

Tashi Palsang: An Archieve of Beyul Tsum



A ROSARY OF RUBIES

The Chronicle of the Gur-rigs mDo-chen Tradition
from South-West Tibet

Dakarwa Chokyi Wangchuk and Franz-Karl Ehrhard

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PREFACE

The present study is a further outcome of my investigations into the cultural and religious traditions of the sKyid-grong region in south-western Tibet and the neighbouring Himalayan valleys. It is based on literary sources, for the greater part manuscripts in *dbu med* script, particularly the writings of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (1775-1837). His set of collected writings (*gsung 'bum*) has already formed the basis for a description of the religious geography of the region (Ehrhard 2004a). Amongst the historical works contained in the *gsung 'bum* I came across a rare chronicle treating a local Buddhist tradition associated with the cult of a group of female protective deities. My interest in this topic and the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa school as a whole goes back to travels in the Nepalese Himalayas in the 1990s, when the written sources used for this book became accessible for the first time.

The chronicle of this little-known bKa'-brgyud-pa school, which is presented in a critical edition, an annotated translation and a photographic re-production below, was first read with students at Harvard University (Tibetan and Himalayan Studies) in 2001, and it is with great pleasure that I remember the classes. At that time E. Gene Smith—who had just established the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC) in a semi detached house in Cambridge, Massachusetts—shared his interest in the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa school with me, and he also reminded me of the important *gser*

'phreng text of the tradition when the study was in its final phase. A last reading of some parts of the chronicle was undertaken with students at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich (Institute of Indology and Tibetology) in 2008, which helped to clarify some difficult passages.

The main load of editing, proof-reading and indexing the present book was shouldered by Ralf Kramer, Bavarian State Library, Munich, and I have to thank him for the smooth cooperation. The printing of the work was made possible through a grant from the Tara Stiftung (Düsseldorf), whose continued support is gratefully acknowledged.

Munich, in the autumn 2008



Lamas and Protectors of Glorious mDo-chen bKa'-bgyu

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

During the 12th and 13th centuries the bKa'-brgyud-pa school of Tibetan Buddhism gave way to a proliferation of sub-sects, which came to be known as the "four great [lineages]" (*che bzhi*) and the "eight lesser [lineages]" (*chung brgyad*). From among the latter the 'Brug-pa bKa' brgyud-pa school was in its initial phase dominated by two important religious figures: Ling Ras-pa Padma rdo-rje (1128-1188) and gTsang-pa rGya-ras Ye-shes rdo-rje (1161-1211). The basic outlines of their respective lives are known to us and a reading of their biographies suggests that they were quite divergent personalities. Ling Ras-pa Padma rdo-rje can best be described as a wandering bard with only limited commitment to establishing religious institutions, while gTsang-pa rGyas-ras Ye-shes rdo-rje appears more like a consolidator, interested in scholasticism and religious institutions.¹

The self-understanding of the newly founded 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school is detectable in a 13th-century historiographical source originating from the religious circles around rGod-tshang-

1. For an overview of the emergence of the different lineages of the bKa'-brgyud-pa school, see Smith (2001:41-43). Concerning the concept of "lineage" (*brgyud pa*)—defined as "a fluid and adaptable collection of material and non-material transmissions that are passed down from one generation to the next"—and a first assessment of the lives of Ling Ras-pa Padma rdo-rje and gTsang-pa rGya-ras Ye-shes rdo-rje, compare Blythe Miller (2005:374-375 & 379-396).

pa mGon-po rdo-rje (1189-1258). He is known together with Lo-ras-pa dBang-phyug brtson-'grus (1187-1250) as one of the two major disciples of gTsang-pa rGya-ras Yeshe rdo-rje. They founded the “Upper 'Brug” (*stod 'brug*) and the “Lower'Brug” (*smad 'brug*) branches of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school, respectively, and have both left autobiographical writings and arranged their own collected works. rGod-tshang-pa had in turn several disciples called “great sons” (*bu chen*) and some of them were responsible for establishing further sub-branches in south-western Tibet. Among these disciples one finds a person known as Ma-bdun ras-chen or Ma-bdun-pa (12th/13th cent.), who had received that latter name “because he meditated at a place in Kyirong (*sKyid-grong*) where Guru Rinpoche bound to oath the seven Mamo.”²

The full designation of this yogin in the document is Ma-bdun-pa mDo-bo che-ba, thus pointing not only to his involvement with the “Seven Mothers” (*ma mo bdun*), a group of female religious protectors in the region of Mang-yul Gung-thang, but also to a specific place known as mDo-bo-che, obviously located in the domain of the old Tibetan kingdom in south-western Tibet as well. Up to now not much information has become available on this little-known lineage of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school and the involvement of its founder with the teachings of the Precious Guru

2. See Smith (2001:43-45) for the further development of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school and its sub-branches. The 13th-century historiographical source mentioned above bears the title '*Brug pa'i lo rgyus zur tsam* and has been translated and commented on by Blythe Miller (2006:10-34). In the commentary on the list of the nine disciples of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje, the one known as Ma-bdun-pa is not credited with having established an own sub-branch.

Padmasambhava. In the following I will present a chronicle of the mDochen bKa'-brgyud-pa, as Ma-bdun-pa's tradition is known, written by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (1775-1837). It is presented with the aim to show how a sub-branch of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school developed in a local context and was transmitted from a certain point onwards by members of a particular family from that region.

The author Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku Chos-kyi dbang-phyug was a Buddhist master of local fame from Mang-yul Gung-thang, who held teaching traditions of both the 'Brug-pa and the rNying-ma-pa schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The course of his life has already been sketched and an overview of his collected writings is available. The latter collection comprises ten volumes and apart from biographies it contains a great number of ritual literature, personal letters and especially "chronicles" (*lo rgyus*), which shed new light on local Buddhist traditions and are marked by a distinct interest in historical matters. These collected writings have survived only in one manuscript edition, which had been saved from oblivion by Slob-dpon 'Gyurmed from the Nub-ris region in the Nepalese Himalayas; he is known as a student of Brag-dkar-ba bsTan-'dzin nor-bu (1899-1959), the last resident teacher at the famous Milaraspa site of Brag-dkar rta-so.³

3. The main events of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku's life and his efforts in propagating the teachings of the 'Brug-pa and rNying-ma-pa traditions in Mang-yul Gung-thang are sketched in Ehrhard (2004a:89-107); for the contents of the ten volumes of his collected writings, see Ehrhard (2004a:535-564). The existence of the "entire records" of Brag-dkar rta-so being in the hands of Slob-dpon 'Gyur-med was first pointed out by Aris (1975:80-81). For the role of Slob-dpon 'Gyur-med as a contemporary Buddhist teacher in the Nub-ris region, see Childs (2004:17-18). Biographical details

In order to provide some background information on the chronicle's treatment of the 'Brug-pa lineage going back to Ma-bdun-pa I will first present some materials on the cult of the "Seven Mothers" in the sKyid-grong area, followed by a cursory treatment of the literary sources dealing with the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa and the Gur family. The main reference point will be the writings of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku Chos-kyi dbang-phyug, as presently there is no better source on the history and the individual representatives of this Buddhist lineage from south-western Tibet.

The Ma-mo mched-bdun

The presence of a cult of the "Seven Ma-mo Sisters" (*ma mo mched bdun*) in the sKyid-grong region of Mang-yul Gung-thang is known from the personal memoirs of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku, and they bear witness to the fact that he was personally engaged in rituals devoted to this group of protective deities. Let me quote two events from his autobiography, which show that the goddesses were venerated at specific sacred sites or Buddhist temples in that area; these events are dated to the years 1823 and 1824, respectively:

According [to the wish] from the people of sKyid-grong that I should perform the commandment [and] the requesting to [the goddess] Ma-bdun-ma because each year on earlier [and] later occasions many people had died due to a fierce

concerning Brag-dkar-ba bsTan-'dzin nor-bu are contained in his *gDan rabs lo rgyus drang srong dga' ba'i dal gtam gyi kha skong*, pp. 33.6 ff.

epidemic, by arranging the ritual offer of burning incense, ablution [and] an accumulation of offering cakes at the residence of [the goddess] Ma-bdun-ma, I made effective the atonement ritual for the Seven Vajra Mothers and the requesting: from that year onwards the stream of the epidemic became like water that had been interrupted, [and this] manifested itself as common knowledge of all [people].⁴

I newly composed [the work] “Dance which pleases all the Ma-mos”, [a ritual text dealing with] the mDos [effigy] for propitiating rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma, the female protector of the vihāra of Byams[-pa] phrin. And after I had adjusted [the sections on] the practice of the ritual acts of the mDos [effigy], although there were made arrangements to construct extensively a mDos [effigy] for propitiating [the goddess] through acts by myself and others in the vihāra, in combination with a hundred religious offerings based on [the work] *Thugs sgrub las byang ’bring po* [of the Northern Treasurers], I did not know if there had come about joy or shame, [and] there did not manifest itself at all any negative or positive sign [of something done] rightly [or] wrongly.

4. See Chos-kyi dbang-phyug: *Bya bral ba chos kyi dbang phyug gi rang ’tshang lhug parbrjod pa*, fol. 189b/1-3 (*skyid grong pa rnams nas snga sor lo btud mar [= lo stud mar] nadrim drag pos mi mang shi bar ma bdun mar bka’ bsgo phrin bcol byed dgos tshul bzhin /gtor tshogs bshams par rdo rje ma mo bdun gyi bskang gso dang phrin bcol gnad smin du bgyis pa ’di lo nas bzung nad rims kyi rgyun chu bcad pa ltar gyur pa kun gyi shes gsal byung song*). For Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku’s life in the period from 1821 onwards, which was dominated by religious activities in the wider sKyid-grong area, see Ehrhard (2004a: 102-104 & 119).

Although it was pretended that from then on a continuously practised custom [of this ritual] had been established, it appears difficult [to believe] that it was something real.⁵

These descriptions allow us, first, to get some general idea about the so called “Seven Mothers” (*sapta mātaraḥ*), a group of autochthonous territorial goddesses particularly known for their presence in northern India. As in the case of the inhabitants of the sKyid-grong area they were considered to be of a malignant nature, causing epidemic diseases and had to be pacified and controlled by ritual means. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition the initial act of taming these kinds of goddesses and transforming them into “protectors of the [Buddha’s] pronouncement” (*bka’i srung ma*) is ascribed to the great adept Padmasambhava. The vast number of different assemblies of these kinds of pre-Buddhist mother goddesses—the most well-known being the group of seven—and the way how they were assimilated into a Tibetan milieu or identified with local traditions has already been addressed by earlier research. In the case of the seven mother goddesses it has been noted that

5. See the autobiography of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 4), fols. 193b/1-4 (*byams sprin gtsug lag khang gi bsrung ma rdo rje legs ldan ma’i bskang mdos ma mo kun tu dgyes pa’i zlos gar zhes par gсар du btsams shing mdos chog gi phyag len sgrigs nas gtsug lag khang du rang mi rang las kyis thugs sgrub las byang ’bring po la rten [= brten] tshogs brgya dang ’brel ba’i bskang mdos rgyas par gtang ba gra ’grig par byung song kyang dgyes pa bskyed dam khrel yod ni ma shes / legs nyes bzang ngan gyi rtags mtshan ni gang yang ma byung mod / phyin chad rgyun du g tong ba’i srol gtsugs [= btsugs] khul yin kyang don du ’gyur ba zhig dka’ bar snang*). The ritual text *Thugs sgrub las byang ’bring po* mentioned by the author has not survived. rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma and rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma are particularly known as those members from the Ma-mo group, who are invoked when consecrating the ma mo mdos, the special thread-cross effigy offered to the female protective deities; see Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956:275).

they obviously belonged to an indigenous Tibetan tradition, and that they are not to be regarded as a mere continuation of the Seven Mothers as known from an Indian context.⁶

As had already been the case in an Indian context, where the group of seven goddesses came to be associated with the Buddhist tantric concept of the mandala, also in Tibet the seven great mothers became female protectors of a wrathful mandala, the task of taming being ascribed to Padmasambhava. This has recently been shown on the basis of an early literary document (i.e. PT 307) dating from the period of the Tibetan empire, which sheds new light on the development of the Padmasambhava legend. Nevertheless, although the list of the seven goddesses shares names with many other native Tibetan deities it is impossible to locate the homes of these seven sisters by identifying their individual places of residence in a particular landscape. Although identifications of this kind are extremely difficult to make, it seems that the border region of south western Tibet, its topography being strongly infused with the legends of Padmasambhava's travels, offers a possible area

6. The question of the "Seven Great Mothers" (*ma mo chen mo bdun*) and whether or not their underlying Indian concept should be identified with Tibetan traditions was, for example, raised by Hoffmann (1950:168). A subsequent investigation into the cult of the Ma-mo deities in Tibetan Buddhism concluded that in the case of the rNying-ma-pa school the group of seven goddesses, which is characterized by the attribute of acting as protectors of the Buddhist doctrine, should be regarded more like an indigenous tradition; see Neumaier (1966:28-29). For the fact that the seven goddesses are not mentioned in those volumes of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* dedicated to the Ma-mo deities, compare Blondeau (2002:293-294). Concerning the category of the Ma-mo as *laukika*-level deities connected especially with Padmasambhava, see Seyfort Ruegg (2008:61).

in this connection. With this observation I am returning to the descriptions of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku.⁷

In 1823 when Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku, the teacher at the Mi-la ras-pa site to the north of sKyid-grong, had conducted ritual offerings to the main goddess Ma-bdun-ma upon the request of the people of sKyidgrong, he also composed a further chronicle. It deals with the history of the *Mamo mched-bdun*, paying special attention to the literary sources of the cult and the iconographical representations of the individual deities. The text has already been used for identifying the geographical locations in the sKyid-grong region, where Padmasambhava is said to have tamed this group of deities, and where the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa yogin bearing the name of the main goddess had taken up residence. One of the places of Padmasambhava's taming activities was known as Me-sho lung-pa, located in sPang-zhing in the vicinity of the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin, one of the four *Yang-'dul* temples founded during the time of Srong-btsan sgam-po, Tibet's first Buddhist ruler. According to the chronicle from 1823 the same vihāra also became the seat of rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma, one of the Seven Ma-mo Sisters. Two of the remaining goddesses had their seat in the village of sKyid-grong itself; the one known as rDo-rje Ma bdun-ma at

7. The process of how the autochthonous territorial deities of the Seven Mothers came to be associated with a Buddhist tantric mandala in India has been described by Davidson (2002:300-303); it is noted that unlike in normative Buddhist mandalas there is no privileging of one member over another, the Seven Mothers are simply members of a circle. For PT 307 and the list of the seven goddesses as protectors of the mandala of Śrī Mahā Heruka, see Dalton (2004:764-768). None of the names and iconography of the individual deities in this document correspond to the tradition from the sKyid-grong region.

a place called So-chu and rDo-rje Sa-lung-ma in Sa-lung, i.e. the site from which she derived her name. The cave, where the disciple of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje had stayed was located near Sa-lung in sKyid-grong and it was there that the spiritual bond was established between him and the main goddess of the *Ma-mo mched-bdun*.⁸

The above-mentioned chronicle provides further information concerning the cult of the Seven Ma-mo Sisters and I will consult it now in order to assess the iconography of the individual goddesses and find out upon which literary sources this specific tradition of the autochthonous territorial deities from south-western Tibet was based. The following elaborations are made in regard to the iconographical details:

Here, the visualisation (*abhisamaya*) of the Seven Vajra Mothers of the tantric activities as well: concerning the main one (i.e. rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma) that is easy indeed [to be seen] above according to well-known information

8. See Chos-kyi dbang-phyug: *rDo rje ma bdun ma'i lo rgyus*, fol. 5a/3-b/1 (the taming of the goddesses), fol. 4a/1-4 (the sites of rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma and rDo-rje Sa-lung-ma) and fols. 7a/5-8a/2 (the vision of Ma-bdun ras-chen at Ma-bdun phug). These details have also been incorporated by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku into his detailed exposition of the religious geography of Mang-yul Gung-thang, written in 1828; for translations of the relevant passages, see Ehrhard (2004a:283-284 & 413-414, note 179), and Ehrhard (2004a:281 & 399, notes 158-159). For the arrival of Padmasambhava in the sKyid-grong region and the act of taming according to the later biographical tradition of the master, see Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan: *Slob dpon sangs rgyas gnyis pa padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam par thar pa*, pp. 80.6-81.1.1 (*de nas mun la ru mang yul gyi srin mo spun bdun gyi [= gyis] sems can der byung ba thams cad smyor 'jug pa der phyin pa dang de dag gis mun khang btang bas / sgrub pa bzhag bdun mdzad de btul nas phyin chad gnod pa mi byed pa'i dam bca' mang po mdzad*).

in the [root text] *mChod gzhung*. As the others are not clearly [described] in the visualisation [instructions], if one [nevertheless] should speak [about them] because one is happy to identify the paintings of their individual images [it is as follows]: rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma has a beautiful appearance, holds in her right [hand] a ceremonial arrow and in her left [hand] a mirror; she rides a black hen. rDo-rje Byang-sman[-ma] has the appearance of a goddess, holds in her right [hand] a mirror and in her left [hand] a magic lasso. rDo-rje Sa-lung-ma is of a pleasing appearance, holds in her right [hand] a vajra and in her left [hand] a lasso of snakes; she rides a magically manifested hen. rDo-rje dByangs-ldan-ma has the appearance of a virgin; her right [hand] holds a rosary and her left [hand] an iron hook. rDo-rje Gar-lon-ma has a youthful appearance, her right [hand] holds a blazing jewel and her left [hand] a sword of meteoric iron. rDo-rje gSal' phro-ma has the appearance of a virgin goddess, her right [hand] holds a book and her left [hand] a diamond wheel. All are dressed goddesses and are adorned with ornaments of a variety of silk, flowers [and] jewels.

Although their individual secret names are according to the information above, [the rumour] that there exists a [goddess] called rDo-rje Yal-ldan-ma these days in [the villages of] sKyid-grong, Grva[and] gNas and so forth, this is [based on facts] unknown. Also the implements of rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma, it is said in the root text *mChod gzhung*, which had come forth as a treasure: “In her right

[hand] she brandishes a golden vajra, in her left [hand] she holds a mirror of white silver; in the night she establishes the capital of sickness.” And in the [text called] *Zla ba'i shel 'phreng*, a praise [of rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma] composed by the Vidyādhara Yol-mo-ba [bsTan-'dzin nor-bu](1598-1644) it is said: “[In her] right [hand] a clear mirror [which re-flects] the true nature of the world; [in her] left [hand] a lasso of snakes which summons the life-essence that causes damage,” and “[she holds] a sharp sword [and] a fierce arrow of long range.”⁹

9. See the text of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 8), fol. 11a/3-b/7 ('dir las kyi ma mo bdun gyi mngon rtogs kyang gtso mo ni mchod gzhung du gsal ba yongs grags ltar gong du sla mod / gzhan rnams mngon rtogs su gsal kha mi 'dug pas so so'i gzugs brnyan ri mor 'bri ba'i ngos 'dzin bde ba'i phyir smos na / rdo rje legs ldan ma mdzes pa'i gzugs can g.yas mda' dar dang / g.yon me long 'dzin pa bya mo nag mo la zhon pa / rdo rje byang sman lha mo'i gzugs can g.yas me long dang g.yon 'phrul gyi zhags pa 'dzin pa / rdo rje sa lung ma yid 'ong ma'i gzugs can g.yas rdo rje dang g.yon sbrul zhags 'dzin pa sprul pa'i bya mo la zhon pa / rdo rje dbyangs ldan ma gzhon nu ma'i gzugs can g.yas phreng ba dang g.yon lcags kyu bshams pa / rdo rje ga lor ma [= gar lon ma] lang tsho ma'i gzugs can g.yas rin chen 'bar ba dang g.yon gnams lcags kyi ral gri bsnams pa / rdo rje gsal 'phro ma lha mo gzhon nu ma'i gzugs can g.yas pusti dang g.yon pha lam gyi 'khor lo bsnams pa / thams cad kyang lha mo'i cha byad can dar dang / me tog / rin chen sna tshogs kyi rgyan gyis brgyan pa'o /so so'i gsang mtshan kyang gong du gsal ba ltar yin kyang ding sang skyid grong / grva gnas sogs su rdo rje yal ldan ma zer ba zhiig 'dug pa ni cha ma [= mi] 'tshal lo / rdo rje legs ldan ma'i phyag mtshan kyang / mchod gzhung rtsa bar / phyag g.yas gser gyi rdo rje gdeng: g.yon pa dngul dkar me long bsnams: mtshan na nad kyi rgyal sa btsug : zhes dang / rig 'dzin yol mo pas mdzad pa'i bstod pa zla ba'i shel phreng du / snang srid chos nyid gsal ba'i me long g.yas / gnod byed bla srog 'gugs byed sbrul zhags g.yon / zhes dang / rno ba'i ral gri dpag chen drag po'i mda' / zhes gsungs). The iconographical details of rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma can be found *ibid.*, fol. 8a/2-4. This description has been incorporated by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku in his account of the encounter between the main goddess and Ma-bdun ras-chen in the chronicle on the Gur-rigs mDo-chen tradition; see Translation, note 5.

This account shows that the seven Ma-mo sisters were depicted on paintings and that even within the local setting of the sKyid-grong region there existed varieties in the pictorial representation of individual deities. This is particularly true in the case of rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma, the goddess associated with the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin, with differing descriptions in a treasure text and in a work devoted specifically to that goddess. It is known from the chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku that the aforementioned Yol-mo-ba bsTan-'dzin nor-bu, an influential master of the rNying-ma-pa school with close connections to the royal house of the Gung-thang rulers, had a vision of rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma while staying in the temple. This happened during a renovation of Byams-pa sprin when an adjacent building of the temple was painted with new murals; it was this vision which led to the composition of the praise for the deity and related ritual activities. Through the autobiography of bsTan-'dzin nor-bu it is possible to date this event to the year 1632; it included the extended renovation in addition to the manufacturing of statues—like the one of Che-mchog-pa, a prominent member of the Gur family—, the production of a painted image of the supine body of the demoness nailed down by the arrangement of Tibet's first royal temples, and especially a painted image of the “One Mother” (*ma gcig*) rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma.¹⁰

10. For the vision of the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku and the composition of the praise, see the text of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 8), fol. 8b/4-6. The renovation of the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin in the year 1632 is one of the last events described in the autobiographical account; see bsTan-'dzin nor-bu: *Rang gi rtogs pa brjod pa*, pp. 260.1- 262.3, and Bogin (2005:242-243). The classification scheme of Tibet's first royal temples as depicted in a drawing and on recent photographs of the individual vihāras

With two of the group of seven goddesses, i.e. rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma and rDo-rje Sa-lung-ma, having their seat in the village of sKyid-grong, and one, i.e. rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma, having it in the temple of Byams-pa sprin in sPang-zhing, the question arises whether the remaining four sisters are to be located in the area of Mang-yul Gung-thang, too. The chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku remains silent in regard to rDo-rje Byang-smān-ma, in whose case no seat is given at all. The other three sisters are all associated with geographical regions to the west of Mang-yul Gung-thang: rDo-rje dByangs-ldan-ma with the vihāra of sPra-dun rtse, one of the four *mTha'dul* temples founded during the time of Srong-btsan sgampo, rDo-rje Gar-lon-ma with the village of gTsang-rang in Glo-bo, present-day Mustang in the Nepalese Himalayas, and rDo-rje gSal-'phro-ma with Khyung-lung Zhang-zhung in the Gu-ge region of Western Tibet. The latter identification is discussed in the chronicle quite extensively, mainly in the context of the visions and travels of Kah-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698-1755), another master of the rNying-ma-pa school engaged in the cult of the Seven Ma-mo sisters.¹¹

can be found in Sørensen & Hazod (2005:204-215). The Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku was assisted in the actual production of the murals at the temple complex of Byams-pa sprin and the painting of the image of rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma by Nam-mkha' kunbzang, a grandson of the treasure-discoverer Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa (1480-1535); for the relationship between the two masters as described in Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku's chronicle of the latter's descendants, see Ehrhard (2007a:41).

11. The description of the seats of the individual goddesses is contained in the chronicle of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 8), fol. 4a/2-6. The literary source for this treatment is—like in the case of the sketch of the iconographical details—the text known as *mChod gzhung*. For the visions of Kah-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu—especially while staying in the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin—and during travels in Mustang and Ladakh, see *ibid.*, fols. 8b/6-9b/3. The association of rDo-rje gSal-'phro-

The reference to a second of Tibet's first Buddhist temples as a residence for another member of the *Ma-mo mched-bdun* is, of course, of particular interest as it suggests that the vihāras of Byams-pa sprin and sPra-dun rtse both located on the western border of the territory of the early Tibetan kings were connected as sites of this particular tradition of autochthonous territorial deities. This connection between Buddhist temples and protective deities brings us to the question on which literary sources the cult of the Seven Ma-mo Sisters as found in Mang-yul Gung-thang was actually based. Once again the chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku provides some clarifications:

Now, it is known that the sādhana of the Seven Vajra Mothers exists as the three paper scrolls of the four tantric activities [in their] outer, inner [and] secret [aspect]. Among them [1] the paper scroll for the accomplishment [of the deities], [which is] the accomplishment into one of the individual ways of abiding of the seven Ma-mos, [i.e.] the complete assembly of all the Ma-mos: it is explained to be a treasure [extracted from] a stone icon [located] in [the vihāra of] Byams[-pa] sprin; [the site of] the cycle *gSo dpyad bdud rtsi bum pa* [retrieved] by the treasure-discoverer rDor-'bum Chos-kyi grags-pa (11th cent.), which is known to be an indisputable treasure [and extracted from] a stone icon [located] in [the vihāra of] Byams[-pa] sprin and the

ma with Khyung-lung Zhang-zhung in Gu-ge should be compared with the available writings on the religious and diplomatic activities of the rNying-ma-pa teacher from Kaḥ-thog.

treasure site [of the paper scroll] are definitely one [and the same]. [2] The paper scroll containing the offerings for the changeable Ma-mos, [it is] a treasure [retrieved] from 'Os-por [lung-pa], [i.e.] Sha-ba ri-phug [in sPang-zhing]. [3] The paper scroll for the accomplishment of the extremely wrathful activities is a treasure [retrieved] from rGya-lung. The two other (i.e. the former) ones have already been referred to above. Concerning [the site] rGya-lung, as it is related to exactly that [place] known as rGya-lung in front of the actual [site of] “Hundred and some Stūpas” in the upper part of Tshong-'dus, one has to consider that it is [just this place].

Concerning the treasure-discoverer: dMar-zhabs ras-pa, a disciple of Guru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (1212-1270), the manifestation of [Ārya] Avalokiteśvara, discovered the three paper scrolls from the three treasure sites according to the prophecy by a ḍākinī.¹²

12. See the text of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 8), fol. 10a/3-b/4 (*de yang rdo rje ma bdun ma'i sgrub thabs phyi nang gsang ba las bzhi'i shog ril gsum du yod par grags shing / de las sgrub pa'i shog ril ma mo kun 'dus ma mo bdun bzhugs tshul gcig tu sgrub pa byams sprin rdo sku'i gter ma yin par bshad pa ni / gter ston rdor 'bum chos kyi grags pas gso dpyad bdud rtsi bum pa'i skor byams sprin rdo sku'i gter ma rtsod med du grags pa dang gter gnas gcig par nges la / 'gyur ba'i ma mo mchod pa'i shog ril 'os por sha ba ri phug gi gter ma dang / las rnams drag por khros pa sgrub pa'i shog ril / rgya lung gi gter ma las / gzhan gnyis ni gong du smos pa zin pa dang / rgya lung ni tshong 'dus kyi gong gi mchod rten brgya rtsa'i dngos dang mdun la rgya lung zhes 'bod pa 'di nyid 'brel mtshungs pas yin no snyam mo / gter ston ni / spyen ras gzig sprul gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug gi slob ma dmar zhabs ras pas mkha' 'gro mas lung bstan bzhin gnas gsum nas shog ril gsum gter nas ston zhig*). Sha-ba ri-phug and 'Os-por lung-pa are the old toponyms for Me-sho lung-pa, the place near sPang-

With these observations it is possible to attribute the literary tradition of the *Ma-mo mched-bdun* as found in Mang-yul Gung-thang to the 13th century and to the generation of disciples of Gu-ru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug, the second treasure-discoverer king of the rNying-ma-pa school. The sites, where the actual treasure scrolls had been recovered, were located in the wider sKyid-grong area and especially in the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin. The reference to the treasure-discoverer rDor-'bum Chos-kyi grags-pa and his cycle *gSo dpyad bdud rtsi bum pa*—a collection of medical texts which had been systematized by Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal (1550-1602) and was favoured by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617-1682)—shows that this treasure had also been recovered in the *Yang-'dul* temple in sPang-zhing; this points once again to the fact that Tibet's first Buddhist temples were sites for the recovery of hidden treasures from the royal period, the findings resulting from the activities of different discoverers.¹³

zhing, where Padmasambhava performed the taming of the Seven Ma-mo sisters; see Ehrhard (2004a:284 & 413-414, note 178). For the site characterized by the remains of more than a hundred miniature caityas said to have been originally erected by Padmasambhava and its location in Tshong-'dus, see Ehrhard (2004a:282 & 402, note 164); this identification follows the tradition of the older pilgrimage guide books to Mang-yul Gung-thang. After further investigations Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku relocated the site known as “Hundred-and-some Stūpas” to a place near Rag-ma in his own guide book of 1828; compare Ehrhard (2004a:285 & 420, note 192).

