

UNEARTHING BON TREASURES: A STUDY OF TIBETAN SOURCES ON THE EARLIER YEARS IN THE LIFE OF GSHEN-CHEN KLU-DGA'*

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Gshen-chen Klu-dga' was an important *gter-ston* (treasure revealer) active in Tibet at the beginning of the eleventh century. The present work supplies translations and discussions of older narrative sources for the earlier part of his life and, in conclusion, a general assessment of his significance for the Bon tradition.

To Professor Per Kvarne in gratitude for much kindness.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE EARLIEST HISTORICAL SOURCES

THOSE WHO HAVE HAD OCCASION to look into the history of the Bon religion will require no introduction to Gshen-chen Klu-dga'. He is the best known of the Bon "treasure revealers" (*gter-ston*, or occasionally *gter-bton*), and at the center of a controversy over the scriptural authority of the texts which he excavated, as well as over the validity of the Bon religion itself. The *locus classicus* of these controversies is an early thirteenth-century source belonging to the religious alternative to Bon, commonly referred to as "Tibetan Buddhism," although we prefer to use the Tibetan word *Chos*. This thirteenth-century work, called the *Textbook on the Single Intention (Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha)*, is made up of brief statements (called *rdo-rje'i gsung*, "Vajra Statements") by 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, founder of the 'Bri-gung-pa lineage of the Bka'-brgyud-pa school, together with commentary by his (loosely speaking) "nephew," Shes-rab-'byung-gnas. I do not wish to enter into a discussion of the polemical tradition in this place, since my purpose is rather to bring forward all the pre-sixteenth-century narrative sources currently known to us on the life of Gshen-chen.¹ Therefore I will cite directly only

that part of the commentary by Shes-rab-'byung-gnas (whose name is often contracted to Sher-'byung) which directly mentions Gshen-chen Klu-dga'. Sher-'byung locates Klu-dga' within a threefold historical model of the development of Bon, one which is in large part (to the best of our knowledge) of his own invention,² and which has never been accepted by the followers of Bon.

Brdol Bon, "Outbroken" Bon, by which Sher-'byung meant a popular religious movement without any valid historical background, one that "popped up" (*brdol*) suddenly.

'*Khyar Bon*, "Strayed" Bon, meaning the phase in which Bon was mixed with "erroneous" philosophical ideas.

Bsgyur Bon, "Transformed" Bon, meaning the phase during which Chos scriptures were "translated" or "transformed" (*bsgyur*) into Bon scriptures by changing a word here and there. This phase Sher-'byung further divided into three different sub-phases.

Sher-'byung credited Gshen-chen Klu-dga' with an essential role in this third and final phase of 'Translated'

* I propose to cover here Gshen-chen Klu-dga's life from his birth in 996 until 1028, when he began his teaching career. The events leading up to his death in 1035 will be the subject of another paper, entitled "Poisoned Dialogue: A Study of Tibetan Sources on the Last Year in the Life of Gshen-chen Klu-dga' (996-1035 C.E.)," forthcoming in the *Central Asiatic Journal*.

¹ The late fourteenth-century history by Sga-ston Tshul-khrims-rgyal-mtshan, entitled *Gter-gyis Kha-byang*, exists in the form of

a forty-five-folio manuscript kept in Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala), accessions number 17765. This source did not come to our attention in time to include it here, although it does contain a biographical sketch on Gshen-chen Klu-dga'.

² The terms *Brdol Bon* and *Brdol Chos* were used by previous writers such as Nyang-ral Nyi-ma-'od-zer and Zhang G.yu-brag-pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa. The names of the other two phases, as well as the threefold scheme itself, seem to be of Sher-'byung's invention.

Bon, claiming that the scriptures excavated by Gshen-chen were in actuality composed by him by "translating" or "transforming" Chos scriptures. Here is a translation of the relevant passage from the *Single Intention*:

[The third and] final transformation: In later times when the embers of the Teaching were rekindled from Mdo-smad,³ there was in Upper Nyang of Gtsang [province] one named Gshen-sgur Glu-dga' [i.e., Gshen-chen Klu-dga'] who, over a period of time having befriended the temple custodian (*dkon-gnyer*) of Chu-mig Ring-mo⁴ in Gtsang, was rewarded with [the place] known as Dar-yul Sgro-lag⁵ in Che-thang, which he transformed (*bsgyur*) into a Bon holy place of Central Tibet (Dbus).

Among other texts, he transformed (*bsgyur*) the *Rgyaspa* into the *Kham-chen*, the *Twenty-five [Thousand]* into the *Kham-chung*, the *Gtan-la Phab-pa*⁶ into *Bon Mdo*, the *Gzungs-sde* into the *Klu-bum Dkar Nag*.⁷ Then he con-

³ This refers to the spread of monastic ordinations from northeastern to central Tibet in the latter half of the tenth century by disciples of Dgongs-pa-rab-gsal (which will occupy our attention in the paper mentioned in the first footnote above).

⁴ Monks from Chu-mig Ring-mo (Long Spring) were involved with Zur-chen in a temple-building decision. For the story, see BKRA, II:175 l. 1; Roerich 1976:81–82, 113, 408, 688, 788, 1009, 1069; Ferrari 1958: 146; PADMA, 405, l. 6; Snellgrove 1987, II:465. Dpal-tshul (1972, II:578, l. 4) identifies Chu-mig Ring-mo with a place called Chu 'Go Stag-stag-ring, located south of Shigatse (Gzhis-ka-rtse). In Bon tradition, it is one of the nine "Gathering Places" ('Du-gnas) in the area of Ru-lag, and so is believed to be an ancient Bon holy place associated with the sages called *rig-'dzin* (knowledge holders).

⁵ Sgro-lag is mentioned in Roerich (1976: 268) as a monastery where Po-to-ba Rin-chen-gsal (1031–1105), a well-known Bka'-gdams-pa teacher, resided temporarily. It is evidently located in Dar-yul, which is a part of 'Phan-yul (Roerich 1976: 635). 'Phan-yul is the high part of the Skyid-chu Valley north of Lhasa (Hoffmann 1950: 331, n. 8). We have seen no other indication that Gshen-chen travelled to Dbus province, and this particular statement of Sher-'byung must be considered extremely doubtful.

⁶ The *Gtan-la Phab-pa* is a classification of sūtras defined by their concern with the codification of the Word (*bka'*), of scripture.

⁷ As pointed out by Shar-rdza Bkra-shis-rgyal-mtshan, this text does not belong to the *gter-ma* of Gshen-chen Klu-dga', but to those of Shu-bon Dge-bsnyen and the Three Ācāryas (see Karmay 1972: 124, 130–31). According to *KHRO* (in a passage translated below), Gshen-chen's father had mastered the *Klu-'bum*, thus explaining the *klu* in the name *Klu-dga'*. Still other possible reasons for the name *Klu-dga'* will be discussed later on.

cealed them as treasures at White Rock (Brag Dkar-po) in Mtsho Nga Dre'u-chung.⁸ Later he himself pretended to excavate them and took them out [of concealment].⁹ His body shattered into pieces and he died accompanied with various inauspicious signs. From then until the present time the Bonpos, Khyung-po Bon-zhig¹⁰ and others, have never stopped transforming/translating (*bsgyur*)

⁸ This place (and the lake after which it is named) belongs to the set of thirty-seven "Gathering Places" ('Du-gnas) of the ancient sages, within a smaller group of nine which are to be found in Ru-lag (see *YL*, 31, l. 6, where it is spelled Mtsho Rnga Dril-chung, and *SFHB*, 646, l. 7, where it is spelled Mtsho Rngas Bre-chung). Wylie (1962: 131, n. 144) locates a Mtsho-mo Dre-btung some eighty miles northeast of Mt. Everest and less than five miles from Gting-skyes Rdzong. Dpal-tshul (1972, II:578, l. 5) locates Mtsho Rnga Dril-chung on the north side of 'Brig-mtshams. See Dpal-tshul (1972, II:593) for more about Mtsho Rnga Brag, site of Gshen-chen's *gter-ma* and its later history. This cave was located on the banks of the lake, but was later occupied by Chos hermits. See Namdak 1983a: 24, where the spelling is Mtsho Rnga Dre-gdong. These sources, in spite of the spelling variations, are all pointing to the same place, which is, in fact, where Gshen-chen was active according to the unanimous testimony of the Bon historians. We should note also that a Mtsho-mo Dre-'thung has been located in Rub-chu at a latitude of 33° and longitude of 78° (but this is much further to the west, in Stod or "Upper" Tibet). See Schlagintweit 1863: 96, no. 128, for this different place known by a very similar (perhaps even "identical") name.

⁹ It is interesting that Sher-'byung here denies that the *gter-ma* are valid "treasures," when he had previously in the same work said that the Bon *gter-ma* were concealed in the time of Khri-srong-lde-brtsan. We might be inclined to think that Sher-'byung is here casting doubt only on the treasures of Gshen-chen, but the following sentences show that he is in fact doubting the *gter-ma* tradition of Bon as a whole. From other parts of the *Single Intention* (which I have translated and discussed on another occasion), one may gather that Sher-'byung had little use for *gter-ma*, whether of Bon or Chos.

¹⁰ Bon-zhig Khyung-nag, 1103–83 C.E., is undoubtedly the person intended here. See Karmay 1972: 168. His biography is found in *SNYAN*, 10–14, 367–85. A different chronological text studied by Kværne (1990a) gives him the dates 1343–1423, which is not possible, for reasons to be brought forward. See also Hoffmann 1950: 233, 238, 309, 310, where we read Bon-bzi K'yun-nag. This Khyung-nag was a direct descendent of Gshen-chen Klu-dga' according to the lineage given in Dpal-tshul (1972, II:247, l. 6).

Bon-zhig Khyung-nag was, according to *SNYAN*, born in a Water Sheep year in Chu-bzang of Upper Nyang. His father and mother were named G.yung-drung-'khor-lo and 'Bre-za Bsod-

[scriptures]. That was the “transformed Bon” (*bsgyur Bon*).¹¹

Even with its clear polemical intentions, it is still the case that this passage is one of our earlier testimonies about Gshen-chen Klu-dga'. While we obviously cannot accept it as a primary guide for research, it might well prove capable of verifying certain key aspects of Gshen-chen's life, helping to provide arguments about his location in time and space. Most important are the earliest Bon narrative sources on Gshen-chen's life, to which I now turn. I begin with a tentative sketch of the earlier Bon historical materials, in general.

With a few exceptions such as the *Grags-pa Rin-chen Gling-grags*, which is attributed to an obscure excavator (*gter-ston*), probably dating to the last half of the thirteenth century, and the life of Lord Shenrab known as the *Mdo'-dus*, which may have been excavated as early as the eleventh century, almost all of the major-length Bon histories are either very recent (eighteenth to twentieth centuries) or composed or revealed in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. From the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries we have no less than five major-length histories which are of great interest to us, because unlike the earlier Bon histories they deal, to varying extents, with the history of Bon in Tibet *after* the imperial period. These will be listed now in chronological order according to our current understanding of their textual interrelation-

dge. Khyung-nag was given his name by Me-ston Zhig-po (see Dpal-tshul 1972, II:466, l. 1) soon after his birth and also studied with the same teacher at the age of twelve. He died in his eighty-first year. His most important disciple was named 'Khrul-zhig Ldom-bu. Me-ston (=Me-sgom) Zhig-po was at least roughly contemporary with Yar-me Shes-rab-'od-zer (whose dates were probably 1118–92). Khyung-nag also met and studied with Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig, whose biography by Zhang-sgom Rin-chen-rgyal-ba is found in *SFHB*, 390–99.

A biography of Bon-zhig Khyung-nag is also found in Dpal-tshul (1972, II:394, l. 5–397, l. 2). Here he is additionally called Gshen-sgom Zhig-po. The lives of his successors in the lineage of the *Rig-pa Gcer Mthong* are told on following pages, and we might note that his spiritual grandson lived during the advent of the Mongols. This does contribute to our sense of certainty that Bon-zhig Khyung-nag lived during the twelfth century, and therefore the dates 1103–83 are most probably correct.

¹¹ This has been excerpted from a complete translation of the anti-Bon polemic of the *Single Intention*, which we plan to publish in the form of a separate study. For the text on which this translation is based, see *DGONGS*, 1:255, or the simple Romanized (Wylie) transcription of the same in Text 1, located in appendix to this paper.

ships, colophon dates and chronologies. All that is reasonably certain to us at this point is that no. 5 was composed after no. 4, while no. 4 was written after, but not long after, no. 3.

1. *Srid-pa Rgyud-kyi Kha-byang Chen-mo (SKC)*. We assume that this, perhaps the lengthiest Bon history (excluding the lives of Lord Shenrab), belongs to the mid-fourteenth century, since it is attributed to the excavations/revelations of the *Gter-ston Gyer Thogs-med* (=Khod-spo Blo-gros-thogs-med), who is said to have been born in 1310. However, one chronology¹² places his excavations in 1310 (an Iron Ox year), while the text itself (p. 369, l. 6) places the excavation in a Water Ox year. What little post-imperial history there is to be found in this work is told in the form of prophecies.
 2. *Khro-bo Dbang-chen-gyi 'Grel-pa (KHRO)* by Skyabs-ston Rin-chen-'od-zer (b. 1353). Assuming his birth-date is correct, the Iron Sheep year of composition must be 1391. The historical part of this work (being a commentary on the introductory chapter of the Bon tantra *Khro-bo Dbang-chen*) pays an unusual amount of attention to Zhang-zhung and its language. He gives etymologies for many Zhang-zhung names and supplies some unique information about the geography of the Zhang-zhung confederacy. One chronology¹³ gives the date 1509.
 3. *Rgyal-rabs Bon-gyi 'Byung-gnas* (for the text, see *THREE SOURCES*, pp. 1–196, often cited in other histories as *Gling-gzhi* [=Gleng-gzhi] *Bstan-pa'i 'Byung-khung*s) by Khyung-po Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan. The chronology given at the end has probably been victimized by scribal miscopying, since there seems to be no way to calculate dates (including the date of composition) correctly on its basis. It would seem reasonable to assume that the Earth Sheep year of composition is 1319 C.E., since this, at least, successfully correlates with the date 146 years following the founding of Gshen Dar-lding Monastery in 1173.¹⁴ However, an interesting passage occurs near the end of the work which we cannot assume to be an interpolation, since it forms part of the outline given earlier in the work. It mentions Ming T'ai-tsu and five generations of Ming Emperors following him. This appears to
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- ¹² Kværne 1971: 232, no. 117. See also Karmay 1972: xxxvii.
¹³ Kværne 1990a: 159.
¹⁴ Kværne 1971. But see Kværne 1988: 243, where the date 1379 is suggested for this history. Other Bon chronologies suggest dates as late as 1559.

- place the composition of the history in the middle of the fifteenth century,¹⁵ therefore either 1439 or 1499.
4. *Yang-rtse Klong-chen* (YL), written by a disciple of Khyung-po Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan by the name of Stag-tsha Bla-ma Rgyal-mtshan.¹⁶ The date of this work, given by Tenzin Namdak as 1351,¹⁷ is therefore too early. We would date it to the last half of the fifteenth century.
 5. *Explanation of the Teachings: Lamp to Illumine Their Growth and Spreading* (Bstan-pa'i Rnam-bshad Dar-rgyas Gsal-ba'i Sgron-me, contained in: SFHB, 498–769), by Spa-ston Bstan-rgyal-bzang-po. We would tentatively date it to 1477. This work has usually been dated to 1405 C.E., but this appears to be too early.¹⁸ The same Spa-ston later wrote the *Zhang-zhung Snyan-brgyud-kyi Bla-ma Brgyud-pa'i Rnam-thar*, a

¹⁵ *THREE SOURCES*, 181, and citation of the same passage in *LEGS*, 237–38 (translation in Karmay 1972: 116). For a list of five different dates that have been proposed for the *Rgyal-rabs Bon-gyi 'Byung-gnas*, see Kværne 1990a: 159. Among the historical sources (here including biographical works on Lord Shenrab) cited in the *Rgyal-rabs Bon-gyi 'Byung-gnas* are the following: 1. *Gzer-mig*; 2. *Mdo-'dus*; 3. *Bsgrags-byang* (perhaps the most cited); 4. *Byams-ma*; 5. *Zhi-khro Rtsa-'grel*; 6. *Yongs-rtse'i Lo-rgyus* (perhaps the *Yang-rtse Klong-chen* work by his disciple!); 7. The *Lo-rgyus Chen-mo* of Khu[-ston]; 8. *Gling-grags*; 9. *Mdo*. We have not noted any citations there of nos. 1 and 2 (in our list of histories), and this could possibly be of some significance for their dating (unless no. 2 on our list is related to the *Zhi-khro Rtsa-'grel*).

¹⁶ This is the beginning of an incomplete commentary on the *Yang-rtse Klong-chen*, entitled *Yang-rtse Klong-chen-gyis 'Grel-pa Nyi-zer Sgron-ma*. The author refers to himself as lineage successor of Khyung-po Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan (YL, 82, l. 2) and gives his own name as Stag-tsha Bla-ma Rgyal-mtshan. His biography may be found along with that of his teacher appended to the *Rgyal-rabs Bon-gyi 'Byung-gnas* (*THREE SOURCES*, 192–96). The teacher of Khyung-po Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan was Rang-grol Bla-ma Rgyal-mtshan (not to be confused with Stag-tsha), whose birth date has been given as 1328 (Kværne 1971: no. 119).

