he who vouchsafes the supreme gift of the Law; Amoghasiddhi, the infallible, inasmuch as the doctrine is the supreme defence and supreme fulfilment. This is a multiplication which Buddhism reached but slowly (in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* for instance, only Amitābha and Akṣobhya appear), under the pressure of those same panindian conceptions which led Shivaism to formulate the fivefold aspect of Shiva or of his powers: *cit-śakti*, *ānandaśakti*, *icchāśakti*, *jñānaśakti*, *kriyāśakti* viz. the supreme Essence in its tending towards the differentiated world, and forming itself by degrees.

The essential difference in the contents of the Tantras, once fittingly studied, will furnish us with some precious evidence as to the age of

Tantric literature / literature, say not experience / and so will contribute to cast some light on this much-discussed problem.

Among all these Tantras, the *Bya rgyud*, *Kriyātantras* are undoubtedly the oldest; in them the essential part is represented by magical rites, by instruction on those ceremonies and formulas to which orthodox Buddhism, in the beginning, was hostile, but which finally penetrated, fatally, into the community. Even tho' official circles were against them, the masses could not renounce certain ideas which no criticism could root out of their consciousness and to which men willingly yielded whenever other means seemed to fail them. Thus the *Prakṛtyavadāna*, translated into Chinese as an independent sūtra *Mo t'eng ch'ieh ching* (LÉVI, TP, 1907) by Chu Lü yen, since 230 A. D., was then included into the *Divyāvadāna*.

The *dhāraṇī* on the other hand originally had a mnemonical character, "The *dhāraṇī* are used to epitomize the sūtras: they are the short cut to enlightenment and the lucky sea to release,, (*Life of Śubhakarasiṃha*, HJAS, 45, p. 258) and were considered the synthesis of the doctrine (cf. *Mabāsannipāta*, Taishō ed., vol. XIII, p. 22); they were believed to possess, for this reason, a miracle-working power, the power of the magical word, and became more and more bound up with magical liturgy: in *Lankāvatārasūtra*, p. 261, they are *rakṣā*, they protect the believers (*na tasya kaścid avatāram lapsyate*), in the *Ta k'ung ch'ueh chou wang ching*, translated by I ching, they are deified, they become *vidyārājā* as in the MMT; Fo t'u ch'eng (dead 348) and Śrīmitra (first half of the IVth century) the first translator of the *Mabāmayūri*, owed their power to them (see CHOU YILLIANG, HJAS, 45, p. 243).

These *dhāraṇī*, then, represent the first official admission, endorsed by the Buddha's word, of a general domain of Indian culture; a penetration of magical thought into Buddhist dogma, implicitly a breach of the law of karma: miracles now take the place of the iron link between cause and effect in the

moral field. The recitation of some *dhāraṇī* and the performance of the rites they recommend can save sinners from the fulfillment of their evil deeds; these *dhāraṇī* assuage disease, which, according to the Indian conception, is caused by a lack of humoral balance, often due to the joint effects of karmic maturation and fiendish forces. Later these powers of the *dhāraṇī* were extended to the outer world: they do not act only on the spiritual world by altering the course of karma; they can also influence cosmic forces, for instance they may produce rain, because their formulas force the *nāgas* and other beings ruling over the waters to obey them. Their power extends even to planets and to their influxes over men and things.

Hence it is clear that the *dhāraṇī* represent the first kernel from which the Tantras developed, so that the passage from Mahāyāna to Tantric gnosis takes place warily and imperceptibly, with the support of some works attributed to the Buddha himself by the Buddhist communities, who no longer hesitated to profess openly beliefs expressing the common fund of Indian religious experience.

Tantrism then matured in the Mahāyānic environment, little by little, out of this invasion and prevalence of magical thought, which breaks, as I have remarked, the law of karma: when the Mahāyānasūtra declare that their recitation helps to annul the greatest sins and to confer the greatest benefits, a breach has been opened: the process, from now on, will develop uninterruptedly.

Now we still find that it is difficult to ascertain when Tantrism arose, in its literary formulation; nevertheless there is no doubt that the *dhāraṇī* were the first codification of the ideas underlying it: the Tantras begin with them. We can go even further and admit, with the Buddhist commentators and editors, that some Mahāyānasūtra or parts of them may be considered as Tantras, Kriyātantras. Such, for instance, is the case with the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* and with the chapters on the

*dhāraṇī* in the *Laṅkāvatāra*, both included by the Vajrayāna masters among the Kriyātantra.

Hence the standard adopted by Buddhist scholars to classify the Tantras is not arbitrary: there is no doubt that the Kriyātantras appear much simpler than the Tantras of the remaining classes: their magic and their rites ignore the liturgical and psychological complications of the other groups of Tantras; they are satisfied with drawing on a *paṭa* the deities whose intervention is evoked, and to recite the invocations of their names and the mantras (*jāpa*), but there is no trace in them of the Haṭhayoga's exoterisms, of the interior processes of evocation produced in the *utpattikrama* and in the *sampannakrama* of the Yogatantras. In this last group of Tantras the magical rite tending to obtain an immediate *siddhi*, power or prodigy, is replaced by soteriological contents; they imply a construction of the world which the Kriyātantras do not deal with. This is confirmed by the Chinese translations, in which versions of the *dhāraṇī* or of kindred Tantric works precede the penetration of the Yogatantras, which took place in Vajrabodhi's and Amoghavajra's times, in the VIIth century.

The Kriyāt. differ from the other Tantras, in which a soteriology is linked as a fundamental part, expressed or implied, to the above element. These new Tantras are no longer concerned with momentary breaks in the karmic law, they strive to obtain, through their own methods, consubstantiation with the cosmic forces, and hence *parāvṛtti*, revulsion from the phenomonic plane to the plane of the absolute, in an immediate manner; they are, as we have said, the speedy path. They are no longer simply magic; magic is present, but it is a secondary element, a consequence of having attained unification with the Whole. They presuppose a Buddhology partly differing from the old one, and above all a new soteriology; their praxis is subordinated to the latter.

In these texts the true gnostic element is inserted, viz. the attempt to translate the

theological system into a psychological force capable of moving the soul's utmost depths through the artifice of a complex liturgical drama, arousing those self-suggestive states which leave lasting traces in all who have experienced them. As compared to the visions and hallucinations evoked by this drama, all logical and dialectic constructions recede into the background: anyone who has gone through the rites, fascinated by the particular psychological conditions experienced, naturally becomes convinced, due to those same experiences, that he is another man, already above the intellectual knowledge of those truths the texts suggested to him: formerly he knew them, now he possesses them, they have become life within him.

The Yogatantras hence represent the second, perhaps most creative period of Tantric elaboration; we do not know when their principles were codified from a literary point of view, but there is no doubt that among all the Tantras, the *Tattvasaṅgraha* has stylistical characters which link it to the style of the sūtras. Probably this elaboration took place about the VIth-VIIth century, a short time before Chih t'ung, Atigupta and Puṇyodaya, Vajrabodhi's and Amoghavajra's forerunners, became in China apostles of the Tantras all belonging to the cycle of Yogatantra.

This seems to be confirmed by a letter of Wu Hsing 無行 whom I Ching met in India before 685, and who died in India. In it he says "Now there is this novelty, the teaching of the mantra Chen yen 真言 which is in great honour all over the country," (LIN LI KOUANG, JA, 1935, vol. CCXXVII, p. 83).

Whatever the case may be, this attempt to confer on rites no longer a magical meaning, but soteriological contents, is evident in the Yogatantras. In fact the *dhāraṇī* are introduced in the *Tattvasaṅgraha*, but with the well-defined meaning of various moments of liberating truth; each corresponds to a successive stage of that awareness which must make the initiated consubstantiated with the supreme

essence. When the bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddha asked the Tathāgatas (*Tattvasaṅgraha*, mss., p. 14) how he should attain this supreme essence and what it is (*katham pratipadyāmi kiṃ śam tattvam*) they reveal to him a mantra whose meditation will lead him to the discrimination of the *citta* (*cittapratyavekṣaṇa*), viz. *om cittaprativedham karomi*, that is "Om, I understand exactly what this thought is,". The person seeking initiation must realize the fundamental principle of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna: that human thought is a pure and glowing essence, without reflections and colours, but that it is tarnished by occasional stains, so that it breaks up, illusorily, into a subject and its object; then, the neophyte visualizes this truth, so that it may become transformed into an efficient experience, by imagining, in the lunar maṇḍala of his own heart, sixteen vowels, a symbol of the 16 kinds of "void," and of the unsubstantiality of all things. In the maṇḍala's symbology, viz. in one of the elements, even tho' exterior, of meditation, this moment is symbolized by Akṣobhya.

The second formula is: *om bodhicittam utpādayāmi*, "I take the vow of being able to attain supreme enlightenment," and this last is understood in the sense of consubstantiation with supreme truth, because *bodhi*, in this school, means not so much enlightenment as the Buddhist consciousness itself, intensely bright. Then the neophyte visualizes, above the first maṇḍala, in the interior of his heart, another lotus, with the various consonants above it: *kāli*. Thus is realized the occasional character of the stains which tarnish that consciousness and they become eliminated.

The third formula: *Om tiṣṭha vajra*, "Om, be firm, vajra," serves to make the thought of enlightenment unshakeable. The person seeking initiation then sees in the maṇḍala, in the interior of his own heart, a fivebranched vajra, corresponding to the 5 Buddhas and to the 5 gnoses related to them: this vajra, in fact, symbolizes the quintessential (*sñin po*) nature of all the Tathāgatas and is the premise

by which all created beings can return to their essential nature.

The fourth formula: *Om vajrātmaḥo 'ham*, "om, I am made of vajra", points to the identity of the threefold adamant essence of the initiated in its threefold aspect of physical plane, verbal plane and spiritual plane, with the threefold adamant essence of all the Tathāgatas.

In the mystical symbology of the Tantras this moment is expressed by the greeting of the Tathāgatas, arrived from all the points of space, to the bodhisattva: *vajradhātur*. In the liturgical drama this moment corresponds to the baptism of the name, when the initiatic name is conferred upon the neophyte.

With the fifth formula: *om yathā sarvathāgatas tathāham*, "om, like all the Tathāgatas, even so am I", the disciple realizes his own identity with all the Buddhas; he becomes consubstantiated with Vairocana, who, in his turn, is the synthesis of all the Buddhas, namely the Dharmakāya.

Here, as may be seen, we are really on a plane very different from that of the Kriyātantras: in these formulas the process of a mystical asceticism which has its premises in Mahāyāna dogmatics, is outlined and which Tantric liturgy tries to translate into psychological experience with the assistance of visive symbols, like the maṇḍala, and of mental concentration.

This Vajrayāna religion has not been codified into an organic and systematic *summa*: unlike Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna did not have, at an early stage, its precise and certain dogmatical formulation. The two trends, though starting from kindred principles and tending to the same end, had very different contents: in Mantrayāna psychological experience, individual and inexpressible, had taken the upper hand. Mantrayāna is not dialectic but, as we have said, it is founded on subjective intuitions and inner flashings, eluding any systematic arrangement. Hence in it, instead of organic and doctrinal expositions, we find a long series

of commentaries on the chief Tantras or, as in the case of the Siddhas' schools, initiatic lyrics, in which the mystic, with a terminology understandable only by his spiritual brethren, sings of his ecstasies and hints, in devious terms, at his laborious and blissful conquest. I allude to those collections of "adamantine songs", *Vajragītā* or *dohā*, forerunners of medieval India's mystical lyric poetry, continued by Caṇḍīdās's poetical esoterisms and surviving in the Bāhūls' passionate songs.

Vajrayāna gradually clarified itself in this exegetic and poetical literature, the latter summing up its doctrines and helping memory by means of verse. It also reached a sort of order, as far as order can be reconciled with the subjectivity of its experiences. Perhaps, if Buddhism had not begun to decline in India, we should have had, for Vajrayāna also, a work like the one Abhinavagupta made for the Śaivasiddhānta. Owing to the rapid decay of Indian Buddhism, these attempts at a systematization did not take place until the Tibetan schools flourished, faithful interpreters of Indian gnosis.

A group of masters standing apart, celebrated in Indian esoteric tradition, both Buddhist and Shivaite, is that of the Siddhas, "the perfect ones", those that, through *sādhana*, have attained *siddhi*, "supreme realization", which is twofold: *lokottara*, transcendent, because the Siddha has become one with cosmic consciousness, and *laukika*, earthly, worldly, a consequence of the first. Having identified himself with the principle of the Whole the Siddha in fact acquired a miracle-working power which enabled him to accomplish unerringly all sorts of magic acts. There is a great abundance of legends on these Siddhas, as was to be expected from credulous populations, who had never drawn well-defined boundaries between the real and the phantastic and lived in an eager and confident expectation of miracles.

Indo-Tibetan tradition has preserved some of their biographies. The first (I) is entitled *Grub t'ob bryad cu rtsa bzii lo rgyus*

(in GRÜNWEDEL: *nmam t'ar*), (bsTan aḡyur, LXXXVI; CORDIER, *Cat.*, III, p. 247 a). A second story (II) is found in the *Grub t'ob bryad cu rtsa bžii rtogs brjod do bā aḡrel pa dañ bcas pa* (*ibid.*). Supplementary lists are to be found in the *Grub t'ob bryad cu rtsa bžii gsol adebs* (III) by rDo rje gdan pa (bsTan aḡyur, LXXII, p. 52; CORDIER, *Cat.*, III, p. 92) and in the *Grub t'ob bryad cu rtsa bžii rtogs pai sñiñ po* (*ibid.*, LXVII, p. 34; CORDIER, *Cat.*, III, p. 225) (IV). The *Grub t'ob bryad cu rtsa bžii bris t'abs* is not to be found either in the sNar t'añ or in the Peking editions of the bsTan aḡyur (nor in the sDe dge edition since no mention of this work is made in the TŌHOKU, *Cat.*).

To these lists may be added a series easily compiled out of vol. *t'si*, XLVIII, of the bsTan aḡyur, dedicated to these Siddhas' *dobā* songs; we also mention Tāranātha's treatise, translated by GRÜNWEDEL (*Edel.*), because this writer generally relies on oral and written traditions of India communicated to him by Indian Siddhas he met or who were his masters, foremost among them Buddhagupta.

In fact there was in India a vast literature, partly anonymous, circulated among he

initiativ schools, recounting the experiences and miracles of great ascetics; such are, precisely, Abhayaśrī's (Abhayadattaśrī) writings, which correspond to bsTan aḡyur LXXXVI, 1 and partly 2 and those works, by bZañ dbañ po, dBañ po byin, Bhaṭṭaraghaṭa, which Tāranātha used. Such is also the work, some fragments of which, concerning Advayavajra's life, were discovered in Nepal and published independently by myself (JRASB, XXVI, 1930) and by S. Lévi (BSOS, VI, 1930-32).

To the lists contained in the above writings may be added the purely Tibetan ones, for instance the Sa skya pa ones by aP'ags pa, used by Rāhula Sāṅkṛityāyana (JA, 1934, II, pp. 218-225) or the other one by SP, pp. 142-146, or finally the one by Kloñ rdol bla ma (*t's'a*, p. 41).

As these Siddhas are the most eminent personalities of medieval India's esoterism and represent the ideal link between Shivaism and Vajrayāna, indeed the expression of the same religious and mystical urge, translated through the analogical symbols, it will be well to attempt a reconstruction of the complete lists.

I	II	III (72/52)	KLOÑ RDOL
1. Lū yi pa, Lu i pā, Lohipa, Ña lto ba, Ñai rgyu ma za ba, Ñai rgyu lto bsol ba. Matsyantrāda, Matsyendra	as in the left column	Klu grub sñiñ po	Lū hi pā
2. Li la pa, Lilapāda, sGeg pa	do	Āryadeva (Padma las k'ruñs) Lilapa	Darika
3. Bir va pa, Bhir va pa, Vitupā	do	Lū yi pa (Ña lto za)	Ḍom bhi pa
4. Ḍombhi, Ḍombi, Ḍombhiheruka, gYuiñ mo can	do	Pad ma vajra (Šiñ tog za)	Li la pa
5. Šavara, Sā bā ri pā, Ri k'rod pa, Šavari	do Ša ba ri pa (IV)	Sa ra ha (Gar mk'an)	Bir va pa
6. Saraha, Saruha, Rāhula, Rāhulabhadra, mDa' snun, sGra gcan aḡsin	as in the left column	mT's'o skyes rdo rje	Ḍom bhi pa
7. Kañkali, Kañ ka ri pa, Kankali	do	Ḍombiheruka	Ša va ri pa
8. Mīna pa, Ña pa, rDo rje žabs, Mīnapāda, Vajrapāda	do	Birūpa	Sa ra ha
9. Gorakṣa, Ba lañ bsruiñ, Ba glañ rdsi	do Gorakha (IV)	Bhusuku (in Nalendra)	Ko ka li

I	II	III (72-52)	KLOŇ RDOL
10. Tsau raŋ gi pa, C'om rkun gyi yan lag, Caurangi	as in the left column gTsaŋ raŋ gi (IV)	rDo rje dril bu (in Bhañ- gala)	Mi na pa
11. Vi na pā, Bhi na pa, Pi vaŋ pa, Pi vaŋ brduŋ.	as in the left column	Nalendrapa ( <i>Ral gri byor nas mk'a' la gšegs</i> )	A naŋ ga vaj ra
12. Šānti, Ratnākaraśānti, Vajrāsana	do	Kukuripā	Tsau ra
13. Tantipa, T'ags mk'an	Tan ta pa	Saŋs rgyas ye šes (in Šiŋ kun)	Vi na pa
14. Tsa ma ri pa, Lham mk'an, Tsa ma ra pa, Cā mā ra	as in the left column	Nag po spyod (?)	Šān ti pā
15. Šaḍ ga pa (for: K'aḍ ga pa), Ral gri pa	do Khaḍ ga (IV)	Indrabhūti	Tog tse pa
16. Nā gar dsu na, Klu sgrub, dPal ldan bzaŋ po	as in the left column	Nāropā	Tin da pa
17. Kah na pa, Nag po, Nag po spyod pa, brTul žugs spyod pa c'en po, Ka' na, Ka' nā pa, Kan ha pa	do	Tog rtse ma	Tsa ma ri pa
18. Kar na ri pā, Kāneri, aP'ags lha, Mig gcig pa, Āryadeva	do	Taŋ ka la (?)	K'aḍ ga pa
19. T'a ga na, rDsun smra ba, rTag tu rdsun smra ba, Stha ga na, Thagana	do T'a k'a na (IV)	La ba pa	Na gar dsu na
20. Nā ro pa, Na ro ṭa pa, rTsa bšad pa	as in the left column	Candragomin	Nag po pa
21. Ša li pa, sPyan ki pa, Si la a li	do	Šān ti pa	Āryadeva
22. Tillo, Tilli pa, Tailopa, Te lo pa, sNum pa, Mar nag aṣ'oŋ mk'an, Til brduŋ mk'an	do Ti lo (IV)	Mar me mdsad	T'a ga pa
23. Tsa tra pa, C'os k'ur nas (or: las) bloŋ, Ca ta pa, Chatrapāda	as in the left column	Ti lo pa	Tai lo pa
24. Bhadra, Ba da pa, bZaŋ po	do	Nag po spyod	Na ro pa
25. K'an di pa, gŇis gcig tu byed pa, Do k'an di	do Dhu k'an (IV)	?	Ša li pa
26. A dso ki pa, A jo ki, Le lo can, Ayogī	as in the left column A dso ka (IV)	Bzaŋ po	Tsa ta pa
27. Ka la pa, sMyon pa, Ka ḍa pa	as in the left column	Ša ba ri pā	Bha ta pa
28. Ḍhombi, K'rus mk'an	do Dombhi (IV)	Da ri ka pā	Dho ša nti
29. Kam ka na, gDu bu can	as in the left column Ko ka ni	Nāgabodhi (ba laŋ skyon)	aDsu gi
30. Kam ba la, Lva ba pā	as in the left column	Mar me lha	Sa ka la
31. Diŋ ka pa, Ṭiŋ ka pa, aBras rduŋ ba, Ṭen ki	do	lDiŋ gi ( <i>aBras bu spyod</i> )	rDo rje bhi pa
32. Bhandhe, Ba de, Ba ta li pa, Nor la aḍsin pa (Bhāḍārī)	do	Dse ta ri	Me ko pa
33. Tan dhe pa, C'o lo pa, Tandhī, Tan- trapā	do Tentana (IV)	Sa ra ka pa (sic)	Ka ma ri pa

I	II	III (72-52)	KLOŃ RDOL
34. Ku ku ri pa, K'yi k'u bo	as in the left column	Šantipā (II)	Dva lañ da ra pa
35. Ku tsi pa, Ku ji pa, lTag lba can, Kubjipā	do	T'a ga pa	Rā hu la
36. Dha ma pa, Da ma pa, T'os pai šes rab bya pa	do Da ma (IV)	Dsa lan dhara	Dhar ma pa
37. Ma ki pa, Na rgyal can	Mahila	Ka ma la	Dho kari pa
38. A tsin ta, Dran pa med pa, bSam mi k'yab	as in the left column	gSer gliñ pa	Me dha ni
39. Ba bha hi, C'us las 'o mo len, Ba bhahi	do Ba ha (IV)	Bla va pa	Sa ga dsa la
40. Na la na, Na li na, Nili, Nali, Padmai rtsa ba	Na li na, Ni la na (IV)	Koñ ka na	Dril bu pa
41. Bhu su ku pa, Bhu su ku pa, Ži lha, Šantideva, Sai sñiñ po	as in the left column	Ka ma la	A yo gi
42. Indrabhūti, dBañ poi blo, Indrabhodhi	do	Tam pa ka ( <i>rKañ mgyogs dños grub brñes</i> )	Ca lo ki
43. Me ko pa, Me go pa	do	Bhi na	Ghu dhu ri pa
44. Ko řa li, Tog rtse řabs, Kotali, řDsor řadsin, řTa mo řadsin, Kuřhāri	Ke ta li (Tog rtse pa), Kotala (IV)	Su ta lo ka	Lu ci ka
45. Kam pa ri, Ka ma ri, mGar pa.	Kam ri pa (IV)	Dhar ma ki rti	Kam kara
46. Dsa lan da ra, Jā ri land ha, Jalan dhari, řDra ba řadsin pa	as in the left column	Ku mā ra	Kam pa li
47. Rāhula, řGra gcan řadsin	do	Ts'au pa	Bha de pa
48. Dha rma pa, C'os pa, T'os pa can, T'os pa šes rab can	do	Ni la pa (in Orgyan)	Tan ta pa
49. Do ka ri, rDo ka ri, Dho ka ri, řO kri	do	Padmakara (Lho nub srin poi k'a gnon mdsad)	Ku ku ri pa
50. Me dhi na, Medhina, T'añ lo pa	Me dhi na	?	Kud ma li
51. Sam k'a dsa (for: Pan), rDam skyes, Pan ka dsa, Pañkaja	as in the left column	Mi na pa	rDa ma pa
52. Ghan do pa, Gan dha pa, Gan tha pa, Dril bu pa, rDo rje dril ba pa	Ghañ řa pa	Sprin gi řugs can	Ma rdi la
53. Dso ki pa, Yogī	as in the left column	Ka ru pa	A cin ta
54. Tsa lu ki, Culiki, Caluki, gñid c'e	do Tsa lu ka (IV)	Da si ri pa (Na)	Bha la ka
55. Go ru ra, Bya pa, Bya ñon byed pa, Vāguri	as in the left column Go tu ri (IV)	A na nta	Na li pa
56. Lucika, Lu tsi ka pa, Lo ci ka, Tsog řadug, Kog blañs mk'an po, Lucika	as in the left column	Señ ge pa	Bhu su ku
57. Na gu ña, Na gu na, Yon tan med pa, Nirguña	do Ner gu ña	Zla ba bzañ po	In dra bhū ti
58. Dsa ya nan ta, rGyal ba mt'a' med	Jaya na nda, Dsa nan ta	Kun dga' sñiñ po	lCam legs smin ka ra

I	II	III (72/52)	KLON RDOL
59. Pa tsa ri, aK'ur ba aṣts'on ba, Pacari	as in the left column	Zla ba grags pa	Dsa len dra
60. Tsam pa ka, Cam ba ka, Campaka	do	Smad dkris pa	Ni gu na
61. Bhi kṣa na, Bha k'a na, Bhe k'e pa, So gñis pa, Viśāṇa	do	Ko ra ṇa ra (?)	Ci va ri pa
62. Dhi li, De li pa, Te li, Mar nag aṣts'on mk'an	Dhe li	A va dhū ti	Tsam pa ka
63. Ku ma ri pa, rDsa mk'an	as in the left column	?	Ghi la na
64. Tsa pa ri pa, Tsa pa li pa, Carpaṣi	do Dar ma pa (IV)	Ṣa kya bṣes gñen	rTil brduṇ pa
65. Ma ṇi bha dra, aByor ma, Ba hu ri, Maṇibhadrā	as in the left column	Caṇḍāli	Ku ma ri pa
66. Me kla lā	do Me k'a li (IV)	Glu dbyaṇs mk'an	Du me pa
67. Ka na kha lā	as in the left column	Vha ghā la	Ma ni bha drā
68. Kalā ka pā, Ka la ka pa, Ku co can	Ka la ka la	sGra mk'an žabs	Me kha la
69. Kan ta li pa, Kam t'ā ri, Ts'em bu pa	as in the left column	Kon ta li	Ka na k'a
70. Dha huli, De ka ra	Dho hu la	Tsa pa ri	Ka na ka
71. U dhi li pā, U dhi li, aP'ur pa	as in the left column	Si ya li	Kan tha li
72. Ka pā la, T'od pa can	do	Ñi ma sbas	Dha su ri pa
73. Ki ra pa, Ki ra ba, rNam rtog spon ba, Kilapā	Ki la pa	Ṇag gi dbaṇ p'yug	U dda ri pa
74. Sa ka ra, Pu ka ra, mTs'o skyes, Ṣaroruha	as in the left column Pa ga ra (IV)	Ti la pa (?)	Ka pa li pa
75. Sa rva bha kṣa, T'ams cad za ba	as in the left column Sar va bhi kṣa (IV)	Ka la sa	Ki ra pa
76. Nagabodhi, (Nāgārjunagarbhaṣ, Klui byaṇ c'ub)	as in the left column	Ku bu rtsa	mTs'o skyes rdo rje
77. Da ri ka, Dā ri ka, sMad aṣts'on can, sMad aṣts'on mai gyog	do	Seṇ ge pa (in Orgyan)	Sar va bha pa
78. Pu ta li, Su ta li, Ta li, rGyan slaṇ ba, Puṭṭali	Su ta li, Sa ta pa (IV)	T'ogs pa med	Na ga bo dhi
79. Pa na ha, mC'il lham can	Pa ha na, Pa mha (IV)	Na ta pa (in Orgyan)	Pu ra li
80. Ko ka li pa, Ko ka lai skad du c'ags, Kokili	as in the left column Ko ka la (IV)	Gliṇ bu mk'an	Sa na ka
81. Anaṇ ga, Aram gi, A ni go, Anaṇ ga	as in the left column	Sa ra pu	Ko ka li
82. Lakṣmīkarā, Legs smin ka ra	do	Ka la nga	A naṇ ga
83. Sa mu da, rGya mts'o nas nor bu len mk'an, Samudra	do Sa mu dra (IV)	Bha ya na	Sa mu dra
84. Byā li, Bya ri, Ba li pa, Vyāḍi	?	Me tog pa	Vya li

We pass over the minor remarks which might be made on this list, for instance the progressive corruption of names, which in later lists, like those by Kloñ rdol, appear in more and more aberrant forms. But we notice that the texts of the bsTan agyur, from which we have drawn the catalogue of Siddhas, form two rather different groups; on one side I, II and IV, and on the other III. The latter is broader, as it includes personages well known for their philosophical and dogmatical works as well as for their mystical experiences, like Dharmakīrti or Atiṣa. This list, as we shall see, is followed particularly by the Yellow school, while the first is particularly concerned with authors of *Vajragīta*. Another thing to be noticed, as I have often remarked, is the close relation between these ascetical schools of Buddhism and the Shivaite schools. Some masters, like Gorakṣa, Mīna, Matsyendra, are still popular with the schools of Shivaite Siddhas, but they also leave a remarkable trace of their thought in the Vajrayāna schools.

To make the personality of some of these Siddhas clearer, we must remember that it is a character of initiatic schools to assume, after baptism or baptisms, an esoteric name, which appears in two types: in the first case it is an allegorical name, alluding to the ascetic's spiritual rebirth: such are, for instance, Advajavajra, or Matsyendranātha, in the Prakritic form Macchinda;<sup>277</sup> Advajavajra because the ascetic has become consubstantiated with cosmic consciousness, which is like a diamond (*vajra*) faultless and transcending the duality of phenomenic existence. Matsyendra because he has vanquished and overcome the *matsya*, the fishes, i. e. the *pāśa*, the "ties", of samsaric existence. In other cases the initiatic name simply reproduces the names of masters famous in primitive Mahāyāna. P. Mus, in a recent work where, as usual, diligence is only equalled by insight, studying the *Ṣaḍgatikārikā*, attributed to Aśvaghōṣa, has noticed that many brief works, certainly written in the late Buddhist period, are attributed to the most

famous masters of Mahāyāna, as if to confer a greater authority upon them, by putting them under the patronage of such venerable names. This certainly took place in the shadow of Buddhist universities, to increase the prestige of didactic handbooks, on which novices and monks perfected their education. But it is also certain that, in the case of esoteric circles, like the Siddhas, the names of great masters which they bore are due to the fact that such names were assumed by their authors, following baptisms. This custom is common to this day in Tibet, where a new name corresponds to each baptism; it is often a name famous in Indian tradition: Kun dga' sniñ po, Rol pai rdo rje, and so on. In these schools the series Rāhula, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Candrakīrti is repeated, and the persons thus called have nothing to do with their celebrated namesakes, their spiritual ancestors. I have already illustrated above the case of Candrakīrti.

To the facts quoted above I may add the *sanpradāya* recorded by DT, *ja*, p. 4 b which not only confirms the dates proposed by me of Indrabhūti and Candrakīrti but shows that masters called Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Candrakīrti lived between the end of the VIIIth century and the end of the IXth. The *sanpradāya* concerns the revelation of the Guhyasamāja and it runs thus: Indrabhūti, a Nāgini, the king of a southern country Bisukalpa, Saraha (a contemporary of Dharmapāla VIIIth century), Nāgārjuna (Klu grub), Śā kya bṣes gñen, Āryadeva, (a contemporary of Devapāla), Klui byañ c'ub (Nāgabodhi), Zla ba grags pa (Candrakīrti), rDo rje, Nag po pa, Sa ḍres pa, the lotsāva of ḍGos (a contemporary of Rin c'en bzañ po).

The same facts are stated by other lists contained in the works of ḍP'ags pa (*gSuñ ḍbum Sa skya pa*, vol. *pa*, p. 4).

Saraha, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Nag po žabs (Kṛṣṇapāda), Zla ba grags pa, dPal ḍdsin, Gayadhara (master of ḍBrog mi)	Saraha, Nāgārjuna, Ri k'rod mgon po (Sabaranātha), Lūi pā, Dārikapā, rDo rje dril bu pa, Rus spal zabs, Jaḷandhara pā, Nag po spyod (junior)	Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Śā kya bṣes gñen, Zla ba grags pa, Rol pai rdo rje, Grags pa 'od zer, etc.
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I shall now quote other typical instances: Advayavajra is the same person as Maitrīpā; this is proved by the Sanskrit text published by Sylvain LÉVI and myself, by the Tibetan colophons (CORDIER, *Cat.*, II, 45, n. 35, pp. 217-232); he is also Avadhūtīpā (*ibid.*, pp. 217-232; *ibid.*, II, p. 63). Devacandra is also called by another name (*mts'an gžan*) Padmavajra (*ibid.*, p. 263). Ānandagarbha is the same as Āryagarbha (*ibid.*, III, p. 161).

Another problem in these lists of Siddha is chronological. Both Benoytosh Bhattācārya and Rāhula Sānkriyāyana have carried out diligent researches on the chronology of Tantric authors and thanks to them the way has been cleared. The remarks which follow will serve to correct or confirm some points, on the base of results which seem sure. First of all let us try to establish an ascertained contemporaneity: the Sanskrit manuscript quoted more than once proves that Advayavajra, i. e. Maitrīpā, i. e. Avadhūtīpā, was a disciple of Nāropā, of Jñānaśrīmitra, of Ratnākaraśānti, of Śavara and of Sāgara.

Nāropā was Mar pa's master and died in 1027 when Mar pa accomplished his last journey to India.

These data help us to establish with certainty the age of a number of masters. Advayavajra viz. Avadhūtīpā, is a contemporary, a little older, of Mar pa, who was his disciple under the same master. Śabara and Sāgara should have been of the same age as Nāropā. Hence all these masters lived in the Xth century, while Tilopā's date must be placed between the end of the IXth century, and the beginning of the Xth. Tilopā was Nāropā's direct master.

Another group is the one centering round Indrabhūti (Indrabodhi). Rāhula Sānkriyāyana greatly reduces this master's date, considering him a disciple of Karmaripā, who in his turn should be a disciple of Vajraghaṇṭa, a contemporary of Devapāla (ca. 800-850). This should bring Indrabhūti's date to the end of the IXth century or the beginning

of the Xth. These dates would overthrow the entire Tibetan tradition, which places Padmasambhava, Indrabhūti's disciple, in the times of K'ri sroñ lde btsan. Hence we must either admit the existence of two Indrabhūti (Or gyān pa's theory; see TUCCI, *Travels of Buddhist pilgrims in the Swat valley*, p. 53) or consider worthless the Tibetan tradition concerning Indrabhūti as Padmasambhava's master.

But in the *Kośalālakāra*, a commentary by Śākyamitra on *Tattvasaṅgraha*, translated by Rin c'en bzañ po (bsTan agyur, vol. L, p. 2), Indrabhūti is mentioned as one of the commentators of the same Tantra; and as Śākyamitra, according to Tārānātha's statement, p. 91, lived in the times of Devapāla (ca. 800-850) we must implicitly consider Indrabhūti earlier than he. This confirms the Tibetan tradition which places Indrabhūti in the VIIth century and consider him the spiritual father of Padmasambhava, K'ri sroñ lde btsan's preceptor. Hence Anaṅgavajra, his master and the latter's master Padmavajra, must be placed at the end of the VIIth century.

But this does not exclude the existence of another Indrabhūti which is in fact confirmed by the tradition preserved as we say by Or gyān pa and by ṛP'ags pa (Sa skya works, *ba*, p. 66).

On the other hand Carpaṭi was Sāhila's contemporary, as stated by the Chambā's *Vamśāvali*, confirmed by the literary tradition embodied in the *Caturaśitisiddhapravṛtti*, according to which he had relations with a king of Campakā; Sāhila, lived in the Xth century. This would serve to date Mīnānātha, who according to Tārānātha was a disciple of Carpaṭi.

This is not the place for details on Vajrayāna dogmatics, which are extremely difficult because they are based, above all, on direct experiences and immediate realizations, and do not lay great store by doctrinal speculations. The latter are borrowed from the various Mahāyāna schools, either Mādhyamika, or Yogācāra; they represent the premises from which the Vajrayāna masters started and upon

which they built the psychological subtleties of their liturgies and of their yoga practices.

In its beginnings Buddhism had implicitly defined two planes between which there is no communication: the samsaric plane, on which the law of karma operates, and the nirvanic plane realized, by a qualitative leap, when karma has been suppressed. This irrational thesis, always met with, whenever the problem of mystical experience and of the incommunicability between this world and the next, implied by it, is faced, could not satisfy the increasingly systematic spirit which finally swayed Indian speculation: that undetermined nirvana which was simply the second of these planes, was defined in ontological terms. It was conceived as an absolute, the premise of all phenomenic appearances; the latter, although they find their justification in it, are nothing but passing shadows, like shifting waves on the sea's surface. That absolute is the being in itself, pure consciousness without either an object or a subject; phenomenic appearances, things, in short, find their principle in it; hence, though that duality is not real, it is impossible to say that it does not exist. It has a relative existence, which becomes annulled when we consider it from the viewpoint of that absolute, but remains from a contingent point of view. This position is expressed in a famous verse of *Madhyāntavibhāga*, I, 1:

*Abbūtaparikalpo 'sti dvayaṃ tatra na vidyate /  
Śūnyatā vidyate tv atra tasyāṃ api sa vidyate //*

"the relative consciousness creating unreal images exists, but duality viz. perception and something perceived do not exist in it in an absolute sense (as really existing). In it is the absolute (as the non-existence of duality), but the latter, in its turn, is in this "absolute,,

This absolute is a cosmic consciousness and its nature is universally shining (*prakṛtiprabhāsvara*). This idea does not belong only to the Vajrayāna: it is the natural evolution of premises already appearing in the

Upanishad and which progressively take a more precise form in India's speculative schools. To mention only those developing in to a kindred soteriology, the Shivaite schools conceive in the same manner the absolute principle from which everything emanates as pure consciousness (*parā samvit*) without a shadow of concrete thought, immovable serenity, still untroubled by the birth of ideas.

This absolute is then the being *per se* of all things, the *dharmatā*, through which things are what they are, the unique and fundamental archetype: "All things are made out of thought,, *cittaśārīrāḥ sarve dharmāḥ*, SM, II, p. 228, or *na kaṃcid dharmam kathamcit kalpayati nānyatra vastumātram grhṇāti tathatāmātram* (*Bodhisattvabhūmi*, ed. WOGIHARA, p. 41), i. e. the Tathatā, that *quidditas* to which no predicate can be applied.

The process of salvation consists in getting rid of the error which causes us to consider as absolute the images of relative consciousness (*abhūtakalpasambhūtabhāvasaṃkalpātmakāḥ bhāvāḥ sa ākhyāto bālavayāmohako budhāih, Prajñopāyavinīcayasiddhi*, p. 1). It presupposes a return to the absolute, transcending all duality: it is a process by which, emerging from the sphere of the perceiving and the perceived, the purity of the unperceiving and of the unperceived is reached.

This doctrinal position is translated into a complex symbology, which actually becomes the instrument of salvation: that absolute, *Śūnyatā*, is *nirvāṇa*, but it is also the Buddha, indeed it is the womb of Buddhas (*tathāgatagarbha; Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, pp. 77, 220, 221, *passim*). The Buddhas appearing in the skies of the innumerable lands of the universe, or preaching to human creatures, are only the emanations of that absolute which, by virtue of these emanations, reveals its essence and so shows the way of discrimination between that which is and that which seems: only in this discrimination is salvation possible. The infinite Buddhas with which Mahāyāna has filled time and space are such only insofar as they have reintegrated through enlightenment,

*bodhi*, the consciousness of their essential participation with the absolute.

Hence this soteriology presupposes a revelation of truth, an epiphany of truth, passing through three degrees, called by dogmatics with the names of three bodies:

Dharmakāya  
Sambhogakāya  
Nirmāṇakāya

to which a fourth body, the *svabhāvikakāya* is added; the latter has evidently been postulated to stress the fact that these three bodies should not be understood as three different natures, but are one identical nature, partaking of one single essence. The theory of the three bodies which has already been systematically stated by Asaṅga in the *Uttara-tantra*, explains the relation between the samsaric plane and the plane of the absolute: the Dharmakāya is revealed by degrees, so as to open salvation to everyone. As Sambhogakāya he projects himself in infinite shapes in the heavens, often he splits himself into two, appearing at the same time both as the mediator and the assembly of hearers, in order to furnish, through the miraculously created assembly, an occasion for a sermon, i. e. for self-revelation: the Sambhogakāya appears outside time and space, in that spiritual sphere to which choirs of the blessed ascend, carried upwards by ecstasy, there to hear dharma, the law which saves, later identified with Being.

Nirmāṇakāya is the assumption of a body adapted to earthly understanding, like the one in which Śākyamuni appeared to men, attaining *bodhi* and revealing in Benares the law of the four truths, of the eightfold path and of the twelvefold causal concatenation.

As in the Shivaite schools, this process may be seen from a double angle: from the angle of the absolute, viz. in a descending direction, from the one to the many, from the undifferentiated to the differentiated, from what is true to what is illusive (*ābhāsa*); but it may also be seen from the opposite angle, viz.

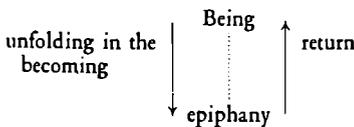
from that which has become to that which is. The conquest of the *bodhi* is a return, i. e. a progressive overcoming of the three stages, corresponding to different revulsions *āśrayaparāvṛtti*, each superior to the following one. As Ratnākaraśānti says in his commentary on the *Khasamatāntra*, when the Bodhisattva, purified by long experience, becomes the Buddha seated on the diamond throne, where *bodhi* is attained, the first *āśrayaparāvṛtti* is accomplished, consisting in the suppression of the mental states, both in a psychical sense, as being the receptacle of samsaric impressions, and as an ascension to a metapsychic plane, matured through long practice of moral virtues and spiritual absorption. Hence those karmic inclinations from which individuality is derived no longer appear, or, if they appear, they become annulled; only the serenity of pure intelligence lives. This is the *āśrayaparāvṛtti* by which a state of absolute purity is reached, incapable of flowing out in particular karmic moments. It is the first leap from the samsaric to the nirvanic plane.

The second *āśrayaparāvṛtti* is a revolution (*mārga*), through which an absolute overcoming of any earthly form and the absolute assumption of every transcendent form come true. The third *āśrayaparāvṛtti* is consubstantiation with the absolute, beyond the casual irruption of magical artifice. The two last aspects, corresponding precisely to *sambhoga* and *dharmakāya*, are a return to its own essence, (*svarūpāvasthāna* = *svabhāvikakāya*) which transcends all attributes (*khasama* = celestial space), although there is this difference, that, as Sambhogakāya, Being assumes forms (*ākāra*) and hence may seem no longer transcendent. But is it not actually so, for these forms are illusive appearances (*pratibhāsa*), and hence unreal (*asat*).

The ontological conception of the Buddha as absolute led to other important implications. How can man, swept away into *samsāra*, flow back towards the nirvanic plane,

join the Buddha once more and lose himself into the absolute, if there is no relation between the Buddha's essence and the essence of men? Man could not hope to become a Buddha at any time, if there were not latent in him this secret nature of enlightenment, of *bodhi*, made by the schools synonymous with Tathāgatagarbha, and next with Vajradhara, Dharmakāya, absolute. If men have this spark in themselves, and may thus hope to blaze out one day into the great fire of Buddhahood, this means that there is a sameness of nature between the Buddha and created beings. And this is precisely the principle already upheld in the *Laṅkāvatāra*, and expressed by Asaṅga in the *Uttaratantra*. Created beings contain the seed of *bodhi*; the Buddha's nature is hidden in man like a purest gem which man does not recognize because it is covered with filth. But the knowledge of truth and an adequate praxis will gradually erase all this dross, and the Buddha's nature will shine forth in its full splendour; the bodhisattva, he whose nature is *bodhi*, will become a Buddha. This nature is the interior threefold diamond, of spirit, word and body, forming the secret essence of created beings and of the Buddha and the premise of enlightenment which is open to all.

So that salvation is based on two premises: on one side the epiphany of Being, on the other the sameness of nature between the absolute or Buddha and created beings, which makes a return possible. Hence we have a closed system, which may be graphically represented as follows:



This epiphany is accomplished through the Sambhogakāya and the Nirmanakāya, by a mutual participation and exchange; thanks to this, truth becomes adequate to the recipient's preparation; his karmic and

spiritual maturity, in a certain sense, evokes it and draws it to himself, in the shape of pleasure for those seeking pleasure, in a terrific shape for those inclining to the terrific, in an agreeable aspect for those disposed to agreeable things (*Jñānasiddhi*, p. 96). The epiphany always takes place by this intervention on the creature's part: an embodied, active go-between who may lead man, unaware of his native purity, to the consciousness of his own divine nature, has never become concrete: the only figure tending to become a mediator between light and darkness, without ever assuming a definite outline, is Vajrapāṇi, Guhyapati, in some Tantric cycles of the upper class. But no trace of an entity which might be compared to a Logos.

So the epiphany we were speaking of is not only a revelation of truth, its progressive discovery: it is also the suggestion of a backward trend in an ontological process of development, in the unfolding (*prapañca*) of the one into the many. Into that elementary intuition is thus inserted the fivefold scheme, spatial and temporal, proper to India's cosmological speculations. The Dharmakāya, which nevertheless, as absolute, remains unchanged, is refracted into five fundamental Sambhogakāyas, the symbols of spatial extension and of temporal rotation, indissolubly joined, viz. the two aspects of its unfolding in the becoming, even while it transcends the latter. The same symbology formulated by the Śaivasiddhānta so appears in Buddhism.

The quinary series, arranged in the maṇḍala's cosmogram, resolves itself into the symbols of a central deity, Vairocana or Akṣobhya, and four deities in the four corners, namely, beginning from the East, Akṣobhya (if Vairocana is in the centre), or Vairocana (if Akṣobhya is in the centre), Ratnasambhava to the South, Amitābha to the West, Amoghasiddhi to the North.

But the quinary series is subject to further developments; if the mystical families, the *rigs*, were to remain five, (and as many are

represented in the maṇḍala's cosmogram), it was necessary, owing to an implication subject to all of India's cosmological and theosophical speculations, to seek for a principle transcending the pentad's spacial and temporal development, the unchangeable, ideal centre, the first motor, the undifferentiated absolute, which cannot be placed in any point and exists before all time. Round these ideas, running through the whole of Indian speculation ever since its beginnings, flowed other philosophisms, elaborated in Buddhist schools and very probably also some foreign ideas when the Buddhist diaspora had come in contact with other cultures. In the first place the theory of three or four bodies, postulating a *dharmakāya* or *śaḥajakāya* beyond all possible determination: then the conviction, which had penetrated into some schools, that there is a primigenial Buddha, an *ādibuddha* (*Saṅs rgyas dai po*) preceding all the others. The *ādibuddha* began to be spoken of since ancient times; he is mentioned, in order to confute the theory stating his existence also in Asaṅga (*Sūtrālakāra*, IX, p. 77), but the word has a different meaning for the great philosopher of the first Mahāyāna and for Vajrayāna. There the opinion is refuted that the Buddha is Buddha from the beginning, i. e. *ādau Buddha*, which implies no conquest of Buddhahood; here, in Vajrayāna, *Ādibuddha* is the primeval cause, the absolute.

*Ādi Buddha* in this sense is specially proper to the Kālacakra system, which, as we said before, issued out of a school not unacquainted with theistic systems, like Islam. But it is a principle common to all Tantras of the upper class, Anuttara, that beyond the pentad, conditioning it, transcending it and nevertheless mysteriously permeating it, there is a Buddha, earlier than the apparent multiplicity, an indiscriminate Buddhahood, the reason and the source of all apparent things. This Buddha, earlier than the pentad, conditioning it and emanating it out of himself, has several names according to the different

schools. He is Vajradhara, "the creator of all Buddhas", *janakah sarvabuddhanam* (*Khasamatantra*, p. 2). He is *khasama* "like ether", beyond all form; he is the enlightenment, *bodhi*, of all the Buddhas (*ibid.*, p. 1). In his symbolical appearance he wears the five Buddhas on his diadem, to prove their descent from himself (*ibid.*, p. 2), hence in the commentary on the *Khasamatantra* he is called *ādibuddha*, after the model of the Kālacakra. He is "like space", *ākāśasama* (*ibid.*, p. 4), he is the *nijam rūpam* of the five Buddhas, which in reality are not. According to *bsTan aḡyur*, LXXII, 5, p. 75, *Kun tu bzañ po* is the quintessence of the "three bodies", he is made out of the five gnoses, absolute omnisciences (*sku gsum gyi ño bo ñid ye šes lña rañ bžin can rnam par t'ams cad mk'yen rañ bžin*).

But the scheme of emanation does not stop at such a simple formulation as this: cosmic expansion takes place through the multiplication of the Being into some fundamental forces, through which it becomes realized. In this case also the parallel with Shivaite schools is clear; gnosis expresses these ideas under gods' names: the mechanism of cosmic expansion is reduced to an association of divine aspects, the five Buddhas are accompanied by their female counterparts, corresponding to the Shivaite *śakti*, with this difference, that the latter are usually active, while in Vajrayāna the active element is always represented by the male god. For this reason the simple quinary group is replaced by a double quinary group, consisting of five Buddhas joined to their female counterparts.

The process does not stop here: another change alters the conception of Bodhisattva: in Mahāyāna a bodhisattva is and fundamentally remains, a being in whom the fundamental germ of *bodhi* has been fully developed, so that he, successively passing through the various stages, or planes of extra-spatial consciousness, into which he is lifted in the meditative process, reaches an indefectible plane where, beyond any possibility of decay,

he is finally aware of his Buddha-nature, an infallible candidate to supreme enlightenment. But in Vajrayāna a radical change is attempted. Some Bodhisattvas are considered the Buddha's emanations: it is true that they still remember their former vows, by whose virtue they have acquired their present pre-eminent position: this could not be avoided without changing Mahāyāna dogmatics entirely and consequently denying any utility to *pranidhāna* and *caryā*, the "vow,, of becoming a Buddha, not for one's own advantage but for the common good and the "practice,, it enjoins. But these bodhisattvas become consubstantiated with the Buddhas, closely bound to them, in a relation of essential identity: indeed they are drawn with the Buddha's figure on their heads, to represent this relation visibly. The bodhisattvas, also undergo a reduplication through their female counterparts, as in the Buddhas' case; hence we have  $5 \times 2 = 10 + 5 \times 2 = 10 = 20$ ; keeping in mind, nevertheless, that under these twenty aspects lies, as a first cause, the simple transcending pentad, without any female counterpart and next, above all, the Dharmakāya (i. e.  $20 + 5 + 1 = 26$ ). As may be seen, here we find once more the fundamental schemes of Indian ontology (the 25 principles of Sāṅkhya must be recalled), which passes through all the theological systems with the chain of its categories (*tattva*). But there is a difference, namely that in Buddhism the machinery is worked out, in its symbolology, rather with an eye to soteriology than with ontological aims. Ontology in spite of many attempts at taking full possession of Vajrayāna gives way to the urge of salvation and yields to psychology.

At this stage the symbology becomes more and more complex: the gods split up into a double aspect, *śānta* and *krodha*, *śi-k'ro*, pacified and angry. This division, is already implicit in many deities of Hinduism: it will be enough to recall, for instance, the bivalent feminine deities Durgā-Kālī, or Shiva. But the Hindu schools did not reach such a clearcut

formulation as Mahāyāna and particularly Buddhist Tantrism. The latter divided the chief deities of its extremely rich Pantheon in serene or pacified and terrific or angry; one might think that this division is an echo of Iranian dualism, in which the principles of good and evil are so sharply distinguished, without any possible understanding between them. But on reflection it appears that even if we admit this suggestion to have reached Buddhist communities, its final outcome was a dichotomy of the divine world greatly differing from the Iranian type. In reality each divinity of Buddhist Tantrism has in itself this double aspect, which corresponds to the different functions it is called upon to perform: the deity assumes its terrific aspect and projects out of itself a frightful emanation, when it is determined to defeat or repel malevolent forces. Moreover in Buddhism and generally speaking throughout Hindu religious experiences evil is not understood as a principle existing *ab aeterno* and contrasting with the principle of good: rather, sin is replaced by ignorance, which means the attachment to life, adhesion to the magical error, favouring samsaric development. These are phases of darkness (*saṅkoca*) in which cosmic consciousness freely envelops and conceals itself: everything happens within cosmic consciousness, for which no evil exists, outside which there is no force: even *māyā*, even *avidyā* (i. e. to consider phenomena as reality), are due to the mysterious machinery of its intrinsic liberty. The stain has existed *ab aeterno*, *anādikālavāsana*; *avidyā* is not outside the absolute, but implicit although casual: *āgantuka*. It is Abhinavagupta's *pauruṣa ajñāna*, cosmic consciousness in the moment of its limitation (*saṃkucita-prabhātmaka*, *Tantrasāra*, p. 6), the primaeval cause of *samsāra*, *mūlakāraṇam samsārasya* (*ibid.*).