13. Concerning the treasure findings of rDor-'bum Chos-kyi grags-pa and their transmission as received by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma, see Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya mtsho: *Zab pa dang rgya che ba'i dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig*, vol. 2, pp. 479.2-490.1. The finding of the paper scrolls in the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin is especially highlighted; see *ibid.*, p. 489.1; for the role of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal in the codification of the collection of medical texts, see *ibid.*, pp. 479.5-480.1. In this line of

It has to be clarified how this specific local tradition had reached Ma-bdun ras-chen—if at all—and how it was later transmitted by his successors, and especially by the Gur family. It seems, at least according to the records of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma, that dMar-zhabs ras-pa had been particularly active in disseminating teachings concerning the cult of autochthonous territorial deities; thus he takes a prominent place in the rituals devoted to another group of goddesses, known as the “Twelve Female [Protectors of the] Doctrine” (*bstan ma bcu gnyis*), the relevant texts being once again discovered by Gu-ru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug.

From the writings of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku it is further known that also Ma-bdun-pa himself belonged to the religious circle of the disciples of the second treasure-discoverer king of the rNying-ma-pa school and that he, too, was involved in the composition of ritual texts dealing with the propitiation of the *Ma-mo mched-bdun*. The latter information is contained in the records of teachings received by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul sku, a text largely completed in 1820:

The lineage of how I received the entrustment itself of rDo-rje Legs-ldan ma, the female protector of the family [of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa (1480-1535)] from the past, [a ritual] which precedes the offering cake initiation of the entrustment of the Seven Vajra Mothers: Gu-ru Thod' phreng rtsal (i.e. Padmasambhava) - dMar-zhabs ras-pa- sTon-chen

transmission stood also Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku; see Chos-kyi dbang-phyug: *Zab rgyas chos tshul rgya mtsho las / rang skal du ji ltar thob pa'i yi ge*, fols. 97b/2-100a/4. It is mentioned in this passage that rDor-'bum Chos-kyi grags-pa had recovered paper scrolls in both the vihāras of Byams-pa sprin and sPra-dun rtse.

ras-pa gSang-sngags chos-rgyal - Bla-ma Śākya - Ke-ti phug-pa - Kun-bzang 'byung-gnas - bSod-nams seng-ge - Chos-grub bzang-po - sNgags-'chang Che-mchog rdo-rje - Chos-dbang rdo-rje- Nam-mkha' lhun-grub - Nam-mkha' seng-ge - Nor-bu bde-chen (b. 1617) - bsTan-pa'i nor-bu - rGyal sras seng-ge (d. 1752) - Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal (1714-1782) - rJe Karma bdud-'joms (1726-1789). This [latter] one [transmitted the lineage] to me.

Concerning the reading[-authorization]: [the text] *mChod thabs*, the continuous practice of the Seven Mothers, [a work with the title] *sNgon skal ma*, which is known to have been composed by the noblen Ma-bdun pa, and also [the text dealing with] the invitation [of the goddesses] to him, the praises of offering and so forth, they have [all] been compiled according to old scriptures and [are known as] *Ma mo bdun gyi gcig tu sgril ba* [*ma rig mun sel sgron me*]. The [transmission of the] lineage of [this work] together with the [work called] *mChod phreng rgyas pa*, a compilation of sNgags-'chang 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal, [it is] just like the lineage of the initiations above: from sNgags-'chang 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal to the presence of the Noble One (= 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms) [and] from him [received by me].¹⁴

14. This transmission is contained in the bKa'-ma section of the records of teachings received by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku; see Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 13), fol. 45a/5-b/6 (*rdo rje ma mo bdun gyi bka' gtad gtor dbang sngon du 'gro ba'i rjes 'brel du rigs kyi bsrung ma rdo rje legs ldan ma'i bka' gtad kyang nos pa'i brgyud pa ni / gu ru thod phreng rtsal / dmar zhabs ras pa / ston chen ras pa / gsang sngags chos rgyal / bla ma śākya / ke te phug pa / kun bzang 'byung gnas / bsod nams seng ge / chos grub bzang*

The ritual texts devoted to the cult of the Seven Ma-mo Sisters in the region of Mang-yul Gung-thang thus included personal writings of Ma-bdun-pa and this illustrates the fact that the yogin of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school was not only bearing the name of the main deity but was active in propagating the cult of the mother goddesses in the region. Once again the work with the title *mChod gzhung* turns up as the central liturgical text of the tradition, which we have already encountered as the literary source for the iconography of individual deities. Although most of the early teachers of this lineage remain still to be identified it becomes evident that the transmission had become associated with the Gur family particularly at the time of sNgags-'chang Che-mchog rdo-rje, the great exponent of the Gur-rigs mDochén tradition in the 16th century.

po / sngags 'chang che mchog rdo rje / chos dbang rdo rje / nam mkha' lhun grub / nam mkha' seng ge / rig 'dzin 'gyur med rnam rgyal / rje karma bdud 'joms / des bdag la'o // lung la / ma mo bdun gyi rgyun khyer mchod thabs rje ma bdun pa chen pos mdzad par grags pa'i sngon skal ma dang / yang de nyid la spyen 'dren mchod bstod sogs yig rnying ltar sbyar te ma mo bdun gyi mchod gzhung gcig tu sgril ba / sngags 'chang 'gyur med rnam rgyal gyi khrigs su mdzad pa'i mchod 'phreng rgyas pa dang bcas pa'i brgyud pa ni / gong gi dbang brgyud lta la sngags 'chang 'gyur med rnam rgyal nas / rje'i zhabs / des so). For the position of dMar- zhabs ras-pa in the transmission lineage of the cycle devoted to rituals of the bsTan-ma bcu-gnyis goddesses according to the findings of Gu-ru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug, see the text of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma (as in note 13), p. 757.2. Ma-bdun-pa is also regarded as one of the disciples of Gu-ru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug; see Translation, note 3. The work *Ma mo bdun gyi mchod gzhung gcig tu sgril ba ma rig mun sel* was also transmitted separately by members of the Gur family; see Appendix II: F.8.d.

The mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa

It is possible to reconstruct the early history of this sub-branch of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school and its later transmission through the chronicle written by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku in the year 1815. According to the colophon it had been composed with the intention to produce a supplement to a *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*, i.e. a lineage history called “Golden Rosary” (*gser 'phreng*), a literary genre especially popular among authors of the bKa'-brgyud-pa school. This supplement to a text on the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa lineage is at the same time a history of the Gur family and predates the chronicle on the history and cult of the Seven Vajra Sisters by eight years; it is one of three works of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku which are according to their titles “genealogical records” (*gdung rabs*), all of which were composed in the period between 1812 and 1820. It is, however, not the earliest text of this author dealing with the Gur-rigs mDo-chen tradition or the cult of the *Ma-mo mched-bdun*; already in 1796, at the age of twenty-one, he had set down a work devoted to the offering rituals for rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma, the female protector of the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin.¹⁵

15. For the three genealogical records that Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku produced between 1812 and 1820, see Ehrhard (2004a:120). An overview of the work describing the history of the descendants of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa, the family to which Chos-kyi dbang-phyug was affiliated, is given in Ehrhard (2007a:40-45). The text on the offering rituals for rDo-rje Legs-ldan-ma is to be found in vol. 7 of his collected writings, containing works on Buddhist rituals. It is followed by another text on the subject of offering rituals, in this case for the Twelve Female [Protectors of the] Doctrine; see Ehrhard (2004a:550). The latter work, written in 1792, seems to be the earliest literary composition of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku.

The *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*, i.e. the work serving as the starting point for the chronicle, is said to have been an old scripture comprising two volumes; it is mentioned on three occasions in the chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku (and once in the colophon of the text). The first reference occurs at the end of the first part after introducing the “Upper” and the “Lower” branches of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school; there it is stated that the lineage of Ma-bdun-pa, although being part of the “Upper” branch, also belonged to the “Lower” branch, which implies that the founder of the lineage had studied both with rGod-tshang pa mGon-po rdo-rje and Lo-ras-pa dBang-phyug brtson-'grus. The reader is then advised to consult the *mDochen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* for biographical details concerning the masters up to Ma-bdun-pa. The remaining part of the chronicle is structured in two main sections: the transmission from Ma-bdun-pa onwards and the transmission starting with Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis, i.e. the history of the Gur family.

At the end of the first of these two sections, the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* is once again mentioned. This time the reference occurs after the presentation of the biographies of Ma-bdun-pa and his two disciples gDansa Rin-chen-pa and Chos-rje ston-pa, the latter one having studied with both Ma-bdun-pa and gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa. As stated by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku, the old scripture of the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* continued the history of this sub-branch of the sTod-'brug tradition with biographical accounts of four teachers called Bla-ma Byang pa, Bla-ma Chos-kyi seng-ge, Bla-ma Chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan and

Bya-btang Śākya dpal. These religious masters are nevertheless not treated in any great detail, as their succession did not constitute a “real lineage” (*brgyud pa dngos*), i.e. a consecutive transmission of the mDo-chen bKa’-brgyud-pa teachings. Instead this lineage is described as passing through three other teachers, namely Sangs-rgyas dbon-po, bSod-nams dbang-phyug and bSod-nams snying-po. This particular transmission is characterized as a “teaching lineage” (*chos brgyud*) in contrast to a transmission as continued by members of a family tradition (like in the case of the Gur family). There were no written sources available on the lives of the three last mentioned teachers, and Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku only observes that according to some records of teachings received bSod-nams snying-po had belonged to the monastery of Nub-dgon, located in the northern part of Gung-thang. In his own records he also lists the latter lineage as the authentic transmission of the doctrines of the mDo-chen bKa’-brgyud-pa lineage.¹⁶

What was the reason for preferring the latter transmission to the former, and why was it regarded as the authentic lineage? Here one has to take into account that the Māyājāla or *sGyu ’phrul* cycle of the Mahāyoga teachings was part of the doctrinal system of the lineage

16. See the text of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 13), fol. 250a/3-6 (*stod ’brug ma bdun bka’ brgyud nas brgyud pa ni / rje rgya ras yan thog ma’i brgyud pa bzhin la / de no lo rgod rnam gnyis / gnyis kas ma bdun ras chen / gdan sa rin po che / byin rlabs rdo rje [= chos rje ston pa] / sangs rgyas dbon / bsod nams dbang phyug / bson nams snying po / gur ston lhun grub bkra shis / sngags ’chang mgon po dpal / kun dga’ gzi brjid / che mchog rdo rje / dkon mchog rdo rje / nam mkha’ lhun grub / nam mkha’ seng ge / nor bu bde chen / bstan pa’i nor bu / rgyal sras seng ge / rig ’dzin rje man ’dra’o*). For this transmission and the monastery Nub-dgon in Gung-thang, compare Translation, note 12.

of the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa since the times of their founder Ma-bdun-pa. It is known that he had studied the teachings of the rNying-ma-pa school from an early age on wards under a teacher called Gar-ston Sangs-rgyas and latter received doctrines of the Early Translations as well from one gSang-sngags sdong-po. Also his immediate disciples gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa and Chos-rje stonpa were recipients of rNying-ma-pa doctrines from further masters.

At a later point in time the teachers Sangs-rgyas dbon-po, bSod-nams dbang-phyug and bSod-nams snying-po had obviously been the main transmitters and codifiers of these “spoken teachings” (*bka'ma*) ascribed to Padmasambhava, and this must have contributed to the fact that their lineage had become the preferred one. The records of teachings received by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku offer a glimpse into the early stage of this particular transmission—with two doctrinal systems already in existence at the time of Ma-bdun-pa—and into the latter stage, when the relevant text books were composed by teachers like the aforementioned bSod-nams snying-po:

The Māyājāla [cycle (i.e. stages) of] the preparation and the entering [into the mandala], in accordance with a mandala liturgy of Mahācārya Padma[sambhava] it was supported by a mandala with a hundred pedals and based [on the text] *dBang chog tshogs gnyis chu rgyun ma* composed by Chos-rje bSod-nams snying-po, who had condensed the two systems of the text book made by the scholar gSang-sngags sdong-po and the ritual practice of the great Gar-ston rTogs-ldan, [i.e.] the ritual

practice of the initiation of the uninterrupted blessing of the excellent doctrine of the noble Ma-bdun-pa, and the textbooks which conferred the uninterrupted stream of the succession of empowerments from Bla-ma Zu-lung-pa, mKhas-btsun dKon[-mchog] tshul[-khrims], Chos-rje Byin-rlabs rdo-rje (= Chos-rje ston-pa) and so forth.¹⁷

The mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa can thus be regarded as a sub-branch of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa lineage deeply influenced since its inception in the 13th century by the spoken teaching and treasure traditions of the rNying-ma-pa school. It flourished in the region of Mang-yul Gung-thang and the founding of its different monasteries and hermitages during the initial and later phase of its spread are well-covered in the chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku. His main literary source for the early history, the *mDochen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*, is mentioned in the text for a third time at the end of the biography of Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis, i.e. the first representative of the Gur family, and he advises the reader

17. See the text of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 13), fol. 25a/6-b/4 (*slob dpon chenpo padmas mdzad pa'i dkyil chog dang mthun par / mkhas pa gsang sngags sdong po'i mdzad pa'i yig cha / gar ston rtogs ldan chen po'i phyag len te lugs gnyis dang / rje ma bdun pa'i bstan rab brgyud pa'i byin rlabs zam ma chad pa'i dbang gi phyag len / dang bla ma zu lung pa dang / mkhas btsun dkon tshul chos rje byin rlabs rdo rje sogs nas rim par dbang gi chu bo rgyud ma chad par bskur tshul gyi yig cha rnam phyogs gcig tu bsodus pa chos rje bsod nams snying pos mdzad pa'i dbang chog tshogs gnyis chu rgyu ma'i steng nas ras bris kyi dkyil 'khor 'dab ma brya ldan ra rten nas [= brten nas] sta gon dang 'jug pa sgyu 'phrul*). For the transmission of the reading[-authorization], compare *ibid.*, fols. 26b/2-27b/6. Both, gSang-sngags sdong-po and Gar-ston rTogs-ldan, were teachers of Ma-bdun-pa; see Translation, note 3. dKon[-mchog] tshul[-khrims], a native of Zur-mtsho, was the main teacher of Chos-rje ston-pa in the bKa'-ma transmission; see Translation, note 10.

once again to consult this work for further information. As the two volumes of the old scripture dealing with the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa have survived it is possible to follow his advice and obtain an overview of the masters of the lineage up to and including Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis (see Appendix I).

The Gur Family

The section of the chronicle which is a genealogical account, starts with Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis and a short interlinear gloss on the names “Gur” and “mDo-chen”. It is then explained that both designations derive from toponyms in the region of Mang-yul Gung-thang. The two relevant places—Gur-phu in Mang-tsha and mDo-bo-che in Phu-lag—had already been noted earlier in the text, namely in the sketch of the life of Ma-bdun pa; they are contained in the list of sites where the master had founded places for his spiritual practices, and especially mDo-bo-che became known as the major seat of this lineage in the domain of the Gung-thang rulers. Concerning the genealogy of the Gur family it is stated in the chronicle that this clan was called 'Ur-rtsa and had originally come from sTod, i.e. Western Tibet.

This information is also found in the autobiography of Tshe-dbang 'Chi med mgon-po (1755-1808), Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku's teacher, who is the last member of the family treated in greater detail in the chronicle. His description of the origins and early representatives of the family is quoted in the following:

[My] family [is] a noble one. The bone (i.e. the paternal lineage) [is] 'Ur-rtsa [from] Western Tibet. After the specific [branch of that family] had settled at [the place of] the human bone (i.e. the paternal ancestors), [it] also came to be known as the one from the upper part of the tent [valley]. From the lineage of these [came forth] the teacher Chos[-kyi] seng-ge, Chos-rgyal ye-shes dar, the great Gurston lHun-grub bkra-shis and so forth: one should know this from the [collection of] biographies of the teachers of the mDo-chen [bKa'-brgyud-pa] lineage, which is being written by me separately.¹⁸

As is obvious from the colophon of the chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku, his teacher Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po had indeed the intention to compose an updated version of the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* but was unable to bring the project to completion. Such an appendix to the earlier work was only finished seven years after the death of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po in form of the chronicle of his disciple.

18. See Chos-kyi dbang-phyug: *Gur gyi sngags ban tshe dbang 'chi med mgon po'i rang tshul chu babs su brjod pa*, p. 15.3-5 (*rigs ni rje rigs rus ni stod 'ur rtsa / bye brag pa mi rus la'jag pa las / gur phu pa zhes kyang ni grags pa ste / de dag brgyud las bla ma chos seng ge dang / chos rgyal ye shes dar dang gur ston che / lhun grun bkra shis la sogs zhis par ni / kho bos mdo chen bla brgyud rnam thar zhig / zur du 'bri bar las shes shing*). If one identified the said Bla-ma Chos-kyi seng-ge with the teacher of the same name referred to in the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*, this person would be another early member of the Gur family holding teaching traditions of the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa. For the studies of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku under Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po and his involvement in the composition of the latter's autobiography in the year 1803, see Ehrhard (2004a:92-97 & 119)

After presenting the main events from the life of his teacher, Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku adds in a final note that apart from the persons described in his genealogical account there also existed further members of the Gur family. Especially mentioned are one Gur-ston dPal-mdzes [rgyal-mtshan] (12th/13th cent.)—a contemporary of Ma-bdun-pa—and one 'Chi-med 'od-zer (1574-1661) as well as the latter's son rGyal-dbang seng-ge (b. 1628). An interlinear gloss refers the reader to an old scripture concerning the first teacher, which might have been a chronicle of that particular line of the Gur family. Although this literary source has not yet surfaced we do possess the biography of 'Chi-med 'od-zer, written by his son rGyal-dbang seng-ge. In its introduction one finds a note on the life of dPal-mdzes [rgyal-mtshan] accompanied by an etymology of the title attached to his name:

[He] who is called Gur-ston dPal-mdzes rgyal-mtshan, as it was said by the so-called saying: “A teacher will appear [living within] the fences of a tent,” the name arose, [and he was] a man descending from that [family]. From a young age on he had been ordained and had gone many times to India, China and so forth; he had touched the feet of many learned [and] realized ones. And as he was trained in all the new [and] old sūtras [and] mantras he became a ruler of all knowledge, and countless doors of meditative absorption were born [in him]. His wondrous deeds, including foreknowledge and miraculous appearances, cannot be measured and he was accepted as a manifestation

of Padmasambhava. The Jñānaḍākinī prophesied [the place of] rDzong-sgo with the words: “Your disciples, they will exist on the neck [mountain] similar to the open mouth of a rocky horse!” And further: “Because your lineage will [once] have arrived [there] for the benefit of beings, increase the family line!” [These are] in short the countless acts of his benefiting disciples, at length [they are] clear in his biography.¹⁹

Although this explanation of the origin of the name of “Gur” does not point straight to a toponym, it does clarify that the ancestors of that family had been associated with the nomadic pastures of Gungthang and had chosen sites for their spiritual practices during the same period when Ma-bdun-pa had founded his hermitages in the kingdom. But it was only in the generation following Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis, namely in the 15th century, that the Gur

19. See rGyal-dbang seng-ge: *Bya btang 'od zer rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*, fol. 3a/1-b/2 (*gur ston dPal mdzes rgyal mtshan bya ba / gur rib pa'i ston pa zhig yong ba 'dug zhes grags pas de skad du mtshan chags pa de las rgyud pa mi / de yang g.yon nu [= gzhon nu] nas rab tu byung ba zhing / rgya gar nag sogs mang por byon / pan grub mang po'i zhabs la btugs shing / mdo sngags gsar rnying kun la sbyangs pas / mkhyen pa'i mnga' bdag tu gyur zhing / ting nge 'dzin gyi sgo dpag tu med pa 'khrungs te / mngon shes rdzu 'phrul sogs ngo mtshar pa'i mdzad pa ni dpag gis mi langs shing / gu ru padma'i sprul par zhal gyis bzhes pa la / ye shes kyi mkha' 'gros khyed gyi gdul bya brag rta'i kha gdams pa [= gdangs pa] 'dra ba'i mgul na yod ces rdzong sgo lung bstan pa dang / gzhan yang der khyod kyi brgyud pa 'gro don yongs pas / rigs rgyud spel cig / ces pa dang mdor na gdul bya mtha' yas pa'i don mdzad pa sogs / rgyas par rnam thar du gsal zhing*). For further details concerning dPal-mdzes [rgyal-mtshan] and this line of the Gur family, see Translation, note 49. rGyal-dbang seng-ge was also known under the name Chos-rje rDzong-pa as can be seen from several entries in the biography of the treasurer-discoverer Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje (1640-1685). He is also the author of the latter's biography; see rGyal-dbang seng-ge: *sPrul sku rig 'dzin chen po gar dbang rdo rje snying po'i phyi'i rnam par thar pa*, pp. 81.5-82.4.

family became the main holder of the teaching lineage of the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa.

The central part of the chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku presents an overview of the successive generations, mainly based on biographical literature, but also including prayers, prophecies and praises for individual masters available to the author. In the 17th century the family diverged into two patrilineal branches, one residing mainly in the valley of La-[l]de[bs], to the south-east of sKyid-grong, and one in [b]Tsum, presently located in the Nepalese Himalayas in the vicinity of Nub-ris; in the latter region one can still witness today the presence of the teaching tradition of Ma-bdun-pa, while the former has still to be investigated in this respect. The complete genealogy of the Gur family as described in the chronicle can be represented in a chart; it covers a dozen generations (see chart on p. 33).²⁰

The 17th century was the time when Nor-bu bde-chen, who was described by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku as the greatest Buddhist master of the family after Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis, flourished. It was during that period in the history of Tibetan Buddhism when

20. For two voluminous works on the Māyājāla cycle of the Gur-rigs mDo-chen tradition as preserved in Nyi-lhod in [b]Tsum, see *gSang ba sgyu 'phrul zhi khro'i rgyud*, 522 fols., manuscript (= NGMPP reel-no. L 493/12-L 494/1), and *sGyu 'phrul zhi khro'i dbang dang se ba'i skor dang rgyud (= brgyud) rim lo rgyus*, 645 fols., manuscript (= NGMPP reel-no. L 492/2-L 495/1). A recent publication on the ritual dances of the Māyājāla cycle is *gSang ba sgyu 'phrul zhi khro gnyis kyi rtsa 'chams byung khung lo rgyus rtsa tshig bcas go gsal du bkod pa*, 28 pp. (Kathmandu: Chum Nile Labrang, n.d.) For preliminary remarks on the toponyms of the La-[l]de[bs] and other sub-dialects of the valley, see Huber (2005:6-8).

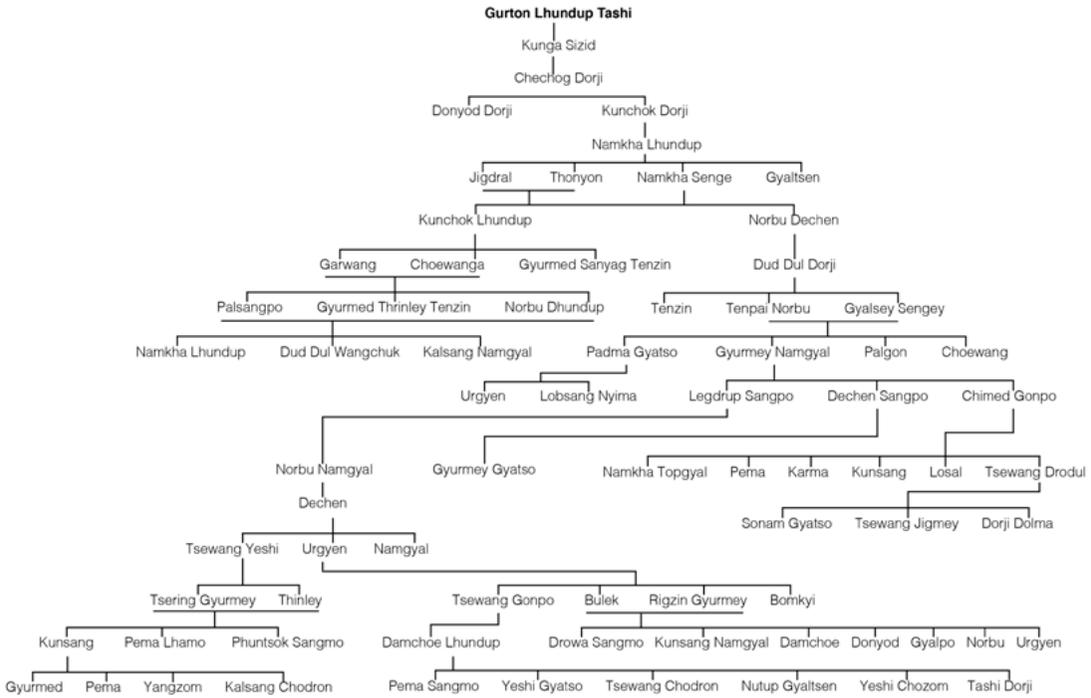
the treasure teachings of the rNying-ma-pa school were in high esteem and received official support from the newly founded dGa'ldan pho-brang government in Central Tibet.

In the same way as other important teachers of that period Nor-bu bde-chen has left detailed accounts of the different transmissions he had received, and it is thus possible to document the history of the Gur-rigs mDo-chen tradition during his floruit and the next two generations in greater detail (see Appendix II).²¹

Looking at the Buddhist genealogies as they are recorded in the chronicles of the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa, it is obvious that lineage-based transmissions were gradually supplanted by family-based transmissions and thus survived in the remote Himalayan valleys to the south, while the importance of the original seat of the tradition in the northern planes of Gung-thang had faded away. In the earlier as well as the later phases of its development it is possible to observe a strong involvement of the individual members with different doctrinal systems of the rNying-ma-pa school. This is particularly true for Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po, the last member of the Gur family, who has left a strong imprint on this tradition from south-western Tibet.

21. Detailed records of teachings received during the 17th century are available, for example, in the case of the Sa-skya-pa master A-mes-zhabs Ngag-dbang Kun-dga' bsod-nams (1597-1659) and the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho; for these records and their sources, see Sobisch (2007:33-64) and Ehrhard (in press b), respectively. Compare also *Gong dkar bla ma 'phrin las rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig*, 415 pp. [Kathmandu]: rGyal-yongs sa-chen dpe-skrun khang, 2008) for the records of teachings received of yet another scholar of the 17th century that recently became available.

Family Tree of Gurig Dochen



PART TWO

History of the Lineage of the Glorious Gur-rigs mDo-chen [Tradition], a Speech of a Few Words [entitled] “A Rosary of Rubies”

Om svasti!

To the lotus feet of the assembly of Siddhas and Vidyādhara called a history of the succession of teachers of the lineage of the glorious Gur rigs mDochan [tradition], a wonderful deed in the form of a discourse of a few words [entitled] “A Rosary of Rubies”, I bow down visibly with my head, prostrating myself and taking refuge.

The sun of the compassion of all the Jinās, who are good friends towards beings, even there being no reason for it, because of its playful appearance in the expanse of the mind of those disciples to be disciplined by whatever [means], the host of the dark deeds and afflictions of the mind stream of beings, they are overcome in the end [and] the sensations of happiness and bliss become perfectly clear—which [thus] enlarges the grove of the hundred petals of the essential doctrine, it is proper to praise this rosary of the lineage of the glorious Gur-rigs mDo-chen [tradition].

Alas! The diadem of the Jina’s teaching, by raising it on top of the banner of the practice lineage the rain of happiness and bliss for beings, they made it fall everywhere—may they [all] be victorious!

Falling not into extremes, grasping all the teaching methods of scripture and realization, and especially clarifying the essential doctrine—[these] protectors, they are known from the [text of the] golden rosary of the [mDo-chen] bKa'-brgyud [tradition].

[They are] the powerful sun of the profound meaning of the Early Translations, holding a treasure from where appears ex-position and spiritual practice [of the doctrine]—the lineage of the succession of the outstanding beings of the noble Gur family from before, [their members are] lined up in proper order.

The discourse of the qualities [of beings] accomplished in such a way, it produces an abundance of faith and virtue, and in this [work], thinking: “Are they not [all] worthy as persons to be popular?,” it will be spread in the form of the letters of a speech easy to be understood.