¹⁷ Namdak 1983b: 188.

¹⁸ We know from the text of this history (SFHB, 703, l. 6; 707, l. 6; 730, l. 7) that the *vinaya* lineage of the Spa family was transmitted from Tre-ston Rgyal-mtshan-dpal to Spa Nyi-dpal-bzang-po to Spa Bstan-rgyal-bzang-po. Since Tre-ston is a very well known Bonpo author, it should be possible to discover his date, and this would give us an approximate date for the history. This history appears to be later than YL, since it refers to a text called the *Yang-rtse Klong-chen* (SFHB, 581, l. 2; 670, l. 2), but this may not necessarily refer to the *historical* work by this title

series of biographies of the ancient Zhang-zhung sages and of Tibetans who continued the oral transmission of their precepts.

Among early Bon histories, we might also mention the thirteenth-century work by Bru Rgyal-ba-g.yung-drung (1242–90) entitled *Histories with Biographies* (*Lo-rgyus Rnam-thar dang bcas-pa*), but this is primarily a collection of extremely brief biographical notes on ancient

(although in the case of SFHB, 670, l. 2, it does seem to make reference to the story of the decline of Bon under Khri-srong-lde-brtan as told in YL, 62, l. 2ff.). The dating of this work has been discussed in great detail by Blondeau (1984: 102–4), without, however, proposing any definite solution.

The chronological section (SFHB, 768) says that 460 years separated the Fire Snake year of Gshen-chen's excavations (i.e., 1017) and the year of composition, a Wood Hen. No Wood Hen year occurs 460 years following a Fire Snake year. Therefore, we suggest that the Wood Hen should be emended to Fire Hen. This would place the composition of the work in 1477, a date we provisionally accept.

We may also back up this dating, at least in an approximate and roundabout manner, by considering a text by Tre-ston Rgyal-mtshan-dpal. This work, entitled *Bka' Lung Spyi-yi 'Grel-ba Bon Sgo Gsal-byed* (contained in *GRUB-MTHA*, 1–368), has a brief chronological section embedded in it (pp. 327, l. 3–328, l. 5). This states clearly that the present year (the year of writing), a Wood Mouse, was 368 years (six sixty-year cycles plus eight) after the Fire Snake revelations of Gshen-[s]gur. Accepting as we do that Gshen-chen's excavations took place in 1017 C.E., the date of the text works out to be 1384. With the knowledge that Tre-ston Rgyal-mtshan-dpal was active in the year 1384, we can at least surmise that his monastic "grandson," Spa Bstan-rgyal-bzang-po (note that monastic ordinations are generally conferred by the most senior monks), would have been active between forty and a hundred years later.

The last part of Spa-ston's history has been translated, although in such a literalistic manner as to make it extremely difficult to read, in Mitsushima (1984), including the brief fourth chapter on chronology. The writers of this article are of the unusual opinion that the history by Spa-ston was written in the Zhang-zhung language when, in actual fact, the only Zhang-zhung words to be found in this work, otherwise written in rather ordinary Tibetan literary language, are contained in some proper names like Ta-pi-hri-tsa. Mitsushima 1992 is also in part based on Spa-ston's history, but suffers from many faults both in understanding the Tibetan and in the use of the English language. The author's own comments are often given without any indication that they should be separated from his paraphrases of Spa-ston. A fairly typical sample of Mitsushima's translation is provided below for the sake of comparison.

sages. We have excluded from consideration histories that relate only the story of Lord Shenrab and his immediate disciples without also dealing with the history of Bon in Tibet. We think it unremarkable that these large historical sources began to appear in the fourteenth century. The fourteenth century could be described as a period of “canonization” and national revival as Tibet began to free itself from Mongol domination. This was the time of Bu-ston, of Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, of the *Red Annals*, of Khyung-po Blo-ldan-snying-po (revealer of the massive twelve-volume life of Lord Shenrab, the *Gzi-brjid*), of the political leader Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, and of the excavator of the *Five Sets of Scrolls* (*Bka'-thang Sde Nga*) by the name of O-rgyan-gling-pa. It was sometime during the latter half of that century that the Bon canon was “closed.”¹⁹ Our impression is that Bonpos were *participating* in this era of heightened historical awareness and canon formation, not just following it, just as, in the mid-thirteenth century, 'A-zha Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan (1198–1263) at Dben-sa-kha Monastery had been a participant in the scholastic developments of his time. And just as Bon had participated in the monastic growth of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, it would participate in the reorganization and resurgence of monastic institutions in the early fifteenth century with the founding of Sman-ri Monastery in 1405 C.E.

Fortunately, we do not have to rely entirely on the fourteenth- through fifteenth-century Bon histories for information on Gshen-chen. Of these other sources, one of the most important is a brief historical sketch by 'A-zha Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan contained in one of his magisterial commentaries, this one devoted to perhaps the most famous excavation of Gshen-chen, the bilingual Zhang-zhung and Tibetan cosmological work, the *Mdzod-phug* (*Innermost Treasury*).

The precious one favored with good deeds and fortune, Gshen-rgur [i.e., Gshen-sgur], was doing the practices of the *Extensive Everlasting Peaceful and Wrathful* (*G.yung-drung Zhi-khro Rgyas-pa*) and the *Single-paged*

¹⁹ Kværne 1974: 38–39. I use the word “closed” only in a relative sense, since the Bon scriptural canon has, in fact, always remained opened to some degree. I should also add that Snyan-snga, in his polemic which I have translated elsewhere, had noticed in the early fifteenth century that Bonpos had their own equivalent to the Kanjur, and this suggests, as do the contents of the catalog, that the canon was “closed” in the middle of the fourteenth century or so. However, the catalog ZAB incorporates later excavations up to and including the eighteenth-century excavations of Kun-grol-grags-pa. Still other catalogs, including different numbers of texts, are known to exist.

Water Offering (*Mchod-gtor Shog-cig-ma*) when, over the years, months, days and meal-breaks, the signs of his success appeared. Then he was given a substance of paranormal powers. He was guided by a small rock of crystal to a place that was indicated by something like a tree trunk that had not fallen to the ground. There he obtained the treasure guide (*kha-byang*).²⁰ In the Fire Female Snake year [1017] he opened the door to the treasures and transmitted them to Bru, Zhu, Spa, Cog and others.²¹

Here is a fuller version of this story as it occurs in the *Khro-bo Dbang-chen* commentary (no. 2 in the list above):

Thirdly, the way the treasures were excavated: There was a lay tantrika (*sngags-ban*) named Bkra-gsal-rgyal-po who belonged to the patrilineal descent of Shenrab, the Dmu-tsha clan. He moved from Tsong-ka in the [north-]east to Cog-ro 'Bring-'tshams [in southern Tibet]. His son, Dbang-phyug-mgon-po,²² married the daughter of a Bon tantrika and led his life in the Bon way. He especially mastered the *Klu-'bum* and *Ge-khod*, and so, when his son was born, he named him Klu-dga'.²³ He was born in a Fire Monkey year [996 C.E.]. During the years before he made his discoveries, he used the *G.yung-drung Zhi-rgyas* and the *Single-paged Water Offering of*

²⁰ On “treasure guides” (*kha-byang*), see the detailed discussion in Gyatso (forthcoming).

²¹ This passage is from a brief exposition on Bon history contained in 'A-zha Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan's work entitled *Lung Mtshan-nyid Srid-pa'i Mdzod-phug-gi Klad-don*, as found in *MDZOD*, 156, 1. 7–166, 1. 1 (at pp. 165–66). For the transcription of the Tibetan, see Text 2 in the appendix. Even experienced readers of cursive manuscripts will have difficulties, and some ambiguities remain. Even with the expert help of our friend Dagkar Geshe Namgyal Nyima they could not all be resolved satisfactorily. For example: “He was guided by a small rock of crystal to a place that was indicated by something like a tree trunk that had not fallen to the ground. There he obtained the treasure guide (*kha-byang*).” This might also be translated: “He took an axe of crystal and, in the place where he extracted the twisted (reading *gcus* for *bcus*) roots (? reading *rtsa* for *ca*) of a trunk, he obtained the treasure guide.” It would of course be good to check these readings against other manuscripts, were such available.

²² Comparing the genealogies in other accounts, it appears that one generation has been dropped here. The father of Klu-dga' was Dpal-mgon (who was a nephew of Dbang-phyug-mgon-po).

²³ This etymology for the name of Klu-dga' might seem like a later rationalization. Other possible explanations: it may have

A-nu'-phrag-thag as his main practices; and he became renowned as a contemplative (*sgom-chen*).

Once he competed in jumping with the great athlete named Sne-sna Gyad-pa and the base of his waist was bent. From then on he was known as the "bent Shen" (Gshen-sgur). Later, while he was living at Mtha'-dkar, as prophesied by the Queen of Existence (Srid-rgyal, or Srid-pa'i-rgyal-mo), he opened the treasures in the Fire Female Snake year [1017 C.E.]. Since the Southern Treasures are primarily tantric and mental texts (*sngags sems*), it was a year of four bad months (*gshed*)—the middle month of winter, the twenty-fourth day, the lunar mansion Phālgun (Khra), the planet Jupiter, and the solar house Taurus (Giang), the conjunctions forcefully converging [?] in an "All Overcoming" (Kun-'joms) configuration. The opening took place in the morning (*gdugs*) as if [to say that] the parasol (*dugs*, i.e., *gdugs*) of the teachings was spreading out.

As for the treasure caskets, while there were thirty-two caskets of *glang-ma* wood, of the two which he brought out, the light-colored one yielded the 'Bum Sde [the *Khams Brgyad* texts], while the dark-colored one yielded the tantric and mental texts.

The transmission to the succeeding generations of his disciples were: 1. For the mental class, Zhu. 2. For the philosophical teachings, Bru. 3. For the scriptural texts, Cog-la G.yu-skyid. 4. For the secret mantra and precepts, Me-nyag Bon-cig-ma. If we replace Bru in the list with Mtshe-mi Shag-bar, then we have the "Four Chiefs of Upper Nyang." The "Eight Descendants of Lower Nyang" included Rung-ku G.yung-drung-gtsug-phud and Rung-ku A-tsa-ra. The "Four Banner Holders" included Bru-sha Khyung-gi-rgyal-mtshan and 'Dzi-bon Dbang-gi-rgyal-mtshan . . .²⁴

Except for some minor added details, and, of course, variant spellings of proper names (ubiquitous in Bon manuscripts), the information supplied in these fairly early sources does not really differ²⁵ with the following first-

something to do with the famous Indian drama *Nāgānanda* (Tibetan, *Klu-dga'*), at least in later times well known in Tibet, or, alternatively, it may have something to do with two athletes (*gyad*) who accompanied the Chinese bride of Emperor Srong-btsan-sgam-po to Tibet, according to a frequently repeated story. Their names were Lha-dga' and Klu-dga'. See, for example, Meisezahl (1985: plate 166, i.e., folio 246 verso, line 6).

²⁴ *KHRO*, 66, l. 2–67, l. 1. For a transcription of the Tibetan, see Text 3 in the appendix.

²⁵ Except on the point of how he got the name Gshen-sgur, on which, more below.

person narration embedded in the history by Spa-ston (no. 5 in our list).

We might take Spa-ston's to be the most important source for the life of Gshen-chen since it purports to convey his own words, but will discuss this point further following the translation. The translation was very difficult and no doubt some mistakes remain. We are especially grateful for the version of the story by Shar-rdza translated by Dr. Samten Karmay.²⁶ Here we have done our best to adhere to the text in Spa-ston, except where it is too obscure, in which cases we have been constrained to follow alternative readings from other versions.

2. THE FIRST-PERSON NARRATION OF GSHEN-CHEN'S LIFE IN TRANSLATION

The Southern Treasures (Lho Gter):

I. Characterization (*mtshan-nyid-pa*).

II. Designation (*btags-pa*).

I. A. *The History of the Gshen [Ancestry]*.

B. *How He Excavated the Treasures.*

C. *List of Bon Scriptures.*

D. *How His Followers Spread.*

A. *History of the Gshen [Ancestry]*

The paternal ancestry (*gdung-rgyud*) of Bla-ma Gshen²⁷ was as follows: The clan (*rigs*) was Sga-tsha Dmu.²⁸ The grandfather (*mes*) was Bkra-gsal-rgyal-po.²⁹ The grand-

²⁶ Karmay 1972: 126–45.

²⁷ We should interpret this "Bla-ma Gshen" to mean the "superior" (*bla-ma*) Gshen [family lineage], as the title appears in another text which will be dealt with later on. The "Bla-ma" here does not mean, as it usually does, a "spiritual master" or "monk" (the latter now being, in actual fact, common usage), and we have to avoid the understandable mistake of thinking it applies to Gshen-chen Klu-dga' in particular.

²⁸ Another text reads Dmu-tsha Dga' at this point (*SFHB*, 239, l. 3), and it seems plausible that these family names may be identical. See Stein 1961: 49 for a discussion of the clan name Dmu-tsha Sga (with many alternative spellings). This family name Sga may bear some connection to the leading family of the Tangut kingdom, which had a very similar name, although this requires study.

²⁹ *Mes* may refer to the male ancestors in general (Bkra-gsal-rgyal-po was the *great*-grandfather of Gshen-chen Klu-dga'). See Karmay 1972: 6, where Shar-rdza says that Bkra-gsal-klu-rgyal-po settled in 'Bri-mtshams and "ruled over all the dis-

mother (*phyi-mo*) was Lha-rgyan Btsun-mo.³⁰ They split away from Tsong-kha of 'Khams to Co-ro [=Cog-ro] 'Bring-'tshams. This very talented family was said to be one of *bande* and tantrics. They had three sons: Mi-g.yo'-mgon-po, Dbang-phyug-mgon-po, and Rdo-rje-mgon-po. Mi-g.yo'-mgon³¹ took a sister (*bu-sring*)³² of a Bonpo as wife. They had three sons: Dpal-mgon-gsas, 'Brug-gsas, and Dgos-gsas.³³ Dpal-mgon kept a "chapter" (*le-gu*) of the discontinued lineage of his maternal uncle, turning [the lineage] into a Bon lineage. He had three sons: Klu-dga', Klu-rtsegs and Ge-khod.³⁴

B. *The Story of the Treasures*

Among the several different [accounts], that of Gshen[-chen] himself is as follows.

When I reached my thirteenth year, my father (*pha-jo*) said: "You and Ge-khod run along and go pick white gentian (*spang-rgyan dkar-po*) and tinder (*spra-ba*)."³⁵

tricts." This is the only known indication of an "aristocratic" status for the family, and the source is modern. Another modern source (*THREE SOURCES*, 413) simply says that the Gshen family member came to 'Bri-mtshams and "took land in that country" (*yul der sa bzung*), while the work of Shar-rdza (Karmay 1972: 202, l. 32) reads "wielded power over all the local communities" (*yul sde kun la mnga'-dbang bsgyur*). Until older sources confirm this "aristocratic" status, we should perhaps reserve judgment.

³⁰ This name occurs as Lha-rgyal Btsun-mo in *SFHB*, 239, l. 5.

³¹ According to *SFHB*, 239, l. 6, it was the eldest son of Dbang-phyug-mgon-po who took the Bonpo's sister as wife, and it was his three children that were raised by their mother's brother, who was a Bonpo.

³² This is perhaps a proper name, Bu-sring.

³³ Karmay 1972: 6 reads Rgod-gsas. According to this same source, Klu-dga' and his brothers were sons, not of Dpal-mgon, but of 'Brug-gsas, but this seems to be the result of some confusion in the text of Shar-rdza, since most other sources agree that their father was Dpal-mgon.

According to *SFHB*, 239, l. 7, the names of the three brothers, in order of seniority, were Gsas-'brug, Gsas-khod, and Dgod-de. The two last named had no male progeny. Gsas-'brug studied the Phenomenal Gshen [Vehicle] with his maternal uncle who later died without issue, whereupon Gsas-'brug became the "patron" of the discontinued lineage.

³⁴ According to *SFHB*, 240, l. 1, this is the correct order of their seniority, with Klu-dga' the eldest of the three brothers.

³⁵ *Spra-ba* is a plant which was dried and used for fire starting. See 'Jam-dpal-rdo-rje 1971: 200, for a Tibetan-style botanical illustration. *Spang-rgyan* is in the same volume, p. 177;

So we went. I left Ge-khod to pick gentian, and I went to find tinder in a further valley, where a disembodied voice spoke, saying: "Gshen Klu-dga', shall I bestow the spiritual power of Bon?" The place where I stood shook, and a crevice [?] in the rock was filled with liquid.³⁶ Thinking this to be the spiritual power, I kept it secret even from my parents.