Thus the Buddhist Pantheon which we see represented on the tankas is divided into male and female, peaceful and dreadful groups; all takes place by virtue of a spontaneous germination, occurring on the fertile soil of

ecstatic visions. An organic arrangement, a theogony, a pedigree, of the Tantric Olympus has never been attempted / hence we very often notice duplications, divergences and contradictions: each school puts forward its own schemes and, from time to time, new derivations and emanations are substituted for, or added to, those already known and accepted.

This system of spiritual filiation and dependence or of the emanation of one god out of the other, is represented by art in a visible manner: by placing on top of the heads of images a smaller figure of the deity with which the represented god is mystically connected. Or else, as in the tankas, the "mystic family,, ,

of a god or of a saint, his spiritual connection, is pointed out by placing above him, on the same line as the axis of Brahmā, which cuts across his image, a representation of the deity from which the former is derived.

Sometimes, as I said, there is an apparent contradiction, but it is very often due to the fact that the correspondence between Bodhisattva and Buddha varies according to the Tantric cycle, viz. the family relation (*kula*) between them varies according to the Tantric group from which the figure draws its inspiration; not infrequently therefore the different relation enables us to guess the different Tantric class suggesting that image.

A Synopsis of the most important Vajrayāna gods according to their relation.

First Principle: Ādibuddha, Vajradhara, Akṣobhyavajra, Samantabhadra, Mahāvairocana, etc.

Passion	<i>moha</i> (bewilderment)	<i>abhimāna</i> (pride)	<i>rāga</i> (passion)	<i>īrsyā</i> (jealousy)	<i>krodha</i> (wrath)
Constituents of human personality	<i>rūpa</i> (matter)	<i>vedanā</i> (feelings)	<i>saṃjñā</i> (ideas)	<i>saṃskāra</i> (karmic activity)	<i>viññāna</i> (consciousness)
Buddha	Vairocana	Ratnasambhava	Amitābha	Amoghasiddhi	Akṣobhya
Mudrā	Vajradhātviśvarī, Locanā	Māmaki <sup>1)</sup>	Pāṇḍaravāsini	Tārā	Māmaki <sup>1)</sup>
Mudrā corresponding to senses	Rūpavajrī	Śabdavajrī	Gandhavajrī	Rasavajrī	Sparsavajrī
Bodhisattva	Kṣitigarbha, Maitreya	Ākāśagarbha	Lokeśvara, Khasarpaṇa, Padmapāṇi and other forms of the same god	Sarvanivaraṇa- viṣkāmbin	Uṣṇīśacakra, Mañjuśrī (SM, I, p. 65); Vajrānāga (SM, I, pp. 123, 124)
Female Bodhisattva	Sitātapatrā (SM, II, p. 365); Uṣṇīśavijayā (SM, II, p. 418); Vajravārahī (SM, II, p. 441)	Aparājitā (SM, II, p. 352)	Kurukullā (SM, II, pp. 348, 385); Ekajaṭā (SM, II, p. 352) Dharmadhātviśvarī (SM, I, pp. 128, 129)	Tārā, (Mahāśrītarīnī, SM, I, p. 245)	Tārā (Mahācinakrama, SM, I, pp. 208, 210); Jāngulī (SM, I, p. 248); Pratyāṅgirā (SM, II, p. 402); Nairātmyā (II, p. 451)
Krodha	Acala	Aparājita, Tak-kirāja	Hayagrīva, Niladaṇḍa	Vighnāntaka, Mahābala	Śumbha

1. *Kuladvaya*, viz. belonging to two families.

This scheme, on account of the soteriological side prevailing on the ontological, expresses not dialectically, but in a poetical and symbolical way, the interplay of forces by which the one develops into the many, so that meditation upon it may lead the initiate to salvation.

But how does this return to the undifferentiated One come about, after his experience in the world? And through what machinery does the epiphany we have mentioned become active and hence capable of salvation? Dialectic knowledge and dogmatic skill are useless: they must be transformed into a direct experience, enveloping the mystic's spiritual life and turning his soul towards new paths. This is possible by realizing, within himself, in perfect awareness, the process of cosmic expansion and reabsorption. The reintegration, out of the apparent multiplicity of the phenomonic world, of the indiscriminate One, i. e. of *bodhi*, is accomplished by one's becoming consubstantiated with this very process, by placing oneself within that same *bodhi* and experiencing, while there, the double moment of its expansion and of its return to itself. This process is aided by props (*ālambana*) capable of transforming an intellectual knowledge of the process into effective experience. The first of these props is the maṇḍala: its diagrams reproduce by means of symbols the play of cosmic forces, their unfolding out of the luminous centre of universal consciousness, up to its own negation, pure materiality. Next, Vajrayāna boldly transfers this maṇḍala to the body, by an immediate identification between the empirical self and the Whole.

Vajrayāna then adopts that homology of macrocosm and microcosm which, permeates the most vital conceptions of Indian theosophy.

The individual is the synthesis and the mirror of the univers: the process of breathing represents the spatial-temporal expansion of Being in its fulfilment. According to

Abhinavagupta's summary in the *Tantrāloka* and in the *Tantrasāra*, in my breathing I can see, reproduced, the indefinite temporal series, and owing to the fact that the two conceptions of time and space are reversible, also spatial progression: my body is the actual whole, in it are the sun, the moon, the continents. "Here in the body / says Saraha / are Ganges and Yamunā, here is the mouth of the Ganges, here are the sun and the moon,, (p. 85). The twenty-four sites of the adamantine Body, according to bDe mc'og's cycle, are equally places of the human body, the latter being a symbol for the universe.

The body, then, is a maṇḍala, a cosmogram in whose psycho-physical functions the Whole is reflected. Therefore in this symbology, as the pentad unfolds in the maṇḍala out of shining or imperceptible, but omnipresent, consciousness, likewise in the body, emanating out of the *bodhi*'s mysterious presence, latent even in those who are unaware of his own recondite being, the five Buddhas take their places. These five Buddhas are imagined as the equivalents of the five components constituting human personality. The five sensorial spheres correspond to them, as the female counterparts do in the scheme of the maṇḍala. "Since they have the nature of the five Buddhas, the five constituents of human personality are called *Jina*: and the five *dhātu* correspond to the Buddhas' *śaktis* Locanā etc. Therefore our body is a Buddha body,, ( *Jñānasiddhi*, p. 41). The equivalence is carried as far as the five fundamental passions, which are, at the same time, the effect and the motive forces of nescience standing in the way of our consciousness of *bodhi*: mental darkness, pride, passion jealousy and anger (see following table). Hence error itself, the darkness, enveloping us, may become a means of salvation, when by a well-advised process of purification (*śuddhi*) its transfer to other planes is obtained, this being the aim of the Anutratantras chiefly meant for those persons in which passions are strong.

Six families <sup>1)</sup>	Corresponding			
	skandha (components of personality)	Buddha <sup>2)</sup>	nature	gnosis
1. cakra	rūpa (matter)	Vairocana	moha (bewilderment)	ādarśa
2. ratna	vedanā (feeling)	Ratnasambhava	abhimāna (pride)	samatā
3. tathatā	samjñā (ideas)	Amitābha	rāga (passion)	pratyavekṣā
4. khadga	saṃskāra (karmic activity)	Amoghavajra	īrṣyā (jealousy)	kriyānuṣṭhāna
5. vajra	vijñāna (consciousness)	Akṣobhya	krodha (wrath)	dharmadhātuvīśuddhi <sup>3)</sup>
6. cittavajra	ākāśa (ether)	Vajrasattva	—	—

1. Another, parallel, designation of the six *kula* quoted above p. 222. — 2. For the corresponding *mudrās* or *saktis* Locanā etc., cfr. Table at p. 238. They symbolize the 5 *dhātu* in relation with the 5 *skandha*. — 3. The theory of the mystic gnosis is to be found already in the *Mahāyānasūtrāloka*, IX, pp. 68-75 but there they are only four *dharmadhātuvīśuddhi* missing. This perhaps gives a *terminus a quo* for the approximate age when the five-Buddha's theory began to be circulated.

This purification between microcosm and macrocosm, as in the Shivaite systems, is then the premise of the "return", viz. of the liberation of *bodhicitta*, the thought of enlightenment, ontologically conceived as Vajrasattva, Vajradhara, Dharmakāya, the absolute, supreme bliss (*mabāsukha*) hidden in our body. The Buddha is concealed within us, like a precious gem. "All the scholars describe the Master, but they do not know that the Buddha dwells in our body," (*Dobākoṣa*, p. 98).

To make this point clear, Mahāyāna dogmatics and Haṭhayoga praxis then blend and define the theoretic and practical bases of salvation.

The mechanism of this process finds its philosophical basis in the Vijñānavādins' dogmatics, according to Asaṅga's elaboration. This school admitted three moments or aspects of the absolute: its deceptive aspect, viz. its appearing as if objectivated in the duality *parikalpita*; as such, these manifestations are reciprocally correlated and interdependent, *paratantra*; but these two aspects intermingle and disappear in its perfect moment, *pariniṣpanna*, which transcends and conditions those two limitations. To this scheme, taken from Asaṅga's school, Tantric masters superimpose Nāgārjuna's theories, and they understand the above three aspects of cosmic consciousness as the three voids, above which

is the absolute void, beyond any words or definitions: the first three correspond to the cosmic process in action, decayed into duality and therefore empty of reality (cfr. Asaṅga's *abhūtaparikalpa*); the last is the absolute beyond any determination.

This is represented according to the following paradigm:

1. Void (*śūnya*), *prajñā*, relativity, "paratantra", night, moon, thirty-three aspects.

2. Supervoid (*atīśūnya*); *upāya*, illusory appearance, "parikalpita", day, sun, twenty-four aspects.

3. Great void (*mabāśūnya*), *avidyā*, completeness, "pariniṣpanna", union of the two preceding aspects, seven aspects.

4. Absolute void (*sarvaśūnya*), *prabhāsvara*, universally bright consciousness; in Vajrayanic symbolology: Vajradhara (*Pañcakrama*, p. 27 ff.).

It is clear that if we read this scheme beginning from the bottom, we have a description of the process of expansion: void is the absolute consciousness, not duality, a pure coincidence of thought and being, *nirvāṇa* and *samsāra*, the great void. *Avidyā*, ignorance, is thought itself, as it first becomes tainted in individuation, and as such it is the initial cause of the dichotomy in which the world's illusion is split up. It is worked out and becomes reality through the two poles of illusiveness, *parikalpita*, and



this play of the *prāna* by producing *nirodha*, voluntary stoppage. In this manner, the *nirodha* of individuated thought is also accomplished: thus it must be led back to the *caṇḍālī*, into the middle channel, where the light of the Absolute shines; by the fire lit in that channel it is finally burnt up.

As always, this process is amphibious: in the manner just told, the motion of subjective images (those images that Shivaism would call *bodhyajñāna*), is suppressed. But over this negative moment a positive moment is superimposed, viz. the reintegration of the Vajrasattva's, or Vajradhara's, or Mahāsukha's indivisible unity, the return, after the experience of the world's unfolding (*prapañca*), to absolute identity, which comes true when duality is overcome. This unity is in the *bodhicitta*, in the "thought of enlightenment,,", which includes in itself, indissolubly, *prajñā* and *upāya*, gnosis and praxis, *sūnyatā* and *kāruṇā*, void and compassion. At this point, the universal process having been transferred to the microcosm, sexual symbology becomes inserted into the system. The *bodhicitta* the thought of enlightenment, viz. the absolute to be reintegrated by the conjunction of its two illusory aspects, is the *bindu*, the "drop,,", i. e. the egg created by the male semen (*śukla*) and by the ovulum (*rakta*), viz. by *prajñā* and *upāya*, gnosis and praxis, once again melting into one another. Symbology then becomes extraordinarily complex, as different ideas and theories are often expressed by the same terms, not uncommonly with the object of preserving the secret of the initiatic schools and keeping the uninitiated away.

There is no doubt that in some liturgies *bindu* is the *anusvāra*, the point =  $\text{ṃ}$  in the mantra's technique; as for instance in the famous syllable *om*. In this case the play of cosmic expansion is expressed by the complication of sounds which reproduce, in their combinations, the intricacy of divine forces, through which the one becomes the multiple. In our case *bindu* is *anusvāra* on

the syllable  $\text{hūṃ} = \frac{\text{ṃ}}{\text{h} + \text{u}}$  viz. vowel = gnosis, plus consonant = means, once again create the "point,,", i. e. *bodhi*, Vajradhara's mystical semen, "the Whole,,",

This is, perhaps, the most ancient and orthodox theory. As from the sexual act, a fusion of semen *śukla* and ovulum *rakta*, egg, *bindu*, is born, so in the yogic conjunction of *prajñā* and *upāya*, represented by the *lalanā* and *rasanā*, the two channels on the right and on the left, the egg is born in the *caṇḍālī*, the middle channel, as a reintegration of the primordial unity of consciousness, even beyond individuated thought. In this case the egg can be nothing but flashing consciousness, the Buddha latent within us, shining like a full light, 'od *ḡsal*, in the centre of that middle channel which, on the top of the head, reaches the void beyond apparent existence and then causes the illusion of individuation to dissolve into that void.

On other occasions, particularly in the *śiddha* schools, this junction is imagined between the ascetic and the *caṇḍālī* itself, considered as his lover.

Not infrequently this process of exteriorization requires in the initiatic liturgy the presence of a *mudrā*, i. e. of a woman, the living symbol of *prajñā*: the disciple, through the sexual act, reproduces the creative moment. But the act must not be performed down to its natural consequences; it should be controlled by *prāṇāyāma* in such a manner that semen goes its way backwards, not flowing downwards but ascending upwards, until it reaches the "thousand-petalled lotus,,", on the top of the head, hence to vanish into the uncreated source of the Whole. This must be carefully seen to, for the semen's fall would be a great sin; not liberation from *samsāra* but a sinking into its depths would result.

*Bodhicittaṃ notsrjet (Subhāsitasanḡraha, p. 77)*  
*cyutir virāgasambhūtir virāḡād dukkhasambbhavah,*  
"the semen's fall, causes the end of passion and the end of passion is a cause of pain,,",  
(Commentary on the *Dobākoṣa*, by Kāṇhupā,

p. 49, B), where passion (*rāga*) is synonymous with *karuṇā*, compassion. This equivalence between passion and compassion is understandable: the purpose of compassion is to lead all living creatures to *nirvāna*, viz. to reintegrate them in the *bodhicitta*, the first principle: compassion is the motive of gnosis. They are the two poles through which the process of this return is accomplished and the cycle is closed from the *bodhicitta*, cause, (*rgyu*), to the *bodhicitta* effect (*abras bu*) at the close of the phenomenical experience, to use dualistic expressions, as it is fitting for anyone wishing, for didactical reasons, to reflect on an essentially one process; in it, in fact, duality is already the effect of individuation, viz. of the false subsumption of an "I,, and of a "this,, as outside the "I,, due to nescience. And if any one, remaining in this nescience, is incapable of flowing back, through the fusion between *prājñā* and *upāya*, towards the One, Being, the Whole, those two poles of *bodhicitta* come out of the circle and descend into the objectivized world, on the plane of duality: this is symbolized by the "fall of the semen,,.

Once again the Vajrayāna schools echo Yoga theories and practices going back to the most ancient lore of Indian religious experiences, already appearing in the Upanishads; I may refer f. i. to the principle of *ūrdhvaretas*, the backward direction of semen produced by yoga discipline, already mentioned in those old books.

Moreover the machinery of meditation on the mantra and of the *Haṭhayoga* exercises, whose purpose it is to reproduce in the maṇḍala of the body the process of cosmic becoming and reabsorption, offers the Tantric masters an opportunity to build a new bridge between their gnosis and the people's religious traditions; the ancient tribal deities, terrible and monstrous, of India and of the frontier countries are accepted, as we have said, but they become transfigured; *devī*, *yaśiṇī*, *dākinī*, *lāmā*, are taken as symbols of the wreaths of mystical letters imagined in the

various psycho-physical centres located in the meditating person's body or of the different moments of *prāṇa*. For this reason such Tantras, particularly those of the two superior classes, swarm with a crowd of gods and goddesses very often reflected in the pictorial mythography of the Tibetan tankas. Although they are represented in their usual and primitive form, they are here taken with a new meaning, a secret and symbolic sense revealed to the disciple. The same process takes place in Buddhism which has been noticed in the Shivaite Tantra, where precisely the series: *Kālī*, *Dākinī*, *Śākinī*, and so on, unfolds.

While in an evolutive or involutive sense the fivefold spatial-temporal series prevails, when time and space have shrunk or have been done away with into the blazing point of cosmic consciousness, absolute reintegration is accomplished through four moments, viz. spiritual rebirth is realized in four moments: the ancient intuition (already mentioned in the Upanishads themselves) of the four states corresponding to gradually more complete purifications from all illusive duality, is received into Vajrayāna and applied to its soteriology: the states of wakefulness (*jāgrata*), sleep (*svapna*), deep sleep (*suṣupta*), ineffable fourth state (*turiya*), are purified with the four *ānanda*, four blisses whose intensity becomes more and more intimate, *prathamānanda*, *paramānanda*, *viramānanda*, *sahajānanda*. In this symbology which allows the initiate to realize the purity of divine experience, they correspond, to the four bodies of the Buddha: *nirmāṇa*, *sambhoga*, *dharmā* and *sabhā*, each of them adequate to the four planes of reality: physical, verbal, spiritual, intellectual (*kāya*, *vāc*, *citta*, *jñāna* - *Sekoddeśatikā*, p. 27).

Thus these four different states of bliss, *ānanda*, more and more intense, flow into the *Mahāsukha*, the great bliss, synonymous, as we have seen, with *Vajradhara* or absolute, an echo, in Vajrayāna, of ancient Indian ideas, which had conceived the absolute as

Being, thought and bliss, *sat-cid-ānanda*. Vajrayāna, in reality, had defined Being as *cittaṃ prakṛtiprabhāsvaram*, "naturally shining thought,,, and now adds to it this determination of *mahāsukha* = *ānanda*, bliss, which is not a physical plane, *indriyaja* (*Jñānasiddhi*, p. 57) but the intuition of the nature of all the Tathāgatas (*sarvatābhāṣatam jñānam, ibid.*). This ascent is

accomplished in four stages or moments, corresponding to four spheres (*cakra*) or points, the equivalents of as many centres of Shivaite yoga (see following Table). They are conceived, in this identification of the ascetic with the Whole and in the reproduction in him of the cosmic process, as the counterpart of the four Buddhas' bodies.

Physical centre	Shivaite centres	Buddhist centres	Kāyas or planes	4 spheres of bliss	4 states	4 vajra
1. Top of the head	sahasrāra	uṣṇisa-kamala (mahāsukha-cakra, 16 petalled lotus)	sahajakāya	sahajānanda (mahāsukha)	turiya	jñāna (gnosis)
2. Frontal lobe	ājñā	as in the left column	—	—	—	—
3. Throat	viśuddha	do	sambhogakāya	viramānanda	svapna	vāc (word)
4. Heart	anāhata	do	dharmakāya	paramānanda	suṣupti	citta (spirit)
5. Navel	maṇipura	do	nirmāṇakāya	ānanda	jāgrat	kāya (body)
6. Base of the genitals	svaḍiṣṭhāna	missing	—	—	—	—
7. Perineum	mūlādhara	missing	—	—	—	—

To this fourfold division of the four blisses, the division of the *mudrās* also conforms, viz. the seals, σφραγίς, which are so important in Vajrayāna. In this esoteric sense the *mudrās* are symbols of four moments of reintegration, or better of four different moments of the awareness leading to it, hence of four different stages of identity with Being. These *mudrās* are:

*karmamudrā*: the seal of the act;

*dharmamudrā*: the seal of the absolute (*dharmā = dharmatā*);

*mahāmudrā*: the great seal;

*samayamudrā*: the symbolic seal.

*Karmamudrā* is a reflection, through visible images, of the tendency to reintegration or of its process: so *karmamudrā* is the woman employed in the maṇḍala with the object of experiencing, through intercourse with her, the function of gnosis and of the means, which, as we have seen, is the necessary premise of the Vajrasattva's reintegration. But all this

takes place on the relative and illusory plane. *Dharmamudrā* is connotated with the absolute, it transcends any development in the phenomonic world, it is autonomous (*akṛtrima*), uncreated, consubstantial with compassion, *paramānanda* (*Caturmudrā*, by ADVAYAVAJRA, p. 33).

*Mahāmudrā* is the pure Being, in which nirvāṇa and existence within time and space are identified, supreme reality (*satyasya bhūtakoṭitvam, Kalparājatantra, Ms., p. 4 a*).

*Samayamudrā* is the result of the non-duality of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, gnosis and compassion, which, are precisely a single and identical reality (*phalam samayamudrāyās dvayor advayavedanam, ibid.*). Dharmakāya is then conquered once more; hence the disciple, having transcended the world of appearance and having become reintegrated into his own essence (*sahaja*), in the pure form of Heruka or under some other divine aspects, freely expanded from Vajradhara, can redeem created beings through Dharmakāya and Sambhogakāya.

can reveal himself and hence manifest the Law (ADVAYAVAJRA, *op. cit.*, p. 35).

Once more we find the polyvalence of words used in the Tantric schools, which makes it so difficult to understand their theories. *Mudrā* does not have only the technical meaning of a particular moment in the mystical ascent, though this is its most secret sense. *Mudrā*, as we have seen, also means the *śakti*, the divine power by whose virtue the god is active; she is represented by Tantric schools as the *yum*, the mother embracing the god. Hence *mudrā*, in the initiatic rite, is the young woman used in the maṇḍala to symbolize, on that hallowed ground the repetition of the cosmic drama, whose actor is now the disciple, made by the rite the equal of the god. *Mudrā* also means token or emblem (*mts'an ma*), as when, instead of a divinity, the symbols corresponding to it are placed in a maṇḍala. Finally *mudrā* is a particular posture of the hands, establishing a syntony between the initiate and a particular deity; it is a "seal", which brings to its destination the *mantra*, expressing through sound that same god's very essence. While these attitudes of the hand are comparatively limited as regards the gods, they are nevertheless of an extraordinary importance, because they point out ostensibly, the nature or activity proper to it. But *mudrās* are very numerous in liturgy; several hundreds of them are known; they have been elaborated and described particularly in the *Yogatantra* schools.

The transfer of the drama of the cosmos into the disciple's body and the bold attempt to transpose the symbol of universal creation into the sexual act, which caused the degeneration of some Tantric schools tending to take this symbology literally (for instance the medieval Bengali Sahajīya schools) are at the base of the coupled representations so frequent in the iconography of Lamaism.

These images are called *yab yum* "father and mother", and now we know what value should be given to these figures; *yab* and *yum*, father

and mother, are only the two components of *bodhicitta*, viz. *prajñā* and *upāya*, *śūnyatā* and *rāga* (= *karuṇā*), from whose coupling and melting it is reconstructed in its primordial unity.

Therefore the copulations predominating in pictorial representations of the Buddhist Pantheon are not necessarily obscene, apart the exterior crudity of their appearance, when looked upon with uninitiated eyes. For the disciple they are an invitation to consider the necessity of reintegrating, through the apparent duality of phenomenic experience, the essential *bodhicitta*, viz. the plane of the absolute, from which we have decayed, falling into a relativity spatial and temporal. And if the symbology may seem shocking, the Vajrayāna theoreticians answer back, anticipating modern psycho-analysis, that it is adequate to human lust to the inborn and instinctive *libido* of living creatures, more and more stubbornly rising up the more one tries to curb and break it; therefore it is well, instead of repressing it, to guide and transfer it to other planes. In fact in the Vajrayānic world every image is symbolic: it must be interpreted like a book written in secret signs, which only the initiates can read. The plurality of heads, for instance, is generally dominated by that spatial-temporal equivalence which we have seen presiding over the maṇḍala's paradigms. There are four heads, viz. four cardinal points; or five, viz. the four cardinal points plus the centre; or six, the four cardinal points, zenith and nadir; or seven, the five points, counting the central one, zenith and nadir; eight: four chief points and four intermediate ones; or nine: these eight, plus the centre; or ten: the eight, plus zenith and nadir; or eleven, these ten plus the centre, and so on.<sup>279</sup> In the same manner (as I have already pointed out in another book, recalling the interpretations of Indo-Tibetan masters themselves) we must read the symbols these deities hold in their hands: their number is determined by exact correspondences with some fundamental categories of Buddhist gnosis,

and the symbols they clasp in their hands are chosen according to the same standards. Mañjuśrī, for instance, holds a sword in his right hand and a book in the left, to point out that the book, viz. the Prajñāpāramitā, i. e. gnosis, is an active force, cutting error (*moha*) like a sword. It is a new symbology, badly adapted to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, intently listening to the Buddha's word in one of the Greater Vehicle's revelations.

The most complex iconographic types are always "read," as in a catechism of the Doctrine: they represent in a plastic form the essential principles of the Law. Here, for instance, may be seen how Tibetan exegesis interprets the image of rDo rje ajigs byed (*Indo-Tibetica*, III, part II, p. 86): "The ascetic topknot, standing up, means that he is consubstantiated with the five mystic gnoses: he has a terrific aspect because he drives hostile forces (Māra) away. His sixteen feet are a symbol of the sixteen kinds of unsubstantiality; his nudity is meant to express that all things are without birth; the erect member means that he is consubstantiated with eternal bliss; the thirty-four arms are a symbol of the thirty-four coefficients of enlightenment; the knife is there because he slays ignorance, the javelin (*bhīndipāla*) because he analyzes what is falsely imagined concerning the subject and its object; the pestle means the concentration of awareness; the razor because he slays sin; the goad (the text has: *rdo rje rtse gcig*) to point out the submission of the body and of words; the axe because he cuts off the mind's error, the spear because he annihilates false theories, the arrow because he pierces false imagining, the hook because he drags (towards salvation), the club because he breaks down the veil derived from karma, the *khatvāṅga* because his nature is consubstantiated with the thought of enlightenment; the disc because he sets the wheel of the Law in motion; the vajra because he is consubstantiated with the fifth gnosis; the hammer because he cleaves covetousness asunder; the sword

because he bestows the various magical powers, like those belonging to the sword, etc., the drumlet because through the supreme bliss so symbolized, he admonishes all the Tathāgatas; the skull full of blood because he stimulates us to observe vows; Brahmā's head because, through his compassion it accomplishes the good of created beings; the shield because he triumphs over all of Māra's works; the foot because he bestows on those who meditate the same rank as the Buddhas; the noose because he takes possession of (literally ties) supreme wisdom; the bow because he triumphs over the three worlds; bowels because he helps us to understand the unsubstantiality of things; the bell to represent consubstantiality with supreme gnosis; the hand because he is capable of doing all things; the rag picked up in cemeteries because he destroys the veil of ignorance which prevents us from recognizing that all things lack an essence of their own; an impaled man because he penetrates deep into the conception that all things lack substance; the (triangular) fireplace symbolizes germinal light (*'od gsal*); the freshly-cut head, because he is full of the ambrosia of compassion; the hand in a threatening posture because he terrifies fiends; the three-pointed spear symbolizes the conception that spirit, word and body have only one essence; a fluttering piece of cloth because all things are *māyā*. The beings he tramples underfoot symbolize the mystic powers derived from him ..

In the same way Bhūtaḍāmara (*Grub t'abs rgya mts'o*, vol. *č'a*, p. 16) "has a blue body to symbolize unflinchingness from the plane of the absolute; he has only one head because all things have a single essence (that of being "void"). His arms are four as a symbol of the four "incommensurable qualities," forming the road (to reintegration); the rdo rje he grasps in his first right hand alludes to the nine kinds of revelation acting as those "contraries," through which the illusive images belonging to the nine earths are destroyed;<sup>280)</sup>

with the other hand on the left, bent in the threatening posture, he takes hold of a noose, because by frightening the hostile forces, not to be pacified through peaceful means, he overthrows them and then again becomes favourable by virtue of his great mercy. The two chief hands are joined in the *mudrā* called *bhūtaḍamara*, inasmuch as gnosis and absolute, being identical, destroy the false idea of duality „

These images are the temporary form taken by what, in its very essence, transcends all form; hence their meaning as symbols: their value, for those who gaze and meditate upon them, is that of a source of purification; they are a temporary prop which must be gradually abandoned, as awareness of our essence dawns upon us in a clearer and clearer form. Images are therefore an artifice (*keṭaka*); even the image of truth appearing in the meditative process is magic (*Jñānasiddhi*, p. 43); in reality there is no *dhyāna* “meditation on any god „ for the *siddha*, because *dhyāna* is only possible in the field of duality, but the *Vajrasattva*, viz. the absolute the, *dharmakāya*, transcends any form: *rūpabhāvanāyā vajrasattvo na sidhyati* (*Jñānasiddhi*, p. 47).

The ontological link between the Buddha and the *bodhi*, and at the same time the certainty of underlying identity in the nature of the Buddha and of created beings, both equally led to a development of the yoga technique meant to unfetter the mysterious presence of the reflection of cosmic consciousness imprisoned within ourselves at the expense of speculation: salvation, as we stated above, is an effect not of knowledge but of praxis. Hence awareness of our true being is not learned in books, but it is a progressive enlightenment, attained through a sacrament. As, in the Shivaite schools, *dikṣā* is required to expel the *pauruṣam ajñānam*, inborn error, so in Buddhist gnosis baptism is an essential and inviolable part of the soteriological process. Naturally, as in the Shivaite schools, *dikṣā* is not efficient unless dogmatics have first eliminated errors dialectically and

postulated truth (*beyopādeyanīśayapūrvaka*), so also in *Vajrayāna* the essential premise is a knowledge of *Prajñā*, generally of *Mahāyāna*, which gives access to the deepest experiences of the adamantine Vehicle. But when theoretical knowledge is perfected, praxis begins, and it begins with baptism, indeed with baptisms, for they are multiple, generally eleven. Buddhism always remains a *krama-mukti*, like all Indian theosophical systems: a progressive liberation which gradually eliminates more and more subtle stains, ascending to higher and higher visions, purified by truth. This ascent reflects the same ideas already implicit in the various degrees of *dhyāna* and *samāpatti* in *Yoga* and ancient Buddhism, as well as in the ten stages (*bhūmi*) which the *Bodhisattva* must pass through. Moreover, the symbology of the *Cakravartin*'s consecration is here repeated. Indeed baptism is called not *dikṣā*, as in Shivaite systems, but *abhiṣeka*, which is a consecration performed by sprinkling water on the head of the person being initiated, as in the rites of royal consecration. This is the first *abhiṣeka* (called *udaka-abhiṣeka*, consecration by water), the second is *mukūṭa-abhiṣeka*, viz. by the imposition of a diadem, or a crown, golden or studded with gems (*ratnabhamamukūṭa*, *Sekoddeṣatikā*, p. 7), or a turban (*vastramukūṭa*, *ibid.*).

The third is *paṭṭābhiṣeka*, in which consecration takes place by putting the sacred band on the shoulders of the person being initiated. *Vajra* and *ghaṇṭa-abhiṣeka* follow: during these the neophyte is touched by the master with bell and vajra; next *vajravrata* or taking of vows, then *nāmābhiṣeka*, in which the person being initiated receives an initiatic or secret name, defining his new mystical personality, hatched out of this consecration: finally the *anujñā-abhiṣeka* follows when the disciple is effectively invested with power, thus receiving from the master the *vajra* and the bell which up to now he was not authorized to handle. Now he will be designated by this name among his “vajra-fellows „, and not

infrequently, in the case of great masters, the initiatic name is substituted for the real one or joined to it.

Generally these seven baptisms represent a single group and are conferred in the same ceremony, on the *rajoṃaṇḍala*, the maṇḍala drawn with coloured powder on the consecrated ground; the neophyte is successively led by his master into different portions of the maṇḍala, to the South, North, East and West. Like the disciple in the Eleusine mysteries, he is led there blindfolded; the bandage (*paṭṭa*) is taken off at the end of the ceremony when, consecration having taken place and inborn stains being therefore erased, the candidate is in the state of purity required to understand the mystical meaning of rites and symbols. While he is blindfolded, the mystical family to which he is attuned is defined by throwing a flower into the maṇḍala. When the consecration is intended to confer magical or earthly powers, (*laukikasiddhi*), in the special magical rite particularly fitted, to his mysterious participation in a given mystical family, the image (or that part of the maṇḍala on which the flower drops), represents the "family", into which the initiated person is called to operate.

These baptisms have been discussed at great length in the Vajrāyana schools: their very denominations are quite different from one Vajrāyana current to the other (see, for instance, *Sekatānvayasāṅgraha*, by ADVAYAVAJRA, p. 36 and p. 37). But generally all agree on their esoteric meaning, on the interior purification they successively cause in the mystic. The first two are meant to purify the physical plane, they do away with the largest blemishes (*kāyavisuddhi*); the third and fourth are used to purify the verbal plane (*vāc*); the fifth and the sixth purify the spiritual plane (*citta*), the last the intellective plane (*jñāna*).

These first seven baptisms are followed by another three, higher and more secret, to be conferred only on those persons who are spiritually mature enough to receive them. For them the

*rajoṃaṇḍala*, upon which other baptisms are performed, is no longer strictly required, but the use of a *mudrā*, is enjoined, a young woman under 21 years of age, usually 16, who, as we have said above, represents gnosis; out of her symbolical union with the adept, *bodhi*, reintegration with the absolute, will be born.

The language used by Tantric texts to describe these rites is sometimes so crudely realistic that it would be offensive to quote it here. But we must recall what has already been remarked, viz. that such language, meant to keep laymen away from the initiatic rite, should not always be taken literally: very often it is a case of *sandhyābhāṣā* or secret expression, whose true meaning only the initiated can understand; obscurity is but a veil, through which purest yogic complexities are dimly perceived. But such symbolologies have their drawbacks, which soon became apparent in the trends, both Buddhist and Shivaist, which took them literally and consequently degenerated, as everyone knows, throwing great discredit on Tantric currents.

Without going into greater detail, it will be well to point out that these superior baptisms are three:

a) *Khumbha-abhiṣeka*. *Khumbha* means "vase", but also "breast", and the word is here used in the latter sense;

b) *guhya-abhiṣeka*, or secret;

c) *prajñā-abhiṣeka*, in which actual possession of the gnosis or *mudrā* is attained.

This scheme of mine, in its necessary and deliberate brevity, does not even give a feeble idea of the complexity of these rites of initiation, their endless liturgical details, the implements and substances required, the formulas recited, the acts the neophyte, his master and their assistants must perform.

The initiation is a real liturgical drama, studied in all its details, requiring from its actors, in the complexity of its moments, an accurate and attentive participation. The ceremony of some special rites takes on dramatic movement, as in the rite of *āveśa*, *krodhāveśa*, or

besetment, when the neophyte, psychologically predisposed and then guided by this liturgy, as he invokes the warlike aspects of the deity on whom the protection of the maṇḍala is conferred, gradually loses the consciousness of his own self and feels the god's invisible but irresistible power invading him; the god then acts through his person, tossing him about in a frenzied dance.

This is *vajranṛtya*, the adamantine dance, in which the initiate, having unconsciously fallen into a hypnotic state, or deliberately imitating the attitudes of a possessed person, rushes round the maṇḍala, often brandishing weapons, to keep off the *vighna* or hostile powers in ambush (*Sekoddeśatikā*). The origin of the sacred dances so frequent in Tibetan convents should be sought precisely in these ceremonies, connected with pre-Buddhist rites of a chthonic character or intended to help the mysterious forces from which the earth draws its periodical fruitfulness.

As to baptism, it always presupposes a maṇḍala, because the latter is *sugatālaya*, "the Buddhas' dwelling," (*Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, p. 11): by erasing the stains which dull men's spirit, it produces awareness of the essential identity between the person to be initiated and the womb of Buddhas, *bodhi* ontologically conceived: hence the baptized person is *anantaloḥkadbātveśa*, lord of infinite universes, (*Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, p. 11): *ekakāyo 'si buddhānāṃ tvam idānim* "you have now become one like the Buddhas," the master says at the end of baptism. (*Jñānasiddhi*, p. 92): he is therefore *sarvabuddhādhipa*, *ibid.*, p. 93, ruler over all the Buddhas (*ibid.*, p. 38).

The Buddhas then flock from the various points of space and bless him (*Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, p. 10). This means that the ascetic thus consecrated by a reconquered awareness of his nature, finds himself on another plane: the exoteric liturgy valid for common men, as a means of purification, necessary but provisional, has no longer any value for the initiate (*Jñānasiddhi*, p. 40).

For this external ceremonial he substitutes *ātmapūjā*, self-worship, inasmuch as he is *bodhi*, Vajrasattva, Dharmakāya (*ātmaiva sarvabuddhatvam ... tasmāt sarvaprayatnena hy ātmānam pūjayet sadā*).

Baptism is accompanied by the vow *śamaya ś prajñā*, which binds the initiate to follow the rules of Vajrayāna, to keep its secrets, to respect his brethren in the vajra, to honour his *guru* as the one who has shown him the way, who is the cause of all his spiritual fortune and success, *sarvārbhasiddhida* (*Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, p. 9); this because the *guru* is identical with Vajradhara, he is the Buddha, the author of that epiphany which has opened up the rescuing light to the neophyte.

These doctrinal premises of Lamaism, which I have so briefly summarized, represent the background against which Tibetan culture, wholly imbued with it, unfolds. Therefore a knowledge of them cannot be dispensed with, if one wishes to understand the soul of Tibet in its innermost meaning, in its complexity which one might almost call baffling and naturally its art. These principles make of Lamaism an initiatic religion, in which the truth that saves does not unfold spontaneously to the devotee in a blaze of love, but has to be conquered with hard work, continually overcoming the obstacles of error which hide truth from our eyes, with the help of rites and formulas and sacraments, which nevertheless would remain inefficient and void, like dead things, were they not revived by the word of the master, the Lama, in which that truth reveals itself in all its light. The master is therefore the only channel between the flow of samsara and nirvāna's unspeakable peace, dazzling *bodhi*. How, out of this doctrinal background, new trends are born, concrete religious yearnings, how gods and heavens are formed, other books will show. But we shall not omit hints and suggestions, as we illustrate, one by one, the tankas we are now going to deal with.



# NOTES

1. See THOMAS, *Lit. Texts*, I, pp. 272, 273; PETECH, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh*, p. 68; RAY H. C., *Dynastic History of Northern Bengal*, I, p. 274.
2. SP, pp. 152-153; DT, ka, p. 19; BUSTON, OB., p. 200; Lists in LIU LI-CH'EN, *Tibetan history after Ländarma*. The West China Frontier Research Institute. See n. 251.
3. aP'ags pa's *Śes bya* also says: "after the royal dynasty's fall, the small kings and the royal families lasted up to our own times . . .", p. 16.
4. *Le mariage chinois du roi tibétain Sron bcan sgam po, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, 1935, p. 7 of the reprint.
5. The fact that in the first half of the VIIIth century Buddhism was not largely diffused in Tibet is confirmed by the statement, evidently partial, of HUEI-CH'AO, see FUCHS, *Huei-ch'ao Pilgerreise durch Nord-West Indien and Zentral-Asien; Sitz. d. Pr. Akademie d. W.*, Berlin, 1938, p. 426.
6. On the seven *sad mi* see LAUFER, T'oung Pao, 1908, p. 9; *gSun obum Sa skya pa*, vol. Ta, p. 140 ff. and note 174 on Part four.
7. See the biography of bSod nams mc'og ldan bstan pai rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po, by the fifth Dalai Lama, p. 6, and of dBañ p'yug rab brtan bstan pai rgyal mts'an dpal bzañ po, by the same author, p. 48.
8. On the Mon see LAUFER, *Hunderttausend Nögas*, p. 94; DAINELLI, in *Spedizione Italiana De Filippi*, vol. IV, p. 135.
9. "Living in this white cell, they called it sGo rum, which in the Žañ žun language means immobile., (*sgul du mi run ba*), *Guide to Saska*, pp. 10-11. On the Žañ žun language see the remarks by F. W. THOMAS in JRAS, 1933, pp. 409-410. It seems to be related to Kanāwri in which munda substratum is evident. *Linguistic Survey of India*, III, p. 427.
10. Being aware of the complexity of the Tibetan race, SP states that "it is the result of an aboriginal people, of the descendants of king Rūpāti and of the Hor . . .", p. 149.
11. See for Western Tibet TUCCI-CHERSI, *Secrets of Tibet*, *passim*.
12. TUCCI, *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 48.
13. Quoted by SP, p. 393. Some expressions are difficult to explain: *sgol* and *shyor* which I translate exorcism and yoga practices mean: "to free . . . and "to join . . . They indicate two different magical actions. *mi gsin dud pa btan bas*: "sending smoke without words . . .", means perhaps, as I translated, making *suffimenta* (which had a great importance in Bon po rituals) without proper incantations or formulae. *Las kyi srin* po are devils forming the retinue of the God of death, *Las can*, *Las kyi gsin rje*. mNal stin po may mean fiends to which miscarriage is attributed, like the Sriu. Instead of *Srin po pas ni read srin po las ni*.  
The worship of the gods with urine and dung, mentioned here, alludes to certain offerings dealt with in Tantric literature, for instance in the *Gubyasamāja*, where it is said that the Buddha must be honoured with those loathsome substances. But in that Tantra the language is allegorical: dung means the objects of the senses which should be given up, urine the senses. See BUSTON, *rGyud ste etc.*, p. 576. Some sects, like the one alluded to by Ye śes 'od, took these expressions literally.
14. aJigs med rig pai rdo rje uses the expression *dga' ston*, which means festivity, a gathering of people for some festival.
15. The son of gYu spyan (see *Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama*, p. 51 a).
16. Other sources, DT, k'a, p. 13 a, give as the date of the arrival of the Mongol troops, the year *leags byi*, 1240. The rGyal lha k'an monastery was then given to the flames and 500 persons, between monks and laymen, perished with So ston. Then rDo rta nag repented and offered gold and silver to rebuild the temple.
17. See the letter that follows and the chronological tables in SP, year 1242.
18. The letter is published both in the *Sa skya Chronicles*, p. 57 b(A) and in the *Sa skya paṇḍita's complete works*, (B) vol. na, p. 214. According to the biography published in the *Sa skya pa* collection of rNam t'ar, p. 62 (see p. 157) the letter was written on the occasion of bKA' gdams pa Nam mk'a abum's objections to the *Sa skya paṇḍita's* enterprise.
19. A, *spruis*; B, *sprin*.
20. A, *dgos*; B, *sgos*.
21. *ned obod mk'an la*.

22. *no bltas*, vassal.
23. A, *mi c'os kyi*; B, *mi c'os kyi*.
24. A, *k'yed kyi*; B, *k'yed kyi*.
25. A, *lba c'os kyi*; B, *lba c'or kyi*.
26. A, *dgos*; B, *sgos*.
27. A, *k'oñ gi*; B, *k'oñ gi*.
28. *yig mk'an*.
29. Meaning doubtful. The same as *bu rta* in the Gyantse chronicles? 30. *adab nor*.
31. *Bi ri*; most probably they are the *Bi ri*, *Be ri* (Chinese 必里) in Eastern Tibet, largely Bon po, of which we shall have occasion to speak again further on. By the *aDram gliñ rgyas bñud* *Be ri* is located with other districts to the east of sDe dge, WASSILIEV, *Geografia Tibeta*, p. 47. The spelling of the name varies between *Be ri* (see KLOÑ RDOL BLA MA, 'a, p. 15 b) and *Bi ri* as in these sources. aJigs med rig pai rdo rje, p. 158 (transl. p. 251): *Be ri*; it was a chiliarchy.
32. *Mi gañ drag pa = drag žan*, on which see p. 39 and note 184 and 855 to Part four.
33. See LAUFER, *Loan words*, s. v.
34. *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 85.
35. S. CH. DAS, *Zam du gun wen bu*; *Guñ min dben bu is*: 郭民萬 *Fi chün min wan bu*. But I am unable to identify the first part of the title.
36. I have already dealt with this census in the vol. IVth of *Indo-Tibetica* on the basis of Kloñ rdol bla ma's treatise, for I was then unable to consult the study of S. CH. DAS. The copy of this book I then used was nearly illegible; fortunately in my 1939 journey I obtained a second and clearer one, which allows me to correct some false readings and so to compare Kloñ rdol bla ma's list with the one reproduced by S. CH. DAS. Here is Kloñ rdol bla ma's passage, 'a, p. 5 a:  
*Yan dbus gtsan ru bži la k'ri skor bucu gsum ni / gtsan gi p'yogs su lo stod lho pai dud grans ston dan dgu brgya dgu bcu yin / la stod byañ pa nis ston dag nis brgya lha bcu t'am pao / c'u mig k'ri skor bor dud grans sum ston nag gsum byed pa yod / za lu k'ri skor sum ston dan brgyad brgya dgu bcu rtsa gñis yod / byañ abrog k'ri skor k'yad c'os dan yar abrog k'ri skor k'yad c'os la leb ni bcu drug zer pa yod / bor dud p'yed dan brgyad brgyao / dbus kyi p'yogs la abri dan bod abrog gñis po la sum ston sum brgya drug bcu (corrected according to S. Ch. Das; the text has: drug brgya) yod / ts'al par sum ston bñun brgya yin / p'og mo grub par nis ston dan bži brgya sum cu rtsa brgyad do / gya' bzañ pa la sum ston dan rgya ma pa dan bya yul po lha ston dgu brgya p'yed p'yed yin / stag lun pa la lha brgya dan de snin lha abrog la sogs ga k'a a'or ston dan bži brgya yod.*  
Kloñ rdol bla ma's list is undoubtedly based on the same source from which S. Ch. Das derived the material for his notes. I do not know if this was done directly from the *rGya bod kyi yig ts'an*, or through some later compilation. Fortunately a good fragment of the part we are interested in is preserved in the fifth Dalai Lama's biography as well. The document being so important, it will be well to translate the whole of it: "A. Kon and Mi gliñ came (to Tibet) and took a census of the civilian population and of the land, taking as their base a (*hor*) *dud*, and without taking into account the Bod pas and the aBrog pas, who were not included in the division into myriarchies and chiliarchies, or mNa' ris skor gsum in the upper part of Tibet or the Southern provinces etc. The census of dBus, gTsañ and the various myriarchies was as follows:

Southern La stod	1990
Northern La stod	2250
C'u mig myriarchy	3001
Ža lu myriarchy	3892

- "Next came the *Byañ abrog* and *Yar abrog* myriarchy, counted separately: it was known as the *16 lb* and comprised 750 families.  
"As to the dBus census: aBri gun, counting Tibetans and aBrog pas together, comprised 3630 families, Ts'al pa 3700, P'ag mo gru 2438, gYa' bzañ 3000, rGya mo and Bya yul 5850, sTag lun 500. Furthermore the scattered population (*k'a a'or*) like the *Lho abrog*, 1400.  
"This was the beginning of the census of dBus and gTsañ, which took place when the Hor and the Sa skya pa were in the relation as between chaplain and patrons.

"Beginning from under mNa' ris, up to Ža lu, the census was taken by A K'ön and Mi glin; beyond that place, up to aBri guñ, by Su t'u A skyid.

"Hence the manner of establishing the territorial division (*ajä mo*) of dBus and gTsañ according to the system of myriarchies, is according to the record in scrolls of the Sa skya pa dPon c'en Ša kya bzän po, who had obtained the title of *Zam gru guñ min dhen bu*, ...

On the census ordered by Ögödüi in 1235 and on the other by Qubilai see RAICHENSKY, *Un code des Yuan*, p. LIJ.

The census does not cover the entire surface of Tibet, nor does it correspond to the area of the 13 *k'ri skor*; it is limited to dBus and gTsañ. A typical case is that of mNa' ris skor sum, which is not censused; it is excluded from the *k'ri skor* but is instead a part of the three *c'ol ga*; the Sa skya vicarship was direct over those thirteen myriarchies, while it was remote and indirect over mNa' ris skor sum, administered and ruled by its own kings, although the *ti šri* included it among the lands placed under their jurisdiction; see the letters I have discovered in Ža lu.

The only text including mNa' ris among the 13 *k'ri skor* is the eulogy of gNas rñin; see n. 52 on the Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama (Part four).

As we have come to deal with this subject, it will be well to recall that the three sKor of mNa' ris skor sum are, according to the ordinary tradition, Mar yul, Guge and Pu hrañ, at least this is the partition usually mentioned in our sources (see, for instance, *Dam päi c'os kyi byün ts'ul*, p. 163, life of bSod nams mc'og ldan bstan pai rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po, p. 28 a). But the fifth Dalai Lama has preserved the memory of a different division, certainly older, most probably going back to the times of the largest expansion of the Tibetan Empire; it includes provinces which later were outside any political influence on the part of Tibet, like Khotan, Gru ža (= Bru ža, Gilgit) and sBal te (Balistan). According to the fifth Dalai Lama, the three sKor would be defined as follows: 1) sPu rañ, Mar yul, Zañs dkar; 2) Li, Gru ža, sBal te; 3) Žan žün, K'ri te stod and smad (see note 9 Part three).

37. At that time the Ža lu territory, which later was to attain great importance, was assigned partly to Bya roq rdoñ (S. CH. DAS, *Chyabog Tšban pa*) and partly to Ts'ön adus (S. CH. DAS, *Tšhong dui* and *Tšhong din*) viz. Gur mo ts'ön adus, a place now of small importance, very near Ža lu (see *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 70). dBus, on the contrary, was divided into seven aJam c'en. See notes on the fifth Dalai Lama's Chronicles.

38. In the text mTs'o' ren, viz. 白 答 to the SW of Liang Chou. *gyad* = athlete, champion, but the expression is synonymous with *gyi žlin*, name of Amdo's famous horses. When the Yellow Sect developed and took possession of dBus and gTsañ, mNa' ris was not spoken of; dBus and gTsañ became the *c'ol k'a* of the law, K'ams stod of men and K'ams smad of horses and riches. SP, p. 297.

39. Thus the Tibetan word, but in this case *klü* corresponds to the Chinese *lu* 路.

40. Viz. the word *žin* here takes on a different meaning, i. e. "reign", like the Sanskrit *rajita* meaning both field and reign.

So that the census gave the following returns:

	KLOñ RDOŁ families	S. CH. DAS families
La smad, South . . . . .	1990	1088
La stod, North . . . . .	2250	2250
C'u mig . . . . .	3001	3021
Ža lu . . . . .	3892	3892
aByañ abrog and Yar abrog (16 Leb) . . . . .	750	—
aBri guñ, Bod and aBrog . . . . .	3630	3630
Ts'al pa . . . . .	3700	3700
P'ag mo gru . . . . .	2438	2438
gYa' bzän . . . . .	3000	3000
rGya ma and Bya yul . . . . .	5850	3850
sTag luñ . . . . .	500	500
Various . . . . .	1400	—
	32401	27369

We can thus gain an approximate idea of Central Tibet's population in the Mongol age. Recalling that a *bor du* (*bor dud*) consists of six "pillars", not, as Das seems to understand, in its literal meaning, but as the members of each single family, multiplying by six the figure

32.406 *bor du*, as many as were contained in dBus and gTsañ, a total population is obtained of 195,018. As we have seen, the census does not comprise Sa skya, which according to Das's document, contained 3630 families, viz. 19,780 persons.