[I] Now, here, in this domain of snow-covered mountains, the realm of those to be disciplined by the own power of Ārya Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of the compassion of all Jinas possessing the ten powers (*daśabala*) and their spiritual sons (i.e. the Bodhisattvas): there arrived in such great an amount that they are not to be measured even by the number of stars, great noble beings in an uninterrupted way, who were holding the doctrine, clarifying completely the precious teaching of scripture and realization of the Jina, the “Friend of the Sun” (*ādityabandhu*). Among them dwells [a tradition] where the great river of the long-lasting essential

doctrine of the great secret of the Early Translations and the great river of the exposition and spiritual practice of the golden rosary of the precious Practice Lineage was merged into one. And especially, there dwells without interruption a transmission from mouth to ear from the Guhyapati Vajrapāni onwards, a stream of ripening and liberating instructions (*upadeśa*) of the Māyājāla [cycle], which is the marvellous essence among the Eighteen Tantras [of the Mahāyoga class], a subdivision of those precious tantras which are even greater and more profound than the profound secret of the speech [uttered] by Samantabhadra-Vajradhara. The scriptural source from where this transmission appeared and the way of the [different] entrustments, fearing [too many] letters, it was not set down here; and more extensively it becomes clear in further histories of the transmission of the [tantras] *mDo*, *sGyu*, *Sems*, [these] three.¹

1. The trilogy *mDo sgyu sems gsum* stands for the three main tantras of the Anuyoga, Mahāyoga and Atiyoga teachings of the rNying-ma-pa school as they were transmitted in the “Spoken Teaching” (*bka’ ma*) tradition. The three main lineages of this transmission and their later spread have been described in Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:599-732); for the special role of the monastery of Kah-thog in the codification and transmission of the *mDo sgyu sems* teachings in the 12th century, compare Ehrhard (1990:3). The period upto the 15th century was dominated by different family traditions, whose individual lineages have not yet been studied in greater detail; compare notes 3 & 7. The establishment of a new tradition of the *dGongs pa ’dus pa’i mdo*, the main tantra of the Anuyoga, was undertaken at the monastery of rDo-rje brag in Central Tibet in the 17th century; see Dalton (2002:161-203). The main figure behind this new tradition was the Second rDo-rje brag Rig-’dzin Padma ’phrin-las (1640-1718), who also wrote a lineage history; see his *’Dus pa’i mdo dbang gi bla ma brgyud pa’i rnam thar ngo mtshar dad pa’i phreng ba*, pp. 23.6 ff. This particular lineage had been disseminated in Mang-yul Gung-thang; concerning the persons active in this regard, compare notes 34 & 37.

And in particular, what is called “bKa’-brgyud-pa”, the long-lasting system of the lineage of spiritual practice, in the world it is famous like the sun and the moon. In that case, the consecutive transmission from Vajradhara onwards, the detailed way of the biographies [of teachers] which appeared until the Protector of Beings gTsang-pa rGya-ras (1161-1211): it is according to [the tradition] generally known as the Transmission of the Precepts. With the master rGya-ras-pa there came as the earlier, middle [and] later disciple an uncountable number [of them], divided into [the branches of] the “Upper ’Brug[-pa]”, the “Lower ’Brug[-pa]”, and the “Central ’Brug[-pa]”, [these] three. What was transmitted from the first one, the Jina rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje (1198-1258) onwards, [this tradition] is known as the “Upper ’Brug[-pa]”. Among the heart-sons of the master rGod-tshang-pa was the Jina Ma-bdun ras-chen himself; because this Lord touched also the feet of the Protector of Beings U-ri-pa or Jina Lo-ras[-pa dBang-phyug brtson-’grus] (1187-1250), [his system] is also mixed with the “Lower ’Brug[-pa]”. Therefore, the biographies up to him, they should be understood from where they become clear as something separate, [namely] in the old scripture of the history that is known as *mDo chen bka’ brgyud gser’phreng*.²

2. The development of the three main branches of the ’Brug-pa bKa’-brgyud-pa schools can be found, for example, in the religious chronicle of the Fourth ’Brug-chen Padma dkar-po (1527-1592); see his *Chos ’byung bstan pa’i padma rgyas pa’i nyin byed*, pp. 423.15-463.10. For the mention of Ma-bdun ras-chen as one of the main disciples of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje, see *ibid.*, p. 444.14. Smith (2001:45) in his treatment of the literary genre of the “Golden Rosary” (*gser ’phreng*) was the first to identify the mDo-bo che-ba as an important bKa’-brgyud-pa school deriving from the “Upper ’Brug-pa”. Another sub-branch of the “Upper ’Brug-pa”, whose teaching

In the following there will [only] be set down a rough version of the biographies of the teaching lineage of the successive transmission from Ma-bdun ras-chen onwards, who was the first one of this tradition, and the transmission of the Gur family in a consecutive way from Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis onwards.

[II] [a] Now, he, who is known as the Jina Ma-bdun ras-chen or rNal-'byor chos ldan with his alternative name. His place of birth [is the site] called Shel mkhar at Gang[-bzang] in Upper Nyang which is part of rGya-gar gling chung of Upper Nyang [in the] gTsang [province]; there he was born in the paternal line of the Gar [clan] in a family of mantra [practitioners] as the son of the father Jo-sras, [called] “The Rich Nepalese”, and the mother Zab-mo dge-ma, [these] two. At the age of eleven years he met the teacher, the great Knowledgeable One, Gar-ston Sangs-rgyas; the lock of hair was cut [by him] and he was given the name rNal-'byor chos-ldan. Up to the age of sixteen years he relied on that teacher and heard countless authoritative scriptures, empowerments, reading[-authorizations] and precepts of the tantras of the old and new Secret Mantras. When the sickness of an [infectious] disease, [which had been caused by a] demon from below, showed up, he closed himself up in retreat for one year; as he propitiated [Vajrapāni in the form of] rDo-rje gtum-po, he saw the face [of the deity] and was released from his sickness.

lineages had spread in the region of Mang-yul Gung-thang, was the 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa lineage; see Ehrhard (2000:58-66).

He met on many occasions scholars and siddhas such as gSang-sngags sdong-po, the great scholar of the rNying-ma-pa [school] of the Early Translations, the Jina Lo-ras[-pa] or Lord of the Teaching U-ri-pa, [who is] the fountain [of the tradition] of the “Lower ’Brug[-pa]”, Khro-phu Lo-tsā-ba [Byams-pa’i dpal] (1173-1250), Mañjunātha Sa-skya Pandita [Kun-dga’ m rgyal-mtshan] (1182-1251), the treasure-discoverer Guru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug] (1212-1270) [and] the siddha ’Phags-pa; and he heard instructions [from all of them].³

He proceeded up to Ding-ri [in] La-stod [lHo], [and] in bDe-chen steng in the upper part of Tshong-’dus in gNya’-nang he met the Lord rGod- tshang-pa [for the first time]. He heard [from him] the mixture of the “Armour of the Twelve Meditations” and the “Doctrine of the Thirteen” and [then] having circumambulated

3. In the transmission lineage of the Māyājāla cycle as received by Ma-bdun ras-chen, the master from whom he obtained these teachings is listed as Gar-ston rTogs-ldan chen-po. A biography of this master, written by one Bla-ma dKon-mchog rdo-rje, is available in the second volume of the *mDo chen bka’ brgyud gser ’phreng*; see Appendix I. The lineage is described on two occasions in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century”; see Appendix II: B.3.a & F.8.a. This particular transmission goes back to gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (b. 844) and was passed on by his disciple So Ye-shes dbang-phyug and the latter’s family; it is not recorded in the historiographical literature, where some problems with the linear succession after So Ye-shes dbang-phyug are noted; see gZhon-nu dpal: *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 142.9-17, and Roerich (1976:109). I take this lineage to be the so-called “So tradition” (*so lugs*); for this tradition in the transmission of the trilogy *mDo sgyu sems*, compare Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:616). References to Ma-bdun ras-chen as a disciple of Khro-phu Lo-tsā-ba, Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan and the treasurer-discoverer Guru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug] have not been located until now. However, the biography of Ma-bdun ras-chen written by his disciple gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa and contained in the second volume of the *mDo chen bka’ brgyud gser ’phreng* could yield relevant information; see Appendix I.

Nepal [on pilgrimage] he arrived in [the region of] [Mang-yul] sKyid-grong. As he was collecting alms [there], there appeared among those who had a mark of being enclosed by abscesses (?) an old lady, who spoke: “Up there, when you step upon a substance [providing] siddhis and [then] take it, you will have arrived [at the right spot]!” As he went [accordingly] in order to search [for that spot], he saw that there was the opening of a dark cave on the nose of a mountain-face and proceeded to there. Performing a *gaṇacakra* [there] his meditation experience increased and [there was] a startling spiritual experience and so forth: seeing numerous signs of a pilgrimage site [he realized] that [this spot] was the cave of [rDo-rje] Ma-bdun-ma. As he stayed there a long time for his practice, his name is known as “Ma-bdun-pa”. At that sacred site he [also] saw the face of the Mahācārya [Padmasambhava].⁴

At one time, when a great black woman appeared, she spoke: “Who am I? Do you recognize me?” As he answered: “I do not know you,” she replied: “You and me, at the time of Guru [Padmasambhava] we have been close friends; I am the hyena-faced ḍākinī riding a

4. The site of bDe-chen steng was one of the favourite retreat sites of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje in south-western Tibet and also the place where he met his disciple Orgyan-pa Rin-chen dpal (1230-1309); for the location of the site and the later meeting, see Ehrhard (1997:128, note 6). During that period the region of Mang-yul sKyid-grong attracted great numbers of yogins of the bKa'-brgyud-pa school due to the presence of the famous Avalokiteśvara statue Ārya Va-ti bzang-po, the so-called “Lord of sKyid-grong” (*skyid grong jo bo*); for a description of the pilgrimage of rGod-tshang ras-pa mGon-po rdo-rje to the Buddhist icon and a list of representatives of the different bKa'-brgyud-pa schools present there, see Ehrhard (2004a: 78-79, note 37). Concerning the identification of the actual site, where Ma-bdun ras-chen had stayed and was blessed by rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma according to the writings of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku, see Introduction, note 8.

horse on a black field.” [This was] rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma [one of the seven Vajra Mothers], bound by oath as a female custodian, who protects the doctrine. As it is said in the [text called] *Grub gzhung*: “rDo-rje Ma-bdun[-ma], hyena-faced, wearing a human skin.” And it is certain, that also this lady, who had uttered the prophecy above, it was just her. It seems that also the [act of] taking her as the principal protector of the family of this [mDo-bo che-ba] tradition, it happened from this time onwards.⁵

Again, after coming [once more] into the presence of the Jina rGod-tshang-pa, he listened to the precepts and counsels of Chos-rje 'Brug-pa (i.e.gTsang-pa rGya-ras) in their entirety and was authorized as the noble heart's son [of rGod-tshang-pa]. From among the eight great sons, who are equal to him, he is universally known as “Ma-bdun-pa, who is equal to the compassion [of his teacher].” He resided several times in varied mountain hermitages like Ling-nga [Brag], sKu-lha, Śrī gNam-lding, lHa-gdong, Shar-sding, dKar-ye dPal-gyi nags-khrod and so forth, performing mainly his practice [there]. He had accomplished the skill of

5. The text called *Grub gzhung* or *mChod gzhung* is the main literary source for Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku's treatment of the location and the iconography of the individual Seven Vajra Mothers; see Introduction, notes 9 & 14. In his work on the history of the cult of the group of seven goddesses he includes a discussion of the outer features of rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma and corrects misspellings concerning iconographical details of the main deity by relying on the text mentioned; see Chos-kyi dbang-phyug: *rDo rje ma bdun ma'i lo rgyus*, fol. 8a/1-3 (*phyis dpal ldan mdo bo che pa'i rigs chos brgyud kyi bsrung mar gyur / dred kyi gdong pa can kyang mngon rtogs zur du mi gsal kyang / mchod gzhung du / rdo rje ma bdun dred gdong mi spags g.yogs zhes pa dang don mthun / zhing nag rta ru zhon pa'ang yi ge gzhan du shing sna rta ru zhon pa zhes bris pa ni yig nor te / 'dir zhing nag zhes pa zhing chen po bem po chen po gdan du gting ba'i don yin no*).

[the unity of] emptiness [and] compassion and had mastered all the auspicious conditions of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; he praised the system of the great meditators at secluded sites and he was of great benefit to others through his great compassion that was immeasurable.⁶

In the later part of his life he established sites for spiritual practice in bDe-sgron in [the valley of] sKu-thang [b]Tsum, in Rin-chen spungs-pa in Long-[']phrang, in Brang Ze-mkhar in Byang-ge, in Gur-phu in Mang-tsha, in dPal-gyi ri, the inner land of Gre-zla, in Shar-sgom [the former residence of] Thog-ston Sangs-rgyas, south-west of sPang-zhing, [and] in mDo-bo-che in Phu-lag in Gung-thang. And as the final of his acts of spreading the teaching of the practice lineage by means of the three cycles (i.e. reading, hearing and reflection, renouncing and meditative concentration, and the deeds to be performed) he passed into the Dharmadhātu,

6. With regard to the qualifications of Ma-bdun ras-chen as the disciple of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje there exist two separate statements; see Rin-chen rnam-rgyal (1437-1557): *rJe rgod tshang pa'i rnam thar rgyal thang ba bde chen rdo rjes mdzad pa la mgur chen 'gas brgyan-pa*, p. 412.1 (*snying rje rang dang mnyam pa ma bdun pa*), and p. 412.7-8 (*shes bya rang dang mnyam pa ma bdun pa*). In another biography of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje Ma-bdun ras-chen is mentioned only as one of the many disciples immediately after the master had his initial encounter with O-rgyan-pa Rinchen. No special role is attributed to him in this source; see Sangs-rgyas dar-po (15th/16th cent.): *rGyal ba rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa*, p. 187.7-13 (*gu lung phu ru gdan phebs pa'i tshe / der chos rje bas slob ma rnams kyi nang nas brtul zhugs rang dang mnyam pa'i u rgyan rgyal po zhes bya ba'i grub thob de dang mjal ba yin / de nas spud sgra'i ri khrod du byon nas bzhugs pas / de dus mkhan po srin po gdong pa'am dge bshes bya bral ba'am / ma bdun pa'am / la rgyud pa'i 'phags pa 'od la sogs pa'i ston sgom phyed dang nyis brgya tsam gyis sgom khrid mdzas nas ...*). For the places frequented by Ma-bdun ras-chen for his spiritual practice, see note 8.

the sphere free from proliferations, at the secluded site of mDo-bo-che at the age of 68 years, in the night of the 19th day of the last summer moon; the sky was filled with rainbow tents and there appeared in manifold ways rains of godly flowers and relics like bones, śarīra and so forth: [all this] was said and condensed from what had been executed by his heart's son gDan-sa Rin-chen[-pa] as a detailed biography.⁷

[b] His heart's son gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa was born in lDing-bzang, a small [stretch of] land in Mang-yul sKyid-grong, as the son of the father Se-zhar' bum-me and the mother Tre-mo sman-ne. At the age of seven years he met the Lord Ma-bdun-pa and through the power of the awakening of the good propensities, by just encountering [Ma-bdun-pa] his outlook changed. At the age of nine years, after hiding himself from his parents, he went to Ma-bdun [ras-chen]; the lock of hair was cut and he was given the name 'Phags-pa dpal. The Lord Ma-bdun-pa spoke: "The [future] owner of these my scattered books, I hope that he will be it!" Recognizing him as a noble being, who is a proper vessel, he prophesied him [in this way] to be his heart's son. As he observed the guidance [of his teacher] at the age of nine years, wisdom free of proliferations was

7. The hermitages established by Ma-bdun ras-chen spread throughout the whole region of Mang-yul Gung-thang, from sPang-zhing in the south up to rDzong-dkar in the north, with one site for spiritual practice in the valley of [s]Ku-thang [b]Tsum. Among the locations mentioned I have not yet identified Long-[']phrang, Byang-ge, Mang-tsha and Gre-zla. Shar-sgom or Shar-sgam, near the village of sPang-zhing in Mang-yul, had been one of the two residences of Thogs-rdugs Sangs-rgyas (seemingly a variant form of Thog-ston Sangs-rgyas), a direct disciple of Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan; see Ehrhard (2004a:284 & 416, note 183). Phu-lag, the region where mDo-bo-che was located, is a nomad region to the north-west of rDzong-dkar, the capital of the Gung-thang rulers; see Everding (2000:73, note 121, and map 6).

born in his heart. Following [Ma-bdun ras-chen] as an attendant wherever he went, he heard the complete stream of the initiations, reading[-authorizations] and precepts; and as he fastened them to his spiritual experience, he attained liberation.

At the age of nineteen years he received full ordination from the upādhyāya known as the one from lHo-brag, and in Nya[g]-tshal he heard completely all the explanations and instructions of the tantras *mDo*, *sGyu*, *Sems*, [these] three, from Chos[-kyi] seng[-ge], the physician of Glan, and from Chos-ldan, [these] two. When an [infectious] disease showed up which upon close inspection [had been caused by] a demon from below, he remained in Shar-sding for his practice and by putting together the earlier and later [periods], during six years [in all] he brought to an end the propitiation of [Vajrapāni in the form of] rDo-rje gtum-po and was [thus] released [from the sickness].⁸

8. A biography of gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa, written by his disciple Chos-rje ston-pa can be found in the second volume of the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*; see Appendix I. The teacher Chos[-kyi] seng[-ge], who passed the trilogy of mDo sgyu sems to gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa, belonged to the Glan family; for two further masters of this family associated with the site known as Nya[g]-tshal, see Dudjom Rinpoche (1991:657 & 668). Compare Dalton (2002:139-140, note 8) for the observation that the Glan family controlled together with the Zur family the Anuyoga tradition up to the 15th century; the earlier lineage was known as the “system of Glan” (*glan lugs*). The place of Shar-sding was already mentioned as one of the hermitages, where Ma-bdun ras-chen followed his spiritual practice. Among the further sites noted in this context, i.e. Ling-nga [Brag], sKulha, Śrī gNam-lding, lHa-gdong and dKar-ye dPal-gyi nags-khrod, four can be located geographically. The first one, Ling-nga or Ling-ba Brag[-dmar rdzong] is known as one of the places, where the great yogin Mi-la ras-pa had stayed and is situated in bKra-shis sgang; see Ehrhard (2004a:288 & 432, note 214). sKu-lha [dPal-rdzong] or [Mang-yul] sKu-lha are alternative names for a sacred mountain, located near Ri-bo dpal-'bar, in the centre of Mang-yul; see Everding (2000:483, note 1197, and map 5). Compare Sørensen & Hazod (2007:131-132) for

In Shar-sgom he stayed for his practice definitely for three years and furthermore in varied [other] sacred sites [as well]. After the Lord Ma-bdun-pa had passed away he maintained all his residences by developing them further. When he founded a monastery at the secluded site of Sharphu in [the valley of] Lan-'de, he named it "bKra-shis sding", [a site] which is these days called lCog[s-ga] ri; and he erected Rin-chen sgang in the upper part of [s]Ku-thang [b]Tsum, Don-grub gling, the monastery of Bul-[']drud, Rinchen gling, the monastery of Be-zho in the vicinity of Shar-sgom and so on, establishing sites for spiritual practice [there].

Having set an immeasurable multitude of disciples on the good path of benefit and happiness by the three [cycles] of explanation, practice and deeds, his final act was the passing away into the Dharmadhātu at the sacred site of lCogs[-ga] ri on the 13th day of the first summer moon in the monkey year.⁹

[c] The incomparable Chos-rje ston-pa, the heart's son of gDan-sa Rin-chen[pa] 'Phags-pa dpal: he was born in the [temple of] 'Bar-

the topographical description of the dominance of the Tshal-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school during that period up to the mountain region of [Jo-bo] sKu-rgyal. lHa-gdong or lHa-sdong is a region to the south of rDzong-dkar; see Everding (2000:545, note 1406). dKar-ye dPal-gyi nags-khrod, a well-frequented hermitage also in later times, lies in sPang-zhing and was originally founded by one Dharmamitra; see Ehrhard (2004a:284 & 417, note 185); for the latter site compare also notes 25 & 27 below.

9. The monastery of bKra-shis sding, later known as lCog[s-ga] ri, was thus the first establishment of the mDo-chen tradition in the La-[l]de[bs] valley and the site where gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa passed away. Next to a second hermitage in [s]Ku-thang [b]Tsum he developed the presence of the tradition in sPang-zhing by founding a monastery near Shar-sgom, a favourite residence of both himself and Ma-bdun ras-chen. No further information on the region of Bul-[']drud is available, where gDan-sa Rin-chen-pa established another monastic settlement.

ba lha-khang [lo-cated] in the centre of Mang-yul sKyid-grong as the son of the father Don-grub rgyal-mtshan and the mother Blon-mo Ye-shes sde, [these] two. At the time of asking for blessings from the Lord Ma-bdun-pa, [the master] prophesied: “By this there will come a benefit for the beings!”; at the age of five years the lock of hair was cut and he was given likewise the name “Blessed Vajra”.

When he was eight years old he went on pilgrimage together with his parents to [the stūpa] “All Trees” (i.e. Svayambhū) in Nepal and to lHa-sa, [which is like] a glorious Dharmacakra. He was a contemporary of the great mChims Nam-mkha’ grags-pa (1210-1285), [the seventh abbot] of sNar-thang.

In the presence of the Lord Ma-bdun-pa he observed the guidance [of his teacher] at the age of thirteen years, seeing nakedly the own face of the Dharmakāya, free from proliferations, [i.e.] in its primordial state; [and] he listened to countless reading[-authorizations], initiations, guidances [and] instructions of the old and new tantras. After the Lord Ma-bdun-pa had passed away, he was ordained in the presence of Chos-rje gDan-sa-pa [’Phags-pa dpal]; he listened completely to the remaining instructions and acted as [his] attendant. At [the monastery of] Yang-thog in Gung-thang he received the training of a Buddhist novice from the upādhyāya ’Od-zer dpal and the full ordination [of a Buddhist monk] from the upādhyāya Sher-pa and from [the teacher] Dingston. From dKon[-mchog] tshul[-khrims], the reverend scholar of Zur-mtsho [in La-stod lHo], he heard on many occasions the cycles of the bKa’-ma [transmission] of the Early Translations

and the instructions of the old and new [tantras]. Further on, he attended in an impartial way upon many noble scholars and Siddhas and performed extensively the listening of the Sūtra[and] Mantra[yāna]. In many mountain hermitages, which were isolated for [the realization of] the meaning of what had been studied, he resided for the practice several times for [a period of] three years, [the entrance] covered up with clay and his speech shut up, and [once] for seven years in the upper and lower monasteries of Shar-sgom and Be-zho; having bound a Nāgā demoness to an oath, who was staying there, [the demoness] was known as “The One of the Jewel Island”.¹⁰

After gDan-sa-pa [’Phags-pa dpal] had passed away, [Chos-rje ston-pa] maintained all the residences, including mDo-bo-che; and when he founded a monastery on the side of a mountain in the upper part of [the valley of] Lan-’de, it was known as “dPal-ldan sding”. There always came together around 500 great meditators, male and female, and on special days more than 1,000 people. Having executed as a pair the continuous turning of the Wheel of

10. A biography of Chos-rje ston-pa, written by one Ye-shes rdo-rje, is available in the second volume of the *mDo chen bka’ brgyud gser ’phreng*; see Appendix I. The vihāra known as ’Bar-ba lha-khang in the centre of sKyid-grong was regarded as one of the border taming temples of the bSam-yas vihāra; see Ehrhard (2004a:280 & 398, note 154) and Vitali (2007:291-292). The site of Yang-thog in Gung-thang is known as the birthplace of Nag-tsho Lo-tsā-ba Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba (b. 1011) and the monastery established by him there was supervised for a period of four years by Chag Lo-tsā-ba Chos-rje dpal (1197-1264); see Ehrhard (2004a:289 & 436, note 223). It must have been around that time when Chos-rje ston-pa received his training there from the afore mentioned teachers. No further details are known about dKon-mchog tshul-khrims from Zur-mtho, a small principality in south-western Tibet, bordering Gung-thang.

Dharma of the profound and vast [doctrine] and the practice for the benefit of beings, in the end he passed away in dPal-ldan sdings on the 14th day of the third Tibetan month in the bird year.¹¹

[d] At that point [of the transmission]: although there are found in the old scripture of the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* from Chos-rje ston pa onwards the biographies and so forth of Bla-ma Byang-pa, Bla-ma Chos[-kyi] seng[-ge], Bla-ma Chos[-kyi] rgyal[-mtshan] [and] Bya-btang Śākya dpal [[*gloss*: it has to be understood that Bya-btang Śākya dpal, who is contained in the transmission of [the teachings of] the “Primordial Pure” [and]the “Spontaneous Given” [according to the] Byang-gter [tradition] and the *rDor sems snying thig* [of Rig-'dzin Kun-skyong gling-pa (1396-1477)], and this person, [these] two, are not the same one]], as a description of a real transmission [lineage] it becomes from Chos-rje ston-pa onwards [the succession of] Sangs-rgyas dbon-po, bSod-nams dbang-phyug [and] bSod-nams snying-po; thus [the biographies] which are clear [in the text mentioned] above are not dealt with at length [here]. Up to bSod-nams snying-po it was apart from a mere teaching lineage no family tradition. Concerning bSod-nams snying-po, it seems to be mentioned in some “Records of Teachings Received” of the teachers [mentioned] above that he belonged to Nub-dgon [in La-stod Byang]; it may be like that, but as the biographies of these [last-named] three teachers did not appear as

11. The monastery of dPal-ldan sdng(s) was the second monastery of the mDo-chen tradition in the La-[l]de[bs] valley. After its establishment in the 13th century, when it attracted a great number of practitioners, it fell into oblivion in later times and was only renovated in the 18th century by 'Gyur-med 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin, also known as dPal lding-pa; see note 42.

something having been set down in writing, I was not able to write [about] them [here].¹²

[III] [a] Like there appeared the succession [of the individual members] of the mDo-chen tradition of the Gur family from Gurston lHun-grub bkra-shis onwards [[gloss: concerning “Gur” [it comes from] Gur-phu, and “mDo-chen” [it comes from] mDo-chen in Phu-lag [in Gung-thang]: one must understand that [these labels] became known as proper names from the designations of the [individual] monasteries]], now the way of this [transmission]:

As the son of the father bSod-nams ’dul-le from the paternal line called the ’Ur-rtsa in Western Tibet, possessing distinguished glory, and the mother Chos-skyong skyid-lde, this Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis was born in Byang-phugs, a place [near the lake] dPal-

12. The second volume of the *mDo chen bka’ brgyud gser ’phreng* contains the biographical accounts of Bla-ma Byang-pa, Bla-ma Chos[-kyi] seng[-ge], Bla-ma Chos[-kyi] rgyal[-mtshan] and Bya-btang Śākya dpal (and three of the latter’s writings); see Appendix I. The transmission of the Māyājāla cycle by later members of the mDo-chen tradition as mentioned in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” is the same one as noted here by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku; see Appendix II:B.3.a & F.8.a (Chos-rje Ma-bdun ras-chen-Thugs-sras gDan-sa Rin-po-che - mNyam-med Chos-rje ston-pa - Chos-rje Sangs-rgyas dbon-po - Chos-rje dBang-phyug mtshan-can - Chos-rje bSod-nams snying-po). Concerning the role of Chos-rje bSod-nams snying-po as the author of the main ritual text book of that particular transmission, see Introduction, note 17. The person of Bya-btang Śākya dpal mentioned in the interlineary gloss, who transmitted Byang-gter teachings and those of the treasure-discoverer Rig-’dzin Kun-skyong gling-pa, is known as one of the teachers of Nub-dgon Chos-rgyal Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan (1511-1571); see Grangs-chen Rab-’byams-pa (16th cent.): *rJe btsun bla ma dam pa byams pa chos rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar dad pa’i shing rta ’dren byed*, fols. 48b/8-49a/1. Not much is available on the teachers associated with Nub-dgon, a monastery located to the north of Gung-thang near the gTsang-po river; concerning Nub-dgon chen-po Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dBang-gi rgyal-po (1657-1731), see note 34.

khud. The great scholar of the Zhi-byed tradition called Bla-ma Zur-khang-pa of Glang-'khor [in] Ding-ri made the prophecy: “This one will become a noble person!” Under Chos-rje bSod-nams dbang-phyug the lock of hair was cut [and] he received the name lHun-grub bkra-shis. At the age of fifteen years he observed the guidance of the Mahāmudrā [doctrine] and thus saw nakedly the wisdom [mind] free from proliferations; from the all-knowing Mus-srad-pa dPal-ldan seng-ge he took the full ordination [and the one as a novice] at once. He approached on many occasions scholars and siddhas including the upādhyāya Don-grub shes-rab from 'Om-phug in Gungthang, rTsa-brgyad-pa rDo-rje seng-ge, Chos-rje dBon-seng-pa [and] Bya-btang Śākya dpal, performing the listening and reflection of the teaching methods of the old and new Sūtra[- and] Mantra[yāna] like an ocean.¹³

13. Two biographies of Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis, written by his disciple Seng-ge dpal bzang-po are available (one written in 'Om-phug); see Appendix I. 'Om-phug in Gung-thang was a site where Nag-tsho Lo-tsā-ba had followed his spiritual practice and where in the 13th century a “teaching seminary” (*bshad grva*) had been established by a female member of the Gung-thang ruling family; see Ehrhard (2004a:289 & 436, note 224). The teacher Don-grub shes-rab belonged to this monastic institution. Among the other teachers of Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis we can identify Mus-srad-pa dPal-ldan seng-ge, a member of the teaching lineage of the Siddha Dar-'phyar (12th/13th cent.); this tantric master was a contemporary of Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan and is known to have discovered his own treasure works, including the cycle *Yang gsang khros pa*. The name of Mus-sred-pa Kun-mkhyen dPal-ldan seng-ge and his position in this particular transmission is also mentioned in the genealogical record of the rDo-dmar-ba, another important Buddhist family from south-western Tibet; see Kun-bzang chos-dpal: *rNam grol rtsangs rdo dmar ba'i gdung rabs*, pp. 47.12-48.3. According to the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” this particular teaching was propagated by Nub-dgon Chos-rgyal Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan and subsequently also reached mDo-chen-pa Nor-bu bde-chen; see Appendix II: D.2.g.