I thought I would stay there at the white rock, but I could not get there for a few years. During that time there was fighting between Central Tibet (Dbus Gtsang) and Zhu-g.yas (Zhu-ya). *Lha* Ge-khod went to the middle [of the fighting], was struck by an arrow, and died. I was held up for a year in the high country gathering wool goats, wool sheep, *mgo* [i.e., *dgo-ba*, a kind of gazelle] and yaks.³⁷ One athletic goatman did not want to give me *mgo* or yaks. He beat me from atop his horse while I ran on foot and escaped. For this they called me "strong man" (*pho shed-can*).

As a distraction from this [business], I was building a three-story [building] at Chu Ser-mo when Sne-nag Ye-mkhyen asked, "Sir, since you are known as 'mighty', will you compete with us?" [He] carried eight bricks.³⁸ Then I, carrying nine bricks, reached the eleventh rung of the ladder³⁹ with the carrying bowl and fell together

three types—white, black, and blue—are pictured. *Spang-rgyan* (meadow ornament) is variously used in Tibetan medicine for treating fevers and throat ailments.

³⁶ This sentence is rather obscure, but MKHAS (folio 64 verso), says clearly that the entire depression in the rock filled with ghee (*mar-khu*), where our present text has *ma-khu*. (Might this explain a very mysterious tenth vehicle of Bon, *Ma-khu-ba*, known only to the *Bka'-thang Sde Lnga*?)

³⁷ Ge-khod is here called *lha* (divinity) as a respectful term for someone who has passed away. The brothers Ge-khod and Klu-rtsegs are reversed here and in some following parts of the story in the *LEGS* version. Karmay's translation (1972: 127) implies that the livestock were collected as a kind of indemnity for the slaying of his brother, and this does seem to be the case. The version of the story in MKHAS (folio 65 recto), suggests that Klu-dga' passed four or five years involved in the legal disputes (*kha-mchu*) of his relatives after Klu-rtseg (!) was killed.

³⁸ Note: *pa'u* = *spra'u*. The fact that he fell at the eleventh rung of the ladder no doubt presages his later inability to keep his excavated scriptures secret for more than eleven years (as told below). The nine bricks are, of course, the nine vehicles.

³⁹ In order to visualize this episode correctly, one must know that this "ladder" most likely was in the shape of a notched log set at an angle. Perhaps "stepladder" would be a more appropriate translation for *skas* (which we might be inclined simply to call "steps").

with the bricks. The [back] joints at the waist were set, but it did not help, and in my eighteenth year, I walked bent over.⁴⁰

At first, when the spiritual power (*dmu-yad*) had appeared, I thought I would remain [there], but it did not work out [that way]. I thought that this [accident] was a "fault formation" of that.

In my nineteenth year, I requested teachings from Dpon[-gsas] Ra-zhags, including the *G.yung-drung Khro Rgyas* and the single-paged water offering of A-nu-ma. Then I engaged in spiritual work during the Tiger year [1014 C.E.] at Brag-dkar-ru. During that year of spiritual work, the signs and spiritual power (*dmu-yad*) appeared as before. I dreamed that I encountered the deity and a stream of elixir disappeared [inside me]. That year, my elderly father died, so I came out of retreat and I stayed there fulfilling the "memorial observances" (*dge-rtsa*). This detained me until the Dragon year [1016 C.E.].

During the Dragon year, the signs [of successful practice] appeared as before. In that year I took Na-ga-za Dpal-sgron [as wife]. By fault of that, the year passed.

In the following Snake year [1017 C.E.], the signs appeared as before. [One] evening at dusk there came a black woman, her locks of hair pressing against her shoulders, her angry fangs bared as if ready to eat something. Without being frightened at this, I remained in contemplation. That evening I set out for Rdza Skya Seng-gi Thod (Upper Whitish Clay). I reached the monastery in the morning and, as I arrived at the juncture of Brag-dkar (White Rock), I was met by many children with turquoise[-ornamented] topknots and women [dressed in] fine white cloth.⁴¹ They prostrated, gave offerings and scattered flowers. I sat without expressing delight in this and they disappeared so that I had no idea where they went.

Again, one evening at dusk a huge Chinese mask appeared, saying, "I will devour you!" but again I remained in meditation unafraid. That evening I started for the top of the large grassy mountain facing me. In the morning, as I arrived at that place many Bonpos with tigerskin coats beating drums and sounding *gshang* bells beckoned to me, but then disappeared leaving me with no idea where they had gone. That evening there were different miraculous appearances including a giant frog. By night, I started for the north side of the place and in the morning as I returned there was a rock which seemed to

⁴⁰ This explains his common name Gshen-sgur, "Bent Gshen." Other sources tell other stories to account for this. MKHAS (folio 65 *recto*) says that he was so hunchbacked that when he rode a horse his chin touched the halter.

⁴¹ *Dar la'u* = *dar sra-ba-po*.

have a human face dripping with a white liquid with yellow globules.⁴² Holding out a copper basin, [the liquid] poured out continuously and filled it. I took some with my fourth finger and placed it on my tongue. It had a superb taste and, thinking it was Elixir, I drank until it was gone.

In the first part of the day, while I was doing a water offering (*mchod-gtor* or *chu-gtor*), the copper basin flew into the sky and then came back landing nearby.⁴³ Not only that, but a "finger rock"⁴⁴ hit me from somewhere just as I was going to sleep. I thought it was [my brother] Klu-rtsegs and stayed still. When I brought my head and eyes close, there was no one at all. Many crystal lights in the atmosphere were coming toward me. I went to the face of the cliff to look, but there was no one there. Five-colored light rays were radiating and dissolving into me. Then there were three loud sounds. After that, from the sky came four beautiful white-colored women wearing fine white cloth. One came down riding a dragon, another on a *khyung* (*garuda*) bird, the third on a lion and the fourth on a tiger.⁴⁵

They descended, saying: "Gshen-sgur Klu-dga', shall we give you the spiritual powers of Bon? If you study, will you become knowledgeable? If taught, will you be able to meditate?"

"If I study, I will become knowledgeable. If taught, I will be able to meditate. Grant me the spiritual powers of Bon." I took a first-offering (*phud*) of yogurt from the cave and made an offering.

"Since you are an emanation embodiment, take this eight-finger-width[-sized] crystal *phur-pa* and keep it [secret] for a cycle [of twelve] years,"⁴⁶ they said. Travelling into space, they vanished.

When I examined it, the *phur-pa* had what are called the nine grades of Vehicles, the six doors of Bon. Nine

⁴² The word *zar-bu* is equivalent to *za-ra*, according to the vocabulary at the end of Namdak 1971.

⁴³ Note the levitation of a bowl in 'Jig-rten-mgon-po 1969: 64, l. 4. There is a much older Buddhist story about the levitation of an alms-bowl, for which see, for example, Murray (1981-82: 253-84).

⁴⁴ A stone flicked from between thumb and finger.

⁴⁵ Karmay (1972: 128) identifies these women as the Four Miraculous *Sman-mo* (Rdzu-'phrul Sman Bzhi). Also called *Sman-mo Bzhi*, they are listed in *SFHB*, 632, l. 1. They are the hypostases of the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water.

⁴⁶ This means that he was supposed to keep the revealed teachings secret for twelve years, but as we will see, he started teaching only eleven years after his excavations. The *phur-pa* served as his "guide" (*kha-byang*), a mysterious key to the location of the treasury. For a detailed discussion of these *kha-*

tether-ropes (*rdang*, =*gdang*) came down from the crystal tip. It had something like a spiral on its trunk. At its head was a square boulder. On the neck was a swastika of vermilion. Below it was a clear swastika of crystal. Upon examination [of the site], it turned out to be just like that.

Without considering if it would be possible to break (overturn?) the boulder, I wanted to do it. So I sent Dpal-sgron away and said to Klu-rtsegs, "Come and bring a pickaxe." That evening it was not possible to break the boulder. We were prevented by a strong wind (*rlung-dmar*) and snow.

That night I dreamed a voice came to me, saying: "Klu-rtsegs is an emanation of the planet Mars. Therefore, he is no suitable subject for the teachings. Do not bring him."

In the morning I said to him: "I played a trick on you. Now just how would a treasure come from a rock like this! I need to fix the pickaxe today,⁴⁷ so leave it here."

Klu-rtsegs left me with the words, "You need a *treasure* more than [you need a] *Bon* treasure."⁴⁸

Then this is what occurred on the twenty-fourth day of the middle winter month, the day of the *khra* constellation: I overturned the square boulder to find a bluish clay. Below that was another square boulder with

byang, see Gyatso (forthcoming). In modern colloquial usage, the word *kha-byang* frequently means "[street or mailing] address."

⁴⁷ The text uses an unusual word *nyi-ra* here for 'day' (*nyin*).

⁴⁸ Translations of this and several preceding paragraphs by Mitsushima (1992: 43–44) are provided here for comparison (note that the entire narration is translated into third-person):

Then he brought a heap of curd from the Cave and offered it to the angels. The angels said, "Now you are an incarnation of God. Go down these stairs and keep going for one year." And they disappeared in the sky. He saw the crystal pegs, (Shel gyi phur pa), which showed the nine vehicles (xx), and six way (Bon sgo drug yod). After descending nine crystal steps he found a tree whose branches appeared to be tied in bundles. Under the tree there was a square stone slab adorned with a colorful Swastika (g.yung drung). Lying beneath the stone slab there was a crystal slab, and examining it carefully he found that it was similarly decorated. He couldn't watch the stone for long, so he sent his wife, Dpal sgron, to ask his brother Klu rtsegs to bring a mattock. But even with the mattock he couldn't move the stone slab. Meanwhile a storm had gathered and snow had begun to fall, so he had to quit. That night some strange things happened, by the power of Mars, so people believe. A strange voice was heard to say, "Because you tried hard and didn't give up, tomorrow morning you shall have the

two swastikas drawn on it—one in vermilion, the other in crystal. I took it out and there were two small boxes. In the larger box were many Bon [teachings] of both the cause and result Vehicles.⁴⁹

I went to take the treasure manuscripts and in a moment they were gone to who knows where. I went to the treasure hole and said, "Now how is it they were here and now that I come to take them they are gone?"

In the evening a black woman and a black man came and said: "Do not carry these things of ours. When you extract them, set up as [their] 'substitute'⁵⁰ a white sheep with vermilion eyes and a white yak with red forehead spot (*mdongs*) and belly wool (*'khob*, = *'khob-bal*). Set up a *'brang-rgyas* with small vermilion spots and a *bshos-bu*.⁵¹ Display them in front of the hole (*dmig*) and [then] take [them]." When they said that, I did not want to take (*bkyer*) them.

C. List of the Bon [Scriptures]

"I did not copy out [the texts in] the larger box."⁵²

treasure that is hidden under the stone. Then leave your mattock as an offering under the stone. Klu rtsegs said, "Treasure my ass!" and went home.

⁴⁹ The text of Namdak 1983b comes to an end at this point.

⁵⁰ Our text reads *rta*, 'horse', instead of *gta'*, a 'security, pawn, pledge'. The *gta'-chen*, or 'great pledge,' is a bowl filled with liquid used in many Bon rituals.

⁵¹ These are all ritual preparations for the propitiation of the protectors who "own" the treasure, and without whose permission the treasure cannot be extracted without suffering dire consequences. All the ritual preparations described here were probably then, as they are now, modelled from colored butter and barley flour. The *'brang-rgyas* is a specific type of ritual offering. The word *'brang-rgyas* may translate as "extensive nomad's tent" (felt tent like the Mongolian yurt) or, perhaps, "well-equipped nomad's tent," but better is "expanded chest." It is, in actuality, a heap of barley flour decorated with butter. This is one of the ritual items for which Sa-skya Paṇḍita, in his *Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye* (see *SDOM*, 94), was unable to find any Indian source. It is also mentioned in a work on consecration (*rab-gnas*) attributed to Atiśa (but this work uses some specifically Bon terminology, including *bya-ru*, the "bird horns" that form part of the finial of Bon *mchod-rtens*, as we will see later on). I should add that one Rnying-ma-pa scholar informed me that *'brang-rgyas* can be used to refer to the "life vase" (*tshé bum*) used in many rituals. I have been unable to come up with confirmation of this latter usage, but leave the question open.

⁵² This ends, for the time being, the first-person narration by Gshen-chen, which resumes at the beginning of section D, following.

In the small box were found a *Khams Brgyad*, *Mdzod*, many Inner and Outer Secret Mantra texts, as well as Mental Class texts and so forth. The texts were:

Khams Brgyad Gtan la Phab-pa'i 'Bum in sixteen sections, and the extracted *Mchong* in four sections.

The *Srid-pa'i Mdzod-phug Chen-mo*.

Outer Tantras (Sngags Phyi): Rnam-dag Yum-gyi 'Phrin-las. Thang-ma-'od-rgyal-gyi Mchod Gtor, root text together with commentary. *Mu-dra Lha'i Phyang-rgya*. The single-paged text on *tsha-tsha*. The root mandala of *Kun-snang-khyab-pa*. The *Three Cycles of Consecration (Rab-gnas Skor Gsum)*. The *Asura's Fire Rite of All-Knowing (Kun-rigs Lha-ma-yin-gyi Sbyin-bsreg)*.

Inner Tantras (Sngags Nang): Zhi-ba Yongs-rdzogs. Man-ngag Thig-le Dbyings 'Chad, together with root text and commentary. *Khro-bo Dbang-chen Gzhung Rtags. Dbang Chu-bo Rab-'byam*, both large and small. *Dus Drug Ma-mo*. The cycle of *Srid-pa'i-rgyal-mo* riding a red mule. *Ma-mo 'Dus-pa* together with its heart-of-hearts tantra.

Mental Class: Nine series of lesser Mental Class texts including the *Ga-pa [=Gab-pa]*.

Harmful mantras: Mu-stegs A-mu-kha Phung-gi Rgyud. Shan-pa Ma Bzhi'i Gsang Sgrub.

On the basis of the *Sngags Grags*,⁵³ it is said that there were thirty-three or thirty-seven wooden⁵⁴ boxes, of which no more than two were removed by Gshen-sgur. Generally, [this confusion] will be cleared away by taking into account [what it says in] the *Rna Rgyan*.⁵⁵ It is to be understood that the *Khams-chen* came out in thirty-three scrolls and that the excavated pages (*gter shog*) came in joined pairs.

D. How his Followers Spread

As the cycle of [twelve] years was passing, Sbrags-sto Ku-ra built a *Byang-chub-chen-po* and invited the physi-

cian (*lha-rje*) Zhang [to consecrate it]. While he was performing the consecration (*zhal-sro*),⁵⁶ I asked what a chorten of Dharmakāya might be. Since there is nothing in a chorten that could apply to Dharmakāya, I proclaimed Bon teachings on that occasion, being unable [to wait to do so] more than eleven years. The earliest to ask [me] for Bon teachings was Me-nyag Na-gu. He offered a thoroughbred mare and a wolfskin cloak (*spyang-thul*) and said that he required a Bon text of the red torma rite (*gtor-ma dmar-po*). He received the *Khro-bo Dbang-chen* [teachings]. Then Zhu-g.yas Legs-po slept [at my] door and received many [teachings].

Then Cog-lha G.yu-skyid came, saying, "Please show me these texts you have reportedly excavated."⁵⁷ After showing them, he kept the tantra [texts].

"I would like to write out this *Khams-chen*," he said.

"It is no good if I give it to you before I have constructed (*bzhengs*) [a copy] myself."

"I will construct and offer [a copy] to [you] the teacher; then I will make my own copy."

"Will you finish this?" I asked.

"I will have no problem," he replied.

He erected [the manuscript called] *Bla-'bum Bse-gleg-can*⁵⁸ and made an offering of it to me. Then he copied out [the manuscript called] *'Bum Dmar* [for himself].

Since these [preceding] statements were made by Gshen-sgur himself, there is no doubt [as to the truth of the contents]. There are many other stories of which I am aware.

Later on, 'Tshe-mi Shag-'bar requested teachings, and [he together with the three just mentioned] were known as the Four Chiefs of Upper Nyang.

Then, the Eight Pillars of Lower Nyang requested teachings: 1. Rong-bu A-tsa-ra. 2. Rong-bu G.yung-drung-gtsug-phud. 3. Phug-pa Rgod-po. 4. Stag-sgom

⁵³ Evidently this is a reference to the *Sngags-kyi Gling-grags*, a Bon historical source. A title similar to this is found in *SFHB*, 136, 1. 7–140 (see the colophon), but this needs more research.

⁵⁴ Here *blang-ba* should be *glang-ma*, a kind of wood.

⁵⁵ The *Rna Rgyan* is a Bon historical source, which seems not to be currently available. The meaning of this passage is just that later authors had confused the number of scrolls with the number of boxes. The present author is arguing that there were in fact only two boxes, but that all the excavations that he made known were found in one box only.

⁵⁶ The usual word for "consecration" is *rab-gnas*. This word, *zhal-sro*, literally means to "warm the face," and sometimes specifically means, in everyday American English, to "soften [someone] up."

⁵⁷ According to MKHAS (folio 68 *recto*), Gshen-chen completed the copying of all the "yellow pages" (*shog ser*, the excavated papers), except for the thirty-three scrolls of the *Khams Brgyad*, in the space of eight years.