Thus the population of the Central Tibetan provinces seems to have been, even in the Mongol age, as scanty as in our times, although my investigations in Western Tibet have rather led me to the conclusion that in those regions the density of the population has considerably dwindled since the XVIIth century, at least if we take into account, as would seem but just, the information furnished by de Andrade. But as regards the Central provinces, we must remember that the total number thus obtained does not include the monks, who must have been a good many, as the monasteries had already developed considerably. Moreover in the census lists the entire scattered population is not recorded, and only partial information is furnished concerning it. Indeed we do not know how the aBrog pa were considered, while it seems certain that the feuds allotted in definite possession to single families and the provinces on the Southern frontiers were excluded from the census.

Another census was taken at the beginning of Toqön tāmür's reign (S. CH. DAS, p. 100: To kwa Temur) viz. after 1333 and it was entrusted to officers whose name Das transcribes Tha gu Anugan (perhaps the Onukhan mentioned before) and Kechogotai Pin chang, assisted by the dPon c'en gŽon nu dbañ; according to the source used by Das, on this occasion the same standards of division were adopted that the chronicles trace back to the times of the *k'ri skor*'s donation to aP'ags pa. The chronicles allude to a method of taking the census which would be quite different from the one now described: the chronicles say that Qubilai divided the territory into lay communities (*ni sde*) and religious communities (*c'os sde*) so that each myriarchy included 4000 monks and 6000 laymen. Thus, the myriarchies being thirteen, we should have a lay population of 78.000 and 52.000 monks, a total of 130.000 persons.

But it is obvious that this system, if it had been strictly adopted, would have reversed the one followed by preceding censuses, substituting to the principle of existing geographical boundaries another principle: the equality of population in all the myriarchies. Clearly, in practice, there was no change, the myriarchies kept their extension and their boundaries, with a population differing from one to the other.

41. Name of a temple?

42. The names of the Ti shih are reproduced according to the Commercial Press reprinting of *Pañ-na-pen*, reproducing the edition published under Hung-wu in 1370 (marked B) and according to the Nanking edition of the *Yüan shih* (金陵書 edition of 1872) included in the 24 histories (A). The transliteration of B is of course the only authoritative.

43. Namely aP'ags pa, appointed *Kuo shih* in the first Chung-t'ung year, 1260.

According to the *Yüan shih* he died in the sixteenth Chih-yüan year, 1279, but according to the *Fo tsu li tai t'ung tsai*, in the 17th year of the same period, 1280, as in the Tibetan sources (see *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 24).

44. Rin c'en. Is he the brother of the preceding? The year of death does not correspond.

45. Dharmapalāraksita. The Chinese transcription would rather presuppose Dharmapalaśtri; there is no great difference as to the date of his death.

46. Ye šes rin c'en, who issued the order contained in Ža lu decree, n. 1.

47. Grags pa 'od zer; see concerning him Ža lu document, n. 2. HAENISCH, *Steuergerechsamte der Chinesischen Klöster unter der Mongolenherrschaft*, p. 35. In the *Fo tsu li tai t'ung tsai*, p. 729, he is called Ti shih 迦囉思巴 韓 仰哩 *Chia lo ssü pa wa cbi li*.

48. Rin c'en rgyal mts'an. He cannot be the brother of aP'ags pa, who died 1279. Previously rin of Rin c'en has been transliterated in a different manner. Cfr. also HAENISCH, p. 37, n. 4 and Ža lu doc., n. 3.

49. Viz. rDo rje dpal. According to DT, *ñā*, p. 70 a, in 1310 *leags k'yi*, died Grags pa rin c'en named Ti shih by Toqön Tāmür: of this Ti shih no mention is made in the list of the *Yüan shih*.

50. Most probably Sāns rgyas dpal, concerning whom see Ža lu documents, n. 4. The Chinese transcription supposes a pronunciation like: Sañghies. HAENISCH, *ibid.*, p. 37, n. 2.

51. Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po. The Sa skya lists know only one lama bearing this name, the son of bZän po dpal, concerning whom the Tibetan sources only say that he was born in 1299 and died in 1327 instead of 1323 as in the *Yüan shih*. The Tibetan sources do not allude at all to this office of *Ti shih* he had; they only say that in 1322, he went back to Tibet.

The Tibetan documents of Ža lu of 1316, 1321 and 1325 support the *Fo tsu li tai t'ung tsai*, which, like the Tibetan sources, places his death in 1327, confirming his appointment for the year 1316.

52. Probably dBän p'yug rgyal mts'an unknown to me.

53. This Kun dga' legs pai abyün gnas rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po is the same as Kun dga' legs pai abyün gnas blo gros rgyal mts'an of the Dus mc'od palace, born in 1308. He is called *Ti ši* in the Tibetan sources.

In this case also the *Yüan shih* disagrees with the *Fo tsu li tai t'ung tsai*, p. 734, according to which he was elected *Ti shih* in 1328; the same difference remains, which we had noticed as regards the death of his brother Kun dga' blo gro.

On him cfr. *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 75.

We may therefore compare the data at our disposal concerning Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mts'an, Kun dga' legs pai abyün gnas and Kun dga' rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po.

<i>Fo tsu li t'ai t'ung tsai</i>	<i>Yüan shih</i>	Tibetan Sources	Ža lu documents
Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mts'an elected 1316, dead 1327	Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mts'an elected 1315 died 1323	Kundga' blo gros rgyal mts'an (no indication that he was a <i>Ti-shih</i> ) 1299-1327	Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mts'an 1316, 1321, 1325
—	Kun dga' legs pai abyün gnas rgyal mts'an elected 1325, died the same year	<i>Ti-ši</i> Kun dga' legs pai abyün gnas 1308-1336	—
Kun dga' rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po (CHAVANES, TP, 1904, p. 442)	no mention	<i>Ti-ši</i> Kun dga' rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po 1310-1358	Kun dga' rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po (1336)

According to the Sa skya pa Chron. another *Ti shih* was bSod nams blo gros rin c'en.

We must therefore conclude that after Kun dga' blo gros died in 1327 the office was handed over to Kun dga' legs pai abyün gnas: who had it for one year only: he was followed by Kun dga' rgyal mts'an dpal bzän po elected in 1328. It also appears that as regards these personages the dates of the *Yüan shih* must be checked. It is worthy of notice that in the same text, while in *Chapt. 30* the date of appointment of Kun dga' legs is the fourth year *T'ai ting* (1327) thus confirming the death of Kun dga' blo gros in that year; in *Chapt. 202* it is the second year 1325.

54. Rin c'en grags pa?; unknown.

55. Biogr. of the Zur pa kun mk'yen, p. 19.

56. This great convent had been organized taking as a model the Sa skya convent; supreme spiritual authority rested in the abbot's hands, but civil power, the administration of justice, military command, were in the hands of officials called sGom pa or sGom c'en. The sGom c'en corresponds to the dPon c'en of Sa skya, another of the five military commanders distributed over Tibet and called *Hsüan wei shih*; until the Court favoured the Sa skya pa, his powers were not perhaps equal to those of the dPon c'en, who controlled all the myriarchies, as delegate of the Sa skya abbots, the latter being the Emperors' vice-regents.

57. When the *spyän sia* was 34.

58. DT, na, p. 75 a, thus called because he was *gzims gyog*, private attendant, of the C'os tje. Cfr. note 177 on Part four.

59. Appendix one.

60. On this title see below note 235 on Part four.

61. See *Blon po bka' t'ai*, pp. 58-59: "By an embodied fiend the Hor will be invited (to come); the royal race's descendants will be brought into subjection; | due to their coming, people will take vows and become initiated, monks will wear the Chinese cap | and following the Hots'

customs, evil will be accumulated ... It will also be well to go through all the PTY prophecies (see transl. by TOUSSAINT, from p. 369 onward; see *ibid.*, p. 385 [le conquérant de *Yar klün*] and p. 387 [the prophecies on the P'ag mo gru pa, in Toussaint's translation, "Portes...]).

62. Sa kya ye ses is one of Tsoñ k'a pa's most celebrated disciples, who died in the year 1435 *šin yos*, at the age of 82. See SCHULEMANN, p. 90. *bKa' gdams pa c'os abyün*, p. 68 b, AJIGS MED RIG PAI RDO RJE, transl. Huth, p. 194. He is thus mentioned in the *Ming shih*, chap. 231, vol. XCII, p. 7. "The Ta t'u'ü fa wang 大慈法王 was called Shih chia yeh shih 釋迦也失.

"The dBus and gTsan monks called him supreme master. In the Yung lë period, when the Emperor appointed the two Fa wang, their disciples were very anxious to visit the Emperor and sue for his favour. Those who came were a crowd.

"Shih chia yeh shih also came to Court in the 12th year (1414) and received honours of a lower class than those vouchsafed to the Ta ch'eng fa wang; in the following year the Emperor appointed him Miao chiao yüan t'ung t'u'ü hui p'u ying fu kuo hsien chiao kuan ting hung shan hsi t'ien fo tzu ta kuo shih 妙覺圓通慈慧普應輔國顯教灌頂弘善西天佛子大國師 and gave him the seal and letters of investiture.

"In the 14th year (1416) he asked leave (to depart) and went back to his country. The Emperor made him a gift of Buddhist books, images of the Buddha, a staff used by religious dignitaries, monk's robes, silk, gold and silver objects. He then composed an eulogy and gave it to him. His disciples increased their prestige.

"In the following year the latter sent envoys to offer tributes. In the 17th year (1419) the Emperor ordered the eunuch Yang San pao 楊三保 to go and present him with statues of the Buddha, clothes and silks. In the 21th year (1423) envoys again came, (sent by him) to offer tributes, and then in the 9th year (1434) of Hsüan te, he came to Court. The Emperor received him as his guest in the capital. The Emperor ordered that the Ch'eng kuo kung Chu Yung 成國公朱勇 and the Minister of Rites Hu Ying. 戶部侍郎 having taken the imperial diplomas, should confer upon him the title of Wang hsing miao ming chen ju shang tzu ch'ing ching pan ju hung chao p'u hui fu kuo hsien chiao chih shan ta sheng fa wang hsi tien cheng chia ju lai tzu tsai ta kuo t'ung fo 萬行妙明真如上慈清淨般若弘照普慈輔國顯教至善大勝法王西天正覺如來自在大國通佛...

Chinese and Tibetan sources disagree on the date of his return to China; in fact according to ajigs med rig pai rdo tje he returned to China for the second time in 1421 *leags glän* (not in 1420 as Huth says), but according to the same author and to the *bKa' gdams c'os abyün* it seems that his stay in China was not very long and that he died on his way back to Tibet, in the year *šin yos*, 1435. I suppose the error to have been due to the second term of the cyclic year, badly completed by chroniclers, who supplemented *leags glän* instead of *c'u glän*, 1434.

This supposition is confirmed by the information contained both in the histories of AJIGS MED RIG PAI RDO RJE, p. 126 (HUTH, transl., p. 198) and in the *bKa' gdams c'os abyün* (p. 69 a), viz. that when he arrived in China Yung lë had died and Zon ti i. e. Hsüan te had ascended the throne (in the *bKa' gdams c'os abyün*, by analogy with the names of the Tibetan kings, he is called Zon lde; cfr. *Vai dü rya shon po*, p. 112 b). The latter was proclaimed Emperor in 1426.

63. On these limitations see *Ming shih*, chap. 231, p. 12 b.

64. *Ming shih, ibid.*, p. 9 b. See note 255 on Part four.

65. Lha btsun has a religious meaning: divine *bbadanta*.

66. *bKa' gdams c'os abyün*, p. 24.

67. The DT gives us to understand precisely this, in the passage quoted by the fifth Dalai Lama, which (*na*, p. 84 a) says that during Grags pa abyün gnas and after his death: "The sea remained empty for twenty years, up to the year water-bird (1453). Then the bDag po c'en po Kun dga' legs pa and the C'e sa Sans rgyas rgyal mts'an held council in the tenth day of the same month of the year wood-dog (1454); they placed the precious lord of the law Nag gi dban po, who was 16 years old, on the precious abbatial throne. Then, owing to the calamities which befell in the year earth-tiger (1458), caused by discord between North and South (Lho Byan) he took possession of the (T'el) see. Sixteen years later, in the year water-ape (1472), led by the gods, by the mk'a' agro ma and by the C'os skyön, (the abbot) sat on his throne ...

68. Whose appointment was not considered lawful. *Ming shih*, p. 33.

69. This happened during Kun dga' legs' reign, viz. before 1454, the year in which Nag dba'n was elected (he was then in his sixteenth year, and hence had been born in 1439).

For the chronology of Rin spuns chiefs, the following data must be noted: in 1435 Kun bzán of Rin spuns, a younger contemporary of Grags pa abyun gnas, (who ascended the throne in 1440) took possession of Rin spuns, of which up to that time he had simply been rdson dpon (see SP, p. 18); in the same year Don grub rdo rje took bSam agrub rse. mTso's skyes occupied mK'ar t'og in Yar klúns before 1454, the year in which Nag gi dba'n p'yug was elected and then became regent after Nag gi dba'n p'yug's death; when this happened is not certain, but we know that Don yod rdo rje, Kun bzán's son, was a contemporary of Nag gi dba'n p'yug, having been among those who placed him on the sNeu gdon throne; but we also know that he changed his attitude towards the Goñ ma immediately after the death of Nag gi dba'n p'yug, leading a raid against sKyid iod. This raid happened, according to SP, in 1481, hence we must conclude that Nag gi dba'n died before 1481, so that the date of the P'ag mo gru prince's death, recorded by Chinese sources as 1495, can only be the date of the regent C'os kyi grags pa's death, in whose place the uncle of Don yod rdo rje, namely mTso's skyes rdo rje, was the *de facto* ruler. Nag dba'n rnam rgyal, the son of mTso's skyes, is the contemporary of the Goñ ma Nag dba'n bkra šis, and his warlike activities against P'ag mo gru pa must have taken place in the last years of the XVth century and in the very first years of the XVIth. From him Nag dba'n ajig grags was born in 1482. On Rin spuns see f. i. *Geheimnis Tibet*, Exped. F. SCHÄFER, p. 182.

70. Tibetan name doubtful Kun dga'... rgyal mts'an perhaps Kun dga' rgyal mts'an appointed Ti shih after the death of Kun dga' legs pai abyun gnas.

71. The son of dBañ yum rGya mo; but according to the Tibetan sources the sister of the Emperor was given to his brother Kun dga' legs pai abyun gnas.

72. This passage has already been translated by RATCHNEVSKY, *Un code des Yuan, Bibliothèque de l'Institut de Hautes Études Chinoises*, vol. IV. 73. *Yuan shih*, chap. 34, p. 1; *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 91.

74. See note 206 on Part four.

75. *Ming shih*, chap. 231; see down below note 89 on Part four.

76. See HANEDA TORU, *Study on the postal system of the Yuan*, in *Tōyō-bunko sōkan*, first part, 1930; *Une tablette du Decret sacré de l'Empereur Genghis*, in *Memoirs of the research department of the Tōyō Bunko*, n. 8, 1936, p. 85.

77. This code is preserved in a manuscript in my possession.

78. Grañ k'añ is perhaps: Dan khan of S. CH. DAS, mentioned as one of the Sa skya feuds. To the instances already quoted in the course of the present work we may add that of the feud of sBan, consisting of 45 families (*hor dud*) with which, by Qubilai's order, the bakšii Ša kya 'od was invested; Life of the Zur pa t'ams cad mk'yen, p. 18 b.

79. *Autobiography*, p. 219.

80. In Ladakh: *drag iod*. See note 184 on Part four.

81. See Biography of dGe adun rgya mts'o, p. 15, where sKyid iod disturbances (*sāe gzar*) are but vaguely alluded to.

82. Probably the defeats of Nag dba'n rnam rgyal of Rin spuns began after that date: perhaps *me byi* (1516)?

83. On these events see *Autobiography* of dGe adun rgya mts'o, p. 33.

84. Life of Tsoñ k'a pa, p. 124 ff. and down below pp. 344 and 430.

85. Not 1542 as in Huth.

86. It must be remembered that in 1549 he was initiated into the dGe lugs pa vows by the Pan c'en bSod nams rgya pa, who acted as *mk'an pa*, by C'os rje Legs pa don grub of gSañ p'u who acted as *las dpon* and by Legs don pa of Šar ts'e, as *slob dpon*, p. 33. Huth, p. 206, n. 9, did not notice that gSañ p'u is a place-name, and falsely corrected it as: *gar bu*. References are to his biography written by Blo bzán rgya mts'o.

87. We find him in:

T's'al, p. 29 a; T's'ön adus, p. 30 a; rTse t'añ, pp. 30 b, 34 b, 47 b, 74 a; rDsin p'yi (in 'Ol k'a), pp. 30 a, 47 a; rGyal, very often; for instance, pp. 32 b, 89 a; aBrag k'a, p. 32 b; 'Ol k'a very often; for instance, pp. 32 b, 48 b, 77 a, 86 a, 90 a; Mal gro, pp. 33 b, 89 b; Rin c'en gliñ (in Mal gro), pp. 33 b, 46 b; Ri sgo, pp. 34 a, 89 a; dGa' ldan p'o brān, p. 34 b; Brag dkar, pp. 46 a, 85 b; T's'al zur k'añ, p. 46 a; bDe c'en, pp. 46 a, 48 b; Roñ C'ad dkar, pp. 47 a, 89 a; rGya ri rdson, pp. 47 a, 77 c, 89 a; Neu gdon rse, pp. 47 b, 64 a, 89 b; Kun bzán rse (in rTse c'añ), p. 47 b (in Tsoñ k'a pa's life and in some works by the fifth Dalai Lama himself, we find: rTse dan); bSam yas, p. 48 b; Dvags po, pp. 56 a, 89 b; Koñ, pp. 56 a, 89 b; Se ra (T'eg c'en gliñ), p. 58 a; mTso's sle gon, p. 59; Rva

sgren, p. 60 a; T'ob rgyal Lha rse, p. 64 a; aP'yoñ rgyas, pp. 64 a, 89 b; mK'ar c'og, p. 64 a; rGyal mts'an rse in aP'yoñ rgyas, p. 65 a; sKyid iod, p. 65 a; Yar klúns, p. 74 a; Ri sgo brka šis c'os rdson, p. 77 a; dGe adun sgan, p. 85 a; Ri k'a, p. 85 a; San šiñ, p. 85 a; lCañ ra, p. 89 a; drum mda', p. 89 b; T's'al guñ t'añ, p. 89 a.

In his journey in the South, begun in 1567 (*me yer*, p. 75 ff.) he passed through Yar klúns, T'ig le, Zañs mo c'e, Ri steñ, Gra gor, Nañ rgyal, sMon grub k'yuñ rse, bTsan gro stod and smad, Se groñ gzi ka, Yul rdson, Nam steñ mk'o m'tin lha k'añ, sMra po lcoq, Goñ ri dkar po, Lho brag, Roñ c'ad dkar, mGrol gon, rGyal me tog t'añ, K'ol ma, dGye re lha k'añ, lJañ pa, gDoñ dkar, dGa' ldan.

During the journey to gTsañ, made in 1569 (p. 77 b ff.) he stopped in: gDoñ dkar, dGye re lha k'añ, Goñ ri dkar po, T'oñ dga' ldan rse, rGyal byed t's'al, U yug gur sñon, gNubs k'oñ lun, bKra šis lhun po, Šañs ri bo c'e, rTAg nag bšad grub, Dar rgyas gliñ, Srin po ri, Lhun po rse c'os sde, Sa skya, K'a'u skye lha, Bo don c'er, Byuñ luñ nag šel dkar aBron rse c'os sde, Pa nam lhun grub rse, rGyal byed t's'al, rTse c'en, dPal ak'or c'os sde, rGyal mk'ar rse, Ri k'rod dga' ldan, gNas riññ, Rva luñ, sNda rkar rse, dPal sde gzi ka, sNeu gdon, Goñ ri dkar po, C'ü iod.

88. In rGyañ a *Nañ so* of 'Od gal Lha's family; in Kun bzán rse and rTse t'añ a *sku zan* (C'os kyi dba'n p'yug, p. 66 b); in Bya a *nañ so*, p. 75 a; in 'Ol k'a a *rgyal po* (P'un t'sogs rab bran, p. 77 a; Amogha rnam rgyal, p. 86 a); in Goñ ri dkar po Lha gziq mi dba'n po, p. 78 a (p. 83 a Nag dba'n grags pa); in aK'ol ma a *sku žañ*, p. 78 a; in T'ön dGa' ldan rse a *nañ so*, p. 78 a; in gNubs k'oñ lun a gNubs c'en Šañs rgyas ye šes, p. 78 b; in Srin po a *Nañ so*, p. 8 a; in Byuñ luñ nag šel dkar a *nañ so*, p. 81 a; in rGyal mk'ar rse a *nañ c'en*, p. 80 a; in Brag dkar a *sa skyon* (bKra šis rab bran, p. 85 b); in T'e'l a *sde pa* (in the life of Tsoñ k'a pa, by Blo bzán ap'rin las rnam rgyal [see below p. 160] p. 189 a, a *Nañ so* is mentioned).

89. In the times of the third Dalai Lama sNeu gdon rse was still Tibet's political capital: *Bod šin sgo btusug rgyal k'ab c'en po p'o brān sñeu gdon rter sa gziñ dba'n p'yug dpal ldan gon ma c'en po žes gonš can gyi skyes rgu mt'a dag gi bla dpon zuñ du aing pa ngon skyabs dpuñ gñen par yur de niid la bslab ston žib c'er žus te*, p. 25 b.

90. Life of third Dalai nams rgya pa by the fifth Dalai Lama, p. 66.

91. The third Dalai Lama's fame and the Yellow Sect's prestige spread throughout Tibet; even Ladakh, in this period, sent missions, gifts and offerings to the dGe lugs pa monasteries and dignitaries; the Ladakh chronicles allude to it, and the bSod nams rgya mts'o's biography, written by the fifth Dalai Lama, mentions a prince mNa' bdag Lha bzán po gon ma aJig rten dba'n p'yug pad dkar lde, who came in 1555 to do homage. The latter, called king of Guge, must be the same persons as that aJig rten dba'n p'yug, whose daughter was aJam dba'n rnam rgyal's first wife; he is erroneously called "a queen of Ladakh", in FRANCKE'S, *Chronicles of Ladakh*, indexes. See note 42 on Part four.

92. Whose head was A to sa dar kan (see HUTH, p. 214; SAYANG SÄCÄN, p. 225). The mission also comprised representatives of Säcän Huntaiji (*ibid.*). SAYANG SÄCÄN, intent on increasing the family's merits, says that the invitation to Altan Khan was made precisely on his great-grandfather's advice.

93. The biography has preserved a schematic but interesting itinerary, whose chief points it will be well to summarize: T's'al zur k'añ, dGa' ldan rnam par rgyal bai gliñ, aP'an yul, Rva sgrēns. In this place to the NE of Lhasa, he sent back many of the lamas and dignitaries who had accompanied him, namely the dGa' ldan k'ri rin po c'e, the sLob dpoms of Se ra and aBras spuns, the Rin po c'e of Bod mk'ar, the Pan c'en Rig pa señ ge of gTsañ, Šañs rgyas ye šes of dBten sa, bKra šis rin c'en, Nam mk'a' byams pa, a master of Yar klúns, the *rd pa* of Gog dkar and bKra šis rab bran, who was *sa skyon* of Brag dkar. Next, after a stop in Rva sgrēns, the journey continued towards sMab t'añ, where some more of those who accompanied him went back, like Lha btusun bSod nams dpal bzán po, the Rin po c'e of Kun bzán rse, invested with the office of Ma c'en. Then, passing through camps of aBrog pa, bSod nams rgya mts'o reached the aBri c'u (i. e. the upper branch of the Yang tzu chüang) at Nam t's'o stod, i. e. Ngaring t's'o, rMa c'u, the branch of the Huang ho born out of that lake. On the bank of the dMar nag river, the dPon dGer rgyas met him to do him honour; then he arrived in Ag c'en t'añ, where many Mongols offered him rich gifts (p. 93 a) and then to rMa c'en spom ra, viz. to the main course of the rMa c'u, where Šañs rgyas skyab, dPon of that place, welcomed him with great celebrations. After this Altan Khan's first envoys came to meet him with

about 800 horsemen: to this group belonged: Yon̄ sā bui (*sic*) Bar ku t'ai ji, K'a t'an pā t'ur, Ma zin pakki the mT'u med (SAYANG SĀCĀN, p. 227. SCHMIDT, *Chatan Baghatūr, Mahācin baksi*) followed by a great crowd which had gathered there. bSod nams rgya mts'o went on to A rig dkar po t'an, where they offered him 1000 horses and 1000 heads of sheep, up to Han̄ ŋe, where he consecrated the temple of P'un ts'ogs rnam rgyal glin, recently built (p. 94 e). Then great Mongol dignitaries arrived to meet him: about 3000 persons, headed by Sācān Hung taji and Dayan Noyan, both of royal lineage. He continued his journey through the territory of As dgal no yon, then, as he got nearer and nearer to the place where Altan rgyal po was waiting for him, meetings and rich homages succeeded one another more frequently. Finally came to receive him with all honours the C'os tje brTson agrus bzān po, whom he had precedently sent to Altan's court, and the Lotsāva Gu šri pak šī who acted as interpreter.

94. Viz. the so-called Dongkor Qutuqu.

95. On the occasion of the temple's consecration there was a fresh exchange of gifts: a diadem (*abu rgyan*) of gold, a vase, the tiara with the symbols of the five supreme Buddhas, implements for the liturgy of baptism, like the vase for blessed water etc., a seal made out of a *srañ* of gold having engraved upon it the figure of a five-clawed dragon and the inscription, in Mongol characters *rDo tje a'c'ñi ta lai bla ma t'am ka*, "seal of the Ta lai blama Vajradhara", its container of silver, a cape ornamented with pearls, yellow silk mantles, ornamented with five-taloned dragons' claws, internally lined with leather (*abol ryan: bol gon, bol gar*, see S. CH. DAS s. v. and LAUFER, *Loan words*, pp. 49, 166), a waistcoat of yellow silk *tā lun*, lined internally with leather, pillows and such things.

96. In the text: Wan yi.

97. This is how the *Ming shih*, chap. 231, p. 4 e, relates these events. "Then (first Cheng tē year, 1506) the Emperor was deceived by recent rumors, according to which in dBus and gTsan there was a monk who was able to know the three times: the men of that country called him a living Buddha. The Emperor was glad and wished to know him and he examined the ancient events when, in the times of Yung lé and Hsüan te, Ch'en Ch'eng 陳誠 and Hou Hsien 侯顯 entered the barbarians' country (Tibet). (The Emperor) ordered the eunuch Liu Yün 劉允 to go and meet him. The Minister Liang Ch'u 梁儲 (on whom see *Ming Shih*, chap. 190) and others said "The teachings prevailing in Tibet (Hsi Fan 西番) are bad and do not correspond to those of the Classics. The Court of our ancestors sent envoys (in those countries) and this took place because, as in those times the world began to be well-ordered, it intended, through those (envoys), to educate fools and check barbarians. (Our ancestors) did not believe in the doctrines of those (peoples) and did not respect them.

"Later, there was peace and many Emperors succeeded one another for many generations; only, as (the barbarians) sent envoys to the Court, they offered gifts (in exchange), but they never lightly sent their envoys to travel in those lands. Now, if this eunuch is suddenly sent as an official envoy to honour those monks, the Court and people, seeing this, will be astonished and (the eunuch) Yün will ask up to several tens of thousands of measures of salt and will begin to ask that hundreds of horses and boats be given him. He will naturally smuggle salt, harassing the stations, and he will wrong officers and private persons. Now in (Ssü Ch'uan) brigandage seems to have subsided; epidemics do not yet arise, the officers have no reserves, but he will certainly wish to extort money wrongfully from military men and from the people. The latter will bravely give themselves up to adventures. Once more brigands will appear. Moreover, when from T'ien Ch'uan (天全 now T'ien ch'uan hsien, in Ssü Ch'uan) and from Liu fan 六番 one crosses the frontier, it is necessary to travel for several tens of thousands of *li*, for the space of several years. But on the high roads there are absolutely no mail stations. Where then will they rest? If in the middle of the roads they meet with brigands, how can they defend themselves? This is tantamount to insulting China's prestige, and receiving insults from barbarous foreigners. Such a thing is not possible. We cannot write the letters the Emperor has ordered us to write..."

"The Emperor paid no attention (to these representation. When Liu Yün arrived).... the living Buddha (dGe adun rgya mts'o) fearing that China should wish to harm him, went into hiding and did not show himself. The officials became angry and wanted to take him by force. By night the barbarians attacked them. Two officers fled and about a hundred men died. The wounded were half as many. Yün, riding a fast horse, rapidly fled, thus avoiding death. When he got to

Ch'eng tu, he forbade them to speak (of what had happened) and reported to the Emperor in an untruthful letter. When the letter arrived, the Emperor Wu tsung had died. Shih tsung called Yün back and handed him to the judges for punishment.

"In the Chia ching period (1522-1567) the Fa wang sent several times offerings of tributes, which came uninteruptedly to Shih tsung's Court. At that time there was (in Tibet) the monk So nan chien 索南堅鎰 (bSod nams rgya mts'o) who knew the past and the future. They called him the living Buddha. The Shun i wang 順義王 Nan ta 俺答 (Altan Qaghan) held him in great consideration and had much faith in him. In the seventh year of the Wan li period (1579) with the pretext of going to meet the living Buddha, (marchoing) Westward he invaded Wa la 瓦剌 (Kalmuks, see chap. 328) but he was defeated. This monk turned him from his inclination to slay and advised him to return to the East. An ta also induced this monk to establish relations with China; from Kan Chou 卅州 (today Chang Ye in Kan suh), he sent a letter to Chang Chü cheng 張居正 (the Chief Minister of the Emperor Wan li, *Ming shih*, chap. 213, pp. 14-22) giving himself the name of Shih chia mu ni pi ch'iu 釋迦摩尼比邱 (Śākyamuni bhikṣu) and, trying to establish with China the relations of a tributary, he sent ceremonial gifts. Chü cheng dared not accept them and informed the Emperor. The latter ordered the gifts to be accepted and allowed that tribute. From that time China knew that there was a living Buddha. This monk possessed extraordinary capacities, by which he was able to subdue men. All the barbarians followed his teaching. Then the Ta pao fa wang and the Shan hua wang and the other princes reveted him and called themselves his disciples. From this time the Western countries acknowledged themselves obedient to this monk. The barbarian princes had then a nominal authority and were no longer able to issue orders..."

98. King Sa'am is a descendant of one of Ge sar's rivals (see DAVID NEEL, *La vie surbumaine de Gütsar de Ling*, p. 264). The scene upon which these events are said to have taken place is, according to M.me DAVID NEEL, the Likiang region, North of Yünnan, Chung-tien and Atunze. According to Blo bzān rgya mts'o, the country of a Jam should be placed a little more to the North, towards Batang-Litang (on the relations between Sa'am of a Jam and the third Dalai Lama see SAYANG SĀCĀN, p. 241). The Bum nag t'an is in the environs of the Bum la, West of the Yang tzu Chiang.

99. But in the text: bha si.

100. aP'ags šin kun has nothing to do with the one of Nepal, see note 237.

101. The latter is the great-grandfather of the Mongol historian Sayang Sācān; he died in 1581, a year after this visit of bSod nams rgya mts'o. MOSTAERT, *Ordoica*, Bulletin Catholic University, Peking, n. 9, p. 56. On this visit see SAYANG SĀCĀN, p. 249. Dayan noyan was a Tūmät chief.

102. Thesame as 'Ombu C'uhur-Noyon, in HUTH, p. 228 (p. 143 text).

103. SAYANG SĀCĀN, SCHMIDT, p. 255, *ibid.*, A mutai Chungtaidschi.

104. SAYANG SĀCĀN, SCHMIDT, *ibid.*, Nomun Jeke wadschra Chagan.

105. Cf. HUTH, p. 59 and p. 233; SCHMIDT, p. 257. H. SERRUYS, *Pei-lou Fong-sou*, Monumenta serica, vol. X, p. 139.

106. Blo bzān rgya mts'o spelling is always uncertain: now T'u med, now mT'u med.

107. He was the religious patron of princes of Sam agrub rtsé; he was invited, together with his son, by the three sons of Žin biāg Ts'e bran rdo tje, the founder of the princes of gTsan's dynasty.

108. In 1604 came the invitation of the chief of Goñ ri dkar po (who was called Lha gzigs mui dban po, like the king of sNeu gdoñ) bKa' brgyud nram rpal ba (p. 31 b); followed by that of dGye re lha btsun (p. 33 a) and that of sKyiḍ ṣod, extended to him by the Sa skyon Gyul rgyal nor bu, uncle and nephew (p. 33 b).

Yon tan rgya mts'o accepted and then continued his tour towards Mal gro, Rin c'en glin c'os sde, 'Ol k'a; the lay and religious communities of rDsin p'yi, that of ICāñ ra, Grum mda', Bañ rim, then came to do him homage. Having returned to sKyiḍ ṣod (p. 34) and then again to aBras spuñs, we find him in 1606 in Yar klun̄s, in aP'yoñ rgyas, in sTag rtsé, invited there by the prince bSod nams grags pa, and next in Ri bo sde c'en, aP'yoñ gyas, P'ag sde, dPal ri sgrub sde, bKra šis bde c'en, C'os lam rin pa and other monasteries which had no prejudices as to system (the Tibetan expression is *grub m't'a' ris med kyi dgon pa c'e c'ui*; HUTH, p. 241, understands *ris med* as a proper name. In the life of Tsoñ k'a pa, p. 8: *gyar rñin ris med kyi mk'as grub*. This can also be better specified: *ris med* is a name given to the rSogs c'en schools, viz. to a branch

of the *rñin ma pa*; *rdogs c'en po ris med kyi dgon pa zag bdun byun*; DT, 9a, p. 13 b and *rdogs c'en ran snan ris med kyi dgon pa jar nas, ibid.*, p. 18 a).

He went on to mK'ar t'og, sNeu gdon and other convents, large and small, like rTse t'ogs, dKon gñer, Ras c'un p'ug, Ri bo c'os glin, bKra iis c'os sde (p. 35). He then conferred baptism to rTse žabs druñ rin po c'e Lha gziis Mi p'am dban sgyur rgyal po, and was then invited by T'ogs mk'an c'en pa Rin c'en rgya mts'o, visited rTse tañ, went to the sde pa of rGya ri rdson and thence continued through Roñ c'ad dkar, E ri sgo c'os rdson, Yar rgyab, where T'u mi sam bhoṭa's descendants ruled; received there with great honour by Srid gsum tnam rgyal, he next passed to rGyal c'en glin, Dol lhun grub (p. 36 b), Lhun po rse in gTsan; finally he returned to aBras spuns.

109. The Dalai Lama's itinerary went through U yug luñ, Šaṅs Ri bo dge ap'el, rTse gdon, Sa skya, where he was invited by aJam dbyaṅs Kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub bkra iis grags pa rgyal mts'an dpal bzau po, up to Tashilunpo, where he was received with great honours by the Pañ c'en Blo bzau c'os kyi rgyal mts'an.

110. On his way back Yon tan rgya mts'o passed through Lhun po rse, accepted invitations from the sde pa of Rin c'en rse, the prince of rGyal mk'ar rse, the Žabs druñ of gNas rñin Nag dbaṅ gi dbaṅ po; the Lord of rTse k'ian c'en po and Goñ ri dkar po (pp. 40-41).

111. The fifth Dalai Lama wrote a brief biography of dKon mc'og c'os ap'el, his Lama and guardian until he came of age. He belonged to the Yar rgyab clan (p. 3) and was born from bKra iis tnam rgyal and Lha mo in the year *c'u bya*, 1575; he died at 72 in the year *šin spreu*, 1644. At the age of eight he took the first vows in the Sa skya pa monastery bKra iis c'os glin, with the Rin po c'e bSod nams rgyal mc'og, and he was then baptized by the name of Yon tan tnam rgyal. Having completed his religious education with Grum mda' pa C'os rje Blo bzau c'os ap'el, at the age of 12 he took monastic vows and was called dKon mc'og c'os ap'el. Among the monasteries where he studied are mentioned: rTse tañ - sKyiid šod, dPal gsañ p'u, sNeu t'og, the latter in the territory of sKyiid yod. He had as his masters, among others, the C'os rje rin po c'e dPal abyor rgya mts'o, who in the year *me spreu*, 1596, when he was 24, imparted perfect initiation to him, the C'os rje of sTag lun brag whom he met when he went for the second time to rTse tañ, Nag dbaṅ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an, K'ri c'en of Ri bo dga' ldan, the acārya of Ra ba stod Rab byams pa Blo gros rgyal mts'an, Don grub tin c'en of sKyor mo luñ, Byams pa c'os mc'og of Dvags po, dGe adun tnam rgyal of rDsin p'yi, etc.

Having become famous for his great learning, he was invited by the Goñ ma of sNeu gdon rse and by the prince of ap'yoñ rgyas. His meeting with Yon tan rgya mts'o took place in aBras spuns, when this Dalai Lama was coming back from his tour in the gTsan region.

He had a preeminent part in concluding peace between Mongols and Tibetans when the latter invaded Tibet in 1621. Cf. *Vai ñu rya ser po*, p. 74.

112. See below SP, transl. p. 654.

113. Life of dBañ p'yug rab bran bstan pai rgyal mts'an, p. 34.

114. Life of bSod nams dbaṅ po, p. 28. Cf. note 453 to the fifth Dalai Lama's Chron.

115. Biography of dKon mc'og c'os ap'el, p. 11 a.

116. See life of the Zur pa, p. 46.

117. Life of dKon mc'og c'os ap'el, p. 12 b.

118. Biography of the fifth Dalai Lama, p. 70 a.

119. In the fifth Dalai Lama's biography, p. 49 a. 'U šu wañ. HUTH, p. 321: Žun šu wañ. On this transcription see LAUFER, *Loan words*, p. 432.

120. Nalendra is North of Lhasa.

121. These events are also mentioned by Pad ma dkar po in his autobiography, p. 45 and p. 96.

122. On the wars of Byaṅ see Biography of bSod nams dbaṅ po, p. 28 ff.

123. Thus in the biography, p. 20 and KLOÑ RDOL BLA MA, p. 14, but AJIGS MED RIG PAI RDO RJE, p. 265 (HUTH): dCra adul.

124. Lha bisun is Lha btsun Blo bstan adsin rgya mts'o; Huñ tai ji, also transcribed in Tibetan: K'un t'ai ji, K'oñ tai ji - Chinese 皇太子 Huang t'ai tzu, as Tai si or Tai ji is T'ai tzu, but sometimes T'ai shih 大師 (see PELLIOU, *T'oung Pao*, XXVII, p. 44). The name of the two Mongol generals, known to Tibetans as Lha btsun and Huñ tai ji, in the Schmidt translation of Sa'yan Säcän is Bagha toin and Chailin Ügetai Baghatur Tabunang; the rDamba Chagan of this text is the king of gTsan, the Tsang pa han of Chinese sources (p. 273).

125. There is a discrepancy as to dates between Sa'yan Säcän and the fifth Dalai Lama's biography; the former places this event in 1619 (*Ki Schaf Jahr*).

126. They were Tümat. The twelve Tümat belonged, with the Ordos and the Yüngsiyebü, to the three right-hand Tümat of the six Mongol Tüman, in the times of Dayan-khan. The three left-hand Tüman were the Čahar, Halha, Urianggai, see MOSTAERT, *Textes oraux ordos*, p. VII, n. 1.

127. Concerning To ba Tai ji see SAYANG SÄCÄN, SCHMIDT, p. 271. "The eight white tents," refers to the Ordos. In the Life of the Zur pa (year 1625, *šin glan*) he is called Ji non rgyal poi geuñ (younger brother) T'ub pa T'ai sun K'un tai ji. On his visit to dGa' ldan see SAYANG SÄCÄN, p. 271.

128. This small number seems to be in contradiction with the fact that the biography mentions the raid: perhaps only the chiefs who led their troops are recorded. On this subject the fifth Dalai Lama's biography says that as the Hor feared the Sog po soldiers, the sDe srid of gTsan did not think of calling them (p. 72). Hor and Sog po are, usually, kept distinct in Tibetan tradition. Thus also aJigs med rig pai rdo rje, p. 138 (transl. p. 219). So also, on p. 77 b of the biography, the Hor of Amdo are kept distinct from the Sog po. In the literature of the period with which we are dealing Sog po means generally the Mongols of outer Mongolia, Hor the tribes bordering Amdo Country. But no precise tribal distinction is always implicit in the two names. In DT Hor is the name of Mongols of Gengis khan.

129. On this tribe see above note 127.

130. aJigs med rig pai rdo rje, transl. p. 51, without naming the general who led the Mongol armies into Tibet, alludes to an alliance between the Mongol prince and the king of gTsan; his statement that Legs ldan invaded Tibet is an error. The king of gTsan, to whom Legs ldan had allied himself before Arslän came into the field is, according to aJigs med, P'un ts'ogs tnam rgyal, but I hesitate to accept this statement: P'un ts'ogs tnam rgyal was probably dead, and since 1623 he had been succeeded on the gTsan throne, as we have said, by his son Kar ma bstan skyoñ, the last sde srid of gTsan (see note 453 to the chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama).

131. In SAYANG SÄCÄN (SCHMIDT, pp. 203, 281, 287); Lingdan, Kutuktu khagan. On the Chinese sources which mention him see MOSTAERT, *Ordosica*, p. 39 and *Textes oraux Ordos*, p. VIII.

132. See note 31.

133. He elected, for instance, the gñer pa or administrator of the temple of Byams c'en po in Roñ Rin spuñs and the Slob dpon of Roñ ldiñ. Life of bSod nams mc'og grub bstan pai rgyal mts'an, p. 7 and p. 13.

134. Life of dBañ p'yug rab bran bstan pai rgyal mts'an, p. 38 and life of bSod nams mc'og grub bstan pai rgyal mts'an, p. 13.

135. FRANCKE, *Chr.*, p. 110.

136. WESSELS, S. I., *Early Jesuit travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721*, The Hague, 1924, *Introduction*, p. 7 (in the English edition of Desideri, edited by DE FILIPPI, Routledge, revised edition, London, 1937). The date of this event is not recorded in the Chronicles of Ladakh, but from them one gathers that on his return from the expedition against the sDe srid, Señ ge tnam rgyal died in Han le, before reaching his capital. Although the actual year of this last war of the Ladakhi king is not mentioned, it is clear that it was undertaken after the peace concluded with Husain Beg in 1639 (see PETECH, *Lad. Chron.*, p. 143). Then, for the reason mentioned above, P'un ts'ogs tnam rgyal no longer reigned over gTsan, as suggested by FRANCKE, *Chron.*, p. 112 and PETECH, p. 161, but Kar ma bstan skyoñ was king. The precise date of Señ ge tnam rgyal's death may however be exactly ascertained, because his funeral ceremonies were celebrated during the new year's festival in Lhasa in the year *me k'yi*, 1646. Life of Blo bzau rgya mts'o, ca, p. 132 a.

137. Cf. C. WESSELS, *op. cit.* and introduction to the *Travels of Ippolito Desideri*, edited by F. DE FILIPPI.

138. *Observations Géographiques et historiques sur la Carte du Tibet* (Tirées des mémoires du Père Régis) in DU HALDE, *Description générale de l'Empire de la Chine*, p. 576, La Haye, 1736.

139. DU HALDE, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 50 and *ibid.*, p. 576. See also TURNER, *Embassies to Tibet*, Italian edition by V. FERRARIO, Milan, 1817, p. 57.

140. COURANT, *L'Asie Centrale aux XVII et XVIII siècles*, pp. 22-23.

141. For details see ROCKHILL, *The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa*, TP, 1910, cfr. HAENISCH, *Die Eroberung des Tibet*, TP, 1911.

142. See ROCKHILL, *op. cit.*  
 143. But he may be the brother of sDe pa bSod nams c'os ap'el.  
 144. The fifth Dalai Lama has written a hymn on *Vati*, probably on this same occasion. See complete works, vol. 8a, p. 20.  
 145. That Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o was the fifth Dalai Lama's son is stated by Csoma de Körös, but I have found no explicit information in the Tibetan sources.  
 146. On aDsum lan see n. 72 on Part four.  
 147. The names are probably misspelt. Yc ran is Lalitapattana in Nepal from Nevari Ela, see LEVI, *Le Népal*, I, p. 61. The names which follow are given in the Tibetan transcription of the Biography.  
 148. These personalities and the following ones are unknown to me.  
 149. In fact the fifth Dalai Lama speaks of these masters in his book on the *Vinaya*.  
 150. See above the letter of Byañ c'ub 'od, p. 7.  
 151. The Gar log are often mentioned in Tibetan sources; for instance we know that the author of the Buddhist revival in Western Tibet, Ye tes 'od, was taken prisoner by the Gar log. In the account of the events of the five men of gTsañ we shall see that after Glan dar ma's persecution some masters tried to reach K'ams passing through mNa'ris and the Gar log. They are then nomad populations who carried out raids into Western Tibet and resided on its Northern frontiers. In the *bSais kyi c'o ga legs kun abhyūñ rgyogs po brian dan bcas*, RC, pi, p. 17, they are listed with Gru gu, Žan žun in the tribes on the frontier: *gru gu žan žun gar log sogz m'a' ak'ob yul gži bdag*. For the name cfr. those of other tribes Go log, bKa' ma log (see down below n. 67 on the Dalai Lama's Chron.) etc. In the introduction to the translation of the *Mabāvūyupatti* (bsTan agyur, vol. 60) the *Gar log* are quoted along with the robbers of sTod and sMad. They send homage to the king K'ri lde sroñ bsan (Ral pa can).  
 152. N. 61 to the fifth Dalai Lama's Chronicles.  
 153. So also it was practised for judgements during the kings' times.  
 154. See below, p. 110 ff., and p. 373 ff. The various theories as regards Padmasambhava are referred to by the fifth Dalai Lama, *Chron.*, p. 35.  
 155. Reading doubtful.  
 156. On Sañs rgyas gsañ ba, Buddhaguhya, see Tāranātha, p. 219, where he is said to be a contemporary of K'ri sroñ lde bsañ and Dharmapāla.  
 157. I. e. the Tharu living in the Terai jungle. W. CROOKE, *Castes and Tribes ...*, vol. IV, pp. 380, 405.  
 158. Kaccha is perhaps Kajuri Kach at the point where the rivers Gomāl and Zhoḥ flow into each other, the boundary between Baluchistan and the NW. Frontier Provinces.  
 159. According to tradition there are two Vimalamitra, an older one who lived in the times of K'ri sroñ lde bsañ and a later one, concerning whom see DT, *ga*, p. 3 and p. 41.  
 160. The likeness to the Bon is, of course, in the number nine of the Vehicles, not in their appellatives, the Bon po yañas being: *p'yva gñen, snai gñen, p'ral gñen, srid gñen, dge bsiñen, aḍkar, drañ sroñ, ye gñen, k'yad par c'en po*.  
 161. For further details, though deserving a good checking, see S. CH. DAS in JRASB, 1882, p. 121 ff.  
 162. Concerning Atiā, besides the biography I have quoted in *Indo-Tibetica*, II, from which S. CH. DAS has taken his *Indian pandits in the Land of Snows*, there is a biography of Sa skya pa origin.  
 163. Marpa's life has been partially translated by J. BACOT, *La vie de Marpa*, "Buddhica", Paris, 1937. The date for this lotsāva proposed by Bacot must be corrected: he places his birth in 993 and his death in 1081, but from the DT, *ñā*, pp. 3, 6, we learn that he was born in the year c'u byi and that Milaraspa was born when he was 29, *ibid.*, p. 4a. As Milaraspa's birth took place in 1040, it follows that the year c'u byi must be 1012. The biography says that he died in the year bya, but this is contradicted by the DT, which gives as the year of his nirvana *me glai* (1097). That 1012 was the date of his birth seems to be confirmed by the information contained in the DT, for that he was 23 when dKon mc'og rgyal mts'an was born (1034 - 23 = 1012). To determine the year of his birth is important, because from it depends the date of one of the greatest Siddhas in Tantric Buddhism, as Nāropā was.  
 164. There is a very ample literature on *geod*; among the best known works are the *Byañ c'ub don du gñer pai geod yul pa rnamis mk'o*

*bai ri c'os rtsibz stoñ ak'or lo* attributed to C'os kyi señ ge; *Ye tes mk'a agro žal luñ gsañ ba mgon du abhyūñ ba spros pa ñer ži brtal žugs lam lons dan bcas pa*, by the same author; together with them, other minor treatises are published, belonging to the same cycle. Cfr. DT, *na*, pp. 1 ff.  
 165. *Mystiques et Magiciens du Tibet*, p. 214.  
 166. Books dealt with in *Indo-Tibetica* are also, as a rule, excluded.  
 167. KLON RDOL BLO MA, vol. 1a, p. 48: *Lba bla ma ye tes 'od kyi snags log sprin yig, ži ba 'od kyi sprin yig*.  
 168. *Document Tibétain sur l'expansion du dhyāna chinois*, JA, 1942, p. 505.  
 169. Concerning Milaraspa (Mid la ras pa according to the spelling followed by Tsoñ k'a pa, for instance in his commentary to the *Na ro pai c'os drug*, and by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o) see, besides works of a general character, *Tibet's great Yogi Milarepa*, by W. EVANS WENTZ, London, 1928; *Milarepa*, par J. BACOT, Paris, 1925; *Milaraspa, Tibetische Texte in Auswahl uebertragen*, von B. LAUFER, Hagen, 1922.  
 170. On these songs, edited for the first time by H. P. Śāstrī, see SHAHIDULLAH, *Les chants mystiques de Kāmba et de Saraba*, Paris, 1929; *Dākārnava*, ed. by N. N. CHAUDURI, Calcutta, Sanskrit Series, n. X; *Dohakoṣa*, by P. CH. BAGCHI, Calcutta, Sanskrit Series, n. 25.  
 171. Here something should also be said of the lives of Mar pa and Milaraspa, which their translators attribute to Ras c'uñ pa, the poet's favourite disciple. But the attribution rests on a mistake; the work was written in a later period, which cannot yet be defined.  
 The author of both works, Marpa's and Milaraspa's biography, rather than give his name declares himself by a designation which looks very much like an epithet: *Dur k'rod ñal bai rnal abyor k'rag a'uñ rus pai rgyan can*. Although this is rather an appellative than a name, it cannot be attributed to Ras c'uñ rdo tje rags pa, as EVANS WENTZ does (p. 309 of his translation). Such an identification is ruled out because at the end of Mar pa's rNam c'ar we read that the author compiled his book making use of other works and particularly of the instructions left by Ras c'uñ and by the master of Nan rdoñ Byan c'ub rgyal po, which represent the most authoritative sources for the tradition handed down by the master of rNog, the master of T's'ur and the master of Mes.  
 But I have not yet succeeded in ascertaining who was this Dur k'rod ñal ba and when he lived.  
 172. For Ras c'uñ I have used: *Ts'e geig gja' brñes pa rje ras c'uñ pai rnam c'ar rags sḍus mgar rnam rgyas*.  
 173. This is different from the Pa c'ab lotsāva referred to in *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 69; the DT, c'a, p. 7, places this sPa ts'ab in aP'an yul.  
 174. "Bla ma of mNa'ris", (dGe mdes byañ c'ub, bKa gḍams c'os abhyūñ, p. 8a) is the author of a commentary on the Hevajratrañtra, taken up once more and commented upon in his turn by Sa c'en (Sa skya pa works, vol. Ka). The works of the first Sa skya, the *goñ ma lia* are published in sDe dge and consist of fifteen volumes.  
 175. For instance: *dPal kye rdo tje rtsa rgyud brtag gñis kyi rnam par bñad pa ñi ma 'od zer, Sampuñ tai ži k'a gnad kyi gyal byed*, a bulky work in 239 large pages.  
 176. *brTag pa gñis pai rnam par bñad pa ma dag rnamis gjomz par byed pai rnam abrel; bDe mc'os luñ pāi lugs kyi mion par rtozs pai bḡgom pai rim*. Of course he also wrote on other tantras, like the *Durgatipariśodhana: Nan soñ sbyon rgyud kyi spyi don, Kun rig gi c'og gžan p'an 'od zer* etc.  
 177. *rDo tje mgar gyi rgyan; mGur gyi bḡsdus don*.  
 178. See the Chap. on the Sects.  
 179. On these masters see TSCHERBATSKY, *Buddhist Logic*, I, p. 55. The *Ts'ad ma rigs pai gter* was later commented upon and in some parts refuted by rGyal ts'ab in his *Ts'ad ma rigs gter gyi rnam bñad legg par bñad pai stñin po*.  
 180. *rGyud kyi mion par rtozs pa ljon c'uñ*.  
 181. *rGyud sḍei dkar c'ag* (vol. pa).  
 182. *Dus ak'or c'ugs khyil gyi mion rtozs*.  
 183. The work was written, as may be read in the colophon, in the *Sa skyai c'os gva c'en po*, in the year *sa stag* (1278), hence it is one of the last works he wrote. The mention of the cyclical year 千 寅 Jen yin written at the end of the Chinese translation, is a mistake, as Bunyu Nanjō found out (N. 1320); however the correction he proposed is not right, we should read 戊 寅 Mou yin which precisely corresponds to 1278. For the Chinese text see Taishō, vol. XXXII, n. 1645. As to Sha lo pa, i. e. Šar pa, or Sha lo pa Kuang Chao 觀照; he was known as 弘教佛大智, Hung chiao fo ta chih; he died in 1314 (Fo tsu li tai t'ung tsai, p. 728). Cfr. *Bukkyō-daijizēn*, p. 285.