In mDo-bo-che he heard several times the instructions of the bKa'- brgyud [transmission] of his own system from Chos-rje bSod-nams snying-po, who had been prophesied by the Guru [Padmasambhava]. He performed austerities for many years in many varied places of solitude like mDo-bo-che, Long-[']phrang, dKar-ye [dPal-gyi nags-khrod] [and] Khra-tums and obtained the fruit of his practice. He was linked to the Dharmarāja of mNga'-ris Gung-thang Khri-rgyal bSod-nams lde (1371-1404) [by the relationship of] donor and spiritual preceptor. He extended greatly the development [of the mDo-chen tradition] by holding the seat of mDo-bo-che, renovating all the convents and monasteries belonging to [the lineage of] Ma-bdun-pa, and founding [new] schools for practice. And he demonstrated clairvoyance, miracles and inconceivable signs of accomplishment; after he had used the Guardian of the Commandment, the Protector of the Doctrine (i.e. rDo-rje Ma-bdun-ma) like an attendant and had kept up extensively the activity for his disciples, he passed away into the sphere of peace in the monastery of dPal mDo-bo-che.¹⁴

The biographies up to this point were set down here as a summary [and] in a rough way. Those wishing to understand them in detail,

14. For a biographical account of the ruler Khri-rgyal bSod-nams lde, see Tshe-dbang nor-bu: *Bod rje lha btsad po'i gdung rabs mnga' ris smad gung thang du ji ltar byung ba'i tshul deb ther dvangs shel 'phrul gyi me long*, pp. 117.22-121.16; compare Everding (2000:115-123). He is especially known for his support of the rNying-ma-pa treasure discoverer Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem 'phru-can (1337-1406) and the founding of the rDzong-dkar chos-sde, the first monastery of the Bo-dong-pa school in Mang-yul Gungthang in 1394. No mention of his spiritual connection with Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis and the monastery of dPal mDo-bo-che is made in this historiographical source.

they should look it up from where it is clear in the two volumes of the old scripture of the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*.

[b] That lHun-grub bkra-shis himself [either] has remained a bhikṣu for his [spiritual] support, or that [otherwise] there has appeared a son [to him], as [these facts] are not clear in his biography, someone with the name Mantradhara mGon-po dpal, who was like a Dharma son [to him] and either the younger brother of lHun-grub bkra-shis or someone [in the succession of] uncle and nephew, the biography of such a person as well, in the form of detailed notice, it is not known [to me].

[c] After him [came] Chos-rje Kun-dga' gzi-brjid-pa: although there is the rumour that there exists an old scripture of his biography [including the names of] father, mother, birthplace and so forth, I have not seen it in the past. If one mentions here just a fraction [of his life-story] like what is known as the oral tradition [it is as follows]: He was a contemporary of the Dharmarāja of [mNga'-ris] Gung-thang Khri lHa-dbang rgyal-mtshan (1404-1464). He listened to countless instructions of ripening [empowerments] and liberating [guidances] of the Sūtra[- and] Mantra[yāna] of the old and new [translations] from countless mentors, who were impartial scholars and siddhas, including the Mantradhara mGon-po dpal, the incomparable lHun-grub rin-chen, the Mantradhara from Drang-so [in La-stod lHo], [i.e.] the treasure-discoverer Śākya bzang-po, and the Siddha gTsang-smyon Heruka (1452-1507). And among the great sons, [who are] the heart's disciples of

gTsang-smyon Heruka, he became one in the series of the six great teachers who have attained inseparable faith [in the master].¹⁵

He stayed in mDo-bo-che itself [which was] his main residence; and he kept up the residence of the summer and winter [periods] also in the monasteries of the gorges, like “bKra-shis sdings” [or] lCogs[-ga] ri and so forth. Up to that time he was only a bhikṣu following the [rules of] the vinaya; in the latter part of his life the Mantradhara Che-mchog[-pa] was born. It is known that there also appeared lineages of disciples in great number, including [the one of] Nam-mkha’ rdo-rje.¹⁶

15. A biographical account of the ruler Khri lHa-dbang rgyal-mtshan can also be found in the work of Tshe-dbang nor-bu; see the text (as in note 14), pp. 122.15-124.19, and Everding (2000:125-131). Once again there is no mention of teachers associated with the mDo-bo-che tradition in this text. No information on the master lHun-grub rin-chen is available; concerning the treasure-discoverer Śākya bzang-po of the rNying-ma-pa school, also known as the First Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku, see Ehrhard (2007a:25-29). For the contact between Kun-dga’ gzi-brjid and gTsang-smyon Heruka, who had been invited to dPal mDo-bo-che during his stay in Mang-yul Gung-thang, see sNa-tshogs rang-grol: *gTsang smyon heruka phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba’i rnam thar rdo rje theg pa’i gsal byed nyi ma’i snying po*, p. 99.3-4 (*de nas spyid [= dpyid] smad mi phyed dad thob kyi bla chen drug gi ya ba mdo bo che’i gdan sa / chos rje kun dga’ gzi brjid bya ba dpon slob ’khor bcas kyis / pha grub thob chen po mdo bo cher gdan drangs bsnyen bskur kyi [=kyis] thugs rangs par byas na gdul bya rnam la skabs su bab pa’i dbang dang gdam [=gdams] ngag gis tshim par mdzad*).

16. A description of the activities of Kun-dga’ gzi-brjid in maintaining the monastery of dPal mDo-bo-che in Gung-thang and looking after the “monasteries in the south” (*lho phyogs kyi dgon pa*) is contained in the biography of his nephew Nam-mkha’ rdo-rje (1486-1553); see Ehrhard (2000:56). This latter teacher had met his paternal uncle for the first time in the year 1496 and received the vows of a Buddhist novice and the religious name Kun-dga’ from him in dPal mDo-bo-che; studies continued then under Kun-dga’ gzi-brjid in the valley of La-[l]de[bs]. The nephew became subsequently known as Chos-rje Nam-mkha’ rdo-rje and was responsible for introducing the teaching traditions of the ’Ba’-ra-ba bKa’-brgyud-pa school to Mang-yul Gung-thang; see note 22. Although one might identify the disciple of Kun-dga’

[d] The Mantradhara Che-mchog-pa was born in the surroundings of lCogs[-ga] ri [at a place] today known as lHas-chung. From [the age of] three years onwards he knew reading and writing. At the time of eight years he left a footprint visibly on a stone, which one can obviously still encounter today. He relied many times on noble kalyānamitras, including the father Chos-rje Kun-dga' gzi-brjid, the treasure-discoverers mChog-ldan mgon-po (1497-1531) and bsTan-gnyis gling-pa (1480-1535), [and] dKar-po Kun-dga' grags-pa, a heart's son of [the treasure-discoverer] Padma gling-pa (1450-1521). Also the line [of transmission] of the ripening [initiations] and liberating [instructions] of [the cycle] *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog*, which had come forth as a treasure of the reincarnation Dri-med kun-dga' (b.1347), it emerged from him onwards. He was a contemporary of the Dharmarāja [of mNga'-ris Gung-thang] bDud-'dul mgon-po lde (i.e. Kun-bzang Nyi-zla grags-pa [1514-1560]).¹⁷

gzi-brjid called Nam-mkha' rdo-rje with this nephew, I would take him rather to be [Jam-dbyangs] Nam-mkha' rdo-rje, a teacher from the rDzong-dkar chos-sde; on him, see Ehrhard (2000:56).

17. Kun-bzang Nyi-zla grags-pa alias bDud-'dul mgon-po lde is known for his involvement with masters of the rNying-ma-pa school, including Rig-'dzin mChog-ldan mgon-po, Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa and dKar-po Kun-dga' grags-pa, the same persons as mentioned as the teachers of Che-mchog-pa; see the biographical account of the ruler in the text of Tsho-dbang nor-bu (as in note 14), p. 137.11-18, and Everding (2000:159-160). Concerning the spiritual career of Rig-'dzin mChog-ldan mgon-po, the encounters with his teacher dKar-po Kun-dga' grags-pa and the importance of the latter's journey to Mang-yul Gung-thang for his student's visit, see Ehrhard (2008:66-71). According to the "Thob yig of the 17th Century" the transmission of the treasure cycle *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog* of Dri-med kun-dga' passed through dKon-mchog rdo-rje, one of the two sons of Che-mchog-pa, and reached later members of the family like Nor-bu bde-chen and rGyal-sras seng-ge; see Appendix II:A.4.a & B.3.b. According to the relevant sections of the actual reading-

The treasure-discoverer mChog-ldan mgon-po had urged the ruler, the king of [mNga'-ris Gung-thang], to renovate the vihāra of Byams[-pa] sprin, [a temple] which suppressed the [element of] wind; and as for the managing of this [undertaking] and as the person holding the residence [of the vihāra] he invested the Mantradhara Che-mchog-pa. [The master thus] maintained jointly the [former] residence of the Siddha O-rgyan-pa [Rin-chen dpal] (1230-1309), [called] Shel-ri dPal-gyi nags-ljongs, and Byams-pa sprin, the great miraculously manifested vihāra, which tames [regions] beyond [the border].¹⁸ And he erected [sacred items] like the especially exalted golden statue of Che-mchog Heruka, which remained in the teachers' quarters at Nyi-lhod in [the valley of] [b] Tsum. He composed [religious works] like a detailed exposition of the choice [of instructions] of the *sGyu 'phrul [drva ba]* [with the title] “Treasure-house of Scripture [and] Reasoning”, [and] an admonition to the place [of the future birth] and so forth. By the Dharmarāja of mNga'-ris [Gung-thang] he was authorized as head-

authorizations it included also the transmission of the biography of the Indian siddha Mitrayogin. A manuscript of a two volume set of the treasure cycle originating from sKyid-grong contains this particular biography, written at the behest of Che-mchog-pa's son dKon-mchog rdo-rje; see Dri-med Kun-dga': *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog*, vol. 1, p. 51.3.

18. The meeting of Rig-'dzin mChog-ldan mgon-po with the most influential religious persons in Mang-yul Gung-thang during his visit in 1526/27 and the way he entrusted them with the task of erecting and renovating religious buildings—including the nomination of Che-mchog-pa for the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin—is described in the treasure-discoverer's autobiography; see his work *sPrul sku rig 'dzin mchog ldan mgon po'i rnam thar*, fols. 237b/2-239a/3, and Ehrhard (2000:34-35). The site of Shel-ri dPal gyi nags-ljongs in sPang-zhing was one of three places associated with O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen dpal in the region of Mang-yul; see Ehrhard (2004a:284 & 415-416, note 181).

priest, [and] there were many lineages of disciples, and for example also Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan (1511-1571) from Nub-dgon [in La-stod Byang] heard some cycles of the *sGyu 'phrul [drva ba]* [from him].¹⁹

On the occasion when the treasure-discoverer bsTan-gnyis gling-pa was taking a profound treasure from Ri-bo dpal-'bar, he urged [the treasure discoverer] again and again [to do so], and because of the circumstances of the angry revenge of [the deity] rGya-garma, the Master of the Treasure [of Ri-bo dpal-'bar], he was struck by sickness on the way [back] and passed away in dGun-mda'. When a prayer [containing] the essence of his life was requested by the sons and the disciples [of Che-mchog-pa] from the great treasure-discoverer [bsTan-gnyis gling-pa], [the following verses] were granted:

19. The work of Che-mchog-pa on the Māyājāla cycle is referred to by rGyal-sras seng-ge and his son Padma rgya-mtsho in their respective records of the transmission of this cycle; see “Thob yig of the 17th Century”, p. 340.3 (*sngags 'chang che mchog pas mdzad pa'i gdab ka rgyas pa'i rnam bshad*), and *ibid.*, p. 386.5-6 (*sngags 'chang che mchog rdo rjes mdzad pa'i gdab ka rgyas pa'i rnam bshad lung rigs gter mdzod*); compare Appendix II:B.3.a & C.1.a. The studies of Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan are mentioned in the biography of the master from Nub-dgon. They took place during a pilgrimage to the 'Phags-pa lha-khang, the temple of the Ārya Va-ti bzang-po, and to the vihāra of Byams pa sprin around the year 1533; see the text of Grangs-chen Rab-'byams-pa (as in note 12), fols. 23b/6-24a/5. Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan was entitled on that occasion by Che-mchog-pa to act as a “master of the old mantras” (*sngags rnying ma'i bdag po*); for an exposition of the *sGyu 'phrul drva ba* teachings by Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan at Nub-dgon in the year 1553, compare *ibid.*, fol. 50b/5-7. This master is generally known as the “secret teacher” (*gsang ba'i bla ma*) of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal (1550-1602), an important lineage holder of the Northern Treasure tradition. bKra-shis stobs-rgyal obtained the transmission of the mentioned teachings at Nub-dgon in the year 1556; see *ibid.*, fol. 57b/2-5.

The primordial Buddha, [the Dharmakāya], unborn from the beginning, [and] the wisdom, radiant by itself, [the Sambho-ga]kāya, unobstructed from the beginning— [who is] the Heruka, manifesting the spontaneously given indivisibility [of these two]: to the feet of Che-mchog rdo-rje I offer my prayers!

Who had realized nakedly the view of what is originally pure, the way [things] really are, [and] who had encountered the face of tutelar deities [and] gods, the wisdom, radiant by itself—exhibiting the marks and signs of having mastered [the acts of] serving and realizing [the deities]: to you, king among the Mantradharas, I offer my prayers!

With many of the highest among the beings [propounding the teachings] of the Vajrayāna he had scrutinized the manifold instructions of [the stages of] generating and completing—with devotion and faith holding [onto them] like [onto something visualized] above one's head: to you, king among those who have completed [all] the initiations, I offer my prayers!

Towards the very secret [doctrine of] Ati[yoga], the essence of [all] the instructions, he had his [spiritual] share, thus realizing the profound intention [of it]—[to whom Reality-as-such] has become directly visible [and] nakedly clear, [just by mere] in-tellectual analysis, faith and devotion: to you, ruler [of the doctrine which is] profound and clear, I offer my prayers!

At the time when he displayed [the body constituted of] the four perishable elements as the illusionary body, by the stages of the dissolution [of the four elements] and so forth he, realized them as the Great Clear Light—who at the time of the explanation of the four *ha-hu* and the one *ha* rested in [the state of] the intention of the fivefold [wisdom]: to him I offer my prayers!

Having rested in the dimension, which is the intention of the fivefold wisdom, from the cloudless sky, there fell down flowers like rain—who had scattered an assemblage of offerings for the gods, including rainbows and light, resting in the dimension of Samantabhadra: to him I offer my prayers!²⁰

Not long after this the rebirth [of Che-mchog-pa] was clearly born as the son of the treasure-discoverer [bsTan-gnyis gling-pa], his name being known as Tshe-dbang bSod-nams rgyal-po. At that

20. The journey of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa to the sacred mountain Ri-bo dpal-'bar and the circumstances surrounding the discovery of a treasure at that site in Mangyul is described in the treasure-discoverer's autobiography; see *sPrul sku bstan gnyis gling pa padma tshe dbang rgyal po'i rnam thar*, fols. 68b/2-70a/6. Before that event he was invited by Che-mchog-pa to La-[]de[bs], where he gave teachings in the upper and lower parts of the valley. After returning to Gung-thang Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa received the news about the death of Che-mchog-pa, who had accompanied him during the treasure hunt and composed a song lamenting his passing away; see *ibid.*, fol. 70a/6-b/4. The prayer commemorating the life of Che-mchog-pa is not contained in the treasure discoverer's autobiography. For further details concerning the invitation of Rig' dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa to Mang-yul Gung-thang by the ruler Kun-bzang Nyi-zla grags-pa and the discovery of the treasure at Ri-bo dpal-'bar in the summer of 1534, see Everding (2000:563-568) and Everding (2004:275-276).

time there existed seven monasteries owned by the mDo-chen-pa [tradition], [each] mother [institution] linked with its [individual] branches: [1.] mDo-chen along with its branches [in] Phu-lag, [2.] Gur-phu [and] Khra-tums, [3.] Shel-ri [and] Byams[-pa] sprin, [4.] Shar-sgom [and] Rin-chen gling, [5.] Shar-sding [and] Shug-khrod, [6.] lCog[s-ga] ri [and] dPal-sding, [7.] Rin[-chen] sgang [and] Long-[']phrang. Among these [the monastery of] Shel-ri, which was linked with Byams[-pa] sprin, it had been donated as a share of his reward to the rebirth [Tshe-dbang] bSod-nams rgyal-po; it is obvious that from this time onwards the lineage of the grandsons (i.e. successors) of the treasure discoverer [bsTan-gnyis gling-pa] had appeared and the custom of their keeping the residence [of Byams-pa sprin] had originated.²¹

[e] To the Mantradhara Che-mchog rdo-rje were born the sons Don-yod rdo-rje and dKon-mchog rdo-rje, [these] two. The two brothers, they heard on many occasions profound teachings

21. The genealogy of the descendants of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa, starting with the latter's son Tshe-dbang bSod-nams rgyal-po, who was regarded as an incarnation of Che-mchog-pa, can be reconstructed with the help of another chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku; see Chos-kyi dbang-phyug: *gTer dbon rig 'dzin brgyud pa'i gdung rabs*, fols. 7a/2 ff. For the individual members of that family from Tshe-dbang bSod-nams rgyal-po up to Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms (1726-1789), the great-uncle of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug, compare Ehrhard (2007a:40-42). The list of seven monasteries and their branches in the 16th century documents the greatest extension of the mDochén tradition in Mang-yul Gung-thang. The main monasteries were: mDo-chen and Gur-phu in Gungthang, Shel-ri, Shar-sgom and Shar-sding in Mang-yul, lCog[s-ga] ri La-[l]de[bs] and Rin-chen sgang in [b]Tsum. Concerning Shar-sding and Shug-khrod it should be mentioned that they were located in sKyid-grong proper and in the relevant pilgrimage guide books they are mentioned at the end of the list of the sacred sites to be visited in the village (located in the immediate vicinity of Khams-gsum rnam-rgyal, the castle of the Gung-thang rulers); see Ehrhard (2004a:161 & 401-402, note 161).

from their father, the Mantradhara Chemchog rdo-rje, and from [teachers] like Rab-'byams-pa dKon-mchog bsam-grub, a scholar and siddha of the Bo-dong-pa [tradition], the treasure-discoverers mChog-ldan mgon-po and bsTan-gnyis gling-pa, [and] Chos-rje Nam-mkha' rdo-rje (1486-1553), a holder of the system of the 'Ba'-ra[-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa]. The older brother maintained [the residences in the north] such as mDo-bo-che, and the younger brother [the residences in the south] such as lCog[s-ga] ri, the mother [institution] and its branches, [i.e.] bDe-sgron, Rin[-chen] sgang and so forth.²²

[f] To the Mantradhara dKon-mchog rdo-rje was born the son Nam-mkha' lhun-grub. From [the age of] eight years onwards he performed the [acts of] approaching [and] realizing [the personal deity]. He relied on the father [together with his elder] brother and [on teachers] like Rab-'byams-pa [Byams-pa] phun-tshogs [from]

22. The teacher Rab-'byams-pa dKon-mchog bsam-grub might have been affiliated with the monastery of mNgon-dga', an influential institution of the Bo-dong-pa school, situated to the south-west of rDzong-dkar. For other Bo-dong-pa masters from mNgon-dga', who were active in Mang-yul Gung-thang, see Ehrhard (2000:14-16). Chos-rje Nam mkha' rdo-rje was a nephew of Kun-dga' gzi-brjid and thus a cousin of both Don-yod rdo-rje and dKon-mchog rdo-rje; for a full description of his life, especially in regard to making available Buddhist block prints in Mang-yul Gung-thang, see Ehrhard (2000:51-66). After receiving the teachings of the 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa school from Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan (1475-1530) in Central Tibet he proceeded to La-[l]de[bs] in the year 1527 and among his first disciples there were his relatives Don-yod rdo-rje and dKon-mchog rdo-rje. One of the teaching sessions conducted there took place at lCog[s-ga] ri, identified in the biography of Chos-rje Nam-mkha' rdo-rje as a former residence of Atiśa Dīpaṃkāraśrījñāna (980-1055); see Ehrhard (2000:58-59). The statement concerning the monasteries of the mDo-chen tradition in the south implies that the branch monasteries in [b]Tsum were under the administration of the mother institution in La-[l]de[bs].

gNas (1503-1581), the incomparable Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan (1484-1549) and Gur-ston Nam-mkha' rdo-rje [from] Rin[-chen] sgang. He founded gSang-sngags bDe-chen gling, the teachers' quarters in 'Brog; and it is furthermore known that he erected about seven vihāras [of the mDo-chen-pa tradition], including dGon-dkar Zil-gnon gling of Bral-sgang, Kun-dga' gling of mKhar-bang [and] the actual monastery of [Nyi-lhod in sKu-thang] [b] Tsum.²³

[g] Among the nine sons, which were born to him, five died due to black small-pox. There remained 'Jigs-bral, Thon-smyon, Nam[-mkha'] seng[-ge], together with rGyal-mtshan; and although up to this [time] there had existed only one teachers' quarter (i.e. 'Brog

23. For full descriptions of the lives of Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan, another Bo-dong-pa teacher associated with the monastery of mNgon-dga', and of Rab-'byams-pa Byams-pa phun-tshogs from gNas, a village to the north-east of sKyid-grong, see Ehrhard (2000: 23-50) and Ehrhard (in press c). Both of these masters were active in producing Buddhist block prints. In the biography of Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan the list of the disciples of the Bo-dong-pa teacher also contains the name of the father of Nam-mkha' lhun-grub; see dKon-mchog rgyal-dbang: *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa*, fol. 109a/6 (cog ri'i gdan sa bla ma dkon mchog rdo rje). Nam-mkha' lhun-grub himself is mentioned among the disciples of gNas Rab-'byams-pa Byams-pa phun-tshogs when the latter one transmitted in the year 1574 the treasure cycle *Bla ma dgongs pa 'dus* of Rig-'dzin Sangs-rgyas gling-pa (1340-1396); see the autobiography *mKhas grub chen po byams pa phun tshogs kyi rnam thar*, fol. 91a/3-6. I have no further information on Gur-ston Nam-mkha' rdo-rje, obviously a member of the family residing in sKu-thang [b] Tsum. Concerning the site of 'Brog, it is located in La-[l]de[bs] and known as another one of the former residences of Atiśa Dīpamkāraśrījñāna; see Ehrhard (2004:289 & 442, note 235). Among the regions, where the aforementioned three of seven vihāras were founded by Nam-mkha' lhun-grub, the one of Bral- sgang has not yet been identified. The temple of mKhar-bang was another foundation in the La-[l]de[bs] valley; see Ehrhard (2004a:96).

bla-brang), thereafter it was divided. As 'Jigs-bral and Thon-smyon, [these] two, resided in the lower teachers' quarters, and Nam[-mkha'] seng[-ge] and rGyal-mtshan, [these] two, in the upper teachers' quarters, from then onwards [their respective residences] were known as the "Upper and Lower Teachers' Quarters".

Nam-mkha' seng-ge laid newly the foundations of the Upper Teachers' Quarters, and he was a contemporary of the ruler [of mNga'-ris Gungthang] Khri bSod-nams dbang-phyug lde (1577-1627). He approached as mentors his father Nam-mkha' lhun-grub, [Tshe-dbang] bSod-nams rgyal-po, [who is] the embodiment of [Che-mchog-pa of] Byams[-pa] sprin, the reincarnation Nam-mkha' brgya-byin [and] his reincarnation, the Vidyā-dhara Yol-mo-ba bsTan-'dzin nor-bu (1598-1644), [together with] the latter's younger brother sGam-smyon Phyag-rdor nor-bu (d. 1658).²⁴

He invited the Vidyādhara Yol-mo-ba [bsTan-'dzin nor-bu] to sKyidgrong, La-ldebs, [b]Tsum and so forth, setting up [there]

24. A biographical account of the ruler Khri bSod-nams dbang-phyug lde is contained in the historiographical work of Tshe-dbang nor-bu; see the text (as in note 14), pp. 142.7-144.b, and Everding (2000:169-173). It is noted there that he relied in the earlier part of his life on the Second Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku Nam-mkha' brgya-byin and in his later years on the latter's reincarnation bsTan-'dzin nor-bu. The daughter of Khri bSod-nams dbang-phyug lde called lHa-gcig was given in a marriage alliance to the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku; for these close relations of bsTan-'dzin nor-bu with the royal family of Gung-thang, see Bogin (2006:11-12). Concerning biographical sketches of the Second and Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-skus and their contacts with members of the mDo-chen tradition, compare Ehrhard (2007a:29-36), A short note on the life of Phyag-rdor nor-bu, the younger brother of bsTan-'dzin nor-bu, is contained in a work of Brag-dkar rta- so sPrul-sku dealing with the history of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school; see Chos-kyi dbang phyug: *dPal ldan gzhung 'brug bka' brgyud gser phreng gi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*, fols. 51a/1-52a/3.

many times *sGrub chen* [rituals] for the manufacturing of medicine and [pills for seven pure] rebirths, and [thus] opening the door for the activities of a great number of great beings. His mind and the one of Yol-mo[-ba] bsTan-'dzin nor-bu mingled into one, and in an official letter he was praised [by bsTan-'dzin nor-bu] with the following address: “Mantradhara, Bodhisattva, Mahāsattva, Complete Victorious One over the armies of hypocrisy, avarice and partiality!” And in the prayer of his life, written by [his son] Nor-bu bde-chen, it is said:

Champion of the very broad view, which is like the sky, lion of eloquence, possessing the three skills of mediation, by supreme conduct bringing under your power all [beings] endowed with deeds: to the Great Vidyādhara I offer my prayers!²⁵

[h] His son, the Mantradhara Nor-bu bde-chen (b. 1617): In the *Yang gsang rdorje phur pa'i bka'i tha ram*, which had been granted as a written notice together with sacred substances, yellow scrolls

25. The invitation by Nam-mkha' seng-ge to [b]Tsum and La-[l]de[bs] is described by the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku in his autobiography; see bsTan-'dzin nor-bu: *Rang gi rtogs pa brjod pa rdo rje sgra ma'i rgyud mang*, pp. 257.5-258.5; compare the translation in Bogin (2005:240-241). The whole visit in the year 1631 must have lasted around two months as it is noted that Nam-mkha' seng-ge was able to finance two extensive *sGrub-chen* rituals, i.e. in [b]Tsum and La-[l]de[bs], during that period. The trip of bsTan-'dzin nor-bu started and ended at dKar-ye [dPal-gyi nags-khrod], the former retreat site of Ma-bdun ras-chen, located near Ri-bo dpal-'bar in sPang-zhing. Upon his return he transmitted there for three months the *Mahā gu ru sku gsum rigs bsdus*, a treasurer cycle of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal; see *ibid.*, pp. 258.5-259.1, and Bogin (2005:241). The quotation from the official letter of the Third Yol-mo-ba and the prayer written by Nor-bu bde-chen have not yet been found in their original form.

and so forth by the treasure discoverer, the powerful Heruka bDud-'dul rdo-rje (1615-1672) from rTag-brtan Rin-chen steng in sPo-bo in [lower] Khams, it is stated:

An incarnation of Nam[-mkha'i] snying[-po], near [Ri-bo] dpal-'bar [he will appear]. Having the name “Blissful One”, he will be adorned with a mole in the middle of his chest—this one, having a [spiritual] share, when he has performed this teaching as a spiritual experience, [also] the doctrine of the “Teaching of [His] Family”, it will develop without decline, and in one life-time he will [attain] happiness in the dimension of Padma[sambhava]’s mind! ²⁶

26. This prophecy concerning Nor-bu bde chen has to be seen in the context of his encounters with O-rgyan dpal-bzang (1617-1677), a native of southern Mustang in the Nepalese Himalayas, who had undertaken an arduous journey to Khams in eastern Tibet, where he became a “master of the teachings” (*bstan kyi bdag po*) of the treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin bDud-'dul rdo-rje. Before returning to his home region and founding the monastery of sKu-tshab gter-lnga near present-day Thini he stayed in Mang-yul Gung-thang and exchanged teaching transmissions with Nor-bu bde-chen; see Ehrhard (2001a:236-237). For further details on the teachings transmitted by O-rgyan dpal-bzang to Nor-bu bde-chen on different occasions, see Appendix II:A.1.a-g, A.5.a-n & F.10.a. The autobiography-cum-gsan yig of the master from Mustang contains two chapters devoted to prophecies concerning his own spiritual status as an incarnation of gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes—like Nam-mkha' snying-po counted as one of the twenty five original disciples of Padmasambhava—and the way, how he was nominated by Rig-'dzin bDud-'dul rdo-rje as a holder of his teaching lineage and the variety of sacred substances which he received on that occasion; see O-rgyan dpal-bzang: *Rigs brgya dbang po'dren mchog slob dpon dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa*, fols. 308a/1-309a/1 (*gu ru rin po che'i lung nas mngags mdor bsdus kyi skor*), and fols. 309a/2-311a/4 (*rig 'dzin chen po bdud 'dul gling pas [sic] mnga' gsol rgyal tshab tu che ston mdzad tshul*). The first chapter quotes from the text rDo rje phur pa'i bka'i tha ram and the second chapter gives gSang-sngags rTag-brtan gling as the place, where the nomination occurred. The prophecy mentioning Nor-bu bde-chen is quoted by O-rgyan dpal-bzang at the end of the list of teachings which he received from Nor-bu bde-chen during their first encounter in the year 1661; see *ibid.*,

So it is known that he was someone prophesied [by Padmasambhava] as an incarnation of Nam[-mkha'i] snying[-po], and was having also a mother spot in the centre of his body. At a tender age he came into the presence of the Vidyādhara Yol-mo-ba bsTan-'dzin nor-bu in dKar-ye [dPal-gyi nags-khrod]; a lock of hair was offered [to the teacher], and he received the name Nor-bu bde-chen. [bsTan-'dzin nor-bu] cared for him with great affection, and he listened on countless occasions to the nectar of empowerments, [reading-] authorizations and instructions. At one time [the teacher] said: "For you, I will exhibit a show today!" Having spread out on the surface of a wall the masquerade garment of Rāhu, in the same way as the body itself of the Great Yol-mo-ba performed the imposing [and] fearless postures of the ritual dance, the masquerade garment, too, showed the corresponding movements and appearances: such a magic show was seen by him.²⁷

As he had heard from his father, the Lord Nam-mkha' seng-ge, the complete doctrine of the mDo-chen-pa [tradition] and from the Siddha of [Ri-bo] dpal-'bar [called] dPag-bsam ye-she (1598-1667) the profound guidances of the Mahāmudrā [doctrine],

fol. 271a/5-6 (*rdo rje phur pa'i bka' gsang tha ram las / lung gis mngag pa nam snying sprul pa ni / nor bu'i ming can dpal nye 'byung*).