⁵⁸ In MKHAS (folio 68 *verso*), this manuscript is called the *Bla-'bum Gser-glegs-can*. (The Ven. Slob-zur Tenzin Namdak told me he saw this, the first copy of the *Khams Brgyad*, when he was in Tibet.) The copy that Cog-la (= Cog-lha) made for himself was, according to the same source, called *Cog-la'i 'Bum-mo-che*.

Rtsang-po-'bar. 5. Ra-zhags Mon-skyid. 7. Skyi-dpal 'Dul-gsas. 8. Bru-sha Lha-gnam-gsas.

The Banner Attainers were: 1. Bru-sha Khyung-gi-rgyal-mtshan.⁵⁹ 2. Mar-pa Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan. 3. 'Dzi-ston Dbang-gi-rgyal-mtshan.

The five men of Srad-pa were: 1. Ra-zhags Mu-'khar. 2. Tre-bon Ye-shes-zla-ba. 3. 'Dzi-bon 'Phan-snang. 4. Zi-'di Lha-rtse. 5. Shud-kye Kyi-'brug.

There were also [receivers] of precepts: Those from Nyang-stod were named 1. Zu Ye-shes. 2. Zu Mgon-ne. 3. Rgya-bon Dge-snyen-gtsug-phud. There were three from La-stod: 1. Sum-bon Stag-slag-can of La-stod. 2. Rngo-bon Rgod-po of Shab. 3. 'Da'-mi Shags-kya of Nyi-shal. From 'Bring-'tshams were: 1. Ga Gtsug-phud. 2. Ga A-tsa-ra. 3. Zur-tshang Skyid-dpal.⁶⁰

* * *

After completing the story of Gshen-chen and listing his disciples, both Shar-rdza and Spa-ston Bstan-rgyal-bzang-po continue by telling stories about those disciples, with main emphasis on the Four Great [Spiritual] Sons (*bu chen bzhi*), holders of the main lineages. However, Bstan-rgyal-bzang-po tells the stories of three of the four Great Sons in a few lines in a very cursory manner, while the story of the remaining Great Son, Spa-ston Dpal-mchog, along with his physical and spiritual descendents (many were both), is developed over several pages.⁶¹ This is only natural, since the author was himself a member of the Spa family⁶² and received the trans-

mission of the tantric *gter-mas* of Gshen-chen Klu-dga' through the lineage initiated by Spa-ston Dpal-mchog. Even though some sources mention doubts that Spa-ston Dpal-mchog ever met Gshen-chen,⁶³ no such doubts are mentioned in Spa-ston's history. It simply states that Dpal-mchog met Gshen-chen when the latter was on his deathbed and received from him the transmission of the tantra *Khro-bo Dbang-chen*. In any case it is agreed that Dpal-mchog studied further with two direct disciples of Gshen-chen—'Dzi-bon and Me-nyag. From the perspective of posterity there were three disciples who were most important: Spa-ston Dpal-mchog, Zhu-yas Legs-po, and Bru-chen Nam-mkha'-g.yung-drung (with his son, Bru-sha Khyung-gi-rgyal-mtshan). According to Shar-rdza, these three "were the first to establish the doctrinal tradition."⁶⁴ Later on, two members of the Rme'u clan, Rme-ston Lha-ri-gnyan-po (1024–91) and Rme'u Dam-pa Ri-khrod-pa (1038–96), accepted teachings from all three of the lineage holders, establishing their own Rme'u lineage. This makes, together with the descendents of Gshen-chen himself, five clans that were especially important for the transmission of Gshen-chen's *gter-mas*, the Gshen, Bru, Zhu, Spa and Rme'u. These clans are supremely significant for us for several reasons, first and foremost being that *it is because of them that knowledge about Gshen-chen Klu-dga' has been preserved*. We might reasonably guess that the first-person narration by Gshen-chen Klu-dga' presented by Spa-ston was preserved in the Spa family lineage.

These five clans all had *vinaya* lineages associated with them; each developed particular monastic traditions that differed somewhat from each other.⁶⁵ The Bru, Zhu, and Gshen had distinct ritual traditions. It is said that

⁵⁹ According to MKHAS (folio 69 *recto*), this disciple (the name of his father, Bru-chen Nam-mkha'-g.yung-drung, also said to be a disciple of Gshen-chen, is curiously lacking here) started the lineage of the philosophical teachings (*mtshan-nyid*) and composed a commentary on the *Mdzod[phug]*. His family originated in the land of Bru-sha, neighboring Orgyan, and Tho-gar; see the same work, folio 74 *recto* ff. Bru-sha is Little Balür, or Burusho, according to Beckwith 1987: 116, n. 44. The story of the origins of the Bru family in Bru-sha has been told in Hoffmann 1969, based on the eighteenth-century history by Kun-grol-grags-pa.

⁶⁰ The text used as basis for the preceding translation is Spa-ston Bstan-rgyal-bzang-po's *Bstan-pa'i Rnam-bshad Dar-rgyas Gsal-ba'i Sgron-me* (as found in *SFHB*, 498–769, at pp. 717–24). A transcription is provided in Text 4, appended below.

⁶¹ *SFHB*, 725, l. 1–731, l. 3. Spa-ston Dpal-mchog was born in 1014 (Kværne 1971: no. 71).

⁶² See Dpal-tshul 1972, II:299, l. 4, for a not very informative biographical notice on Spa-ston. One can at least see from this source Spa-ston's position within the Spa family lineages. On the Spa (or Dpa', etc.) family, see Stein 1961: 66ff. It is in-

teresting that the language of the Tanguts (Me-nyag) is called (in the Bon history *SKC*) the Spa language (*Spa skad*).

⁶³ MKHAS, folio 69 *recto*, line 5; Karmay 1972: 135. His name is not listed among the disciples of Gshen-chen in the lists accompanying the different versions of his biography.

⁶⁴ Karmay 1972: 137.

⁶⁵ The main monasteries belonging to these monastic traditions are marked on the map accompanying Karmay 1972. The Gshen (at Dar-lding Monastery), Bru (at G.yas-ru Dben-sa-kha), and Rme'u (at Dpal-ldan Bzang-po-ri, also called Snye-mo Bzang-ri) are located near the north bank of the Brahmaputra. The Spa monastery is in Gung-thang, rather far from Gshen-chen's locale, while the Zhu monastery (Ri-zhing) is closer, located not far to the southwest of Rgyal-rtse. This shows that they were rather isolated from each other, geographically speaking. This shows also that Gshen-chen's teachings spread primarily to the north and to the west of his home area.

nowadays the Bru ritual tradition is mostly followed, although some Gshen rites continue to be performed.⁶⁶ Even if the Bru family itself nearly disappeared in the nineteenth century, its monastic tradition is of special significance because of the monastery G.yas-ru Dben-sa-kha, founded in 1072 by a disciple of Nam-mkha'-g.yung-drung named Bru-chen G.yung-drung-bla-ma.⁶⁷ It was the most important single center of Bonpo learning in the eleventh through fourteenth centuries. Damaged by floods sometime after 1386, its traditions were carried on at nearby Sman-ri Monastery, founded in 1405, which then took the place of Dben-sa-kha as the center for higher Bon studies. The families acted as main patrons for their particular monasteries, but they also contributed their sons, who sometimes became abbots. It is very important to understand the role of these Great Families for the history of Bon in the eleventh century and following, which also helps to make sense of some of the further sources about the life of Gshen-chen, to which I now turn.

3. THE BIOGRAPHY OF BLA-MA GSHEN

The text entitled simply *The Biography of Bla-ma Gshen (Bla-ma Gshen-gyi Rnam-thar)*⁶⁸ would seem to be a biography of 'Gshen-chen Klu-dga'. However, the "Bla-ma Gshen" of the title refers to the Gshen family lineage, and not to Gshen-chen in particular, whose life occupies only one page of the six. The first page tells of the ancestors preceding Gshen-chen, much as told in the history by Spa-ston (although there are a few significant differences which have been noted already), while the last four pages are about his descendents. Following is a translation of the last part, about Gshen-chen and his descendents.

* * *

The eldest [son] was Bla-ma Gshen-sgur. The *Prophecy (Lung)*⁶⁹ says,

There will appear one named Klu-dga' of the Gshen,
an emanation of Dmu-tsha Gyer-med.

⁶⁶ Skorupski 1981: 34.

⁶⁷ For a chronological listing of abbots of Dben-sa-kha, see Cech 1986: 22, n. 18 and Karmay 1972: 140.

⁶⁸ Found in *SFHB*, 238–44; the portion translated here is located at pp. 240 l. 2–244, for a transcription of which, see Text 5, appended to this paper. We have also consulted the recopied version in *BMBM*, 58–66, which actually has a few preferable readings.

⁶⁹ The word *lung* implies that the text is a "prophecy" (*lung-bstan*). The citation is found in a text entitled simply *Lung-ston*,

While he is in retreat at Mtsho-rngam Rock
I will take the form of a crystal *phur-pa*
and give him my blessings.

With it he will open the treasury door of the Teachings
and flood the four directions with their sun.

*The Middle Key of Dpon-gsas Da*⁷⁰ says,

A Gshen-po of the Dmu clan, Klu by name,
will come to 'Bring-'tshams Mtsho-rnga Brag-dkar.
His accomplishments will be prophesied by the signs of
scripture
on the blessed crystal *phur-pa*.
As if none other than 'Chi-med-gtsug-phud,⁷¹
he will plant the life-wood of Bon Teachings.

It also says,

An emanation of Da-mi-thad-kye
named Klu-dga' of Gshen will appear.
After being blessed by the ministers [?],
he will open the door of scriptural treasures.

*Be-ro-tsa-na's Lesser Key*⁷² says,

located in *SFHB*, 72–86, at pp. 78, l. 7–79, l. 1. It is also found in a *gter-ma* of Rma-ston Shes-rab-seng-ge located in *SFHB*, 186–237, at p. 228, l. 6. Also, a parallel citation from the "*Sgrags-byang* by Dran-pa" is found in Dpal-tshul 1972, II:184, l. 5.

⁷⁰ The particular prophetic book cited here seems to be a *gter-ma* of Dbyil-ston He-ru-ka Khyung-rgod-rtal (notice the *Dbyil-gyi Lde-mig 'Bring-po* cited in *A-TRI*, 27), and the citation could indeed be located in *CP*, 257–301, a text entitled *Dran-pa'i Lung-bstan Lde-mig 'Bring-po*, with the particular citation found at p. 267, l. 3 (also, *SFHB*, 92, l. 7 and 723, l. 3, where the reading is rather different). The "Dpon-gsas Da" of the title should be emended to "Dpon-gsas-pa" (as appears later in the text), and in this case the "Dpon-gsas" is understood as a title of Dbyil-ston, who is often called Dpon-gsas Khyung-rgod-rtal. Most of the persons and events prophesied here predate the late-twelfth-century *gter-mas* of Dbyil-ston, although there is clear reference to the Sa-skya Dpon-chen Shākya-rin-chen and the fighting between the Sa-skya-pa and 'Bri-gung-pa factions in the late thirteenth century (p. 292, l. 4). See Kværne 1974: 136, no. T224, for a reference to these prophetic works.

⁷¹ On 'Chi-med-gtsug-phud, whose name means "Deathless Headcrest," see Martin 1994. He is the originator of the Bon tantras, and Bon historians often identify him as a prior manifestation of Gshen-rab Mi-bo, the founder of Bon.

⁷² A text by this title is mentioned in the prophecy text referred to in the previous note (p. 300, l. 4). The citation is found in its context in a work entitled *Be-ro-tsa-na'i Lung-ston*

An emanation of Klu-bon Ye-shes-snying-po
will appear named Klu-dga' of the Rga (=Sga) clan.
He will make the nine Vehicles Teaching spread.

He was born in a Fire Male Monkey year [996]. In his twenty-second year, a Fire Female Snake year [1017], in the middle month of winter, on Monday the twenty-fourth, a day of the lunar asterism *khra*, he opened the treasure of Eternal Bon and had the pride of Accomplishment. Then, when he reached his thirty-sixth year [1031], Zhu-yas Legs-po of Skyin-mkhar,⁷³ one born in a Tiger year [1002], came in his thirtieth year [1031] to his presence and was granted Bon Teachings, it is said. The story of how he opened the treasures and propagated Bon Teachings has been told elsewhere and will not be repeated here. It is said that later on he passed away in a Wood Male Tiger year [1074?].⁷⁴

Bla-ma Gshen-sgur had two sons. The eldest, Rin-chen-rgyal-mtshan, was born in an Earth Tiger year ["1038," but actually 1030] when his father was in his thirty-fifth year.⁷⁵ He died at the age of eighty-one⁷⁶ in a Tiger year [1110]. The lineage of the younger son, Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, was broken off.

Rin-chen-rgyal-mtshan had two sons, Sman-khod [=Sman-rgod] and Tha-ru. The elder one, Sman-khod, was born in an Ox year [1049] and died in his thirty-fourth year, a Dog year [i.e., a Water Male Dog, 1082].⁷⁷ The younger one was named Tha-ru Me-rog.

(in *SFHB*, 108–13, at pp. 109, l. 7–110, l. 1). Be-ro-tsa-na is, of course, a Tibetanized form of Sanskrit *Vairocana*.

⁷³ I.e., Skyid-mkhar. See map at end of Karmay 1972. It was this same general area where the head monastery of the Zhu clan was founded. Kværne (1971: no. 69) agrees that Zhu-yas was born in 1002 C.E.

⁷⁴ This seems to refer to the death date of Gshen-chen (not Zhu-yas), which was a Wood Pig year (Shing Pho Phag), therefore 1035, rather than a Wood Tiger (Shing Pho Stag), which would have been 1074. Dpal-tshul (1972, II:247, l. 3) says that Gshen-chen died in a Tiger year in his forty-third year (therefore necessarily an Earth Tiger year, or 1038). However, we follow the chronologies which agree that he died in a Wood Pig (his fortieth year).

⁷⁵ The addition does not work here. He would have been in his forty-second year in 1038 (Earth Tiger), if he had not died in 1035. We assume that the date 1030 (Iron Horse) was intended. Dpal-tshul (1972, II:247) has Rin-rgyal (i.e., Rin-chen-rgyal-mtshan) born in an Earth Horse (Sa Rta), therefore 1018(!).

⁷⁶ We follow *BMBM*, 67, which reads "eighty-one" rather than the "one hundred eleven" of the present text.

⁷⁷ Sman-rgod was born in a Wood Dog year (1034? 1094?), according to Dpal-tshul (1972, II:247, l. 6). We have merely noted the variant dates given by Dpal-tshul, rather than used

The son of Sman-khod was Dam-pa Rgyal-tshab.⁷⁸ He was born after the death of his father in a Water Male Dog year [1082]. He studied Mental and Tantric teachings from the physician (*lha-rje*) Sgrol-ba-gshen-rgyal. He did a tantric retreat at Brag-dmar of Rlang in Tshamo-rong and had the pride of Accomplishment. He beheld the form of the chosen deity. Staying in solitary hermitages, he did the meditation practices, many extraordinary spiritual experiences emerged in his thought continuum, and he simultaneously achieved realizations. He was without fear, and so when things disentangled on their own ground he spoke many precepts of spiritual experience. He did not keep any fixed abode, but wandered about in all regions creating extensive benefits for beings. He became an unrivalled Mahāsiddha of Bon. Later he made his seat at the Bon holy place of Bod-dong-kha [=Bo-dong-kha] and at the age of eighty-nine⁷⁹ he passed away [1170].

Dam-pa [Rgyal-tshab] had four sons. The eldest was Doctor (*lha-rje*) Jo-bkra. He was born in a Dog year when his father reached his sixty-first year [1142].⁸⁰ He held the holy place of 'Or-mo Stag-grod in 'Jad.⁸¹ He passed away in his eighty-second year [1223].

Next in order of age was Lha-rje Jo-'brug. He stayed in Tsha-mo-rong.

His younger brother was Lha-rje 'Bum-me-nag-po. He held the monastery of Mang-lha-rtse in 'Bring-'tshams. His descent line also came to an end.

The youngest brother was Rtsang-mo-che 'Od-rgyal. He stayed in Yab-yum⁸² Gnyan-rtse Temple. His descendants came to an end.

them to emend the present text, which was evidently one of those on which the modern historian based his own interpretation of the chronology.

⁷⁸ He founded the monastery in Khams called Bo-dong-kha. See Dpal-tshul (1972, II:593, ll. 6ff.). The same volume of the work (p. 248, l. 1) says that he was born in an Iron Tiger year (1050? 1110?). The name Dam-pa Rgyal-tshab may mean that he was a "substitute" (*rgyal-tshab*) of his "departed" (*dam-pa*) father who had died earlier in the same year he was born. One Bon chronology dates his birth at 1238 (an Earth Dog year).

⁷⁹ Here we follow *BMBM*, 62, reading "eighty-nine" instead of "one hundred and nine" (Dpal-tshul [1972: II:248, l. 5] also reads "eighty-nine").

⁸⁰ Dpal-tshul (1972, II:249, l. 1) says that Jo-bkra was born in an Iron Dog year (1130?).