184. rGyal bu ji big te mur la glam du bya ba nor bui p'reñ.

185. rGyal bu mam ga la glam du bya ba bkra ñs kyi p'reñ.

186. On Tögüs-buqa, Doctor Hambis, whom I have consulted, writes: "L'histoire des Yüan (30, 1 b) mentionne sous la 3<sup>e</sup> année l'ai ting un prince de 𠄎 𠄎 Wu P'ing nommé 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 T'ieh ku ssü pu hua (Tögüs-buqa): il est également cité au ch. 108, 6<sup>e</sup> dans les tableaux des apanages comme ayant reçu un sceau en or dans le 3<sup>e</sup> l'ai ting (1326), ..

187. A brief biographical sketch of the lotsäva of Šon is contained in the DT, t'a, p. 14 ff. His name was rDo tje rgyal mts'an, was born in Boñ ra in sPyan lun Šar k'a. One of his first poetical compositions was a hymn in honour of aP'ags pa, just back from China. He went to Nepal where he studied for five years at the school of the pandita Mahendrabhadra. On his return to Tibet and precisely to Sa skya, he translated the *Kälacakra* with its commentary, which aP'ags pa judged superior to the preceding translation. He next translated the *Avadānakalpalā*.

188. But for the date of aP'ags pa, see *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 74.

189. The works are arranged in an order differing from the printed edition known to Kloñ rdol bla ma, and not all the works correspond; KLOÑ RDOL, *op. cit.*, vol. ra, p. 6 ff., and *Zab pa dāñ rgya c'e pai dam pai c'or kyi t'ob yig gāñ gai c'u rgyan*, premitted to the works of the fifth Dalai Lama, part II, p. 77.

190. *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 14.

191. *bsTan agyur dkar c'ag yid bžin nor bui za ma tog* (vol. 10). The work was undertaken by order and with the favour of the sku žañ Kun dga' don grub. See *bsTan agyur gyi dkar c'ag yid bžin nor bu dbañ gi rgyal poi p'reñ* (vol. la) pp. 4, 6.

192. MOULS, *Christians in China*, pp. 224-225.

193. The rDsoḡs c'en scriptures are divided into: *sems sde*, pertaining to thought, *kloñ sde* pertaining to essence, *man nāg sde* pertaining to the mantra; the sNīn t'ig belongs to the latter class, DT, *ge*, p. 36.

194. Quoted by SP, p. 396.

195. See MASPERO, *Légendes mythologiques dans le Tchou King*, JA, 1924.

196. The book was partially translated (the first 54 chapters) by SCHLAGINTWIRT in the *Abhandlungen Bayr. Akad. Wiss.*, I, XXI, II, pp. 419-444; XXII, III, pp. 51-576, and in its entirety by TOUSSAINT, *Le dict de Padma*, Paris, 1933. The Peking edition was consulted by

LAUFER, *Der Roman einer Tibetischen Königin*, p. 239 ff.; for further bibliographical information see GRUNWEDDEL, *Padmasambhava und Verwandtes*, Bäsler Archiv, Vol. III, Part I, 1912; TOUSSAINT, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

197. Laufer's translation of this entire passage should be corrected as follows: "the patron was the Hor prince (i. e. Za hor) bSod nam stobs rgyal, Minister of the P'ag mo gru pa king, invested with authority over Tibet by the Mongol kings who had received their authority from heaven, ..

198. A Chapter of the collection of the *Bar do t'os gro*.  
199. The songs included in the *bKa' t'an sde lha* like those of the *bsTan mai bka' t'an* translated by LAUFER, *Der Roman* etc., should be considered as belonging to the oldest parts of the book as the language clearly shows.

200. For instance in *Blon poi bka' t'an*, p. 58, the mention of Sa skya dPon c'en Byaḡ c'ub rin c'en, who carried off from bSam yas the turquoise statue of the Lha mo. In Kun dga' of aBri gun there is an allusion to the sGom c'en Kun dga' rin c'en; in Nam mk'a' of Byaḡ, Nam mk'a' rab brtan is hinted at, and so on p. 68: "503 years from now the Hor will come and there will be great misery, .. See also above, n. 61.

201. See above p. 87. A refutation of his arguments is contained in an important book by an unknown author which I found in Hemis. I refer to it as "rNīn ma pa apology, ..

202. The life of Ye šes mts'o rgyal passes, even so, for a *gTer ma*; its title is: *Bod kyi jo mo ye šes mts'o rgyal gyi rnam par l'ar mśad ts'ul gāb pa mñon du byuñ ba*, Potala edition, after an ancient edition in aP'yon rgyas, dPal gyi ri c'eg c'en glin; but no *gTer ston* is recorded. It is a late compilation containing allusions to the Yellows' triumph, p. 102, *dGe ldan bstan pa aphyun* and to the fifth Dalai Lama: *Za hor dāñ ml'a mi yi dbañ po bstan pa dūs gtsāñ k'ams su bca ba aphyun*, p. 102 b. The activity of the rNīn ma pas as commentators was very great and it centered on the most important Tantras, chiefly on the Guhyagarbha. In fact the rNīn ma pas are often called the "gSañ śhīn po pa, .. The DT, *ge*, quotes many works of this kind: f. i. the *gSañ bai śhīn poi tik k'a rgyas pa* by rTa ston gzi brjid (XIIIth century) (*ibid.*, p. 22 a); a *gSañ ba śhīn po rgyud tik k'a c'e ba* by Sans rgyas rin c'en rgyal mts'an (1350-1431), (*ibid.*, p. 23 a); the *gSañ ba śhīn poi k'og dbu pa* and the *rGyud rnam nes* by Śa kya 'od (XVth century) (*ibid.*, p. 25 a).

203. As to the *gTer stons* they are very many: a traditional list of them is known, which is worthy of notice.

FTV Toussaint's transl. (88) Chapt. 94	Name of the gTer ston	rNīn ma pa Apology and contemporaneity with other persons	R C	Names of Books discovered
p. 376	Sans rgyas bla ma	[as in the left column]	p. 36: Rin c'en bzañ po	—
p. 376	rGya lotsäva (rDo tje bzañ po)	do contempor. of Marpa lotsäva	p. 37	—
p. 377	sNa nam pa	[as in the left column]	p. 38: born in mDo K'ams in the family Žaḡ sna nam pa	books on medicine and astrology
p. 377	Dum rgya Žaḡ k'rom	do	p. 38	books on gSin tje, Ma mgon etc.
p. 377	Ñi ma seḡ ge	do	immediately after rGya lotsäva	—
p. 377	gYu ru ston Ša kya	do	p. 39: called dBu ru ston	—
p. 377	Bon po Brag Ts'al	do	p. 40	—
p. 378	Žu yas of sÑe mo	Sa skya pa dPal bla ma dam pa (cont.) [as in the left column]	—	—
p. 378	Grub t'ob dños grub	do (master of Myaḡ gi bla ma) rJe btsun grags pa (cont.)	p. 41	Sroñ bstan sgam poi bKa' aḡum
p. 378	gTsug lag dpal dge	[as in the left column]	p. 42: born when Sans rgyas bla ma was old	—
p. 378	sKu ts'a ston pa	missing	p. 42: called sKu sa sman pa or sMan pa Padma skyabs	—
p. 379	A ya lha aḡum	missing	p. 43	astrology and medicine
p. 379	K'yun po dpal dge	missing	p. 44	—
p. 379	Ša mi rdo tje rgyal	[as in the left column]	—	—
p. 379	lDan ma lthun rgyal	do	p. 44: lCe btsun Seḡ ge dbañ p'yug (cont.)	sNīn tig
p. 380	Gra pa mÑon šes (dBaḡ ap'yug aḡar)	do	p. 46: born in the year c'u bya of the first cycle, 1033, pupil of Yam šud rgyal ba 'od	Žaḡ blon rdo tje bdud aḡul; rGyud bži and other medical works in <i>sa steg</i> , 1098

PTY Toussaint's Chapt. 94 (98)	Name of the gTer ston	rñin ma pa Apology and contemporaneity with other persons	R C	Names of Books discovered
p. 380	Ra śag (C'os abar or bSod nams rdo tje)	[as in the left column]	p. 46	books of K'ri sroñ lde bzan, Ma mo glin bñii mdos
p. 380	Myañ ral (ñi ma 'od)	do	p. 47: born ñin abrug of second cycle, 1124, dead ñin byi, 1204	—
p. 380	K'yun t'og gsas	do	p. 50: of a Bon family	—
p. 381	Ra mo śel sman (Ye śes bzan po)	do	p. 51	—
p. 381	Guru c'os dbañ	do	p. 52: born in the year of the monkey, 1212	—
p. 381	Guru Jo ts'e (Ts'e dbañ dar po)	aP'ags pa (cont.) [as in the left column]	p. 55	Gur ngon
p. 381	Pad ma dbañ p'yug	capture of Bya rog rdson 1281 [as in the left column]	p. 56	—
p. 382	Don ban rgya mts'o	do	p. 56	—
p. 382	Rag ši ston pa	Ag len (cont.) [as in the left column]	p. 57	—
p. 382	rDsa ron bhi <sup>11</sup> (pa) (in RC Byar ron) E sman pa (Ni ma 'od gsal)	do	—	—
p. 382	C'os kyi rdo tje	do	p. 57 \	dPe dkar ar tad
p. 383	gYag p'yar sñon mo	do	p. 58	—
p. 383	mK'ar nag	do	p. 58	—
p. 384	Lha btsun sñon mo	do	p. 59	—
p. 384	Ñi ma geags pa	Pats'ab lotsäva Ñi ma grags pa (cont.) [as in the left column]	p. 60	—
p. 384	Ts'ul k'rimis rdo tje	do	p. 61: born <i>leags yas</i> , 1291, Kar ma Rañ byun rdo tje (cont.)	—
p. 384	Ts'e brtan rgyal mts'an	Taisitu Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an (cont.) [as in the left column]	p. 62	—
p. 385	Rin c'en gliñ pa (Rin c'en rgyal po dpal bzan)	at his place Sañs rgyas gliñ pa	p. 63	—
p. 385	O rgyan gliñ pa	[as in the left column] contemp. with Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an	p. 65: born <i>c'u p'og</i> , 1323	Padma bka' yi c'an yig, Padma mai nram t'ar c'un ba, bKa' c'an sde lña
p. 385	rDo tje gro lod	missing	missing	—
p. 385	Dri med 'od zer	Byañ c'ub rgyal mts'an (the year of his death is the year of the discovery of the gTer ma)	<i>sa spre</i> of the fifth cycle, 1308	—
p. 386	O rgyan gliñ pa	Ra tna gliñ pa	missing	—
p. 386	Rog tje - O rgyan gliñ pa	C'os tje gliñ pa (or dBon tje)	p. 69: C'os tje gliñ pa (aDsam gliñ rdo tje) - Blo bzan dar rgyas, K'ri c'un dCa' ldan (cont.)	—
p. 386	O rgyan gliñ pa - gTer bdag	called gTer bdag gliñ pa	p. 71: born ñin k'yi, 1334	—
p. 386	O rgyan - Kun skyoñ	Kun skyoñ gliñ pa contemp. of Bo don P'yogs las rnam rgyal and Nor bzan of Rin spuñs	p. 74: born <i>me byi</i> , 1396	—
p. 386	O rgyan mdo śnags gliñ pa	—	p. 76	—
p. 387	O rgyan bstan gñis pa	[as in the left column] contemp. of Rin spuñs Ñag dbañ	p. 78: bsTan gñis gliñ pa Pad ma ts'e dbañ rgyal po (cont.)	—
p. 387	O rgyan rdo tje gliñ	[as in the left column]	p. 79: born <i>me k'yi</i> , 1466	sÑin t'ig bcu gsum
p. 387	O rgyan rin c'en gliñ pa	do	p. 82: Rin c'en gliñ pa p'yi ma, born <i>leags abrug</i> , 1466; contemp. of gZon nu dpal	—
p. 387	O rgyan pad ma gliñ pa	[as in the left column]	p. 85: born <i>leags k'yi</i> , 1490	—
p. 388	O rgyan las ap'ro	O rgyan las ap'ros gliñ pa	born ñin bya, 1525, called also Ñag dbañ c'os rgyal	—
p. 388	bSam gtan gliñ pa	[as in the left column]	p. 91	—
p. 388	O rgyan žig po gliñ	do	p. 91: born ñin <i>spreu</i> , 1524, (Nam mk'a' ts'e dban); contemporary with Kun dga' rin c'en of Sa skya	—
p. 388	O rgyan bde c'en gliñ	do	p. 93: born <i>c'u k'yi</i> , 1562	—

1. The place of discovery of the gTer ma.

204. Kloñ rdol bla ma, in his work *bKa' gdams pa dan dge lugs bla ma rag rim gyi gsun'bum mts'an l'ob*, complete works, vol. 1a, p. 42 ff., gives a list of the works: *sutra, prakaraṇa and tantra*, on which Tsoñ k'a pa based himself, having recognized them as authoritative.

205. On this Candrakīrti see the chapter on vajrayāna, p. 231.

206. Desideri's translation, which he gave to Father Felice da Morro, is lost; a partial translation of the *Lam rim c'en mo*, by Zybikoff, was published in the *Izvestia of the Oriental Institute of Vladivostok* (1913).

207. On him see DT, *c'a*, p. 7 and p. 10.

208. Na dpon is a title; on Na dpon Kun dga' dpal of rTse c'en see MC, p. 141, *Life of Tsoñ k'a pa*, p. 75.

209. This difference should be noted between the old Sa skya pa's point of view (Kun dga' sñin po) and the dGe lugs pa; while the first maintained that logic is a subsidiary profane science, the second ones recognize in Dharmakīrti's Logic the theoretical foundation of Buddhism (see TSCHERRBATSKY, *Buddhist Logic*, I, p. 46).

210. The seven texts or members (*sde bdun*) of logic are the *Pramāṇavārttika*, the *Pramāṇavivēka* and the *Nyāyabindu*, considered as the three chief texts, followed by the two secondary texts: the *Hetubindu*, the *Sambandhaparīkṣā*, the *Santānāntarasiddhi* and the *Vādānyāya*.

211. I have used the dGa' ldan P'un ts'og gliñ edition in 18 + 8 + 12 vols.

212. Notice on him in *bKa' gdams c'os abyūn*, p. 76 a.

213. See his biography in *bKa' gdams c'os abyūn*, p. 82 b.

214. On the works edited in aBras spuñs (Blo gsal gliñ), see KLOÑ RDOL, *bKa' gdams pa dan dge lugs bla ma rag rim gi gsun'bum mts'an l'ob*, complete works, vol. 1a, p. 18 and p. 44.

215. See above, p. 107.

216. SCHUBERT, *Tibetische Nationalgrammatik*, Leipzig, 1937. Cf. also BACOT, *Les slokas grammaticaux de Tsonmi Sambhota*, p. 224. Another school of grammar was that of Pra sti rin c'en Don grub, on which see VOSTRUKOV, *Critical remarks on the bibliography of Tibet*, p. 52, n. 1.

217. The *gSūñ'bum* by Kun dga' bzañ po consists of three large volumes, printed in Ewañ (Nor) monastery.

218. Hence he was born nearly a century earlier than the fifth Dalai Lama, whose contemporary Evans Wentz states him to be (*Tibetan Yoga*, p. 112).

219. The edition in ten large volumes, printed in Bhutan, has now become extremely rare, because the blocks of the woodcuts were destroyed a few years ago by fire.

220. *aGro hai mgon po gtsañ rgya ras pai nram par l'ar pa no mts'ar dad pai rlab ap'reñ*.

221. The *P'yag c'en gyi zin bris* has been translated by EVANS WENTZ, *Tibetan Yoga*, p. 101 ff. The king on whose request the small handbook was written was a king not of Kashmir but of Zans dkar, gZan p'an bzañ po, unknown to Francke's lists: *Antiquities of Western Tibet*, II, p. 161.

222. On Vibhūticandra see DT, *c'a*, p. 20.

223. Recently edited by Doctor CARELLI in *Baroda oriental Series*.

224. The work was edited by DE LA VALLÉE POUSSIN, *Recueil de travaux publiés par la faculté de philosophie et Lettres*, Gand et Louvain, 1896; one chapter was written by Śākyamitra. Nāgārjuna, the author of this treatise, is not the great Mahāyāna philosopher, but the tantric siddha.

225. See below, part three, p. 354.

226. The Lotsāva of sTag ts'an Śes rab rin c'en was born in 1405.

227. See on this list STAEL-HOLSTEIN, *On two Tibetan pictures representing some of the spiritual ancestors of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama*, Bull. National Library, Peiping, 1932. Cf. Part three, p. 538.

228. WADDELL, *The cathedral of Lhasa*, in JRAS, B, 1896; GRÜN-WEDEL, *Die Tempel von Lhasa*, Heidelberg, 1919.

229. The last of the Rin spuñs princes, see genealogical tables.

230. A book on things which have nothing to do, or only indirectly with religion: clothes, silks, tea, metals, stones etc.

231. We shall meet with this personage once again in appendix two.

232. Csoma de Kőrös, JRASB vol. III, 1834, p. 6.

233. Cf. BELL, *The religion of Tibet*, p. 137. See art. Tshang-sdbyans-rgya mtsho in HUMMEL, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, Washington, 1944.

234. In this last periods lived two great polygraphists of Tibet, I mean aJam dbyañs bzad pa Nag dbañ brson agrus who founded the Labrang monastery in Amdo (1648-1742). He wrote upon almost every

branch of learning. Some abstracts of his work on logic were published by TSCHERRBATSKY, *Indian Logic*, vol. II, p. 323 ff.

The other is rTse btsun Blo bzañ c'os kyī nī ma, born in the year fire-serpent of the XIIth cycle 1737 not 1674 as in S. CH. DAS, JRASB, 1881, p. 187, dead 1802. Cf. n. 251.

235. After the printing of this book was over these documents came to light:

236. *bKa' l'an sde lha*, book V, chap. 17. See THOMAS, *Literary Texts*, p. 277 ff.

237. I. e. aP'ags pa Śin kun in the environs of Amdo, near Tsoñ k'a. The Śin kun in Nepal, alluded to by LAUFER, *Loan words*, p. 412, n. 5, is out of the question. Śin kun is: *arsafetida* (see LAUFER, *Sino-Iranica*, p. 362). As regards Śin kun in Nepal, it is a corruption of the name of Svayambhūnāth. For the name cf. *Syemgu* found in some manuscripts, LEVI S., *Le Népal*, II, p. 216.

The name rGya bod lo rgyas deb l'er is not even the title of the book, but rather its equivalent, provisionally adopted by the author of the rGyal rabs; in fact gZon nu dpal, referring to the same work, calls it in his turn rGya yig l'u'ñ. The Chinese title of this book is very probably the one preserved in the same rGyal rabs, in the beginning of the episode concluded with the foresaid quotation, namely: rGyai deb ter c'en mo, *Zu l'u ban c'an* (see LAUFER, *Loan words*, p. 414) whose precise meaning cannot be determined, as it is impossible to reconstruct with certainty the Chinese character corresponding to those sounds. Nevertheless, as the Tibetan aspirate is normally the equivalent of the Chinese labial aspirate, l'u ban probably reproduces the Chinese l'u fan; hence we may be induced to reconstruct the Chinese title as follows: 續吐番傳. Instead of T'ai tsung LAUFER rightly proposes to read Tai tsung.

In this connection, we may remark, as to the use of the word *Deb l'er*, that it is known to be a word of Persian origin (see LAUFER, op. cit., p. 481) but in Tibetan usage it is restricted only to collections of documents, books on history, registers, as for instance *Deb l'er shon*, *Deb l'er dmar po* or a census register, like the one the king of Gyantse caused to be compiled (cf. Kōkō Dabātar of the Mongols, on which see PELLLOT, *T'oung Pao*, vol. XXVII, p. 39).

238. rGyal rabs, p. 26 (B, p. 36); in the same page there is mention of a rGya deb l'er, therefore different from the rGyai deb l'er c'en mo mentioned above.

239. rGyal rabs, p. 26. It was the source of the *T'i'ol pa deb mar*.

240. To the dynastic lists contained in it corresponds the summary of Tibet's historical genealogies in the first and second period of the propagation of Buddhism, included in the *Lam aBras bu dan bcas pai man nag gi byūñ ts'ul gsun'ñag rin po c'e bstan pa rgyas pai nī'od*, p. 8 ff., by Kun dga' bzañ po, which an extremely important account of the spread of the doctrine and of its successive branching off.

241. See above p. 103.

242. Complete works, vol. Ba, p. 361.

243. Thus quoted by the fifth Dalai Lama in his biography of bSod nams mc'og ldan; *bu lan* is Mongol: *ulan*, red.

244. THOMAS, *Literary Texts*, p. 202, notices this fact and accepts the date 1327 proposed by Laufer. We must add that the rGyal rabs had several versions. Unfortunately I do not possess any block-printed edition of this work, but I have two mss., one coming from the monastery of Hemis, mentioned above, and the other found in the library of the Nono of Spiti; the latter, without quoting the name of bSod nams rgyal mts'am, is attributed to Legs śes pa of Yar klun, although it follows very literally the text of the rGyal rabs. As variants are noticeable between these two manuscript versions, very noticeable variants must also exist between the latter and the block-printed editions. To quote an instance, neither of the two passages translated by Thomas and taken from the rGyal rabs he used, is to be found in the manuscripts to which I have access.

245. On the Deb l'er's chronological system and certain incongruities in it, see PETECH, in TUCCI, *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 281.

246. *Kloñ rdol bla ma*, vol. 1a, p. 19 A.

247. The fifth Dalai Lama's chronicle is entitled: *Gaṅs can yul gyi sa la spyod pai nul'o ris kyī rgyal blon gso bor brjod pai deb l'er rdsogs ldan gzon nui dga' ston dpyid kyī rgyal moi glu dbyāns*. It is included in vol. 4a of the complete works, published in Lhasa, and comprises 113 sheets. It was written in the year c'u lug, 1643.

248. Year: wood-ape; S. CH. DAS, *Life of Sum pa mk'am po*, in JRAS of Bengal, 1889, erroneously says 1702.

249. On Kloñ rdol bla ma see YU TAO-CH'UAN in "Bulletin of the National Library...", Peiping, vol. IV, n. 5, p. 19.

250. And not 1818 as Huth says. The article of G. Roerich has not yet appeared.

251. The *Grub mt'o' t'ams cad kyi k'uñs ts'ul dan g'dod ts'ul ston pa legs b'jad žel gyi me lon* by T'u kwan (十; 順) Blo bzän c'os kyi ni ma is to be mentioned (Chapt. on Buddh. in China edited in *Studia Serica*, Series B, N. 1, by Lü Ch'eng, Chengtu, 1942. Cfr. n. 235. The: *Gais can yul gyi sa la spyad pai mt'o' ris kyi rgyal blon g'tso bor brjad pai deb t'er* said to be by N'ag dbän dge legs and partly translated into Chinese by Ltu Li-ch'ien, *Tibetan history after Ländarma*, The West China Frontier Institute is nothing else but the Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama.

252. Life of Tson k'a pa, p. 5. The main argument on which they dwell is threefold: T'o's bsam b'gom study of the doctrines, reflection so that they may result clear to our spirit, and meditations.

253. Life of Blo bzän c'os kyi rgyal mts'an, vol. Ta, p. 4 b.

254. Thus in the colophon, but on p. 133 a: bSam yas ka ts'igs c'en mo. In the *rnam t'ar* of Rva lotsäva, p. 3, mia' b'dag k'ri sroñ ldeu btsan gyi žal c'ems bSam yas ka btsigs c'en mo.

255. Cfr. LAUFFER, *Die Bräuä Sprache*, p. 39 (reprint).

256. Born in the mouse year (biogr. p. 9); died at the age of 70 in the year of the horse. In the *Reu mig* the dates are respectively 1188, 1258. We must correct 1189, reading in the manuscript byi instead of kyi and 1258 (earth horse).

257. *Travels of Buddhist Pilgrims in the Swat Valley*. Calcutta, 1940.

258. *Ibid.*, p. 9 ff.

259. Viz. Shang tu. See *Ža lu* documents.

260. The invitation to Tson k'a pa to go to China. See note 113 on Part three.

261. Kloñ rdol bla ma quotes, among many biographies of Tson k'a pa, studied by novices, those by aJam dpal rgya mts'o, by Kun dga' bde legs dpal bzän po of gNas rñin, of the Pan c'en Blo gros legs bzän, of the mNa' ris žabs druñ b'Stan pai rgyal mts'an, by aC'i med rab rgyas of Ne rin, by tJe druñ Nag c'os. See bKa' gdams pa dan dge legs bla ma rag rim gyi guñ abum mts'an t'o.

262. T'ams cad mk'yen pad ma dkar poi rnam t'ar t'ugs tje c'en poi zlos gar gyi ap'ros brjad pa sgyu ma c'en poi dor.

263. See above p. 80.

264. The guide book of gNas gsar may be added here: *Myan ro rtsis gnas gzar lba k'an gi gnas b'jad t'os grol no mts'ar rmas abyun*.

265. See *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 71. Cfr. dPal ža lu gzer k'añ gi gnas yig dad b'kor ts'ad p'an yon bcas, p. 9: Sar rgya yul nas bzo bo mk'as pa abod de rgya p'ugs gyu c'u, etc.

266. And not in 1211 as in S. CH. DAS, p. 51. The date c'u spreu is given in Sakya's biography, p. 49.

267. Cfr. *Pag lo sde yul nan nas rgyan du b'ženis dan nams gso mdsad pai dkar t'og bzani mig rgyan* by Ye šes c'os a pel dpal bzän po, complete works, vol. Tii, p. 4.

268. On the *Leu b'dun ma*, see below p. 374 and p. 604.

269. The inscription contains nothing but a summary dkar c'og of the tantric cycles represented on the walls of the sKu abum, giving the source of each one. In the end the merits are enumerated that pilgrims obtain from a pious visit to the monument. The only important information contained in the inscription is that the paintings were executed according to Bu ston's explanations: *dus gsum sans rgyas t'ams cad kyi mk'yen brtse priñ las bcig tu (bsdus) pai dnos mk'as grub Bu ston rin po c'e b'jad b'žin du*.

270. S. CH. DAS, Life of Sam pa khan po, p. 61. According to Taranātha's pamphlet which we have quoted, the valley where this monument was built has a long history in the tradition of Tibetan asceticism; in its welcoming solitude, the following siddhas spent a large part of their life in meditation: Ma geig sans rgyas dpal ldan, Grub tob adar p'yar, Rin c'en bzän po, Kun spañs t'ugs tje brtson agrul (Kun spañs c'en po kun tu bzän po), Yon tan rgya mts'o, Šes rab gyi mts'an dpal bzän po, the founder of the sku abum; the Lotsäva Blo gros dpal bzän po p'yoags las rnam rgyal, Byañ c'ub señ ge, Na dpon c'en po Kun dga' dpal, etc.

271. *Jo nan gnas b'jad*, p. 4.

272. See, for instance, Taranātha's autobiography (p. 159); with the intervention of Byañ sde srid, p. 203.

273. On the Putra Min stñi cycle see *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. IV, part I, p. 129 ff.

274. On Dhānyakaṭaka see note 293 to Part three.

275. The second part of the book shows in the names and the attributes of many demons a contamination with Bonpo ideas.

276. Without entering into further details, since, as regards many Tantras, the Tibetan masters held different views, it is useful, I think, to give a summary of the Tantric literature, as it has been classified by Bu ston. *rCyud sde spyii rnam par b'žag rgyud sde rin po c'ei mdses rgyan*. Complete works, vol. Ba. The numbers refer to the Tōhoku Cat.

## I. BYA RGYUD

FIRST GROUP - *De b'žin g'ęgs rigs*. Eight divisions: 1) *rigs g'tso bo*; 2) *rigs b'dag po*; 3) *rigs yum*; 4) *g'tsus tor*; 5) *rigs k'ro bo*; 6) *rigs p'o na*, p'o na mo; 7) *byañ c'ub sems dpa'*; 8) *gnas g'tsan lba*.

First division - *rigs g'tso bo*: dam ts'ig gsum bkod pai rgyal poi rgyud, n. 502; Nor bu rgyas pai g'žal med k'añ in tu rab tu gnas pai rtogs pai rgyal po, n. 506; De b'žin g'ęgs pa t'ams cad kyi byin rlabš kyi stñin po g'san rin brtel gyi za ma tog, n. 507; Byañ c'ub stñin poi rgyan abum gyi g'zuns, n. 509; 'Od zer dri ma med pa rnam par dag pai 'od, n. 510; rTen cin brel bar abyun pai stñin poi g'zuns c'o ga dan bcas pa, n. 519; rTen cin brel bar abyun bai mdo, n. 520; rTen cin abrel bar abyun ba stñin po, n. 521; rGo mt'o' yas pa sgrub pai g'zuns, n. 525; Sans rgyas kyi mts'an brgya rta brgyad pa g'zuns snags dan bcas pa, n. 532; Sans rgyas bcu gñis pai g'zuns, n. 511; Sans rgyas kyi stñin poi g'zuns, n. 515; Sans rgyas kyi stñin po, n. 514; Me tog brtsegs pai g'zuns, n. 516; Sai dbyañ poi g'zuns, n. 523; Tsan dan gyi yan lag ces bya bai g'zuns, n. 518; gDon mi za bai g'zuns, n. 524; rNan par snañ mdsad kyi stñin po, n. 534; Sans rgyas bdun pai g'zuns, n. 512; Sans rgyas t'ams cad kyi yan lag dan ldan pai g'zuns, n. 513; Dri ma med pai g'zuns, n. 517; gZuns c'en po, n. 529; rGron ma mc'og gi g'zuns, n. 528; C'os t'ams cad kyi yon tan bkod pai rgyal po, n. 527; De b'žin g'ęgs pa bdun gyi snon gyi smon lam gyi k'yad par rgyas pai mdo, n. 503; sMan blai mdo c'ñ nu, n. 504; aJigs pa c'en po brgyad las sgral bai g'zuns, n. 541; sGo drug pai g'zuns, n. 526; Šes rab kyi p'a rol tu p'yin pa yi ge inu nu, n. 530; Šes rab stñin po, n. 531; Ye šes ta la la g'zuns, n. 522; mC'od pai sprin gyi g'zuns, n. 538; Pad mai spyan gyi g'zuns, n. 539; Nan son t'ams cad yons su sbyon bai g'zuns; Su rü pai g'zuns, n. 540; K'yad par can kyi g'zuns, n. 542; gSer 'od dam pa mc'og tu rnam par rgyal poi mdo, n. 552; gSer 'od dam pa mdo sdeñ dhan po rgyal po, n. 556; gSer 'od dam pa mdo sde dhan poi rgyal po, n. 557.

Second division - *rigs b'dag po*: aJam dpal gyi rtsa bai rtog, n. 543; gTsuq tor abar bai g'zuns, n. 600; dPa' bo geig tu grub pai rgyud, n. 544.

Third division - *rigs yum*: Rig snags kyi rgyal mo ston c'en mo rab tu gjomš pa, n. 558; Rigš snags kyi rgyal mo rma lya c'en mo, n. 559; Rigš pai rgyal mo so sor abran ma c'en moi g'zuns, n. 560; bS'il mai t'al c'en mo, n. 562; gSan snags c'en mo rjes su adin pa, n. 563; Rig snags kyi rgyal mo rgyal ba can gyi g'zuns, n. 567; aP'ęgs ma 'od zer can gyi g'zuns, n. 564; Dug sel mai g'zuns, n. 571; bKlags par grub pa sor mo can žer bya bai rigs pai rgyal mo, n. 572; C'os t'ams cad kyi yum, n. 570; gTsuq gi nor bui g'zuns, n. 573; Yi ge drug pai rig snags kyi rgyal mo; Šes rab kyi p'a rol tu p'yin pa ston p'rag brgya pa, ston p'rag ni lu lña pa brgyad ston pa g'zuns; p'ar p'yin drug pai stñin po; p'a rol tu p'yin pa drug g'zuns par agyur pai g'zuns; p'a rol tu p'yin pa bcu t'ob par agyur pai g'zuns; t'ad med b'žei t'ob par agyur ba; Šer p'yin ston p'rag brgya pa g'zun bar agyur ba g'zuns; p'al po c'e g'zun bar agyur pa; snon po bkod pai stñin po; Tiiñ tse adin rgyal po g'zuns par agyur ba; so sor abran ma c'en mo g'zun bar agyur pa; Lan kar g'ęgs pai mdo t'ams cad bklag par agyur bai g'zuns, nn. 576-589.

Fourth division - *gTsuq tor*: gTsuq tor gdugs dkar po can g'žan gyis mi t'ub p'yir bzlog pa c'en mo, n. 590; gTsuq tor gdugs dkar mc'og tu grub pai g'zuns, n. 591; gTsuq dkar po can g'žan gyis mi t'ub pa, n. 592; De b'žin g'ęgs t'ams cad kyi gTsuq tor rnam par rgyal ba, n. 594; gTsuq tor nad byin bai gdugs dkar po can g'žan gyis mi t'ub pa, n. 593; Nan agro t'ams cad yons su sbyon bai g'zuns tor rnam rgyal, n. 597; gTsuq tor rnam par rgyal bai g'zuns rtog pa dan bcas c'ei b'dag gi dbyug pa adin pa, n. 595; gTsuq tor rnam pa rgyal bai g'zuns rtog dan bcas pa c'un ba, n. 597; Kun nas sgor ajug pai 'od zer gTsuq tor dri med par sna ba de b'žin g'ęgs pa t'ams cad kyi stñin po dan dam ts'ig la rnam par lta ba, n. 599; Šer pa t'ams cad mt'ar p'yin par grub pai mc'od rten, n. 601; sNin tje mc'og gi g'zuns, n. 603; mC'od rten geig btob na bye ba btob par agyur bai snags c'o ga, n. 602.

Fifth division - *rigs k'ro bo*: K'ro bo rnam par rgyal bai rtog pa g'san ba, n. 604; rDo tje ajigs byed g'zuns, n. 605; Be con c'en poi g'zuns, n. 606; gZau gyis t'ub pa rin po c'ei p'reñ ba, n. 607; Bar du g'od pa t'ams cad rnam par sbyon ba, n. 608; sGro lñin bai rigs snags, n. 610; sKul byed mai g'zuns, n. 613.

Sixth division - *rigs p'o na*, p'o na mo: sgo bzän poi g'zuns, n. 614; Bu man po rton pai g'zuns, n. 609; ro lams bdun pai g'zuns, n. 616; mT's'au mo bzän poi mdo, n. 617; mDuns p'yir ap'rog pai mdo, n. 618; aP'ęgs pa mig rnam par sbyon bai g'zuns, n. 619; Mig nad rab tu ži bar byed pai

m̄do, n. 620; gŽan abrum rab tu ži bar byed pai m̄do, n. 621; Nad l'ams cad rab tu ži bar byed pai gzuinis, n. 622; Rims nad rab tu ži ba gzuinis, n. 624; Rims nad rab tu ži bar byed pa, rims nad ži ba, abrum hui nad ži ba gzuinis, nn. 625-627; Yōns pai grōn k'yer du ajug pai m̄do, n. 628; Mi rgod rnam par ajoms pai gzuinis, n. 629; Bar du gcod pa l'ams cad sel bai gzuinis, n. 630; aPags pa mi gyo bai gzuinis, n. 631; rDo tje k'ro bo rgyal poi rto gpa ba bidus pai rgyud, n. 632; gSer can žes bya bai rig rgyal moi snags kyi rgyal mo, n. 633.

Seventh division - byān c'ub sems dpa': Byams pai mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa gzuinis snags dan bcas pa, n. 634; sPyan ras gzijs kyi mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa gzuinis snags dan bcas pa, n. 634; Nam m'ko ai sniin poi mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa gzuinis snags dan bcas pa, n. 636; Kun tu bzān poi mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa gzuinis snags dan bcas pa, n. 637; Lag na rdo rjei mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa gzuinis snags dan bcas, n. 638; aJam dpal gžon nur gyur pai mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa, n. 639; sGrib pa rnam sel bai mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa, n. 640; Sai sniin poi mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad, n. 641; aJam dpal mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad, n. 642; Byams pos dam bcas pai gzuinis, n. 643; rGyal ba bla mai gzuinis, n. 652; dKyiil ak'or brgyad pai gzuinis, n. 644; bDud rtsi abyun bai gzuinis, n. 645; Yi dvaqs k'a nas me abar ba la skyabs mdsad gzuinis, n. 646; Yi dvaqs mo k'a abar ma dhuqs abyun bai gtor mai c'o ga, n. 647; Ye žes skar mai sniin po, n. 649; Ses rab bkkyed pai gzuinis, n. 650.

Eighth division - gnas gstan lba: mDo c'en mo adus pa c'en poi m̄do, n. 653; C'os kyi rgyal poi m̄do, n. 654; bCgeš sel bai gzuinis, n. 655; Kun tu rgyu ba dan kun tu rgyu ba ma jin pa dan m'um pai m̄do, n. 656; iPrin c'en poi m̄do, n. 657; sPrin c'en poi rluṅ gi dkyil ak'or gyi leu klu t'ams cad kyi sniin po, n. 658; Klui rgyal po gzi can gyis žus pai gzuinis, n. 659; T'ogs kyi bdaq poi rgyud, n. 665; gZa' rnam kyi yum, n. 660; Nor gyi rgyun gyi gzuinis, n. 662; Nor rgyun mai rtoq, n. 663; Nag po c'en poi rgyud, n. 667; mGon po nag poi gzuinis, n. 668; Nag po c'en poi gzuinis rims nad las t'ar par byed pa, n. 669; Lba mo nag moi mts'an brgyad rtsa brgyad pa, n. 672; Lba mo nag moi gzuinis, n. 670; Lba mo nag moi lba bstod pai rgyud, n. 671.

SECOND GROUP - Pad ma rigs. Five divisions: 1) rigs kyi gto bo; 2) rigs kyi bdaq po; 3) rigs kyi yum; 4) rigs kyi k'ro bo, k'ro mo; 5) rigs kyi bka' gnan p'o mo.

First division - rigs kyi gto bo: T'se dan ye žes dpag tu med pa, n. 675; T'se dan ye žes dpag tu med pai sniin po, n. 676; sNan ba m't' yas kyi gzuinis, sNan ba m't' yas rjes su dran bai gzuinis, snags, Yōn tan gzijs pa dpag tu med pai gzuinis, nn. 677-679.

Second division - rigs kyi bdaq po: sPyan ras gzijs dbañ p'yug gi rtsa rgyud pad mai dra ba, n. 681; Don žags kyi c'o žib mo, n. 682; Don yod žag pai sniin po, n. 683; P'ar p'jin druṅ gi gzuinis, sa bcui gzuinis, nn. 687-688; sPyan ras gzijs t'ogs pa mi mna' bai t'ugs rje c'en po rgya c'er yōns su rdsogs pai gzuinis, n. 691; sPyan ... dbañ p'yug gi gan bai mdsad t'ogs med pai yid bžin gyi ak'or loi sniin po, n. 692; sPyan ras ... žal bcu gzig pai gzuinis, n. 693; Kun tu bzān poi gzuinis, n. 699; sPyan ras gzijs kyi gzuinis, n. 695; sPyan ras gzijs kyi sniin po gnīs ni la kañ tbañ gzuinis, n. 697; sNin rje mi bžol bai gzuinis, n. 698; Pad ma cod pan gyi rgyud, n. 701; aJig sten dbañ p'yug gi rtoq, n. 700; Sen ge sgra rgyud c'un, n. 702; Sen ge sgrai dam bcas pai gzuinis, n. 704; sPyan ras ... mts'am brgya rtsa brgyad pa rgyal ba t'ams cad kyi rin strel rin po c'ei za ma t'og, n. 705; Lus kyi dbyiys mdses pa žes bya bai gzuinis, n. 707; gŽan gyis mi t'ub pa mi ajigs pai sbyin pa žes bya bai gzuinis, n. 708; sToñ agyur gyi gzuinis, n. 710; De bžin gžegs l'ams cad sbyin gyis rlabš sems can la gzijs žin sañs rgyas žin gi bkoḍ pa kun tu ston pa, n. 721; sPyan ... p'yug lag pa ston dai mig ston dan ldan pai c'o ga žib mo.

Third division - rigs kyi yum: De bžin gžegs l'ams cad kyi yum sgröl las sna t'sogs abyun ba, n. 726; sGrol mai mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad, n. 727; sGrol moi m'c'og žes bya bai lba moi mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad, n. 728; sGrol ma dam bcas pai gzuinis, n. 730; aJigs pa c'en po brgyad las sgröl bai gzuinis, n. 731; Grags ldan mai gzuinis, n. 732.

Fourth division - rigs kyi k'ro bo: rTa mgrin gyi rgyud c'en po dpal sdom pa, n. 733; P'yir zlog rnam par rgyal ba can, n. 734; Par na ža ba rii mdo, n. 735; Ri k'rod lo ma gyon pa žes bya bai gzuinis, n. 736.

Fifth division - rigs kyi bka' gnan p'o mo: P'yir bzlog pa stobs can, n. 737; Lba mo dpal luh bstan pai gzuinis, n. 739; dPal c'en mo mdo, n. 740; dPal c'en moi mts'an bcu gnīs, n. 741; mC'og l'ob pai rig snags, n. 742; Lba mo sgra dbyans la bstod pa snags dan bcas, n. 738.

THIRD GROUP - rdo rje rigs. Five divisions: 1) rigs gto bo; 2) rigs bdaq po; 3) rigs kyi yum; 4) rigs kyi k'ro bo, k'ro mo; 5) rigs kyi p'o na dan bka' nian p'o mo.

First division - rigs gto bo: Las kyi sgrib pa l'ams cad sbyon ba, n. 743.

Second division - rigs bdaq po: Rig pa m'c'og gi rgyud, n. 746 (according to Tathagāratarkata is a spyod rgyud); rDo tje sa 'og rgyud, n. 744; Lag na rdo rjei gzuinis c'o ga dan bcas, n. 748; Lag na rdo rjei mts'an brgyad pa, n. 749; rDo tje rnam par ajoms pa, n. 750; rDo tje ri rab c'en poi rtsē moi

k'añ pa brtsęgs pai gzuinis, n. 751; rDo tje p'ra mo l'ogs pa med pai gzuinis n. 753; Lag na rdo rje mi lam m'oiñ bai gzuinis.

Third division - rigs kyi yum: rDo tje mi ap'am pa me ltar rab tu rmoñs byed gzuinis, n. 752.

Fourth division - rigs kyi k'ro bo, k'ro mo: bDud rtsi'ob t'ib sbyor gyi sniin po bži pa, n. 755; Rig gzijs kyi rgyal mo c'en mo rgyal ba can, n. 567.

Fifth division - rigs bka' gnan: sTobs po c'ei gzuinis, n. 757; K'ro boi rgyal po rme ba rtsęgs pa la bstod pa snags dan bcas, n. 756; rDo tje lu gu rgyud kyi rtoq, n. 758; rDo tje m'cu žes bya ba klui dam t'sig, n. 759; rDo tje gum laqs m'ui gzuinis, n. 760; lCags m'ui gzuinis, n. 761; lCags m'cu nag pa, n. 763.

FOURTH GROUP - nor bu: Nor bu bzān poi gzuinis, n. 764; Nor bu bzān poi rtoq pa, n. 765; gNod adsin dpal gyi gzuinis, n. 768; gNod adsin c'ub dbañ sniin rje can gyi gzuinis, n. 769; gNod gnas kyi dbañ po ji ltar abyun bai rtoq, n. 770; gNod adsin gyi mdsad mts'an brgya rtsa brgyad pa, n. 771.

FIFTH GROUP - lhas rtsen: Me k'a lai gzuinis, n. 772.

SIXTH GROUP - aJig rten pai rigs: Rig snags kyi rgyal mo dhuqs c'en po, n. 773.

Tantras of the Bya class of a general character; dPuñ bzān gyis žus pai rgyud, n. 805; dKyiil ak'or l'ams cad kyi spyi c'o ga gan bai rgyud, n. 806; Legs pai grub pai rgyud, n. 807; bSam gnam gyi p'yi mai rim par bya ba, n. 808.

## II. SPYOD RGYUD

FIRST GROUP - de bžin gžegs: rNam par snān mdsad c'en po mion par rdsogs par byān c'ub pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pai rgyud, n. 494; De bžin gžegs l'ams cad kyi k'ro boi rgyal po mi gyo ba dēi stobs dpag tu med pa rtul p'od pa adal bar gsuñs žes bya bai rtoq pa, n. 495.

SECOND GROUP - pad rigs, unknown.

THIRD GROUP - rdo rje rigs: P'yag na rdo rje dbañ bskur pai rgyud, n. 496; P'yag na rdo rjei gos snon po can gyi rgyud rdo rje sa 'og, n. 498; rDo rje sa 'og gi rgyud leu dāun pa, n. 744; Sa gum du rgyu bai rtoq, n. 500; Lag na rdo rje gos snon po can, n. 501; Lba mo brgyad kyi gzuinis, n. 497.

## III. RNAL ABYOR RGYUD

FIRST GROUP - rTsa rgyud: De nid bsdus, n. 479.

SECOND GROUP - bSād rgyud: rDo tje rtsē ma, n. 480.

THIRD GROUP - c'a m'um rgyud: rDo tje sniin po rgyan gyi rgyud, n. 490; gSan ba nor bui t'ig lei rgyud, n. 493; De bžin gžegs l'ams cad kyi gan ba rgyan gyi bkoḍ pa, n. 492; Nan son l'ams cad yōns su sbyon ba gzi brijd kyi rgyal poi rtoq pa, n. 483 (and 485); Šes rab kyi p'a rol tu p'jin poi sgo ni ū rtsa lina pa, n. 491; Rab tu gnas pa ndor bsdus pai rgyud, n. 486.

## IV. BLA NA MED

The Bla na med are divided into three classes: 1) t'abs rgyud (upāyat); 2) Šes rab rgyud (prajñā); 3) gnīs su med (aduaya).

### T'ABS RGYUD

The T'abs rgyud are divided into six groups each corresponding to a rigs, kula, or mystic family: 1) Mī bkkyod pa; 2) rNam par snān mdsad; 3) Rin c'en abyun ldan; 4) 'Od dpag med; 5) Don grub; 6) rDo tje ac'añ.

First division - rtsa rgyud: gSan adus, n. 442.

Second division - b'ād rgyud: A) rDo tje ap'ren ba, n. 445; Lba mo bžin žus pai rgyud, n. 446; Ye žes rdo rje kun las btus, n. 447; aPags pa gnīs su med pa miam pa nid rnam par rgyal ba rtoq pai rgyal po, n. 452; dPal rdo tje sniin po rgyan gyi rgyud, n. 457; gSan ba rgyud kyi rnam par byed pa drag gum adul, n. 455; aPags pa p'yag na rdo rje gos snon po can gyi c'o ga rdo tje be con rgyud, n. 456; P'yag na rdo rje gos snon be con rdo tje gden pa rgyud, n. 457; rDo tje gum po gan bai rgyud, n. 458; dPal rdo tje gum po t'ugs gan bai rgyud, n. 459; dPal rdo tje gum po t'ugs gan bai rgyud p'yi moi p'yi ma, n. 460; P'yag na rdo rje me lci rgyud, n. 461; rDo tje sniin po me lce abar pai rgyud, n. 462; P'yag na rdo rje gan ba mion par bstan pai rgyud, n. 464; P'yag na rdo rje gan bstan pai rgyud, n. 463; rDo tje bde k'ros rgyud kyi rgyal po, n. 465; B) cycle of rDo tje rigs kyi sems dpa' p'yag rdoz sgyu p'ul dra ba, n. 466; aJam dpal gyi don dam pai mts'an yan dag par brijd pa; rNam par snān mdsad sgyu ap'rul dra bai rgyud, n. 466.

SECOND GROUP - rNam par snān mdsad: De bžin gžegs l'ams cad kyi sku gsuñ t'ugs kyi gñin rje gñed nag poi rgyud, n. 467; dPal rdo tje ajigs byed rgyud, n. 468; rTog pa gum pai rgyud, n. 469; gŠin rjei dgra nag poi k'or

lo las t'ams cad grub par byed pa zes bya bai rgyud kyi rgyal po, n. 473; dPal gñin rje gñid dmar po zes bya bai rgyud kyi rgyal po, n. 474.

THIRD GROUP / Rin c'en abyün ldan. No tantra of this group preserved.

FOURTH GROUP / 'Od dpag med bcom ldan adas ral pa gcig pai brtag pa rgyud gyi rgyal po, n. 476.

FIFTH GROUP / Don grub. No tantra preserved.

SIXTH GROUP / rDo rje ac'an: Zla gšan t'ig lei gšan bai rgyal po c'en po šin tu dgyes pa rdo rje gdon mi za dai dam ts'ig gi dkyil ak'or c'en po rgyas pa mc'og tu gšan bai rgyud, n. 477.

### YE ŠES RGYUD

These are divided into seven groups according as they: A) teach adequately to the six families mentioned above; B) are connected with Heruka; or C) with rNam snañ; D) with rDo rje ñi ma; E) with Padma gar dban; F) with rTa mc'og grub pa; G) with rDo rje ac'an.