27. dKar-ye [dPal-gyi nags-khrod], also known as dKar-ye dNgos-grub mtsho-gling in later times, was the favourite residence of the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku in the Mang-yul region and also the place, where his previous incarnations had stayed; see Ehrhard (2007a:44, note 51). The "Thob yig of the 17th Century" mentions the different transmissions that Nor-bu bde-chen had received from bsTan-'dzin nor-bu at that particular site in the year 1633 at the age of sixteen years; see Appendix II:A.3.a-h. It was also at dKar-ye [dPal-gyi nags-khrod] that the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku had completed his memoirs one year earlier, in 1632; see the text of bsTan-'dzin nor-bu (as in note 25), p. 267.6-7, and Bogin (2005:247).

the own face of the primordial Reality as-it-is became manifest. Further, he relied on many authoritative great beings of the new [and] old [schools], including rNgog-ston Karma blo-bzang [from] Brag-dkar [rta-so], [his successor] Ras-chen Karma chos-'phel, rGyal-thang Zil-gnon rdo-rje, the one from Ling-ba [Brag-dmar rdzong], Kun-bzang klong-yangs (1644-1699), the one from Mustang, sGam-smyon Phyag-rdor nor-bu and so forth. From the treasure discoverer Gar-dbang rdo-rje (1640-1685) he heard the complete ripening [empowerments] and liberating [instructions] of the latter's own treasurers, and he became his Dharma son, the minds [of the master and the disciple] having melted into one, by establishing a [week long] *sGrub chen* [ritual] in Kun-dga' gling at mKhar-bang and so forth.²⁸

28. Three transmissions of teachings obtained by the father Nam-mkha' seng-ge are to be found in the "Thob yig of the 17th Century", the first two occurring at lCogs-[ga] ri in the year 1647 and at Chos-rdzong in the year 1633; see Appendix II:A.4.a-u & F.8.a-e. A third one concerned the transmission of a Mahāmudrā lineage of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school; see Appendix II:F.2.a. The biography of the 'Brug-pa yogin dPag-bsam ye-shes, known for his prolonged residence at the sacred mountain Ri-bo dpal-'bar, contains information on meetings with Nam-mkha' seng-ge and the latter's son Nor-bu bde-chen; see Mi-pham dGe-legs rnam-par rgyal-ba: *rJe btsun grub pa'i dbang phyug dam pa dpag bsam ye shes zhabs kyi rnam par thar pa*, fol. 46a/2-b/7. According to this source Nor-bu bde-chen had received the Mahāmudrā teachings according to the 'Brug-pa school after the death of his father; dPag-bsam ye-shes was travelling to La-[l]de[bs] afterwards, where he gave instructions on the "transference [of consciousness]" (*pho ba*) to many people, including Nam-mkha' seng-ge's brother Bla-ma 'jigs-bral. The teachers rNgog-ston Karma blo-bzang and Ras-chen Karma chos-dpal are known as the fifth and the sixth abbot of the monastery at the Mi-la ras-pa site Brag-dkar rta-so; see Ehrhard (2004a:264). Concerning further activities of rNgog-ston Karma blo-bzang in spreading teachings of the Karma bKa'-brgyud-pa school in the Nepalese Himalayas, compare Ehrhard (2001b:103-106). rGyal-thang Zil-gnon rdo-rje was resident teacher at Ling-ba [Brag-dmar rdzong], another Mi-la ras-pa site in Mang-yul Gung-thang, and the teachings he transmitted to Nor-bu bde-chen are known from the "Thob yig of the

Because of the wide expanse of his analysing power and his great knowledge also in the common sciences, including the [systems of the] “white calculation” [and] the “black calculation”, the svarodaya [astrology] and so forth, he composed [works] like the *Khro thung gi las byang nag po ’gro shes*. When this [work] *Khro thung gi las byang* had also been inspected in the presence of the great treasure[-discoverer], the Dharmarāja (i.e. Rig-’dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa [1646-1714]), the latter one exhaled [the statement]: “A well-done arrangement of the ritual acts!”²⁹

17th Century”; see Appendix II:D.2.a-j, F.1.a & F.4.a. Concerning the role of rGyal-thang Zil-gnon rdorje as a master of the teachings of Rig-’dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje, see Ehrhard (1994:64-65). The biography of this treasure-discoverer, who was also known as mNga’-ris gter-ston and recovered his findings in the regions of sKyid-grong, [s] Ku-thang and La-[l]de[bs], contains further information on the encounters with Nor-bu bde-chen, including the invitation to La-[l]de[bs] and the mentioned sGrub chen ritual; see rGyal-dbang seng-ge: sPrul sku rig ’dzin chen po gar dbang rdo rje’i snying po’i rnam par thar pa, pp. 56.1-57.3. The different teachings received by Nor-bu bde-chen from Rig-’dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje are also contained in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century”; see Appendix II:D.4.a, D.5.a & F.9a-b. No records have survived concerning the transmissions of teachings from Phyag-rdor nor-bu, the younger brother of the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku. The transmissions obtained from Kun-bzang klong-yangs are once again recorded in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century”; see Appendix II:A.2.a-s & F.7.a-c (reversed order!). This latter teacher was born in the Jumla region of the Nepalese Himalayas and is known as the main disciple of O-rgyan dpal-bzang and his successor as abbot of the monastery sKu-tshab gter-lnga. He was present when his teacher stayed in La-[l]de[bs] in the year 1666 and was invited later by Nor-bu bde-chen to give teachings there in person in the year 1689; see Kun-bzang klong-yangs: *rTogs brjod mu tig gi mchun bu (= chun po) zhes pa’i gtam*, fols. 16a/4-b/2, and 64a/1-65a/6.

29. Up to now the work *Khro thung gi las byang* or any other of the writings of Nor-bubde-chen have not become available to me. Contact between the religious authorities of the rNying-ma-pa school at sMin-grol gling and teachers from the borderlands of south-western Tibet were well established during the period of the 17th century. This can be seen, for example, in the case of Kun-bzang klong-yangs, who stayed at sMin-grol gling in Central Tibet for the greater part of the year 1688,

On the journey, where a lady from the western part of sKyid-grong was welcomed as his spouse, the bride was removed from her horse by a teacher of the 'Dzam-gling-pa family and taken away. When due to this [event] great disputes [and] hostilities occurred to and fro, this mighty Vidyāmantradhara performed the ritual acts [aimed at the subduing] of the horse [and] g.yag circle (?), separating the multitude of ritual acts of the protector (i.e. Mahākāla), and within seven days, due to an internal dispute between the other side [and] the party of the bride, [everyone] dispersed. And also afterwards, when he was staying in closed retreat in lCogs[-ga] ri for the ritual acts aimed at the subduing of the *abhicāra* [rites], after about seven days the father, the Dharma lord Nam-mkha' seng-ge, arrived and said from the door to the cave: "What are you doing? You are not [eventually] performing something like the ritual acts of applying the evil?" And when from within the retreat [site] it was requested: "Please do not enter now the interior [of the cave]!", the father broke the door open and entered [the cave]. [The son] was sitting there after having arranged the maṇḍala of the violent *abhicāra* [rites], and had [it just] stirred up by the kicking of his feet. Having scolded him [with these words]: "If you perform from now on such ritual acts, you and me, we [two], have no pledge [between us]!", [but even] before that [event] the signs [of the successful practice]

immediately before his journey to La-[l]de[bs] upon the invitation by Nor-bu bde-chen; see his autobiography (as in note 28), fols. 57b/3-64a/1. The name of Glo-bo bla-ma Kun-bzang klong-yangs turns up several times for that very year in the biography of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa; see Ngag-dbang Chos-dpal rgya-mtsho: *gTer chen chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar*, pp. 314 ff. For a member of the mDo-bo-che family, who stayed at sMin-grol gling and was one of the teachers of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa, compare note 39.

of the ritual acts aimed at subduing had [already] manifested completely, and not long afterwards the family lineage of the other side had been cut off.

On the occasion when [Nor-bu bde-chen] was residing in the upper teachers' quarters of 'Brog, although a violent meteoric iron of someone else's exorcizing [power] fell down from above, it did not cause any harm; the traces of it hitting a boulder in the vicinity are clearly manifest to the present day.

His hearing [of the Buddhist doctrine] was extremely wide and it also contained the cycle [*Kun bzang thugs gter 'khor 'das rang grol* of [the treasure-discoverer] [Bya] mang-po Byang-chub gling-pa (14th cent.). When from the central region of Tibet the request was made in the form of the words of rDo-rje brag Rig-'dzin Padma 'phrin-las (1640-1718) and the great treasure[-discoverer] from sMin[-grol] gling, the Dharmarāja (i.e. Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa), that he should come [there], he nevertheless replied that he was not able to go.³⁰

30. For [Bya] mang-po Byang-chub gling-pa and his treasure cycle *Kun bzang thugs gter 'khor 'das rang grol* which was recovered near the lake lHa-mtsho srin-mtsho in Gung-thang, see Ehrhard (2004a:97 & 110-111, note 87). One of the transmissions of the findings of Byang-chub gling-pa reaching the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma (1617-1682) passed through Nub-dgon Chos-rgyal Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan and the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku and his younger brother Phyag-rdor nor-bu; see the text of Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (as in the Introduction, note 13), vol. 3, pp. 174.5-175.2. The transmission held by Nor-bu bde-chen was also the one of the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku, and he had received it from the latter's disciple sNgags-'chang 'Chi-med rgya-mtsho; see Appendix II:F.6.a.

When he married a lady from [the family of] dPon-po Gong from [the village of] Grva, besides three daughters no son was born. As [afterwards] the auspicious circumstances were created [by him] that a son was begotten with a mudrā from [the family] with the name sPas-skyā [from the village of] Nyi-lhod [in] [b]Tsum, the son bDud-'dul rdo-rje (1648-1672) was born. He is known as a reincarnation of the Mantradhara Nam-mkha' kun-bzang, the son of the emanation from Byams[-pa] sprin (i.e. Tshe-dbang bSod-nams rgyal-po); he passed away at the age of twenty-five years. To his spouse, to one ḍākinī endowed with the [special] marks, a lady of the Jo-bo family from [l]Cang in sKyid-grong whom he had married, were born three sons, [who were] brothers. bsTan-'dzin, the eldest, bsTan-pa'i nor-bu, the middle one, [and] rGyal-sras seng-ge (d. 1752), the youngest; [the latter one] was from an early age on, beginning with reading [and] writing, cared for by his grandfather (i.e. Nor-bu bde-chen) after having been made the representative of his father.³¹ The daughter of Nor-bu bde-chen, called bSod-nams rgyal-mo, became the spouse of rGyal-tshab seng-ge (d. 1672) of [the family] 'Dzam-gling-pa [from the village of] Grva [and] the son 'Dzam-gling-pa Blo-gros chos-'phel (1665-

31. A short sketch of the life of Nam-mkha' kun-bzang, a second-generation descendant of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa, is contained in the genealogical record of that family written by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku; see the text of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 21), pp. 14.2-15.3, and Ehrhard (2007a:41, note 44). It is interesting to see how the spiritual connection between the two families, i.e. the descendants of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa and those of Che-mchog-pa, was further deepened by the process of recognizing reincarnations in the opposite family (the first case being Tshe-dbang bSod nams rgyal-po, the father of Nam-mkha' kun-bzang). The "Thob yig of the 17th Century" notes the teachings received by Nor-bu bde-chen from Nam-mkha' kun-bzang; see Appendix II:D.3.a.

1728) was born. From an early age he studied in La-ldebs in the presence of his grandfather, and the way how he listened [to the teachings] [and] reflected [on them] is clear in his biography.³²

In the succession of teachers of the mDo-chen [bKa'-brgyud-pa] it appears that down to Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis this one (i.e. Nor-bu bde-chen) was the most learned one. From his own prayer, a conversation called “Despising Song of Pride”:

[He is] really the mighty Avalokiteśvara of virtuous deeds, born as the son of Nam-mkha' seng-ge [and] cared for [by him]. [He] who opens the doors to the profound treasures of ripening [empowerments and] liberating [instructions]

32. Initial information on the history of the 'Jam[-dpal] gling[-pa] family from the village of Grva, halfway between sKyid-grong and La-[l]de[bs], is given in Ehrhard (1997a:257, note 41) and Ehrhard (2000:65, note 65). The name of the first monastery under the administration of that family was 'Jam-dpal [bDe-chen] and had been given by Sa-skyia Pandita Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan; up to the 16th century the family followed the teachings of the Sa-skyia-pa school and it was only with the activities of 'Ba'-ra-ba Chos-rje Nam-mkha' rdo-rje that the teachings of the 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa school became prominent; compare also Vitali (2007:287-292) for the early history of the 'Jam-gling-pa (spelled 'Dzam-gling-pa throughout the text under study). A biography of Blo-gros chos-'phel is available, which describes the early studies with the father and upon the latter's death with the grandfather Nor-bu bde-chen; see Ngag-dbang ye-shes: *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa rdo rje 'chang blo gros chos 'phel gyi rnam thar*, pp. 240.6-241.3 (*dgung lo bdun pa [= 1671] la yab rje dam pa nyid kyi drung du bcom ldan 'das padma dbang bzhi / rta po yongs rdzogs kyi lcags lung rnam rdzogs par gsan / gzhan yang kun rig rgyud don / phyag rdor 'byung 'dul / yab mes kyi chos skyong phyag bzhi pa rnam kyi dbang rjes gang soggsan / de'i phyi lo [= 1672] yang rje dam pa de nyid dag zhing du gsheg pas / lan sde [sic] chos rdzong lcags ri sogs su mes po sngags 'chang dam pa nor bu bde chen gyi zhabs drung du klog yig sogs bslab sbyangs mdzad cing gsang sngags rnying lugs kyi dbang ches kyang zab cing rgya che ba mang du gsan*).

of the new [and] old [schools]: to the one, whose continuing deeds had been cleansed in earlier [lives] I offer my prayers!

Having offered the lock of hair to the Jina Yol-mo-ba [bsTan-'dzin nor-bu], the second Padmasambhava, [his] name was also given by the teacher. He conferred the profound auspicious connection of vast insight [upon his disciple]: to the one, who is regarded as the main one among [bsTan-'dzin nor-bu's] spiritual sons, I offer my prayers!

After he had relied upon twenty learned [and] realized ones, the rain of blessing of [their] bodies [and] teachings of their speech poured down [upon him]. Cared for with the love of [their] minds he saw the own face of the Dharmakāya: to the one, who is skilled in unbiased visions I offer my prayers!

When he had performed the approaching [and] the accomplishing of the peaceful [and] wrathful deities, he attained to some extent the warmth of the [deities'] blessings. [Afterwards] he became one with the degree of confidence of intimidating the evil ghosts: to the one, who has reached the limit of tantric activities, I offer my prayers!

When he saw the assemblage of beings tormented by diseases [and] suffering, through the power of [his] compassion everyone [achieved] happiness for himself. He possesses the discipline of being able to dismiss [everything] not being elevated: to the one, who has entered the behaviour of the son of a Jina, I offer my prayers!

Because the lotus of his insight [and] understanding had been opened, the courage of having understood properly [all] the innumerable intentions of the sūtras [and] śāstras became manifest: to the one possessing the riches of having heard and reflected [the Buddhist doctrine], I offer my prayers!

Because the doors of the ripening [and] liberating teachings of the secret mantras had been opened, [there] manifested [themselves] the good omens that the blessings of the spiritual succession had moved on. He [is the one], who has planted the seed of liberation into all the fortunate ones: to you, where [every] connection established has meaning, I offer my prayers!

So it was said and in the way it was assured by his mouth established as true reality. The final deed [of Nor-bu bde-chen] was the passing into [the state of] peace in the highest storey of Kun-dga' gling at mKhar-bang [in La-ldebs]. It is known that also [the acts of] purifying his deceased body, the erection of the outer reliquary shrine and so forth, were performed by 'Dzam-gling-pa Blo-gros chos-'phel.³³

33. There are no details concerning the death or the erection of the reliquary shrine of Nor-bu bde-chen in the biography of Blo-gros chos-'phel. The only further reference to the grandfather is an invitation to La-[l]de[bs] after the first journey of Blo-gros chos-'phel to Central Tibet, where he had studied the teachings of the 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-bryud-pa school and had met Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa at sMin-grol gling; see the work of Ngag-dbang ye-shes (as in note 32), pp. 257.6-258.2 (*mes po sngags 'chang norbu bde chen rang gnas su spyan drangs te snga 'gyur bka' ma sgyu 'phrul zhi khro / dong sprug dang bcas pa'i dbang lung yongs su rdzogs pa dang / gzhan*

[i] bsTan 'dzin, the [eldest] son of bDud-'dul [rdo-rje] stayed in the teachers' quarters of Nyi-lhod in [s]Ku-thang [b]Tsum and there were not born any sons to him. bsTan-pa'i nor-bu protected in turns [the other monasteries] in Lan-lde[bs] and [b]Tsum, [these] two; rGyal-sras [seng-ge] remained in the teachers' quarters at 'Brog. This [latter] one had heard completely the doctrines of the forefathers from his grandfather and from bsTan-pa'i nor-bu, and after arriving in dBus-gtsang he met in O-rgyan sMin-grol gling the All Knowing [Lo-chen] Dharmasrī (1654-1717), uncle [and] nephews, and heard completely the cycle of the New Treasures, and from the Great One from Nub-dgon, Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dBang[-gi] rgyal[-po] (1657-1731), the [cycle] of the empowerment of the [*dGongs pa 'dus pa'i*] *mdo*.³⁴

yang pad gling drag po dmar chen / nyang gi phyag bzhi sogs mang du gsan / de rjes sngags 'chang dam pa nyid la smin gling gter gsar skor phal che ba'i dbang lung 'bul bar mdzad). The next event mentioned in the biography is the visit of Kun-bzang klong-yangs to La-[l]de[bs] in the year 1689, on which occasion Blo-gros chos-'phel also exchanged teachings with him; see *ibid.*, p. 258.2-5, and note 29.

34. The transmissions which rGyal-sras seng-ge had received from his brother bsTan-pa'i nor-bu, from Lo-chen Dharmasrī, from the latter's nephews, Padma 'Gyur-med rgya-mtsho (1686-1718) and Zhabs-drung Yid-bzhin legs-grub (1698-1718), and from Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dBang-gi rgyal-po (1657-1731) are all to be found in the "Thob yig of the 17th Century"; see Appendix II:B.1.a-f, B.2.a-d, B.3.a-g, B.4.a-e, B.5.a-d & G.2. The latter master was affiliated with the monastery of Nub-dgon and propagated mainly teachings of the Byang-gter tradition as received by his teacher, the second rDo-rje brag Rig-'dzin Padma 'phrin-las (1640-1718). A biography of Kham[s]-lung-pa is available, which describes the transmission of the *mDo-dbang* cycle; see Ngag-dbang ye-shes: *dPal ldan bla ma kham lung pa chen po padma rig 'dzin dbang rgyal gyi rnam thar*, fols. 34b/3-35a/1. This happened in the village of Grva and next to bsTan-pa'i nor-bu and rGyal-sras seng-ge their half-brother, 'Dzam gling-pa Blo-gros chos-'phel, was also present on that occasion. On the basis of the latter's biography we can date this event to the year 1708; see the text of Ngag-dbang ye-shes (as in note 32), p. 267.2-4.

Having been accepted also as a mentor by the Vidyādhara, the Great One from Kah-thog, Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698-1755), [the latter one] heard [from him] the complete *sGyu 'phrul* [*zhi khro*] cycle and also the stream of guidances of the Six White Ones, including the Mahāmudrā [doctrine] transmitted from Ma-bdun-pa onwards. In an official letter [of Tshe-dbang nor-bu] the prophecy is made: “The path of his life is great, with forty-six, [forty-]nine or fifty [years]. Liberated from that [life] he remains alive for [another] while. Having moved on [to the next live] he [then stays] in other places [of rebirth] for the time being, after obtaining [finally again] the human body of leisure [and] freedom, he is taken to the Vajrayāna [doctrine] after being seized by the blessing of Nam-mkha'i snying-po.”³⁵

[j] To this great Mantradhara were born the sons Padma rgya-mtsho, Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal (1714-1782), dPal-mgon

35. The biography of Kah-thog Rig-'dzin provides further information concerning the teachings of the mDo-chen tradition given by rGyal-sras seng-ge at Za-'og phug in Ra-la, a Mi-la ras-pa site in Gung-thang; this took place in the year 1748. See Chos-kyi dbang-phyug: *dPal rig 'dzin chen po rdo rje tshe dbang nor bu'i zhabs kyi rnam par thar pa*, pp. 216.1-217.2. In his detailed account of the different Mahāmudrā lineages Kah-thog Rig-'dzin also mentions the particular one going back to Ma-bdun ras-chen, who had originally obtained it from both his teachers Lo-ras-pa dBang-phyug brtson-'grus and rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje; for this doctrine, known as the Six White Ones, and for how it was passed on by the Ma-bdun tradition, see Tshe-dbang nor-bu: *Lha rje mnyam med zla 'od gzhon nu'i bka' brgyud phyag chen gdams pa ji tsum nod pa'i rtogs brjod legs bshad rin chen 'byung khungs*, p. 241.1-6. The quoted prophecy concerning rGyal-sras seng-ge is contained in the collection of official letters issued by Kah-thog Rig-'dzin; see his *Chab shog skor*, p. 746.5-6. For the complete missive, see *ibid.*, pp. 746.3-747.1. In the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” are also noted two transmissions of teachings that rGyal-sras seng-ge had received from Kah-thog Rig-'dzin; see Appendix II:E.1.a & E.2.d.

[and] Chos-dbang, [these]four. The eldest one, Padma rgya-mtsho, remained in [b]Tsum and the sons sNgags-'chang O-rgyan and Blo-bzang nyi-ma, the reincarnation of Blo-bzang chos-grags, the great upādhyāya [from] Chos-mkhar [phug], were born [to him]. The Mantradhara [Rig-'dzin] 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal heard completely the doctrine of the forefathers, [the family's] own system, from the father (i.e. rGyal-sras seng-ge) and the victorious son (i.e. Padma rgya-mtsho). The name of offering a lock of hair to the great Vidyādhara (i.e. Tshe-dbang nor-bu) was given as Tshe-dbang bsTan-'dzin grub-pa'i rdorje[and] he listened in manifold ways to the nectar of the ripening [initiations and] liberating [instructions of the latter's teachings].³⁶

He heard completely the full reading[-authorization] of the precious Collected Tantras of the Early Translation Period at [the monastery] of dPal-mo chos-sdings from Ngag-dbang lHun-grub

36. The list of teachings which Padma rgya-mtsho had received from his father rGyal-sras seng-ge and other masters is available in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century”; see Appendix II:C.1a-e, C.2.a, C.3.a-c & C.4.a-i. One of his sons was regarded as an incarnation of Blo-bzang chos-grags, a master associated with Chos-mkhar phug, located in Shal-smad to the south of rDzong-dkar. This site is known as the residence of 'Jam-dbyangs bKra-shis rgya-mtsho (1641-1718), a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho; concerning bKra-shis rgya-mtsho, a native of Mang-yul Gung-thang, and his activities in his home region, see Ehrhard (2004a:265, 377, note 110 & 433, note 217). Blo-bzang chos-grags was a nephew and disciple of 'Jam-dbyangs bKra-shis rgya-mtsho and left a biography of his uncle; see rJe btsun bla ma 'jam dbyangs bkra shis rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa, fols. 23b/5-24b/3. 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal was in the company of his father rGyal-sras seng-ge when they first met Kah-thog Rig-'dzin in La-[l]de[bs] in the year 1727; see the text of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 35), p. 124.6 (mdo bo'i che'i sngags 'chang rgyal sras seng ge yab sras sogs). A final meeting occurred in the year 1752 during the ceremonies following the passing of rGyal-sras seng-ge; compare *ibid.*, p. 266.1-3.

grags-pa, the observer of vows from lHo-brag, and from rJe 'Ba'-ra-ba Ngag-dbang ye-shes (1700-1760) the great empowerment of the [*dGongs pa*] '*dus pa*'[*i*] *mdo*; furthermore he relied on many noble kalyānamitras. From Ngor Kun-dga' lhun-grub (d.1773) he heard the ripening [initiations and] liberating [instructions] of the *Zab tig* [*chos dbyings rang gsal*] of [Rig-'dzin] Gar-dbang rdo-rje and offered in return the initiation [and] reading [authorization] of the *dPal mgon maning* [cycle] of [Rig-'dzin] 'Ja'-tshon snying-po (1585-1656) and so forth.³⁷

37. For the circumstances surrounding the reading[-authorization] of the *rNying ma rgyud'bum* at dPal-mo chos-sdings in Gung-thang and the presence of 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal on that occasion, see Ehrhard (1997b:256-257). 'Ba'-ra-ba Ngag-dbang ye-shes was a son of 'Dzam-gling-pa Blo-gros chos-'phel, who had received the vows as a Buddhist novice from 'Jam-dbyangs bKra-shis rgya-mtsho in Chos-mkhar phug and had later also studied with Blo-bzang chos-grags. Among his further teachers one finds Kah-thog Rig 'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu and Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dBang-gi rgyal-po. His extensive biography contains further details of a transmission of the *mDo-dbang* cycle and it is noted that Ngag-dbang ye-shes was active in this regard in order to fulfil the wishes of the latter teacher; see Chos-dbyings rdo-rje: *rJe btsun bla ma dam pa rdo rje 'chang kun mkhyen o rgyan ngag dbang ye shes dpal bzang po'i rnam thar*, pp. 551.2-3. Concerning Ngor Kun-dga' lhun-grub it is known that he belonged to the Ngor-pa tradition of the Sa-skyapa school, had founded a monastery near the sacred lake Mānasārovar in the Kailāsa region and had later settled in the La-[[de[bs] valley; see Ehrhard (2003:97-98). According to the biography of his disciple O-rgyan chos-'phel (b. 1755) Ngor Kun-dga' lhun-grub was in particular holding the teaching lineage of the treasures of Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje through the master O-rgyan bstan-'dzin (1657-1737) from the Dol-po region; see O-rgyan chos-'phel: *O rgyan chos 'phel gyi nyi tsheskye ba 'di'i rtogs brjod phyi rnam thar*, fol. 152b/1-2 (*gter bton gar dbang rdo rje / gter slob g.yu bkra [= sgra] sprul pa o rgyan bstan 'dzin / yang slob padma 'gro don / snying slob bdag gi rtso ba'i bla ma ngag dbang kun dga' lhun grub*). A sketch of the spiritual career of O-rgyan bstan-'dzin and his activities in the Nepalese Himalayas is provided by Schaeffer (2004:23-26).

