

Vajradhara in Human Form

Jörg Heimbrel

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The Life and Times of
Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po

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NEPAL



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Cover photo: Statue of Ngor chen (*ngor chen nga 'dra ma*),
Ngor Monastery, TAR, China

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Acknowledgements

1382–1456

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Needless to say, any shortcomings, misinterpretations, or mistakes that remain are my own responsibility.

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Preface

In the autumn of 2007, I travelled with a friend and colleague through the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), visiting monasteries in and around lHa sa, gZhis ka rtse, and rGyal rtse. One day, we also paid a visit to the monastery of dPal Ngor E wam chos ldan, located to the southwest of gZhis ka rtse in the upper reaches of the colourful Ngor valley. Walking through the restored monastic complex, I had no idea that just one year later I would embark on a scholarly journey into the history of Ngor Monastery, investigate the life of its founder or return a few years later to discuss details of his life with its incumbent abbot. Against this background, it seems that during my first visit some auspicious connection (*rten 'brel*) may have been formed that led me to delve into the history of the monastery and its tradition—a connection that was deepened further over the years by the openness and hospitality of the many Ngor masters and monks I was fortunate to meet and work with.

Ngor Monastery was founded in 1429 by one of the most outstanding and influential Sa skya masters of the fifteenth century, Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456), who is honoured by his own tradition as one of its “Six Ornaments that Beautify the Snow Land [Tibet].”¹ Like Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419), Ngor chen can be considered a reformer who tried to renew his own Sa skya school from within. He made efforts to cleanse the Sa skya teachings from elements he considered to be mistaken, aiming to return to the religious roots of his tradition by transmitting what he perceived to be the pure and untainted teachings of the early great Sa skya founders, such as Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) and his sons, Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216). Withdrawing from the worldly distractions of the bustling town of Sa skya as well as from sectarian conflicts, Ngor chen left his traditional *alma mater* of Sa skya Monastery and set up his new monastic seat in the remote Ngor valley, located about 30 km southwest of bSam grub rtse (present-day gZhis ka rtse), where, based on the observance of a strict monastic discipline, he hoped to go back to traditional Sa skya teaching and practice in a more supportive environment. Immediately, Ngor became a new centre for tantric training within Sa skya pa monastic circles. Ngor chen, as the leading tantric expert, trained a whole new generation of young students, producing some of Sa skya pa's brightest minds, such as the illustrious and controversial figures gSer mdog Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) and Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489). In doing so, Ngor chen became the founding father of the Ngor tradition (*ngor lugs*), which quickly developed into the most prominent subdivision of the Sa skya school. At a crucial point in the history of the Sa skya pa, who

¹ The list enumerating the “Six Ornaments that Beautify the Snow Land [Tibet]” (*gangs can mdzes par byed pa'i rgyan drug*) is made up of the names of six Sa skya masters in pairs of two, from the generations after Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375): (1) two experts in *sūtra*: g.Yag phrug Sangs rgyas dpal (1350–1414) with either Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449) (*g.yag rong rnam gnyis*) or Red mda' ba gZhon nu blo gros (1349–1412) (*g.yag gzhon rnam gnyis*); (2) the two experts in *mantra*: Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po and rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1382–1446) (*kun dga' rnam gnyis*); and (3) the two experts in *sūtra* as well as *mantra*: Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489) and gSer mdog Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) (*go shāk rnam gnyis*). The earliest work I could find so far that enumerates those six ornaments was written by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892); see the *gSang sngags gsar rmying gi gdan rabs* (pp. 100.4–101.2). On that group and some further variations in enumerating individual members, see HEIMBEL 2009: [47]–48, n. 3.

had lost their political power in the mid-fourteenth century with the collapse of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), Ngor chen was one of a few highly influential figures whose activities caused Sa skya's influence on the religious sphere not only continue to flourish but also to strengthen. Furthermore, through his religious activities, he was able to establish new bonds on the political stage with such powerful rulers as the kings of Mustang (Glo bo).²

Modern research has acknowledged the great influence Ngor chen exercised on Tibetan religious life, as is immediately evident from the abundance of references to his person that we encounter in the secondary literature. Given his importance, it is striking that Tibetological scholarship mainly restricted itself to studying certain aspects of his life within other contexts, but did not devote a full-length study to his life in its own right, a prerequisite for better understanding his manifold activities within the interconnected religious, socio-cultural, and political contexts of fifteenth-century Tibet. This period has been described as “a phase in the religious and cultural history of Tibet marked by an enormous productivity in shaping the spiritual traditions that had been received during the first and second spread of the Buddhist doctrine,”³ or likewise as “a period generally characterized by widespread scholastic activity and intellectual efflorescence.”⁴ During that constructive period, Ngor chen was one of a number of important figures that appeared on the religious scene pursuing their individual agendas by various means, such as reforming and further reshaping their own traditions, establishing new monastic institutions, and forming important alliances and networks of support with wealthy and powerful patrons. Ngor chen also witnessed the emergence and swift rise of the influential dGa' ldan tradition, which quickly changed the religious climate, leading to sectarian conflicts and polemical exchanges with far-reaching consequences that would also effect Ngor chen.

Against this background, the present study aims at positioning Ngor chen within the multi-layered and interlinked religious, socio-cultural, and historical contexts and developments of fifteenth-century Tibet, thereby clarifying his role and formative impact on the further development of Tibetan Buddhism, in general, and of the Sa skya school, in particular. The investigation of the life of Ngor chen serves as a case study to exemplify the various developments that took place during that important period of Tibet's history. It aims to show how Ngor chen's religious career was not only influenced by these developments, but also how he actively took part in shaping the new religious landscape of fifteenth-century Tibet. By outlining Ngor chen's religious training and career, this study hopes to make two further contributions: firstly, to fill gaps in our knowledge of the Sa skya pa's religious history during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and secondly, to trace the genesis and further development of the Ngor tradition as it was established by Ngor chen and his successors on the abbatial throne of Ngor.