A) Tantras teaching adequately to the six families: dPal sañs rgyas t'ams cad dān mñam par sbyor ba mk'a' agro ma rgyu ma bde bai mc'og, n. 366.

B) Tantras connected with HERUKA. Five subdivisions: 1) bDe mc'og; 2) Kye rdo rje; 3) Sañs rgyas t'od pa; 4) sGyu ap'ru' c'en mo; 5) A ra li.

1) bDE MC'OG. Two kinds of Tantras are distinguished: rtsa rgyud and bñad rgyud:

a) rtsa rgyud: dPal bde mc'og abyün ba, n. 373;

β) bñad rgyud. First three subdivisions: extraordinary (t'un moñ ma yin), ordinary (t'un moñ bai bñad), rgyud about which there is discussion whether they are pure or not.

Extraordinary: dPal rdo rje mk'a' agro žes bya bai rgyud c'en po, n. 370; dPal be ru ka mion par abyün ba rnal byor mai rgyud kyi rgyal poi c'en po, n. 375; rNal abyor mai kun tu spyod pai rgyud, n. 375; bDe mc'og sdom pa abyün ba, n. 373; rNal byor ma bñi k'a sbyor gyi rgyud, n. 376.

Ordinary: dPal yan dag sbyor bai t'ig le, n. 382.

bŠad rgyud about which there is discussion whether they are pure or not:

a) T'ugs rgyud (connected with the spiritual plane): gŠan ba dar rje rgyud, n. 383; gŠan ba gcod pai rgyud, n. 384; gŠan ba bsam gyis mi k'yab pai rgyud kyi rgyal po, n. 385; Nam mk'a' dān mñam pai rgyud, n. 386; Nam mk'a' c'en pa rgyud, n. 387; sKu gsus t'ugs rgyud, n. 388; Rin c'en p'ren bai rgyud, n. 389; Dam ts'ig c'en poi rgyud, n. 390;

b) gŠun rgyud (connected with the verbal plane): sTobs po c'ei rgyud, n. 391; Ye žes gšan bai rgyud, n. 392; dPal ye žes p'ren bai rgyud, n. 393; Ye žes abar bai rgyud, n. 394; Zla ba p'ren bai rgyud, n. 395; Rin c'en dābar bai rgyud, n. 396; Ņi mai ak'or loi rgyud, n. 397; Ye žes rgyal poi rgyu c, n. 398;

c) sKu rgyud (connected with the physical plane): mk'a' agro ma gšan bai rgyud, n. 399; gŠan bai me abar bai rgyud, n. 400; gŠan ba bñud rtsii rgyud, n. 401; Dur k'rod rgyan, n. 402; rDo rje rgyal po c'en po rgyud, n. 403; Ye žes bsam pai rgyud, n. 404; dPal c'ags pai rgyud, n. 405; mk'a' agro mai sdom pai rgyud, n. 406;

d) aP'ros pai rgyud (emanated): Mi p'ren rgyud, n. 407; rDo rje mk'a' agro gšan bai rgyud, n. 408; rDo rje ajigs byed nam par ajoms, n. 409; sTobs c'en ye žes rgyal po, n. 410; dPal rdo rje grub pa dra ba, n. 411; De bžin gregs t'ams cad t'ugs kyi šniin po don gyi rgyud, n. 412; Dur k'rod kyi rgyan rmad du byun ba, nn. 412, 413; rNag pa med pai rgyud, n. 414; bDe mc'og nam mk'a' dān mñam pai rgyud, n. 415.

Fourth division: dPal rdo rje nag po c'en po k'ros pai mgon po gšan ba dnos grub abyün ba, n. 416.

2) KYE RDO RJE. Seven divisions: a) rtsa; b) bñidus; c) rgyud p'yi ma; d) p'yi mai p'yi ma; e) bñad; f) šniin po; g) abras bu.

a) rtsa: dpol dgyes pa rdo rjei rgyud, n. 417;

b) bñidus: Kye rdo rje mk'a' agro ma dra bai sdom pai rgyud, n. 418; mk'a' agro ma rdo rje gur, n. 419;

c) p'yi ma: dPal p'yag rgya c'en poi t'ig le, n. 420;

d) p'yi ma p'yi ma: dPal ye žes šniin po, n. 421;

e) bñad: dPal ye žes t'ig lei rnal abyor mai rgyud, n. 422;

f) šniin po: Grub pa nes par bstan pai t'ig le, deest;

g) abras bu: dPal de k'a na űid kyi sgron ma, n. 423.

3) Sañs rgyas t'od pa zes bya bai rnal abyor mai rgyud, n. 424.

4) sGyu p'ru' c'en po, n. 425.

5) Ri gi a ra lii rgyud, n. 427; rDo rje a ra li, n. 426.

C) Tantras connected with rNam par snañ mñad: dPal gđan bži pa, n. 428; gĐan bžiñ bñad rgyud shags kyi c'ai rgyud kyi rgyal po, n. 429; rNal abyor ma t'ams cad gšan rgyud; dPal gtum po k'ro bo c'en poi rgyud, n. 431; Mi gyo ba gšan bai rgyud c'en po, n. 434; K'ro bai rgyal po t'ams cad gšan shags gšan bai rgyud, n. 433.

D) Tantras connected with rDo rje ñi ma: rDo rje bñud rtsi űiñ nui rgyud, n. 435.

E) Tantras connected with Pad ma gar: Riggs kyi ajig rten mgon po lna bcu pa, n. 436; sGrol ma ku ru kullei rtag pa, n. 437.

F) Tantras connected with rTa mc'og: P'yag ts'al űi žu rtsa geig bstod pa p'an yon dān bcas pa, n. 438; rDo rje p'ur pai rgyud, n. 439; Nag po c'en po zes bya ba rgyud, n. 440.

G) Tantras connected with rDo rje ac'an: Ji bžin mñes nam mk'a' dān mñam pai rgyud, n. 441.

### GÑIS SU MED RGYUD

Dur kyi ak'or loi rgyud, n. 361; Dus kyi ak'or loi rgyud p'yi ma rgyud kyi šniin po, n. 363; dBan rob byed, n. 365.

277. TUCCI, *Animadversione Indicar*, IRASB, NS, XXVI, 1930, P 132.

278. Vajrayāna symbolism is therefore connected with the ancient androgynous conception of the first principle; Vajradhra or Vajrasattve is *prajñā* and *upāya*, blood and semen newly united in the synthesis of the primeval being; in the same way the Puruṣa is often imagined to contain within himself *virāj* (see FALK M., *Il mito psicologico dell'India antica*, pp. 324, 328 ff. So also Śiva is *arḍhanarīvara*, half man and half female.

279. This spatial symbolism and meaning of statues, appearing to the initiated as signs of the expansion of supreme awareness, is clearly stated by the Śaivasiddhānta, for instance the *Pratyabhijñā* says: "He (Śhiva) through a variety of images assumes the aspect of spatial progression... Abhinavagupta, in the *Tantrasāra*, p. 138, makes this comment: "divine freedom (*paramaśvarasvātantrya*) inasmuch as it appears under the form of an image, makes the category of space manifest; consciousness is the centre; we have high when consciousness takes possession of what appears as distinct and different; what remains outside this taking possession is low; the East is what tends towards consciousness, the West is its contrary; the South, immediately after the manifestation of this tendency towards consciousness, is the ascent towards the conscious current, concurring with it; the North is this tendency inasmuch as it is reflected; these last four are the points of space, in the centre is God, above the face of Isāna, below the infernal face (*paśāla*); the four faces to the East etc. are those of Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Sadyo (jāta), Vāma (deva)... That is, excluding the infernal aspect, his manifestation as self-negation, *Pāncavaktra-Śiva*.

On Śhiva's five aspects see MEINHARD, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Sivaismus nach den Purāṇa's*, in *Büssler Archiv*, XII, 1928.

280. The list of the contraries meant to suppress wrong ideation is frequently met in dogmatical works. See f. i. *Prajñāparamitāpīṇḍartha* edited by me in the *JRAS*, 1947, p. 61.



PART TWO

EVOLUTION AND CHARACTERS  
OF TIBETAN TANKAS



# EVOLUTION AND CHARACTERS OF TIBETAN TANKAS

## I. CHARACTER AND FORM OF THE TANKAS

**T**ibetan paintings on canvas are generally known in Europe by the name of "banners"; so they are often called in English, following the usage of travellers who, having seen them hung on the walls and sometimes carried in processions on the occasion of religious festivals, have taken them for flags. This name, which has passed into other languages, bears no relation to the Tibetan name, which is tanka (*t'añ ka*, or *t'añ sku* or *sku t'añ*). The word means: something rolled up, *volumen*.<sup>1</sup> This is the name, most common today, which has replaced another name, *ras*, literally: cotton; *ras bris*, "design on cotton", *ras ri mo*, "design on cotton", corresponding, in translations of Tantric works, to the Sanskrit *paṭa*. Hence, while *ras bris* stresses the material on which the picture is painted, *t'añ ka* emphasizes its formal aspect, a rolled up image. When tankas are put away, or taken on a journey, they are in fact regularly rolled up, always beginning from the bottom. To roll up a tanka from the top is an irreverent act, a sort of sacrilege.

A tanka is nearly always rectangular, according to directions codified in one of the most authoritative books of the Tantric schools, one of the most widely studied in the Land of Snows, I mean the MMT. This text lays down that the material of the tanka must be rectangular, measuring four cubits by eight or two by five, or one *vitasti*<sup>2</sup> by a cubit and an inch, according as the *paṭa* is of the first, second or third class. These rules apply only to the *paṭa*, i. e. the paintings used,

as the book suggests, for a magic purpose, to acquire spiritual merit or to evoke certain deities; but these rules are not followed in the case of *maṇḍalas*, symbolic representations of the universe traced on the ground with coloured powder, of which we shall treat later. *Maṇḍalas* are square, and according to their rank, high, middle or lower, they must measure sixteen, twelve or eight cubits square (*ibid.*, chap. II, p. 37). But tankas do not observe these rules very strictly; while the most recent are, as I said, decidedly rectangular, the oldest, whether they come from Guge or Central Tibet, whether they are made up by Tibetan artists or imported from India, tend to a square form, that is, the difference between length and breadth is much smaller than in modern tankas. There is also another difference between old and recent specimens. At present, tankas are framed on every side by woven material which completely encloses them, while in the ancient tankas the border is found only on the lower edge and, a little narrower, on the upper edge; the two sides are free. In this case too we have something between the modern usage and the rules of the MMK; the latter only mentions a selvage, left by the weaver of the *paṭa* on the lower edge, without alluding to any frame. No frame is found in the ancient *paṭas* of Western Tibet (Guge) and in tankas of this school, always painted after the Indian manner; the material here used is cotton, never silk. The rod on which the lower edge of the cloth is pasted, is made out of a bamboo cane, whose ends are often wrought in the form of a flower. The rod is in some cases painted in red and gold, not infrequently ornamented in relief, by applying putty,

with floral patterns. Then gradually the painted surface, called "me loñ", "mirror", becomes rectangular and the frame encloses it on all sides. The type of material this frame is made of also changes: cotton is supplanted by silk, nearly always Chinese silk. The frame, by a skilful succession of tones, in harmony with the colours of the painting, seems to guide the eye, through ably graded shades, to a maturer enjoyment of the picture.

Besides the frame proper, the painting is usually enclosed by two bands, also of silk often yellow or red; they are called *aja' (aja' ma) dmar, ser* "red, yellow rainbow", and, according to their name, they symbolize the rainbow as a celestial light irradiating from the image, to signify that the painting is a reflection of remote heavens, diffusing a divine radiance.

On the inferior border (*t'an mt'a'; mt'a'*) is often applied, exactly in the centre, a square piece of silk stuff of another colour and more prized. Tibetans call it *t'an sgo*, "door of the tanka",.

Not infrequently, indeed whenever it is possible, this applied patch or the space corresponding to it on the silken band, is wrought with figures of dragons. This may seem simply a decorative pattern, but it answers to an exact symbolism: it represents the sphere of cosmic waters, of the endless and inexhaustible possibilities which are latent in the world of *mayā*, the "becoming", contrasted with the planes of spiritual purity represented in the painting: on one side intellect, on the other nature and matter.

The tanka is stretched between two little rods (*t'an šiñ*), one thin on the upper end and the other heavier on the lower end; the latter nearly always terminated by two wooden buttons or knobs of wrought silver or brass (*t'an tog*). To protect the painting a length of thin silk (*žal k'eb*), as large as the tanka, is usually sewn on a level with the upper rod; thus, in the case of a journey, when the tanka is rolled up, there is less danger that it may be damaged, and in

temples it is protected from the smoke of ritual lamps. Two ribbons of red or yellow silk, about an inch broad, are applied below to tie the tanka properly once it has been rolled up.

## 2. HOW TANKAS ARE PREPARED

We have said that paintings or drawings on woven material are called tankas, and that the name implies they can be rolled up. Only by an impropriety of language this name is given to paintings on wood, which on the other hand are rare; I have seen only a few, most of them probably of Indian origin. The material used is always linen cloth, prepared by a process I will describe later; the older the picture, the thicker and coarser the material. Sometimes silk is also used, particularly for smaller tankas; even tankas painted on leather are known to exist.

By this I do not mean that all tankas are painted; some are printed, some embroidered, others done in *appliqué* work. They will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

I will not dwell on a description of how tankas are painted; Roerich has already treated of this technique in his valuable book on Tibetan painting,<sup>3)</sup> and there is not much to add to what he wrote there. A piece of muslin or linen fabric is cut out, and stretched on a frame by passing twine through its edges. The fabric is then spread with lime (*sa dkar, dkar rtsi*) slaked in water, so that it becomes completely soaked and drenched with it, by spreading it two or three times on both sides of the material. The lime is mixed with animal glue. When the lime has thickened and dried, any porosity that may be left is eliminated by rubbing the cloth with a piece of shell or other smooth substance, which makes it even and shiny. Having thus prepared the surface on which the drawing is to be carried out, the outline and patterns of

the figures are traced in charcoal, always beginning with the central image, which is the ideal nucleus round which the lesser scenes unfold; if needed, the drawings thus outlined may be strengthened with Chinese ink. The colours are then applied; they are, or rather were, mineral colours, more rarely vegetable; the painter must be careful to dose the lime in which the colours are slaked according to the greater or lesser depth and vividness of the shades he wishes to obtain. Together with the lime, a little gluten is mixed with the colours and makes the mixture more lasting. The predominant colours are: lime white (*sa dkar, dkar rtsi*), red (*dmar po*), yellow (*ser po*) obtained from arsenic (*ba bla*), green (*ljan gu*) obtained from vitriol (*span ma*), vermilion (*li k'ri*) obtained from carmine, blue (*snon po*) from lapislazuli (*vaidurya*), and indigo (*ml'in*).

Mineral colours are pounded in a special stone mortar (*gtuñ*) with a wooden pestle (*gtuñ šin*).

Gold (*gser*) is much used for backgrounds and ornaments; the use of silver is rarer. Sometimes exceptional substances are used, following similar Indian methods; for instance tradition has it that in a temple of Central Tibet a tanka was preserved, which had been painted by an Indian master with blood out of his own nose.<sup>4)</sup>

### 3. ORIGIN OF THE TANKAS

It is well known that Tibetan culture is in a large measure derived from India; I say in a large measure, because it was also inspired and influenced by other countries with which it had relations, either for geographical reasons or through historical developments. No wonder that Tibetan culture should depend on that of other peoples. The Tibetans, when they came in contact with India for the first time, had no civilization at all; they were held in subjection to a shamanic and magical religion, they had

neither an alphabet, or art, nor literature; they lived in tents and roamed with their flocks and herds on the highlands, adapting their lives to the course of the season and to the succession of pasture-lands. The Chinese, the first to mention the Tibetans, describe them as barbarians and mention with loathing some Tibetan customs which they found exceedingly repellent and particularly their habit of exposing corpses to wild animals and birds of prey. Becoming converted to Buddhism, the Tibetans welcomed all they could assimilate of the lofty culture which raised them out of darkness into the light. Owing to their scarcity of cultural traditions and also to the reverence felt by all converts for their masters, they took good care not to change anything in the teachings they were receiving from India and China. And in reality what contribution could they have given, issuing for the first time from a primitive and uncouth condition by virtue of that religion, and suddenly confronted with millenarian cultures whose noble ideas fascinated them, whose refined life and magnificent art were their wonder?

It was not possible that Tibet should repeat the experience of China, where Buddhism, on being transplanted, was obliged to conform to the country's culture and to undergo its influence in many ways, to the extent of compromising with native traditions and adapting itself to Chinese psychology. In the Country of Snows Indian culture, introduced together with Buddhism, was not thought and lived over again in a new and original manner; rather it was faithfully preserved and protected. Many centuries were needed before the Tibetans assimilating India's and China's suggestions, could follow their own paths and listen to their own inspiration. Thus the tankas too are not a spontaneous creation of Tibetan talent; they are a type of art borrowed, together with other ideas, from India, and which, only in course of time, received the imprint of their genius.

The paintings which served as models for the Tibetan tankas are called *paṭa* in India (*prabhā* in Nepal): tissues painted with images and symbols of divinities like those described in the MMT or lives of saints like those still to be seen or explained to pilgrims in the temple of Puri, representing Jagannāth, his acolytes and his heaven. Their use became general with the spread of Indian gnosis which had found its literary expression in the Tantra. In some of these books is prescribed the use of *paṭa*, viz. paintings reproducing visibly the schemes of the theology which is behind those rites. The *paṭas* have various ends: they can be used for magic or they may be considered a work producing merit (*punyasambhāra*) and therefore profitable to the spiritual welfare of the donor and of all those who, looking upon them or framing a pious thought, accumulate a good karma; because, according to Buddhism, there can be no greater merit than to diffuse, by any means whatever, the Buddha's teachings, to enlighten the souls of men sunk in the darkness of error and to circulate sacred books and objects. On other occasions these paintings are used to evoke the deity they represent, by meditating upon them, so that it may appear to the initiate and pour out benefits on him. This is why some Tantra, for instance the MMT and the others of the same class, dedicate entire chapters to these paintings. In course of time *paṭas* and *maṇḍalas* became confused, and it was possible for a *paṭa* to represent a *maṇḍala*; but originally the two words stood for different objects. In the *paṭa* figures of divinities are preferably reproduced, while the *maṇḍala* contains images of deities or symbols, but according to a geometrical pattern of concentrical squares and circles representing the projection of cosmos.<sup>5)</sup> Although the *maṇḍala* may, exceptionally, be represented on some woven material, originally it was drawn on the ground with powders (*cūrṇa*) of different colours. This is still the custom of

Tibetan monasteries on the occasion of great initiatic festivals; the *maṇḍala* is drawn on the consecrated surface and around or inside it the initiated performs the prescribed rites; when the ceremony is over, the *maṇḍala* is obliterated.

Moreover, *maṇḍala* is a comprehensive term: any consecrated surface in general is a *maṇḍala*, first of all a temple, built precisely as a projection of the universe, a duplicate of cosmos, whose every part and element reproduces, according to determined rules and analogies, the world in its essential plan.

Anyhow in course of time the *maṇḍala*, which is always necessary when a disciple receives the esoteric baptism, lost this original character of an exclusive instrument of initiatic rites and became confused with the *paṭa*, in the sense that the *maṇḍala* too was painted as an object of general worship, without any definite purpose of being used for some particular meditation or ceremony. Neither can we say that all *paṭa* had a magical or liturgical value; they might also have a practical use, as representations of the lives of saints and masters or of the glories of heavens. They were then employed by story-tellers to illustrate by visible images the tales they told, roaming from one place to another, on the occasion of feasts and celebrations. Or they were used for the same purpose by guides of convents, when explaining to pilgrims the miracles and glories of holy personages who had lived there. The use of these narrative *paṭa* is very ancient in India, where a class of itinerant storytellers is known to have existed, called Maṅkha or Śaubbhika; Lüders has studied them with his usual learning.<sup>6)</sup> Allusions to these itinerant story-tellers (whose tales are one of the elements out of which the Indian theatre was born) and to their custom of illustrating their narratives with pictures, are not lacking in dramatic literature: already the *Mudrārākṣasa* (ed. HILLEBRANDT, p. 17) mentions them (*yamapaṭa*). The Jaina too knew this custom, if it is true that Gosāla Maṅkhaliputta's father, a

contemporary a little older than the Buddha, was by profession a Mañkha. The custom survives in Tibet; in the fairs, places of pilgrimage and bazars of the chief cities one frequently meets itinerant lamas or laymen, who sing to a devoutly spell-bound audience wonderful stories about Padmasambhava and the glories of Amitābha's heaven, showing as they sing, on large tankas they unroll, the pictorial representation of the events or miracles they are relating. Often they repeat tales in verse, reciting them in a sort of sing-song, and drawing them from a special section of sacred literature, called *gsol aḍebs*, hymns or invocations; the saint is invoked in each verse, with a brief allusion to one of the most remarkable episodes of his life, a vision he had or a miracle he performed; some tankas, as we shall see, are precisely illustrated *gsol aḍebs*.

Some story-tellers specialize in certain particular cycles; thus for instance, those who recite and illustrate the epic of Ge sar; their apparel is also typical: they wear a white hat on which the sun and moon are pictured, and they carry an arrow, which they use to point out the different episodes of their tale as they recite it.<sup>7)</sup>

*Paṭa*, *maṅḍala* and painted representations of the lives of the saints, for the use of story-tellers and of guides to holy places, are the threefold origin of Tibetan tankas; these at times singularly imitate and continue their Indian models and at times contain them all in that intermediate form, stabilized in course of time which, though derived from those models, could not help conforming to the artistic spirit of the country into which they had been adopted.

According to the Indian tradition, the tankas, though they represent religious subjects and never touch profane themes, have a practical purpose; they are not free creations of the artist's fancy, but on the contrary a necessary element in liturgy, and they are bound, as we shall presently see, by exact and inviolable rules.

#### 4. ORIGIN OF TIBETAN PAINTING

It is then proved that the tankas are derived from a magical or religious tradition of India, although in Tibet their development and success was probably greater than in India. But Tibet did not only imitate the liturgical use of tankas. Being ignorant of any art, it educated its taste at the school of the greatest civilizations it came in contact with, through historical events; first of all, in order of time and as to intensity of inspiration, were those of India and China. Their influence was so great that Tibetan art, born out of that contact, continued to live on its past, modulating those influences in various manners, but without ever attempting new paths. The Tibetans for a long time wavered undecided between different artistic manners, and as translators were not free to alter a single syllable of the text they were transposing into their own language, without committing sacrilege, so artists, once they had been educated in a given style, whether Indian or Chinese, handed down its technique and beware of introducing any arbitrary change. As the subject of these paintings, the visual symbol of Tantric experience, was fixed and unchangeable, so their form was transmitted as inviolably as the religious tradition. Centuries passed before Tibet's artistic spirit outgrew this subjection and gave its works of painting and sculpture an individual stamp. The echo of those voices, however, was never extinguished; it was always present and living.

But whence did the Tibetans receive their first lessons of art, in our case, of painting? Which was the school they came in contact with first and set out to imitate? It has been generally stated that Tibetan painting is derived from Bengal, through Nepal. This opinion rests on the authority of a native tradition, rather recent as to its literary formulation, but in fact derived from ancient memories, transmitted by that succession of oral teachings, from master to disciple,

which defies the silence of centuries. In this way we have received information that Tibet inherited from India; it must be received with great caution because inevitably it has often been misunderstood; nevertheless it fills many gaps that we could not bridge otherwise. The traditions I have in mind go back to Tāranātha, echoed by Sum pa mk'an po;<sup>8)</sup> the latter's additions more particularly concern Tibet. Both polygraphists state that the principal artistic schools hail back to Dhiman (Dhīmān) and Bitpalo, who lived in the times of the kings Devapāla and Dharmapāla (VIIIth-IXth centuries).

According to Tāranātha, they lived in Varendra, according to Sum pa mk'an po in Nalendra, i. e. Nālandā. Nālandā's importance as a centre of culture might induce us to prefer Sum pa mk'an po's version, but his text has been so badly edited by Das that his *variae lectiones* deserve no consideration, especially when we remember that in this passage, as elsewhere, Sum pa mk'an po depends, almost literally, from his predecessor. Anyhow the fact that the two artists are contemporaries of two well known kings, even though their exact chronological terms are uncertain, fixes their date approximatively about the ninth century. According to the tradition accepted by Tibetan polygraphists, the manner of these artists' father spread in Eastern India, while the sons' manner spread in Central India and proceeding from one place to the other, according to Sum pa mk'an po, was introduced into other regions of India and Nepal. Another school was that of Hasarāja the Kashmiri, a third the Southern Indian school, which had among its masters Jaya, Parojaya and Vijaya, and was still flourishing in Tāranātha's times. But the latter gives us another very important piece of information "Also in Nepal the first schools of art were similar to those of the ancient West, .. This would lead us to suppose that, according to tradition, before the Eastern style derived from Varendra's

masters was introduced, other artistic trends prevailed in Nepal, linked to the celebrated schools from which Ajanṭā art had bloomed. That this statement of Tāranātha's is not wholly unfounded, is confirmed by Foucher's well known research on the miniatures of manuscripts. Foucher came to the conclusion that the oldest miniatures go back to models perhaps not later than the VIth century and that they are connected with that pictorial tradition whose greatest monument is Ajanṭā.<sup>9)</sup> They can be thus distinguished from later miniatures, of Bengali type and origin, already grown, in a certain sense, conventional and heavy. Therefore even in Nepal the echo and the influence of various manners had penetrated, before a well-defined local style could be formed.

It finally falls, however, under the domination of Pāla and Sena art, prevailing over Nepalese schools to such an extent that (as it has been more than once recognized) between the former and these latter (the Tibetan schools derived from them included) the unity of conception, design and expression is such, that all these manners may be considered as the various modulations of one and the same style.

But here we do not have to deal with Nepal; we must consider it only as a country which the tradition handed down by Tibetan writers points out as the centre of irradiation of Tibetan art. And in fact, as we shall see later, pictorial documents fully confirm these literary data.

## 5. KASHMIRI INFLUENCE

**A**t this point we must ask ourselves: was Tibet influenced only by Nepal and through Nepal, indirectly, by the Bengali manner, or did other artistic currents penetrate from the earliest times into the Country of Snows, together with the diffusion of the sacred texts?

I believe my discoveries in Western Tibet have shown with certainty the remarkable, indeed decisive, role which the province of Guge played in the renaissance of Buddhism during the Xth-XIth centuries.<sup>10)</sup> Ye šes 'od, the pious king who according to tradition preferred imprisonment to apostasy and invited one of the foremost masters of his times, Atiśa, to preach in his country, looms large in the history of Buddhism; he had thrice sent to Kashmir the monk Rin c'en bzañ po, a tireless worker in that fervid movement of renewal which, in the course of a few years, was to spread Buddhism anew, with greater purity and faithfulness, in Tibet.

When I studied the life of Rin c'en bzañ po, born in the Xth century, in one of the Western Tibetan highlands, I called the reader's attention to certain passages in his biography, where he is said to have brought with him, on his return to his country, seventy-five Kashmiri masters. Rin c'en bzañ po and his royal patrons knew that it was not sufficient to translate the sacred texts, to explain them and to comment upon them for the Tibetan neophytes. The population was still too uncivilized to derive great spiritual benefits: they thought it would be more profitable for the spread of religion to multiply temples from which the faith might be irradiated; to make the temples more attractive and draw the people to them, they began to decorate and beautify them, in a manner worthy of the artistic traditions fostered by Buddhism in India. But craftsmen were needed, and Rin c'en bzañ po brought them with him from Kashmir.

There is no doubt that the literary tradition is truthful: in Tsaparang, Toling, Tabo, in every place of any importance in Western Tibet, the temples founded on Rin c'en bzañ po's advice and under the patronage of the Kings of Guge bear evident traces of the Kashmiri craftsmen's work: bronzes and wooden portals sculpted with a soft suppleness and a plastic relief proclaim unmistakably the

country of their origin. The portals are polyptics representing the Buddha's life, and sometimes, as on the Toling portal, Hindu legends; this induces us to suppose that they had been imported from Kashmir ready-made and placed where Tibet's royal patrons and protectors desired. On the other hand the temple of Mañ nañ has preserved the only frescoes known today which are certainly of the Kashmiri school,<sup>11)</sup> the extreme Northern projections of those classical traditions which, transmitted by Ajanta to Ellora, inspired India's pictorial currents in the Middle ages. To the Mañ nañ frescoes may be added those of Alchi in Ladakh, although they are later. And this is all: nothing else has come down to us of ancient Kashmiri painting, and to get an idea of it we lack even the assistance of those manuscripts ornamented with miniatures we have for Nepal.<sup>12)</sup> Even if other documents were lacking these would be sufficient to give us an idea of the origin and character of Nepalese art; on the contrary in Kashmir books were written on beech-wood bark, which is not adapted to painting as palm leaves are.

Nevertheless some idea of Kashmiri miniatures may be gained from some copies of the Prajñāpāramitā, which I have discovered in ruins of upper Toling, among a heap of canonical works, indiscriminately flung into a store-room pending a menace of invasion, which later remained under the debris (Plates C, D). The pages belong to different copies of the same work, but some are older and some more recent, hence the miniatures are by different hands and of different merit. While some paintings, not reproduced here, appear to be coarse imitations made by inexperienced craftsmen, others express a highly artistic atmosphere; the figures are drawn with extreme delicacy, golden backgrounds are frequent, the haloes are iridescent like rainbows (figg. 27, 11). The miniatures are covered with a resinous varnish or lacquer, which imparts great lustre and freshness to the colouring; the figures are

slender, tall, with no trace of the plumpness and fullness apparent in Bengali and Nepalese art; there is a well-defined preference for erect and supple postures; a slight undulation of the body replaces the classical *tribhaṅga*. Details of dress are extremely accurate: embroidery and patterns can be distinctly seen. The colour is not applied in a flat manner, but ably graded, so as to produce *chiaroscuro* shadows and cause the figures to bulge out with a plastic relief. This group of miniatures, finding its perfect counterpart in certain frescoes of Tsaparang and Alchi, is derived from the same schools which decorated the chapels of Mañ nān, although they are perhaps a little later; everything induces us to think that the country of their origin is Kashmir. The comparison with some pages of Nepalese manuscripts or their covers (*pālaka*) shows how the two schools differed: colours, technique, drawing are different (Plates A, B). If we now consider figg. 8-10 it cannot escape us that, though the four figures are not by the same author, they cannot nevertheless be assigned to the artist who painted the specimens illustrated above; evidently these are imitators of differing skill, from the more capable one who illustrated the Prajñāpāramitā and reproduced the portrait of the donors in n. 1, to the one who drew n. 10, ending with the clumsiest of them all, who drew in n. 8 the heavenly palace, *vimāna*, in the centre of which the Buddha is sitting. Miniature n. 9 has a place completely to itself: its modernity of construction and colouring is surprising and cannot be connected with any other specimen resembling it known to me.

We must therefore draw a sharp line between the schools of Guge and the artistic currents of Central Tibet; although the spiritual world was the same, the art of Western Tibet has its own particular character due to the country's political independence and to the fact that it held aloof from the events which disturbed dBuś and gTsañ. Its proximity to Kashmir and to Kangra, the dependence

of its first artistic activity from Kashmir, the relations it long kept up with Kashmir, opened Guge up to influences which did not reach other regions of Tibet. Nevertheless in the temple of Kojarnāth,<sup>13</sup> in the nearby state of Pu hrañś (a satellite of Guge for a certain time) the influences of Nepal are evident: the image adored there is Nepalese, other statues heaped on its altars are surely Pāla. On the contrary Chinese influence never reached these lands, or if it ever did, it was so feeble and languid that it could not modify other traditions solidly rooted there. We are aware of it by the treatment of certain themes, more strongly influenced by China, i. e., the representations of heavens and particularly of Amitābha's heaven, modelled on the large compositions of the Central Asian *pin siang*, furnishing Buddhist communities, from T'ang times, with iconographic models of the blissful Western land, where the God of light and of endless life reigns. The Guge school was naturally, inspired by the same literary sources; it followed the compulsory track of the canonical scriptures, but interpreted them in an independent manner, which has very little in common with representations of the same subject attempted in other Tibetan localities, where Chinese influence was always felt. This does not mean that the Western Tibetan painters were the inventors of those images, rather they imitated other models independent of China; their sources and their models were in India and very probably in Kashmir. Precisely there we must look for the inspiration of another extremely remarkable tanka, whose characteristics are so peculiar as to represent something unique (Tanka n. 12). In this painting the figures become long and slender, the legs are enveloped by long draperies which cling to the limbs and hinder their motion, the chest is on the same line as the legs; that slight inclination of the body which imparts a dancing rhythm to the Indian figures, as in the miniatures studied above, is lacking; on

the whole a certain archaic stiffness appears, which has its counterpart in some statues I have found in the environs of Spiti, in a province once belonging to Guge, evangelized by its missionaries and therefore also influenced by Kashmiri art, as the Tabo monastery proves in an evident manner.

While in ancient Nepalese pictures the background is very often dark red, in Guge dark blue prevails, but Nepal is present in the pattern of flexible tendrils which twine with capricious curves, delicately embroidering the background of the haloes (cf. KRAM-RISCH, JISOA, I, p. 47). Generally the most ancient Guge tankas, like the one already described and another representing Amitābha's heaven, are more airier than the Nepalese paintings, where the figures are huddled together, and arranged so as to form a frame along the edges of the picture or round the central image, enclosed in small shrines or semi-circular halos. But almost as if repentant of having wasted all this space, the Guge painters also strewed it with leaves and flowers; this is a constant motive of Nepalese art, found both in miniatures and in *prabhā*. It is derived in its turn from literary reminiscences, because in the sacred scriptures each epiphany of the deity and each miracle is greeted by a rain of flowers, thrown from the sky by divine beings who glorify the divinity, following a theme common to the Buddhists and the Jaina and not unknown to Brahmanic sources. "As soon as the supremely wicked spirit, having been vanquished, departed, the regions of heaven became clear, the moon shone, clouds of flowers fell from the sky upon the earth,, (AŚVAGHOṢA, *Buddhacarita*, XIII, v. 75). It is the same rain of flowers which, according to the MMT (LALOU, p. 48) the gods pour down upon the Buddha and the saints. In the painting, which is also the projection of an epiphany consciously produced by the artists, the miracle is repeated.

The paintings executed by the school of Guge thus have certain characters which we

do not find in Central Tibet. The country of Guge now so desolate, was for some centuries a centre of fervid culture, where different traditions met and blended; the Guge artists, interpreting with a certain freedom imported inspirations, succeeded, perhaps earlier than other parts of Tibet, in creating a style of their own. For these reasons we are entitled to speak of a Western Tibetan school, born about the XIth century, which had a life of its own until it was completely exhausted by the political decay of the Kingdom of Guge, crumbling under the armed attacks of Señ ge rnam rgyal of Ladakh in the XVIIth century. This school of painting, born of the imitation first of Kashmiri, then of Nepalese art, remained self-contained, grew barren, shrivelled up, and finally languished and became extinct, to rise no more. This well-defined school may then receive the name of Guge, from the province where it was born and took shape.

It begins after the renaissance of Buddhism in Rin c'en bzañ po's times and continues, with an independent life of its own, up to the end of Guge independence. Having lost the support of the nobility (the new Ladakhi sovereign had dealt it a hard blow), it began to languish and became impoverished in lifeless imitations. When the province was incorporated into Greater Tibet at the end of the XVIIth century, its individuality was completely lost and the new manner of the Tibetan "settecento,, triumphed in Guge too.

We have thus ascertained two points: first of all that Tibetan painting drew its first inspiration from two schools, the Bengali-Nepalese on one hand and, in Western Tibet, the Kashmiri school, great branches of the same trunk. The pictorial conception is the same, but we find particular shades which allow us to grasp the difference between the two trends; they are like two provinces of the same kingdom, where the same language is spoken but dialectal varieties, easy to recognize, are

noticeable. Furthermore we have proofs that Indian painting did not penetrate in Tibet only through the *paṭa* or *maṅḍala*; it reached Tibet also through miniatures in manuscripts, whether Bengali or Nepalese. The influence of these miniatures has been so strong that its traces are also to be found in the frescoes; certain chapels of Narthang, of the Kumbum of Gyantse, not to mention the temples of Tsaparang, are like pages of a gigantic manuscript, whose structure is lost; only the images remain.

## 6. CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIA

But Kashmir and Nepal were not the only countries which moulded Tibetan art and culture; the tradition itself speaking of Sroñ btsan sgam po's conversion to Buddhism and of the empire he founded in the VIIIth century through the rapid fortunes of war, mentions his double marriage to the daughter of the King of Nepal and to a Chinese princess of the T'ang dynasty; this shows how a double current penetrated Tibet in those times, from Nepal and from China. Chinese artists cooperated with those of Nepal, although perhaps not so numerous, and in the same manner, side by side with Indian pandits, Chinese Hva šaṅ cooperated in giving the Tibetan people its religious education.<sup>14)</sup> The *rGyal rabs*, the chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama (p. 26, B), the *bKa' t'añ sde lña*, record the contemporary presence in Tibet of Chinese and Nepalese artists, when its conversion to Buddhism and its first contacts with the great neighbouring civilizations inspired the Court with dreams of a new and unheard of luxury.

But Tibet, during this period of political vigour, coinciding with the reign of the three great emperors, Sroñ btsan sgam po, K'ri sroñ lde btsan and Ral pa can, had extended its domination over the caravan highroads and the rich oases of Central Asia: the

"Four garrisons,, (Kuchā, Khotan, Kāshgar and Tokmak) and later Turfan were repeatedly overrun by the Tibetans troops, which the fortunes of war now substituted for Chinese garrisons, in flight before them and, in Turfan, before the rising Uigur Empire. Then Arab invasion and Islamic penetration came, sweeping away the principalities of Central Asia, and with them fell the glorious centres of Buddhist culture, which joining the Far East to India and to the Far West, along the silk roads, had brought remote cultures together and favoured those contacts of ideas which fruitfully enrich the human spirit.

The Hellenistic world, China and India, had met there, had almost come to an assigned tryst and a sort of Buddhist *oikoumene* had resulted, in which the most different forms of thought, art and religion had poured and melted into one another, in a synthesis that Asia was not to look upon again. When, under the impact of wars and invasions, those bulwarks of Buddhist humanism crashed, one by one, small monastic communities took refuge in the Country of Snows. They were probably moved by apostolic zeal; the country was not hospitable, life was hard, the population poor and rough, but there were souls to be gained, a country where Buddhism, but recently introduced, was still on the surface and had not yet completely conquered the masses. A famous inscription found at Tun-huang speaks of Buddhist dignitaries invited by the Tibetan *btsan po* to his court. Tibetan tradition on the other hand preserves memories of colonies coming from Khotan: they had seeped through in various epochs and during the expansion of the reigns of K'ri sroñ lde btsan and Ral pa can, or even later. Some of them were translators of Buddhist books, others were artists: the *Li lugs*, "painting according to the style of Khotan,, is witnessed to by our sources,<sup>15)</sup> and I have myself found magnificent specimens of it in Central Tibet; it does not seem doubtful that artists, in this case, followed the Khotanese

manner, because they wrote as much under the pictures, in perfectly legible letters.

To the styles thus identified, we can add another, whose place of origin cannot be defined; in the inscriptions, for instance in those of Ivang, which distinguish it from the Khotanese manner, it is generically called *rgya lugs*, "Indian system", but it must not be confused with that of Nepal, because the names for Nepal and for India are kept scrupulously distinct in Tibetan literary use, and "Nepalese manner", would have to be written *bal poi lugs*, not so vaguely *rgya lugs*.<sup>16)</sup> This expression means, in a general sense, the Indian manner of the great convents whose spiritual heritage Tibet had gathered, namely Nālandā and Otantapuri. But this expression of Tibetan painters, their referring to this or that manner, is enough to show us that for many schools art was or should have remained a faithful imitation of foreign models. To sum it up, the parallelism always to be found between written language and artistic language is reproduced: as their theologians and philosophers did not swerve by a hair-breadth from Indian models, to the point of moulding their very language on that of India, so the Tibetans did not dare to tread new paths even in art.

## 7. WHILE NEPALESE INFLUENCE CONTINUED, CHINESE INFLUENCE FOLLOWED POLITICAL EVENTS

These are the principal currents which we find operating in Tibetan art, and which run parallel and sometimes mingle. Their vitality, resistance and vicissitudes varied; while the Central-Asian manner, no longer fed by direct contacts, survived, when the Central Asian world crashed, only by virtue of some types and patterns fixed by tradition, which had made them inviolable, (as in the tankas representing rNam t'os sras or in the images of the eighteen arhats), the case of Nepal and of China is quite

different. Contacts with Nepal were never interrupted, both on account of the frequency of trade and neighbourhood, and also because, between Tibet and Nepal, there was a continual exchange of persons and things, finally because Nepal remained for a long time a country where Tibetans went to study Sanskrit, to collect manuscripts and to visit the famous stūpa of Svayambhūnāth. Thus Nepal greatly influenced Tibetan art; the afflux of Nepalese artists into Tibet lasted for centuries, indeed in certain epochs it became more intense, for instance during the Sa skya pa period, when teams of Nepalese craftsmen were invited by the abbots of those monasteries. One of them, named Aniko,<sup>17)</sup> came to Tibet with 24 artists whom aP'ags pa had directed to build a pagoda. He was then only seventeen; later he was taken to the Emperor of China's court and his art was found so pleasing that literary sources have recorded it; the Emperor patronized him, created him "inspector of artisans", and after his death conferred posthumous titles upon him. Although he was particularly famous for the statues he modelled with great skill, no branch of art was unknown to him. He is the first of a long series of artists whose names have been lost, but the eulogies of monasteries and the lamas' biographies abound in general allusions to makers of statues (*lha bzo pa*) and to painters (*lha bris pa*) from Nepal; there was no convent which, at the moment of its foundation or of its greatest prosperity, was not embellished by them with statues or frescoes. From the Sa skya pa chronicles to the eulogy of gNas rñiñ,<sup>18)</sup> from the *Myañ c'uñ* to the abbots' lives, various confirmations can be drawn of the uninterrupted flow into Tibet of Nepalese artists and craftsmen.

We know the name of that Vañ gu li who, assisted by five *lha bzo pa*, worked on the decorations of the Ñor temple; another was called A k'e ra dsa. Also in Tāranātha's times twenty Nepalese artists made the statues of the Sañs rgyas rabs bdun of the sGo k'añ

(*Autobiography*, p. 219). They did not work for pay; according to the Indian custom, they received at the end of their work not a price but rewards of various kinds (*dakṣiṇā*). Sacred things are not an object of trade, therefore pay is replaced by different kinds of articles, which in Nepal could be easily changed into ready money (*ibid.*, p. 220): Chinese cloths, turquoises, gold dust, silk and so forth. Tāranātha himself ordered Nepalese artists to model a statue of Jambhala, in the Indian style (*ap'ags yul gyi lugs su byas pa*, *Autobiography*, p. 232), and seven artists of the same country to make seven halos (*rgyab yol*) to be placed round the heads of the statues. Together with the artists, merchants came from India, bringing many materials, and above all pigments, from carmine (*li k'ri*) to indigo (*span' mt'in*) which, according to a passage in his autobiography, would seem to have been required as part of the taxes to be paid as passage-fees to the custom officials (*sgo dpon*).

Some Nepalese artists worked for the fifth Dalai Lama and their name is recorded in his autobiography under the year 1659 (*ca*, p. 268); they are artisans specialized in casting statues, not painters but, though I did not find records of them, it is likely that even painters were called to Tibet, along with other workmen as late as the XVIIth century. These artists were: Dsyo bhan, Siddhi, bKra šis (Maṅgal), Dhar ma de vo, Dsai siñ (Jaysingh) A ma ra dsa ti (Amarajāti), Dse la k'rañ, K'ra pa su tsa; among other images, they made also that of the fifth Dalai Lama himself reproducing his own traits (*adra abag*).

Thus the Nepalese manner was constantly kept alive by an unbroken flow of artists, paintings or statues ordered by commission to the Buddhist community in Nepal, by the study of models, existing in great numbers in public and private chapels, by the inspiration Tibetans could find in the miniatures of manuscripts.

Before China, in the XVIIIth century, renewed Tibet's pictorial traditions through

the triumph of the Dalai Lamate and then through political submission, ruling from the great monasteries of Lhasa and Tashilunpo or irradiating from the Eastern provinces, Nepalese art and crafts held undisputed sway. We have observed this in the main convents which, after having been laid waste so many times, are full, even now, of imposing collections, in which all the epochs and landmarks of Nepalese art are reflected, from its ancient glories in which Bengal's artistic tradition is still a living echo, up to the formulas of its decay.

With the passage of centuries, the imitation of those models was a fixed tradition, which would inevitably have lapsed into barbarism like all arts sluggishly and effortlessly drawing from past experiences, free from shocks and effort, if fresh contacts with China had not infused a new spirit into Tibetan culture.

The first contacts after the new spread of Buddhism happened in Sa skya times, when exchanges continually took place between the hierarchs of this monastery and the Celestial Empire. Buston himself recognizes the presence of Chinese and Mongol artists in Ža lu;<sup>19)</sup> we have every reason to suppose that this was also the case in the other and more important monasteries. Traces of the Chinese types are to be found, quite clearly, both in the sKu abum of sNar t'añ and in some Gyantse chapels.

But Chinese influences followed the ups and downs of political events. When the Mongol dynasty fell, they languished for about four centuries and the Chinese manner held out in certain fashions and forms which had become a permanent acquisition, but was not revived by new currents. It was rekindled, however, brighter than ever, in the XVIIIth century, when Tibet linked its fortunes to China. These remarks naturally apply both to mural painting and to painting on canvas, i. e. to tankas proper. In other words, one must not think that only tanka painters or only painters of frescoes existed, as two different artisan

currents. The style and the technique were one, even if the matter was not the same. Indeed in several temples I have seen the walls covered with paintings on canvas, symmetrically applied and arranged there. If we compare a photograph of the wall paintings with the tankas of the same period, we shall not find any difference: in both cases the same features, the same groundwork, the same hues and shadings stand out. The implications of this fact are clear. While the tankas are hardly ever dated, and only occasionally the name of some personage or a brief dedicatory inscription allow of a chronological determination, the wall paintings, as we have seen above, can nearly always be dated; hence they are the best documents of the development of Tibetan culture from the XIIth to the XVIIIth century, they record the contact and fusion of different schools, they mark the stages of their formation and of their decay. It is precisely by a reference to mural paintings besides the few tankas which can be dated with certainty, that we are able to distribute the latter in a chronological series which we can consider sufficiently accurate, in a general way.

We have a remarkable instance in the tanka n. 14 representing the Buddha's life; its date may be fixed closely enough through a comparison with the Tsaparang frescoes, whose age can be accurately determined.

#### 8. EVOLUTION OF TIBETAN PAINTING, PARTICULARLY THAT OF ḡTSAÑ

What is it then that these pictorial documents show us? And what were the developments of Tibetan painting on canvas which we can reconstruct on their base?

Central Tibet, since the beginnings of its art, was chiefly dominated by Nepal, as surviving monuments show; this, as we have

seen, can be explained in many ways. Painting, having crossed the Himalaya, took up its abode in Tibet, where an inviolable religious tradition caused it to survive through the centuries, preserving it from those changes which in India were altering manners and schools. That art inspired the painters of tankas and brightened the walls of chapels with its colours. In the earliest times the Tibetans of dBus and ḡTsañ copied faithfully; as the Ivang frescoes and their inscriptions show, they followed their models with the accuracy of neophytes, whether the models came from Central Asia or from India. In the temples of these regions the oldest frescoes and the tankas of the same epoch do not differ in the least from the Nepalese manner, to such an extent that in some cases we cannot establish with certainty whether the paintings are Nepalese originals or Tibetan copies. Anyhow, in Central Tibet, frescoes and tankas carry us into an artistic world which differs sufficiently from that of Guge; it is enough to compare the mural paintings of Ivang, Samada and Ža lu with those of Tsaparang or Toling,<sup>20</sup> to perceive that a different style prevails in ḡTsañ; the backgrounds are pale blue or red, but the red, as compared to Guge paintings, verges rather on hues of blood colour or orange, and the figures are more languidly modelled, the curves are more pronounced. We notice in these Nepalese manners a tendency to isolate the figures of deities and to leave each by itself, perhaps through the influence of miniature-painters; we hardly ever find a composition in the true sense of the word, but rather long series of divinities, each self-contained, round the central figure. An art extremely hieratic, a faithful and schematic reproduction of the meditation's rules (*sādhana*), which teach how to visualize the images of the gods without the least profane intrusion. Consequently the artist's whole ability consists in retouching details.

Another difference between Guge and ḡTsañ can be seen in the tankas representing

historical legends; I refer, for instance, to nn. 9, 10 of the present collection. The eye is struck by the prevalence of orange and yellow; and by the symmetrical arrangement, the subdivision into so many squares, each visibly illustrating a particular story, the continued unfolding of an uninterrupted legend; a legend developing like the pages of a manuscript and the stanzas of a metrical biography. In reality these tankas are faithful representations of biographies and follow them step by step. Once again, even if the tankas have not been painted by Nepalese artists, their authors accurately followed Nepalese models: this is proved, for instance, by a comparison with the *prabhās* published by Kramrisch (JISOA, I, p. 129 ff.).

The Guge school also knew narrative tankas; I refer, for instance to n. 14 dedicated to Śākyamuni's life, but a simple comparative examination between these tankas and those of central Tibet shows the great difference in style, composition and drawing. It is therefore clear that this Nepalese style greatly prevailed over other artistic influences which had reached Tibet at various times and through different channels. The Khotanese style gradually disappeared, surviving only, as we saw, in some iconographical cycles. The Chinese style was felt again, as I have said, in the Sa skya pa's times, and generally until Tibet was closely linked with China and the Mongols; then we see Ža lu decorated by Hor and Chinese artists; the Ts'al monastery, according to the fifth Dalai Lama (*Chronicles*, p. 32) was also decorated by artists from China; in Narthang the frescoes of a chapel are in Chinese style. If the Sa skya monasteries had remained untouched, we would surely have found there extremely remarkable traces of this influence. Hence the development of Tibetan painting consists in a mutual approach and blending of the Chinese and Nepalese manners. The mural paintings of monasteries and mc'od rten, of which I have spoken above and in *Indo-Tibetica*, IV,

mark the outlines and the stages of this progressive fusion between various manners which had coexisted for a long time side by side, each following, with an accuracy which seems pedantic, the lines traced by a century-old tradition. In the space of a few generations, from the rise of Sa skya pa hegemony to the consolidation of P'ag mo gru power, contemporary with the early Ming, the inspirations of various origin which had produced the Tibetan schools of painting and had given them rules and a direction, slowly lead to a new style: this contains them all, though transfigured by the Tibetan people's artistic sensibility, which has now matured and become well-defined.

In some monuments, chiefly in the sKu ḅum of Gyantse (XVth century) we still see at times glimpses of China, at times of India, but not so impersonally reproduced as heretofore;<sup>21)</sup> there is a little of each, more India than China, but both seen for the first time through Tibetan eyes. The artists tried to cut loose from the yoke of a tradition which had forced them to be nothing but imitators of outlandish currents. They still feel all its weight, but they begin to train themselves in a way of their own to express their images pictorially; hence in their paintings we find a new breadth, the world translated into forms no longer typically Chinese or Indian, but Tibetan.

