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The Autobiography of a 20th Century Rnying-ma-pa lama¹

by Alexander W. Macdonald

The massive printing and reprinting of Tibetan texts which has taken place in India in recent years has opened up a whole new field of study for scholars throughout the world concerned with diverse aspects of Tibetan culture. At the same time, anthropological research in Nepal, Ladakh, to some extent in Sikkim, but not as yet in Bhutan, has widened our knowledge of the functioning of the Buddhist church in the southern borderlands of Tibetan culture. Some years ago David Snellgrove edited and translated into English four very interesting biographies of Tibetan lamas who lived and worked in the Dolpo area of Nepal between the 15th and 18th centuries. Further information on the activities of contemporary lamas is given in his book *Himālayan Pilgrimage*, in that of Corneille Jest on Dolpo, and in the recent work of Barbara Aziz on Dingri.² In addition Michael Aris has published in Tibetan the autobiographies of three Rnying-ma-pa lamas who were active between 1668 and 1767 in Kutang, in Northern Nepal.³ However, Western-language translations or summaries of autobiographies of frontier lamas active in contemporary times are rare. So it may be of interest to draw attention to a short autobiography written by my teacher and collaborator the Sherpa lama Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin, and printed in Delhi in 1971. The biography covers 12½ pages of normal Tibetan format, having six lines on recto and verso, and is entitled *Jo-glang gangs-rgyud shar-pa sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin gyi nam-thar mdor-sdus sgro skur bral-ba'i bden-gtam*. This might be translated as "Brief autobiography of the Sherpa Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin of the mountainous region of Everest: True words written without falling a prey to Eternalism or Nihilism."⁴

The Tibetan expression *nam-thar* which I have translated here as "biography" and "autobiography," and which the dictionaries in-

dicare as equivalent to the Sanskrit *vimokṣa*, can be rendered in English by a variety of paraphrases according to the context in which it is employed. It is interesting then to note how the author himself envisages the subject of his composition. He remarks that to begin with one might divide the summary of those of his acts directed towards his own emancipation and the good of others under three headings: 1) his birth, 2) his studies, and 3) his services to Buddhism. Again, these headings might be subdivided and the account developed so that first, concerning his birth, one would deal with the place and the country in which he was born, who his parents were, and the manner in which his birth occurred: this would make four sub-sections. Secondly, concerning his studies, one would deal with the places in which he studied, at what dates he studied, to what branches of learning he addressed himself, and in what manner he carried out his studies: this would make four more sub-sections. Thirdly, concerning his usefulness to other Buddhists, one would state in what domain he rendered service, the volume of his contribution, its nature, and the needs to which it responded: and this would make four more sub-sections, in all twelve. Were one to develop these twelve sub-sections, each would need to be explicated firstly from the author's own point of view, then from the point of view of others, and finally the two points of view would have to be reconciled. However, by this triple multiplication, one would arrive at thirty-six sub-sections—altogether too many, so he decided to limit himself to a few indications, following the general plan only in outline.⁵

His birth took place in that of the Five Continents known to "Modern Science" as Asia. It occurred among the animate beings of the holy kingdom of Nepal—to be precise, among the snowy mountains where is situated the highest summit in this world: Sagarmātha. The country in which he was born was Sholu-Khumbu, an area where religion and people are pure; and the site was Brag-mtho-sbug, where water, grass and wood abound.⁶ As for the moment of birth, it took place in 1924 according to the system of dating in universal usage; in 1981 according to the Nepalese system; and in 897 according to the Tibetan system. It is said that his birth took place on the 10th day of the rising moon, the Fifth Hor month, a Monday, at dawn.

As for the father and mother from whom this body was born, the father was Zla-ba bstan-pa, the younger son of 'O-rgyan phur-pa who was himself the elder of two sons of Padma tshe-ring, an important man of Mi-nyag gdon family (*rigs*) and of the Grags-

mtho clan (*rus*) of Gshongs-lung. His mother was Nyi-ma bu-khrid, the only daughter of the lama Zla-ba nor-bu, an important man of the Nyang family belonging to the Ser-pa clan, who was himself the elder son of the lama Sangs-rgyas bstan-pa of Gshongs-lung.⁷