The present study was undertaken by a combination of philological-historical and ethnological methods, including expert interviews (conducted in Tibetan). Major parts originate from a careful and close reading of a wide range of Tibetan textual sources central to the life and times of Ngor chen and his tradition. This corpus of sources comprises (1) the extant biographies (*rnam thar*) of Ngor chen and his teachers, disciples, and important contemporaries, (2) Ngor chen's own writings, (3) autobiographies (*rang*

² See DAVIDSON 1981, JACKSON 2010a: 177–179, and KAPSTEIN 2006: 234.

³ EHRHARD 2002: 31.

⁴ JACKSON 1989b: [1].

nam) and biographies of successive Ngor abbots and influential Ngor masters, as well as the successive abbatial histories (*gdan rabs*) of Ngor Monastery, and (4) a variety of religious histories (*chos 'byung*), genealogies (*gdung rabs*), religious chronologies (*bstan rtsis*), and other sources dealing with the religious, political, and doctrinal developments important to the life of Ngor chen and the history of his tradition. In the field, these sources were read in whole or in part with Tibetan scholars and difficult passages contained therein were discussed in detail. In addition, interviews on Ngor chen, the history of Ngor and its tradition were conducted with leading lamas of the Ngor tradition, such as Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs bsTan pa'i nyi ma (b. 1931), the seventy-fifth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1954–1957). Two other important research steps that greatly enhanced my understanding were visiting such monasteries as Ngor, Chu mig, and Sa skya, and discussing my research project with Phan bde mKhan Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs Thub bstan snying po, the present abbot of Ngor Monastery in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). This study also benefitted enormously from the greater accessibility of many important textual sources that surfaced during my research, owing to the efforts of the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po (1927–2010) and the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, researchers and publishers of rare books.⁵

In the present study, I have deliberately decided against preparing a translation of one of two extant full-length biographies of Ngor chen. Though this would have revealed my unsatisfactory translation skills, that is not the reason I have chosen not to include such a translation; rather I found it more important to thoroughly analyse the aforementioned corpus of texts than to restrict myself to just one of Ngor chen's biographies. That put me in a much better position to embed his life in the eventful developments of fifteenth-century Tibet and to assess the impact of his manifold activities. However, to convey a better impression of how Ngor chen is portrayed by his biographers and other Tibetan authors, I found it equally important to provide translations of significant episodes from his biographies and the related textual sources, followed by discussions.

This study contains six parts. Part One gives an overview of the research conducted previously on various aspects of Ngor chen's life and the history of Ngor and its tradition. Part Two introduces the primary sources for studying Ngor chen's life, focussing on his extant as well as currently unavailable biographies and their authors. In addition, other important sources, such as Ngor chen's own writings and biographies of his disciples, are introduced.

Part Three and Part Four are devoted to the exploration of Ngor chen's life. Part Three opens with a discussion of text passages from two *sūtras* that are traditionally interpreted as prophecies of Ngor chen's appearance in this world and his achieving of Buddhahood and continues with a short compilation of references to his previous lives. This is followed by an investigation into Ngor chen's familial background in Sa skya and a discussion of the historical context in which he was born. The rest of this part is devoted to Ngor chen's youthful studies and later religious training. For a better assessment of the different teaching traditions he received, I provide, as far as possible, biographical sketches of Ngor chen's teachers, try to locate his studies under them in place and time, and discuss the actual subjects of his studies.

Part Four explores major episodes from Ngor chen's life after having completed his religious training, such as his early teaching activities and travels, his attempt to revive

⁵ See, for instance, the *Lam 'bras 3*, *Lo rgyus rnam thar 1–4*, and *E waṃ bka' 'bum*.

the two lower Tantra classes, his involvement in religious disputes, his foundation of Ngor Monastery, and his three travels to Mustang (Glo bo). It also introduces his other monastic foundations and large network of patrons and disciples. After a summary of the last years of his life leading up to his death, this part also thematises the religious tradition that Ngor chen established at Ngor Monastery, investigating the *Lam 'bras* tradition of Ngor in comparison to the systems of other Sa skya sub-schools. Both Part Three and Part Four also contain discussions of Ngor chen's commissions of famous *bal ris* style *thangka* sets in fulfilling the last wishes of his late teachers. The main aim of these discussions is to clarify the historical context of their commission and offer new insights into their dating.

Part Five approaches Ngor chen's writings. It gives a first tentative overview of the compilation history of his collected works, the *Pod bzhi ma*, and presents a descriptive catalogue of its four-volume block-print recension from sDe dge. In addition, other works by Ngor chen that were not included in this collection will be located and described as well. The present study concludes with two appendices, compiling an annotated list of the successive abbots of Ngor Monastery and bringing together critical editions of longer Tibetan text passages that were given in translation within the previous parts.

To present a more general portrayal of Ngor chen, it was necessary to restrict the scope of this study to subjectively chosen episodes from his life that I consider essential for a better understanding of his activities and long-term impact. Thus the present study can only scratch the surface of the many important contributions Ngor chen made to the religious life of Tibet. Nevertheless, I hope that it will make a small contribution to our understanding of the history and development of Tibetan Buddhism, in general, and of the Sa skya school, in particular.