To his son, bearing the name “Noble Nātha” (i.e. Tshe-dbang ’Chi-med mgon-po [1755-1807]) he offered the reading[-authorization] of the complete Old Tantras and earlier [and] later he obviously transmitted about four times the complete empowerments [and] reading authorizations of the *sGyu ’phrul [zhi khro]* [to him]. Also disciples manifested in manifold ways, including the noble mGong-nang-pa (i.e. Rig-’dzin ’Phrin las bdud-’joms [1726-1789]), [Blo-bzang nyi-ma], the reincarnation [from] Chos-mkhar [phug], [and] the brothers, [who were] the sons of the family of the Lord dPal-lding-pa (i.e. ’Gyur-med ’Phrin-las bstan-’dzin). Also myself, at the age of seven (i.e. in 1781) I received the empowerment and reading[-authorization] of some volumes of the Collected Tantras and the *dPal mgon legs ldan* [cycle]. He established the teachers’ quarters of Chos-rdzong and the teachers’ quarters of Chos-dkar gling [in] sMu-lug, together with the assembly hall. At sixty-nine years [of age] he passed away into the realm of final peace, accompanied by astonishing visions.

His younger brother, dPal-mgon, became learned as a medical expert and it is said that he had the sign of a *vīra*, one white birthmark, just the size of a pea, at the sphere of his forehead. This one passed away in his forty seventh year. The youngest one [of the sons of rGyal-sras seng-ge], Chos-dbang [by name], went at the beginning as a bridegroom to Byams[-pa]sprin; later, as [the situation there was] not adequate, he returned back to his own place and stayed together with his brothers. [He possessed] the eye of wisdom and went together with the noble dPal-lding-pa (i.e. ’Gyur-med ’Phrin-las bstan-’dzin) to dBus-gtsang on pilgrimage.

It is known that after his passing away there appeared in close succession two very distinct reincarnations.³⁸

[k] To Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal were born the sons Tshe-dbang Legs-grub bzang-po, Tshe-dbang bDe-chen bzang-po [and] Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po, [these] three brothers

[l] To the sons of the above-mentioned Gur-ston Nam-mkha' lhun-grub, [namely] 'Jigs-bral and Thod-smyon, [these] two, was born the son dKon-mchog lhun-grub. And also he heard from the Mantradhara Nor-bu bde-chen many initiations and reading[-authorizations], including the cycle of the doctrine of the forefathers and so forth; it is said that in the end there was a minor dispute [between the two branches of the family]. Having gone to dBus-gtsang he heard at sMin-grol gling in the presence of the great treasure[-discoverer] (i.e. Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa) a great amount of profound teachings, and it is clear from his biography

38. The contribution of 'Chi-med mgon-po, the son of 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal, in spreading the tradition of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* included also—together with 'Gyur-med 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin—the production of a manuscript edition of the collected tantras, which was kept at the upper and lower teachers' quarters in La-[l]de[bs]. The reading[-authorization] that Chos-kyi dbang-phyug received at mChod-rten nag-po near Brag-dkar rta-so in the year 1781 was the one passing through Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms, another disciple of 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal. Concerning these details on the spread of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* in Mang-yul, see Ehrhard (1997b:258-259); compare Ehrhard (2007a:42-45) for data on Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms. The teachers' quarters Chos-rdzong and Chos-dkar gling, erected by Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal in the La-[l]de[bs] valley, were later maintained by his son Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po; see notes 47 & 48. No further information is available on the other two sons of rGyal-sras seng-ge; concerning 'Gyur-med 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin, the master also known as dPal-lding-pa, compare also note 42.

that he also offered some reading[-authorizations] in return, including the *sGyu 'phrul rdo rje'i las rim* and so forth.³⁹

[m] To dKon-mchog lhun-grub were born the sons Gar-dbang, Chos-dbang [and] 'Chi-med phun-tshogs, [these] three. The two elder ones protected the teachers' quarters [in bTsum], and the youngest one touched the feet of many learned [and] realized ones, including sTag-rtse [sKu-skye-]ba [Mipham Phun-tshogs shes-rab (1654-1715)]; he was deeply learned in white [and] black astrology. Having arrived in Central Tibet he offered the lock of hair in sMin[-grol] gling in the presence of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa [and] was given the name 'Gyur-med gSang-sngags bstan-'dzin. He was cared for by the great treasure-discoverer, father [and] sons, and uncle [and] nephews, including the younger brother [Dharmaśrī], the great upādhyāya [and] translator; and he listened to many ripening [initiations] [and] liberating instructions, principally of the cycles of the new treasurers [of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa]. He was given personal sermons, fully seized by [the latter's] compassion, and [also] many blessed sacred items.⁴⁰

39. The biography of dKon-mchog lhun-grub has not surfaced until now. But details on the transmission of teachings by dKon-mchog lhun-grub in the year 1679 are contained in the biography of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa; see the work of Ngag-dbang Chos- dpal rgya-mtsho (as in note 29), p. 198.3-4 (*mdo bo che ba dkon mchog lhun grub la sgyu 'phrul phra mo skor gyi lung 'ga' re bcas gsan*). His name can also be found among a list of teachers of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa. They are known as “the twenty-five kalyānamitras, who had obtained different kinds of profound teachings and were widely skilled in visionary teachings;” see *ibid.*, pp. 327.5-328.3 (*zab chos sna tshogs thob cing dag snang rgya cher sbyangs pa'i bshes gnyen nyi shu rtsa lnga*).

40. sTag-rtse sKu-skye Mi-pham Phun-tshogs shes-rab had been active in the Mustang region of the Nepalese Himalayas and was a disciple of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-

After returning to his home region, in the latter part of his life he stayed for his practice exclusively at the hermitage of dPal-lding. He ripened the essential points of the spiritual practice of the two stages and the fully complete three activities of approaching [and] realizing many personal deities, including *gShin rje dregs 'joms* [and] *bDe gshegs kun 'dus* of [the cycles of] the teacher [Padmasambhava], the [Great] Perfection [and] the [Great] Compassionate One, [these] three, of the New Treasures. A few [times] he produced also prints of some chapters of the *bDe gshegs kun 'dus and the gSol' debz le'u bdun ma*. Also his protecting the benefit of others, [i.e.] the disciples, manifested [itself] in manifold ways, including the hearing of the ripening [empowerments and] liberating [instructions] of the complete cycle of the New Treasures by Grub-mchog Ye-shes chos-grags (1705-1772) from Brag-dkar [rta-so] and my own teacher, the great Vidyādhara mGon-gnang-pa (i.e. Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms).

His disciple in the science of astrology [was] sTobs-ldan [from] A-ya [in]Grva. It is obvious that from the latter's [disciple] known as mGon-po, the learned one from [the village of] sPang-zhing,

brguyd-pa masters sNyan-grags dpal-bzang (1617-1680) and the famous yogin Rang-rig ras-pa (d. 1683); see Ehrhard (2002:148-149, note 3) and Ehrhard (2003:100). According to the "Thob yig of the 17th Century" mDo-chen-pa rGyal-sras seng-ge had also received a Mahāmudrā transmission from sTag-rtse sKu-skye Mi-pham Phun-tshogs shes-rab; see Appendix II: G.1. 'Gyur-med gSang-sngags bstan-'dzin is listed as a link between Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms and Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa in the transmission of the latter's treasure cycle *rDor sems thugs sgrub* in the Sherpa region of eastern Nepal; see Ehrhard (1993:93).

the tradition of the science of astrology [known as] the Phug[-pa] system gradually spread in this region [of Mang-yul Gung-thang].⁴¹

[n] The sons of Gar-dbang [and] Chos-dbang, [these] two, were born [as] dPal bzang-po, 'Byung-gnas [and] the youngest one, Nor-bu don-grub, [these] three. The eldest one had [the ability of] the wide eye of analysing the two glorious systems (i.e. the worldly and the religious doctrine) and the youngest one protected the teachers' quarters [at bTsum]. The middle one offered the lock of hair to Kham[s]-lung-pa gSang-sngags bstan-'dzin [and] was given the name 'Gyur-med 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin. [From him] he heard scattered [teachings], including the *Thugs sgrub rnam gsum* [cycle] of the Northern Treasures, from Ngor Kun-dga' lhun-grub [the cycles] *Zab tig* [*chos dbyings rang gsal*] and *dKon mchog spyi 'dus* and so forth, from rNam-grol rdo-rje, the one from 'Bras[-mo] ljongs, (i.e. Sikkim), the New Treasures [of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa], [and] from Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal the complete stream of the doctrine of the forefathers, including the *sGyu'phrul* cycle and so forth.

41. The master Grub-mchog Ye-shes chos-grags, a native of southern Mustang and resident teacher at Brag-dkar rta-so, was the previous incarnation of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku Chos-kyi dbang-phyug; see Ehrhard (2004a:90, note 55). A short note on 'Gyur-med gSang-sngags bstan-'dzin, also known as O-rgyan gSang-sngags bstan-'dzin, as a teacher of Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms is contained in the latter's biography; see Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po: *Rig 'dzin chen po karma bdud 'joms kyi rnam par thar pa*, pp. 40.6-41.1, and Ehrhard (2007a:44). A collection of astrological texts of the Phug-pa system as spread in Mang-yul Gung-thang is available; see different authors: "Lesser Known Tibetan Astrological Texts of the Phug-pa Tradition." For the temple of the Himalayan territorial priests known as A-ya in Grva and the statement that they followed the teaching tradition of sMin-grol gling, compare Ramble (2007:708-709).

Although there had occurred before the dispute between the Mantradhara Nor-bu bde-chen [and] dKon-mchog lhun-grub, [these] two, master [and] disciple, this one (i.e. 'Gyur-med 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin) purified the dispute by convening confession, and from then on there was no dispute [between the two branches of the family and the situation] cleared up. As [the monastery] called dPal-ldan sding, founded earlier by the incomparable Chos-rje ston-pa, had become in the course of time something like being [completely] empty, he renovated [it] and newly established the tradition of a convent for spiritual practice. He erected the teachers' quarters [there], an assembly hall together with sacred items, a [large] prayer-wheel [containing the Sadakśarī [formula], statues for the temple of the convent, the main one being an icon of the Mahācārya [Padmasambhava] and so forth.

Also the achievement [was] excellent in terms of increasing the custom of ritual services, including the very extensive [week-long] sGrub mchod [ritual] of the *Na rag dong skrugs* maṇḍala and the newly established ritual service of the *Zab tig* [*chos dbyings rang gsal*] on a yearly basis; and he offered the initiations [and] reading[-authorizations] of the '*Chi med yang snying kun 'dus* [cycle] of the New Treasures [of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa] to [Kun-dga' lhun-grub], the lord of the doctrine from Ngor. There appeared many disciples, including the successors of the family [of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa], like the noble teacher mGon-gnang-pa (i.e. Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms), and those like Kun-spang Nam-mkha' bsam-gtan and so forth. When the span of his life and the

practice were at an equal stage, he passed away to a pure field in his seventy-third year.⁴²

[o] As the sons of the Mantradhara dPal bzang-po and Nor-bu don-grub, [these] two, were born Nam-mkha' lhun-grub, bDud-'dul dbang-phyug [and] bsKal-bzang rnam-rgyal, [these] three brothers.

[p] The youngest son of the above-mentioned Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal, the noble teacher resting as the essence of the all-encompassing Vajrasattva, bearing the name Nātha, was born in the wood female pig year in the thirteenth sexagenarian cycle [called] *yuvan* (i.e. 1755). At [the site of] dNgos-grub phug he offered the lock of hair in the presence of the Mahāvidyādhara [Kah-thog] Tshe-dbang nor-bu [and] was given the name Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po; he [also] heard the explanation of the profound way, the Guru Yoga, [from the master on that occasion]. At six

42. Kham[s]-lung-pa gSang-sngags bstan-'dzin was a disciple of Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dBang-gi rgyal-po of Nub-dgon, on whom see note 34. Concerning Ngor Kun-dga' lhun-grub, a disciple of Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje, compare note 37. I have no information on rNam-grol rdo-rje from Sikkim, a lineage holder of the treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa. Kun-spangs Nam-mkha' bsam-gtan was a follower of the doctrine of the Great Perfection and a disciple of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan (1735-1804) in the medical profession; see Ehrhard (2007b:123). A reference to the renovation of dPal-ldan sding(s) in the La-[l]de[bs] valley by 'Gyur-med 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin can be found in the autobiography of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po; he was present there with his father Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal in 1764 when the paintings of the assembly hall were newly executed; see Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po: Gur gyi sngags ban tshe dbang 'chi med mgon po'i rang tshul chu 'babs su brjod pa, p. 22.2-3 (*rang lo bcu pa'i skabs su dpal lding gi / 'du khang chen po'i ldebs ris gsar skrun skabs / yab rje mchog gi zhabs phyir bskang gso sogs / gtong zhing dpyid kyi ring der gnas byas shing*).

years [of age] he knew without difficulty how to read [and] write. At [the age of] nine he had mastered writing [completely] and heard from his father, the noble great Mantradhara (i.e. Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal) [like] a vessel is filled to the brim, all the ripening [initiations and] liberating [instructions] on earlier [and] later [occasions], including the *sGyu 'phrul* cycle, the doctrine of the forefathers, and the initiations [and] reading[-authorizations] of the *Na rag dong dkrugs* [cycle] and so forth.

Furthermore, from 'Gyur-med 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin, the noble one from dPal-sding, from the Vidyādhara, the great one from mGon-gnang, 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms, from the observer of vows, bsTan-'dzin rdo-rje (1731-1776), and so forth, the vessel of his mind was filled with the nectar of an ocean of profound [and] wide teachings of the new [and] old [schools], the main one being those of his [family's] own system. He was also learned in the common sciences, [i.e.] medicine, white [and] black astrology, arts [and] sculpture, and also the composition of poetical writings manifested in his mind as something bursting forth by itself, without [any] effort.⁴³

43. The person known as bsTan-'dzin rdo-rje was the younger brother of Rig-'dzin 'Phrin-las bdud-'joms; see the work of Chos-kyi dbang-phyug on the descendants of the family of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa (as in note 21), fols. 14b/4-15b/1. For the early education of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po under the aforementioned teachers, see his autobiography (as in note 42), pp. 17.5-26.5. The studies of the different systems of astrology mainly took place in the year 1767 under his father Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal; see *ibid.*, p. 24.2-3 (bcu gsum lon skabs dgun ring 'brog nyid du / skes rtsis bag rtsis gshin rtsis la sogs dang pa / nag rtsis skor dang ri khrod chos rdzong du / skar rtsis dgu mtha' nas bzung sgru ba dang / le'u tho bsdu pa 'dun pa'i tshul la sogs / yab rje nyid nas gang mkhyen kun slab pa shing / tshegs med nyid du shes pas ...).

From [the age of] sixteen [years] onwards he performed properly the approaching [and] accomplishing [of the deities of] the *sGyu 'phrul zhi khro* [cycle], and on the occasion when he heard from his father, the noble one (i.e. Rig-'dzin 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal), the profound guidances of [the treasure cycle] *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog* [of Dri-med kun-dga' (b.1347)], he saw the own face of great originary awareness, the correct state of Being-as-it-is.⁴⁴

From [the age of] twenty-one [years] onwards up to forty-four [years], [he conducted] at [places like] Chos-rdzong, Bum-phug, Gru-'dzin dkar, lCogs[-ga] ri [and] bKra-shis sding four times the attainment of a three year [retreat] and further on the approaching [and] accomplishing of many personal deities, relying on [the period of practice] from one month onwards up to one week. After having condensed the spiritual practice of “firm abiding” (*khregs chod*) of the Great Perfection in accordance with the time [periods and] the central points he then lived as a spiritual experience the application of the inner wind and so forth of the “leaping over” (*thod rgal*) and obtained thus firmness in the generating phase, where the impure visions are blocked. As he [then] achieved

44. The transmission of the treasure cycle *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog* and the mentioned spiritual experience occurred also at Chos-rdzong, one of the two hermitages established by the father; see the work of Tshé-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po (as in note 42), pp. 30.6-31.2 (*de yi dgun thog ril por chos rdzong du / thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog gi / dbang lung dang ni khyad par smin khrid skor / legs par zhus shing sems ngo sprod pa'i skabs / gnas 'gyur rig sogs zhib par rtsad gcod pa'i / bka' 'dri phebs tshe 'dri ba gsum khongs su / gnas lugs don nyid 'gol 'dugs med pa yi / rang ngo brjen par [= rjen par] gsal ba'i lan phul tshe / rje nyid shin tu dgye pa'i dbugs byung bcas*). This treasure cycle had been transmitted in the family since the 16th century; see note 17.

control of ordinary awareness of the completion stage, there appeared the impartial intention of the [state of] self-manifested Great Perfection, the defining characteristics of [the object] which is grasped [and] the grasping [subject] became liberated in their own place; he [thus] achieved the enlightenment in the great expanse of equanimity, where the whole of samsāra is without a base [and] free from any origin, the freedom of an encompassing samādhi of the Clear Light, where meditative absorption [and] the succeeding [post meditative state] are without any difference. He was able to enjoy without any hindrance all the means [of the attainment] of the siddhis, including sacred substances and so forth. He mastered the behaviour of the strict discipline of the outward activity of knowledge, where no thought is wasted on negative conditions. In regard to his seeing the lamps [and] visions [of the leaping over], the facts of the teachers and personal deities were shown [to him] and he was blessed [by them]. As he looked at [and] understood the sūtras, tantras, upadeśas [and] the pronouncements of the noble learned [and] realized ones, he obtained without any hindrance the power of making full use of [his] mind, and as he thoroughly understood all the phenomena whatsoever, he became someone without any rival in exposing [the Buddhist doctrine] and composing [treatises].⁴⁵

45. For the period of 1775 to 1798 in the life of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po, see his autobiography (as in note 42), pp. 36.3-121.3. Concerning the sites where he conducted his spiritual practices, it should be mentioned that he renovated lCogs[-ga] ri, the first establishment of the mDo-bo-che tradition in La-[l]de[bs] and known as the birth place of Che-mchog-pa; see *ibid.*, p. 85.3-6 (*de nas re shig der 'dug dbyar thog nyid lcogs rir sdod cing jo pho gling nyid kyi* [gloss: *sngags 'chang che mchog rdo rje*] 'khrungs pa ru /grags pa'i dgon ro de nyid zhig gsos kyi / grabs yul byas shing chos rdzong dgon pa yi / jo btsun rnam nas shing cha gcod 'dren dang / dpal ldng grub pa

At [the age of] twenty-eight [years] he undertook a journey to encounter the sacred places [and] receptacles of Nepal, and at [the age of] thirty [years] he went to encounter all the sacred places [and] receptacles of the region of dBus-gtsang, [the central Buddhist region] under the sun, and of Tsa-ri-tra, the enclosure of wisdom, and so forth; on [all] these occasions he experienced in manifold ways hardship during the travels, including fever and so forth. Having met many noble authoritative persons, like the protector of [Tibet, the land of] glaciers, the one holding a white lotus, [the Eighth Dalai Bla-ma] 'Jam-dpal rgya-mtsho (1758-1804), father [and] sons, the mighty one among the Jinas, the Thirteenth Karma-pa [bDud-'dul rdo-rje] (1733-1797), the venerable [Eighth] 'Brug-pa Rin-po-che [Chos-kyi snang-ba] (1768-1822), the great upādhyaya from sMin[-grol] gling, O-rgyan bstan-'dzin rdo-rje (b. 1742), and so forth, he returned back to his home region.⁴⁶

ngag dbang 'phrin las kyi / rdo bzo dang dang ni mched po rgyal mtshan gyis / shing bzo gyis pa zhag bcu'i khongs su grub / de nas khong rnam sphyir ldog rang nyid dang bu chung padma nam mkha' stobs rgyal bcas / mtshams pa mtshams g.yog tshul du byas nas ni. This happened in the year 1785; two years later at the age of thirty-two, a further retreat is mentioned, especially devoted to *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*. Another retreat during which he was engaged in these spiritual practices took place in 1790; see the autobiography (as in note 42), pp. 90.3-91.3 & 101.6-102.6. A text dealing with *khregs chod* was composed by Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po in the year 1796 at the hermitage of Chos-rdzong; see id.: *Khregs chod lta ba'i gnas lugs snying po don gyi man ngag gi bshad 'grel man ngag rin po che'i snye ma*.

46. The pilgrimages to Nepal in the year 1782 and to Tsā-ri and Central Tibet two years later are described in the autobiography; see Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po (as in note 42), pp. 59.2-60.2 & 64.6-82.5. During the journey to Nepal Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po also paid a visit to the sacred sites of Yol-mo Gangs[-kyi] rva[-ba]. Returning to his home region after the pilgrimage to Central Tibet he encountered the Tenth Zhva-dmar-pa Chos-grub rgya-mtsho (1742-1792) at the sacred site of dNgos-grub phug in the sKyid-grong region; see *ibid.*, p. 82.2-3 (*de ring min smin drug zla nang du zhva dmar rje yang dngos grub phug nyid du / phebs zhes thos pas*

He [then] granted a circle of [religious] deeds, [i.e.] an assembly hall for Chos-rdzong, together with sacred items, an assembly hall for Chos-dkar gling [in] sMu-lug[s], [together with] a [great] Dharma wheel [filled with] the ṣaḍakśarī [formula], a complete [manuscript edition of the] precious Collected Tantras of the Early Translation Period of the Secret Mantras, stūpas [and] golden reliquary shrines and so forth, and to all the teachers of the mDo-chen [tradition], his own family, the complete reading [authorization] of the precious Collected Tantras of the Early Translation Period and in the way that it was filled to the brim of a vessel all the ripening [initiations and] liberating [instructions], headed by the doctrine of the forefathers, like the *sGyu 'phrul* [cycle] and so forth. Also myself, I received many times the kindness of [his] profound teachings, including on earlier [and] later occasions the initiations [and] reading[-authorizations] of the *sGyu 'phrul* [cycle] and instructions of the [Mahā]mudrā [and the Great] Perfection. In order that the Buddhist doctrine may remain a long time he composed in manifold ways also well-formulated treatises like ritual manuals for the initiation of the *Zhi khro* [cycle] [and] the [*Tshe khrid*] *rdo rje phreng ba* [of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa (1450-1521)], a record of teachings received, explanatory commentaries on the [Mahā]mudrā [and the Great] Perfection [doctrines], [and] treatises for approaching [the deity] and so forth.⁴⁷

yul skya ser tshogs du mar bcas te mjal phyin mjal kha yang / spro bar gyur). This must have happened when the Tenth Zhva-dmar-pa was on his own pilgrimage to Nepal in the year 1784; for this date and the events following that journey, see Ehrhard (2007b:119-121).

47. Among the different building projects of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po, the erecting of an assembly hall at Chos-rdzong took place in the years 1790 to 1791,

Having been completely liberated from the attachment of mental acts for his own benefit, with the courage of caring solely for the benefit of the Buddhist doctrine [and] the beings, he passed his time with the complete white deeds of [performing] the explanation [of the teachings], the attainment [of the spiritual practice and] the [tantric] activities; and thus his kindness for the prolonged life-force of [the Buddhist doctrine] in general and the doctrine of the Gur-rigs mDo-chen [tradition] in particular, was immeasurable: because from Nor-bu bde-chen, the Mantradhara of the earlier times, onwards, the skill of knowledge [and] understanding of this noble one alone and the excellent accomplishments of his deeds were established by direct perception.

during the period of the Sino-Nepalese war; see the autobiography (as in note 42), pp. 103.1-105.6. Concerning his efforts in producing a manuscript edition of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* in La-[l]de[bs], see note 38. This took place in the year 1794, i.e. after the end of the Sino-Nepalese war, see Ehrhard (1997b:258). According to the memoirs of Tshe dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po the preparations for this project had started already in the preceding year and included the purchase of the necessary paper from Nepal. The scribes for the writing out of the actual manuscripts were recruited from La-[l]de[bs] and the village of gNas, to the east of sKyid-grong; see *ibid.*, pp. 110.5-111.1 (*bal yul phyogs su dpal lding chos rdzong gi / grva pa rnam gnyis shog bu bsgrub tu btang / dpyid sos shog bu sleb phral la ldebs dang / gnas shar nub kyi rig mkhan kha shas la / bla med dkon mchog spyi' dus dbang bzhi tsum / bskur nas tshugs pa'i ston mo mtshon byed dang / bcas te so sor ma dpe shog bu sogs sprad nas lo 'khor khongs su grub bkod byas*). For the festivities upon the completion of the project, see *ibid.*, pp. 112.3-113.5. A few of the works of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po are available, but not his *gsan yig* and the mentioned writings; for his work on the spiritual practice of *khregs chod*, see note 45. A work devoted to the *sGrub mchod* rituals of the Seven Vajra Mothers has also survived. It was written at Chos-dkar gling in the years 1802 to 1803; see Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po: *rDo rje ma bdun ma'i bka' gtad ji ltar bya ba'i tshul*.

Such a course of life, in a way like pointing [only] to the teachings, on the break of dawn of the thirtieth day of the waning moon of the great fourth Tibetan month [of the year 1808], in his fifty-fourth year, he contracted the mandala of his visible body into the Dharmadhātu, the expanse of the Clear Light, the Vessel of the Youthful Vase. Those wishing to understand in detail [his] biography should look into what has become separately clear as the verses of the words of the lord himself, [the work] called “Pleasantly Flowing Sound of Water.”⁴⁸

[IV] So, other [persons] than those mentioned in the coarse [and] detailed biographies up to this lord are easy to understand [from further sources]. It is known [for example] in the old writing of a history that one person known as Gur-ston dPal-mdzes [rgyal-mtshan] (12th/13th cent.) [[*gloss*: it appears in an ancient chronicle]] and also 'Chi-med 'od-zer (1574-1661), the one who has attained siddhis in a hidden way, the father of rGyal-dbang seng-ge (b. 1628) of Zva-phug [in] [s]Ku-thang, were from the Gur-phu family.⁴⁹

48. The first part of the work *Lhung lhung snyan pa'i chu sgra* is the autobiographical account of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po. It was completed at Chos-dkar gling—spelt Chos-mkhar gling in the text—in the year 1803. The work was afterwards expanded by Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku covering the final part of the life of his teacher; see the autobiography (as in note 42), pp. 12.1-145.5 & 146.1-163.4). From this appendix it becomes clear that the renovation of the assembly hall at Chos-dkar gling took place in the year 1805; see *ibid.*, p. 150.1-2. This was followed by a final reading[-authorization] of the *rNying ma rgyud 'bum* upon the request, among others, of a teacher from Zhe-chen monastery in Khams. It is noted that the edition used for the transmission comprised 37 volumes in all; see *ibid.*, p. 150.2-5.

49. The biography of Gur-ston dPal-mdzes rgyal-mtshan is not yet available. Up to now it is only known that he was a contemporary of Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga' rgyal-

The reasons for the sub-sections [of that family] I do not know in detail. Further on, discussions and old legends and so forth, as they are not beautiful at length, I remain indifferent [about] them.

Here it is said:

Yes, possessing a dense grove of excellent qualities, a family of siddhas, [which is] a string of sandalwood trees, [their] narratives, a speech [with] a taming fragrance, delicious [and] strong: may it deliver the glory to clear the painful suffering of the ones with devotion!

A story according to the arguments of the ancient chronicles, although not worth to be repeated once more by a child without [any] knowledge, having seen that even the telling of a mere part of what has happened is rare, I have joined it together at length in the way of the voice of a learned one.

Although these days those who hold the spiritual lineage of a higher rebirth [are] a flock leading others, increasing like a youthful sprout growing in summer, a book, holding [such a] glory through the nectar of knowledge [and]

mtshan (1182-1251), who addressed an epistle to him under the title “Reply to the questions of the teacher [from the] Gur [family]” (*gur ston gyi zhus lan*); see Jackson (1991:234-237). rGyal-dbang seng-ge, also known as Chos-rje rDzong-pa, and his father 'Chi-med 'od-zer belonged to a branch of the Gur-phu family which originally had settled at rDzong-sgo in sNying, a village in the south-eastern region of Gung-thang. It has already been noted that rGyal-dbang seng-ge had been one of the four main disciples—together with Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje—of rNgog-ston Karma Blo-bzang and that he was associated with the site called Zva-phug [Brag-dmar chos-gling] after his father had moved there in the year 1637; see Ehrhard (2001b:106) and Ehrhard (2004b:589 & 595, note 10).

understanding, [it is for] the benefit of [oneself and others, these] two, like the sky with a vulture [carrying] pollen [for all].