In what manner was he born? Many favourable outer and inner omens being manifested simultaneously, it is said that the embryo was belted like a religious robe. Not only that, its surface was enclosed by sinews similar to *kusha* grass. As for himself, it is said that he was seated in an open, four-petalled lotus bloom, coming from the east from the far depths of a cloudless sky. He still clearly remembers coming flying with the flower; the scene remained particularly vivid to him, both in wakeful state and in dreams, up to the age of four or five. The birth-feast was celebrated with fervour and, in conformity with the conjunction of the planets, he was given the name of Zla-ba bstan-'dzin.⁸

Later he began his studies. From his fifth year onwards his father taught him the Tibetan alphabet, the vowels and the consonants, writing and the spelling out of words. He learned quickly and, from the age of eight, he could write without tuition the *Sdig-bshags*, the *Bzang-spyod* and other texts in *dbu-can*.⁹ He began to learn spoken and written Nepali when he was eleven, and this too without difficulty. At the age of seventeen, furnished with numerous gifts, he went to study with the lama Yon-tan rgya-mtsho at Gshongs-lung. From him he requested and obtained the *dbang*, *lung* and *khrid* of the principal religious texts current in the Gshongs-lung and Shar-Khum areas.¹⁰ In addition he completed most of the retreats prescribed for the teachings he had received. At twenty, with his lama's permission and with gifts, he went to study with the lama Rtogs-ldan tshul-khrims at Steng-po-che.¹¹ There he learned to read and write Tibetan long-hand and followed the lama's teachings in vocabulary, grammar and arithmetic and on the *Rgyal-sras lag-len so-bdun-ma*.¹² One year later he took his vows of *dge-tshul* in the presence of the lama Sangs-rgyas chos-'phel,¹³ from Tshul-bzang in the Rtsib-ri district of Tibet. He was given the religious name of Sangs-rgyas zla-ba since it was that of the local abbot. At twenty-two he settled down to study with Padma tshe-dbang, the *rin-po-che* of Stod Nya-dkar. At that period he studied the *Dkon-mchog spyi-'dus*,¹⁴ the *Sgrol-ma nyer-gcig*¹⁵ and the *Khro nag-mo*. He was given the *dbang* and *lung* of these texts and the *khrid* of the commentary on the *Bde-smon*¹⁶ by Rme-ba Chos-grags. He also studied *sems-khrid*, *'pho-ba*, *gcod* and other meditational cycles.

At twenty-three he went to Lha-sa, visited Se-ra, 'Bras-spungs and Dga'-ldan, the two images of Jo-bo Shakyamuni,¹⁷ and the Potala. He studied for a short while in Blo-gsal-gling college at 'Bras-spungs.¹⁸ Then at twenty-four, in the face of many difficulties, he went to study in Khams. He went in stages by way of Chab-mdo to Sde-dge,¹⁹ Rdzong-gsar,²⁰ Rdzogs-chen,²¹ Lcham-mo ri-khrod, Zhe-chen²² and Lchang-ma Sgar. The *mkhan-po* Thub-bstan snyan-grags, the *mkhan-po* Padma tshe-dbang, the *mkhan-po* Ngag-dbang nor-bu, the *mkhan-po* Gang-shar dbang-po, the *mkhan-po* Mdo-sngags Bstan-pa'i nyi-ma, the *mkhan-po* 'Jam-dpal rdo-rje, the *mkhan-po* Blo-gros rab-gsal, the *mkhan-po* Nyi-ma rgyal-lo, the *mkhan-po* Thub-bstan chos-'phel, the *mkhan-po* Lung-rtogs mthar-phyin, the *mkhan-po* Tshe-dbang nor bu, Dkon-mchog of Dpal-yul²³—in front of these and other learned, reverend and good teachers, who shouldered the heavy responsibility of maintaining the Doctrine and explaining it to others, he studied lexicology, grammar, *kāvya*, the *Amarakośa*, astrology, logic and, in addition to the four common sciences of craftsmanship and healing, the *Madhyamaka*, the *Pāramitā*, the *Vinaya*, the *Abhidharmakośa* and the *tantra*. Having listened to these teachings he studied them with ardour and to the best of his ability. He followed with particular attention the teachings of the incarnation of the mental principle (*thugs*) of 'Jam-mgon Blo-gros mtha'-yas.²⁴ When he recalls this teacher's compassion and bounty, it is difficult for him to pronounce his name without tears. He bows deeply before the feet of him whose reputation is famous in the three worlds, his *mūlaguru* named Padma dri-med legs-pa'i blo-gros.²⁵ From him he obtained the *dbang*, *lung* and *khrid* of the religious teachings of the Snga-'gyur *Gsung bka'-ma*;²⁶ the *dbang*, *lung* and *khrid* of the great *Rin-chen gter-mdzod*;²⁷ on two occasions, the *dbang*, *lung* and *khrid* of the Smin-grol gling 'Dod-jo bum-dzang;²⁸ the *lung* of the *Bka'-gyur* and of the *Bstan-'gyur*; the *lung* of the complete teachings of Rong zom-pa;²⁹ of the master Klong-chen and his pupil;³⁰ of the Smin-grol gling brothers;³¹ of the two 'Jam-kong rnam-rgyal;³² of Jigs-med Chos-kyi dbang-po, the incarnation of Dpal-spungs;³³ of the *mkhan-po* of Kaḥ-thog, Nus-ldan;³⁴ of the *mkhan-po* of Sde-dge dgon-pa, Kun-dpal; the *lung* of the complete works of 'Jam-mgon Mi-pham rnam-rgyal.³⁵ Likewise, from the sixth embodiment (*sku-phreng*) of Zhe-chen, Kun-bzang Chos-kyi Nyi-ma, he solicited *dbang* and *lung* of the *Klong-chen snying-thig*³⁶ and of the *Gsang-ba'i snying-thig*.³⁷ From the fourth *sku-phreng* at Zhe-chen, 'Gyur-med Padma rdo-rje theg-mchog, he requested, on frequent occasions, the *dbang* and *lung* of the