Technical Note

The edited text of longer Tibetan passages that I give in translation is included below in Appendix Two. References to this edition are provided in the footnotes. The Tibetan text of shorter passages given in translation is cited in the footnotes. Emendations within the shorter passages are given in square brackets; for instance, *btso* [= *gtso*]. Tentative emendations have been marked by a question mark; for instance, *dbon* [= *dpon?*]. For the sake of clarification, additional information is also given in square brackets; for instance, *shing sbrel* [i.e., 1884]. Annotations or glosses (*mchan*) are given within curly brackets (e.g., {...}). Tibetan abbreviations (*bskungs yig*, *bsdus yig*) are decoded without further notice. Since the main purpose of this study lies not in the preparation of a critical edition of Ngor chen's biographies (or related textual sources), the Tibetan text reproduced in the footnotes does not constitute a critical edition, though, when available, I did use other textual witnesses to clarify doubtful passages.

Calculations regarding the Tibetan calendar system follow a work by Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las and Dar mdo bKra shis dbang 'dus (i.e., the *Bod kyi rig gnas dang lo rgyus kyi re'u mig ngo mtshar kun snang*).¹ However, only Tibetan years are converted into the Western (i.e., Gregorian) calendar system. The fact that each Tibetan year starts generally about one or two months later than the Western year is only taken into consideration when an actual event falls into that specific period of time. Since I was unable to tell which Tibetan calendar system authors actually employed, Tibetan days and months are not converted.² Owing to such uncertainties, a typical conversion looks, for instance, as follows: the fifteenth day of the third month of 1418 (*rnam 'phyang gi lo nag pa zla ba'i tshes bco lnga*).

According to Tibetan tradition, a child is already a year old (or in his first year) at birth and advances one year in age at the Tibetan New Year (*lo sar/gsar*). This custom of counting is preserved in the present study and should be kept in mind while reading it. When considered relevant, the age of a person is converted into a year according to the Western calendar system; for instance, in his twenty-ninth year (i.e., 1374).

In presenting the chronology of the abbots of Ngor Monastery, I follow the tradition established by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot of Ngor, in his first abbatial history of Ngor.³ The respective tenure of each Ngor abbot is given in Appendix One. In enumerating the throne-holders of Sa skya, I follow the chronology employed by the Sa skya tradition itself.⁴

The first time each person appears in one of the six parts of this study, their dates are given in brackets after their name. Thereafter, in the same part, only their name will be used without specifying their dates again. As they frequently occur throughout this study, the dates of Ngor chen's biographers—Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469) and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705)—will only be given when introducing their respective biographies in Part Two and in other parts only when required by

¹ See the *Re'u mig*.

² On Tibetan calendrical calculations, see SCHUH 1973.

³ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 and Appendix One, n. 1.

⁴ For such a list, see, for instance, the *Sa skya'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (pp. 26–34). For a differing chronology of the early throne-holders, cf. JACKSON 1997a: 52–53.

context. Moreover, throughout this work, the former biographer is simply referred to as Mus chen.

In order not to overload the present study with numerous transliterations of Tibetan technical terms, a short glossary shall be prefixed here.

Tibetan	Sanskrit	English
1. TYPES OF TEACHINGS		
<i>dbang</i>	<i>abhiṣeka</i>	empowerment or initiation
<i>man ngag</i>	<i>āmnāya</i> (but also <i>upadeśa</i>)	esoteric instruction
<i>bshad pa</i>	<i>bhāṣya</i>	explanation or exposition
<i>khrid</i>		instruction
<i>gdams ngag</i>	<i>upadeśa</i>	oral instruction ⁵
<i>mdzub khrid</i>		pointing-out instruction
<i>lung</i>	<i>āgama</i>	reading transmission
<i>lag len</i>	<i>prakriyā</i>	ritual application or ritual procedures
2. SPECIFIC TEACHINGS		
<i>Kye rdor rgyud gsum</i>		<i>Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra</i>
<i>Dus 'khor sbyor drug</i>		<i>Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra</i>
<i>bDe mchog rim lnga</i>		<i>Five Stages of Cakrasaṃvara</i>
<i>Ni gu chos drug</i>		<i>Six Dharmas of Niguma</i>

⁵ In translating *man ngag* as esoteric instruction and *gdams ngag* as oral instruction, I follow STEARNS 2001. On both terms, see also KAPSTEIN 1996.

<i>Blo sbyong don bdun ma</i>		<i>Seven-Point Mind Training</i>
<i>gSang 'dus rim lnga</i>		<i>Five Stages of Guhyasamāja</i>
3. TYPES OF ORDINATIONS		
<i>dge bsnyen</i>	<i>upāsaka</i>	layman or layperson
<i>dge tshul</i>	<i>śrāmaṇera</i>	novice monk
<i>dge slong</i>	<i>bhikṣu</i>	fully ordained monk
<i>bsnyen (par) rdzogs (pa)</i>	<i>upasampadā</i>	full monastic ordination
<i>rab (tu) byung (ba)</i>	<i>pravrajyā</i>	monastic ordination
4. ROLES OF PERSONS FUNCTIONING IN ORDINATIONS		
<i>mkhan po</i>	<i>upādhyāya</i>	presiding abbot or ordaining preceptor
<i>grib tshod pa</i>		time keeper
<i>dus go (or sgo or bsgo) ba</i>		(also a) time keeper
<i>las (kyi) slob (dpon)</i>	<i>karmācārya</i>	ceremonial master
<i>gsang (ste) ston (pa)</i>	<i>raho'nuśāsaka</i>	instructor in private

Part One

Previous Research on Ngor chen and the Tradition He Founded

From the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, major Tibetan sources for investigating the life of Ngor chen were published in Japan and India. In 1968, bSod nams rgya mtsho (1933–1987)—alias 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the seventy-fourth abbot of Ngor—published from Tokyo the four-volume set of Ngor chen's collected works as part of the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*.¹ Nearly ten years later, in 1976, Ngor chen's compiled full-length biography by 'Jam mgon Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot of Ngor, appeared in India.² In 1983, the Sakya Centre began to publish the *Slob bshad* collection of the *Lam 'bras*, which contains the biography of Ngor chen written by his chief disciple Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469), the second abbot of Ngor, as well as another edition of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography.³ With those publications, the foundation was laid for Tibetological explorations of Ngor chen's life and literary output.