Thus Tibetan art acquired an individuality of its own, and the artists, as if they had vaguely sensed this, took an unusual course, never since so prevalent in Tibetan painting: they signed their works. This can happen only in a period of great fervour, when men are almost swept off their feet by their own creative capacities, and admiringly see them embodied in works of art.

The mural paintings of the sKu ḅum of Gyantse, which may be considered the most significant monument of Tibetan art, now born into an individuality of its own, are almost all due to artists whose name we know.

These artists are mostly laymen. Which does not mean that monks disparaged the painter's art: the great abbots included painting and statuary among the subsidiary arts of which they boast a knowledge. An image admired to this day in Sa skya's principal temple is attributed to the Sa skya paṇḍita; the third of Buston's disciples Śeṣ rab ṅbum was celebrated precisely for his skill in the figurative arts. But this was an unnecessary complement to priestly lore, upon which very different demands were made. In Tibet, if less severely and with fewer restrictions, the old traditions of Buddhist India held good, which left painting to laymen and forbade monks to practice it, as the *Saddharma-smṛtyupasthāna* says. In the MMT also, the Sādhaka, when he needs a *paṭa* and even when he must have a *maṇḍala* drawn, calls for a painter (*citrakāra*),<sup>22</sup> and everything induces us to suppose he was a layman. In Tibet this absolute prohibition was not enforced, but it is a fact that most of the painters are laymen. Nevertheless, the lamas assisted them. We know, to quote a few instances among many we might give, that Buston himself drew the outlines (*bkod pa*) of the Ža lu frescoes; Tsoṅ k'a pa dictated instructions for the mural paintings in rDsiñ ji, which he had ordered to be made according to the visions he had seen in a dream. The Gyantse inscriptions contain references to these outlines by the lamas, translated into paintings by the artist (*lha bris pa*), so that responsibility for the composition, when large works were to be executed, always rested on the lamas, who traced their general plan (*bkod*) according to the prescriptions of liturgical treatises. In these cases nothing was left for the painter but to draw the figures, accurately following the suggestions he had received, translating them into images according to the iconometric canons and displaying his skill in the balance of colours, unless even these were not exactly limited by liturgy. In fact the Narthang and Gyantse inscriptions praise above all the artist's skill in colours.

The lama had to intervene again to vivify the painting, i. e. to cause the divine spirit to descend into it and to consecrate it. Therefore if the painter was a layman, he always worked under the lama's watchful eyes, and could not escape iconographical patterns.

These lay painters too lived in the shadow of convents, worked for them, created in the same spiritual atmosphere, and were accordingly nourished with the same ideas.

But man cannot submit forever to the tyranny of abstract ideas, closing his eyes to life. Although religion denied the world any values, reducing everything to a vain shadow, not even Tibetans could ignore, in their art, the world of men: in no country are heavens and angelic visions sufficient to forget life. Thus, little by little, by a natural process of maturing, we see in Tibetan painting the series of saints and deities, formerly arranged in files, one after the other like a coloured litany, replaced by scenes of human life. It was no longer the ascetic wrapped up in the stillness of contemplation, already transferred to other spiritual spheres, made alien to the world, blissful in his sanctity, but on the contrary the conquest of sanctity, his earthly life. The chronicles, cultivated in Tibet with great fondness, have their correspondence in these tankas, which are a pictorial reproduction of their contents. Thus by degrees, the cold and abstract lines of the *maṇḍala* and the hieratic, contemplating figures of early tankas were replaced by a faint human smile. The earth, of which there is no trace in earlier paintings, now appears as the artists saw it under their own eyes: small, white houses whose thatched roofs are framed in red bands, solemn monasteries with dome and pinnacles; processions of monks, religious ceremonies, donors in festive apparel, cavalcades of armed horsemen; life with its toil and turmoil, succeeding to the seraphic serenity of heaven. In the earliest tankas man had but the second place: he was put in the background or in a corner,

confined like an alien, like a being whose position proclaimed him a citizen of another world; he was the donor kneeling in prayer, who had ordered the painting to be made for his own and his family's spiritual benefit, and who implored the god to grant him some favour or to confer magic power upon him. Above and around him, the tanka displayed divine figures, like visions of a paradise he hoped to acquire for himself and his loved ones, once his karma had been destroyed and gnosis had made him worthy of ascending to bliss. The two worlds were separate: no participation of the human in the divine: to reach the latter, the former must be overcome and forgotten. That sort of painting is ecstatic; it is all paradise, contemplation, sanctity. Now, on the contrary, man enters as an actor, the saint, whose life is represented, takes his fellow-men along with him, his friends and enemies, disciples and rivals, evoking all that world in which he had accomplished his task as a master, a preacher and an apostle.

The tankas then become projections of the earth, but as they are inspired by biographies written in monasteries, convent life predominates. Space too is broadened and extended; in the oldest tankas it seems almost as if painters could not bear space to be empty; figures are heaped on one another, in the intervals they place conventional trees, little flowers suspended in mid-air, arabesques; thus in Tibet we constantly see that dislike of void which is one of the most constant traits of ancient Indian painting, where the images are crammed with the same exuberant fancy as the wild growths of a jungle.

We may now ask what place is occupied, in the history of Tibetan painting, by the famous tanka discovered by Stein in Ch'ien fu tung and reproduced in *Thousand Buddhas*, Plate n. XXXI. Lawrence Binyon, and Stein with him, consider it "likely to be the oldest of its kind now in existence, or at least one of the oldest," (p. 9), but he

cannot help recognizing, with Stein, that it is "of the same type as the numerous pictures brought from Tibet itself in recent years, collections of which are in the British Museum and in other museums of Europe and America, ..". But when this tanka is compared with the pictorial documents painted in fresco or canvas, which I have had the opportunity of studying in repeated journeys to Tibet and have published in many a volume, it will be easily noticed that, notwithstanding its great analogies with the more recent Tibetan paintings, it finds no match either in Ivang or in *Ža lu*, Gyang, gNas gsar, Western Tibet, or in the oldest tankas of the present collection: not only it is rectangular in shape, but it has all the characteristics of the composite Tibetan style, in which the Nepalese tradition has not been entirely overruled by the Chinese XVIIIth century. We find in it a stiff bearing and a certain heaviness, which the supple and winding Chinese lines have not done away with. The clouds on which the divinities lean are heavy blots of colour, the figures are outlined according to those conventions, indeed those compromises between various styles, which are, as we have seen, the result of a long experience, and give the tanka a typically Tibetan imprint. A more thorough examination will show that the masters represented above, on both sides of the Buddha, are reproduced after the manner of the monks of the Yellow Sect, whose yellow cap they wear, a departure from the custom of the older schools, where the red cap was used.<sup>23)</sup> Moreover the terrific deity below is easily recognizable as dPal ldan lha mo; as we shall see later, she is precisely the "bsTan sruñ," or patron of the Yellow Sect, whose cult seems not to have been divulged before the XVth century.

Hence both an examination of the tanka's style, and the treatment of its theme, induce us to place the age of this painting many centuries later. Instead of being the most

ancient document of Tibetan painting, it is, as to time, quite close to the tankas generally admired in our collections, as indeed Bin-yon's experienced eye had perceived, although the fact did not induce him to doubt its antiquity. This conclusion of mine may seem surprising at first, but I believe it will convince anyone who examines the tanka attentively and compares it with the monuments of Tibetan art, ancient and modern, known to us. My opinion might seem to be ruled out by the epoch in which, according both to Stein and to Pelliot, the cave where the famous Tun huang findings took place was closed. Both of them, for reasons summarized in *SERINDIA*, p. 820 and p. 827, reached the same conclusion, namely that the cave was closed for the last time, with masonry, in the first years of the XIth century. But the discovery, among the texts found therein, of some dated Uiguric documents (*ibid.*, p. 828) and of other undoubtedly recent fragments, obliged Stein to take up the subject once more and to admit that, the above date and circumstances being largely considered unchanged, occasional additions to the deposit were made after 1900, the year of its discovery (*op. cit.*, p. 829). This in fact also explains the finding, in that cave, of a Taoist treatise printed under Kuang hsu 1875-1908 (*SERINDIA*, p. 628). For the reasons stated above, I think that the tanka in question must also be included among the objects that the monk who discovered the cave has added to the initial collection, like the above-mentioned documents.

## 9. THE NEW CHINESE INFLUENCE IN THE XVIIIth CENTURY

**N**o shock stirred Tibetan painting up to the new violent contact with China in the XVIIIth century, when strife between sects opened up the country to the conquest of China, born to a new

life under the great K'ang hsi. With the pretext of pacifying the Country of Snows, Chinese troops invaded it and reduced it to subjection; garrisons and ambans exploited Tibet, which became free again only when the Celestial Empire broke down.

A new Tibetan art was then developed which in a certain sense was a provincial echo of the Chinese XVIIIth century's smooth and ornate preciousness; this time too Tibet accepted suggestions from outside, but it did not remain passive; it worked out the Chinese style in its own way, so that the model translated into its own language took on a local colour and this new born painting, although inspired by Chinese art, was something different and peculiar.

Chinese influence gradually thinned out figures, left blanks, revealed to the Tibetans also the mysterious poetry of space: in certain schools, like the one of K'ams, the figures emerge from a vast landscape, on which green mountains, shaded by pine-trees stand out, rivers slowly flow, birds and gazelles are basking. China not only gave this painting a sense of space, she also opened the eyes of the Tibetans to landscape; it was of course a conventional landscape, imitated from Chinese models. It was not what they saw all about them, steep and barren mountains and a boundless wilderness, as one would expect in Tibet, but the pointed, ragged and unreal cliffs of Chinese landscape painters. Here we see once again the contrast between the two spiritual currents influencing Tibet; China and India. The former looked with joy and admiration upon the slumber of nature, which moved her heart to share its life. India only considered spiritual values and closed her eyes to the world, which is indeed the raiment of God; but raiment is not the soul; it is worn out and falls to pieces, it belongs to the reign of things that pass and are transformed, while man is made to conquer the eternal, beyond the changing world of forms.

This influence is also felt in the pictorial lives of saints; the monasteries and temples which used to prevail become more sparse, they nestle on the slopes of mountains or gleam white among green fields where sheep and oxen are grazing and strange birds fly overhead.

In the narrative tankas of Sa skya and then in those of Tashilunpo and Narthang, Tibetan painting cut loose from the old tradition that each event should be enclosed in an independent picture, as e. g. in the Nepalese tanka reproducing Śākyaśrī's biography. Now these rules are forgotten, the stories freely unfold round the central figure, like a ribbon displaying its curves. In lively groups the artist encloses and condenses particular elements meant to identify immediately the occurrence they represent; but some conventions hailing back to Indian art persist like the rule that the principal character must be drawn on a larger scale, or that the place where the episode occurs should be represented by special symbols, as animals or plants suggesting it.

When Chinese models do not prevail as it is the case with the K'ams school, then the Tibetans continue to bring into the tankas a reflection of their country: its turquoise skies, that deep blue whose airy veils seem to caress the mountain tops, where roaming clouds glitter like icy peaks. The colours of the earth are as vivid as those of the sky; mountains have the tints of gold; the green of a few barley-fields, as if to make up for surrounding squallor, shimmers like an emerald. And man too is in harmony with this luminous atmosphere: red-cloaked monks walking along whitewashed houses which, seen from a distance, look like blocks of marble fallen into the desolate yellow wilderness which separates the scanty and remote urban centres set in this stony desert.

The painter, held spellbound by this light, has flooded the tankas with a scale of the most vivid colours, beaming in airy cheerfulness.

It is true that all of Eastern painting is luminous; light floods it from above, with no shadows or dark corners; it is an art of sunshine and bright daylight. Even when some night-scene is represented, the night is so transparent and diaphanous that nothing is veiled or darkened. India alone has tried to represent night's gloomy mystery, but not before the Moghul period and perhaps under the influence of Western painting, which in those times was first introduced into the country. When Tibetan paintings too represent night, it is not the gloom of night they are interested in but cosmic darkness, the gloom of abysses from which the forces of evil ascend, and also the good forces which in order to fight and conquer them, must come down to their level and plunge into that world. This is to be seen in the mGon k'añ tankas, representing terrific deities, which are so peculiar that they will have to be treated separately.

Out of the fundamental pattern defined by theology and iconography, the Tibetan masters then drew a synchrony, so to say, of details, backgrounds, minor scenes, accompanying and explaining, with their vivid tones, the central vision; not light and shadow, but degrees of light, alternating flashes of red, deep blue stains, golden splendours, green spaces and white serenities. The colours know no shades, softening or toning down; they are what they are in their most outspoken purity.

But the tankas, whether they breathe a domestic, Tibetan air or reproduce the essential traits of Chinese landscape with a naive yet lively accuracy, still retain surviving Indian reminiscences, which the schools had handed down through the centuries with extreme reverence and had not dared to alter: among those rocks Indian ascetics, half-naked, are seen transplanted into the Country of Snows, with gazelles and with an entire flora which does not belong to Tibet.

As life penetrates Tibet and the Chinese influx is felt more and more, the drawing becomes more graceful and refined; the central

images are still cold and motionless as in the rude old art, but the scenes unfolding around them are free: lines bend and flow with ease to follow and represent the gestures of praying monks, the processions, the pageants of abbots. In certain cases even those large figures of gods or monks which occupy the centre of the tankas and represent the spiritual essence to which the paintings are dedicated, acquire a greater levity. Hairs in heads and beards are drawn one by one, instead of being represented, as in the old paintings, by indistinct masses of blue and black; arms become longer and more delicate; the artists' skill concentrates above all in drawing the hands: soft, tapering, fragile, they foreshadow the spirit, its embodiment in a form where matter, fading out before its levity, becomes almost rarefied and diaphanous. These hands bend and move as if they were not bound up with flesh, so that the entire life of these figures is in their hands, which flutter, point and express by gestures more than words can say. These painters have continued and perfected a tradition already outlined, though with less skill and force of inspiration, also in the more ancient specimens, and it is not by chance that they dwelt on hands and were able to represent them in so vivid and expressive a fashion. The liturgy of the *mudrās* had led up to it, viz. the symbolic gestures of ritual drama which accompany the liturgic formulas and make them operative, leading them to their destination. The word *mudrā*, as we saw, means "seal", and the *mudrās* are in reality a seal, without which the words would remain suspended in a void and would lack any operative virtue. The mystical plane cannot be reached without those two keys viz. *mantra* and *mudrā* to open up its mysteries. This is the reason why painters were so careful in drawing the hands of the deities.

As it is always the case when an interior urge and a creative impulse are absent, since the static fixity of divine images cannot by any

means be altered, the details became the object of the greatest care. Then clothes were covered with arabesques in their minutest items, lined with gold and patterns, reproduced in their natural vividness of colours and embroideries; hence this art very often dwells on a painstakingly accurate ornamental decoration. But this attempt to infuse life into the stiff and motionless figures, drawn according to a mechanical iconography, by means of skilful colour-schemes or minute trimmings, is all in vain; the figures do not lose their hieratic fixity, unmoved by the least throb of life. They are lifeless and limp projections of a world of remote ideas, they do not come down to comfort those who pray before them; their smile does not share human feelings, and in order to ascend to their level man must cut loose from his personality: there is no bridge between their impassibility and the throes of earthly strife. Nor could it have been otherwise, in a religion which reduces its deities to symbols and has but rarely established human relations with divine beings nor imagined and felt them as approaching humanity with a parent's love. Prayer has been supplanted by meditation (*dhyāna*) which is a way of reflecting on those symbols so as to annul the human person in their splendour and essence.

Such, in their main lines, are the vicissitudes of Tibetan art; they cannot properly be called a history, for the history of art is written through the succession of artistic personalities, the development of their genius, and in centuries of Tibetan painting on canvas we only see the alternating of schemes which, once they have been formed, are handed down, anonymous and unchanged.

Should we then for this reason come to the conclusion that Tibetan painting has no artistic value whatever and is altogether nothing but the production of a class of craftsmen, living on a perfunctory tradition, unable to renew it? I do not think that such a sweeping judgement does justice to the

pious and anonymous illuminators who tried to express on canvas the phantoms of their faith. Let us put aside the *maṇḍala* or the compositions enforced by a liturgical pattern and let us speak of the Tibetan art of the XVIIIth century. These artists behold with a religious awe the visions unfolding before their minds' eyes, and know how to express in their works the mixed emotions of their soul. The fact that their technical resources are poor does not impair in the least the evocative depth of their compositions: one perceives that the artist says neither more nor less than what he feels: he gives himself up to his images, and they obediently settle on canvas, with the levity, even with the haziness, of things seen in a dream. At other times, as in the paintings of the mGon k'añ, where terrific deities grimace threateningly, the nightmare of these visions takes hold of the artist to such an extent, that his creative powers seem to be stimulated; precisely in these evocations of fearful phantoms, which trouble the Tibetan artist's subconsciousness, or in the smiling artlessness of his heavens reflecting his country's aspect, he reaches his highest effects, through his consummate skill in assorting and matching colours. Grousset has justly deplored that historians of Eastern art should still misunderstand Tibetan art and remain indifferent to it. With his distinctive insight the same author has perceived a kinship between these anonymous artists of the Country of Snows and such painters as Beato Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli. I entirely agree with him: both schools of painting breathe the same air, they have the same naive serenity, even if their language is naturally different. I am also an admirer of Persian painting, but I do not see why this should make us indifferent to Tibetan painting, which labours under the same limitations, but rivals Persian art in its wonderful symphony of colours; while the latter is closer to man and to the earth, the former is more transparent and beatific.

## 10. SYMBOLICAL MEANING OF COLOURS AND LINES

As I have already said more than once, this painting is exclusively religious, in so far as it draws its inspiration exclusively from religious subjects. But Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna gradually gave Tibetans the habit of considering all events unsubstantial and vain: the world is a mirage and a phantom, passions a dream, our own thoughts a delusion. Everything is thus "void,,, and has no existence by itself. Buddhism therefore does not aim at the conquest of heaven, and even in Mahāyāna celestial bliss is not the supreme reward of life. Each rebirth in heaven leads to a new form of existence, blessed, happy, angel-like, but nevertheless liable to inescapable change and decay; the gods are not eternal and even those born in heaven are fatally obliged to leave it as soon as the merit which brought them there has been spent up. The karma which has projected them there vanishes in the process of ripening, is replaced by the operation of some other karma.

Surely the masses hopefully turned their eyes to the celestial bliss of Amitābha's, Mañjūśrī's and Akṣobhya's heavens, particularly to Amitābha's or Amitāyus', god of infinite light or of eternal life, where they confidently hoped their conscious principle, that is their karmic personality, the kernel and foundation of individual existence, would be transplanted, to begin a new and blissful life. But the learned people held about these celestial spheres a different, more complicated view; moreover the Buddhist doctrine's supreme purpose and the ultimate aim that devotees hope to attain, albeit in a very remote time, is the complete dissolution of the mirage of existence, even of a heavenly existence, and the reabsorption into that colourless light from which all things are born. This light is the "Void,,, at least for us submerged as we are in the delusion of a cosmic "becoming,, and enveloped in the deceitful yearning after

various images; but of a truth, that light is "Being", quintessential plenitude, Dharma-kāya and it is attained by degrees as, while one climbs to higher and higher spheres, the veil of *māyā*, hiding it from us, is thinned out or torn asunder. Those spheres do not belong either to this earth or to another plane, but are outside any determination of time and space. They are reached by a sudden ascent, through the meditative process, which unveils, in an immediate fulguration, visions and flashes which are already a realm of experiences lifting men out of humanity.

Every mystical plane has its symbolic projection, expressed, as in a mysterious writing, by the figures of the gods; the initiate reads into them the secret instructions which will produce his palingenesis. Or else the gods are a conventional image of the forces with which the adept must identify himself, in order to be, as soon as he has absorbed their miracle-working power, in a condition to produce miracles, vanquish fiends, conquer that abysmal world whence evil germinates for cosmos and for men.

Tibetan painting is inspired by this atmosphere. With the single exception of the lives of saints, it nearly always puts before us the symbols of spiritual planes; for this reason it preserves, largely, the stiffness of geometrical patterns. The paradigm of the *maṇḍalas* rules the development of Tibetan painting; in the centre of the *maṇḍala* looms the symbol of a mystical sphere or of a particular moment of cosmic evolution, while all around the successive emanations unfold through which that light or spiritual force are gradually transformed into psychical energies and into the changing evolution of material reality; equally in the other tankas, round the figure of the god or of the saint occupying the centre, the acolytes and disciples shine forth like a mystical rose, which expresses the irradiation of truth and the spiritual link uniting those who have been initiated into the same mystery.

Hence these paintings, whether tankas or frescoes on the temple walls, are often called by the name of *Ziñ k'ams*; this word is a translation of the Sanskrit *kṣetra*, i. e. *Buddhakṣetra*, the "realm of the Buddha", those ideal spheres where the spirits of the elect, once enlightenment has effaced from them the stains of samsaric existence, partake of the vision of a Buddha, the miraculous projection of supreme truth, proportioned to the contemplating soul's maturity. These reigns of the Buddha are commonly called heavens, but the name is improper, since one does not ascend to them only after death. Popular Lamaist experience supposes that a person's conscious principle may be projected into them, either owing to its ripeness or by a liturgical operation. According to learned currents, this can also take place at any moment, as soon as the meditative process lifts us out of earthly life into that purity, and we become of the same substance. This process transfers us to those heights where more than human experiences take place, in a community of the elect where no degrees of quality exist, and a preaching of the Law is heard, naturally deeper and more mysterious than the one revealed to common men on earth. But these visions are not the artist's fancies; they are founded on well known literary texts, on one of the numberless revelations which, preached on those planes, have descended among men, in proportion to their moral and mental capacities.

The main object of these paintings is to facilitate for their beholders a revulsion from the plane of samsaric existence to those immaculate spheres. For this reason they are often called *mt'ön grol*, which means "liberation through sight"; they produce the liberation of the beholder, if he looks on them with pure eyes and penetrating mind. They must not be considered as possessed of a magical power, thanks to which their mere presence suffices to transport us in the beautiful worlds they represent. Nothing comes to

pass which has not been accomplished through a complete participation of our inmost being, capable of transforming us into different beings. For these paintings operate like the texts of the Great Vehicle or of the Adamantine Vehicle. It is necessary, in order to read their symbols and their forms, to understand their mysterious language, it is necessary to *live* their meaning. Then a consubstantiation with the plane they represent takes place; the contemplator becomes unified with the object of his contemplation, so that in those spheres he is reborn on the miraculous lotus.

*mT'oñ grol* is the name commonly given for this reason to *mc'od rten* like those of Gyantse. But the same name is used for pictures adorning their chapels, and the great canvas tanka which the Nañ c'en of Gyantse had made in remembrance of a title he had received from the Mongol Emperors is also called *m't'oñ grol* (MC, p. 111). For this reason the author of the MC, speaking of the consecration of this tanka, relates with deep conviction the miracles which are said to have happened: flowers and perfume rained down from the sky on the temple of Gyantse. The tanka had transported the devotees spiritually ripe for the understanding of its hidden ideograms into the worlds it represented. They ascended to those spheres and partook of celestial glories. Hence the flowers rained not on the Gyantse monastery but on those heavens into which the contemplators had soared.

It cannot be objected that this interpretation seems to be contradicted by the fact that often the choirs of the elect consist of disciples arranged round a Master's figure, and all of them historical personages, whose life and history are known. In this case also the reality of the personages does not consist in their having appeared on earth, having had an earthly name and having performed a mission there. All that is mere appearance, as it was in the Buddha's case. Of them too, when they sicken and die, it is said

that "they teach the manner of falling ill and of entering nirvana . . . as if life was nothing but an image appearing to men, indeed evoked by men according to their karmic preparation. Their reality is precisely in those supreme spheres where their spirit attains communion with their Master; there they listen to his revelation, which is identical with that of the Buddhas, because their master is such insofar as he is at one with "the body of the Law . . . from which every reality and every revelation starts. Exactly for this reason the Master is represented in the Buddha's very *mudra* and is called *rdo rje qdsin*, *rdo rje ac'añ*, *vajradhara*, because he is unified with the adamantine body, i. e. with the body of the Law.

For this reason Tibetan painting, rather than religious, might be called liturgical, both because it was born as a ritual element and because of the evocation which the artist must perform before painting, and which I shall mention later. In its schemes it follows the indications of Tantric liturgy, which is a texture of scholastic and theological subtleties; it is a creation not of fancy but of the intellect, a ritual act or an illustrated theological handbook: the tankas preserve the stiff pattern and the geometrical symmetry of both, and are bound to their inspirations to such an extent that, when the meaning of the picture is not manifest, explanatory inscriptions are added. This painting finds its artistic value only in the polyphony of colours which alternate and follow one another like the notes of a concert. But in this art nothing is left to chance, and even colours are not of the artist's choice; they are strictly prescribed by theology.

Often gold takes the place of this polychromy, enforced by ideological links between colours and Buddhas; I mean that the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas are not represented according to their proper colour, but are all uniformly golden. In the case of some deities, Amitābha for instance, the

golden colour is justified by literary tradition, although in the maṇḍala the colour belonging to him is red. The *Amitāyurdhyanasūtra* says: "Now he shows himself as possessing a splendid body, filling the whole sky, now he assumes a body which seems small, sixteen to eighteen cubits in height. This body in which he shows himself, always has the colour of pure gold .."

For other deities the golden colour is easily explained, as gold is not only the symbol of purity but also of truth, and this since the remotest times of Brahmanic speculation (S. LÉVI, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Br.*, p. 17). Gold shares these properties with diamonds; the *vajrasana*, the place where the Buddha attained supreme enlightenment, that is where he flowed back into the *dharmakāya*, beyond human contingency and sinfulness, is *suvarṇavarṇa*, "gold-coloured .." (SM, I, p. 19, see further).

In other words the emanation of cosmos from the first principle which is absolute consciousness and a shining light, is accordingly expressed, as we already saw, through a subtle symbology of colours; the first process by which that light becomes concrete, its first reaching out towards the world, as the germinal idea of the whole, is represented by white in Vairocana's figure; next come blue, yellow, red, green, to which correspond as many symbols, the images of Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi, the five supreme Buddhas esoterically called "the five mystical families ..", because living beings and things which are in the universe belong necessarily to one group or the other, that is they are in syntony with this or that manifestation of cosmic energy and of its working. Colour then has a fundamental value and meaning of its own; in the case of deities it is not chosen haphazard, it is the symbol of an essence which through its suggestions must be possessed by the contemplator to the extent of becoming identified with it.

With the exception of the latest tankas, over which the breath of Chinese painting

has passed, the Tibetans, never forgetting the patterns of the Indian *maṇḍalas*, have thus considered painting as a projection of the celestial world: are even, unearthly outline of beings; these figures are not bodies but essences, an afflatus breathing through the cosmos, not cosmos itself. Hence the line which limits and designs their form, with no attempt on the artist's part to reveal by chiaroscuro and the interplay of light their plastic solidity, has a magical value; it resembles the sign drawn in the air by a magician's wand; it defines, in spheres invisible to human eyes, disembodied appearances, magical symbols of those planes operating, with their imperceptible omnipresence, in the "becoming .. of the worlds. These lines cut into space, which is an image of the void, the boundaries of a *templum* and isolate that brief surface on which evocation will cause the divine presence to descend. Line is the essential element of these pictures: this is so true that *lha bris* "to write gods ..", or *ri mor bkod pa*, "to dispose into lines ..", is the Tibetan term for "to paint ..", while in India, by calling for painting *citra*, preeminence was given to colour, its variety and harmony. A linear type of painting, it gives us the scheme of things, not things themselves; it is almost a visible reflection of the magic atmosphere in which Tibetans have always lived. Fearing nature, in which occult forces are hidden in ambush, they have extracted its symbols in order to defend themselves from nature by operating on and through the symbols.

## II. TO PAINT IS TO EVOKE

Every painting is an evocation. It could not be otherwise because in order to see those images, it was necessary to close one's eyes to the earth. As all over the East, in Tibetans well, the painter does not copy from nature: led through yoga to a state of ecstasy, he sees the images of the gods with the eyes of

the spirit, not with those of the flesh. Indeed the artist, like the officiating priest accomplishing a liturgical act, must be at one with the spiritual planes which he wants to reproduce or upon which he wishes to act: between *māyā*, the changing play of magical freedom, and the world of essences which transcends *māyā*, there is no possible understanding: *nādevo devam arcayet*, "let him who is not a God not worship God,,. Hence the act of painting is preceded by a deification of the artist;<sup>24)</sup> according to a process with which we shall deal again, in greater detail, when speaking of the consecration of the tankas, the artist becomes identified with the supreme, immaterial, unchangeable, eternal principle of things, colourless light, indiscriminate consciousness from which all things are born. In a second moment, by reproducing within himself the eternal process of cosmic evolution and emerging from that condition of dreamlike stupour, like the cosmic consciousness in its tending towards the concrete of "becoming,, , he imagines in the centre of his heart, i. e. on the plane of the infinite powers translating germinal ideas into acts, certain mystical syllables. They vary according to the spiritual states which the artist wishes to issue from himself and which are their mystical seed, because every syllable is sound and sound is the first moving force of things. From that sound, by virtue of the magic relation binding things to the ideas of things, expressed by sounds, emanate by an inviolable necessity the images of the gods, that is the symbols of those planes according to the form proper to each, fixed by the *sādhana* or formulas for evocation and meditation.

He who performs the liturgical act and wishes to paint a sacred image, must then become assimilated with the first principle of things, and next extract out of himself and project the infinite worlds which that principle contains, drawing them only out of himself, by virtue of the power of meditation and of ritual.

Preparation for painting a picture is the same as preceds a liturgical rite; the cotton must be gathered in a pure place by an initiated person, it must be purified by the use of *mantra* and by a special ceremony for which the intervention of a maiden is required, and she must be blessed with a particular rite; next she must spin the cotton, and the thread thus prepared must be given to an experienced weaver, endowed with signs of good omen: he must be neither old nor diseased, he must not suffer from asthma or catarh, nor have gray hair; no physical defect whatever must be in him. This weaver, after having carried out the rites of purification, must begin his work in an auspicious day and hour, and perform a lustration of the articles used for weaving. When the material is ready the painter, who must be a *sādhaka*, a person capable of mystical realizations, begins to paint.

All this painting then is based on two fundamental elements: evocation and line, which we might call inspiration and the language expressing it, were it not that the evocation is not the artist's free fancy, but a finding anew, on his part, of the schemes of eternal essences. Thus art is not a creation, in which the artist's personality is expressed, but the reproduction of pre-existing paradigms which he finds already described and he is also intructed in the manner of causing them to shine on his mind with lightning-like vividness. In his ability to reproduce those visions and in the accuracy with which he renders their details, lies all his merit. That some artists should confer peculiar vibrations on those images and go beyond those schemes by force of a higher skill, that they should be true artists and not mere craftsmen, as it sometimes has been the case, does not matter to the Tibetans, who are only interested in the religious aspect of the tankas and do not care for whatever artistic value they may possess.

The value of line in these paintings and the fact that line is determined by fixed rules

codified in literary works, the symbolic meaning that we have seen underlying the images, now induce us to speak of the iconometry which strictly regulates their design.

## 12. ICONOMETRY

Painting in Tibet is, as we have said, a part of the *rig gnas*, i. e. of those branches of knowledge which are the object of intellectual, not of intuitive (*nañ rigs*) activity: it is on the same plane as grammar, rhetoric, mathematics and astrology. That is treatises on painting deal with artistic means of expression, with the external plan, with the framework of a piece of art, as if it were a building not to be created, but rather to be constructed anew according to pre-established models. Kloñ rdol bla ma discusses together, in the same treatise, the art of making statues and medicine. Equally the fifth Dalai Lama deals with art and iconometry in a treatise on astrology.

As we have said above, a god is not drawn according to the artist's whim and fancy; not only would this be sacrilege, but the image thus obtained would not yield any effect, nor would it possess any liturgical value. There is a relation, which cannot be violated, between the gods and the lines which circumscribe them; it has been fixed by the canons of iconometry, which is the grammar of drawing and the science of the mathematical proportions regulating all images. If those rules are not observed, one might as well make a calculation based on wrong figures: the result is not correct.

"The image, all of whose lines are complete, is a bestower of happiness, while the image in which they are lacking causes all sorts of evils," (*Vivarāṇī*, ed. H. MITRA, p. 1).

This iconometry has nothing to do with the canons of classical antiquity: it is not used to reproduce a type of ideal beauty. Man, as we have seen, is of no account in this type

of painting, entirely transcendent and magical. Iconometry has a liturgical value, it is like the survey of that consecrated area on which the priest has to perform a ritual.

Naturally the Tibetans, in this instance too, have created nothing: they have followed Indian iconometry, which has ancient traditions and has been discussed in many handbooks, fashioned in the technical schools of the *śilpa*, and later becoming differentiated according to religious sects.

It goes without saying that the Tibetans, when they took possession of the Buddhist tradition, began by translating the best-known handbooks on iconometry into their own language, and having done this they included them in the bsTan ḡgyur. Then Tibetan masters, following the pattern of these basic treatises, with the addition of other traditions which had penetrated into their country, always from India, compiled new collections for their craftsmen to use.

The Indian works on iconometry included in the bsTan ḡgyur, as Laufer has pointed out, are four, entitled:

I. *Citrakakṣaṇa*, a treatise on painting, edited in Tibetan and translated by Laufer into German. The work is attributed to Naḡnjit, recorded in the Indian tradition (see f. i. Utpala's commentary on *Brhatsambhīta* Viz. SS, p. 770, chap. 57, v. 4).

II. *Pratimāmānalakṣaṇa*, also called *Ātreya-tilaka*, because the soothsayer Ātreya is considered its author. The book is in verse and was translated into Tibetan by Dhar-madhara and Grags pa rgyal mts'an; the Sanskrit text was edited by P. N. Bose, in "The Punjab Sanskrit Series,".

III. *Daśatālanyaḡrodhaparimaṇḡala-buddhaprati-mālakṣaṇa*; this work differs from the other two in this, that while the former are attributed to two personages of the Brahmanic tradition, both connected with technical literature, this third text is *buddhabhāṣita*, revealed by the Buddha, and in fact, like all the Sūtra, it begins, in the Tibetan translation

and in one of the Sanskrit versions, with the usual formula: *Evam mayā śrutam*, "Thus I have heard,..". It is said to have been revealed by Śākyamuni when he descended from the Tuṣita heaven, where he had gone to preach the Law to his own mother. The disciple whose question elicited the revelation from him was Śāriputra; hence, in the Tibetan literary tradition, this book is also called *Śā ri bui žus pa, Śāriputrapariṣcā*. (But it has nothing to do with the work of the same title Taishō, n. 1465).

The place of revelation was the Jetavana. This small work is inserted in vol. CXXIII of the *bsTan agyur*, while as a *sūtra*, it ought to be found in the *bKa' agyur*; in fact it is missing in the index of the *Tōhoku Imperial Library*, p. 661, where its commentary is inserted instead. The Tibetan tradition preserved by *sMan t'añ pa*, who passed it on to his followers, knows four versions of this work:

1. *bDe bar gšegs pai sku gzugs kyī ts'ad bstan pa*, spoken by the Buddha in the *rNam rgyal k'añ bzañ* in the Tuṣita heaven; it was translated by the Nepalese paṇḍita Jayasiddhi and by the *lotsāva* *Byañ c'ub*.

2. *mT'o bcu pa nya gro dha ltar c'u žen gab*, revealed in the Jetavana, on the return from the Tuṣita heaven, on Śāriputra's request.

3. *bCom ldan aḍas sku gzugs kyī mts'an nīd mt'o bcu*, as above.

4. *Śā ri bu žus pai ts'ad kyī gzuñ ruñ par bya ba*, translated by *Jo bo rje* (*Atiśa*) and by *rMa dGe blo gros*.

Which of these may be the text preserved in the *sNar t'añ* edition, it is difficult to tell, as the edition has no colophon at all.

This work, at any rate, is known in its Sanskrit text, twice published in India by J. N. Banerjea, *Pratimālakṣana in Texts from Nepal*, Calcutta University Press, 1932, and by Haridas Mitra in *Sarasvati Bhavanā Series* 1933 (cf. BENDALL'S, *Catal.*, p. 200 ff.).

The *Tsao siang liang tu ching chieh* 造像量度經解 (Taishō, XXI, n. 1419 translated into Ch. by a Mongol officer *mGon po skyabs*

in the years 1742-1743) contains, besides the translation of this text, a commentary incorporated into it; it is drawn not so much from Indian works inserted in the *bsTan agyur*, as from Tibetan iconographic literature. It is certainly taken largely from the treatise by *sMan t'añ pa* and specially of *dPal blo bzañ po*; this appears chiefly from the paragraphs dealing with the deity's ornaments and postures.

IV. *Sambuddha-bhāṣita-pratimālakṣana-vivarana* (CORDIER, *Cat.*, p. 474, n. 5) is a commentary on the preceding, translated into Tibetan by Dharmadhara and by the *lotsāva* *Grag pa rgyal mts'an* of *Guñ t'añ*. But a comparative research shows that this commentary is different from the *Vivarana* edited by H. Mitra, which is ampler and in many occasions deals at some length with subjects that the brief *Sūtra* does not touch.

Neither the Peking edition (CORDIER, *Cat.*, p. 474, n. 5) nor the *sNar t'añ* one mention the author of this work, but in *Buston's* catalogue of the *bsTan agyur* the *vivarana* is attributed to *Ātreya: Drañ sroñ a rii* (sic) *bus mdsad pai yañ dag par rdsogs pai sañs rgyas kyis gsuñs pai sku gzugs kyī mts'an nīd kyī rnam agrel* (complete works, vol. *ya*, p. 171 b) which is, with the *pratimāmānalakṣana*, the only work on art (*bzo rig*) known to *Buston*.

These are the technical treatises dealing exclusively with iconometry, but there are remarkable mutual influences between this literature and the Tantra: Buddhism, in this respect, is in the same case as Śivaism. The Tantras, in describing *paṭas* and *maṇḍalas*, did not forget to lay down the essential measurements of each deity; hence sometimes these treatises do nothing but draw their rules from the Tantras. But, particularly in the later Tantras, we cannot deny that the contrary may have happened, i. e. that iconometric handbooks may have been transferred and included into them wholesale.

*M.lle Lalou* has the merit of having made known, in a very diligent study, the iconographic section of the *MMK* and of the parallel text of the *Tāramūlakalpa* (*HJAS*,

1936, p. 327). But this is not the only text containing such precepts. To recall but the most important, I may quote the *dPal sdom pa abyun ba* and its commentary (bKa' rgyud, *rGyud*, XII, part I, pp. 97-98; vol. *ga*, p. 62, chap. 30: *ri mo sogs pai skui mts'an ñid ñes par p'ye pa*, a purely iconometric section), and the *Dus kyī ak'or lo*. The *Kriyāsamuccaya* also contains a remarkable iconographic section.

Tibetan literature followed this Indian pattern; it may be divided into two groups, and the chief authors, according to Kloñ rdol bla ma in his pamphlet quoted above, on the arts (*bzo rig*), are:

sMan bla Don grub rgya mts'o of Lho brag called by the fifth Dalai Lama *pir t'ogs dbañ po* (vol. *va*, *rTsis*, p. 9), father and son; the dBu mdsad C'os dbyiñs rgya mts'o of gTsañ, whom we have already seen quoted by Blo bzañ rgya mts'o as an artist of great fame, to whom the decoration of the Potala was entrusted; he is also mentioned by Sum pa mk'an po as one of the most celebrated *lha bzo* of Tibet; sMan t'añ pa father and son (one of them was called sMan t'añ aJam pai dbyañs), Byi 'u lha bzo ba of Yar kluñs, Žun t'iñ pai dag ris, sPrul sku mk'yen brse of Goñ dkar stod, sPrul sku Neu c'uñ ba, sPrul sku Ri mk'ar pa, also quoted by the fifth Dalai Lama (*ibid.*), sPrul sku p'reñ k'a pa, dBu mdsad bsTan aḍsin nor bu (Kloñ rdol, *op. cit.*, *Ma*, p. 7 b).

Some treatises Kloñ rdol quotes are unknown to me, others are listed here, of which there is no trace in his book.

1. According to an oral tradition I have found in many places, which also reached Roerich, there is in existence a general treatise on painting, called by my informers *Vai ser*, *Vai ñu rya ser po*. A *Vai ñu rya ser po* is well known: it is the history of the Yellow Sect, written by the sDe srid Sañs rgyas rgya mts'o we have mentioned, but it contains no section dealing with iconometry and painting.

2. *rGyud sdei rgya mts'o sku gzugs kyī p'yag ts'ad kyī rab tu byed pa kun las bsdus pai*. This

is a list of deities and at the same time a summary description, without any iconometric reference; rather a collection of sāḍhanas than a real treatise on iconometry. It opens with a hymn to rDo rje gdan, and it closes with a hymn to Ri k'rod ma. The colophon is missing; the work has been copied from a manuscript of Sa skya.

3. *sKu gzugs kyī p'yag ts'ad rab tu byed pa kun las bsdus pa*. This, an appendix to the first, is a real iconometrical treatise, which lays down the proportions of the Tathāgata, taking as a base those of Śākyamuni; the second part is dedicated to the Sambhogakāya taking as a model Vairocana's image; a part follows dealing with the more properly Tantric deities, beginning with sDom pa, Saṃvara. Thus it has many analogies with the work that follows. It was written by dPal mi p'am bSod nam rgya mts'o p'yogs las t'ams cad las nram pai rgyal bai sde in Potala (*gru aḍsin*).

4. *rDsogs pai sañs rgyas mc'og gi sprul pai skui p'yag ts'ad sman t'añ pas mdsad pa*. It is a part, from the seventh to the tenth chap., of a treatise written by the famous sMan t'añ pa, quoted, as we have said above, by (p. 137) Kloñ rdol bla ma, and by SP (p. 137) as one of the greatest artists in Tibet. This fragment is divided into sections, in which the author gives the measurements of several deities, from Śākyamuni to the Śrāvaka, from the Yakṣa and the Rākṣasa to Gaṇapati, quoting each time the different theories contained in the most authoritative Tantras. Judging from the colophon, the title of the complete work seems to have been *Legs bśad 'od zer brgya p'rag*. "When moved by the desire to foster the garden of the lotuses of good, the sun is diffused ('od zer rgya p'rag) of the beautiful sayings (emanated) from the vast maṇḍala of the intelligence of sMan t'añ pa of Lho brag, experienced in the arts, although the lunar lotus of the mouth of fools closes, the water-lily (of the spirit) of the experienced opens ..."

5. *bDe bar gśegs pai sku gzugs kyī ts'ad kyī rab tu byed pai yid bžin gyi nor bu*, pp. 1-34.

This is a general treatise on iconometry which, besides the proportions of statues, contains also those of *mc'od rten*. The book was printed in dGa's ldan p'un ts'ogs glin; the author is dPal blo bzañ po, who re-edited the works of sMan t'añ pa, whose incarnation he considered himself to be. He is quoted by the fifth Dalai Lama (*ibid.*, p. 8); when we compare this treatise with the fragment of his predecessor, a verbal correspondence is noticeable, but as I do not possess sMan t'añ pa's complete work, I cannot tell what Blo gros bzañ po's original contribution, if any, amounts to. At the same time we notice a close relationship between these treatises, elaborated by sMan t'añ pa and his school, and Pratimālakṣaṇa's commentary (*Vivaraṇī*) edited by H. Mitra; the relation is so intimate that there can be no doubt that this text was known to those craftsmen, although we are not informed that a Tibetan translation of the book existed.

6. *Bris skui rnam bśad mt'oñ ba don ldan* is a small treatise on iconometry, written by the well known polygraphist Pad ma dkar po. It is included in vol. K'a of the complete works, and brings no new contribution to what we already know. The booklet begins with a brief introduction on the origin of the Buddha's images, from the one Bimbisāra sent to king Rudrāyana of Roruka, up to the sandal-wood Jo bo, later taken to China. This work also starts from the Buddha's images, and then goes on to deal with those of the terrific deities.

7. *sKu gsuñ t'ugs rten t'ig rtsa mc'an agrel can me tog ap'reñ ba mdses* by Sum pa mk'an po (LAUFER, *Dokumente*, p. 39).

8. *Saṅs rgyas kyi gzugs brñan bris pai t'ig ts'ad* (SCHMIDT-BÖHLINGK, *Verzeichniss der Tib. Handschs. und Holzdrücke im Asiatischen Museum*, p. 59, n. 6).<sup>25)</sup>

We will not go into the details of this Buddhist iconometry, which adds nothing new to the schemes adopted by the Hindu masters, well known thanks to Gopinath Rao's studies.

The Buddhists have not contributed any novel addition, they too are derived from the common fund of a single experience, ripening in the course of centuries and handed down by the living tradition of craftsmen's schools.

But iconometry did not only codify a praxis which had become established in the art schools; it based its types and founded its plan on the research and the classifications of physiognomy, whose origins are very ancient in India: starting from the myth of the *mahā-puruṣa* the "great man", saint or sovereign, and his distinguishing bodily features it defined the measurements of perfect creatures.

But this perfection, we repeat it, is not the perfection of an ideal beauty, it is the expression of an inner superiority, the manifestation, through signs and proportions, of a nature transcending humanity, the symbol of participation in an essence different from that which common creatures are made of. Indian liturgical thought, ever since its beginnings, delighted in mathematical relations; the vedic altar is a construction which follows accurate and inviolable geometrical rules. Prajāpati's altar, used in the Agnicayana sacrifice, would not partake of the god's essence, nor would the sacrificer be able to equal the god, if he did not scrupulously respect the measurements, laid down by ritualistic. The god's image, before being an object of worship is, like the stūpa, the projection, accessible to human beings, of a divine essence, and it may be "read", in many and different manners according as the worshippers are prepared to understand it. Hence it must naturally conform to an exact scheme. On the other hand the same tradition had fixed the measurements of the Buddha, indeed of the Buddhas, because their proportions vary with the cosmic ages in which they appear: Śākyamuni measures 16 feet, because 16 is the perfect number. The number 4 is the unity of measure already appearing in the most ancient Indian myths; four is the whole; since vedic times four means totality.

The Puruṣa, it is said in the *Puruṣasūktā*, is composed of four parts (*pāda*); one of them constitutes living beings, the realized world, and three remain immortal in heaven (3rd stanza).

By multiplying four by itself, we have 16; already in the Upanishads 16 is the whole, the all; in the Tantras 16 are the *titibi*, lunar fractions, fifteen of which alternate in the round of the phases, while one remains eternal, alien to temporal events, a symbol of the changlessness of being, of supreme reality, persisting beyond the flux of things; it is the subject of great esoteric speculations. The Buddha too must measure 16 feet because he is the whole; nothing is outside him.

Leaving aside the iconometric details discussed in the treatises mentioned above, I will nevertheless give a list of their essential canons, to throw light on what shall be said later, and on the atmosphere Tibetan artists were educated in.

Of course the typical figure, the model and standard, is Śākyamuni, the perfect master, the *nirmāṇakāya*, that manifestation of the supreme essence, *dharmakāya*, revealing itself to men of this our world, the *Jambudvīpa*. There is a relation of reciprocity between the being revealing himself and the person to whom he is revealed, by virtue of which the latter, in a certain sense, fashions the former and adapts him to his manner of conceiving and to his karmic maturity, so that he appears as "a man amongst men, god amongst the gods and Brahmā with the Brahmās", (*Siddhi*, pp. 764-765); accordingly the bodies of the Buddhas, shining with thirty-two chief signs and eighty secondary signs, appear in different aspects to created beings according to their faith (*mos*) (*sKyabs agro bdun bcu pa* of Candrakīrti mDo, XXXII, p. 9): the Buddha, in fact, cannot have assumed another form, different from ours, in order to become accessible to us.

Besides this aspect of his as *Nirmāṇakāya*, may also be reproduced the *Sambhogakāya*, the reflections of the *Dharmakāya* preaching

in the heavenly *Gṛdhrakūṭa*, perceptible to the Bodhisattvas of the tenth earth (*ibid.*) and hence reproduced according to the descriptions of revelation or the visions of those who have ascended to that sphere. But the *Dharmakāya* "the reposing intellect of the very essence of things (so says the *sKyabs agro bdun bcu pa*)", is, in theory, unrepresentable, or only the reflections of it appearing in the *Akaṣṭha* may be represented. While in the type of the *Nirmāṇakāya* the loan from the *Cakravartin's* mythography is reduced to the chief and secondary signs (see *Uttaratantra*, trad. OBERMILLER, p. 263 and *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, VIII, pp. 12-17), in the *Sambhogakāya's* type the loan also includes draperies and ornaments.

Like the *Cakravartin*, the Buddha is *Nyagrodha-parimaṇḍala*. *Nyagrodha* is the *ficus indica*, also known by its other name of *vaṭa*; *parimaṇḍala* (Tib.: *c'u zeñ gab*) regularly means circumference, but this meaning does not suit the present case; as a matter of fact there is no intention of saying that the Buddha's body must be well rounded like the trunk of the *nyagrodha* tree. The expression, recurring both in Buddhist canonical texts and in treatises on iconometry, must be understood (according to Utpala, when commenting upon the *Bḥatsambitā*, LVIII, p. 7 and quoting *Parāśara*) in the sense that the length of the figure must be the same as the breadth of the extended arms (*ucchrāyaḥ pariṇāhas tu yasya tulyam*). So we find once again the pattern of the *maṇḍala*: the intersection of two main lines, producing a square or a circle, perfect figures, within which the Buddha's image is theoretically included, or rather the image of the Buddha and of any other deity symbolizing the supreme Being.

Thus the figure is built starting from the bare skeleton of two lines intersecting each other at a right angle; the main line is of course the vertical, called *Brahmā's* line (*ts'añs t'ig*), a symbol of the axis of life; it marks the centre of cosmos; the universe revolves around it. In the physical world it

is identified with Mount Sumeru, which stands in the centre of the earth and lodges the gods on its terraces; they partake less and less of the materiality of things, as they come nearer and nearer to the summit, and from its top one leaps into nirvana, beyond any boundary of space and time. In the individual, a projection, reduced in size but complete, of the macrocosm, that axis is the backbone which passes through different psycho-physic circles above one another. These too become more and more spiritual, in the ascent towards the top of the skull, where according to yoga, is to be found the *brahmarandhra*, "brahma's hole", through which also one leaps from individuated existence into the non-individuation of nirvana.

In the images, Brahmā's line goes from the top of the head to the centre of the sphere of the genital organs, that plane of samsaric life. In any case it has always the same value and presupposes an ideal identification, reached through meditation, of the individual or the statue with the essential scheme of cosmos.

The unity of measure of each image, whether sculpted or painted, is the *aṅguli* or finger, as it was for the vedic altar (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 10, 2; 2). It may be *mātrāṅgula* or *dehalabbhāṅgula*: the first is obtained by taking as a base the breadth of the middle finger, either the artist's or the donor's by whose liberality the statue or the painting are executed. It is not a rare case that the standard unit for the image or the *mc'od rten*, which is the same thing, should be the thumb, the elbow or the arm of the person who has ordered the work. So, to quote an example, the sku ḅbum of Gyantse was built taking as a measure the arm of king Rab brtan kun bzañ. When Ma gcig pad ma died, her husband ḅP'ags pa dpal bzañ po had a statue of sGrol ma modelled in silver, taking as the standard unit the dead woman's thumb. Instances might be multiplied and have their precedents in India (e. g. the statue, mentioned by Hsüan Tsang, which Harṣa caused to be made).

Thus an ideal identification was achieved between the person who consecrated an image and the being it represented, and the consubstantiation realized in the ecstatic process, when the meditating person became one with the god meditated upon, was perpetuated.