⁸¹ 'Jad is the name of the area, very close to Dar-lding Monastery, that included the valley of Bo-dong (evidently the site of Bo-dong-kha Monastery).

⁸² Dpal-tshul (1972, II:149, l. 3) reads *yab yul* here, which is preferable, meaning 'father's country'. *Yab-yum*, 'father-mother', is respectful for parents, as well as deities in "parental" pose.

Lha-rje Jo-bkra had three sons. His eldest was Lha-rje Jo-rtse,⁸³ who was born in a Hare year when his father was in his forty-fifth year [1186]. He especially applied himself to the tantric visualization practices and had the pride of ordinary accomplishments. A first-portion offering of beer went for a month without losing its taste. He was a Mahāsiddha who beheld the face of the glorious Mo-ma.⁸⁴ He passed away in his seventy-fifth year (1260?).

The middle son [of Jo-bkra] was the lama Gshen Nam-mkha'-rgyal-mtshan,⁸⁵ born in a Dragon year [1196?]. He took ordination from Yar-'brog Me-ston⁸⁶ and studied

with him. He became an incomparably great scholar, as rarely appearing as an *udumbara* flower. He was a remarkably great monastic ordinator for the Bonpo. It says in the '*Dul-ba Gling-grags* revealed by Rma,

There will appear a manifestation of Li-bya-ha-ra,
a discipline keeping member of the Dmu family, the
Gshen clan.
He will be a monk with the name Nam-mkha'
who will keep the disciplines and blessings of
Dmu-cho.⁸⁷

In the *Prophecy of Dpon-gsas-pa*,⁸⁸

On the slopes of Jo-mo Nags-rgyal [Mountain] in
G.yon-ru
will appear Nam-mkha', a Gshen-po of the Dmu family.
He will plant the life-wood of Bon Teachings.

With good intentions and aspirations, he held the Bon holy places of Bo-dong and Bzang-'or of 'Jad, and at each of these he erected a sublime chapel. In his seventy-fifth year he passed away.

It is said that the youngest son [of Jo-bkra] became a monk named Gshen Gsung-chen[-pa].

Lha-rje Jo-rtse had three⁸⁹ sons. The eldest, Bla-ma Gshen-ston Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan,⁹⁰ was ordained in the presence of Bla-ma Gshen Nam-mkha'[-rgyal-mtshan]. He cultivated his mind, becoming an unrivalled great scholar. He passed away in a Mouse year, his fifty-seventh year.

The youngest [son of Jo-rtse], Lha-rje Rgyal, was born when his father was in about his forty-eighth year, in a Dragon year [1232].⁹¹ He was the continuation of an emanation body, so just by virtue of being born he had great unimpeded insight. He knew everything that he

⁸³ Jo-rtse was a disciple of one Drang-srong Chags-med Rnal-'byor, who was in turn a disciple of Rme-ston Dam-pa Dgongs-mdzad (1038–96, Kvarne 1971: nos. 77, 90) according to Dpal-tshul (1972, II:420, l. 2). We assume that the Hare year is a mistake and take the “forty-fifth year” as correct since the chronology ultimately works out this way. Dpal-tshul (1972, II:249, l. 4) has Jo-rtse born in a Fire Tiger year, while the year 1186 is a Fire Horse (“tiger” [*stag*] and “horse” [*rtā*] being easily confused).

⁸⁴ We take Dpal Mo-ma to be an epithet of Srid-pa'i-rgyal-mo, who is associated with divination techniques (*mo*). See *SKC*, 79, l. 1, for a Mo-ma Skyid-ldan (evidently a female diviner). However, we should probably read “Dbal-mo ma tshogs,” following *BMBM*, 63, or simply “Dbal-mo,” following Dpal-tshul 1972, II:249, l. 5.

⁸⁵ See Karmay 1972: 110, 132. He is supposed to be the author of the biography of Yar-'brog Me-ston mentioned in the following note. He seems to be the very first member of the Gshen family lineage to be ordained into the monastic order.

⁸⁶ Yar-'brog Me-ston Shes-rab-'od-zer lived from 1058 to 1132 (according to Kvarne 1971: nos. 81, 94). Sometimes he is called Yar-me (short for Yar-'brog Me-ston). Me-ston is itself a contraction of Me-nyag Ston-pa, and he was, evidently, a Tangut. His biography is to be found in *SFHB*, 346–73. Some of his works, including one on *vinaya*, are available. His biography says he was born in an Earth Mouse (1068?) year. He died at the age of seventy-five in a Water Mouse (1132) year. This shows that the Earth Mouse date given for his birth must be emended to Earth Tiger (1058), but then his dates, 1058–1132, might have to be adjusted one sixty-year cycle later (i.e., 1118–92), for the following reasons. He studied as a young man with Dam-pa Rgyal-tshab, who died in 1170. He also studied as a young man with a teacher of old and new tantras named Dge-bshes Rta-ston (name for several related Rnying-ma-pa teachers, most but not all of them born in the 1160s) and later mentions one Jo-bsod (*SFHB*, 358, l. 6) whom we take to be Rta-ston Jo-bsod (b. 1166), son of Rta-ston Jo-'bum (1123–74). Dbyil-ston [Khyung-rgod-rtsal], who was born in 1175, is also mentioned (*SFHB*, 359, l. 2). All this suggests the later dates of 1118–92 for Yar-me.

⁸⁷ For the passage in the context of the '*Dul-ba Gling-grags*, see *SFHB*, 136, l. 3. It is interesting that this work is here attributed to the excavations of Rma (either Rma-ston Srid-'dzin or Rma-ston Shes-rab-seng-ge), since this is not indicated in the text of the '*Dul-ba Gling-grags* itself.

⁸⁸ This should be the same *Middle Key of Dpon-gsas Da*, cited earlier, in which the same expression about “planting the life-wood of Bon Teachings” occurs.

⁸⁹ “Three” might need to be corrected to “two” since only two sons are named, and Dpal-tshul (1972, II:249, l. 6) says that he had two sons.

⁹⁰ Dpal-tshul (1972, II:68, l. 3) has him born in an Iron Mouse year.

⁹¹ Dpal-tshul (1972, II:250, l. 1) says that Rgyal (= Jo-rgyal) was born in a Wood Dragon year (1244?).

read during the same day. Also, all he had to do was take a look at a field of knowledge and he mastered it. He passed away in his fortieth year.

He [Rgyal] had two sons. The eldest was Dpon-gsas 'Dzam-gling, who was born in his father's twenty-eighth year [1259].⁹² The Bla-ma Gshen-chen⁹³ gave him the name 'Dzam-gling-'od-khyengs ['world filled with light']. He obtained the essential scriptures, blessings, and empowerments of the past masters, including "uncle and nephew" (*khu dbon*) lamas. He performed the *Zhi-khro* (Peaceful Wrathful) and Medicine practices and became a great master in the transmission of blessings. His mental continuum was thoroughly tamed and his thoughts were immaculately pure. He was completely free of erroneous conceptions of the subjective and objective and devoid of attachment to partial perspectives that come from holding on to the "self" and one's own special qualities. Therefore he could overpower and control other people's experience of the phenomenal world. Because of his blessings and compassion he could overpower all hindrances and injuries.

His younger brother was Bla-ma Gshen-ston Blo-gros-seng-ge. He took ordination from Bla-ma Gshen Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan.⁹⁴ In cultivating his studies he had unimpeded great insight, and so he became learned in all the baskets of scripture and reasoning. He had no difficulty in accomplishing all [the three actions of a scholar,] exposition, debate, and composition. Because of his immaculate conduct he was a great abbot. With his mind vast as the sky and his aspirations immaculate, all the Gshen-po came within reach of his care and kindness. His fame and renown reached far and wide, becoming like a turquoise dragon thundering in the heavens. He passed away in a Fire Sheep year, his forty-sixth year [1307].

⁹² Dpal-tshul (1972, II:250, l. 2) has him born in an Iron Sheep year (1271?).

⁹³ Evidently this means Bla-ma Gshen Nam-mkha'-rgyal-mtshan.

⁹⁴ This Gshen Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan appears in a *vinaya* transmission lineage of the Gshen branch found at *SFHB*, 700, l. 6. The lineage runs like this:

Yar-me Shes-rab-'od-zer.
Gshen Nam-mkha'-rgyal-mtshan.
Gshen Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan.
Gshen Blo-gros-seng-ge (who died in Khams, bringing this particular lineage to an end).

According to Dpal-tshul (1972, II:69, l. 2), Blo-gros-seng-ge was born in a Wood Dog year (1214? 1274?).

Dpon-gsas 'Dzam-gling had three sons.⁹⁵ The eldest became a monk named Gshen Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan. The middle son was Khro-rgyal-'bum. The youngest was Shogs Khri-skyong-dar.⁹⁶

These belong to the "great lineage" [among many lesser ones] that descended from Bla-ma Gshen-sgur up until the present time. The [stream of] *siddhas* and scholars ran steadily like [the water in] an eavestrough. Like a string of pearls, or of interspaced gold and turquoise, the good ones were not interrupted by any bad, and this sets them apart from others. The foregoing has been the "great lineage."⁹⁷

This ends the work called *The Origin of the Predominating Lamas of the Gshen, A Brief History of the Generations: Clearing Away All Doubts*.

This has been set down in a guidebook (*dkar-chag*) at Dpal Dar-sdings Monastery.⁹⁸

* * *

It was necessary to translate and study closely the entire last part of the text, in part to demonstrate that the text itself belongs to the early-to-middle fourteenth century, in part to attempt to establish some chronology for the period, and in part to underline the existence of family-based monastic lineages which gained in importance in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. This

⁹⁵ This means the three sons by his first wife, Bram-ze Me-tog-rgyan; see Dpal-tshul (1972, II:250, l. 4). He had another three sons by his second wife.

⁹⁶ MKHAS, folio 72, gives the name as Gshen Khri-skyong-rgyal-po (a.k.a. Mkhän-chen Ye-shes-blo-gros, evidently not to be confused with the founder of Dar-ldings Monastery). A few further generations are supplied in this work, which is not now available to me for consultation. Kun-grol-grags-pa (in *THREE SOURCES*, 411, l. 4–415, l. 2) traces the lineage up to himself in the eighteenth century.

⁹⁷ Some of the other branches of the family are traced by Shar-rdza; see Karmay 1972: 132–33.

⁹⁸ This Dar-sdings (=Dar-lding) Monastery, the monastery which became the main seat of the Gshen family, was founded by Ye-shes-blo-gros in 1173 (Kværne 1971: no. 103). However, Dpal-tshul (1972, II:594, l. 6) dates its founding to 1233 (one sixty-year cycle later). A temple located there called Khri-bstan Nor-bu'i-rtse was founded by Dmu-gshen Nyi-ma-rgyal-mtshan (b. 1360). The nearby town named Dge-lding was inhabited by the Gshen family (see Karmay 1972: 133, n. 1). The closing statement suggests that this lineage story might have been extracted from the guidebook (*dkar-chag*) to Dar-sdings Monastery, but that monastery was founded by a different branch of the Gshen family than that traced here (see Karmay 1972: 132).

helps us to understand the material from another very important source on the life of Gshen-chen Klu-dga', the biography of his main disciple from the Zhu clan, Zhu-yas Legs-po.

4. THE BIOGRAPHY OF HIS DISCIPLE ZHU-YAS LEGS-PO

The biography of Zhu-yas Legs-po (1002–81) is a remarkable document in its own right, being perhaps the only biographical source of comparable length having a Bonpo master of the eleventh or several succeeding centuries as its subject.⁹⁹ I will use it mainly for the light, indirect or direct, that it might shed on Klu-dga's first-person narrative, and, of course, on Klu-dga' himself.

This is a peculiar text in that it is divided into three chapters, each with its own title page, which might mislead one into thinking it is three separate texts. It is called a "biography" (*rnam-thar*) but is not a typical example of that genre. It is almost entirely in the first person, and should be considered as an autobiography (*rang-rnam*), except that the hand of an editor/compiler can sometimes be seen as, for example, in the opening eulogy of Zhu-yas, where he is identified with the royal Gshen Mi-lus-bsam-legs.¹⁰⁰ The manuscript slips imperceptibly into a first-person account of how, on the evening following Zhu-yas' wedding with a "skygoer" named Lha-skyid, he had a dream. In his dream it is dawn and a voice calls out from the sky, "Mantra Holder Legs-po!"

He looks up to behold a bejewelled woman¹⁰¹ with four similarly adorned companions. The woman reminds him about orders given to him by Bla-chen [Dran-pa-nam-mkha'], Tshe-dbang-[rig-'dzin] and Orgyan [Pad-masambhava] which he had received in a previous life, but then forgotten.¹⁰² During the waxing moon he is to go

⁹⁹ For bibliographical reference, see ZHU. This manuscript, recently brought to India from Tibet, bears an illegible seal with the words "Snang Dgon Bya-'phur *dpe*," meaning "book [from the library of] Bya-'phur Bla-brang at Snang-zhig Monastery," handwritten across it. This monastery, in Rnga-pa (the A-pa of modern maps) in the far eastern borderlands of Khams and A-mdo, has recently been visited by Per Kværne, who has studied the monastery's *dkar-chag* (Kværne 1990b). The photocopy we worked with is not always clear, and in some places illegible (apparently the illegible letters were in red ink in the original: such unclear or illegible syllables occur on every page).

¹⁰⁰ Mi-lus-bsam-legs is the main subject of Martin 1994.

¹⁰¹ She is later explicitly identified as the Queen of Existence, Srid-pa'i-rgyal-mo.

¹⁰² The combination of Tshe-dbang-rig-'dzin, Dran-pa-nam-mkha', and Padma-byung-gnas is quite odd for an old text,

south to Mtsho-rnga Rock and request accomplishments from the Bla-ma Gshen. Then, after three years, he is to keep retreats together with his wife Lha-skyid[-mtsho] at the Black Rock of Skyid-mkhar in Upper Nyang and at the divine palace of Zo-bo Khyung-slag.¹⁰³ The woman continues telling him more about his future, about how he will leave four footprints in the four directions around his temple of Zo-bo Khyung-slag "as a sign of guiding future generations." He is informed that there are three treasure sites at Mtsho-mo Ngang-skya that he is destined to excavate. She ends her prophecy saying that his family lineage will continue uninterrupted in two different places. She dissolves like a rainbow into space.

When I awoke, I rose up. The sun was shining. All the village people were sitting in a group in the set seating-order drinking beer. Feeling sad about the vicious cycle of *samsāra*, I said to my father: "Father, cultivated ground that grew my body, and mother, excellent treasury box of my body, I, your son, was born in Tibet with an inferior form. I did not die as soon as I was born. So now I am stuck in the swamp of *samsāra*. I fear I will suffer two hundred rebirths. Thinking about that makes me depressed. Forgive me, but I cannot stay here in my own land . . ."

After his speech he immediately leaves in the direction of the southern pass, Lding-la. All his friends and neighbors, wondering what will happen, follow after him. His father is the first to catch up with him at the foot of the pass, then the villagers, and finally his mother and his bride. The speeches that follow reflect a range of ambiguities in the dialectic between the religious householder and the renunciate. His bride reminds him of the festivities arranged by the villagers, the honors paid to his father, the happiness experienced by his mother, and the mental and physical pleasures that he and she experienced on their wedding night. Her speech leaves everyone saddened and silent.

When Zhu-yas speaks, he tells how deep is the depression he feels for the vicious cycle of rebirth, but he does not deny his past interdependencies with friends, relatives, and neighbors and asks them to make a vow to meet him again in a future life. He tries to assuage their anger and disappointment. He flies off like a bird toward the mountain pass, leaving his parents and fellow vil-

since this triad seems properly to belong to a current of "New Bon" (Bon Gsar) that emerged in the seventeenth century.

¹⁰³ According to YL, 26, l. 2; 27, l. 7, this temple was erected in imperial times. In SKC, 70, l. 7, it is a name of a chorten built in 'Ol-mo-lung-ring.

lagers weeping, his wife beside herself. In Zhu-yas' absence, a villager named Kun-dga'-bzang-po makes another speech, thus clearly betraying the hand of an omniscient narrator.

Following the initial introductions, Zhu-yas tells Gshen-chen the story about his prophetic dream and how he left his village and bride in the middle of the wedding festivities. Gshen-chen replies:

Listen to me closely, Legs-po.
 Sweet words are in the nature of the flute.
 Deception is in the nature of beer.
 Persuasion is in the voices of women.
 One must not fall under their influence.
 A student of authentic Bon
 must undergo both difficulties and discomforts.
 He must be both studious and disciplined.
 He needs both courage and passion.
 I have a hundred disciples who mastered Bon
 but only one with karmic qualifications.
 The teachings that belong to you
 are currently under the ground.
 In order to extract them from the soil
 I need a load of axes and picks.
 I need thirteen able-bodied men.
 I need six loads of paper and ink.
 I need a hundred secretaries to copy them out.
 I need several earth treasure vases.
 I need a few pieces of valuable silk.
 If you have strength to complete the task
 the treasures will be yours.
 I know that you are right for this.
 You know if you can do it or not . . .