In the following pages, I shall survey the relevant secondary literature that discussed aspects of Ngor chen's life, investigated his writings or focussed on themes directly linked to his monastic foundation of Ngor and the tradition he founded. This part's first chapter, "Early Research (1834–1976)," assembles in chronological order the earliest references to Ngor chen and Ngor, which were mainly written prior to the publications mentioned above. Its second chapter, "Later Research (1976–2017)," will introduce subsequent scholarship, divided into four themes: (1) Ngor chen's Life and Works, (2) Ngor chen's Three Sojourns in Glo bo, (3) Ngor chen's Commissioning of *Bal ris* Style Thangkas and Ngor-Related Religious Art, and (4) Ngor Monastery and the Life of Later Abbots. Although I will, in general, follow a chronological order, my discussion primarily discusses authors one at a time, that is, whenever a scholar has written different papers on Ngor chen, they will be introduced before moving on to the next author's contribution. Moreover, although the importance of Ngor chen has been acknowledged by quite a few scholars, I will not enumerate each and every minor publication that mentions him only in passing or refers to him in a footnote that reiterates some well-known facts.

¹ See the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 2 (vols. 9 and 10). "After living many years in Japan," as JACKSON 2003b: 626, n. 612 explains, bSod nams rgya mtsho "was given Japanese citizenship and took the Japanese name Hiroshi Sonami."

² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7.

³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2, respectively.

Chapter One

Early Research (1834–1976)

In 1834, **Alexander Csoma de Kőrös**, the pioneer of Tibetan studies, was probably the first to mention the foundation of Ngor Monastery in Western literature. He mentioned it based on a chronology of important events in Tibetan Buddhist history, which he had extracted from the *Bai dūrya dkar po* of sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705). However, due to what appears to be a typographical error, the foundation year was only given as “142” missing, following the calculations of de Kőrös, the final “8” of 1428.⁴

The earliest reference to Ngor chen was apparently given by **Sarat Chandra Das** in his 1889 translation of the “Rehumig (chronological table)” found in the religious history of Sum pa mKhan po Ye shes dpal ’byor (1704–1788).⁵ Das mentioned both Ngor chen’s year of birth and death as well as the foundation of Ngor. However, he dated each of these events one year too early and mistook the entry for Ngor chen’s death as referring to his birth: “Chog-ro Ņor-pa Kun-bssañ of Sa-skya was born. (...) 1381;”⁶ “Bssañ dor kun-bssañ of Saska founded the monastery of E-bam. (...) 1428;”⁷ and “Kun-bssañ of Ņor was born. 1455.”⁸

In the 1930s, the Indian *paṇḍita* **Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana** drew attention to Ngor Monastery as a repository of Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscripts. During his expeditions to central Tibet (in 1934, 1936, and 1938), he paid several visits to Ngor:⁹

Though the monastery of Sa-skya, where many hundreds of Sanskrit books were translated into Tibetan, was never destroyed after its ascendance, yet, later hierarchs did not care for these MSS. [i.e., manuscripts] which had no meaning for them; and, they allowed the scholars of their sect to take the MSS. away to their monasteries. In fact, the MSS. which are found in the monasteries of Ṣha-lu and Ngor, originally belonged to Sa-skya.¹⁰

Now I was free to leave for Ngor (established 1429 A. C.). Of all the monasteries, I found Ngor with its large collection of Indian MSS. most difficult to inspect, on account of its Khan-po-in-charge’s unruly Steward. In reality he was the master and not the Khan-po (Dean). At times I was thinking that it might not be possible for me to get a chance of seeing the important MSS. of that monastery.¹¹

⁴ See CSOMA DE KŐRÖS 1834: 187. On the mistaken conversion by de Kőrös, see VOSTRIKOV 1970: 123–125, n. 369.

⁵ The chronological table is found in the *rGya gar ’phags pa’i yull rgya nag chen po/ gangs can bod yull sog yul mams su dam chos rin chen byung tshul dpag bsam ljon bzang*. On this work, see MARTIN 1997: 129–130, no. 289.

⁶ DAS 1889: 62.

⁷ DAS 1889: 65.

⁸ DAS 1889: 67.

⁹ According to SFERRA 2008: 19, n. 10, the negatives and photographs of those expeditions are kept by the Bihar Research Society in Patna (Museum Building) and copies of the negatives are held by the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitäts Bibliothek in Göttingen. On the former, see also MUCH 1988, and the latter, see BANDURSKI 1994. For pictures of some Sanskrit manuscripts and thangkas that might have been taken at Ngor, see PATHAK 1986: pls. 10, 19–22, and 30–42.

¹⁰ SĀŅKRṬYĀYANA 1935: 22. For a list of manuscripts documented during that expedition at Ngor, see *Ibid.*: 31–42.

¹¹ SĀŅKRṬYĀYANA 1937: 7.