Bka'-ma *Dong-sprugs*.³⁸ Furthermore, he obtained from the incarnation of Rdzogs-chen, 'Ju-nyung *sprul-sku*, from Chos-kyi blo-gros of Rdzong-gsar and other incarnations and *rin-po-ches* all possible teachings on the *sūtra* and the *tantra*.³⁹

At the age of twenty-nine, in accordance with the instructions of his teachers, he took the vows of *dge-slong* in front of the Smin-grol gling Gcung-sprul, Ngags-dbang Chos-grags *rin-po-che*, and obtained the *khrid* and *lung*, with oral explanations of the commentaries on the *Gsang-ba'i snying-po*,⁴⁰ the *Bsang-bdag dgongs-rgyan*⁴¹ and the *Zhal-lung*.⁴² Thus, with the help of numerous *kalyānamitra* from his own country and from Upper and Lower Tibet, he completed his religious studies to the best of his capacity, rounding them off by the three Means,⁴³ having undertaken difficult tasks without loss of faith and without yielding to pleasures. Then, thanks to the compassionate blessings of his lamas, he received a favourable omen. Once, he does not know how, in a dream which seemed to be true, the teacher Shākya-thub-pa, Rdo-rje sems-dpa', the master Padma byung-gnas, 'Jam-dpal-dbyangs, Spyan ras-gzigs, Sgrol-ma, Dbyangs-can-ma, Yeshe mtsho-rgyal, Bi-ma mitra,⁴⁴ Klong-chen rab-byams, 'Jam-mgon Mi-pham, along with other lamas, tutelary deities and *dākinīs*,⁴⁵ showed their faces to him, gave him instructions and made prophecies. In this dream, there came out from within his own heart a ray of sunlight, unbearable to look at. With his hand he threw up into the sky barley-flowers. These were all transformed into *ring-bsrel*, scattered everywhere and multiplied. From the summit of a peak of *vaidurya* there came forth a white cloud which did not darken the light of the sky; transparent, it spread out in the sky in a miraculous manner. Meanwhile, he himself felt at times that he was rising into the sky, at times sliding down into a great lake, at times climbing to the top of a mountain.⁴⁶ On a peak to the east the sun appeared innumerable times; he cannot describe it all.

Having finished his studies, in accordance with the prophecy of the gods and his lamas, he came back in his thirty-third year to his own country and, in order to spread the Doctrine and for the good of others, in the hope of starting to teach, he set up a temple with some statues, and began work. Little by little the work was done, and after two years the building itself and some of the statues were completed.