Gshen-chen lists all the titles of texts that still lie buried at 'Bring-'tshams Mtha'-dkar Rock, along with an enumeration of holy items for worshipping the Body, Speech, and Mind of Buddha.¹⁰⁴ Zhu-yas agrees to find able-bodied men to do the digging and to pay their wages, but asks Gshen-chen to find the secretaries. He will supply them with all the food, paper, and ink. He asks the Lama to prepare the vases to put in place of the treasures, but promises to offer the pieces of silk and the digging equipment. Before he returns to his village to seek patronage, Gshen tells him how important it is to speak

¹⁰⁴ He also, in a highly prophetic mode, mentions the future lineage holders of the Spa, Bru, Rme'u, and Cog-la families. This, of course, looks more like wisdom in hindsight on the part of the anonymous narrator (bearing in mind that the Rme'u lineage holders never personally met Gshen-chen, and if Spa met him at all it was when he was on his deathbed).

with his wife Lha-skyid and raise seed for the guidance of future descendants.

On his way back to the home he had just abandoned with such strong drama, Zhu-yas reflects that he must tell a lie to his parents in a diplomatic way in order to avoid difficulties. When he arrives in his village he says that Gshen-chen had instructed him to take Lha-skyid again as his wife, because if his family line were not propagated, the Tibetan king would punish them. He tells them that Gshen-chen said: "If it were not for this I would give you over a nine-year period these precepts for attaining Buddhahood in a single lifetime, and after practicing hard according to your instructions for forty years you would certainly reach the level of Buddhahood. But, since it is necessary for you to propagate your descendants . . . I have some thirty horse loads of Bon texts that are presently under the ground . . ."

The false words, imputed to Gshen-chen in order to convince his parents to help him, emphasize that these texts are of the sort that will promote long life, wealth, and prosperity, and also funerary rituals and rituals against harmful spirits. He makes it sound as if he were ready simply to revert back to the life of a villager. He knows that this is just what his parents, his wife, and the villagers desire; so he uses this knowledge to gain their cooperation in order to fulfill the requests of his Lama and follow the high spiritual road of renunciation and liberation from worldly entanglements. He has not necessarily *lied* to them, just stretched the truth a little for their benefit and his. Gshen-chen *did* ask him to raise progeny with his wife Lha-skyid, and his excavations *did* include some "popular" rituals useful for the non-renunciate. His family and the villagers readily supply the necessary items and Zhu-yas returns to Mtha'-dkar with a hundred and thirty loaded horses and *mdzo* (a domesticated yak-cattle crossbreed).

There is an alternative explanation here for his name Gshen-sgur (pt. 1, folio 13 *recto*). A person named Gshen Ge-khod-skyabs ambushes him by throwing a "sky-stone" (*gnam rdo*, meteorite) at his head from the top of a boulder.¹⁰⁵ Lha-skyid makes a magical gesture so that, rather than hitting his head, it hits his waist. His waist cannot be fixed, so he receives the name Gshen-la Klu-sgur, or Bla-ma Gshen-sgur.

¹⁰⁵ This passage shows signs of being a transformation of the story told in Gshen-chen's first-person narration about the finger-rock which was supposed to have been thrown at him by his brother Klu-rtsegs who, as we have noted, may sometimes trade places with Ge-khod. But there the incident takes place at least five years *after* his back injury.

To be terribly brief, in summary, the treasures are excavated and sixty-five scribes work for three months and five days to complete the copying. The result, after being proofread three times, is eighty-six volumes of scripture. Some land is donated to Zhu-yas, and on it he starts building the temple of Zo-bo Khyung-slag. Then he meets Atiśa, who tells him that he is a reincarnation of Gnubs Sangs-rgyas-ye-she,¹⁰⁶ and gives Legs-po a name for his son, Zhu-g.yas Skyid-po, and even a name for the son of that son, Jo-thog (the Jo, a popular component of names in those times and in the following century, is from Atiśa's common title Jo-bo). In the first month of the next year, a son was born.

Before going on to reveal more of the contents of Legs-po's (auto)biography, I would like to point out some basic incompatibilities between the first-person narration of Gshen-chen and the picture drawn here. First of all, we get a very different story accounting for his name Gshen-sgur, which seems relatively fantastic, if less symbolic.¹⁰⁷ Secondly, the other early sources in no way lead us to believe that Legs-po met Gshen-chen *before* the discoveries were made, as he does in this case.¹⁰⁸ The other early sources give us no information about Legs-po assisting in the transcribing of the treasure texts. In fact, if we follow Gshen-chen's first-person narration, their meeting *before* the treasure excavations would have necessarily occurred before Legs-po was fifteen years old (not an impossible marrying age). But then if we follow *The Biography of Bla-ma Gshen*, they first met some fourteen years after the excavations. This does make sense, because Gshen-chen's first-person narration says that he did not give Bon Teachings to anyone until eleven years after their excavation. Also, according to that same source, Zhu-yas was Gshen-chen's second main disciple,

making it rather unlikely (but possible, we suppose) that Gshen-chen already had "a hundred disciples who mastered Bon."

In an Earth Tiger year, which should be 1038 C.E., Legs-po stayed at the site of the ancient Zo-bo Khyung-slags Temple, where he received a prophetic vision of a wrathful deity granting the temple to him (pt. 2, folio 6 verso). He made, meanwhile, certain excavations of his own (including, besides texts, a *phur-pa* that had belonged to Dran-pa-nam-mkha' and a horn filled with gold dust). After the completion of the temple, he invited a number of Tibetan notables to the consecration ceremony:

From Yar'brog, Rme'u-ston Tshul-khrims-'od-zer.¹⁰⁹
 From Mtsho-rnga Brag-dkar, Gshen-chen Glu-dga'.¹¹⁰
 From G.yas-ru, Bru-ston Nyi-ma-rgyal-mtshan.¹¹¹
 From Shang[s], Rma-ston, both the father and son.¹¹²
 From Jo-bo Lhun-po, Se-dor Rdo-rje-grags-pa.¹¹³
 From Skyid-mkhar Cog-spo, Sa-chen Kun-dga'-blo-gros.¹¹⁴
 Ghu-ru (i.e., Guru) Ye-she-khyung-grags.¹¹⁵

Then Atiśa performs a ritual called *Stong-gsum* [?] *Snang-srid G.yen Bcos*. *G.yen bcos* is equivalent to

¹⁰⁹ This could possibly be Rme'u-ston Tshul-khrims-dpal-chen, said to have been born in 1052 (Karmay 1972: 134; Kvarne 1971: 230, no. 79).

¹¹⁰ If Gshen-chen died in 1035, he could not have been present for this consecration, which had to take place in 1038 or shortly thereafter.

¹¹¹ He was a grandson of Bru Nam-mkha'-rgyal-mtshan, and nephew of 'Bru Khyung-gi-rgyal-mtshan (see Karmay 1972: 140, 150). But he is also said to be a disciple of Rma-ston Srol-'dzin (see following note and Karmay 1972: 168), which causes some chronological problems.

¹¹² This refers to Rma-ston Srol-'dzin (b. 1092?) and his son Rma Lcam-me, both Bonpo *gter-stons* (Karmay 1972: 167-69).

¹¹³ One named Se-dor Ston-pa is mentioned in Dpal-tshul (1972, II:231, l. 4). He seems to have been a minor Bonpo excavator. Jo-bo Lhun-po is here apparently an epithet of Mt. Kailash in western Tibet.

¹¹⁴ Given the title Sa-chen, this must be a Sa-skya teacher, and there have been at least two famous persons by the name of Kun-dga'-blo-gros. One flourished in the early fourteenth century, the other in the eighteenth century. More likely, the author intended the famous Sa-chen Kun-dga'-snying-po (1092-1158), one of the founding patriarchs of the Sa-skya sect.

¹¹⁵ For a discussion of this very early and somewhat obscure Bonpo *gter-ston*, see Karmay 1988: 220, and especially Blondeau 1984: 112-13. He dates from somewhere between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

¹⁰⁶ Tibetan tradition generally gives him dates corresponding to 832-962 C.E.

¹⁰⁷ Note that another early source (*KHRO*, as translated above) says that he was injured in a jumping competition. This version of the story lacks in any magical, symbolic, or prophetic content, and therefore *might* be deemed more "factual."

¹⁰⁸ See Dpal-tshul 1972, II:277, l. 2, which says that Zhu-yas Legs-po heard news that treasures had been unearthed by the Bla-ma Gshen, then went to 'Brig-mtshams to sleep at the door of Gshen-chen and served him for eight years by cutting grass and wood, manuring fields and clearing away thorn bushes. None of this appears in the Zhu-yas "autobiography." It is not at all certain whether or not Zhu-yas Legs-po ought to be identified with an early Rnying-ma scripture excavator named Snye-mo Zhu-yas (=Snye-mo Zhu-yas Gnod-sbyin-'bar), on whom see BKRA, II:469, l. 6-471, l. 6.

dbyen bcos, which means 'mend divisiveness'. The whole title could then be glossed, *Mending Divisiveness in the Phenomenal Universe*. After the guests have departed, Legs-po, together with Cog-la G.yu-skyid, remain behind copying out scriptures. Among these scriptures is a guidance manual to two Rdzogs-chen precepts that were translated by the "Pundit from India," Atiśa. Now, Atiśa died in 1054 C.E., and chronologically speaking, it is entirely possible that he could have been present for Legs-po's consecration, but only if that consecration took place after 1042, when Atiśa arrived in western Tibet. The idea that Atiśa attended a Bonpo consecration will appear preposterous to many (as will his translation of Rdzogs-chen precepts), but it is intriguing in light of the Bon elements in the consecration text attributed to Atiśa.¹¹⁶ In any case, most of the guests had not yet been born in 1038, according to our chronological data, while Gshen-chen had already died in 1035. In short, Legs-po's guest list makes a hopeless hash out of everything we think we know about the chronology of the period.

It should be clear by now how little certainty attaches to the chronology of Bon in these centuries.¹¹⁷ Still, we may be fairly sure that Gshen-chen Klu-dga' lived in the years 996–1035, and for a simple reason. One must bear in mind the nature of the Tibetan system of chronology based on sixty-year cycles (called *rab-'byung*) and the fact that all the Bonpo chronologies date from the eighteenth century or later (except the one from the fifteenth century, near the end of the *Rgyal-rabs Bon-gyi 'Byung-gnas*, and a few other brief chronological passages embedded in other works). The oldest separately titled chronology, dating from 1804, gives Gshen-chen the dates 1116–55,¹¹⁸ which is two sixty-year cycles later than the dates 996–1035 given in another chronology. The later dates for Gshen-chen are to be rejected, because hostile testimony confirms the earlier dates. The passage from the polemic of Sher-'byung which we have translated at the beginning of this paper, reads: "In later times, when the embers of the Teaching were re-

kindled from Mdo-smad, there was in Upper Nyang . . . one named Gshen-sgur Glu-dga'." While the reintroduction of monastic vows into Central Tibet, to which the "rekindling from Mdo-smad" refers, is variously dated between about 950 and 975, this does place Gshen-chen in the late tenth century. There is one further step to this argument. Sher-'byung also mentioned one Khyung-po Bon-zhig, who is certainly Bon-zhig Khyung-nag. The same chronology that gives us the dates 1116–55 for Gshen-chen also gives us 1343–1423 for Bon-zhig. This late date for Bon-zhig is clearly impossible, since the polemic of Sher-'byung was written in the early thirteenth century. Thus, we must conclude that the later dates for Bon-zhig,¹¹⁹ like the later dates for Gshen-chen, are too late; and until finding further reasons for questioning them, we should accept the dates 996–1035 for Gshen-chen. These dates are crucial for studies of Bon history in general, since most chronological discussions take the Fire Snake year (which we accept to be equivalent to 1017 C.E.) of Gshen-chen's excavations as a primary date against which later dates are calculated.

Especially since the "autobiography" of Zhu-yas has Gshen-chen living beyond the year 1035 traditionally given for his death, has Zhu-yas meeting Gshen-chen before the excavations of 1017,¹²⁰ and otherwise violates not only the first-person narration of Gshen-chen but also other early Bon sources, we should carefully weigh the respective merits of our two "autobiographies" as historical sources. One apparently logical conclusion might be drawn that the Zhu-yas autobiography, clearly reflecting the interests of the later members of his family lineage, shows that Gshen-chen's autobiography must be of the same type, and therefore of equally dubious historical value. There may be some justice in this view if we could be certain that the autobiographical passages of Gshen-chen were extracted from a family chronicle or other longer document similar to the Zhu-yas autobiography. Still, there are factual, formal and stylistic

¹¹⁶ These elements include the *bya-ru*, 'bird-horns', which appear on the tops of Bon stūpas (similar but not identical to the solar/lunar symbol that appears on the tops of Chos stūpas), and perhaps the *'brang-rgyas* mentioned already, and *gyer*, a Bon style of chanting. The work attributed to Atiśa, entitled *Skū dang Gsung dang Thugs Rab-tu Gnas-pa* (Toh. no. 2496), is located in *SDE-DGE TANJUR*, 53:508–19.

¹¹⁷ "Only extensive research in historical and biographical literature can eventually lead to the establishing of a firm chronological sequence of events" (Kværne 1990a: 158).

¹¹⁸ Kværne 1990a: 158.

¹¹⁹ The Myang history (as cited in Hoffmann 1950: 309, 405) says that Bon-bzhi Khyung-nag was a contemporary of Spyang-snga of 'Bri-gung. Although several 'Bri-gung hierarchs are called by the title Spyang-snga (meaning "The Presence"), I believe that this must be a reference to the one usually remembered as Spyang-snga Rin-po-che (ordination name Grags-pa-'byung-gnas), the third abbot of 'Bri-gung, who lived from 1175–1255. He was abbot of 'Bri-gung during the initial Mongolian expedition into Central Tibet.

¹²⁰ See, in addition, the statement of Kun-grol-grags-pa that Zhu-yas met Gshen-chen *after* the latter's excavations had made him famous (*THREE SOURCES*, 422, 1.1).

reasons for preferring Gshen-chen's first-person narration to that of Zhu-yas. Firstly, Gshen-chen's narration never departs widely from information found in other early sources. As we have seen, the Zhu-yas narration contradicts these sources on several crucial points.¹²¹ Secondly, most of Zhu-yas is in verse, while Gshen-chen is entirely in prose, and with Zhu-yas, we often have the impression that the words we are reading are being sung, that we are attending an opera. The form of Zhu-yas, being highly unusual for the Tibetan biographical genre called *nam-thar*, begins with a marriage, and family values are reasserted at every possible occasion. Quite to the contrary, the Gshen-chen narration is a fairly simple story simply told, in which renunciate (although *not* monastic) values are emphasized. (Regrets are expressed for time lost from spiritual practice due to family duties.) It has a certain naïveté that comes through even in the translation. There are no highly dramatic elements, few metaphors. One gets the impression of a rather rustic (certainly not *highly* literate) visionary who trusts his visions. The visions have a strong sense of realistic contingency, since they are not always guaranteed to glorify the narrator and his "quest," and he several times fails to interpret them correctly, or to carry them out. His human fallibility puts him on a more intimate level with the reader (or hearer), and this is not reducible to an effect of literary devices, so far as I am able to see.

From a slightly different angle, the Gshen-chen narration has greater credibility than the Zhu-yas just *because* the former, like the latter, was apparently preserved for us in a family tradition. For while the Zhu-yas narration was preserved by his own descendents, whose interests frequently surface in the course of the narration, the Gshen-chen narration was preserved not by his own physical descendents, the Gshen family, but by the Spa family. Not only are Spa family interests *not* embedded in the narrative, Spa Dpal-mchog, their most important patriarch, is not even mentioned in that context. This alone goes quite far in arguing for its authenticity, although it naturally does not rule out the possibility of transformation in the course of transmission for reasons other than family-based ones.¹²² If the same narration of Gshen-chen had been preserved in the Gshen family lin-

eage, we might predict that there would be some reference to Gshen-chen's physical sons, but there is in fact no mention of them whatsoever.

This brings us to a general and, I think, very important assessment of the place of Gshen-chen in later Bon tradition. His importance lies not only in the texts he revealed. According to Bon historians, he was not the first *gter-ston*; neither was he necessarily the most important in the sense that he revealed the most important texts for their traditions, even though some of them, such as the *Mdzod Phug*, the "Bon Abhidharma," were certainly important. He was preceded, according to Shar-rdza, by fifteen different treasure revealers (a few of them, like the Three Ācāryas, actually being collectivities).¹²³ It may well be that these earlier *gter-stons* did not have as wide a sphere of influence as Gshen-chen. Some of Gshen-chen's treasures, like the *Gsang-ba Bsen-thub* and *Khro-bo Dbang-chen*, were in any case excavated by others as well, thus denying Gshen-chen exclusive responsibility for making them available. A large part of Gshen-chen's renown for the Bon tradition and his position of special honor therein stems from the fact that it was through his immediate disciples and their immediate disciples that Bon became an institution, through them that religious centers which would remain influential in following centuries were built, centers which would sustain and educate people about the teachings revealed not only by Gshen-chen but also by those Bon

¹²¹ I might add that the Zhu-yas autobiography (*ZHU*) also conflicts with the usual stories about Zhu-yas himself, as noted above.