Like Sa-skya, here too the Indian MSS. are mixed up with Tibetan MSS. numbering about 1,000 volumes. The Sanskrit MSS. which I had separated in my last visit were put in one place. I made a little search for new MSS. in the heaps of the other MSS. and my trouble was well-rewarded when I found a complete copy of *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* by Vasubandhu and a copy of Sarahapa's *Dohākośa*.¹²

After staying for a few weeks at Shigartse we went to Ngor on the 31st July. The monastery of Ngor is one of the three monasteries in Tibet which have got the largest collection of Sanskrit MSS. In subject-matter the collection of this monastery is more important. We did not give previous information of our arrival. We feared that the chief custodian may play a trick by absenting himself as his predecessors did last time.¹³

Those manuscripts were also seen and investigated by **Giuseppe Tucci**, who visited Ngor during his 1939 expedition through gTsang, and they were photographed by his companion Felice Boffa Ballaran:¹⁴

The most important discoveries have been made in the monasteries of Sa skya, Ñor and Žva lu. In the neglected, unguarded and dusty libraries, I have found about seven thousand manuscript pages of Indian works that were considered lost. In other words, I have discovered the Sanskrit originals, on palm leaves, of many of the most important philosophical and religious works of India.

In his three-volume study *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* from 1949, Tucci was the first scholar to bring Ngor chen and his religious activities to the attention of Western academia. During his travels in Tibet, he had been able to lay his hands on a sixty-six-folio block-print edition of Ngor chen's biography by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, which he utilised for several of his publications:¹⁵

This is the biography of the founder of Ñor and of the sect which took its name from that monastery (if this branch of the Sa skya pa, undistinguished by any doctrinal peculiarity, deserves to be called a sect). The biography was written by dPal ldan don grub in the monastery of Evaṃ (another name for Ñor), built by that same Lama in the year 1429, that is when he was 36, having been born in the year

¹² SĀṆKṚTYĀYANA 1937: 18. For a list of the manuscripts documented during that expedition at Ngor, see *ibid.*: 53–57.

¹³ SĀṆKṚTYĀYANA 1938: 140.

¹⁴ Cited after the translation by SFERRA 2008: 30, n. 42. For an annotated list of photographs of those manuscripts, see SFERRA 2008: 43–45 and 49–50. On Tucci's 1939 expedition, see NALESINI 2008: 92–95, SFERRA 2008: 19, and TUCCI 1940. Tucci had visited Ngor from July 14–23, 1939; see NALESINI 2013: 284. As I was kindly informed by Oscar Nalesini (email, 16 December 2014), the large majority of pictures that Felice Boffa Ballaran took of Sanskrit manuscripts at Ngor are preserved in Rome at the library of the former Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (ISIAO). Twenty-seven pictures of Ngor's monastic complex, surroundings, statues and a few texts are also housed in Rome at the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci' (MNAOr); see pls. 20 and 24–34.

¹⁵ TUCCI 1999: 157. Prior to that, while discussing the different Tibetan Buddhist schools, Tucci referred to Ngor chen's founding of Ngor as follows (*ibid.*: 91): "From the Sa skya pa another school branches off, called ÑOR after the monastery it is connected with (founded in 1429); in this case the school's individuality is derived not so much from doctrinal differences, which are irrelevant, as from the monastery's importance and the moral prestige of its founder Kun dga' bzañ po." In *The Religions of Tibet*, which was first published in German in 1970, Tucci mentions again the Ngor pa as a sub-school of Sa skya and also referred to Ngor chen's founding of Ngor; see TUCCI 1988: 37, 112, 150, 197, 259, n. 4, and 266, n. 5. Tucci also obtained a second edition of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' Ngor chen biography—that is, the one contained among the lives of *Lam 'bras* lineage masters; see TUCCI 1956: 17–18, n. 3.

waterdog, 1394. The biography contains no reference to historical facts, and this was to be expected, for Kun dga' bzañ po was simply a scholar and an ascetic, hardly touched by political events. So that his *rnam t'ar* breathes a serene religious atmosphere, untroubled by human interests; a survey is made of his studies, a list is given of the works on which he meditated or wrote, the names of his masters are recorded. He perfected his studies in Sa skya, as it was natural, but he also met Tsoñ ka pa, from whose very voice he heard the *Lam rim c'en mo*. The story of how Evam monastery was built and the description of the statues placed there or of the pictures he caused to be painted on the walls, occupies a large part of the book, whose interest is increased by its records, not only of Tibetan artists but also of a squad of Nepalese artists, called in to decorated [sic] the temples.

This master's fame spread widely in Western Tibet, Guge and Mar yul, and the extremely close relations between the Ñor sect and certain monasteries of Western Tibet, like Kojarnath (*K'a c'ar*), go back to his times.

In his assessment, Tucci underestimated to a certain extent the historical value of Ngor chen's biography, which does include important historical information, especially on the history of the ruling house of Glo bo. Moreover, he mistakenly identified dPal ldan don grub (1563–1636), the sixteenth abbot of Ngor, as Ngor chen's biographer, and wrongly converted the water-dog year (*chu khyi*) of Ngor chen's birth to 1394 instead of 1382.¹⁶

Tucci also obtained three volumes of Ngor chen's collected works.¹⁷ Based on his reading of them, he was the first scholar to offer a brief glimpse of Ngor chen's literary output:¹⁸

Among the most prolific writers of the late Sa skya school must be counted Kun dga' bzañ po, the founder, in 1429, of the Ñor monastery. From his pen we have a bulky *gsuñ abum* containing, beside a collection of hymns in verse praising the principal masters of the school, also a *T'ob rig rgya mts'o*. (...) Kun dga' bzañ po too follows these examples in his treatises: he reconstructs the genealogy and the spiritual pedigree through which he was initiated into each of the Tantra he had studied. He also incorporated in his work the indexes of the *gsuñ abum*, of the Sa c'en, of Sa skya pañdita and of aP'ags pa. This work is thus simply a collection of endless lists of names, which may be extremely interesting for the history of Lamaism, but whose literary value is negligible. His *Lam abras bu dañ bcas pai man ñag gi p'yin* [sic] *ts'ul gsañ* [sic] *ñag rin po c'e bstan rgyas pai ñi 'od* has greater literary pretensions; it aims at giving a history of the various *sampradāya*, as they abutted into the Sa skya pa school.