Then in his thirty-fifth year, on the fourth day of the sixth month of the year Earth-Hog, he opened the school. He has taught each of his hundred or so pupils, according to their bent and their capa-

bilities, to read and write Tibetan in *dbu-can* and *dbu-med*; he has taught vocabulary and grammar, prayers and instructions, the *Rgyal-sras lag-len*; the *Spyod-'jug 'grel-ba*,⁴⁷ the *Dbu-ma rgyan-'grel*;⁴⁸ the *Sher-phyin mngon-rtogs-rgyan-gyi 'grel-ba*,⁴⁹ the *Don rnam nges*,⁵⁰ the *Mkhas-'jug rtsa-ba*,⁵¹ the *Mdo-rgyan 'grel-ba*,⁵² the *Kun-bzang zhal-lung*; the *Bar-do drug-khrid*; the *Sdom-gsum dpag-bsam snye-ma*,⁵³ etc. He has countered local opposition to his teachings by clear arguments and by quotations. When it became necessary, he composed a dictionary, a grammar, prayers and school-books, *mes-rabs* and a *chos-'byung* as well as other brief compositions. He has explained these and continues to explain them for the profit of those who enter into religion. His viewpoint is not blemished by extremist theses. He has employed himself for the profit of others.

The monastery thus founded by Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin at Ser-log in 1959 is called Bshad-sgrub zung-'brel gling. In his autobiography the author does not go into detail about the difficulties encountered in setting up the monastery. However in the *chos-'byung* he enlarges on this theme, and since his remarks are pertinent to the understanding of his own life-history, I shall include some notice of them here.⁵⁴ Once he had started explaining the Vehicle of the *sūtra* and *tantra*, the possibility of hearing them and pondering on them existed. However, for this, living-quarters and a meeting-hall were necessities. Secondly, an indispensable minimum of clothes and food had to be obtained. Thirdly, for each pupil a series of books for study was necessary. Fourthly, if a learned abbot from another area was to be invited, there had to be a good reason for his coming. Even if these four basic necessities were met with, this in itself would not be satisfactory unless he could dispose of sufficient capital. A small sum would be of no use; he needed a large amount. Despite the presence in his homeland of pious and generous patrons, he could not obtain what was required. He realized that, in the circumstances, he could not bring his project to fruition; so he decided to go once again to Sdedge, Zhe-chen and Rdzogs-chen, to those areas where there were many great and holy men in the Rdza-chu district of Mdo-khams in Lower Tibet, which is a fertile religious field; and so he set out once more. He was very frightened by the dangers which threatened his life on the way, meeting with the terrible forces of the powerful invaders from Red China. Wherever he went, there was neither food nor drink on arrival. However, treating with contempt whatever happened, he

made his way through to the lamas who were behaving like Buddhas in human form. At that time the Red Chinese filled with their foul stench the east, the west and the centre of Tibet, and religious men found themselves, as in the proverb, like living creatures held in the mouth of a great *makara*: it could not be otherwise. Nonetheless he explained to them the reasons for his coming, as sketched out above, in order to undertake fresh actions on behalf of the Doctrine and for the benefit of others. These great *kalyāṇamitra*, their hearts filled with desire to help others and strong in their religious convictions, were delighted. As the proverb has it, "When a learned father, on the point of going overseas, suddenly meets an intelligent son, both are equals in religion." When he had explained fully his case and his problems, they answered him forthwith that all he wanted should be done. Seeing that his ambition was to be fulfilled and that he could get all he longed for in his heart, he was happier than anyone can be. However, seeing how the misfortunes of this sad epoch were sweeping down upon the lamas as heat spreads from tongues of fire and as cold spreads from ice, he was filled at the same time with joy and sadness. As the proverb has it, "a very loving mother, on the point of leaving for a far-off country, will give to her son who knows her projects all he wants; but this son, once she has gone, will be more unhappy than he was previously happy." In like manner, even if the author's *mūlagurus*, full of sympathy as they were for his projects, had decreed that all he wanted should be given to him—just as a great king would give to his son as a marriage-portion several tens of horses, several hundred *'bri* and *g-yag*, vessels of gold, silver and copper along with turquoise, corals and pearls, tea, silks, woollen and cotton cloths—the fact remained that the Red Chinese were in the process of wiping out the wealthy. Moreover even in the case of a poor pilgrim who was going to Lha-sa they were known to have passed a law forbidding him to carry with him more than 100 *da-sgor*.⁵⁵ To quote the proverb: "Once bitten by a poisonous snake one runs away from a multi-coloured string." Not only did the lamas themselves have doubts: our author too remembered that the Sugata had taught to his *dge-tshul* and *dge-slong* that one should not transgress civilian law. So, abandoning the question of riches, he simply asked for permission to return to his homeland. The lamas replied: "For the moment we can't do otherwise. Later, if conditions get better, you should come back again. So if you leave now, taking only what you need in the way of provisions for the journey, all should go well." Therefore, following his lama's instructions, taking with him only five loads containing books and