The *dehalabbhāṅgula* or simply *dehāṅgula* corresponds to the 108th, 116th, 120th and 124th part of the image, or rather of the wood or stone the image is made of.

As the standard unit thus obtained is rather small, in the case of larger figures it is replaced by the *tāla*, theoretically corresponding to 12 or to  $12\frac{1}{2}$  *aṅgula*, so that the image will be, in different cases, *daśatāla*, *navatāla* and so on (i. e.  $10 \times 12 = 120$ , or  $10 \times 12\frac{1}{2} = 125$  etc.

Having fixed, in one of these ways, this standard unit, the artist begins to outline the image, constructing it geometrically; that is, he starts from the lines that intersect each other, but as the drawing becomes completed in its phases, he traces new lines, parallel to the first, and from the points of intersection he draws transverse lines which, forming triangles, determine the proportions of the different parts. Thus the image is constructed keeping in mind a system of relations and proportions reduced by the *Pratimālakṣaṇa* to the following:

	Aṅgula
uṣṇāsa or ascetic topknot on the Bud-	
dha's head . . . . .	4
hair . . . . .	2
face . . . . .	13½
neck . . . . .	4
from the neck to the breast . . . . .	12½
from the breast to the navel . . . . .	12½
from the navel to the penis . . . . .	12½
thighs . . . . .	25
knee-cap . . . . .	3
foreleg . . . . .	25
ankle . . . . .	2
heel . . . . .	4
	Total 120

By varying the proportions, images are obtained of 108, 116, 124 *aṅgula*.

It may seem surprising that Tibet, always so respectful of India's teachings, should not follow the tradition closely in this case, although it was contained in a text attributed to a revelation from the Buddha, should indeed depart from it precisely in the case of the Master's proportions. Śākyamuni's measure is in fact laid down as 125 *aṅgulas*, instead of the *Pratimālakṣaṇa's* 120 *aṅgula*. How can we explain this departure, the more surprising as this book passes for a revealed text? As a matter of fact the *Pratimālakṣaṇa*, after having said that images are divided into two classes, those representing bodhisattvas and those representing Buddhas, and that the former measure 120 *aṅgula* and the latter 125 *aṅgula*, in the list that follows gives the proportions of the images of 120 *aṅgulas*, i. e. those of bodhisattvas, not those of Buddhas.

This may be explained taking the *tāla* as composed of 12½ *aṅgulas* when the image of the Buddha is concerned. The cause of this increase of the Buddha's proportions from 120 to 125 may be the consideration that, as a being to whom tradition itself had assigned a height superior to that of other men, he should not be put on the same level as the Bodhisattvas, for instance, to whom 120 *aṅgula* were also assigned. The superiority of his nature was thus visibly expressed by a greater height. On the other hand Tibetan tradition, as we shall see from the table given later, follows slightly larger measures, and sometimes makes the parts longer. Moreover Tibetan iconographic treatises are much more complex than the canons contained in Indian works, from the *Pratimālakṣaṇa* to the kindred texts included in the *bsTan ḡgyur*. The latter, in fact, are limited to the Buddha's image but contain no allusion to the infinite number and endless variety of the gods the Vajrayāna teems with. Precisely these gods are often imagined in attitudes which cannot be reduced to Śākyamuni's hieratic rigidity. The Vajrayāna pantheon knows terrific and misshapen deities,

others full of life and movement, hurled by ebriety into a cosmic dance or flung against the enemies of the Law, fearful and relentless.

It is clear that those elementary canons used to represent the preaching or meditating Buddha, or the Buddha motionless and absorbed in heavenly glory, no longer sufficed: Tantric literature, as we have seen, supplied this want, and Tibetan artists drew from it unreservedly. If we glance through the handbook by *sMan t'añ pa*, a standard text for centuries, we find there traces of the new needs which the Vajrayāna's exuberant imagination suggested to iconometry: *sMan t'añ pa*, closing an experience which had lasted for centuries, both in India and in Tibet, classes images, and according as they belong to one type or another, he fixes different iconometric canons. Here we shall follow him obediently because his precepts have become law for Tibetan artistic schools.

I. *Samyaksambuddha*, *Nirmāṇakāya*, in a monastic aspect; it measures, in a vertical sense, i. e. from the top of his head to the tip of his feet, (*svid = vyayāma*) and horizontally (*žeh*), i. e. from one end to the other of his extended arms, ten *t'al mo (tāla)*, and as each *t'al mo* corresponds to 12 *sor mo (aṅgula)* and a half, (*sārdhatrayodaśa*) 125 *sor mo*. The base of the measurement remains that of the Indian treatises: the *tāla*, called in Tibetan *c'a c'en*, "larger part", or *gdön*, *t'al mo*, *mt'o žal*, *žal ts'ad*, or the *aṅgula* called "lesser part", *c'a p'ran*, or *sor mo*, distributed as follows:

	Height
Parts of the body: . . . . .	<i>sor mo</i>
<i>uṣṇīṣa</i> . . . . .	4 ½
hair . . . . .	4
from the hair to the <i>ūrṇā</i> . . . . .	4
from the <i>ūrṇā</i> to the tip of the nose	4
from the tip of the nose to the chin	4 ½
neck . . . . .	4
from the neck to the breast . . . . .	12 ½
from the breast to the navel . . . . .	12 ½
from the navel to the genitals . . . . .	12 ½
	62 ½

hips . . . . .	4
thighs . . . . .	25
knees . . . . .	4
forelegs . . . . .	25
feet . . . . .	4½
	<hr/>
	62½

In the horizontal sense:

from Brahmā's line to the edge of the armpit . . . . .	12½
shoulders . . . . .	20
arm ( <i>p'yag nar</i> ). . . . .	16
forearm ( <i>p'yag ngo</i> ). . . . .	12
elbow . . . . .	1
wrist . . . . .	1
	<hr/>
	62½

The seated images are half this size, i. e. 5 *t'al mo*.

II. The images of the Sambhogakāya are modelled on those of rNam par snañ mdsad; they have the main and secondary characters of the Cakravartin, but as to their proportions they follow the canons fixed for the preceding group.

Aksobhya and the other four, when they are represented in a maṇḍala, in the act of teaching, may be represented of 10 *t'al mo* but reduced to 12 *sor mo*, namely 120 *sor mo* instead of 125. This means that a difference is fixed between proportions of the central figure of the pentad, point of irradiation of the cosmos, and its refractions in the points of space; the latter in fact are created by the former (*ātmabbāvanirmīta*, as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* says) and emanated; although consubstantial with it, they form the divine essence listening to its revelation. It is desired to represent visibly the apparent superiority of one of the five Buddhas, inasmuch as he assumes the aspect of a revealer, although in point of fact they all converge into the same essence.

III. The images included in this group are modelled on those of bDe mc'og; they are the deities of the various Tantric cycles, represented with many heads and arms, attended by their śaktis, nearly always in the

act of dancing or with legs wide apart, in the position called by a technical term *aliḍḍha* or *pratyāliḍḍha*. They measure 12 *t'al mo* each, also of 12 *sor mo*, or, not counting the seat, 11 *t'al mo*; the chief difference is in the ascetical topknot rising above the *uṣṇīṣa*, on which is represented the *rigs bdag*, namely that one of the five Buddhas whose emanation the god is (10 + 2 *sor mo* = one *t'al mo*). Moreover bDe mc'og has four faces, which, according to sMan t'añ pa, may be reduced to four different forms (following the *Vivaraṇa*); they are not described in detail, but defined by similitudes which can only suggest an approximate image of what is truly intended to represent: their vagueness leaves the artist great freedom. In this case, and still more in that of the terrific deities, the C'os skyoñ and the Yi dam, as an expression of uncouth powers, endowed with the blind impulses of natural forces, the treatises have not been able to fix exact canons: having laid down the proportions of each part of the body, they did not find a way to restrict by rules the fearful aspects which an artist's fancy was free to modulate at pleasure. Hence we must not wonder that the iconometric treatises, when fixing the iconographic schemes of bDe mc'og's four faces (which hold good for all the K'ro bo, the gNod sbyin and the minor deities of a terrific and evil character) should forget for a moment their mathematical accuracy and be content to offer suggestions rather than exact data.

These faces then may be like a duck's egg, like a sesame seed, square, round. The first two forms of face are characteristic of the mahāpuruṣa and of the goddesses respectively, and they are pleasant to look at; on the other hand the Yi dvags, the Byuñ po, the Śa za, all the evilminded K'ro bo, have square or round faces. In the case we are considering, as bDe mc'og sums up in his person the double aspect of a divinity both terrific and beneficent, the four types of faces alternate: while the central face and the one on the left are respectively square and round, the back

one and the one on the right are oval or in the form of a sesame seed. The eyes of the central face must be 10 *nas* (*yava*) long and 3 *sor mo* high; the face grins showing its teeth, the space between the teeth is of two *nas*, the brows are scowling; the eyes of the face on the right are one *sor mo* long and 3 *sor mo* high, like lotus stalks; those of the face on the left are 9 *nas* long and 4 1/2 *aṅgulas* high; those of the face on the back are 6 *nas* long and 3 1/2 *aṅgulas* high. The other details given concerning the image have no iconometric value; they follow the formulas of meditation.

IV. The bodhisattvas' figures, according to sMan t'añ pa, must measure ten *m't'o*, each of twelve *sor mo*, i. e. 120 *sor mo*, five *sor mo* less than the Buddha's image.

V. In this group are included the deities said by sMan t'añ pa to be "of a pleasant appearance", (*yiḍ du 'oñ bai rañ gzugs*); they measure 9 *t'al mo*, namely 108 *sor mo*, four and a half from the top of the head to the genitals and four and a half from the genitals to the soles of the feet. So also in the horizontal sense: from Brahmā's line to the edge of the armpits 10, shoulders 18, arm 14, fore-arm 12. The breasts, in the case of female deities must have a diameter of eight *sor mo* and be four *sor mo* high; the face should have an oval form. The images of female deities, like sGrol ma, conform to these canons.

VI. K'ro bo and K'ro mo, terrific deities, eight *t'al mo*:

seat . . . . .	12
feet . . . . .	4
shins . . . . .	12
from the neck to the knee-joints . . .	36
neck . . . . .	4
face . . . . .	12
hair . . . . .	12
rigs bdag . . . . .	4

VII. The gNod sbyin, the Srin po and other evil-minded creatures must measure 8 *t'al mo*, i. e. 96 *sor mo*, like the K'ro bo.

VIII. Ts'ogs bdag, Kinnaras, etc, six *t'al mo* or, as the *Kriyāsamuccaya* prescribes, five (1 for the head, two from the neck to the genitals - instead of three - two from the genitals to the soles of the feet).

IX. Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha, when the former are those same ones present at Śākyamuni's preaching and the latter belong to this continent and not to others, the proportions to be adopted are human, i. e. 4 *k'ru* or 96 *sor mo*.

Kloñ rdol bla ma, writing after sMan t'añ pa, condensed his predecessor's work and reduced all possible images to three different types, according as they measure 10, 9 or 8 *t'al mo*.

Present-day painters adopt more or less the same measurements, for instance a Lha bris pa of Gyantse, who passes for one of the ablest in the country, follows the following scheme: gem on the *uṣṇīṣa* 2, *uṣṇīṣa* 4, face 12, neck 4, from the neck to the breasts 12, from the breasts to the navel 12, from the navel to the genitals 4, from the genitals to the knee 8, from the knee to the ankle 26, feet 4, hands 12, wrist 4, from the wrist to the elbow 16. This reveals a progressive reduction of the proportions, hence the image loses its suppleness, become shorter and stouter, misses that levity which the canons of the most ancient iconometry conferred upon it.

Thus universal standards have been established, which control both the design of a maṅḍala and the figure of a painted or sculptured image or the architecture of a mc'od rten because all these things have the same symbolical character. The maṅḍala is the geometrical diagram of cosmos projected on a level surface; the Buddha's statue or painting, besides being the representation of a god, is a temporary reflection of the eternal being caught in the act of revealing himself, the stūpa is dharma architecturally constructed. The principle underlying these representations is one, the standards which determine their symbolism are one, and their iconometric rules are identical.

### 13. THE PLAN OF THE TANKAS

In spite of differences between one tanka and another, the tankas do follow a general plan in their construction; they use the same symbols, they have many characters in common, both as to plan of composition and as to the single elements of their figures. In the first place, they always conform to the pattern of a maṇḍala, hence the central figure dominates the middle space, it gives the whole tanka its tone, it is the *gTso bo*, the lord, inasmuch as it represents the tanka's spiritual essence. As we have often said, the tanka is implicitly a "paradise,,<sup>26)</sup> it represents a plane of reality no longer human but transcendent: whether it pictures Śākyamuni, or one of the Buddhas of the supreme pentad, or a terrific deity or any other figure of the Vajrayāna pantheon, or a historical character, it equally carries us into a different sphere; the sphere in which that being is revealed to those who have succeeded, thanks to the meditative process, in provoking its epiphany through the forces of *ābyāna* and of evocation. This is why all these figures are supported by a lotus. The lotus expresses a double symbology, we might call one of them exoteric and the other esoteric: the first denotes creation as a whole and in its general sense, from the primordial pregnancy of the cosmic waters, as in the myth of Brahmā issuing from Nārāyaṇa's very navel on the waters; it is the earth outspread on those same waters (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, IV, pp. 1, 3 c) and the support of the universe (SĀYANA, ON RV, VI, pp. 16, 13). The second, which has acquired a much higher value in the development of Indian religion through thousands of years, has a spiritual sense: it is the sign of the "other plane,, revealing itself in the centre of the inner space, *ākāśa*, in the heart (on which see f. i. *Chandogya Up.*, VIII, I, p. 1 ff.).

The first creation is within time and space, the second starts from these limitation, but, without proceeding through the different stages

of being in its becoming and unfolding, it leaps at one bound to that particular sphere into which our concentration has lifted us, because, according to the well known principle of Indian mysticism, we always reach that, towards which our thoughts have been earnestly turned. This does not mean that the two symbologies exclude one another, on the contrary they mutually penetrate one another, precisely in the figure of a lotus. The universe, to remain in the field of vajrayanic Buddhism, is the fulfilment of the Dharmakāya, the indiscriminable bedrock of thing, cosmic consciousness of which we partake in the *ākāśa* of the heart. Hence divine images emanate, their reflection arises there; for this reason, during the evocative process, the god's aspect must be visualized in the centre of the heart, by the syllable mystically corresponding to him and causing him to appear, next transformed into a lotus, in which the deity is made manifest. Thus the birth on the lotus is a spiritual birth, it is the generation of forms from the cosmic consciousness when we look at the process in a descending order, as a revelation; but it is also, seen from our point of view, a palingenesis, a return, the sign that the phenomenic plane has been surpassed, that the spiritual world is reborn. It is a new ascent towards the Dharmakāya, having acquired the consciousness of our own being, substantially, nothing but Dharmakāya and having our justification in it. But in both cases it is implied that the being born in the lotus is beyond the fluctuations of life, beyond earthly passions: thus also those who are reborn in the Western heaven, upon lotus flowers too, soar over a pure earth. "As, o brethren, a lotus born in the water, grown in the water, mounts to the surface and is not wetted by water, thus, o brethren, the Tathāgata, born in the world, grown in the world, having surpassed the world, is untouched by the world,,. *Samyutta N.*, vol. III, p. 140.

In Kṛṣṇācārya's mystical songs the *maḥāsukha*, supreme bliss, the absolute, is a

fourpetalled lotus flower *pattacauṭṭha mahāsuba vāse* (by BAGCHI, *Journal of the Department of Letters*, vol. XXVIII, n. 5). The four petals, as the commentary suggests, symbolize the four *śūnya*, i. e. the four moments of mystical ascent towards the nirvanic plane (see above, p. 244).

This lotus under the images of the deities appears to a careful observer with the first row of its petals open and turned outwards, while the others are closed; this means, as in the maṇḍalas, that the deity is the point of arrival, the mystery which must be reached; the first row of open petals is the extreme margin of spiritual reality, giving access to the most secret experiences. There is a something hidden, symbolized by the still closed lotus, but the way to it is shown; hence the flower has a double meaning: it represents transcendence, the adamantine plane, the surpassing of the earthly plane; but at the same time it is the first revelation which leaves an entrance open to those able to understand its secret meaning.

It may be observed that sometimes the lotus is missing; in fact it is not present with the figures of the 16 Arhats or with the images of the Paṇ c'en of Tashilunpo's and the fifth Dalai Lama's incarnation. Should this absence be considered a neglect of the above canons, a sign that the lotus had lost its mystical meaning and was simply considered an ornamental motif? Or did a lay spirit, introduced from China, attempt to detach painting from iconographic patterns and to revive it through the regenerating influx of purely artistic considerations? The latter hypothesis would seem to be confirmed by the fact that the series of the 16 Arhats as well as the series of the Paṇ c'en of Tashilunpo's incarnations, betray a strong Chinese influence; even the centre of the picture is displaced; the images are all placed sideways, to the left or to the right. But another explanation is perhaps more probable: the arhat, due to their mission, are bound to the earth; they preside well known places in

the Jambudvīpa, they will enter nirvana when Maitreya appears; they are not bodhisattvas.

In the same manner the incarnations of the Paṇ c'en of Tashilunpo are related to their earthly activity; they are seen and represented in the moment of their manifestation in this world, while their essence remains elsewhere. In a word, whenever there is an allusion to the earthly epiphany of historical characters, not of the Buddha, the presence of the lotus as a seat seems unnecessary; it was perhaps in relation with the visibly earthly character of their body. This seems to be indirectly confirmed by tanka n. 61 representing Tsoñ k'a pa at the beginning of his career; he is pictured in monastic apparel, and no lotus alludes to his divine nature because it had not yet revealed itself; he had not yet given any evidence of his character as a rDo rje ṅc'añ, of his adamantine essence. But when the lotus is present, we are no longer upon earth; we are on ideal planes, where the god's and the saint's essential nature is revealed to those who have become worthy of joining his choirs; the mystical vision with which nearly every book of the Mahāyāna, first of all the Lotus of the good Law, opens is then repeated; in a transcendent town, that god or that saint shows himself to the assembled masters and disciples, who flock from other lands, called by him to listen to his teachings: the revelation which, beyond time, is eternally repeated.

Thus a "heaven,, is created, centering round a deity or a master who has awakened to the consciousness of his own adamantine nature; round the god or the master unfolds the assembly of listeners or of those who live together on the same plane, if this expression may be used speaking of non-spatial spheres. No wonder, then, that the lotus is not only a pedestal for gods or masters, but also a support for heavens, as in representations of Zañs mdog ri, Padma-sambhava's pure earth, which is precisely called a spiritual sphere, *citta*. This heaven

rests on a large lotus flower, which represent, its transcendent character: the journey by which it is reached is transfigured into an allegory into a mystical journey leading from the kingdom of time and of pain to the non-temporal sphere of bliss and contemplation of the god.

This lotus is spread out on the throne, or turns upwards, its stalk slowly issuing from the water, wavering with a slight undulation on the extreme edge of the tanka and then branching out in the voluble play of its tendrils. Often these tendrils, shooting out parallel to the lotus flower and with it supporting the throne, hold in their coils figures of animals, like the lion (sometimes of Iranian taste as in Tanka n. 12) or the elephant; the former is a symbol of the superiority of the Buddhist preaching over all doctrines, the emblem of the *simbanāda*, the lion-voice of the Buddha, the latter of its unconquerable nature; sometimes legendary beings are added, like the Kinnaras or the seven gems, emblems of the Cakravartin who, when the myth of the universal monarch was joined to that of the Buddha, were represented as being born together with Śākyamuni, by slightly varying their list (WADDELL, *Lamaism*, p. 389; RHYS DAVIDS, *Buddhist Birth-stories*, p. 68, n. 1):

Seven gems or seven royal symbols <i>Rin c'en sna bdun</i>	Seven precious things born together with the Buddha	Seven royal emblems
1. <i>akera, akor lo</i> , wheel	tree of enlightenment	<i>k'an bzan</i> , palace
2. <i>mani, nor bu</i> , gem	the chief disciple, Ananda	<i>gos</i> , dress
3. <i>stri, btsun mo</i> , wife	ditto	<i>lham</i> , shoes
4. <i>mantrin, blon po</i> , minister	ditto	<i>glan c'en ts'em</i> , elephant's tooth
5. <i>bastin, glan po c'e</i> , elephant	treasures	<i>btsun mo sna c'a</i> , the queen's earrings
6. <i>asva, rta</i> , horse	ditto	<i>rgyal poi sna c'a</i> , the king's earrings
7. <i>senapati, dmag dpon</i> , general	equerry	<i>nor bu</i> , gem

The foregoing table shows the modulations of cognate themes, which starting from the worldly scheme of the precious imperial ornaments, become adapted to the greater spirituality of the Buddhist legend, and are then reflected into more popular items, surely of a Tibetan flavour.

These tendrils issuing from the lotus, in some cases, as in certain frescoes of Tsaparang and Gyantse, wind all over the picture, each enclosing the image of a god or a master. The motif, initially derived from the West, thus attains developments which may be called the Eastern parallel of the tree of Jesse; it is represented, for instance, in Burma and in Bāzāklik. Precisely a realistic form of the tree will be reached in tanka n. 50 from Tashilunpo, in which the lotus has become a solid and massive plant, also born out of the waters of samsaric existence, on whose leaves the saints are arranged like a crown round the central figure.

The tree spreads out its leafy branches round the lama's figure looming large in the centre, while gods and masters encircle him. The cosmic tree is met with in Indian's most ancient traditions: in the RV it is turned upside down; its branches, turned downwards, represent the unfolding of existence, and the root is above it because it is descended from Brahmā: the tree is life. But in Buddhism, naturally, the process is reversed, because Buddhism, at least at this stage of its development, has shifted our attention to spiritual creation, to the passage from the samsaric plane to the pure plane of nirvana, the possibility of this leap resting always on the bivalency of the *citta*, which is certainly samsāra, but is at the same time the experience required if the leap into nirvāna is to take place. Hence the tree must be cut at the root.

In initiatic schools, as that of the Siddha was, the tree is individuated thought, the work of magical illusion; the five sense are its five branches, therefore it must be cut down, says

Kāṇhupā in one of his *doḥā*, “with the help of the Great Master’s precepts, so that it may no longer put forth shoots. That tree grows in the sea of good and evil; those, who do not know how to cut it down and break it, walk on a mistaken path and accept existence (as existing),”. *Caryāpāda*, H. P. Shāstried. n. 45.

But on the tanka I am dealing with the tree on whose branches the choir of saints and gods is placed is not the tree the *siddha* alludes to: rather it has here replaced the lotus, symbolizing spiritual creation.

Its realistic representation is, to the best of my knowledge, a unique example in Tibetan iconography; its analogies are much more with the Western interpretations of the tree of Jesse and its genealogic developments than with the Eastern instances quoted by Grünwedel and Watson (WATSON, *Iconography of the tree of Jesse*, Tab. IX, S. Zeno, XI, baptism of Parma, XV, XVIII, XIX, XXIX, XXX, XXXII, XXXVI).

I do not know whether the painters of this tree drew their inspiration from preexisting types, where a tree realistically reproduced replaced the lotus, but which I have never met with in Tibet, or whether they have been affected by Western influxes; we are induced to think, for instance, of the way monastic orders represented their abbots branching off from the founder of the order: it is not theoretically impossible that the painter of this tanka (of the XVIIth century) may have seen some picture of this kind, brought into Tibet by missionaries, whose activity, between the XVIIth and the XVIIIth century, developed noticeably in Tibet, as everyone knows.

But tree and lotus both issue from the waters which are in the heart, which are the heart, *antaḥ samudre hṛdi*, RV, IV, 58, 11, because the heart is the seat of the thinking faculty, *citta*, the infinite possibilities of the cosmic process, individuation: it must be overcome, but due to the bivalency mentioned above it is the very condition of revulsion

from the samsaric plane to *nirvāna*. “Man’s heart, o monks, is the ocean; its tide is made of moods; he who overcomes this tide of dharmas, o monks, is said to have passed over”, *Samyutta-N.*, vol. IV, p. 157.

At other times, as we have said, the lotus rests on the throne; the throne is not only the sign of the Sambhogakāya which iconographically reproduces the characters of the Cakravartin: the throne is also the sign of the preaching: *śimbāsana*. But it is also the *vajrāsana*, the diamond seat, on which the Buddha was seated when he obtained supreme enlightenment and upon which the thousand Buddhas of this Aeon entered the Vajrasamādhi: it is made of diamond because diamond, being unbreakable, represents the bodhi’s unshakeableness (*abhiṣṭa*), while its purity means transcendence above any earthly stain. It is the symbol of Dharmakāya. Its colour is usually golden, because gold is truth, *satya*: as in tanka n. 14, it contains the images of the four Māra, which represent respectively the five components of human personality (*skandha*), moral infections (*kleśa*), death (*mṛtyu*) and Devaputamāra. They hold together (*parigṛhṭa*) the throne of the sermon (*śimbāsana*), because the diamond of enlightenment can only be born out of the relativity of earthly life, not as its effect but as its necessary opposite (see SM, I, p. 20).

In the most ancient tankas this throne is more complex: two forms prevail, a simpler and a richer one. The first consists in a base on which rests a back having two bars on each side and one horizontal arm above, slightly ornamented at both ends (see tanka n. 2). The second reproduces the throne typical of the Pāla images, which migrated from Bengal to Java. The preceding pattern is enriched by new elements: on the sides of the two vertical bars we see climbing figures of animals, lions, horses, *vyālakas*, elephants, men. Often several of these figures are placed over one another. The upper frame ends with a *garuḍa*’s figure;

or in that of a *kirtimukha*, the first being recognizable on account of its wings. On its sides two serpents are represented, which, according to Indian iconographic traditions, are human in appearance and of the female sex (*nāgini*): they are nevertheless recognizable from the hood, which unfolds almost enclosing the head in an aureole.

This type of throne only appears in tanka n. 4, whose direct inspiration is Nepalese.

The imitation of sculptural models, of metal images, is evident: the painter has simply copied them. But little by little this dependance from a plastic model grows fainter: the back of the throne becomes flat, loses all volume, it is reduced to a pretext to unfurl, at the artist's pleasure, the arabesques of his fancy; the lions and *vyaḷakas* remain, as in tanka n. 16, but the small pillars on the sides become covered with figures of deities, liturgically connected with the one represented in the centre. The aureole and nimbus also unfold and develop in curves and arabesques which are now but slightly related to the primitive type of throne; their free development is used to introduce minor deities, as if their choir, represented in the maṇḍala, had broken out of its boundaries, invading the space reserved for the god's throne and occupying it. Hence the back of the throne tends to lose its original character, we might say it becomes dissociated from the base and transformed into a mere ornamental motif; this process may be observed, in two different moments, in tankas n. 17 (*sPyan ras gzig*s) and n. 21 (*Milaraspa*).

At other times (tanka n. 15) the animals and monsters, which in the preceding case were an integral part of the throne and climbed up the well-proportioned pillars, now become a mere ornament, leaning on slender little columns, which have no base to rest on, and whose existence thus has no excuse. The throne has completely disappeared; in its place only the lotus flower remains, whose tendrils climb and unfurl with such a studied

symmetry that the central space becomes encircled by a precise geometrical figure, like the large rosette in the centre of Persian carpets.

Elsewhere only the base of the throne is left: the aureole and the nimbus are replaced by the picture of a *mc'od rten*, enclosing an image of the Buddha. And this may have happened because the artists had in mind the Buddha of Bodhgayā.

But, as the influx of ancient Indian and Nepalese models decreases, we see a simple type of throne prevailing; it is reduced to a mere base, which in its most elementary type is nothing but a sort of high stool, consisting of a pedestal, a central body and a frame; in the central part are painted figures of lions or other animals, vehicles and symbols of the deities represented. The rest of the surface is divided into various squares by small columns decorated with arabesques; the intermediate space is either plain or, more frequently, covered with symbolical figures or geometrical designs, or studded with precious stones; this is the type which in course of time has become by far the most common; it is a translation into painting of the bases of the *mc'od rten* or of the Nepalese statues which artists used to find in great abundance in every temple or chapel.

To go back to the lotus on which the image is seated, this may be of two kinds, "solar," and "lunar," i. e. red or white; the first is assigned to deities when it is wished to stress their active aspect, that is when they are not sunk in meditation, but exerting their power; for this reason all the terrific deities (*krodha*, *k'ro bo*) must necessarily rest on the "solar," lotus; the "lunar," one belongs to the pacified deities (*śānta*, *ṣi*), collected in the attitude of the preaching of the Law or of meditation. This lotus may also be either simple (*padma*) or double (*viśvapadma*), when petals are represented both in upper and lower directions.

The lotus does not always rest on the throne; very often a carpet is laid between them, generally of Chinese type.

The images, according to a rule of Indian iconography, are surrounded by a halo, the *prabhāmaṇḍala*, which provides a background for the figure, to represent (whatever its origin) the gods' luminous nature. Often the halo is a *nimbus*, *śiraścakra*, surrounding the head, and it either has the form of an oval with a truncated base, as in many Nepalese paintings and miniatures, or else it is perfectly round, as in Gandhāra, Gupta and Pāla sculpture, hence also in Java, or in Central Asian paintings, where the two types coexist (e. g. *Thousand Buddhas*, Tab. III). In some tankas the two halos are enclosed within a larger halo, and both the nimbus and the halo proper are framed by a border of small flames, which are extensively developed in the images of terrific deities. This halo accompanies Tibetan iconography throughout its evolution, although it undergoes various modulations; in the later specimens we often notice the leaning towards an ogival form, which nevertheless never succeeds in ousting the circular form. In the Guge tankas the surface of the halo is either wrought with floreal patterns, or often covered with sparse figures of minor deities, on a small scale.

The tankas then represent a heaven: a central figure round which the assembly unfolds, by virtue of the principle, stated above, that revelation presupposes a community and a concomitance of closely related symbols. But the chain of images alluded to above requires classes, dependencies, descent, according to the quinary or senary family system (*kula*, *rigs*) entirely converging towards the same ideal centre we have mentioned; this allows us to understand that each figure, and particularly those of bodhisattvas and masters, is the irradiation, the projection, the emanation of some particular family, symbolized by a *rigs bdag*, a head of the family, that is one of the Buddhas of the pentad. For this reason not infrequently, above the central figure, the corresponding *rigs bdag* is represented vertically above its

head; for instance Ts'e dpag med in the case of Avalokiteśvara or the deity whose earthly projection a person has been: e. g. ṅJam dpal above Tsoñ k'a pa.

The influence of the maṇḍala's pattern is also evident in other characteristics of the tankas; I mean the unfailing presence of terrific images even in the tankas representing pacified deities or masters. These are the C'os skyoñ or the Yi dam, which in the maṇḍala's pattern preside over the doors.

Those forces are placed on the extreme limits of the consecrated surface, that is on the edge of the world of ideas, on the boundaries between matter and the spiritual world. In the planes of heavenly bliss or in the peaceful spheres of meditation to which he ascends, the disciple becomes consubstantiated with cosmic consciousness; there is no wind of passion or turmoil of evil; maleficent forces cannot penetrate there: danger begins in the exteriorized world, in the kingdom of birth and death, into which the errors and delusions of a transitory personality creep, driving us away from the crystal-clear light of truth. In this world are temptations, fear, darkness, shutting us out from the bliss of nirvana. Here, then, man needs the help of divine forces, and lo! they appear as soon as they are invoked, they come to our aid and stand on the boundary between this world and the world of eternal light, awe-inspiring doorkeepers who do not allow the agents of ignorance to trouble the unruffled air of those regions.

The presence of terrific deities at the foot of the throne in the tankas lends itself to many modulations; while sometimes only one angry deity is represented, elsewhere an entire cycle is pictured. Nevertheless this element may be considered indispensable and is laid down by the rules of ancient iconography: thus, for instance, the MMK prescribes that under the central divinity's figure (in this particular case Śākyamuni) the god of wrath, Krodharāja Yamāntaka should be represented, whose office is to remove obstacles and to avoid

perils. The same office is attributed to Tārā, represented on the other side, both of them on a mountain. This means that they appear from the heights of their heavens, whence their active force descends, for they cannot belong to our plane.

Above, nearly always on the right and left of the image which represents the spiritual essence of the figure pictured in the centre of the tanka, we see the figures of the sun and moon which, as we know, also top Tibetan *mc'od rten*.

We shall not touch upon the intricate question of the origin of this symbol, nor wonder whether it was native to India or imported from outside, but it is certain that the two images of the sun and the moon have a well-defined meaning in Vajrayāna. Their meaning we have briefly alluded to in the chapter on the religion of the adamantite Vehicle. Sun and moon do not stand for the world's chief sources of light; rather they represent the rotation of time, hence they point out that the images pictured on the tankas allude to scenes taking place in the world of the *pratibhāsa*, of appearance. However, due to the double value of Vajrayāna terms and symbols (so many instances of which we have met with in the course of these pages) sun and moon also have a deeper meaning: the two poles between which the bodhicitta, the thought of enlightenment, becomes divided: its indiscriminate being, and at the same time the way and the means by which it may be reconstructed in its primitive essence, after the phenomenic experience.

Thus none of the motifs appearing on the tankas has a purely ornamental value, nothing belongs to the artist's fancy or caprice. In many paintings, particularly in the most ancient ones or in those from Guge, closer to the Indian models, the figure of the god enthroned in the centre is surmounted by a canopy, upheld on the right and left by two figures. This does not only happen as a new instance of the influence of the Cakravartin's

type on the Buddha's type, it evokes the homage done to Śākyamuni by the Śuddhāvāsa gods, who according to the MMK are represented precisely by those figures. They are the same, called in that book Śuddha and Visuddha, who cause a rain of flowers to fall round the Buddha, according to a well known theme of panindian hagiography, to which I have alluded above (cf. MMK, transl. by LALOU, p. 48).

The tankas evoke the miracle of the Buddha's preaching and epiphany, and for this reason the gods are represented as if repeating their act of homage. But as Tibetan painting is influenced throughout by Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna dogmatics, these scenes may also be referred to particular episodes, that is, to a special preaching. There is no doubt that many tankas are inspired by a particular text, that they represent the Buddha in the act of revealing some particular book; the bodhisattvas on each side of him, schematically symbolize, by their presence, the infinite assembly which partook of that revelation; that the Śuddhāvāsa should honour the Buddha by holding up his canopy and showering flowers upon him, means that such a painting is implicitly connected with the MMK or any other text, which was revealed precisely in the Śuddhāvāsa's heaven. Every time we notice in the tankas the presence of divine personages honouring the Buddha in those two manners, to identify them we must go back, as far as possible, to the painter's intentions, namely define which text was in his mind and which preaching he wished to represent: the gods' name will change each time.

Elsewhere we see figures of gods soaring through the air, holding wreaths of flowers, in the act of placing them on the Buddha's head; this motif also has a Hellenistic origin, but Buddhist iconography has inherited it, conferring upon the *vidyādharas* the honour of crowning the Buddha.

The divinities represented on the tankas may be either in monastic dress or wearing

rich draperies: Śākyamuni, the 35 Buddhas invoked in the confession of sins, the four or seven Buddhas forming, together with Śākyamuni, the series of the all-knowing ones who have revealed themselves during the latest cosmic age, are represented in monastic dress, which is meant to show their nature as *nirmāṇakāya*, the fact that they have appeared in the world of men to preach redeeming truth, assuming an aspect suited to us.

When divinities wear royal draperies, they are *sambhogakāya*, that is, the Buddhas are represented in the aspect under which they appear, in the Heavenly *Ḡḍhrakūṭa* or in the other Pure Earths, to the choirs of *Bodhisattvas* and of beings who have been carried there by the power of their ecstasy and by the purity they have achieved; they may be the five or six supreme *Tathāgatas* and also Śākyamuni, when the latter is no longer considered as the revealer of the Lesser Vehicle on this earth, but, lifted into superhuman spheres, as the preacher of the *sūtras* of the Great Vehicle or of the *Tantras*. The *bodhisattvas* too are generally represented in royal apparel, the same worn by the *Cakravartin*: they are the sons of the Buddhas, crowned by them as their successors and heirs; simply by the fact of being proclaimed *bodhisattvas*, they are designed for a divine kingdom. The jewels with which they are regularly decked are the very ones which, according to Indian iconography, adorn kings: first of all the following chief jewels:

<i>ḍbu rgyan</i>	diadem	<i>mukuta</i>
<i>sñan rgyan</i>	earrings	<i>karnika</i>
<i>ngul rgyan</i>	necklace	<i>harṣa</i>
<i>do šal</i>	precious garland	<i>bāra</i>
<i>se mo do</i>	pearl necklace	<i>ardhabāra</i>
<i>ḍpuñ rgyan</i>	armlet	<i>keyūra</i>
<i>gdu bu</i>	bracelets	<i>valaya</i>
<i>'og pag</i>	belt	<i>mekhala</i>

*sñan goñ ut pa lai gdeñs ka, kuṇḍala*: ornaments on the upper part of the ear, in the form of an expanded lotus;

*rkañ gdub kyi gyer ka, nupūra*: anklets with bells.

The terrific deities wear a *cod pan*, a crown of flames, and the *rus rgyan*, which is an apron and breast-plate made of human bones, and other awe-inspiring and repulsive ornaments, as human bones, snakes, etc.

Tibetan masters are represented wearing the apparel proper to the monks of the sects they belong to: from the cap it is easy to tell whether the figure represented *rNiñ ma pa, bKa' brgyud pa, dGe lugs pa* or *Sa skya pa*.<sup>27)</sup> The typical features of each single master have early been established by artistic schools and handed down most faithfully: hence, while the schematic drawing and the hieratic fixity of these figures are such that they cannot be spoken of as portraits, undoubtedly the most representative figures of Tibet's religious history have become unalterable types, and if other suggestions, like votive inscriptions, were lacking, it would not be difficult to recognize them. *Tsoñ k'a pa*, the fifth Dalai Lama, the *Pañ c'en dPal Idan ye šes*, in all the *tankas* belonging to the most different schools, have so well-defined an individuality, that it is impossible not to recognize them: these types nearly always go back to portraits (*sku ābag*) made in the times of the personages themselves, which have later become models for successive artists; we know, for instance, that this has been the case for *Tsoñ k'a pa*: seven effigies are an object of veneration, painted from him and recognized by himself as good likenesses (*ñā ādra ma*); (*rJe bdag ñid c'en po sogs kyi sku brñan aga' žig gi lo rgyus cuñ zad brjod pa mñam par 'os pai gnam gyi p'reñ ba*, by *Šes rab rgya mts'o*).

The fifth Dalai Lama, in his lifetime, was portrayed by painters and sculptors (*Biography, c'a, p. 122, ñed rañ gi ādra ābag dan bcas par yan lag gi rjes yod pai bris t'añ bzeñs pa*).

In the case of Indian masters, they are nearly always represented in the dress of the *ācārya*, with *pañḍita's* caps and leaning on a pillow.

The *Siddha*, the masters of *Hatḥayoga* esotericism, are also represented in the garb of Indian ascetics: almost naked, a *ḍboti* enveloping the

lower part of their bodies, the ascetic's topknot (*jaṭā*), often large earrings, like those the sect called of the Kaṅphaṭ wears to this day.

These gods or personages are represented walking or seated in one of those postures, *āsana*, which yoga has classified in the greatest detail, thinking they might be a good preliminary to the difficult exercise of the *prāṇayāma*, the control of breathing, which by checking thought is one of the most important elements of liberation. These *āsanas* are many: some late treatises on yoga, like the *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* enumerate some scores of them, but in iconography only the most important appear. This time also we shall take as our guide sMan t'an pa and we limit the *āsanas* to those he has himself described quoting from a commentary of Abhayākaragupta on the *Māyājālatantra* which is otherwise unknown to me.

*rdo rje skyil kruñ (vajraparyāṅka)*. Having placed the left foot between the thigh and the calf of the right leg, the right foot leans on the left leg, passing between the thigh and the calf.

*padma skyil kruñ (padmaparyāṅka)* the left calf rests on the right calf and the knees are lowered.

*dpa' boi adug stañs (vīrā-āsana)*: having bent in the *paryāṅka* posture only the left foot (*ardha-paryāṅka*), the right knee is placed near it, straight upwards.

*dpa' moi adug stañs (vīrā-āsana)*: having bent only the left foot in the *paryāṅka* posture, the right knee rests upon it, while the right foot lies straight under the left thigh.

*sems dpa' skyil kruñ (sattvaparyāṅka)*, while the right foot rests on the left thigh, the left foot passes under the right thigh.

*bzañ poi adug stañs (bhadrāsana)*: sitting on a high seat, both legs drop equally extended.

*tsog pai adug stañs (utkutukasana)*: to crouch while the feet rest on a seat or cushion, a span apart.

*gyas rol (lalitāsana)*: having placed the right foot in the *sattvāsana* posture, the left foot remains stretched out (see *rgyal poi rol pa*).

*gyon rol*: the opposite posture.

*bde legs can (sukhāsana)*: to be seated holding the two feet so that they adhere one to the other.

*gyas pai brkyañ (ālīḍha)*: having bent the left leg, the right leg is placed at about a span's distance from the left heel.

*gyon brkyañ (pratyaḷīḍha)*, the opposite posture.

*sa ga adug stañs*: to have the toes turned out and the knees straight.

*zlum poi rkañ*, the same posture, with legs two cubits apart, like a swan's wings.

*mñam pai stabs*: to keep the legs joined and the toes of each foot adhering to those of the other.

*rgyal poi rol pa (mahārājilā)*: to place the feet in front of a cushion, with a span's distance between the heels; (when the left leg is stretched out, this is called *gyon rol*; *gyas rol* in the opposite case, described above).<sup>28)</sup>

In the most ancient tankas, which closely follow the prescriptions of the *paṭa*, the donor's image is not lacking; he is represented with his family and the officiating lamas; on the right or on the left, indifferently, the god of riches. Almost an echo of life thus reaches these paintings and speaks with the voice of human desires: the donors had in mind not only a heavenly reward, but material prosperity as well and to obtain it they placed in the painting a picture of Jambhala or Kuberā, the god of riches, who solicited by the devotee should have showered upon them his blessings and his treasures.

#### 14. CONSECRATION OF THE TANKAS

**B**ut is it enough for a tanka to have been drawn and painted, for a fresco or a statue to have been completed, for a mc'od rten to have been built, that they may become objects of worship? Buddhism agrees with Hinduism in giving a negative answer:

the divine image, whatever it be, has no liturgical value if it has not been consecrated; it is not a holy thing, no spiritual force issues from it, it remains a lifeless object which will never be able to establish any living and direct relation with those who pray. For Hinduism no image can receive worship, which has not first been consecrated; this consecration is called by a technical term *pratiṣṭhā*, or more completely *prāṇapraṣṭhā*, which means precisely "to impart life, vital breath, ..". It is necessary that the god's figure be vivified by his effective presence. The artist then gives place to the priest, who through a complex ceremony causes the divine breath to descend into the lifeless object.

Buddhism knew a deification of sacred objects from its earliest times: the *stūpa*, whose origin and object have been so acutely studied by Mus, had an internal soul, represented by the *śāvira*, relics, or a sacred text, the *dharmā*, which confer on the monument its essential meaning and its divine value.

The Mahāyāna and particularly, the Vajrayāna, codify the ritualistic of consecration, which does without the presence of a relic, and substitutes for it the liturgical imposition of a divine spirit. This consecration is modelled on that of Hinduism, or better it is like a parallel branch, established at the same time in the Purāṇa or in the liturgical sections of the Tantra, thence to pass into the latest handbooks of the Smārta literature; the Buddhist and the Hindu ritual are in fact derived from the same magic intuitions underlying a large part of India's religious experience; successive speculation aimed only at arranging, interpreting and ennobling it by the skilful touch of its symbolology and of its mystical or dialectical subtleties. Consecration consists in causing an object to partake of the divine essence it represents; until this happens, the object is undeserving of worship (*mc'od par mi'os*). This rite is extremely complex and has been treated, with more or less complexity, both in some Tantras (e. g. the *Kālacakra* and the

*Samvarodaya*) and in liturgical handbooks like the *Kriyāsamuccaya*; there are also Tantra exclusively treating this subject, like the *Rab gnas kyi rgyud* (TŌHOKU, *Cat.*, n. 486).

The Tibetans did nothing but follow their Indian masters; not only have they translated, including them in the *bsTan agyur*, some of these works, but according to their custom, they have gone deeply into the ceremony of *rab gnas (pratiṣṭhā)*, the inserting of life (*srog*) into the completed work; they have amplified it, explained it and carried it to extreme lengths and complexity. The centre of these liturgies always remains the priest's spiritual experience: he is the miracle-worker, because he finds again and causes to shine in his own soul that universally luminous consciousness which is the womb of all things: the gods themselves, as I have said, are only its temporary emanations. The basic idea of Indian philosophy always returns: the equation of microcosm with macrocosm whence the yoga draws the premises and hopes of its miracles.

Let us see then how this process of vivifying a sacred object is accomplished. We notice first of all that it is put before the priest in a state of perfect fitness to contain the divine spirit which the former will cause to descend into it: a painting, a statue, a *mc'od rten* have been completed by the artist and built according to an inviolable plan of lines and proportions. Moreover the artist, before drawing or modelling the image, should have evoked its aspect and forms by visualizing them; hence a first epiphany has already come to pass through his work, but this epiphany has left behind a shadow of itself and has then disappeared, leaving a concrete but lifeless projection.

The consecrating priest's ritual, which must call it to life and causes the god's active spirit to descend into it, also begins with an evocation, preceded by those introductory ceremonies which are typical of all Tantric liturgies.

We will follow each stage of the theoretic elaborations of this ritualistic, as it is codified, for instance, in the dGe lugs pa school following the *Rab tu gnas pai c'o ga lag len du dril ba dge legs rgya mts'oi c'ar abebs* by Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an.

A comparison between the handbooks of *rab gnas* of the different schools and of various epochs shows a general correspondence of methods and subjects: the differences are reduced to unimportant details, which may be of interest to a priest, but are nearly always of small importance to us. Let us simply point out the chief elements.

The liturgical process of consecration and vivification of sacred objects is accomplished in the following moments:

1. Deification of the sacrificer, (*bdag skyed*). He must meditate on the essential purity of things: *svabhāvaśuddhāḥ sarve dharmāḥ*; and recognize that everything disappears into the dharmakāya, towards which all things flows back, because all things are born from it. Hence: *svabhāvo śuddho 'ham*, "I too am essentially pure,, , i. e., my individuality is non-existent because my being is that same indiscriminate dharmakāya.

2. The surface on which the image must be bathed is then prepared and on it the maṇḍala required for the ceremony of the bath is drawn.

3. In the centre of this maṇḍala, having the form of a lotus, are placed the nine vases, one called *rnam rgyal bum* (*vijaya-kalaśa*) and the others *las bum* (*karma-kalaśa*): on the eight petals unfolding round this centre are placed the eight *las bum* full of pure water and other substances, like scent or butter; copper or bronze vases with fruit and seeds and other ritual ingredients are put between one vase and another, or in front of the vases. As may be seen, the rite of the *ghaṭasthāpana*, "consecration of the vase,, , a typical element of the Hindu *pūjā*, is here repeated.

4. Evocation of the central deity of the maṇḍala, that it may be visualized before the

sacrificer (*lha mdun bskyed*); it is imagined that in each of the eight vases arranged on the eight petals of the maṇḍala there is a lunar seat on which is written the mantra of the corresponding divinity; from the mantra a light issues which, being diffused through space, attracts the Master, the *Yi dam*, the Buddhas, the C'os skyoñ, all the qualities of the physical and mental cosmos, inserts them into the mantra and reabsorbs them in it: then from the mantra a flow of ambrosia spurts and blesses the purifying substances arranged round those same vases.

5. The priest recites 108 times the formula *ye dharmā* etc., namely the Gnosis summed up in one verse: "of all things having an origin and an end, the Buddha, the Tathāgata, the great ascetic, has explained the origin and the end,, , and this formula is written on some flowers; it is imagined that a light, issuing from the formula, attracts the blessing of all the Buddhas, causing it to be reabsorbed into the formula and into the flowers.

6. Praises of the Buddha; saying "this image must be consecrated by me,, , flowers are thrown on it, with incense and to the accompaniment of music; then the mantra of the divinity to be consecrated is uttered, repeating four times "*om vajrasattva hūm,, ,*

7. *Sems bskyed*: May the merit derived from having consecrated this sacred object be offered for the benefit of all created beings, so that they, as well as the donor and the sacrificer, cleansed from all sin, may obtain supreme enlightenment.<sup>29)</sup>

8. This moment is the essential one; it is called *rten bskyed*, "creation of the object in which the divine spirit is to be installed,, . Having purified the object to be consecrated with water taken from the *las bum*, the priest accomplishes the ceremony of evoking the deity whose divine power is to descend into the object. This divine power may be, in a general sense, 'Od dpag med in the case of a book, rNam par snañ mdsad in the case of

a mc'od rten or a temple, but it may vary according to the donor's intention, and naturally according to the god represented by the statue or the picture. Why rNam par snañ mdsad should be installed in a temple or a mc'od rten, is clear once we remember that both of these buildings are maṇḍalas, and that Vairocana, as we have said, occupies in many Tantric schools the central place in the maṇḍala, the *primus inter pares* in the five-fold series of the evolutive process.

Why 'Od dpag med should be installed in books is clear when we remember the three-fold imposition of the *vajra*: as we shall see later, this ceremony is meant definitely to impart life to the image: on touching the neck, the syllable *āḥ* is uttered, which is imagined as being on a red lotus in the centre of the neck: *āḥ* corresponds to the verbal plane (*gsun*) and red, in the maṇḍalas, is the colour of Amitābha, and of the Western region corresponding to him; then *āḥ* is the syllable of his mantra: *om āḥ arolik hūm*.

The evocation is performed according to the usual schemes of the *sādhana*. For instance (SM, I, p. 19):

"The priest fixes his thoughts on the Buddha's figure, as he is regularly imagined; he is worshipped with offerings, then a confession of sins is made, satisfaction is expressed for the good accomplished by other beings, every merit acquired through one's own actions is offered in favour of others, refuge is taken in the precious Trinity: Buddha, Law, Community; a vow is made to follow the way traced by the Buddha, the vow is taken to achieve supreme enlightenment,, next one reflects on the "void,, , knowing by intuition that all things do not exist in themselves; (the mystic) then sees himself as indestructible, of the same essence as the thought of enlightenment, light. With the purpose of fixing this intuition, let him utter the mantra "om, all things are essentially pure; I too am essentially pure,, , then, let him imagine the lunar disk evolved out of that light;

upon it the letter *hūm* surrounded by the 16 vowels *a* etc., surrounded by the consonants *ka* etc., of a white colour. All this is then evolved (again in a) lunar disk; in this the mystical seed (*bīja*): *hūm* is evolved into a yellow vajra: in its centre let the letter *hūm* be (again); all this is evolved into a diamond seat (*vajrāsana*) of a golden colour, supported by the four Māra who respectively correspond to: the five elements of human personality, moral infections, death, the Devaputra-māra, respectively yellow, red, black, green; after having imagined their appearance, one after the other, let him imagine that these Māras support the throne of the lion (*simhāsana*) on which rests a double lotus (*viśvapadma*). Upon the latter, the mystic must imagine himself seated under the aspect of the Blissful one, with two arms, seated in the adamantine posture (*vajraparyāṅka*) with his right hand in the act of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśa*), his left hand lying flat on his lap, his body covered with a reddish dress, resting in ease; he then utters the formula of referring (that reality) to his own self: "Om, I am coessential with the womb of all things ...,, Let him then perform the imposition on the six limbs: on the eyes of the Blissful One, (i. e. his own eyes as the Blissful One) let him imagine a lunar disk and on it the syllable *ḥṣim*, white; on the lunar disk of his ears the syllable *jam*, blue; on the lunar disk of his nostrils the syllable *kham*, yellow; on the lunar disk of his tongue the syllable *gam*, red; on the lunar disk of his forehead the syllable *skam*, green: on the lunar disk of both his eyes the syllable *sem*, white. Then on the lunar disk of his heart let him imagine a vajra evolved out of the syllable *hūm*, on this still another syllable *hūm*; let him then imagine that all this develops in the *jñānasattva*, in the same manner as it has developed above in the *samayasattva* ..