The *dPal kye rdo rjei lus kyi dkyil ak'or la rtsod pa spañs pa smra ba rnam ajoms* is a treatise at the same time liturgical and polemic; it discusses the rituals centering round Hevajra's symbol, confuting the objections of other schools to the first Sa skya pa abbots' interpretation of these cycles.

Another great work of Kun dga' bzañ po's deserves to be mentioned, dealing with the mysticism of the Vajrayāna, ist [sic] symbolism and the complication of its rites. It is entitled *dPal kye rdo rjei sgrub t'abs kyi rgya c'er bñad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla ba*, and in it are discussed the initiatic tradition of this Tantric cycle, its baptisms, the difference between the evocative method and the perfect method;

¹⁶ In TUCCI 1956: 16, n. 2, he corrected Ngor chen's year of birth to 1382.

¹⁷ See TUCCI 1999: 260, n. 217.

¹⁸ TUCCI 1999: 124–125.

the author goes into details concerning the psychological process called evocative method by the Tantric schools, illustrating its developments and its moments. It is an extremely technical work, which nevertheless brings a remarkable contribution to the understanding of Lamaist exoterism.

This is not the place to mention the many other treatises written by this lama who, though he turned his attention mostly to Hevajra's cycle, did not neglect other similar cycles, like those of bDe mc'og and of gSañ ḁus: they are booklets of varying length, all on ritualistic, about which I may usefully speak in a book on Tibetan esoterism, better than in the present summary of Tibetan literature.

A couple of years later, in 1952, Tucci journeyed through Nepal also visiting parts of the old kingdom of Glo bo (Mustang) in northwest Nepal. In his expedition report of 1953, he noted the predominance of the Sa skya school in Glo bo as well as the presence of two Ngor pa monasteries at Ghiling (dGe lung), whose construction he dated back to Ngor chen's time as based on a "foundation certificate" shown to him.¹⁹ However, though he mentioned other foundations of Ngor chen—such as at gTsang rang, rNam rgyal, and the Byams chen at Glo bo sMon thang—he did not identify them as such. But he already announced that the religious history of Glo bo "will soon be clarified by the immense quantity of material collected during the expedition; biographies of monks, inscriptions and guides to monasteries."²⁰ Indeed, in 1956, Tucci did publish his *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal*, in which he devoted one chapter to the religious history of Glo bo. Mentioning again the dominance of the Sa skya pa, he especially noted the influence of the Ngor tradition:²¹

A revival of Lamaism took place in these parts through the zeal of the Ñor subsect of the Sa skya pas, started by Kun dga' bzañ po who came from its chief monastery, Ñor.

Many of the temples and dgon pas of Mustang side still belong to the Ñor pas, (...).

In researching the history of Glo bo, Tucci mainly relied on Ngor chen's biography, concluding:²²

Buddhism entered the country in the fifteenth century. This was due to A me dpal. (...) A me dpal tried his very best to spread Buddhism in the country under his rule. His first attempt with Bo doñ was not successful. He was more successful with the Sa skya pas, but the real person who greatly contributed to the spread of Buddhism in this part of the world was Kun dga' bzañ po who was invited three times by A me dpal to the territory to which he had been appointed, in order to preach Buddhism there.

On the following pages, Tucci summarised the religious activities of Ngor chen and his patrons from Glo bo, again based on the accounts contained in Ngor chen's biography. For his research, he also utilised a monastic constitution (*bca' yig*) that was preserved at dGe lung Chos sde, which attested to Ngor chen's visit in 1446.²³ Moreover, in the same

¹⁹ See TUCCI 1977: 57–62.

²⁰ TUCCI 1977: 62.

²¹ TUCCI 1956: 16–17.

²² TUCCI 1956: 17–18.

²³ See TUCCI 1956: 17. This monastic constitution is seemingly the same document to which he referred in TUCCI 1977: 57 as "foundation certificate."

publication, he investigated the history of the Khaśa rulers in mNga' ris and western Nepal and, in doing so, employed two letters written by Ngor chen; one was addressed to the Ya tshe king Hastirāja and the other to a local minister.²⁴

In 1958, a first short description of Ngor Monastery appeared in the translation of 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po's (1820–1892) short guide book to the holy places of dBus and gTsang: "At half-a-day's march from sNar t'añ there is the monastery of Nōr E waṃ, with 18 colleges under five different heads. (...)."²⁵ The Tibetan text was originally translated by **Alfonsa Ferrari** and was completed and edited by **Luciano Petech** after she passed away. For identifying the temples and religious objects described by mkhyen brtse'i dbang po, the authors utilised the biography of Ngor chen that Tucci had acquired.²⁶

In 1967, **Michael Peissel** published the travel account of his 1964 journey to Mustang. In parts of his travelogue, he explores the history of Glo bo and relates the information he learned about Ngor chen's religious activities and foundations. His presentation is based on both oral accounts as told to him by local Mustangis and information extracted from a couple of Tibetan sources.²⁷ One of these sources was the biography of Ngor chen by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, which he saw at dGon gsar at Glo bo sMon thang.²⁸

Having little or no knowledge of literary Tibetan myself, I was dependent on Tashi. Looking over his shoulder, I told him to discard books of a strictly religious character, until we stumbled upon a large biography of the Lama Ngorchen Kunga, the great reformer of the Sakyapa sect who had come to Mustang in the fifteenth century and about whom we had first heard in Geling. This old volume was two inches thick, we couldn't hope to read its hundred and eighty-six pages there and then, so we took down its name, intending later to buy it or to have a copy of it made by a monk. We very happy about this find for, glancing through it, we saw that it contained many references to Lo.