money and abandoning the rest like riches perceived in a dream, he showed all he had to the *rdzong-dpon* of the Red Chinese, and requested and obtained a travel document. Using trucks and horses, he made his way and arrived back in his homeland without hindrance, thanks to the compassion of the lamas.

When he had assembled the material goods obtained, as related above, in his homeland together with those he had brought with him from Khams, the monastery at Ser-log was completed. However, not even one-hundredth part of what had been envisaged in the original plan was accomplished. This plan had provided for living-quarters for sixty monks, each to be equipped with a mattresses, tables and altars, grouped around the *gtsug-lag-khang*, and was based on the calculation that there would be fifty-three resident monks to whom rations, clothing and bedding would be provided. Inside the *gtsug-lag-khang* were to be the Three Supports which give great blessings as well as many fine offerings. In particular were envisaged a printing press for carving xylographs of the books of his own order; and all that was necessary in the way of facilities was to be offered to itinerant men of religion. Now, however, all this was merely words that had been pronounced, thoughts that had been in the mind. Nonetheless, thanks to his own diligence and to the compassion of his reverend lamas, he now had in hand something of what was needed and what he wanted, even if because of the unfortunate coincidence of his original plan with the invasion by the Red Chinese the riches of which he had dreamed were not translated into concrete reality. So, without abandoning his initial resolve, and thanks to the help of fortunate people from his own country and abroad, he has worked and continues to work for the benefit of the Doctrine and living creatures.

This biography seems to me significant on several counts. First, its simple but fairly detailed and factual account complements the kind of biographical detail one looks for in F. W. Funke, *Religiöses leben der Sherpa*, and in Sherry B. Ortner, *Sherpas through their rituals*.⁵⁶ Secondly, we learn from it much about the training of a Rnying-ma-pa lama in our century, and what we discover leads us to understand that village lamas are by no means always simple people. Thirdly, it shows us what can still be accomplished, even in these days, by a man of stubborn courage and solid faith. Lastly, it is an interesting example of the Tibetan literary genre of *rnam-thar*, a genre which is very different in its aim and content from the western “warts-and-all” or “kitchen-sink” types of autobiography; Sang-rgyas bstan-'dzin would

agree with 'Brug-pa kun-legs that to relate "how he ate this morning and how he defecated this evening"⁵⁷ would be of little significance. It is no doubt the necessary exemplarity of a Tibetan *rnam-thar* which accounts for the somewhat self-congratulatory tone employed by Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin. However this may be, it is always a moot point to what extent the true and individual character of an author is revealed in his autobiography, whatever the language employed.

NOTES

1. I read a short paper on this topic at the second meeting of the International Association of Buddhist Studies at Nalanda in January, 1980. The intention of the present article is to provide the non-specialist reader with an example of how a contemporary lama envisages his own life-history. The footnotes are not intended as a definitive plunge into the arcana of Tibetan bibliography; they aim to draw the reader's attention to some publications, knowledge of which helps to elucidate the text. I wish to thank my friends Pema Tsering, Helmut Eimer and Michael Aris for positive criticism and helpful advice.

2. D. Snellgrove, *Four Lamas from Dolpo* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 2 vols., 1967); *Himālayan Pilgrimage* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1961). C. Jest, *Dolpo, Communautés de langue tibétaine du Népal* (Paris: Editions du C.N.R.S., 1975); B. Aziz, *Tibetan Frontier Families* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978).

3. M. Aris, *Autobiographies of Three Spiritual Masters of Kutang. Lives of Padma don-grub, Padma dbang-'dus and Padma lhun-grub (O-rgyan bstan-'dzin)* (Thimpu, Bhutan, 1979).