Therefore, whoever has come in the later generation presently living, from the steps of a ladder of what has to be discarded [and] to be accepted, following the noble ones from before they have ascended the peak of the excellent edifice of complete liberation: may they stay on guard for the benefit of others!

Whatever was obtained of virtuous things from telling this way [of a narrative], may through this increase the doctrine of the highest vehicle of the Early Translations, the essence of the teachings of the Jina, together with [the number of] those, who hold it! And may myself [and] others attain the supreme [state of] a higher rebirth [and] final liberation!

Thus, the history of the lineage of the Glorious Gur-rigs mDo-chen [tradition], a discourse of a few words [entitled] “A Rosary of Rubies”: although earlier from the lord, the teacher, the protector of the circle that comprises all, the noble Nātha (i.e. Tshe-dbang ’Chi-med mgon-po), came the intention to compose an appendix to the *mDo chen bka’ brgyud gser’ phreng*, as there did not manifest the request of the insistence of a person wishing [such a work], [later,] on top of [my own] wish to write [it] in order to fulfil the remains of the intention that had not ripened [yet] to a real receptacle, the one with an discriminative eye, the representative of the family of the mDo-chen-pa [tradition], the resident of dPal-sding, [known

as] Tshe-dbang 'Gyur-med rgya-mtsho, requested again and again: “As a proper account for the latter generations through the force of the succession of the earlier arguments is like a star at day time, such a thing, it should be written in the form of letters!” Due to that, [and] because the history of the old chronicles which had been set down in letters was something seen and heard of in detail, not having the courage to relate [it] accordingly, nevertheless, what had become something to be understood [and] heard [by me] from the words of the noble teachers, and what had been condensed from the scattered [notes of] whatever was clear from the biographies of many noble ones, just that right amount, without exaggeration, it had been compiled by Chos-kyi dbang-phyug, the one free from worldly obligations, on the good twenty-first day of the great fourth Tibetan month of the wood female pig year [called] yuvan in the fourteenth sexagenarian cycle (i.e. 1815), at Brag-dkar rta-so, the great site of spiritual practice. The one, who wrote down [the text] was the [same] person, who had requested [it].⁵⁰

50. Tshe-dbang 'Gyur-med rgya-mtsho, the person who requested Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku to compose his work and also acted as scribe, was the son of Tshe-dbang bDe-chen bzang-po and thus a nephew of Tshe-dbang 'Chi-med mgon-po. This is known from the inscription of a beautiful thangka of Zangs-mdog dpal-ri, the celestial realm of Padmasambhava, ordered by Tshe-dbang 'Gyur-med rgya-mtsho upon the death of his father; for the scroll painting and the inscription, see Essen & Thingo (1989, vol. 1:202 & vol.2:174-175) and Essen & Thingo (1991:135). The inscription comes from the pen of Brag-dkar rta-so sPrul-sku and refers in that case, like in the colophon of the present text, to Tshe-dbang 'Gyur-med rgya-mtsho as the “representative of the family of the mDo-chen-pa [tradition]” (*mdo chen pa'i gdung 'tshob*).

May this also become the reason for the doctrine of the essence of the Vajra[yāna] of the definite secret mantras to spread wide and remain for a long time!

May it be virtuous! May it be virtuous! May it be virtuous!

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I:
The mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng

The “Golden Rosary” (*gser 'phreng*) of the mDo-chen bKa'-brgyud-pa lineage in two volumes was filmed by the NGMPP in [b]Tsum in 1994 under reel-nos. L 481/4 and L 481/5 to L 482/1. The first volume contains biographical accounts starting with the primordial Buddha Vajradhara and going up to the two founders of the “Upper 'Brug” and “Lower 'Brug” branches of the 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa school, namely Lo-ras-pa dBang-phyug brtson-'grus and rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje. The second volume begins with biographies of Gar-ston [Sangs-rgyas] and Ma-bdun ras-chen and presents the latter's teaching lineage up to Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis, the first representative of the Gur family. The text as such can thus be regarded as a compilation of the 15th century.

As these two volumes contain additional lineage prayers, religious instructions and in some cases different versions of one particular biography, they should be analysed in more detail in the future. In the context of the present study I will only give an outline of the text based on the notes taken by Paldor from the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center, New York.

bKa' brgyud kyi rnam thar thog mar rdo rje 'chang gi rnam thar na rim par bzhugs so / bka' brgyud gser 'phreng stod cha, 365 fols. (margin: ka)

1. *rDo rje chang gi rnam thar, fols 1a-7b*
2. *Sa ra ha'i rnam thar, fols 7b-8b*
3. *Lo hi pa'i rnam thar, fols 8b-10a*
4. *rGyal po mda' ki ba'i (= dha ri ka pa'i) rnam thar, fols 10b-12b*
5. *lDing gi pa'i rnam thar, fols 10b-12b*
6. *Slob dpon klu sgrub kyi rnam thar, fols 13b-18a*
7. *Slob dpon chen po ma tang gi rnam thar, fols 18a-19b*
8. *Thang lo pa'i rnam thar, fols 19b-20a*
9. *Dom bi he ru ka'i rnam thar, fols 20a-24b*
10. *Slob dpon lva ba pa'i rnam thar, fols 24b-30b*
11. *Te lo pa'i rnam thar, fols 18a-31a*
12. *Na ro pa'i rnam thar, fols 31a-42b*
13. *Mar pa'i rnam thar, fols 43a-47b*
14. *rJe btsun mi la'i rnam thar, fols 47b-125a*
15. *Ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar, fols 125a-131a*

16. *rJe btsun rtsang pa'i rnam thar*, fols 131a-133a
17. *mNyam med sgam po rin po che'i rnam thar*, fols 133a-147a
18. *Phag mo gru pa'i rnam thar*, fols 147a-159b
19. *Gling chen ras pa'i rnam thar*, fols 159b-186b
20. *gTsang pa rgya ras kyi rnam thar*, fols 186b-219a
21. *'Gro mgon lo ras pa'i sku gsum zhing khams ma*, fols 219a-225b.
Written by dGe-sbyong tshul-khrims.
22. *Lo ras pa'i rnam thar chen mo or Chos rje rin poche'i sku gsung 'phrin las dang bcas pa'i rnam par tharpa yon tan mtha' yas pa'i gya mtsho*, fols 226a-295b. Written by dGe-sbyong tshul-khrims in dKar-po chos-lung.
23. *Lo ras kyi zhal chems*, fols 295b-298a
24. *Chos rje rgod tshang pa'i thugs dam bcu gnyis*, fols 298a-308a.
Written by Byang-sems sher-gzhon.
25. *Chos rje rgod tshang pa'i rnam thar nya ngan 'das byung*, fols 308a-312b. Written by dBang-phyug rgyal-mtshan.
26. *gDung sob 'bar ba'i rnam thar*, fols 313a-365b

bKa' brgyud gser 'phreng las smad kyi cha rnams bzhugs so mdo chen brgyud rnams mchis, 332, fols (margin: kha)

1. *brGyud 'debs, fols 1a-4b*

2. *brGyud pa ring, fols 4b-7b*

3. *rTog ldan (= rTogs ldan) chen po gar ston pa'i rnam thar or Bla ma rtog ldan chen po'i rnam thar bde legs 'byung gnas, fols 8a-26a.*
Written by Bla-ma dKon-mchog rdo-rje.

4. *rJe ma bdun ras chen gyi rnam thar or rJe'i rnam thar rin po che'i phreng ba, fols 26b-70b.* Written by dGe-sbyong 'Phags-pa dpal.

5. *Thugs sras gdan sa 'phags rin po che'i phags pa dpal gyi rnam thar or Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar rin po che'i phreng ba, fols 70b-112a .*
Written by Śākya dge-slong Byin-rlabs rdo-rje bzang-po (i.e. Chos-rje sTon-pa) at bKra-shis sdings-kyi pho-brang in a “hare year” (*yos lo*).

6. *mNyam med chos rje ston pa'i rnam thar or Chos rje byin rlabs rdo rje'i rnam thar yid bzhin nor bu mos gus bsam 'phel, fols 112b-183b.*
Written by Śākya dge-slong Ye-shes rdo-rje in gDan-sa chen-po dPal ldan mDo-bo che'i pho-brang in a “pig year” (*phag lo*).

7. *rTog ldan (= rTogs ldan) byang pa'i rnam thar tshul gsum rtsa lnga ma, fols 184b-186b.* Written by Chos-kyi seng-ge.

8. *rNam thar ka smad sum cu pa or rJe mtshan ldan dharma seng ge'i rnam thar, fols 186b-188a*

9. *Bla ma chos seng gi rnam thar*, fols 188a-189a. Written by Ye-shes dar.

10. *Bla ma chos rgyal gyi rnam thar or rJe'i rnam thar mdor bsdus rin chen sgron me*, fols 189a-212b. Written by Ye-shes dar.

11. *Bya btang śākya dpal gyi rnam thar*, fols 189a-212b 12. *Bya btang śākya dpal gyi rnam thar bsdus pa*, fols 246b-250b

13. *Bya btang śākya dpal gyis mdzad pa'i dge sbyong tshul khrims can*, fols 250b-252a

14. *Bya btang śākya dpal gyis mdzad pa'i mi rtag sgyur dpe ma*, fols 252b-255b

15. *Bya btang śākya dpal gyis mdzad pa'i rtsa ba rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*, fols 255b-257b

16. *Mandal thos pa rgya mtsho ma*, fols 257b-258a

17. *gNas 'og min ma*, fols 258a-259b

18. *Chos rje lhun grub mtshan can gyi rnam thar gsol 'debs ma*, fols 259b-263b. Written by Śākya dge-slong Seng-ge dpal bzang-po at dPal-ldan Om-phug padma dkar-po.

19. *Chos rje lhun grub mtshan can gyi rnam thar byin rlabs kyi 'byung gnas or Chos rje rin po che gur phu ba zhes mtshan yongsu grags pa de nyid kyi rnam thar byin rlabs kyi 'byung gnas*, fols 263b-325a. Written by Śākya dge-slong Seng-ge dpal bzang-po at Yang-dben Seng-ge rdzong.

20. *rJe yang dgon pas mdzad pa'i smon lam le tshan bcu bzhi pa*, fols 325a-329a

21. *bDe ba can gyi smon lam*, fols 329a-332a

APPENDIX II: The “Thob yig of the 17th Century”

The work published as “Thob yig of the 17th Century” is a compilation of records of teachings received by three members of the mDo-chen bKa’-brgyud-pa lineage and the Gur family. These are Nor-bu bde-chen (b. 1617), his grandson rGyal-sras seng-ge (d. 1752) and the latter’s son Padma-rgya-mtsho. As the Tibetan introduction of the modern edition is of no help in identifying the respective records and the individual transmissions—and as some of the records are incomplete or have been wrongly arranged in the process of publication—the following description aims at making these materials more accessible.

An examination of these records shows that in the case of Nor-bu bde-chen two masters played a prominent role in the transmission of treasure teachings of the rNying-ma-pa school to this important member of the Gur family. These are O-rgyan dpal-bzang (1617-1677) and Kun-bzang klong-yangs (1644-1699), both originating from the Nepalese Himalayas, i.e. from the regions of southern Mustang and Jumla. As their respective biographies have survived it is possible to reconstruct the circumstances under which these particular transmissions of Buddhist teachings occurred. Especially the autobiography-cum-*gsan yig* of O-rgyan dpal-bzang is a rich source in this context, and it has already been used to document

the spread of the teaching tradition of the treasure-discoverer Rig-’dzin Zhig-po gling-pa to Sikkim. This happened at a time when a Buddhist monarchy had just been established in the country.¹

From this literary source it is also evident that O-rgyan dpal-bzang reached the area of lake dPal-mo dpal-thang in Gung-thang after his departure from Sikkim, and it was there that he heard the name of Bla-ma Nor-bu bde-chen for the first time. Having met him in person, O-rgyan dpal-bzang displayed the written documents stating that Nor-bu bde-chen was the prophesied holder of the treasure teachings of Rig-’dzin bDud-’dul rdo-rje (1615-1672), especially of the cycle known as *Dam chos sprul sku snying thig*. After the description of this encounter follows a detailed list of the transmissions received by O-rgyan dpal-bzang from Nor-bu bde-chen; this section of the autobiography-cum-gsan yig bears the separate title *sGyu ’phrul zhi khro’i thob yig ye shes ’od kyī me long*. The first list of teachings received as contained in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” is that of Nor-bu bde-chen, and it opens with a particular transmission of the *Dam chos sprul sku snying thig* which he had obtained from O-rgyan dpal-bzang. This transmission occurred in the hermitage of Chos-rdzong in the La-[l]de[bs] valley, known as a “site of spiritual practice of the Jina Ma-bdun

1. For a first assessment of the travels of O-rgyan dpal-bzang and his important role in bringing rNying-ma-pa treasure cycles from eastern Tibet to the Nepalese Himalayas, see Ehrhard (2001a:236-238). For O-rgyan dpal-bzang’s stay in Sikkim in the year 1646, when he received the treasure cycles of Rig-’dzin Zhig-po gling-pa from Phun-tshogs Tshe-ring rnam-rgyal alias mNga’-bdag Byams-pa bstan-’dzin, compare Ehrhard (2005:21-22 & 26).

ras-chen” (*rgyal ba ma bdun raschen gyi sgrub gnas*); it is dated to the year 1661.²

One of the following entries in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” concerning teachings transmitted by O-rgyan dpal-bzang refers to another meeting between him and Nor-bu bde-chen in La-[l]de[bs] in the year 1666, just after the former had completed a three-year retreat at the sacred mountain Ri-bo dpal-'bar in Mang-yul Gung-thang. This encounter is also described in the autobiography-cum-gsan yig, where it is said to have lasted three months. Another entry in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” referring to the master from southern Mustang deals with the transmission of O-rgyan dpal-bzang's own records of teachings received to Nor-bu bde-chen during their first encounter in the year 1661.³

In the latter part of the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” one finds further transmissions obtained by Nor-bu bde-chen from several teachers, which turn up in the autobiography-cum-gsan yig of O-rgyan dpal-bzang as well. Two entries refer to the person of

2. For the encounter between the two teachers and the section containing that particular record of teachings received, see the autobiography-cum-gsan yig of O-rgyan dpal-bzang (as in the Translation, note 26), fols. 256 b/1-276b/3. The teachings of the *Dam chos sprul sku snying thig* later became prominent in the Dol-po region in the Nepalese Himalayas through the activities of O-rgyan bstan-dzin (1657-1737), a disciple of O-rgyan dpal-bzang; see Ehrhard (1998:14-16).

3. For this second meeting between the two teachers see the text of O-rgyan dpal-bzang (as in the Translation, note 26), fols. 313a/7-314a/4. The entry in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” containing the *gsan yig* of O-rgyan dpal-bzang mentions at the very beginning of the list a collection of the tantras of the Early Translations comprising forty volumes; see *ibid.*, p. 251.1-2 (*rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum po sti [= po ti] bzhi bcu'i gsan yigkha byang*).

Phyong-rgyas ras-chen (17th cent.), who is characterized in the latter work as a disciple of Zhabs-drung Kong-po Kun-bzang rnam-rgyal, i.e. lHa-btsun Nam-mkha’ ’jigs-med (1597-1653), also known as the “Holy Madman from Kong[-po]” (*kong smyon*). O-rgyan dpal-bzang had met Phyong-rgyas ras-chen in the vihāra of Byams-pa sprin, and the list of teachings he received on that occasion bears the title *Srog sgrub kyi thob yig utpala’i phreng ba*. The teacher named rGyal-thang-pa Zil-gnon rdo-rje, who is mentioned three times in the records of teachings received by Nor-bu bde-chen, also occurs in the autobiographical account of O-rgyan dpal-bzang, who had encountered that master, a member of the rGyal-thang-pa family, at the latter’s residence Ling-ba Brag-dmar rdzong.⁴

The last person to be highlighted as a common acquaintance of both Nor-bu bde-chen and O-rgyan dpal-bzang is sNgags-’chang ’Chi-med rgya- mtsho, who has two entries in the former’s records. This master is known as a disciple of the Third Yol-mo-ba bsTan-’dzin nor-bu, and he had fulfilled official functions on his

4. The meeting with Phyong-rgyas ras-chen and the list of teachings received on that occasion is described in the autobiography-cum-*gsan yig* (as in the Translation, note 26), fols. 287b/3-290a/7. According to Nor-bu bde-chen’s accounts in the “Thob yig of the 17th Century”, the person of rGyal-thang gZil-gnon rdo-rje was a seventh generation descendant of rGyal-thang-pa chen-po bSam-gtan ’od-zer; see *ibid.*, pp. 463.3 & 482.5. To this family belonged also rGyal-thang-pa bDe-chen rdo-rje, a disciple of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje and author of a 13th-century biography of the great yogin Mi-la ras-pa; see Smith (2001:75-76) and Quintman (2006:108-114). For the role of rGyal-thang-pa bDe-chen rdo-rje in attributing the category “fortress” (*rdzong*) to the meditation sites of the great yogin Mi-la ras-pa and thereby giving prominence to the site of Ling-ba or Ling-nga Brag-dmar rdzong, compare Quintman (2008:375).

master’s behalf as overseer of the Bya-rung kha-shor stūpa in the Kathmandu valley and other religious institutions of the rNying-ma-pa school in the Nepalese Himalayas; he had invited O-rgyan dpal-bzang to the Hidden Valley of sKye-ba lung, and it was there that the transmissions of teachings occurred.⁵

The remaining parts of the “Thob yig of the 17th Century” describe the teachings obtained by rGyal-sras seng-ge and his son Padma rgya-mtsho. These masters can be placed in a wider context by comparing their records with the respective lists of masters of the New Treasurers from sMin-grol gling or the Northern Treasures from rDo-rje brag. For the present purpose it should be sufficient to show how the teachings of the mDo-chen tradition were transmitted in their individual cases and which constellations were formed with important Buddhist masters during that period. We are thus gaining further knowledge of how the transmissions of the mDo-chen bKa’-brgyud-pa had been dispersed until the 18th century.

5. The invitation to sKye-ba lung, located on the newly established trade route between Nepal and Tibet, and the transmission of teachings from sNgags-’chang ’Chi-med rgya-mtsho to O-rgyan dpal-bzang are described in the autobiography-cum-*gsan yig* (as in the Translation, note 26), fols. 276b/7-277a/7. For the location of sKye-ba lung (not far from bDe-chen steng, the former residence of rGod-tshang-pa mGon-po rdo-rje), see Ehrhard (1997a:129). For the person of sNgags-’chang ’Chi-med rgya-mtsho alias Rig-’dzin sTobs-ldan dbang-po and his role as overseer of the Bya-rung kha-shor stūpa and further rNying-ma-pa monasteries in Nepal, compare Ehrhard (2007a:37-38).

A. Thob yig of Nor-bu bde-chen

1. *O rgyan lung zin skyes bu mchog / o rgyan dpal bzang zhabs drung du / orgyan gter chos thob tho rnam / o rgyan bka' bzhin bkod pa*, 16 fols., pp.1.1-32.4. Transmissions of treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin bDud-'dul rdo-rje (1615-1672) received from O-rgyan dpal-bzang.

a. *Dam chos sprul sku snying thig*, pp. 4.4-16.1

b. *Tshe sgrub tsha ba dmar thag*, p. 16.2-5

c. [*bKa' rdzogs pa chen po dam chos*] *dgongs pa yongs 'dus*, pp. 16.5-17.1. Received at Chos-rdzong in La-[l]de[bs] in 1661.

d. *bKa' rdzogs pa chen po dam chos dgongs pa yongs 'dus*, pp. 17.2-24.1. Received at dPal-ldan lding in La-[l]de[bs] in 1666.

e. *Zab don gsang ba snying thig*, pp. 24.1-26.6

f. *Yang gsang mkha' 'gro snying thig / snying gi thig le / tshe yang phur gsum*, pp. 24.1-26.6

g. *Zhing skyong chen po kun dga' gzhon nu'i chos skor*, pp. 28.6-32.4

2. No title, 20 fols. (incomplete), pp. 33.1-74.6. Transmissions of treasure cycles and one spoken teaching lineage received from Kun-bzang klong-yangs. Text begins on fol. 8a, for the previous sections, see, pp. 554.1 ff.

a. *gNam chos* of Mi-'gyur rdo-rje (1646-1667), pp. 33.1-44.2

- b. *Yang dag snying po'i chos skor of Gu-ru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug]*, pp. 45.1-47.3 Received in 1689.
- c. *Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba dong sprug of Gu-ru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug]*, pp. 47.3-50.3
- d. *Chos drug sras mkhar ma'i skor of Gu-ru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug]*, pp. 50.3-52.2
- e. *sGrub chen dza ha bhir gyi snyan brgyud of Jābir*⁶, pp. 52.2-54.1
- f. *rTsa gsum dril sgrub of gTer-ston 'Jam-dbyangs bla-ma*⁷, pp. 54.1-55.4
- g. *rTa mgrin yaksha yang chung nag po of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer (1124-1192)*, pp. 55.4-56.6
- h. *mKha' 'gro chen mo'i skor of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer*, pp. 56.6-60.6

6. This particular hathayoga lineage passed through 'Bri-gung Rin-chen phun-thogs (1509-1557) and can be called a “Buddhacized” teaching of Nātha yogin doctrines as promulgated in Tibet. See Walter (1992:434, note 10); also compare Walter (1996:145-146) and Walter (2003:26) for further details on the transmission of the “Jābir Cycle”. The Fifth Dalai Lama had received this transmission, also known as *Tshe sgrub pa'i rlung sbyor gyi skor*, too; see the text of Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (as in the Introduction, note 13), vol. 4., pp. 240.1-243.2. He was also a member of this teaching tradition within the lineage of the Sa-skyapa master Tshar-chen mKhyen-brtse dbang phyug (1524-1568); see *ibid.*, vol. 2., pp. 429.2-431.3.

7. The treasure-discoverer 'Jam-dbyangs bla-ma was regarded as a reincarnation of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can and his major finding occurred in the region of Nyang-stod in gTsang. The cycle *rTsa gsum sgril sgrub* and the respective transmission were also received by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma; see the text of Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (as in the Introduction, note 13), vol. 3., pp. 346.2-348.6.

- i. *bKa' brgyad rig 'dzin yongs 'dus* of mNga'-ris Pan-chen Padma dbang-rgyal (1487-1524), pp. 61.1-66.3
- j. *sGrub thabs yon tan gter mdzod kyi kha skong* of mNga'-ris Pan-chen Padma dbang-rgyal, pp. 66.3-6
- k. *Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba dbyings grol gyi chos skor* of mNga'-ris Rig-'dzin Legs-ldan bdud-'joms rdo-rje (b. 1512), pp. 67.1-68.4
- l. *Zab lam 'pho ba ba'i gdams pa* of gTer-ston Nyi-zla sangs-rgyas (14th cent.), pp. 68.4-69.2
- m. *Ral dbang* of gTer-ston Me-long rdo-rje (1243-1314), pp. 69.2-70.1
- n. *Ratna gling pa'i gter ma* of Rig-'dzin Ratna gling-pa (1403-1478), pp. 70.2-5
- o. *bZang po grags pa'i gter ma* of bZang-po grags-pa (14th cent.), pp. 70.5-71.3
- p. *sGyu 'phrul tshe dbang rong lugs su grags pa*, pp. 71.3-72.6
- q. *mGon po dkar po'i tshe sgrub bdud rtsi 'khyil ba* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer, pp. 73.1-6
- r. *rGya can skor nas tshe sgrub mdangs ma bcud 'dren* of the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho, pp. 73.6-74.2
- s. *Zab lam bde gshegs kun 'dus kyi skor* of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa (text interrupted on fol. 28b), pp. 74.2-6

3. *rGyal dbang padma kāra yi / rnam ’phrul mchog gi sprul pa’i sku / bstan ’dzin nor bu’i zhabs drung du / bka’ gter zab chos thob yig yod*, 11 fols., pp. 75.1-95.4. Transmissions of treasure cycles received from the Third Yol-mo-ma sPrul-sku bsTan-’dzin nor-bu.

a. *bKa’ brgyad drag po rang byung rang shar* of Rig-’dzin rGod-ldem ’phru-can (1337-1408), pp. 76.1-82.6. Received at dPal dNgos-grub mtsho-gling in Mang-yul in 1633.

b. *rDzogs pa chen po ka dag rang byung rang shar* of Rig-’dzin rGod-ldem ’phru-can, pp. 82.6-85.3

c. *Gu ru drag po dmar chen gyi chos skor* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma’i ’od-zer, pp. 85.3-88.3. Received at dPal dNgos-grub mtsho-gling in Mang-yul in 1633.

d. *dPal mgon phyag bzhi pa’i chos skor* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma’i ’od-zer, pp. 88.3-91.2

e. *Dug dbang rdo rje pha lam of Rig-’dzin rGod-ldem ’phru-can*, pp. 91.2-92.5. Received at dKar-ye [dNgos-grub mtsho-gling] in Mang-yul in 1633 together with rGyal-sras Phyag-rdor nor-bu and sNgags-’chang Nam-mkha’ kun-bzang.

f. *Tshe’i dbang bskur zab mo* of Thang-stong rgyal-po (1361-1485), pp. 92.5-94.4

g. *gSol ’debs le’u bdun ma’i chos skor* of bZang-po grags-pa, pp. 94.4-95.4

h. *'Jam dpal dmar po* of Grva-pa mNgon-shes (1012-1090), pp. 95.3-4. Not recorded in detail due to Nor-bu bde-chen's young age.

4. No title, 46 fols. (incomplete), pp. 97.1-190.6. Transmissions of treasure cycles and one Mahāmudrā lineage received from the father Nam-mkha' seng-ge. Text begins on fol. 9a.

a. *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog gi skor* of O-rgyan Dri-med kun-dga' (b. 1347), pp. 97.1-101.2

b. *Bla ma dgongs pa kun 'dus* of gTer-ston Sangs-rgyas gling-pa (1340-1396)⁸, pp. 102.1-128.6

c. *sGrub skor rnam gsum* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can, pp. 131.1-138.3

d. *bCom ldan 'das rdo rje phur pa'i chos skor des Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can*, pp. 138.3-141.6

e. *rGyud bcu bdun gyi lung*⁹, pp. 142.1-146.5

8. The treasure cycle *Bla ma dgongs pa kun 'dus* of Rig-'dzin Sangs-rgyas gling-pa was propagated in the region of Mang-yul Gung-thang by gNas-pa Rab-'byams-pa Byams-pa phun-tshogs (1503-1581), who had received the transmission from his teacher rGod-tshang ras-pa sNa-tshogs rang-grol (1482-1559); see Ehrhard (in press c). It was this lineage which reached the Gur family through Nam-mkha' lhun-grub, a disciple of Byams-pa phun-tshogs.

9. This reading[-authorization] of the “Seventeen Tantras” (*rgyud bcu bdun*) of the Bi-ma snying-thig tradition of the Great Perfection teachings passed through dKar-chen Kun-dga' grags-pa (15th/16th cent.), a lineage holder of the treasure cycles of Dri-med kun-dga' and Rig-'dzin Sangs-rgyas gling-pa. He had visited the region of Mang-yul Gung-thang and that particular lineage was continued by Rig-'dzin mChog-ldan mgon-po (1497-1531) and his successors; see Ehrhard (2008:70-71). rGyal-sras bstan-pa'i 'byung-gnas, the son of the latter treasure-discoverer, is mentioned in the transmission as recorded by Nor-bu bde-chen.