Peissel also described some of the monasteries and temples established by Ngor chen—such as the rNam rgyal Chos sde and Byams chen lha khang—though he was not aware of their founder's identity.²⁹ Moreover, he was able to take a look at one volume of a *bKa' 'gyur* that was written in golden ink and that Ngor chen was said to have commissioned.³⁰

Also in 1967, **David L. Snellgrove** published his *Four Lamas of Dolpo*, "which is concerned with four lamas all of the same *Ngor-pa* tradition and their activities in *Ban-tshang* and *Nang-khong*."³¹ Snellgrove's introduction to the history and religion of Dol po and his translation of these four biographies of Dol po lamas was the first publication that established a link between the Ngor tradition and that region: "*Ban-tshang* was more accessible to Lo than any other part of Dolpo, and the religious traditions there were

²⁴ See TUCCI 1956: 114–115.

²⁵ FERRARI 1958: 62–63.

²⁶ See FERRARI 1958: 147–148, nn. 468–479.

²⁷ See PEISSEL 1992: 84–86, 124–125, 166–168, and [224]–228. On Peissel's account, see also JACKSON 1984: 15–17.

²⁸ PEISSEL 1992: 168. See *Ibid.*: 228, where he identified the author as "Sanji Pintso."

²⁹ On rNam rgyal, see PEISSEL 1992: 132–136, 167, and 255. On the Byams chen, which Peissel called "Jampa God House" see *Ibid.*: 170 and 172–174.

³⁰ See PEISSEL 1992: 245–246.

³¹ SNELGROVE 1967: 11.

Ngor-pa, a branch of the *Sa-skya* tradition, just as they were in Lo.”³² All four lamas lived between the sixteenth and eighteenth century and had studied under Ngor abbots in central Tibet, mainly at Ngor.³³

One year later, in 1968, **Josef Kolmaš** published his study and edition of the royal history of the ruling house of sDe dge, the *dPal sa skyong sde dge chos kyi rgyal po rim byon gyi rnam thar dge legs nor bu'i phreng ba 'dod dgu rab 'phel*, written by Yab chen Tshe dbang rdo rje rig 'dzin (1786–1847). This versified history attested to the close relationship between the Ngor lamas and the sDe dge nobles, in whose domain the Ngor tradition became the dominant Buddhist tradition. Kolmaš referred to this connection only in passing: “Of Bo-thar’s two sons, the first, Dpal-ldan-seng-ge, became a monk in Ngor, one of the largest monasteries of the Sa-skya-pa sect in Gtsang. He returned to Khams only in old age.”³⁴ Nevertheless, Kolmaš emphasised that the ruling house of sDe dge adhered to the Sa skya tradition and that they “had constantly professed the teaching of the Sa-skya-pa sect and assisted its propagation in every way.”³⁵ Ten years later in *The Iconography of the Derge Kanjur and Tanjur*, Kolmaš expressed this connection more clearly: “Although Derge traditionally maintained very close contacts with the Sa-skya-pa sect, especially the Ngor-pa offshoot at the E-wam monastery in Gtsang, (...)”³⁶

Discussing the religious and political power of Sa skya, **Cassinelli** and **Ekvall** mentioned in their 1969 study *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sa sKya* that “a reverse occurred when the Ngor sect broke with the Sa sKya sect and established its own monastery of E Wam CHos lDan near Gyangtse in 1429.”³⁷ My reading of Ngor chen’s biography indicates that such an assessment of the foundation of Ngor is overstated because Ngor chen did not break with his own tradition. By shifting away from Sa skya, he only hoped to go back to traditional Sa skya teaching and practice in a more supportive environment.

In his 1970 introduction to *Kongtrul’s Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture*, **E. Gene Smith** spelled out much more clearly than Kolmaš the close link between the Ngor pas and the house of sDe dge, also mentioning sectarian conflicts that arose at the sDe dge court at the end of the eighteenth century:³⁸

The lords of Sde-dge, like the majority of the Khampa aristocracy, could be counted upon as patrons for any worthy religious or cultural project. The vast majority were without pronounced sectarian convictions although certain sects came to enjoy the recognized patronage of a princely family through a period of several generations. The Nor-pa subsect of the Sa-skya-pa enjoyed such a preferential relationship with the Sde-dge Royal Family and with a large segment of the aristocracy (*mdun-'khor*). At the end of the 18th century, the peace was suddenly disrupted.

³² SNELLGROVE 1967: 10. Initially, Snellgrove had dated the first three lamas one sixty-year cycle too early. As suggested by David Jackson, he moved forward the dating by sixty years into the next cycle in a revised edition; see SNELLGROVE 2011: *Preface to the Second Edition*, JACKSON 1978: 218, n. 86, and JACKSON 1984: 143, n. 67.

³³ See SNELLGROVE 1967: 1, 83, 86–87, 104, 133, 180, 191, 206, 211, 234, n. 2, and 250.

³⁴ KOLMAŠ 1968: 32.

³⁵ KOLMAŠ 1968: 39.

³⁶ KOLMAŠ 1978: 16.