4. In my translation I have tried to convey something of the *rnam-thar's* flavour by retaining the author's own figures of speech and peculiarities of expression. The Tibetan text is to be found in Shar-pa'i Bla-ma Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin and Alexander W. Macdonald, *Documents pour l'étude de la religion et de l'organisation sociale des Sherpa, I* (Junbesi—Paris/Nanterre, 1971), fol. 1–13. Information on the circumstances in which the volume was composed is given in my article "The writing of Buddhist History in the Sherpa area of Nepal" in A. K. Narain (ed.), *Studies in History of Buddhism* (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 121–131. Some further passages from the same source have been summarized in A. W. Macdonald, "The Coming of Buddhism to the Sherpa area of Nepal," in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.*, t. XXXIV (1–3) (Budapest, 1980), pp. 139–146. As S. C. Das, *Dictionary*, p. 336, indicates, *sgro-skur* is an abbreviation for the expression *sgro-'dogs-pas dang skur-pa 'debs-pa* "decorating with feathers and casting abuse." However, to restrain from such excesses designates, in *chos-skad*, the Madhyamaka.

5. Tibetan *rnam-thar* are generally classified as *phyi*, *nang* and *gsang*, outer, inner and secret, a classification in which these three divisions often overlap. The reader will note that the biography we are concerned with conforms also, to some extent, with this pattern. As Gene Smith has pointed out, the Western term "biography" can also deal with matters related in Tibetan *rtogs-brjod*.

6. A small village on the main path from Kathmandu to Namche Bazaar, at the foot of the Junbesi side of the Lamjura la.

7. Gshongs-lung is Junbesi. Gshong-rong is Solu.

8. i.e., because he was born, as stated on a Monday: *gza' zla-ba*.

9. There seems to be no generally accepted English rendering of *dbu-can*: "copper-plate" never seems to have gained admittance. *Dbu-can* means, of course, "having the *širorekha*, i.e., headline" and is contrasted to *dbu-med*, "cursive, i.e., without the headline."

10. i.e., in Solu, Pharak and Khumbu. On *dbang, lung* and *khrid*, see recently Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche, Foreword to H. V. Guenther, *Kindly Bent to Ease Us, Part II* (Emeryville: Dharma Press), pp. vii–viii.

11. In Khumbu.

12. The Thirty-Seven Points of the Practice of the Bodhisattva, a text composed by a Bka'-gdams-pa disciple of Bu-ston, Rgyal-sras thogs-med bzang-po, but accepted by all the Tibetan monastic orders.

13. Perhaps the "Ch'ö zang lama" of Barbara Ariz, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

14. On this cycle, discovered in Brag-lung in the 17th century by Las-phro gling-pa (1585–1656), see, for instance, David Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himālaya* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1957), pp. 228–234, 249–258.

15. For the cult of the Twenty-One forms of Tārā in Tibet, see S. Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā. Magic and Ritual in Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press), *passim*.

16. Prayers for re-birth in the paradise of Bde-ba can (Sukhāvātī).

17. See A. Ferrari, *Mk'yen-brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet* (Rome: Is.M.E.O., 1958), pp. 39–40 and notes 39 and 46. Recently Hugh Richardson has published a useful article reconstituting the plan of the Jo-khang, "The Jo-khang, cathedral of Lha-sa" in *Essais sur l'Art du Tibet* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1977), pp. 157–188. When I visited the Jo-khang in June, 1980, it was still very much the spiritual heart of Tibet. I was repeatedly told that the statue of Jo-bo which one sees today in the Jo-khang was one of the few statues not destroyed by the Red Guards during the 1967/68 troubles in Lha-sa. The great majority of the statues at present in the Jo-khang seem to be re-makes and copies (often very good ones) made on Chinese orders in 1973/74. Pilgrims from far-off Khams and Amdo still crowd into the Jo-khang daily to make their devotions in front of these statues; the scene is most impressive and I, personally, was convinced that if Lamaism, as a social force, is dead in Tibet, Buddhism, as a system of beliefs, still has a strong hold in the minds of the local population. I wish to thank the Academia Sinica of the Peoples Republic of China for their invitation, which made this visit possible.