- f. *'Jam dbyangs dkar po*. The transmission was not requested.
- g. *rDzogs pa chen po mkha' 'gro snying thig chos skor* of Padma Las-'brel rtsal (1291-1319), pp. 147.1-150.5
- h. *Bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho'i skor* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa (1450-1521), pp.151.1-156.6. Added sub-title: *lHo gter skor las bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho'i thob byin rlabs char 'bebs yod*.
- g. *Phyag na rdo rje dregs pa kun 'dul gyi skor* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa, pp. 157.1-160.6. Added sub-title: *dPal phyag na rdo rje dregs pa kun 'dul gyi thob yig yod*.
- h. *Tshe sgrub rdo rje phreng ba'i chos skor* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa, pp. 160.6-163.2. Added sub-title: *Tshe sgrub rdor 'phreng gi thob yig 'chi med gnam lcags rdo rje yod*.
- i. *Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba las sgröl gyi zab chos* of gTer-ston Zhig-po gling-pa (1524-1583)¹⁰, pp. 168.1-172.5
- j. *dPal bde mchog dmar po'i chos skor* of gTer-ston Zhig-po gling-pa, pp. 172.5-173.6
- k. *Thugs dam zab pa skor* of gTer-ston Zhig-po gling-pa, pp. 173.6-175.4

10. The cycle *Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba las sgröl* had been discovered by Rig-'dzin Zhig-po gling-pa in the Jo-khang temple in lHa-sa in the year 1563 and was latter spread by the mNga'-bdag family to Sikkim; see Ehrhard (2005:23). The lineage mentioned here—and the further treasure teachings of Rig-'dzin Zhig-po gling-pa—passed through the Second Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku Nam-mkha' brya-byin, who had received it from the treasure-discoverer in person. It reached the Gur family through Nam-mkha' seng-ge, a disciple of the Second Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku; see Ehrhard (2007a:29-30).

l. *rTa mgrin nag po na ga* (= *nā ga*) *klu 'dul gyi dbang* of gTer-ston Zhig-po gling-pa, pp. 175.4-176.6. Received at lCogs[-ga] ri in La-[l]de[bs] in 1647.

m. *Yang tig ye shes mthong grol* of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa (1480-1535), pp. 177.1-180.3

n. *Phag mo zab khrid kyi chos skor* of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa, pp. 180.3-181.5

o. [*lTa ba*] *sangs rgyas dgongs 'dus kyi cha rkyen* of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa, pp. 181.5-182.4

p. *rDo rje dmar kyi rjes gnang* of Grva-pa mNgon-shes, pp. 182.5-183.4

q. *mKha' 'gro ma seng ge'i gdong can chos skor* of Ba-ri Lo-tsä-ba (b. 1040), pp. 183.4-184.3

r. *Klu bdud naga* (= *nā ga*) *raksha'i skor*, pp. 184.3-185.3 Lineage of Rin-chen gling-pa (14th cent.) or Gu-ru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug].

s. *Man ngag lam rim gyi skor* of gNubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes, pp. 185.3-186.6

t. *Zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul* of Pha dam-pa Sangs-rgyas (d. 1105), pp. 187.1-190.6

u. *Phyag rgya chen po yi ge bzhi pa*, pp. 190.6. Text interrupted on fol. 55b.

5. No title, 36 fols. (incomplete), pp. 191.1-264.2. Transmissions of one spoken teaching tradition, different treasure cycles and a gsan yig received from O-rgyan dpal-bzang. Text begins on fol. 17a.

a. *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer¹¹, pp. 191.1-231.5 Added sub-title: *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa'i thob yig tshangs pa lha'i gandhe*. Received at dPal-ldan lding in La-[l]de[bs] in 1666.

b. *Bla ma yang tig* of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308-1364), pp. 231.5-235.6

c. *Theg mchog rin po che'i mdzod* of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, pp. 236.1-5

d. *rDzogs chen kun bzang dgongs pa kun 'dus* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa, pp. 236.5-241.3. Received at Chos-rdzong in La-[l]de[bs].

e. *Thugs rje chen po mun sel sgron me'i skor* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa, pp. 241.3-242.5

f. *bDud rtsi sman gyi sgrub pa'i chos skor* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa, pp. 242.5-244.1

g. *Rig 'dzin padma gling pa'i bka' 'bum*, pp. 244.1-245

11. The text distinguishes between a “lineage of the spoken teachings” (*bka' ma'i brgyud pa*) and a “lineage of the treasure teachings” (*gter ma'i brgyud pa*); see “Thob yig of the 17th Century”, pp. 223.2-226.5 & pp. 226.5-231.5. The distinction in the transmission of the initiations of the *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* cycle of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer is also acknowledged in the records the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma; see the different lineages in Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (as in the Introduction, note 13), pp. 550.5-561.1.

- h. *Tshe sgrub rgyal ba 'dus pa'i skor* of gTer-ston Zhig-po gling-pa, pp. 245.3-247.4
- i. *Phyag rdor stobs po che'i skor* of gTer-ston Zhig-po gling-pa, pp. 247.4-248.3
- j. *Bla sgrub hūm nag snying thig* of Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-tshon snying-po (1585-1656), pp. 248.3-5
- k. *Rig 'dzin 'ja' tshon snying po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum*, pp. 248.5-249.4
- l. *Zhig po gling pa'i snyan brgyud dag snang gi skor*, pp. 249.4-250.2
- m. *'Jam dpal a ra pa [tsa] na'i skor* of gTer-ston Zhig-po gling-pa, pp. 250.2-6
- n. *Lung zin skyes mchog o rgyan dpal bzang de nyid kyi gsan yig*, pp. 251.1-263.6. Received at Chos-rdzong in La-[l]de[bs] in 1661.

B. Thob yig of rGyal-sras seng-ge

1. *bKa' 'drin mnyam med chos kyi rje / gter bdag gling pa'i rgyal ba sras 'gyur med yid bzhin las (= legs) grub zhabs / zab mo'i chos kyi thob yig yod*, 22 fols., pp. 265.1-307.5. Transmissions of treasure cycles received from [Zhabs-drung] Yid-bzhin legs-grub (1689-1718), the younger son of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa (1646-1714).

- a. *Bla ma drag po'i skor* of gTer-chen Ratna gling-pa (1403-1478), pp. 266.1-271.4
 - b. *Tshe khrid rdo rje phreng ba* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa, pp. 271.3-274.1
 - c. *Phag mo zab brgya* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can, pp. 274.1-275.4
 - d. *rGyud bcu bdun*, pp. 275.4-279.2
 - e. Different reading[-authorizations], pp. 279.2-282.1
 - f. *sGrub thabs 'dod 'jo'i bum bzang* of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa, pp. 282.2-307.4
2. *O rgyan lung zin skyes bu mchog / ngag dbang chos dpal rgya mtsho yis (= yi) / zhabs la spyi bos btud pa yis / rgyal sras seng ge'i thob yig yod*, 3 fols., pp. 309.1-313.6. Transmission of treasure cycles received from [mKhan-po] Lo-tsa-ba Chos-dpal rgya-mtsho (i.e. Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, 1654-1717), younger brother of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa.
- a. *Zab chos rig 'dzin thugs thig* of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa, pp. 310.5-311.3
 - b. *Thos grol chen mo* of Karma gling-pa (1327-1387), pp. 311.4-312.5

c. *'Pho ba'i khrid* of Karma gling-pa¹², p. 313.1-6

3. *gTer ston gter bdag gling pa yis (= yi) / dri ma med pa'i gdung 'dzin pa padma 'gyur med rgya mtsho las / yab chos zab gter thob yig yod*, 9 fols., pp. 315.1-331.5. Transmissions of treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa from Padma 'Gyur-med rgya-mtsho (1686-1718), the elder son of the treasure-discoverer.

a. *Zab chos rig 'dzin thugs thig*, pp. 317.2-320.1

b. *gShin rje dregs pa 'joms byed gyi skor*, pp. 320.5-323.2

c. *Mahā guru drag po*, pp. 323.2-324.5

d. *rDor sems thugs sgrub*, pp. 324.5-326.2

e. *A ti zab don snying po*, pp. 326.2-327.3

f. *sNgags srung e ka dzā [ti] chos skor*, pp. 327.3-328.1

g. *Thugs rje chen po bde gshegs kun 'dus*, pp. 328.2-331.5

4. *bKa' drin mtshungs med bla ma rje / bstan pa'i nor bu'i zhabs drung du /gsang ngags bka' gter dbyer med kyis / rgyal sras seng ge'i thob yig yod*, 12fols., pp. 333.1-356.6 (margin: *ka*). Transmission of

12. The lineage of the so-called Bar-do thos-grol teachings is the one which reached the sMin-grol gling tradition through Byang-chub gling-pa bSod-nams chos-skyong (d.1530) and sPrul-sku sNa-tshogs rang-grol (1494-1570); see Cuevas (2003:162-169). For further information on the residence of Byang-chub gling-pa in lHo-brag and the treasure cycles disseminated by him, compare Ehrhard (2008:66-67); two further teachings of Karma gling-pa were also transmitted by the aforementioned masters.

one spoken teaching tradition, different treasure cycles and further works from the older brother bsTan-pa'i nor-bu.

a. *sGyu 'phrul zhi khro* of the Gur-rigs mDo-chen tradition¹³, pp. 333.1-341.6

b. *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog* of O-rgyan Dri-med kun-dga', pp. 342.1-357.4

c. *Zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul* of Pha dam-pa Sangs-rgyas, pp. 357.4-351.6

d. *Thugs sgrub gu ru rdo rje drag po rtsal* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can, pp. 352.1-356.5

e. *Mi la rnam mgur* and *Mani bka' 'bum*, pp. 356.5-6

5. *rDor brag rigs (= rig) 'dzin chen po'i thugs sras / nub dgon pa sngags 'chang rigs (= rig) 'dzin padma dbang gi rgyal po nas / bdag rgyal sras seng ges dbang lung thob pa'i yig chung zur bkod*, 11 fols., pp. 357.1-377.5. Transmissions of treasure cycles and Mahā- and

13. In the presentation of the transmission of the Māyājāla cycle following Chos-rje Ma- bdun ras-chen the text includes two interlinear glosses. After Kun-dga' gzi-brjid it is noted that the “lineage of the mDo-chen [tradition] is up to this [person] only one of Bhikhus, [who are] Vajradharas” (*mdo chen brgyud pa 'di yan dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa kho na yin*), and after Che-mchog rdo-rje it is stated, that “from this one onwards all [persons were ones] who protected the doctrine alone by holding the [family] lineage, and the [family] lineage was [then] divided into three [branches]” (*'di yan thams cad brgyud 'dzin kho nas bstan pa bskyangs shing / brgyud pa gsum du gyes so*); see *ibid.*, p. 341.4-5. For a possible identification of these three lineages, see note 17 below.

Anuyoga teachings received from Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dbang-gi rgyal-po (1657-1731).

a. *bKa' brgyad rang byung rang shar* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phrucan, pp. 359.1-365.5

b. *Thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phrucan, pp. 365.6-368.5

c. *rGyud gyi rgyal po gsang ba snying po*, pp. 368.6-374.4

d. *mDo chen dgongs pa 'dus pa*, pp. 374.4-377.4

C. Thob-yig of Padma rgya-mtsho

1. *bKa' 'dri (= 'drin) mnyam med chos kyi rje / rgyal sras seng ge'i zhabs drung du bka' gter zab chos thob yig*, 10 fols., pp. 379.1-398.6 (margin: *ga*). Transmission of one spoken teaching tradition and different treasure cycles from the father rGyal-sras seng-ge.

a. *sGyu 'phrul zhi khro* of the Gur-rig mDo-chen tradition, pp. 382.4-388.4

b. *Zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul* of Pha dam-pa Sangs-rgyas, pp. 388.5-392.4

c. *sPrul sku snying rje'i 'pho ba* of 'Khrul-zhig dBang-grags rgya-mtso, pp. 392.4-393.4

d. *rDo rje phreng ba* of Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa, pp. 393.4-396.4

e. *Yang zab dkon mchog spyi 'dus* of Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-tshon snying-po, pp. 396.5-398.6. Not received completely.

2. *gNyags rigs rdo rje slob dpon mchog / gsang sngags bstan 'dzin zhabs drung du / bka' gter zab chos ji snyed pa / ji ltar thob tshul*, 3 fols., pp. 399.1-403.4. Transmission of a treasure cycle from gNyags-ston Padma gSang-sngags bstan-'dzin, a disciple of Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dbang-gi rgyal-po.

a. *rDo rje phag mo zab khrid* of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa, pp. 401.2-403.4

3. *Byin rlabs thugs rje'i sprin phung tsam / mnyam med nam mkha' chos rje las/zab rgyas smin grol dam chos kyang / thob yig mu tig phreng mdzes*, 7 fols., pp. 405.1-418.5. Transmissions of treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje (1640-1685) received from Nam-mkha' chos-rje, a disciple of the treasure-discoverer.

a. *Thugs rje chen po rtsa gsum snying thig*, pp. 408.2-410.6

b. *Zab chos padma snyan brgyud*, pp. 410.6-415.2

c. *rDo rje phur pa spu gri reg gcod*, pp. 415.2-418.5

4. *Rig 'dzin chen po padma dbang rgyal gyi zhabs drung du byang gter sgrub skor rnam (= rnam) gsum gyi thob yig*, 13 fols. (incomplete), pp. 419.1-448.4 (margin: *ka*). Transmission of different treasure cycles and further works from Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dbang-gi rgyal-po.

- a. *Rig 'dzin gdung sgrub* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can, pp. 420.4-424.3
- b. *gSang sgrub gu ru drag po* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can, pp. 424.3-432.1
- c. *Thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun sgrol* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem phru-can, pp. 432.2-435.3
- d. *'Chi med bdud rtsi'i bum pa* of rDor-'bum Chos-kyi grags-pa (11th cent.), pp. 435.4-441.2 Fol. 10 is missing.
- e. *Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba dbyings grol* of mNga'-ris Rig-'dzin Legs-dan bdud-joms rdo-rje (b. 1512), pp. 441.2-444.1
- f. *mTsho skyes rdo rje sku gsum rigs 'dus* of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal (1550-1602), pp. 444.2-445.6
- g. Biography of [Tshar-chen] 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse dbang-phyug (1524-1568), pp. 445.6-446.2
- h. *bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i'od-zer, pp. 446.3-448.2
- i. Biography of the Second rDo-rje brag Rig-'dzin Padma 'phrin-las, p. 448.2-4

D. Thob-yig of Nor-bu bde-chen

1. *Padma srid zhi yongs grol zhes / 'phyong rgyas ras chen zhabs drung du / rigs (= rig) 'dzin srog sgrub la sogs pa'i dgongs gter dag snang thob yig*, 6 fols., pp. 449.1-460.4. Transmissions of different treasure cycles from 'Phyong-rgyas ras-chen.

a. *Zab chosrig 'dzin srog sgrub* of lHa-btsun Nam-mkha'jigs-med, pp. 451.2-457.5

b. *Zab chos rdzogs chen spyi ti skor* of gTer-ston Tshe-ring rdo-rje, pp. 457.5-459.2

c. *Rig 'dzin yongs 'dus of mNga'-ris Pan-chen Padma dbang-rgyal*, pp. 459.3-460.4

2. *Byin rlabs thugs rje'i sprin spung can / ngag dbang zil gnon rdo rje las / zab rgyas smin grol dam chos kyī / thob yig utpala 'phreng tshogs*, 14 fols., pp. 461.1-487.2. Transmissions of different treasure cycles received from rGyal-thang-pa gZil-gnon rdo-rje.

a. *rDzogs pa chen po ka dag rang byung rang shar and rDzogs pa chen po dgongs pa zang thal lhun grub* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem 'phru-can, pp. 464.3-470.3

b. *rDor sems snying thig* of Rig-'dzin Kun-skyong gling-pa (1396-1477)¹⁴, pp. 470.3-472.3

14. The transmission of the *dGongs pa zang thal lhun grub* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem 'phru-can—and the following one of the *rDor sems snying thig* of Rig-'dzin Kun-skyong gling-pa—passed through Bya-btang Śākya dpal-bzang, known as one of the teachers of Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan from Nub-dgon; see Translation, note 12.

- c. *Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba dong sprugs* of Gu-ru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug], pp. 472.3-473.4
- d. *Gu ru drag dmar* of Rin-chen gling-pa, pp. 473.4-475.3
- e. *Chos skyong bstan srung* of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem 'phru-can, pp. 475.3-476.4
- f. *Yang bzlog me'i spu gri*, pp. 476.4-478.1. No transmission given.
- g. *Padma dbang chen yang dag khros pa* of Grub-thob Dar-phyar [Rin-chen bzang-po]¹⁵, pp. 478.2-482.6
- h. *bKa' srung chos kyi sgron me* of Rin-chen gling-pa, pp. 482.1-483.5
- i. *Ma gcig rgyal thang lugs*, pp. 483.5-484.3. Text interrupted.

The transmission of the *Ka dag rang byung rang shar* reached rGyal-thang-pa Zilgnon rdo-rje through one mChog-sprul Byams-pa Śākya rgyal-mtshan, who stood in the teaching lineage of Byams-pa Chos rgyal-mtshan. Under the name sPrul-pa'i sku-mchog rGyal-sras Sems-dpa' chen-po Śākya rgyal-mtshan the latter master is also known as one of the teachers of the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku; for a description of the transmission of the two treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem 'phru-can—preceded by the one of the *rDor sems snying thig*—, see bsTan-'dzin nor-bu (as in the Introduction, note 10), pp. 167.5-169.4, and Bogin (2005:178-179). This lineage of the *Ka dag rang byung shar* had been received by Nor-bu bde-chen already on an earlier occasion directly from the Third Yol-mo-ba sPrul-sku; see Appendix II: I.3.b.

15. This teaching lineage of the treasure cycle *Padma dbang chen yang gsang khros pa* was propagated by Mus-sred-pa Kun-mkhyen dPal-ldan seng-ge, one of the teachers of Gur-ston lHun-grub bkra-shis; see Translation, note 13. A pilgrimage site in the vicinity of Rag-ma in sKyid-grong is associated with Grub-thob Dar-phyar, who is mainly remembered for the assistance provided to Sa-skya Pandita in Mang-yul during the latter's encounter with the Brahmin scholar Harinanda; see Ehrhard (2004a:284 & 416-417, note184).

j. *mKha' 'gro yang tig* of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, pp. 485.1-487.2. Not all sections of the cycle received.

3. *gTer ston bstan gnyis gling pa yis (= yi) / dri ma med pa'i gdung 'dzin pa / sngags 'chang nam mkha' kun bzang las / yab chos zab gter thob yig yod*, 4 fols., pp. 489.1-495.6. Transmission of a treasure cycle of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa by the latter's grandson sNgags-'chang Nam-mkha' kun-bzang.

a. [*lTa ba*] *sangs rgyas dgongs 'dus*¹⁶, pp. 489.4-495.6

4. No title, 2 fols., pp. 497.1-499.1. Transmission of a treasurer cycle received from Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje.

a. *Phag mo khros ma nag mo* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer, pp. 497.1-499.1 Received at Shel-phug rdzong in Mang-yul Gung-thang in 1677.

5. *Padma thod 'phreng rgyal ba nyid / snyigs 'dus 'gro ba brtser dgongs nas / sprul pa'i skur byon rig 'dzin rter (= rjer) / zab gter thob*

16. After Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa this lineage was passed on by Tshe-bdag rdo-rje to the Bo-dong-pa monk mNyam-med Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan (1486-1553); for the contact between these two masters at the palace of the Gung-thang rulers in the year 1537, see Ehrhard (2000:40-41). mNyam-med Chos-dbang rgyal-mtshan had also been a direct disciple of Rig-'dzin bsTan-gnyis gling-pa and had received the cycle *lTa ba sangs rgyas dgongs 'dus* from the treasure-discoverer in person shortly after it had been recovered in the year 1528; see Ehrhard (in press a). In an interlinear gloss Nor-bu bde-chen refers to the biography of the Bo-dong-pa monk and the insertion of Tshe-bdag rdo-rje into this particular lineage; see *ibid.*, p. 495.6 (*chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar na / tshe bdag rdo rje brgyud pa la 'dzug dgos rgyu 'dug kyang / ding sang 'dzug pa'i gnang 'dug pa gang yin brtag pa'i gnas pa'o*).

tshul po sta ka (= *pu sta ka*), 4 fols., pp. 501.1-508.1. Transmission of a treasure cycle received from Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje.

a. *rDo rje sems dpa' thugs kyi me long* of Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje, pp. 501.1-508.1 Received at La-[l]de[bs] 'Brog in 1673.

6. *Padma thod 'phreng rgyal ba nyid / snyigs dus 'gro la brtser dgongs nas sprul pa'i skur byon rig 'dzin rjer / zab gter thob tshul po sta ka* (= *pu sta ka*), 3 fols., pp. 509.1-514.6. Copy of no. 5 with minor variations.

E. Thob-yig of rGyal-sras seng-ge

1. *Zab chos zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol kyi thob yig*, 4 fols., pp. 515.1-522.4. Transmission of a treasure cycle received from Kah-thog Kun-bzang 'phrin-las [=Kah-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu].

a. *Zab chos zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol* of Karma gling-pa, pp. 515.1-522.4

2. *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po ma ning nag po'i thob yig*, 3 fols., pp. 523.1-528.7. Transmission of a treasure cycle received from Kah-thog Kun-bzang 'phrin-las [= Kah-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu].

a. *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po ma ning gi chos skor* of Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-tshon snying-po, pp. 523.1-527.2 Added: prayer to the incarnation lineage of Kah-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu, written by O-rgyan 'Phrin-las bstan-'dzin dpal bzang-po.

F. Thob-yig of Norbu bde-chen

1. No title, 1 fol., pp. 529.1-530.6. Transmission of a treasure cycle received from rGyal-thang Zil-gnon rdo-rje.

a. *Gu ru'i gsol 'debs* of sPrul-sku bzang-po grags-pa (14th cent), pp. 529.1-530.6. Received at Ling-ba brag-dmar in Mang-yul Gung-thang.

2. No title, 1 fol., pp. 531.1-532.4. Transmission of 'Brug-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa teachings received from the father Nam-mkha' seng-ge.

a. *rJes gnang nyer lnga* of the Fourth 'Brug-chen Padma dkar-po (1527-1592)¹⁷, pp. 531.1-532.4

3. No title, 3 fols. (incomplete), pp. 533.1-534.6. Transmission of treasure cycles received from Phyang-rgyas ras-chen.

a. *rGyal po rnam thos sras kyi chos skor* of Rig-'dzin Sangs-rgyas gling-pa, pp. 533.1-534.2. No transmission given as a record of teachings received was not available.

b. *Khros ma nag mo'i chos skor* of Rig-'dzin Sangs-rgyas gling-pa, pp. 534.1-6. Text interrupted.

17. The description of the transmission closes with a note on the differentiation of the lineage into three branches; see *ibid.*, p. 532.2: “the necessary lineage, [i.e.] the lineage of the father, the lineage of the mother, [and] the lineage of the sons: they are [to be understood] according to the prayer” (*dgos brgyud pha brgyud / ma brgyud / sras brgyud gsum ni gsol 'debs ltar lags*). This statement might refer to the prayer at the beginning of volume two of the *mDo chen bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*; see Appendix I.

4. No title, 1 fol., pp. 535.1-536.6. Transmissions of treasure cycles received from rGyal-thang-pa Zil-gnon rdo-rje.

a. *'Jam dpal rdzogs chen gyi skor* of gTer-ston Sar-ban phyogs-med¹⁸, pp. 535.1-536.6

5. No title, 1 fol. (incomplete), p. 537.1-4. Transmission of a treasure cycle received from sNgags-'chang 'Chi-med rgya-mtsho.

a. *sPrul sku snying rje'i 'pho ba* of 'Khrul-zhig dBang-grags rgya-mtsho, pp. 537.1-4

6. *lHa lung dpal gyi rdo rje nyid / bsam bzhin sprul pa'i sku 'byon pa / rigs (=rig) 'dzin 'chi med rgya mtsho las / zab gter chos kyi thob yig*, 7 fols., pp. 539.1-552.6. Transmission of treasure cycles received from sNgags-'chang 'Chi-med rgya-mtsho.

a. *Thugs gter 'khor 'das rang grol* of Bya mang-po gTer-ston Byang-chub gling-pa (14th cent.), pp. 540.3-546.4

b. *'Joms byed 'char kha sgam bu ma* of Dum-pa rGya Zhang-khrom (11th cent.), pp. 546.4-550.5

c. *Bla rdzogs thugs gsum* of Gu-ru Chos[-kyi] dbang[-phyug], pp. 550.4-552.5 Text interrupted on fol. 7b.

18. This treasure cycle and its transmission, which passed through Rig-'dzin rGod-dem phru-can, had also been received by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma. The site where the treasure was retrieved is known as sTag-tshang Seng-ge bkra-shis dpal-phug; it is located in present-day Bhutan; see Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (as in the Introduction, note 13), vol. 3., pp. 177.3-182.5.

7. No title, 7 fols., (incomplete), pp. 554.1-566.6. Transmissions of a biography and different treasure cycles from Kun-bzang klong-yangs.

a. *Padma bka' thang* of Rig-'dzin Sangs-rgyas gling-pa, pp. 555.4-556.6

b. *Zab chos zhi khro dgongs pa rang grol* of Karma gling-pa, pp. 556.6-562.1

c. *gNam chos of Mi-'gyur rdo-rje*, pp. 562.1-566.6. Text interrupted on fol. 7b, for the following sections, see, pp. 33.1 ff.

8. *bKa' 'drin mnyam med chos kyi rje / nam mkha' seng ge zhabs drung du / gsar rnying bka' gter dam pa'i chos / ji ltar thob tshul pu sta ka*, 8 fols. (in-complete), pp. 567.1-582.6 . Transmission of spoken teachings and treasure cycles from the father Nam-mkha'seng-ge.

a. *sGyu 'phrul zhi khro*, pp. 570.1-574.6. Received at [La-ldebs] dGon-pa chos-rdzong in 1633.

b. *Na rag dong sprug*, pp. 575.1-577.4. Added subtitle: *Na rag dong sprug kyi thob yig nyams chag dri 'khrud*.¹⁹

19. This spoken teaching lineage reached Ma-bdun ras-chen through his teacher Gar-ston rTogs-ldan chen-po. After Che-mchog rdo-rje it was transmitted by a certain Chos-dpal bzang-po. The text provides an interlinear gloss for that person; see *ibid.*, p. 577.5: “he is from the livestock of the mDo-chen-pa [family]; he is not identical with the great teacher [Chos-dpal bzang-po] of the sGo-mang [lHa-khang in rDzong-dkar]” (*mdo chenpa'i gnag tsha yin / sgo mang gi bla chen pa dang mi gcig go*). For this latter master, associated with the royal palace of the Gung-thang rulers and also known as rDzong-dkar Bla-chen Chos-dpal bzang-po (1371-1439), see Everding

c. *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po* of Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i 'od-zer, pp. 577.6-581.1 Added subtitle: *dPal ye shes kyi mgon po legs ldan nag po'i thob yig*.

d. *Ma mo bdun gyi mchod gzhung gcig tu dril ba mun sel sgron me*, pp. 581.1-6. Received in 1633.

e. *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog* of O-rgyan Dri-med Kun-dga' p. 582.1-6 Added subtitle: *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog gi thob yig 'od kyi snang ba*. Text interrupted on fol. 8b.

Two prayers inserted:

i. *Byang gter thugs rje chen po 'gro ba kun grol gyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs*, 1 fol. (incomplete), pp. 583.1-584.4

ii. No title, 1 fol. (incomplete), pp. 585.1-586. Prayer to Rig-'dzin chen-po [Gar-dbang rdo-rje], composed by Gur-ston rGyal-dbang seng-ge (b. 1628), rGyal-thang-pa Zil-gnon rdo-rje and lHa-bdun mkhan-po Blo-bzang brtan-pa.

9. No title, 4 fols. (incomplete), pp. 587.1-594.6. Transmissions of treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin Gar-dbang rdo-rje, received from the treasure discoverer.

a. *rDo rje phur pa spu gri reg gcod*, pp. 587.1-592.4

b. *Padma snyan rgyud*, pp. 593.1-594.6 Text interrupted on fol. 7b.

(2000:127) and Ehrhard (2004a: 258 & 367, note 90).

10. No title, 3 fols. (incomplete), pp. 595.1-600.6. Text begins on fol. 8a. Transmissions of treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin bDud-'dul rdo-rje received from O-rgyan dpal-bzang.

a. *Zab don gsang ba snying thig*, p. 595.1-6 Received in 1668.²⁰

b. *Yang gsang mkha' 'gro snying thig / snying gi thig le / tshe yang phur gsum*, pp. 596.1-598.3

c. *Zhing skyong chen po kun dga' gzhon nu'i chos skor*, pp. 598.3-600.6. Text interrupted on fol. 10b.

G. Thob yig of rGyal-sras seng-ge

1. *Phyag chen lhan cig skyes sbyor kyi thob yig*, 1 fol., pp. 601.1-602.6 (margin: *cha*). Transmission of a Mahāmudrā lineage received from sTag-rtse sKu-skye-ba Mi-pham Phun-tshogs shes-rab (1654-1715). Written in the eighth and ninth Tibetan months of the year 1711; final verse dedicated to Kah-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu in 1752.

One folio with unrelated material; pp. 603.1-604.4

20. After the transmission of treasure cycles of Rig-'dzin bDud-'dul rdo-rje in La-[l] de[bs] in the years 1661 and 1666, this final encounter between O-rgyan dpal-bzang and Norbu bde-chen in the year 1668 must have taken place in southern Mustang. It is known that exactly in 1668 the former master undertook the first building work for his own monastic site, later known as sKu-tshab gter-lnga; see Ehrhard (2001:236-238). It can be assumed that Nor-bu bde-chen was present on that occasion.

2. *Lung phran bu rnams thob pa'i thob yig*, 1 fol. (incomplete), pp. 605.1-6. Transmission of minor teachings received from Kham[s]-lung-pa Padma dbang-gi rgyal-po.

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