¹²² I would suggest that the highly symbolic aspects of his accident (the nine bricks and the eleventh rung of the ladder) might be one of those transformations, seeing that they are absent from the account in *KHRO*.

¹²³ Karmay 1972: 118. These earlier excavations were made over a geographical area ranging from the Yar-klung Valley in the east to Spu-rangs and Mt. Ti-se in the west, but mostly on or close to the banks of the Brahmaputra River, and especially at Bsam-yas monastery. It was only with Gshen-chen that *gter-ma* discoveries began to be made far to the south of the Brahmaputra, and thus his are the first of the so-called Southern Treasures (*lho gter*, on which see Karmay 1972: 191), while those of his excavator (*gter-ston*) predecessors belong to the Northern and Central Treasures (*byang gter* and *dbus gter*).

In the Rnying-ma (Ancient) school of Chos there is also a division made between Southern Treasures (*lho gter*) and Northern Treasures (*byang gter*). The Southern Treasures are associated mainly with the excavations of Ratna-gling-pa (1403–78), while the Northern are associated with Rgod-kyi-ldem-'phru-can (1337–1409?). The former were especially cultivated at Smin-grol-gling monastery, located several miles south of the Brahmaputra, while the latter were specialties of Rdo-rje-brag monastery, just north of the Brahmaputra. Hence the Brahmaputra as a dividing line would seem to explain both the Bon and the Rnying-ma usages of the terms Southern and Northern Treasures.

gter-stons who preceded and followed him. It is surely of significance that these most important centers, with their monastic populations increasing through the twelfth century, just as did the monasteries of other Tibetan sects, were closely associated with particular families. This kind

of knowledge will need to be turned to good account in future studies of Bon history, if these studies are ever to touch ground and at the same time avoid the ruts created by a millennium of polemical cultivation.

APPENDIX

TEXT 1

tha ma bsgyur ba ni / dus phyis bstan pa'i me ro mdo smad nas slangs khar / gtsang nyang stod na / gshen sgur glu dga' bya bas / gtsang chu mig ring mo'i dkon gnyer dang yun ring du 'dris par byas nas / bya dga' che thang du stsal bas / dar yul sgro lag bya ba dbus kyi bon gnas gcig tu bsgyur te / rgyas pa la kham chen / nyi shu lnga la kham chung / gtan la phab pa la bon mdo / gzungs sde lnga la klu 'bum dkar nag la sogs par bsgyur nas / mtsho lnga dre'u chung gi brag dkar po la gter du sbas nas / phyis kyang khong rang gis thon pa ltar byas nas bton / khong rang yang lus dum bu dang tshal bar song ste / bkra mi shis pa sna tshogs byung ste shi / de nas dus da lta phan chad du khyung po bon zhiq la sogs pa bon po rnams kyis bsgyur 'phro ma bcad pa rnams yin te / de rnams bsgyur bon yin /.

TEXT 2

gsum pa ni las dang skal par ldan pa'i rin po che gshen rgyur gyis / g.yung drung zhi khro rgyas pa dang mchod gtor shog cig ma bsgrub pa'i tshe lo zla zhag dang za ma nyams rtag byung nas sngos srub (dngos grub) dngos su byin pas shel kyi rde'u khrid nas sdong sa (po?) la ma (?) babs (?) pa 'dra ba bston pa'i shul du kha byang rnyed nas me mo sbrul gyi lo la gter sgo phye nas bru zhu spa cog la sogs pa (?) la brgyud pa'o //.

(The same text may be transcribed with greater scientific precision, i.e., without dissolving the abbreviations, as follows:) 3 pa ni las dang skal par ldan pa'i rin po che shye rgyur gyis / g.yuung zhi khro rgyas pa dang mchod gtor shog 1 ma bsgrub pa'i tshe lo zla zhag dang za ma nyams rtya byung nas sngos srub dngosu byin pas shel kyi rde'u (ste'u, rte'u?) khrid nas sdong po la na (ca, rtsa?) babs (bcus?) pa 'dra ba bston pa'i shul du kha byang rnyed nas me mo sbrul kyi lo la gter sgo phye nas bru zhu spa cog la swo (suo?) pa la brgyud pa'o //.

TEXT 3

(Note that the abbreviations have been tacitly resolved in this and the following texts, and few other 'corrections'

have been proposed; otherwise, the text is given 'as is'.) gsum pa de nas gter thon tshul ni dmu tsa'i rigs gshen rab kyi gdung las chad pa'i bkra gsal rgyal po bya ba'i sngags ban / shar tsong ka nas cog ro 'bring 'tshams su phebs pa'i / sras dbang phyug mgon bya bas / bon sngags pa cig gi sras mo bzhes nas bon lugs kyis chab srid skyong bas / khyad par klu 'bum dang ge khod la mnga' snyems pas kho rang gi sras cig 'khrungs pa la klu dga' btags te / dgung lo me sprel la 'khrungs gter du ma byon pa'i g.yung drung zhi rgyas dang a nu 'phrag thag gi mchod gtor shog cig thugs dam mdzad cing bzhugs pas sgom chen du grag go // res zhiq sne sna gyad pa bya ba rtsal che ba cig dang mchong pa 'dren pas rked rtsa 'phras nas phyis gshen sgur zer / de rjes mtha' dkar du bzhugs pa la srid rgyal gyi lung bstan na / me mo sbrul gyi lo la gter zhal phye pa ni / lho gter sngags sems gtsob bas gshed bzhi'i lo dang / dgun zla 'bring po dang / nyi shu bzhi dang / skar ma khra dang / gza' phur bu dang / nyi khyim glang rnams drag po'i lugs kyis 'phrod kun 'dzoms pa yin / gdugs kyi snga gro ni bstan pa 'dugs bdal pa bzhi du'o // rnyed pa'i bon kyang gter sgrom du shing glang ba'i sgrom bu so gnyis 'dug pa'i sgrom gnyis gdan drangs pa'i ka ru nas 'bum sde smug gu nas sngags sems kyi sde rnams byon no // de nas slob ma'i gdung rab kyi rim pa rgyud pa ni / bka' bab kyi slob ma bzhi te / sems phyogs zhu dang / mtshan nyid bru dang / gsung rab cog la g.yu skyid dang / gsang sngag man ngag gi me nyag bon cig ma la bka' bas so // bru'i dod la mtshe mi shag par brtsis nas nyang stod kyi dpon bzhi zer / rung ku g.yung drung gtsug phud / rung ku a tsa ra la sogs / nyang smad kyi gdung brgyad / bru sha khyung gi rgyal mtshan dang / 'dzi bon dbang gi rgyal mtshan / rgyal mtshan thog pa'i mi bzhi . . .

TEXT 4

gnyis pa lho gter la yang gnyis / mtshan nyid pa dang btags pa'o // dang po mtshan nyid pa la bzhi / gshen gyi lo rgyus / gter gyi thon lugs / bon gyi them byang / slob ma'i 'gyes tshul lo // dang po gshen gyi lo rgyus ni / bla ma gshen gyi gdung rgyud / sga tsha dmu rigs / mes bkra gsal rgyal po dang / phyi mo lha rgyan btsun mo gnyis / 'kham kyis tsong kha nas / co ro 'bring 'tshams su chad (chang?) / yon tan gyi rigs ni ban dhe sngags pa yin

skad / de'i sras mi g.yo mgon po / dbang phyug mgon po / rdo rje mgon po gsum mo // mi g.yo' mgon gyis / bon gyi bu sring blangs pas / dpal mgon gsas / 'brug gsas / dgos gsas dang gsum / dpal mgon gyi zhang po rab chad pa'i le gu skyangs pas / bon rgyud du song / de'i sras klu dga' / klu rtsegs / ge khod dang gsum mo //

gnyis pa gter gyi lo rgyus ni / mi gcig pa 'gha' 'dug nang / gshen nyid kyi zhal nas gsungs pa ni / bdag lo bcu gsum lon pa na / pha jo na re khyod dang / lha ge khod gnyis rgyug la / spang rgyan dkar po dang / spra ba thus la shog zer nas phyin / ge khod spang rgyan thu ru bcug ste / bdag gis ma tha (mtha?) lung gi nar spra ba tshol du phyin tsa na / [p. 718] nam mkha' la gzugs med pa'i skad cig // gshen klu dga' / bon gyi dngos grub byin nam zer bar byung / ste / bzhag g.yos pa dang / pha bong gi skyu ma khus bkang 'dug go // der dngos grub du bsam nas / pha ma la yang gsang ngo // de nas brag kar ru 'di na bsdad bsam nas / lo cig lo gnyis ma thon / de dus dbus rtsang dang / zhu ya gnyis 'thabs / de'i bar la phyin pas / mda' yo ba phog nas / lha ge khod bkrongs / stod du spu ra spu lug / mgo g.yag sdud pa la / lo cig 'gyangs so // sbur pa gyad pas 'go g.yag ster du ma 'dod par / kho rta thog nas bdab nas / sa lings byas ste / 'khyus pas / pho shed can du grags so // de'i g.yang bar bdag gis chu ser mor du sum thog cig rtsigs pas / sne nag ye mkhyen na re / jo bo she mong che zer ba / 'u rang 'dran nam zer pa'u brgyad khur thal / der bdag gis dgu khur ste / skas rdang bcu cig khar zed gyis thon pa dang / pa'u dang dus cig 'gyel thal / rked pa 'tshigs bcos dang ma phan par / lo bco brgyad la sgur por song nas / dang po dmu yad byung tsam na / bsdad mno' bas ma grub / de'i nyams chags yin nam mnos ste / bcu dgu pa la / dpon ra zhags la / g.yung drung khro rgyas zhus nas / brag dkar ru la stag lo sgrubs pas / sgrub pa'i lo rang nas / mtshan ma dang dmu yad gong bzhin byung ste / lha dang zhal mjal nas bdud rtsi chu bo [p. 719] bstims pa rmis / de lo pha dgan grongs nas / 'tshams thon nas phyin / dge rtsa zin zin sdad / des gnam lo thug pa {'brug la} 'gyangs / 'brug lo la mtshan rtags gong bzhin byung pa la / de lo na ga za dpal sgron blangs ste / des nyes de lo 'gyangs / phyi lo sbrul gyi lo la rtags gong bzhin byung / srod la bud med nag mo ral pa 'phrag pa non pa cig / mche ba snyer cing za tshul ston du byung / de la bdag gis 'jigs breg ma bgyid par dgongs pa la sdad pas / de nub rdza skya seng gi thod la skyal rnga (?) / nang par dgon par yongs ste / brag dkar gyi 'dor sleb tsam na / khye'u g.yu'i zur phud can dang / bu mo dar gyi la'u can mang pos bsu nas / phyag dang mchod par byed me tog 'thor ba byung / de la spro dga' med par bsdad pas / gar song cha med du thal / yang srod la rgya 'bag chen po cig byung nas khyod za zer ro // 'jigs preg med pa dgongs pa la spros /

de nub mdun gyi spang ri chen po'i rtse la skyal / nang par gnas su yongs tsam na / bon po stag slag can rnga rdung gshang 'khrol ba mang pos bsus te gar song cha med du thal lo // srod la sbal pa chen po cig sprul pa sna tshogs ston cing byung / nub mo gnas kyi byang rgyab tu skyal / nang par tshur yongs tsa na / brag mi ngo 'dra ba nas chu dkar po la / ser bu'i za ru byas pa cig thigs thigs gda' / zangs gzhong bze bas nar ra (nar nar?) byung nas khengs so // srin lag gis blangs te lce la bzhag pas / ro mchog dang ldan ste / bdud rtsir bsam nas thims kyi gsol bas / [p. 720] nyi ra na mchod gtor gtong gin yod pas / zangs gzhong nam mkha' la 'phur tshar tsa na babs byung / da kar thang cig gnyid du thal tsa na / gar bzhed nas sor rdo rdeg pa cig byung ste / klu rtsegs yin bsam nas / cog ge sdod 'go dang mig gcor byas pas / su yang mi gda'o // bar snang na tshur shel 'od mang po yong gin gda' / brag khar phyin nas ltas pas su yang mi gda' / 'od zer rnam lnga 'phro yin bdag la 'du ba byung / de nas sgra chen po gsum byung / de rting nam mkha' nas bud med dkar mo bzang bsdug dar dkar gyi la'u gon pa bzhi / 'brug khyung seng ghe stag bzhi la zhon pa babs nas / gshen sgur klu dga' bon gyi dngos grub byin na / slabs na sgrogs shes sam / stan na sgom nus sam zer nas byung / bdag gi bslad na sgrogs shes so // stan na sgom nus so // bon gyi dngos grub gsol cig byas ste / phug nas zho phud blangs nas mchod pas / khyed sprul pa'i sku yin pas / shel gyi phur pa sor brgyad pa 'di khyer la / lo skor cig du gsong cig gsung nas / nam mkha' la gshegs thal / ltas pas phur pa la bon theg pa rim dgu bya ba / bon sgo drug yod / shel gyi bkras rdang dgu babs pa na / sdong po la chun spyus pa 'dra ba cig yod / de'i 'og pha 'ong gru bzhi / gnya' na mtshal gyi g.yung drung cig yod pas / gsham na shel gyi g.yung drung lam me ba yod bya ba gda' / der bltas pas de ka bzhin gda' ste / pha 'ong gleg du btub pa ma bltas pas / 'dod par 'dug nas / [p. 721] dpal sgron btang nas / klu rtsegs la stog tshe khyer la shog byas pas / yang de na pha 'ong gleg du ma btub / kha ba dang rlung dmar byung nas gshol lo // de nub de ni gza' mig dmar gyi sprul pa yin pas / bstan pa bzhag gnas med pas / de ma khrid par shog zer ba'i sgra byung / nang par nga'i khyod la ku re byas pa yin / da ka 'dra'i brag la gter 'ong ba ci yod / stog tshe 'di nyi ra 'chos su zhog byas pas / klu rtsegs na re / khyod la bon gter bas nas gter cig dgos zer nas song ngo // de nas rgun zla 'breng po'i tshe nyi shu bzhi / skar ma khra'i nyin mo / pha 'ong gru bzhi slog pa'i 'og nas / khams sngon po cig byung / de'i rting nas yang pha 'ong gru bzhi la mtshal dang shel gyi g.yung drung gnyis bris pa cig gda'o // de bton pas / de na rgam chung gnyis gda' / che sho nas rgyu 'bras gnyis ka'i bon mang du gda' nas / gter shog rnam khyer yongs pas / dar cig na kar

song cha med du song / gter khung du phyin nas / da ci'i
de tsho gda' nas khyer 'ongs pas / 'phor song / nub mo
bud med nag mo dang / mi nag po cig 'ongs nas / nged
gyi de tsho ma khyer / 'don na lug dkar mo mtshal mig
dang / g.yag dkar mdongs 'khob dmar rta ru tshug cig /
'brang rgyas mtshal gyi thig phran can dang / bshos bu
slang cig dmig sngar ston la zhal zhus zer / nas bkyer du
ma 'dod do //

gsum pa bon gyi them byang ni / der rgam che shogs
ma bris / chung ngun nas / khams brgyad cig dang /
mdzod dang / gsang sngags [p. 722] phyi nang / sems
phyogs la sogs mang bar byung / ces pas / khams brgyad
gtan la phab pa'i 'bum dum pa bcu drug / gud du byung
ba'i mchong dum pa bzhi / srid pa'i mdzod phugs chen
mo / sngags phyi la rnam dag yum gyi 'phrin las / thang
ma 'od rgyal gyi mchod gtor / rtsa 'brel ti ka dang bcas
pa / mu tra lha'i phyag rgya / tsha tsha shog cig ma /
kun snang khyab pa'i rtsa ba'i dkyil 'khor / rab gnas skor
gsum / kun rigs lha ma yin gyi sbyin bsreg / sngags nang
la / zhi ba yongs rdzogs / man ngag thig le dbyings
'chad / rtsa 'brel dang bcas pa / khro bo dbang chen
gzhung rtags / dbang chu bo rab 'byam che chung / dus
drug ma mo / srid rgyal tre dmar ma'i skor / ma mo 'dus
pa yang snying / gi rgyud dang bcas pa / sems phyogs ni
ga pa la sogs sems phran sde dgu / ngan sngags la mu
stegs a mu kha phung gi rgyud / shan pa ma bzhi'i gsang
sgrub dang bcas pa byung ngo // stong rgyung gi ser ba
dbab bcad dang bcas pa rnams byung / sngags grags
tshod la / shing blang ba'i lgam sum bcu so gsum 'am /
so bdun 'dug pa la / gshen sgur gyis gnyis las ma thon zer
te / spyir rna rgan la rang shes bcug par gsal lo // khams
chen la shog ril sum bcu rtsa gsum byung pa la / gter shog
gnyis bzung du byung pa la thog pa'o //

bzhi pa slob ma'i gyes tshul ni / lo skor 'gro ru cha ba
la / sbrags sto ku ras byang chub chen po bzhengs nas /
lha rje zhang gdan trangs nas / zhal sro mdzad gyin
[p. 723] chos kyi sku'i mchod rten gang yin tris pas /
mchod rten la chos sku dang sbyar rgyu mi gda' nas /
der bdag gis bon sgrags pas / lo bcu cig las ma thub / bon
zhu ba la snga ba me nyag na gus / dgod ma cig dang /
spyang thul cig phul nas / gtor ma dmar po'i bon cig dgos
zer nas / khro bo dbang chen zhus / de nas zhu g.yas legs
pos / sgo nyal bcug nas mang bar zhus so // de nas cog
lha g.yu skyid byung nas / gter thon zer ba / bdag la
bstan 'tshal zer / bstan pas sngags bdog / khams chen 'di
'bri ba zhu zer ro // de nga rang gis ma bzhengs / par /
btang na mi yong byas pas / slob dpon la bdag gis
bzhengs la 'bul / de nas bdag rang 'bri lags zer / de tsam
'grub pa ma byas pas / tsheds med zer nas / bla 'bum bse
gleg can bzhengs nas bdag la phul / de nas 'bum dmar
bris so // ces pa rnams gshen sgur nyid kyis gsungs pas

the tshom mi za'o // gzhan lo rgyus mang ste blo byas
so // de rjes 'tshe mi shag 'bar gyis zhus / de bzhi nyang
stod gyi dpon bzhir grags so / de nas nyang smad gyi
bka' ba brgyad gyis zhus te / rong bu a tsa ra / rong bu
g.yung drung gtsug phud / phug pa rgod po / stog sgom
rtsang po 'bar / ra zhags 'phags pa skyabs / ra zhags mon
skyid / skyi dpal 'dul gsas / bru sha lha gnam gsas dang
brgyad do // rgyal mtshan thob pa ni / bru sha khyung gi
rgyal mtshan / mar pa shes rab rgyal mtshan / [p. 724]
'dzi ston dbang gi rgyal mtshan / srad pa'i mi lnga ni / ra
zhags mu 'khar / tre bon ye shes zla ba / 'dzo bon 'phan
snang / zi 'di lha rtse / shud kye kyi 'brug / yang man
ngag gi zu ye shes zu mgon ne / rgya bon dge snyen
gtsug phud dang gsum yang nyang stod pa yin no / la
stod kyi sum bon stag slag can / shab gyi mgo bon rgod
po / nyi shal gyi 'da' mi shags kya gsum la stod pa'o // ga
gtsug phud / ga a tsa ra / zur tshang skyid dpal dang
gsum 'bring 'tshams pa rnams so //