18. Blo-gsal gling was visited by Prof. Tucci in 1949 (*To Lhasa and Beyond*, Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1956, pp. 104–105). As I saw it in June, 1980, it is now only an empty husk of its former self. On 'Bras-spungs, see, recently, Geshe G. Lödrö, *Geschichte der Kloster Universität Drepung mit einmen Abriss der Geistesgeschichte Tibets, I* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1974).

19. On Sde-dge, see E. Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 158–159; J. Kolmas, *Prague Collection of Tibetan Prints from Derge, Part I*, Asiatische Forschungen, Bd. 36 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), p. 10 and *A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge, Sde-dge rgyal-rabs* (Prague, 1968), *passim*.

20. On Rdzong-gsar, see the references in D. Schuch, *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke, Gesammelte Werke des Koñ-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas*, Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, XI, VI (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976), Index, p. 327.

21. On Rdzogs-chen, see Gene Smith, Preface to *The Autobiographical Reminiscences of Ngag-dbang dpal-bzang, Late Abbot of Kah-thog Monastery* (Gangtok, 1969), p. 7, n. 18 and Ringu Tulku, "Zog-chen gon-pa," in *The Tibet Journal*, I, N° 3-4 (Dharamsala, 1976), p. 85-86.

22. On Zhe-chen, see Gene Smith, *loc. cit.*, p. 7, n. 20.

23. There is a sketch, in which there figure several of the monastic foundations mentioned by our author in the previous sentence, in S. Kaschewsky and Pema Tsering, "Die Niederschlagung des Empörers von Nag-roñ und andere Reminiscenzen des Dpal-sprul rin-po-che," in *Zentralasiatische Studien*, N° 7 (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1973), p. 445. Dpal-yul, as indicated in Helmut Eimer and Pema Tsering, "Äbte und Lehrer von Kah-thog," *Zentralasiatische Studien*, N° 13 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), pp. 459-460, n. 7, lies to the south of Sde-dge dgon-chen.

24. The works of Kong-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas are catalogued in the remarkable volume by D. Schuch quoted above in n. (20). The Introduction, p. XXV-XLVII, gives a most interesting account of Kong-sprul's life-history.

25. See the Introduction by Gene Smith to *Kongtrul's Encyclopaedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture, Parts 1-3*, edited by Lokesh Chandra in the Śāṭa-piṭaka Series, vol. 80 (New Delhi, 1970), p. 76.

26. On *Bka'-ma*, see Eva Dargay, *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), pp. 13-14.

27. The Mtshur-phu edition of the *Rin-chen gter-mdzod* in sixty volumes was arranged by Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho alias Padma Gar-dbang. A reproduction, with additional texts from Dpal-spungs, numbering in all one hundred and eleven volumes, is in course of publication, since 1976, at Paro, Bhutan.

28. This is the *Sgrub-thabs 'dod-jo bum-bzang, A Collection of Nyingmapa Sadhanas written by Gter-bdag gling-pa with the help of Smin-gling Lo-chen*. Reproduced from the manuscript of Dorje Khandro by B. Jamyang Nor-bu, vol. 1-2 (New Delhi, 1972-73). There was also a Derge Dpal-spungs print.

29. On Rong-zom Chos-kyi bzang-po, who lived in the 11th century, see Gene Smith, Preface quoted in n. (21) above, p. 4, n. 7.

30. On Klong-chen Rab-'byams, Dri-ma 'od-zer (1308-1363), author of the *Mdzod-bdun*, see Gene Smith, Preface quoted in n. (21) above, p. 4 and n. 8. *Sras* refers to 'jigs-med gling-pa. On the master and his pupil, see also Pema Tsering, "Tibetische Geschichten zur Erläuterung der Drei Forman des Glaubens (*dad-pa gsum*)," in *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*, Heft 2 (Reinbek, 1976), pp. 136-138.

31. On Smin-grol-gling, see Gene Smith, Preface quoted in n. (21) above, p. 6-7, n. 17. The brothers are Gter-bdag gling-pa (1646-1714) and Lo-chen Dharmasri (1654-1717).

32. These are 'Jam-dbyans Mkhyen-brtse dbang-po and Kong-sprul rgya-mtsho, also known as Mkhyen-Kong rnam-gnyis.

33. This is Dpal-sprul O-rgyan Jigs-med dbang-po, on whom see, most recently, the article by Pema Tsering quoted in n. (30) above, p. 133-135 and 139.