Next the *vajrasparśa* is performed, the touch with the vajra, that is the descent of the being evoked into the image and his

instalment in it: this takes place by uttering the three syllables *om āh būm* and each time touching the image on his head, on his neck, on his heart; then, when the objects to be consecrated are paintings, those letters are written on the back of the painted image: sometimes the letters are written before the body of the image is coloured: in this case it is clear that the work of the draughtsman, probably a lama, who traced the linear scheme of the spiritual plane or of the heaven it was wished to represent, thus consecrating the accomplished work, was one thing, and quite another thing was the task of the painter, who confined himself to putting the colour on the already "living", tanka.

Now the object is ready to receive the divine essence: the *rten*, the support, has become sacred through the descent of the divine power which has taken up its abode in it (*brten*). It is then covered with a red dress, taking care to cover or blindfold its eyes; flowers are thrown on it, uttering the formulas: *om tiṣṭha vajra*, which is the mantra definitely binding the divine spirit to its container.

9. Now the initiation of the god descended into the statue or the painting is performed. The ceremony of esoteric baptism or initiation, *abhiṣeka* is repeated: the statue is treated as a neophyte. It is imagined that the god throws flowers on the maṇḍala placed before him; then the band is taken from his eyes, so that he may, like a person being initiated, gaze on the maṇḍala of whose essence he must partake. Now laid on a throne (*gdan*), let him be placed on the *k'rus dkyil*, that part of the maṇḍala where the washing is performed, and let him be sprinkled with water, or, as it naturally happens in the case of tankas, let the water be sprinkled on a mirror reflecting the tanka. The mirror is not made use of with the single purpose of avoiding that the tanka may be spoiled by water: this of course is one reason, not the only one: the rite has a deeper meaning, which appears from the

normal use of a mirror in Tantric ceremonies: the statues are reflected because the liturgy with this symbol reminds the mystic that the gods have no objective existence and are but images of our minds, reflections, proportioned to our understanding or karmic maturity, of a reality which cannot be grasped or defined.

Thus the baptism of the image is accomplished: the divine flow issued out of the invisible essence, forced by the power of ritual, regains in the maṇḍala the consciousness of its own nature; after having been temporarily isolated, it resumes its place in the harmonious choir of the powers enchained and conditioned according to a hierarchy of planes which represent the expansion and reabsorption of the universe.

10. Now that the image has really been blessed by the god's presence, it is necessary to provide that its sacramental purity may not be tainted and hurt. Disorderly forces revolve about the world, they obey no law, they break up the harmony of the universe, they are an expression of that magic freedom called *māyā*: they are the *bGegs* (*vijhna*) who obstruct good and prevent the triumph of the Law: they represent the negative element of life, all that induces us to resist the injunctions of our moral conscience. These *bGegs* are vanquished by the *K'ro bo*, the terrific deities, the warlike aspects, as we have said, of the supreme deities of Buddhism. At this moment it is well to evoke them, above all their supreme lord *Krodharāja*, drawing him out of the syllable *būm* into the maṇḍala of one's own heart. As usual, the consecrator himself emanates the *K'ro bo* out of himself, and when this has appeared and he sees him, he pacifies him with offerings and hymns.

11. Now, safe from all danger, thanks to the presence of the watchful *K'ro bo*, the consecrator may turn to the *bGegs*, advising them, before he tries extreme measures, to flee from the sacred place, inducing them to promise that they will never violate its purity or do it harm; then the consecrator

offers flowers to the bGegs and to the *gtor ma* which have been arranged beforehand round the maṇḍala. Addressing the chiefs of the bGegs, Śumbha and Niśumbha<sup>30</sup>) he calls upon them to turn their steps elsewhere: if the promise is not kept, their head, by Krodharāja's power, will split into a hundred fragments. The *gtor ma* are then scattered in the direction of the four points of space, together, with seeds of white sesame. They are the offerings on which they should feed.

12. But are we sure that the ceremony's sacramental purity has not been violated? Has there been no lack or omission in the course of the liturgical act? Are the sacrificer and the donor really pure-hearted? To ensure that the rite will not be annulled for these reasons, it is necessary to remove sin of all kinds and any fault in the rite; turning to the right and to the left, the sacrificer offers seeds of white sesame, balls of cow's dung and barley-flour kneaded with water and invoking the Vajrasattva's intervention, that he may burn all sins, he throws the offerings into the fire.

13. Placing his left hand in the blessed water and taking a little of the water with the middle finger of his right hand, he sprinkles it on the image or on its reflection in the mirror, in the direction of its mouth, nose, eyes, ears, hands, navel, head (*ñe reg*); a supreme purification which, together with the final offering, ends the complex rite.

In all this liturgy, which is much more complex than the brief scheme we have given, the essential moment is then the eighth, during which a projection of the invoked god installs itself in the consecrated object, imparting a divine nature to it, although it remains undifferentiated from its indivisible essence. This divine presence or participation is called *iñānasattva*, *ye šes sems dpa'*.

Thus once more the Vajrayāna continues India's old magical intuitions; the liturgy of the *pratiṣṭhā* tends to establish the divine presence in the consecrated object, in the same way as the ritual of the *agnicayana* transformed

the altar into a magical replica of Prajāpati. As Paul Mus has justly recognized, we must start from this to understand many Buddhist ideas, which are not aberrant plants, but push their roots deep into the soil of panindian religious experience.

The Vajrayāna, bringing those intuitions back into the light and drawing from them unhesitatingly, revives and ennobles ancient rites, adapts them to new spiritual needs, finds a place for those myths in dogmatics, often interprets them. The *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* is not the blessing of a sacred object, it is the insertion into an object of a divine spirit. It takes the place of that "life,, (*jīvita* say the pāli sources) which introduced into the *me'od rten* either some part of the Master's body, like his nails or hair, or an object which had come in contact with him, like a piece of his dress, or relics which, becoming transformed into a magic replica of the Saint himself bound his mysterious presence to that monument or that image.

The dogmatic and theological maturity which the Vajrayāna had reached, naturally induced it to define this mysterious presence of the god in the sacred object and to explain how the divinity, itself a mirage, a relative moment in the mechanism of cosmic emanation, or an appearance becoming visible in the indiscriminate in answer to the call of the meditating person's intense concentration, can possibly install itself within an object and give it life. This divine power which establishes a participation between the sacred object and the deity it represents or is consecrated to, was called *jñānasattva*. This projection, different from and at the same time equal to that divinity is like Prajāpati, who remained unchanged though existing in all created things; how is it then attracted in the place it has to occupy? He who draws it therein is the mystic, through the *samayasattva*, *dam bca' sems dpa'*. *Samaya*, *dam bca'* means convention, pact, promise: the *samayasattva* is thus a conventional being, which the mystic

evokes out of his own self, after having imagined his self reabsorbed into the indiscriminate bedrock of things and then flowed back to the first cause of every form: he evokes it according to the schemes which the treatises on meditation suggest and when he thinks of himself as transformed into that god (*samayasattva*), his light pervading space, he will draw from the immensity of ether the *jñānasattva*; the two will melt into a single being, and this will be transfused into the image.<sup>37)</sup>

So, for instance, after having evoked, according to the method outlined above, Khasarpaṇa's image (this corresponds to the *mdun bskyes*, "the birth before oneself,") "let the mystic think of himself as identified with that god, imagining on the head of his own body (= Khasarpaṇa) the syllable: *om*, on his neck: *āḥ*, on his heart: *hūm*, always on the lotus flower. Thus with this method, let him meditate as long as he likes (i. e. the meditation may be repeated many times).

"Next endless flows of bright lunar rays which disperse the gloom of ignorance in all the three worlds, issue from the syllable *hūm*, the god's mystical seed, white as a lotus in autumn (the month of *kārtika*), rising on the immaculate lunar disc (visualized) in the heart of this *samayasattva* who has the appearance of Lokanātha (Khasarpaṇa); those rays attract from the most remote worlds the same god in his form of *jñānasattva*, existing *ab aeterno* (*anādisamsiddha*). And having thus led up to himself (transformed into *samayasattva*) that god, let the mystic fix him in space before himself and let him (mentally) wash the feet of Lokanātha, who has appeared in the aspect of *jñānasattva*, with water taken from a vessel wrought with various gems and let him honour the god, in the aspect of *jñānasattva*, with exoteric and esoteric liturgies of various kinds, flowers, incense, lamps, offerings, perfume, necklaces, ointments, powders, dresses, umbrellas, flags, bells, banners, of a celestial quality. After having thus repeatedly worshipped him,

pronouncing four mystical syllables *jah*, *hūm*, *vam*, *ho*, let him place his hand in the mudrā called *vikasitakalamudrā*, "the seal of the open lotus,," By the power of this mudrā, having led the god to him, let him propitiate again the god in that aspect, and pronouncing the syllables: *om*, *āḥ* *hūm*, let him realize in the god, who has a *samayasattva*'s aspect and is identified with himself, the non-duality of the two aspects, *samayasattva* and *jñānasattva*, (SM, I, p. 59).

When the divine spirit has to be installed into a sacred object, the rite is the same; the only difference is that in the case of a simple meditation, at the end of the *sādhana*, the *visarjana* takes place, viz. the dismissal of the *jñānasattva*; hence the meditative process is at an end, while in sacred objects it is a case of permanent possession, which the *visarjana*, however, can put an end to; when it is operated with the prescribed liturgy by a capable person.

"By reciting the *mantra* proper to the particular god (invoked), as (for instance) "*om yamāntaka hūm phat*," and then pronouncing: *om āḥ hūm* (when a book has to be consecrated), sNān ba mt'a' yas with his śakti is installed in the single letters of the book; like the appearing of an image on a mirror, it is the *ts'ig sems dpa'* (*samayasattva*) residing in the very essence of sNān ba mts'a yas and of the śakti; it is dissolved in those single letters, assuming the form of the letters: thus, having become a book, it will accomplish the good of created beings untill the samsāra revolves,,"

"As to mc'od rten, temples etc. (i. e. statues and paintings) the *samayasattva* derived (by an evocative process) from the central deity of the maṇḍala (built for the consecration and to which that object is dedicated) or from rNam par snañ mdsad and from his śakti, will appear like the image (on the mirror) of rNam par snañ mdsad, of his śakti and of other gods, even though dwelling in rNam par snañ mdsad's very essence;

it is transformed into that mc'od rten or into that temple, whose essential nature is intelligence; hence that mc'od rten, until the saṃsāra revolves, will accomplish the good of created beings; then the temple, as the seat of the Buddhas, of the Law, of the Bodhisattvas and of the Śrāvaka, celestial palace (in which unfold) all sorts of samādhi, becomes like the *dharmadhatu*. So says the great Acārya ṛJam dpaḷ grags pa: during the rite the god and the body emanating from him are transformed into a painted image or a statue, or a mc'od rten, or a letter of the book, and thought becomes form ,, (op. cit., of Blo bzañ c'os kyi rgyal mts'an, p. 22).

The three syllables: *om āḥ hūm*, through which life (*srog*) is finally inserted into the image or the mc'od rten, represent, in Vajrayāna speculation, the threefold *vajra*, the threefold adamant sphere to which is reduced the quintessence of every being. Even the most ancient Indian speculations had reduced the individual to a threefold element, *vāc, manas, kāya*, word, spirit and body, but in the Vajrayāna schools they acquire a very different value: they are no longer the components of the living personality, held together by the vital connection itself and subject to dissolution or death; they are a reflection of planes superior to the vicissitudes of time: man, inasmuch as he partakes of the Buddha's very essence, reverberates in himself the planes refracted by the Dharmakāya in its process of attraction and reabsorption, as it appears to the individual intelligence, but which in reality becomes annulled in him. Thus man too is an indissoluble unity of these three *vajra, sku, gsuñs, t'ugs*, body, word and spirit. And the relation extends to the other three means of divine revelation.

Sacred objects, as containers of divine presence, are called *rten gsum*, i. e. "the three supports ,, , *sku gsuñs t'ugs rten*, supports of the physical, verbal and spiritual plane; the images, statues or paintings, are the *sku*, the body, of that essence, which has appeared

in various forms, according as the created beings are able to conceive it, causing it to correspond to their capability; a book is the *gsuñs rten*, the voice, the word, the verbal revelation; the *mc'od rten* corresponds to the *t'ugs*, to the spiritual plane, the Dharmakāya-cosmogram, which contains in its interior the Mahāyāna's quintessential formula, the Prajñāpāramitā, which is gnosis and at the same time the Tathāgata himself, according to a famous verse by Diñnāga. But these three planes may be divided only for didactical purposes, because in fact they form an indissoluble unity, the Buddha's unity, as emanation of the Dharmakāya: only the Dharmakāya is. This explains how the threefold diamond, *vajra*, expressed by the three mystical syllables, is necessary to give the images life, their essential reality being reduced to those three planes.

The *sādhaka*, according to the *Gubya-samāja*, p. 23, must repeat the formula "om, I am made of the *vajra*'s essence of the body of all the Tathāgata, the same of the words, the same of the spirit ,, . Only thus he will be able to lift himself up to a secret state, coessential with the Tathāgatas and made up of three *vajras* (cf. *ibid.*, p. 43).

Hence by the imposition of the threefold formula, not only is life conferred on the images, but they are made to partake of the adamant essence; they are transformed into that same diamond throne which is outside the saṃsāric plane and on which the Buddha is seated, or better which is the Buddha himself.

It must be noticed that this transfer of the three planes, which imparts a full life, takes place through an imposition of correspondent parts of the body. It is a passage by contact from the *sādhaka*, deified by the meditative and liturgical processes, to the image, according to a rite which has remote origins in India and whose first examples may be found in the transfer of personality from the father to the son, when the former, on his deathbed, transfers his secret vitality, his interior

## 15. CLASSIFICATION OF THE TANKAS

personality, into the son's body, to live again in him. "The son approaches from above, and touches all his father's organs with his own ... Then the father transmits to him his organs ... "May I lay my word into you ... May I lay my breath (*prāna*) into you ... , etc. (*Kauṣītaki Up.*, II, p. 15, cfr. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.*, I, pp. 5, 17).

And in reality the entire rite of the *prāna-pratiṣṭhā* is the combination of two liturgies: that of birth and that of kingly consecration; the latter indeed also accompanies birth, in a certain sense: the introduction into the king's person of a new nature, his kingly dignity. The *Rab tu gnas rgyud* clearly states that in the ceremony of *pratiṣṭhā* gods enter into statues, as when the Buddha descended from the dGa' ldan to enter his mother's womb (bKa' ḡgyur, *ja*, p. 90), and the image is washed, as he was washed by the gods immediately after birth. At the same time draperies and a tiara are placed on the image seated on its throne and, as in the ceremonies of a royal *abhiṣeka*, among the ritual ingredients, the presence of an *uḍumbara* branch is prescribed; this is an essential element of the royal *mahābhiṣeka* rite (*Aitareya-Brahmana*, transl. by A. B. KEITH, H O S, XXV, pp. 325, 332). This is a new instance of the contamination between the vajrayanic liturgy and the royal rites, other cases of which we have noted in the course of these pages; even the eight vases arranged on the eight petals of the maṇḍala and containing ritual and precious substances recall the eight elements placed in the *uḍumbara* cup in the royal *abhiṣeka* (*ibid.*, p. 322). They are placed on the eight points to symbolize ideal lordship over all the substances and riches of the universe, whose master the initiated person becomes, through the rite itself. In the same manner the central vase, the *vijayakalaśa*, represents the centre of the universe, with which that divine or regal power becomes consubstantiated, thus extending its regulating power over all things.

Going back to what we have said in the preceding chapter, we may ask ourselves whether this Tibetan painting, which developed through the centuries, now supinely imitating and now reaching a greater originality, may be somehow classified. In other words, when we have a tanka before us, are we in a position to assign it to this or that school, to this or that period? And by what standards should we be guided? It is not easy to give an answer because, as we have seen, this art repeats itself, copies itself, has the hieratic uniformity proper to all sacred things. Besides, there are some types of tankas bound to their subject or to their technique to such an extent that it will never be possible to date them with certainty: at the best we will be able to fix, approximately, judging by the drawing and composition, the epoch in which a much repeated and imitated scheme was conceived for the first time. For this reason it is well to clear the ground and to consider first of all the tankas in which it would have been difficult for the artist to cut loose from compulsory patterns, because the subjects themselves forced him to use precisely those forms. It may be objected that thus two different standards of classification overlap: the one stylistical and chronological, attempting to distribute the tankas according to their school and epoch, and another, external, which totally ignoring the first standard, divides the works according to their subjects or to certain peculiar characters. There is no doubt that this is a fault, but it is derived from the very nature of these paintings, which conform to a religious tradition and where an artist's original personality is never revealed.

Having put forward these remarks, let us begin by determining the groups of tankas which, as we cannot divide them into schools

or define them chronologically, must be distinguished in a different manner.

They can be classed in the following groups:

- a) printed tankas;
- b) *gser t'añ*;
- c) embroidered or appliqué tankas;
- d) maṇḍalas;
- e) tankas of the *mGon k'añ*.

Let us consider each of these groups by itself.

I. – In the printed tankas the artist's work is limited to colouring the drawing. He finds the composition ready-made in the woodcut printed on linen; if any originality is to be found, it belongs only to the author of the drawing, the one who conceived and drew the composition, which was then cut on the wooden block.

The approximate date of these tankas thus concerns only the woodcut, not the painting.

II. – To the second group belong the tankas having a golden background; they are called *gser t'añ*, "golden tankas,,". They are of different types; sometimes, on a uniformly gilded background, the figures are drawn in black with clear-cut lines which run swift and twisting; at other times, against this same background, an image stands out in the centre, with its vivid colours it enlivens the monotony of that yellow gold and seems to emerge out of it like an iridescent flower; or else the gold is spotted with small red, blue and black touches, skilfully distributed so as to give relief to the dresses of the gods and goddesses, or sprinkled with flowers which impart to the picture an extremely bright and festive air.

Tibetans also consider *gser t'añ* the tankas having a uniform red background, against which the figures are coloured prevalingly with gold. The artist moves within these patterns and cannot escape them; hence it is never possible to determine where these *gser t'añ* come from, much less when they were executed. But we can say, in a general way, that they are rather recent; I have never

seen any specimen that can be considered earlier than the XVIIIth century. Although these tankas are bound to an exact technique, the artist often attains beautiful effects through the skilful harmony used in arranging against a uniform background sudden spots of colour and tracing the winding interplay of lines. For this reason *gser t'añ* are much prized by the Tibetans.

III. – The use of tankas made of appliqué work (stuff cut out and sewn on another material) called *sgos sku*, *t'ags su bskrun pa*, *ap'an c'en*, is very ancient in Tibet. In the *Myañ c'uñ* we read the description of the large tanka made in the times of the kings of Gyantse and then shown in public and borne in processions during solemn festivals.

We know that it was made to the order of the Nañ c'en, when he received the diploma conferring upon him the title of *t'us dgon*; for twenty-seven days, thirty-six craftsmen (*gos bzo*) specialized in this sort of work, worked on it uninterruptedly. It was made of 23 bolts (*yug*) of silk (*gan gos*); 24 bolts were used for the lining, 42 spools of silk were necessary to sew the various pieces together. Its height was of 33 cubits. The central image represented Byams pa between the two standing figures of sPyan ras gzigs and aJam dbyaṅs. The description of another large tanka (*ap'an c'en*) has been preserved by the fifth Dalai Lama (*Biography*, vol. *c'a*, p. 172 ff.). After mentioning the quantity and quality of material used, he also records the names of the chief artists who worked on it; he distinguishes on one hand the two draughtsmen, those who traced the design, the master (*dbu mdsad*) Ts'e don rig ḍsin of Rin spuṅs and his assistant (*dbu c'uñ*) aJam dbyaṅs dbaṅ po of Rag k'a, and on the other hand the actual craftsmen, who nevertheless must have been held in great appreciation, if Blo bzaṅ rgya mts'o deigns to mention them. They were the masters (*dbu mdsad*) P'un ts'ogs of Ri nañ, O rgyan of Rag rse śag in the environs of Lhasa,

Ts'aris ldan, brTan pa of Pa rnam and T'se brtan; among their assistants (*dbu c'uñ*): Pad ma ts'e rin of rGyal rtse, Dar rgyas bkra šis of gZis rtse, P'un ts'ogs of Goñ dkar. From this list we see that artists abounded in the environs of Gyantse, where groups of craftsmen specialized in this sort of work had very ancient traditions.

Of this same type is the huge tanka which is hung twice a year in Tashilunpo on a vast wall, built for the purpose. Embroidered tankas were introduced from China.

IV. – We must dwell at greater length on the maṇḍalas, as they are among the most complex symbols of Vajrayāna esotericism; hence they have a precise esoteric character, as the visible projection of a scheme of the universe, and also as being an essential part of Tantric liturgies, they have given a great contribution to the development of Buddhist iconography.

The maṇḍala, like the stūpa, is a psychocosmogram:<sup>32</sup> it represents a scheme of the world in the liturgical drama, indeed it is the universe itself led back from its material multiplicity to its quintessential unity; while the stūpa represents in an architectural manner this cosmos and the persons who perform the ritual circumambulation around it go back from the expanded and displayed world to the source of all things thus becoming unified with it, the maṇḍala is the linear and pictorial scheme of that identification and of that same process: it gives us, horizontally, the plan of the stūpa, it is the stūpa seen from above, with the doors of the *pradakṣiṇā* and its centre; the maṇḍala too is “entered into”, the ceremony of initiation is a “*praveśa*”, an entry.

Hence it is also the human body, the microcosm, the most perfect maṇḍala, in which the interplay of universal forces is reproduced; the symbols through which this language finds expression are images, nearly always the images of deities; the component parts of human personality (*skandha*), material elements (*dhātu*), sensorial spheres (*āyatana*) are reflected into it as figures of gods

and goddesses (*p'uñ k'ams skyes mc'ed rten ābrel rnam sba dan lba moi ran bžin du nañ gis c'os mt'un de ltar gnas*). (*Dharmamaṇḍalasūtra*, by Padmākara, bsTan aḡyur, vol. LXXII, part I, p. 1).

The disciple, when he has been baptized, (*abhiṣikta*) is introduced into the maṇḍala, and becomes ideally identified with its centre, which is not a spacial centre, but the “origin”, beyond time and space.

Thanks to this character and meaning, the maṇḍala is drawn according to the same paradigms used to build a stūpa: both are Indian echoes of the Babylonian *zūburat*, but inserted in a vital manner into the Indian tradition; hence the remote foreign inspiration is slowly transformed into a natural and more appropriate symbol of the liturgical, cosmological and psychological equivalences of Indian soteriology.

This correspondence between the maṇḍala and the plan of the stūpa extends to the scheme of the palace or city of the Cakravartin, the universal monarch, whose mythography took roots in India after her contacts with the Persian empire; it is made evident by its very aspect.

The maṇḍala is circumscribed all around by the *me ri*, “belt of fire”, fire, in the Tantric symbolology, means knowledge, the indispensable means by which the understanding of supreme reality may be attained, and through it, the saving experience.

Immediately after it comes the *rdo rje ra ba*, “belt of vajra”, which shows that the threshold of the sphere of reality has been reached, the adamantine earth identified with gnosis itself. Then follows, particularly in the maṇḍalas dedicated to the terrific deities, or to the most secret Tantric cycles, the circle of the eight cemeteries which represent the eight kinds of sensations and mental activities; keeping man attached to phenomonic appearances, they are the cause of *samsāra* and hence must be destroyed and annihilated if we wish to ascend to the plane of the absolute: they are placed in the maṇḍala for the same reason

as the four Māras are on the Buddha's throne: by virtue of that bivalence of man's psychical complex which is the cause of saṃsāra and at the same time the necessary premise of salvation when the revulsion of planes has taken place.

The cemeteries are succeeded by a circle of lotus leaves; that is, the spiritual sphere begins because, as we have seen, the lotus is the support of the immaterial world where the mystic finds himself when, in the contemplative process, the revulsion from the saṃsāric to the nirvanic plane has been realized. In the internal circle is traced the square maṇḍala, also drawn starting from the two fundamental lines crossing each other: the proportions vary from one maṇḍala to another, but generally the unit of measurement is the eighth part of the *ts'añs t'ig*, a vertical line: this eighth corresponds to the measure of the "door", which we shall now speak of; one fourth of this door, i. e. the fourth part of an eighth, constitutes the "small part", *c'a c'uñ*. On the four sides of this square representing the "town", are drawn four doors (*sgo*) in the shape of a T, whose upper part is called *ya p'ubs*: these doors are flanked by five bands, each painted in one of the five colours. On the sides of each of them are two or more pillars (*ka ba*) supporting the *torāna* (*rta ābabs*) which surmounts the door. The doors are joined by a belt which is itself divided into five parts: *stegs* or *ādod snam* basement, *snam bu* or *p'a gu* fringe, *gduñ ma*, small columns, *dra ba*, *dra p'yed*, *bārārdhabāra*, namely a surface ornamented with necklaces and half necklaces of pearls hanging or issuing from the mouths of *makara* and lions, *rin c'en šar bu* or *p'yu bur* "jewelled band", and then above all, the balcony, called *māda' yab* or *padma*, because it is decorated with lotus flowers. Over the doors rises the arch, *torāna*, made of eleven fringes (*snam bu*) or storeys, resting on the small pillars on both sides of the doors: beginning from below, they are called *rin c'en šar bu*, jewelled band, *rin po c'e*, the gem,

*rta rmig*, the horse's hoof, *gser*, gold, *c'u srin*, *makara*; *gser*, gold; *rta rmig*, *rin po c'e*, *rta rmig*, *gser*, *māda' yab* (balcony) ornamented with figures of half lotus-leaves.

It can be seen that the names of the single parts are derived from their ornaments and colour.

On the top of the *torāna* there must be a lotus, on which rests the wheel of the Law with its twelve spokes; on its right and left two gazelles *kṛṣṇasāra*, a symbol of the preaching of Sarnath, but whose symbolism is a complex combination of various elements, first among them, the myth of the Cakravartin, who goes round the earth repeating the sun's course, hence almost creating and developing the earth itself in its spatial and temporal succession.

Above the wheel we see the umbrella (*gdugs*) a badge of royalty; on its sides *ba dan*, small flags, stuck on staffs resting on vases (*bum pa*, *kalaša*). All around, on the edge of the belt from door to door, paradise trees (*āpag bsam šin*) are born out of the *bhadrakalaša* (*bum pa bzañ po*), "vase of the water of longevity", and next the seven gems, emblem of the Cakravartin are placed: eightspoked wheel, six-toothed white elephant, green horse, girl of sixteen, gem with six rays, a red minister with an inexhaustible treasure, a general of a dark colour, with cuirass, spear and sword.

This symbology too, then, takes us back to the myth of the Cakravartin and of his city; the signs of the universal monarch are displayed on the belt, the trees remind us of those *tāla* plants mentioned in the description of the Cakravartin's city;<sup>33</sup> the five stripes which make up this belt are also, perhaps, derived from the belts (bastions) of the royal city or of the *zikkurat*, which were originally five, before becoming seven due to astrological equivalences; in the plan of the maṇḍala they are placed one above the other like the five parts of the same wall, but it is extremely probable that this has happened due to a

faulty perspective: each of them has a particular colour and a distinguishing ornament, as the walls of the Cakravartin's city had a different colour and were made of a different precious substance: this also explains why in the sides of the doors there must be five stripes of five different colours: the five original doors have been united to make a single door and each of them has the colour and substance of the corresponding belt.

Naturally for the adept each part of the maṇḍala has a specific value, it is the emblem, the token, of the Law's fundamental tenets: the five girdles correspond in his eyes to the 5 gnostic knowledges; the *torāṇa* and its parts to the three planes i. e. of desire, of forms and of the super-sensible (*kāma, rūpa, arūpa*) with the addition of moral praxis; the pillars to the eightfold path, the small columns to the Buddha's imperturbability, and so forth.

(*Dharmadhātumaṇḍala*, bsTan agyur, vol. LXXII, p. 3).

Inside this belt can be inserted either a true maṇḍala, circular, protected by its external circle (*mu k'yud*) and next by the "diamond", enclosure and the "lotus border", or else another belt may be included, of the same type as the external one, in which is contained the maṇḍala where the deities are arranged.

The inner surface is divided by diagonal lines, *zur t'ig*, into four triangles, each of a different colour, but according to the most common plan: blue to the East, yellow to the South, red to the West, green to the North; in each of these directions a deity is painted, alone or included in a smaller maṇḍala together with his acolytes. Hence a tetrad is derived, arranged round the central deity, which represents the point of irradiation or centre of emanation of all the others: the reality which, remaining always the same, apparently extends within space and develops within time.

In the maṇḍala are distinguished, in theory: a) the drawing itself and its diagrams which form its receptacle, *rten*, and b) the figures it contains, *brten*.

The *rten* in its turn is both the surface itself (*gži*) and the heavenly palace (*žal yas k'añ*) drawn on it; the latter is then divided into a *vimāna* proper, with all its parts, colours, embellishments and its support-throne (*señ ge k'ri, glañ c'en k'ri*, "with a lion, with an elephant", according to its deity) or a lunar or solar lotus.

The *brten* consists of the cycle of the gods, whose body is considered in its parts: 1 face, 2 arms; 3 faces, 6 arms, and so on, the colour, the signs which will be the 32 main and the 84 secondary ones, proper to the superior being, Cakravartin or Buddha, the symbols, i. e. arms or objects clasped in the god's hands (see *op. cit.*, p. 3 ff.).

The maṇḍala is read following the *pradakṣiṇa*'s order: as the latter is entered from the East, so also its symbolism begins from the East, always remembering that this is not the astronomical East: the maṇḍala's orientation is dependant on its relation with the meditating person, according to a general rule of Hindu ritualistic; hence the East is the side opposite the *sadbaka*, the person towards whom the figures are turned.

Having determined this point, the maṇḍala's course proceeds in the direction of the circumambulation.

When the circumambulation of the maṇḍala is accomplished, the spatial series and the temporal development are concluded; only the centre remains, into which all the preceding display has flowed back and with which the mystic who has accomplished the rite finds himself unified.

V. – We shall also dwell at length on the tankas of the mGon k'añ, because, although they too obey certain fixed schemes, they often attain the highest artistic expression Tibetan art is capable of. They are called tankas of the mGon k'añ because they are almost always arranged in the mGon k'añ and represent the deities venerated there. mGon k'añ, literally, means "the mGon po's house"; the mGon po is the "Lord", i. e. the *Yi*

*dam*, the protecting deity of the sect or convent; in fact each sect has its patron, its terrible defender, the terrific and warlike aspect of the merciful deity who protects the devotees from the dangers of evil powers. The Sa skya pa f. i. have Gur mgon and P'ur pa, the dGe lugs pa have Ye šes mgon po.

The *Yi dam* rules and guides a host of lesser beings, *sruñ ak'or* or *bstan sruñ*, nearly all aboriginal deities, which Buddhism later accepted, transforming them into the terrible keepers of the Law; many of them are local demons who, after the triumph of Buddhism, were taken on as custodians of the temple built on the place they used to garrison, of its treasures and of its fortunes. *Yi dam* or *mGon po*, surrounded by the pageant of their terrible followers thus reside and receive their cult in the *mGon k'añ*, mysterious shrines into which it is very difficult to be admitted. The doors giving access to them are low and narrow. On the doors are painted monstrous faces. The visitor, even before entering, feels hesitating and lost in a half-light which the feeble light of a lantern seems to make gigantic, plumbing its doubtful depths. The monks too are restless and anxious. The locks creak, keys are turned, the doors open. One has the impression of plunging headlong into bottomless night, into solidified darkness. Then the lamp, prevailing little by little over the gloom, sculpts and carves against the black background forms and aspects which do not belong to this world. You would think you were looking out over primordial chaos, where the vital urge finds expression in uncertain and contradictory waverings or becomes incorporated into indistinct shapes, immediately abandoned as by a sudden repentance, but so suddenly that the two images overlap, melt one into the other and monsters are born out of them, figures which are neither beast nor man, but are nevertheless one and the other, without yet reaching a definite aspect of their own: the beast has a human expression,

the man grins and twists like a brute. An elementary, chaotic, contradictory world, like the images formed in a feverish delirium. There is no cruelty or malice in their eyes, but the fury of monsters, exploding with the violence of a storm; you expect them not to speak but to howl like the wind, not to move with a wild animal's agility but to hurl themselves about with a hurricane's uncontrollable vehemence.

The shrine proper is reached little by little, plodding and groping in the dark. All around, stuffed animals hang from the ceiling: dogs, yaks, horses, wolves; stiff, filled with straw, covered with the dust of centuries; their hair falls off and drops down every time a breath of air blows through the place.

They are the *spyän gzigs*, the god's messengers. All round, war trophies and remains of enemies and brigands, killed through the favour of the same deities who protect the temple. And as the temple is a projection of the universe, indeed cosmos in its essential paradigm, they also defend all men from all sorts of perils and evils.

Meanwhile in that cave, which seems to sink into the abysses of the earth, deep thuds echo with a constant rhythm and are repeated by mysterious hollows. One advances in the anxious anticipation of being confronted at any moment by something mysterious; one is led on by a resigned and awed curiosity; it is no longer possible to turn back. Little by little the thuds become nearer, until the *sancta sanctorum* is reached, where a priest, squatting in the ritual pose, recites litanies and invocations in a monotonous voice, beating rhythmically on a large drum with a crooked drumstick. The dark and empty rooms multiply its echo. These priests pass their lives in the *mGon kañ*, voluntary comrades of the deities incumbering on all sides with their monstrous figures; they are buried in darkness, as though plunged into primordial chaos to live the drama of creation over again in that silence. When one enters,

they do not move nor look up; they remain with closed eyes, murmuring secret formulas, almost a lullaby soothing and putting to sleep forces hidden within the images; as if, were the crooning interrupted for an instant, they might wake up and break loose in all their fury. The place itself captivates by its mystery, its shadows, its silences; the faith, the pious awe of religious souls who have passed through the place or lived there for centuries, seem to create a sacred atmosphere, in which the manifestation of the god's divine spirit is felt to be imminent. As if to show materially that these mGon k'añ sink back into the origin of all things, they are often underground.

Our religions are enlightened, they give the first place to consciousness and its crystal-clear sheen; the object of a life inspired by religion is to come closer to that splendour of truth and good in which everything is clear, of a pellucid, angelic transparence, like the ascent of the sun and its expansion in a triumph of light over the heavenly regions, without shadows or mist. The subconscious is left to its darkness, denied, or rather expelled like the reign of evil. We are on the threshold between human and brutish life, on one side all the light on the other all the darkness; hither the ascent towards consciousness, thither the descent towards the chaos of matter.

This break does not exist in Buddhism: rather there is an organic continuity between the subconscious and the placid and adamant splendours of consciousness; indeed the latter are attained through the night of the former, its ambushes, its blind overflow, its impacts and clashes. All that is good in spiritual life is born out of that labour, has its seed in that darkness, like the tree ascending towards the sky but digging its roots into the damp earth. This is why yoga begins precisely with the study and the description of the subconscious which is the possible infinite, a magical liberty denying

the light but leading to it through the meandering and tormented paths of life. And since those theosophies identify macrocosm with microcosm, the drama of each of us is the drama of the universe: a contrast of forces, non-physical but conscious, indeed distinguishable one from the other only by a greater or lesser degree of consciousness, good or bad, which lifts us up into the unperturbed bliss of nirvana or flings us into that continuity of suffering and death which is existence. Man's destiny is decided within those abysses, the struggle for conscious life follows the impulse of those contests between trends and inclinations which strive at any cost to come forth into the daylight out of that gloomy turmoil, one overcoming the other.

Good is also hidden and laboriously seeks a way out towards the light, like a smoldering fire waiting for favourable circumstances to break out into a roaring blaze of flames. This Buddhist intuition, continued in many parts by psychoanalysis, is expressed in the East through symbols. Those forces are imagined in the shape of gods, the same ones represented, serene and contemplating, in the heavens, which appear to the eyes of ascetics purified by meditation, but under new aspects, suited to darkness and chaos; no longer in forms of supreme human beauty, shining with a spiritual light, but precisely as the protectors of the terrific mGon k'añ, as unsuccessful couplings of man and beast, not blissful but frantic. This is the moment of strife, not yet the moment of final victory over evil; gloom and ambushes are everywhere and emerge in an unceasing flow from the depths of chaos, like a sea always stirred and troubled by stormy winds; even the forces of good are obliged to appear warlike and fearful in that blind tumult, lest they be vanquished. Submerged in the subconscious, they smother the fiendish forces, they are like larvae of the beatific deities, heroically seeking a way out of the darkness into the light. Thus in these mGon k'añ we see,

expressed in all its abstruse symbolism, the religion of late Buddhism; without it the temple proper would be incomplete and fragmentary, in the same way as every man's consciousness is fatally preceded and accompanied by an obscure subterranean world, binding him to life's very origins.

The tankas of the mGon k'añ correspond marvellously to the atmosphere of the place meant to receive them: their pervading colours are red and black; in the most ancient, of the Guge school, the dark blue or black figures of monstrous deities emerge from the dark red background; in the most recent ones these roles are reversed: on the black background the figures stand out surrounded by vivid gleams of flame. In some of them, as for instance in dPal lha mo, we must almost guess at the presence of the goddess from the vivid red of her eyes, mouth and hands and from the flames surrounding her; she suddenly springs out of the awful darkness of cosmic night, all a flame.

At other times, terrific deities and gruesome offerings of human skulls, eyes and entrails are traced out in thin golden lines. But in both cases the effect is equally obtained: the contrast of strong colours, black backgrounds, fiery images emerging from them in sudden epiphanies, represent in an extremely striking manner the atmosphere of *tremendum* pervading all the mGon k'añ.

Having thus cleared the ground of those tankas which, being reduced to types, can with difficulty be assigned to a given epoch or school, let us see if, in other cases, epoch and style can be ascertained. It is comparatively simple to distinguish the tankas of Central Asian or Nepalese style, although it is not so easy to tell whether the latter be originals or copies; but the difficulty of determining school and epoch with any accuracy increases as the different trends inspiring Tibetan paintings and flowing into them, become blended and form a manner containing

them all and going beyond them all, a *koiné* to which the Tibetan spirit conforms.

The schools were never isolated, though they lived a self-contained existence. They did not keep aloof from the artistic and religious atmosphere penetrating the country's entire life; they did not develop independently, they exchanged their manners and schemes in a conscious uniformity.

This was largely due to the prestige of the great convents, in whose shadow the schools of painting flourished and prospered: Sa skya, aBri guñ, mTs'ur p'u, Gyantse, sNar t'añ, Tashilunpo, Lhasa, Se ra, aBras spuñs, dGa' ldan, with their dependencies and offshoots, centres of spiritual and intellectual life and goals of pilgrimages, which every believer yearned to visit, at least once in his life, these monasteries exercised a powerful influence on Tibetan art and thought. Pupils flowed from every point to the theological universities of these centres; venerated masters and saints dwelling in their enclosures attracted crowds of devotees and disciples; their printing-presses flooded the country with numberless copies of the canonical books and of their theologians' subtle glosses; there were brought to light the works of Tson k'a pa and his disciples, of Buston and of the K'ri c'en of dGa' ldan, various treatises on logic and theology. But along with dogmatic treatises and canonical works, in some of those monasteries, engraved on large wooden tables, are found the outlines of the tankas which the devotees flowing there from all parts, get printed on paper or linen and take back to their country as a souvenir of their pilgrimage. The sanctity of the places those drawings come from, the visions they represent and their noble composition compel the admiration of painters and craftsmen even in the remotest provinces; they have but to copy them, sometimes they have only to put colours on the printed material. Thus these models travelled throughout Tibet and with them travelled the remembrance of frescoes

admired on the walls of the same temples where the tankas had been drawn, showing the pilgrims, in the vast galleries, lives of saints, the glories of the gods, the Yi dam's terrific pageants, heavenly bliss.

All these motives concur in enforcing a natural sameness on the works produced by Tibetan artistic schools. Hence no real local varieties exist, with the exception of some manners, like those prospering on the Chinese frontiers, peculiar to those countries; the liveliness of Chinese influence classes them almost as an offshoot of Chinese provincial art; the same, as we shall see, had happened in the early days of Buddhist penetration, in the extreme Western province, the country of Guge. Hence, these two influences excepted, it is more just to speak of local craftsmen, settled in one country or another, rather than of schools in the sense of original and independent trends.

Nevertheless, some styles may be discerned, marking, we may say, the various moments in the slow formation of a manner quite peculiar to Tibet, destined, in the XVIIIth century, to succumb once more to Chinese influence.

For this reason the tankas of the present collection, although they all breathe the same air, may be distinguished without any enforced classification, into some well-defined groups, based on their evident characteristics. Let us begin by separating a small group of tankas which Tibetan tradition universally recognizes as typical of the K'ams manner (*K'ams lugs*): design and colours, empty spaces, landscape, fully justify this attribution. The series of the 16 Arhats naturally belongs to this group: it is true that the pictorial representation of the keepers of Buddhist Law follows, through a long tradition, Chinese iconography; nevertheless the series formed by nn. 121-136 and coming from K'ams is stylistically different from the others represented in n. 42 derived from sNar t'añ models.

The iconography, in all these cases, is identical and inspired by a well-defined

tradition, of Chinese origin; notwithstanding this, the K'ams series has a stylistic individuality of its own, interpreting an old theme in a less schematic manner and more broadly, treating it in that supple and fresh manner present even in popular manifestations of Chinese art. There we find motives which we might suppose to be inspired by Persia, were it not that they echo customs and peoples of near-by Turkestan. Figures of Turkomans from Central Asia, with their flowing beards, replace the Indian personages usually met with in the tankas of Central Tibet; they are a vivid note of local colour, a breath of worldliness, disturbing the fixity of iconographic tradition.

It is also easy to recognize another, more numerous group, developing out of the Tibetan XVIIIth century and bearing all its characteristics; it is predominant in the Tibetan collections of Western museums and has a rustic gaiety whose vivid colours gladden our eyes: gods and saints, in their bright clothes, meditate in the centre; around them scenes of monastic life, against a formal landscape over which strange rocks loom or green fields lie under a blue sky where snow-white clouds hover. In the fields cows, gazelles and other nimble animals traced with the accuracy of consummate miniature-painters. Here, at every moment, we breath the fresh air of Chinese art, which broadens out, makes even, confers liveliness, tones down too-bright colours, tempers the stiffness which dulled preceding tankas, where Chinese influence, after having penetrated under the Sa skya, had grown faint due to the powerful voice of Nepalese models. This art gained ground with the triumph of the Yellow Sect and spread in its monasteries, but even the schools of rival sects did not escape its influence: after vainly resisting, they too bowed before the fashionable taste, and bKa' brgyud and rNin ma pa tankas are seen to adopt the same language and find expression in the same style.

Having thus identified these well-defined groups, it will be easy to determine another group: the tankas immediately preceding the XVIIIth century. They represent the attempt of Tibetan painting to assume a form of its own, after having absorbed and assimilated outside influences. They echo India more vividly than China: uniform and bright colours, unthinned out light; the figures still close one to the other, the influence of the maṇḍalas is strongly felt. But as we have seen, hieratic grimness and uniformity are tempered by an outburst of life; convent life, of course, and a Tibetan landscape, represented not with the imaginative breadth of Chinese painting,

but with monasteries and the small white cottages of its villages. In this case too there is a general uniformity of style and manner, but an attentive observer may discover details due to which some tankas, for instance those from Sa skya, seem to form a group to itself: they shall therefore be taken separately.

The Guge school, is, as we saw, easily recognisable.

Outside these groups, what is left is pure imitation and copy of Nepalese and Central Asian models, without the least originality.

On the base of these standards we have divided the tankas which we shall now illustrate separately.



## NOTES

1. LAUFER, *Der Roman einer tibetischen Königin*, p. 7.
2. *vitasti*: A measure, the span, the distance between the tips of the fully stretched thumb and the little finger. ACHARYA P. K., *A Dictionary of Hindu architecture*, s. v.
3. *Tibetan Paintings*, 1925.
4. The image of Ye šes mgon po made by Maitripā. See *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 64.
5. See below, p. 318.
6. LÜDERS, *Die Saubhikas*, reprinted in *Philologica-Indica*, p. 391 ff.
7. ROERICH, *The Epic of Kesar of Ling*, JRASB, 1942, p. 277.
8. TĀRANĀTHA (Schiefner), *Geschichte des Buddhismus*, p. 278; dPag bjam ljon bzai, ed. S. CH. DAS, p. 136; LAUFER, *Dokumente der indischen Kunst*, p. 184.
9. FOUCHER, *Étude sur l'icon. bouddhique*, p. 181 f.
10. *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. II (Rin c'en bzai po and the Renaissance of Buddhism).
11. *Indian Paintings in Western Indian Temples*. Artibus Asiae, vol. VII, p. 191 ff.
12. See Plates A B. The two longest *pālaka* cover a ms. of the Prajñāparamitā, written under king Udayadeva about 1050 (BENDALL, *Catalogue of the Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts*, Chronological Appendix, I. S. LEVI, *Le Népal*, vol. II, p. 194.
13. On Kojarnāth see G. TUCCI, *Indo-Tibetica*, II, pp. 64, 66; IV, part II, p. 280; *Santi e briganti*, pp. 38-43 and note 72 to Part four.
14. *rGyal rabs*, p. 105, *bal poi lba bzo ba*, the authors of statues of sPyan ras gziags, Khasarpana etc, p. 107; *rgya mo bzas kyañ rgya yul nas šin bzo dan lba bzo man po bos nas*, p. 111, *bal poi lba bzos abur du bikos*. Chronicles of the fifth Dalai Lama, p. 24 b: *de nas bal poi lba bzo dag gi sor moi rgyur rtsal gyis sku dai gsun gi rten rnam ji ltar byon pa bžin du gsal bar brkos*; p. 27 a: *bal yul nas can dan ha ri sdoñ po las ap'ags pa lo ke žva ra spyan drans te*.
15. *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. IV, part I, p. 133 ff. The *rGyal rabs* mentions artists ordered to be brought from Khotan, Li yul, in the times of Ral pa can; *rig byed la mk'as pai bzo bos*, p. 135.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 137. Also in the *rGyal rabs*: *bzo bo rgya gar gyi lugs su bženis*, p. 128.
17. On him see S. LÉVI, *Le Népal*, III, p. 185. In ap'ags pa's letters and in his works in general I find no mention of it. However in his *rGyal po yab sras kyis me'od rten bženis pa la bsnags pai sdeb sbyar dandaka* (Sa skya works, vol. ba, p. 337) a *bzo boi me'od rgyur bal poi rigs byuñ mGw žes bya* is mentioned, who built the me'od rten Qubilai had ordered to be made, together with many other *rgya* (Indian or Chinese?) artists *rgya yi bzo boi ts'ogs dan bcas*.
18. Eulogy of gNas rñin (on which see *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, pp. 44 and 145). An ācārya Manu was the author, as we have seen, of the me'od rten containing Atiśa's mortal remains (see above, p. 89). Other Nepalese artists are mentioned as the authors of images of the siddhas in SP, p. 384.
19. Quoted in *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 25, n. 1.
20. I am obliged once more to refer the reader to the various volumes of *Indo-Tibetica*, advising a comparison of the different tables.
21. *Indo-Tibetica*, IV, part I, p. 168 ff.
22. LALOU, op. cit., p. 19 ff.
23. As to the deity represented, SEICHI TAKI in Kokka, n. 439, 1927, and HACKIN in RAA, vol. V, 1938, p. 39, have stated that it appears to be Avalokiteśvara. I cannot agree with the two learned authors and I think that it is Tārā protecting from the eight kinds of dangers. She is represented in the usual posture as in the tanka 36 of this collection; she is surrounded by her eight epiphanies. The breasts are clearly marked as can be seen in *Thousand Buddhas*.
24. When the painter copies or puts the colours on the drawing designed by a lama (*bkod pa*), the god naturally descends into this lama at the very moment of the evocation.
25. Another writer of works on iconometry was Blo bzai c'os kyi ŋi ma. See S. CH. DAS, JRASB, 1881, p. 187.
26. *Indo-Tibetica*, vol. IV, part I, p. 30.
27. On the various types of hats see WADDELL, *Lamaism*, p. 194 f.
28. The Sanskrit equivalent of *sa ga adug stans zlum poi rkañ, mñam pai stabs* is uncertain. A list of these *āsanas* is in the *Hathayogoprandipikā* which knows 84 of them.
29. *Viz. the parināmanā*.
30. In the Pañcakrama, ed. LA VALLÉE POUSSIN, Chap. I, vv. 193-195 Śumbha is included in the cycle of the Vighnāntakr.
31. To *śamayasattva* and *jñānasattva*, the Pañcakrama also adds a *śamādhisattva* (ed. LA VALLÉE POUSSIN, Chap. I, vv. 91-92). The *jñānasattva* is imagined as manifesting itself in the heart of the *śamayasattva*: the *śamādhisattva* is the mystical syllable, the sacred seed, the essence of the spiritual plane, *bum*, v. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
32. Indeed, even if the maṇḍala is originally a cosmogram, by virtue of the homology between macrocosm and microcosm, the drama it finally represents through the scheme of its symbols is no longer that of cosmic evolution and involution; it is rather the drama of the disintegration of initial consciousness and its reintegration. Precisely for this reason the maṇḍala, in Vajrayāna, is not a simple cosmogram, but rather a psycho-cosmogram. I have discussed this in detail, in a book on the maṇḍala, to be published shortly.
33. In other words the maṇḍala, as a sacred surface enclosed by a *temenos* or *sulcus primigenius*, considered as the equivalent of cosmos or as a magical transposition of cosmos converging towards a central point, is a primitive intuition in India too; the Assyro-Babylonian scheme which, through Iran, later fixed its form, was superimposed over that ancient idea: instead of the maṇḍala, ancient India used the vase, *kalāśa* or *kumbha*, a symbol of the universe. This is proved by the fact that in later times, when the theory of the maṇḍala was elaborated in a final manner, the vase remained as an integral part of maṇḍalic liturgy, in the same way as it still forms an indispensable element of certain *pūjā* of Hinduism, for instance the *Durgāpūjā*, gathering temporarily, like the maṇḍala, the *jñānasattva*. Indeed Tsoñ k'a pa on his treatise on Vajrayāna quoting *Sāmpuṭatantra*, p. 178, says that the vase is the *lba yi gnas*, "the place where the gods are... On its sides is painted, as in the maṇḍala, the seed of the god on the sun or on the moon. In its centre is imagined the circle of the gods, *Lhai ak'ar lo*, *ibid.*, p. 180. In the central vase *rnam rgyal bum pa, vijayakalāśa* the *jñānasattva* is made to descend (see p. 313). So that the vase is the first maṇḍala into which the deities descend and arrange themselves.



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