TEXT 5

che ba bla ma gshen sgur yin te / lung las kyang / dmu
tsha gyer med sprul pa ni / gshen gyi klu dga' bya ba
'byung / mtsho rngam brag la bsgrub dus su // bdag
gis shel phur rnam sprul nas / de la byin gyis brlab par
'gyur // de yis stan pa'i rter sgo 'byed // stan pa nyi ma
phyogs bzhir spel ces gsungs so // dpon gsas da'i lde mig
'bring po yang / 'bring 'tshams mtsho rnga brag dkar
ru // dmu rigs gshen po klu'i mtshan can 'ong // byin gyis
brlabs pa'i shel phur la // bka' rtags dngos grub lung yang
ston // 'chi med rtsug phud dngos dang 'dra // stan pa
bon gyi srog shing 'dzugs ces gsungs ba dang / yang da
mi thad kye'i sprul pa ni / gshen gyi klu dga' bya ba
'byung // kho blon pos byin gyis brlabs nas ni // bka'i rter
sgo 'byed par 'gyur ces gsungs so // be ro tsa na'i lde mig
chung ba las / klu bon ye shes snying po'i sprul pa ni //
rga rigs klu dga' bya ba 'byung // theg pa dgu'i bstan pa
rgyas par byed ces gsungs so // me po spre'u lo pa yin //
dgung lo nyi shu rtsa gnyis / me mo sbrul gyi lo / dgung
zla 'bring po'i tshes nyi shu bzhi nyi ma phag gi nyi
ma / gza' zla ba / skar ma khra'i nyin bar g.yung drung
bon gyi rter zhal phyed nas dngos grub snyems pa lags
so // de nas dgung lo sum bcu rtsa drug zhes pa'i dus
su / skyin mkhar gyi zhu g.yas legs po de / stag lo ba
sum cu tham [p. 241] pa zhes pa cig khong gi drung du
byon nas / bon gnang ba lags skad / rter zhal ji ltar phyed
lugs dang / stan pa ji ltar spel lugs kyi lo rgyus ni gzhan
na gsal bas 'dir ma bris so // phyis shing po stag gi lo la
sku 'das skad do / bla ma gshen sgur la sras gnyis yod
de / che ba rin chen rgyal mtshan ni / yab dgung lo sum
bcu rtsa lnga pa'i dus su / sa pho stag gi lo as sku

'khrungs pa yin / dgung lo brgya bcu rtsa gcig chu po stag lo la sku 'das / chung ba byang chub rgyal mtshan zhes bya ste gdung tshad (ched, chad?) / rin chen rgyal mtshan la sras sman khod dang / tha ru gnyis / che ba sman khod ni glang lo pa / sum bcu rtsa bzhi pa khyi'i lo la 'das so // chung ba tha ru me rog zhes bya ba lags yab / sman khod kyi sras ni dam pa rgyal tshab yin te / yab 'das kyi rjes la chu pho khyi lo la 'khrungs / lha rje sgröl ba gshen rgyal la sngags sems kyi bon rnams gsan / tsha mo rong gi rlang gi brag dmar la gsang sngags kyi snyen bsgrub mdzad pas / sgrub pa snyems pas / yi dam gyi lha zhal gzigs / ri khrod dbyen gnas 'grims cing / sgoms sgrubs mdzad pas / nyams rtogs thun mong ma yin pa rgyud la skyes te / rtogs thob dus mnyam du gyur te / 'jigs med rang sar grol nas / nyams kyi man ngag mang du gsungs / rgyal khams phyogs med 'grims cig 'gro don rgya cher mdzad / bon po'i grub thob chen po 'gran zla med par gyur / phyis bod dong kha'i bon gnas su bdan phab / dgung lo brgya bcu rtsa dgu la sku 'das so // dam pa la sras bzhi / che ba lha rje jo bkra [p. 242] yin / yab drug bcu rtsa cig bzhes pa'i dus su / khyi lo la 'khrungs so // khong gis 'jad kyi 'or mo stog grong gi gnas bzung / dgung lo brgya bcu rtsa gnyis la sku 'das so // de 'og lha rje jo 'brug yin / khong gi tsha mo rong du bzhugs / de 'og lha rje 'bum me nag po yin / khong gis 'bring 'tshams mang lha rtse'i dgon pa bzung / de'ang dung chad / chung ba ni rtsang mo che 'od rgyal zhes bya bas / yab yum gnyan rtse'i lha khang du bzhugs te gdung chad / lha rje jo bkra la sras gsum / che ba lha rje jo rtse de yab kyiis zhi bcu rtsa lnga bzhes pa'i dus / yos bu lo la sku 'khrungs / gsang sngags kyi snyen bsgrub la shin tu brtson pas / thun mong gi dngos grub bsnyems nas / phud chad tshod cig la zla ba gcig gi bar du mi zhim par ma song ba dang / dpal mo ma tshogs rnams zhal mngon du gzigs pa'i grub thob chen po yin / dgung lo bdun bcu rtsa lnga la 'das so // bar bla ma gshen nam mkha' rgyal mtshan de 'brug lo pa yin / yar 'brog me ston la rab tu byung zhing thos bsam mdzad / mkhas btsun chen po 'gran zla dang bral ba / 'byung bar dkon pa u dum 'bar ba lta bur gyur pas / bon po'i 'dul 'dzin mkhan po chen po rmad du byung ba lags te / rma'i rter ma 'dul ba kling grags las / li bya ha ra'i rnam sprul pa'i / tshul 'dzin dmu rigs gshen gyi gdung // dmu tsha byin brlabs tshul 'dzin pa'i // nam mkha'i mtshan can drang srong 'byung ces gsungs pa dang / yang dpon gsas pa'i lung stan nas / g.yon ru jo mo nags rgyal 'gul // gshen po dmu rigs nam mkha' 'byung // bstan pa bon gyi srog shing 'dzugs ces gsungs so // thugs dgongs dag cing thugs [p. 243] skyed bzang bas / bo dong gi bon gnas dang / 'jad bzang 'or gyi bon gnas bzung nas / de gnyis ka ru mchod khang khyad par 'phabs pa re bzhangs so // dgung

lo bdun bcu rtsa lnga la sku 'das so // chung ba rab tu byung ba ni gshen gsung chen lags skad / lha rje jo rtse la sras gsum / che ba bla ma gshen ston ye shes rgyal mtshal de / bla ma gshen nam mkha'i drung du rab tu byung zhing / thugs rgyud sbyangs te / mkhas btsun chen po 'gran zla med par gyur cing / byi ba'i lo lnga bcu rtsa bdun la 'das so // chung ba lha rje rgyal ni / yab kyiis dgung lo bzhi bcu zhe brgyad zhes tsam na / 'brug lo la sku 'khrungs / sprul sku'i rgyud pa yin pas skyes stobs kyi shes rab chen po thogs pa med pa mnga' bas / nyi ma gcig la klog tshad du phyin pa mkhyen cing / gzhan yang rig pa'i gnas la gzigs pa tsam gyis mkhyen te / dgung lo bzhi bcu tham pa la 'das so // de la sras gnyis mchis pa ni / che ba dpon gsas 'dzam gling ni / yab kyiis dgung lo nyi shu rtsa brgyad bzhes pa'i tshes sku 'khrungs // mtshan bla ma gshen chen gyis 'dzam gling 'od khyengs zhes bya bar btags so // bla ma khus dbon la swogs chen po gong ma rnams kyi dbang dang byin brlabs / dang bka'i gnang ba thob pas / zhi khro dang sman sgrub la swogs pa / byin brlabs rgyud pa'i dpon zshing chen por gyur cing / thugs rgyud yongs su rdul zhang thugs dgongs rnam par dag pas / 'khrul rtog bzung 'dzin dang / rang kha ma'i mtshan ma dang / dag 'dzin phyogs cha'i zhen pa yongs so bral bas / gzhan snang dbang du 'dus cing zil gyis non pa / byin rlabs dang thugs rjer ldan pas bar chad dang gnod pa kun kyang zil gyis non pa lags so // bcung po [p. 244] bla ma gshen ston blo gros seng ge de / bla ma gshen ye shes rgyal mtshan la rab tu byung zhing / thugs rgyud sbyangs shes rab chen po thogs pa med pa mnga' bas / lung rigs sde snod kun la mkhas cing / 'chad brtsod brtsom pa kun la spobs pa thogs pa med par gyur pa / tshul khirms rnam par dag pas mkhan po chen por gyur / thugs dgongs nam mkha' lta bur mnga' zhing thugs skyed rnam par dag pas bka' drin dang sku skyabs kyiis / gshen bon kun la khyab par mdzad / snyan pa dang grags pas phyogs mtshams kun du khyab pa / dgung la g.yu 'brug sgrogs pa lta bur gyur nas / dgung lo bzhi bcu zhe drug me mo lug gi lo sku 'das so // dpon gsas mdzam gling la sras gsum / gcen po rab tu byung ba gshen blo gros rgyal mtshan / bar pa khro rgyal 'bum / chung shogs khri skyong dar dang gsum mo // de dag ni bla ma gshen sgur nas ding sang gi bar du rgyud pa'i che rgyud lags so // grub thob dang mkhas btsun 'gran zla dang bral ba rnams bzang za ra tshags su byon pa mu tig star la rgyud pa'am / gser g.yu spel ba lta bu bzang bar ngan gyis ma chod pa / gzhan las khyad par du gyur pa lags so // de yan chad ni che rgyud lags so // spyi phud bla ma gshen gyi chad khungs / gdung rabs kyi lo rgyus mdor bsod pa / the tsom rnam par sel byed ces bya ba rdzogs s.ho // // dpal dar sdings dgon par dkar chag la btab pa lags so // dge'o //.

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- BKRA** Gu-ru Bkra-shis (=Stag-sgang Mkhas-mchog Ngag-dbang-blo-gros, =Dbyangs-can-dga'-ba'i-blo-gros), *Bstan-pa'i Snying-po Gsang-chen Snga-'gyur Nges-don Zab-mo'i Chos-kyi 'Byung-ba Gsal-bar Byed-pa'i Legs-bshad Mkhas-pa Dga'-byed Ngo-mtshar Gtam-gyi Rol Mtsho* (=Chos-'byung Ngo-mtshar Gtam-gyi Rol Mtsho). Delhi: Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche, 1985?, 5 volumes.
- BMBM** *Biographical Materials about Bonpo Masters* (in Tibetan). New Thobgyal: Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1981.
- CP** *Collected Prophecies and Visionary Revelations of Bonpo Masters of the Past* (in Tibetan). Dolanji: Gelong Sonam Gyaltzen, 1979.
- GRUB-MTHA'** *Bonpo Grub-mtha' Material* (in Tibetan). Dolanji: Tenzin Namdak, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1978.
- KHRO** Skyabs-ston Rin-chen-'od-zer, *Spyi-spungs Khro-bo Dbang-chen-gyi 'Grel-pa* (and the *Dbal-phur Spyi Don* rediscovered by Khu-tsha Zla-'od). New Thobgyal: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973.
- LEGS** Shar-rdza Bkra-shis-rgyal-mtshan, *Legs-bshad Rin-po-che'i Gter Mdzod*. Lhasa: Mi-rigs Dpe-skrun-khang, 1985.
- MDZOD** *Snang-srid Mdzod-phug-gi Rtsa-ba dang Spyi-don-gyi Gsung Pod*. New Thobgyal: Tashi Dorji, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973.
- MKHAS** Mkhas-grub Lung-rtogs-rgya-mtsho (=Tshangs-sras-ngag-gi-zla-ba-dpyod-lhan-lha-yi-bshes-gnyen), *Bstan-'byung Rig-pa'i Shan-'byed Nor-bu Ke-ta-ka'i Do-shal*. I used a photocopy from photographs made of a manuscript in 123 folios (which remains inside Tibet), located at Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, Dolanji. The original manuscript has 123 folios. This work was completed in 1917.
- PADMA** 'Brug-chen IV Padma-dkar-po, *Chos-'byung Bstan-pa'i Padma Rgyas-pa'i Nyin-byed*, contained in 'Brug-chen IV Padma-dkar-po, *Collected Works (Gsung-'bum) of Kun-mkhyen Padma-dkar-po*. Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1973. Vol. 2, pp. 1-619 (note: page numbers correspond to those in the Śatapiṭaka Series edition).
- SDE-DGE TANJUR** *The Sde-dge Mtshal-par Bka'-'gyur: A Facsimile Edition of the 18th Century Redaction of Si-tu Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas*. Delhi: Delhi Karmapae Chodhey Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang, 1976=.
- SDOM** Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan, *Sdom-pa Gsum-gyi Rab-tu Dbye-ba'i Bstan-bcos (Sdom Gsum Rang Mchan 'Khrul-med)*, New Delhi: Ngawang Topgyal, 1987. This is a reprint of a 1986 Lhasa edition.
- SFHB** *Sources for a History of Bon* (in Tibetan). Dolanji: Tenzin Namdak, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1972.
- SKC** Khod-spo Blo-gros-thogs-med, *Srid-pa Rgyud-kyi Kha-byang Chen-mo*. Dolanji: Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1976.
- SNYAN** Bon-zhig Khyung-nag, *Snyan-rgyud Rig-pa Gcer Mthong: Bon-po Oral Transmission Precepts Granted by Srid-pa-rgyal-mo to Bon-zhig Khyung-nag*. Dolanji: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1972.
- THREE SOURCES** *Three Sources for a History of Bon* (in Tibetan). Dolanji: Khedup Gyatso, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1974.
- YL** Stag-tsha Bla-ma Rgyal-mtshan, *Yang-rtse Klong-chen-gyis 'Grel-pa Nyi-zer Sgron-ma*. Contained in: Gzhod-ston Dngos-grub-grags-'bar, *Bla-med Rdzogs-pa-chen-po Yang-rtse Klong-chen-gyi Khrid Gzhung Cha-lag dang bcas pa'i Gsung Pod*. New Thobgyal: Sherab Wangyal, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, 1973. Vol. 1, pp. 1-98.
- ZAB** Kun-grol-grags-pa, *Zab dang Rgya-che G.yung-drung Bon-gyi Bka'-'gyur-gyi Dkar-chag Nyi-ma 'Bum-gyi 'Od-zer*, a manuscript in 197 leaves (photographic copies made by S. Karmay, kept at Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, Dolanji), composed in 1751. This work has also now been made available under the title *G.yung-drung Bon-gyi Bka'-'gyur Dkar-chag*, Krung-go'i Bod-kyi Shes-rig Dpe-skrunkhang, Beijing, 1993.
- ZHU** *Gro-ba'i Mgon-po Rgyal-sras Zhu-g.yas Legs-po'i Skyes-rab Rnam-thar*. A photocopy of a 56-folio manuscript which formerly belonged to Snang Dgon Bya-'phur Bla-brang in Eastern Tibet, presently in the possession of the Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre, Dolanji.

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