34. For information on Kah-thog, see Helmut Eimer and Pema Tsering, "Äbte

und Lehrer van Kaḥ-thog," in *Zentralasiatischen Studien*, N° 13, pp. 457–509.

35. The collected works of 'Jam-mgon Mi-pham rnam-rgyal (1846–1912) are catalogued in D. Schuh, *Tibetische Handschriften . . .*, XI, V, pp. 63–266.

36. The *Klong-chen snying-thig* is to be found in the seventh and eighth volumes of the *Rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum* of which the Sde-dge edition comprises twenty-six volumes. It was set down by 'Jigs-med Gling-pa (1730–1798) who was inspired to do so in a trance by Klong chen-po.

37. This might refer to D. Schuch, *Tibetische Handschriften . . .*, XI, VI, pp. 154–155, N° 131.

38. This is a text contained in the *Rnying-ma'i rgyud-'bum*, pertaining to the category of the *Gsang bka'-ma*. According to the *dkar-chag*, it is also to be found in the section *ca* of the *Bka'-ma*.

39. The eighteen basic texts in the curriculum of Rnying-ma-pa lamas at Sde-dge are listed in Helmut Eimer and Pema Tsering, *loc. cit.*, paragraph 3.4.3, p. 487, n. 5.

40. On the Sanskrit text of the *Gsang-ba'i snying-po*, see G. N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, I (Calcutta, 1976), 2nd edition, pp. 103–104.

41. Commentary on the *Gsang-ba'i sying-po*. Several commentaries are listed in Lokesh Chandra, 'Les imprimeries tibétaines de Drepung, Derge et Pepung,' in the *Journal Asiatique* (Paris), 1961, p. 516.

42. That is: the *Gsang-bdag zhal-lung* and not the *Kun-brang bla-ma'i zhal-lung*.

43. Giving, respecting, obeying.

44. On Bīma mitra, see, for instance Eva Dargay, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–31.

45. Such visions, blending together at one point in space and making contemporaries in time of historical characters, divinities and goddesses, are also experienced by *jhātrīs* in the Himālayan area. They are not confined to Buddhists; the *dramatis personae* in a Hindu or a "tribal" vision will, of course, be different: but the divine assemblies who encourage and instruct are, in such cases also, composed of beings of different classes.

46. One is tempted to interpret these feelings as indicative of his power to move freely up and down the cosmic axis.

47. Tibetan commentaries on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* are legion and they have not yet been catalogued in a definitive manner. For one aspect of the question, see Helmut Eimer, "Suvarṇadvīpa's 'Commentaries' on the Bodhicaryāvatāra," in *Studien zum Jainismus und Buddhismus, Gedenkschrift für Ludwig Alsdorf*, edited by Klaus Bruhn and Albrecht Wezler (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag), (the off-print bears no date), pp. 73–78.

48. A commentary on the *Madhyamakālamkārahārikā* of Śāntirakṣita. The indications furnished by our author do not permit precise identification of the editions referred to by him. However, it seems useful to draw attention to editions referred to in European catalogues. Confer D. Schuch, *Tibetische Handschriften . . .*, XI, V, p. 107, N° 123.

49. A commentary on the *Abhisamayālamkāra*. Confer D. Schuch, *ibid.*, p. 174, N° 187.

50. Confer D. Schuch, *ibid.*, pp. 176–177, N° 190.

51. A text by Sakya-pandita.

52. A commentary on the *Mahayānāsūtrālamkāranāmakārikā*. Confer D. Schuch, *ibid.*, p. 223, N° 236.

53. i.e. the *Rang-bzhin rdzogs-pa chen-po'i lan-gyi cha-lag Sdom-pa gsum mam-par nges-pa zhes-bya-ba'i bstan-bcos bzhugs-so* of Sakya Pandita.

54. See *Documents pour l'étude de la religion et de l'organisation sociale des Sherpa, I*, fol. 111–116.

55. A large coin in usage in the Sining area.

56. Innsbrück and Munich, 1969, Universitäts Verlag Wagner; and Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978.

57. Quoted in R. A. Stein, *Vie et chants de 'Brug-pa Kun-legs, le Yogi*n (Paris: G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1972), p. 12.