³⁷ CASSINELLI and EKVAL 1969: 20.

³⁸ SMITH 1970: 23–24. In light of new sources, RONIS 2011 reappraised the alleged sectarian conflict. On the connection of the Ngor pas with sDe dge, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1984, JACKSON 1987: 232–236, CHAIX 2010, and CHAIX 2013: 28–34.

The fame of 'Jigs-med-gliñ-pa had reached the ears of the young queen of Sde-dge. When she met that great guru, an unshakeable faith was born in the heart of that princess. 'Jigs-med-gliñ-pa and his disciple, Rdo-ba Grub-chen, rapidly became the most influential chaplains of Sde-dge. The honours bestowed on the Rñiñ-ma-pa could not but arouse the jealousy and envy of the Ñor-pa lamas and their patrons among the aristocracy. This envy and fear of a loss of support were smoldering coals, hidden but ready to burst into flame under the proper conditions. Those conditions were not long in appearing.

In another introduction from 1970, later titled "Glo bo Mkhan chen and Buddhist Logic in Tibet," Smith referred several times to Ngor and its masters: (1) he mentioned Glo bo mkhan chen bSod nams lhun grub's (1456–1532) studies under early Ngor abbots; (2) discussing Glo bo mkhan chen's collected works, he singled out the latter's history of the Shar family of Sa skya from which "the lamas of the Klu sdings Bla brang of Ngor are said to descend;" and (3) mentioned Ngor chen's founding of Ngor, though he dated it to 1434 instead of 1429.³⁹

In 1971, **Giuseppe Tucci** published his translation of the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* by Pañ chen bSod nams grags pa (1478–1554), which was probably the first non-Tibetan publication to mention bSod nams grags pa's portrayal of Ngor chen as a sectarian figure. bSod nams grags pa relates an account of an alleged meeting between the Rin spungs pa lord Nor bu bzang po (1403–1466) and Ngor chen. In the course of their meeting, Ngor chen is said to have urged Nor bu bzang po to convert all dGa' ldan pa monasteries in his domain to Sa skya pa ones and stop the foundation of bKra shis lhun po.⁴⁰ However, the credibility of that account was already disputed by the Fifth Dalai Lama (Tā la'i bla ma) Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682).⁴¹ Tucci's translation also contained the passage on Ngor chen's invitation to Glo bo (Mustang) by A ma dpal (var. A me dpal; 1388–ca. 1456) and the successive royal support of the Ngor tradition, who "forced the monasteries of their estate to be either Sa skya pa-s or especially Ñor pa-s, whether they were or not (of those sects) and they showed somehow unfriendliness towards the dGe ldan pa-s."⁴²

In 1974, the first investigation of the different *Lam 'bras* lineages of the Sa skya school was made by **Musashi Tachikawa**. He extracted the lineages from the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* of Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802) and presented the lineages of the Ngor, rDzong, and Tshar traditions in respective tables.⁴³

A more detailed picture of Ngor chen's life (fuller than that sketched by Tucci) was offered by **Lobsang Dagpa, Migmar Tsering, and Ngawang Samten Chophel** in 1975. Based on Ngor chen's biographical sketch as found in the *Ngor chos 'byung*—a history of Buddhism begun by dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot of Ngor, and later on extensively enlarged and completed by Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs—they briefly recounted important events of Ngor chen's life when

³⁹ See SMITH 2001: 112 and 115.

⁴⁰ See TUCCI 1971: 239–240.

⁴¹ This account was later on mentioned by scholars such as VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 260, n. 19, VITALI 1996: 509, n. 862, SHEN 2002: 65, n. 97, 109, 149, n. 92, 207–208, n. 289, and 211–212, n. 302, CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 44 and 271, n. 216, AHMAD 2008: 127, and CZAJA 2013: 223–225, n. 54.

⁴² TUCCI 1971: 170.

⁴³ See TACHIKAWA 1974: 134–136. See also VAN DER KUIJP 1993c: 155, n. 13.

introducing their translation of Ngor chen's *dGe tshul gyi bslab bya mdor bsdus pa rags sdom bcu'i 'bru 'grel*, the earliest translation of a work by Ngor chen into English.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ For Ngor chen's biographical sketch, see LOBSANG DAGPA, MIGMAR TSERING, and NGAWANG SAMTEN CHOPHEL 1975: 6–10. For their translation, see *Ibid.*: [51]–61. On the *dGe tshul gyi bslab bya mdor bsdus pa rags sdom bcu'i 'bru 'grel*, see CATALOGUE (no. 149).

Chapter Two

Later Research (1976–2017)

Ngor chen's Life and Works

In his 1981 article “The Nor-Pa Tradition,” **Ronald Davidson** offered a much more detailed and comprehensive picture of Ngor chen's family background, monastic training, and later religious activities than previous scholars had done.⁴⁵ Davidson framed his presentation within a consideration of the different types of values and goals that founders of monastic traditions embraced:⁴⁶

Or we may reflect on another group of teachers who, upon analyzing the tradition received, wished to cleanse from it elements which appeared to them as doubtful and unwarranted. Perhaps the most famous lama of this variety is rJe Tsoñ-kha-pa who initially envisioned his movement as the bKa'-gdams-gsar-ma, the new bKa'-gdams-pa. Of a similar conviction was Nor-chen Kun-dga'-bzañ-po—the founder of Nor E-Waṃ chos-ldan—for Nor-chen had reservations, not only about certain elements within the Sa-skyā tradition as he knew it, but about the direction of Tibetan Buddhism as a whole.

Davidson also introduced Ngor chen's attempt to revive the two lower tantric systems of Kriyā (*bya rgyud*) and Caryā (*spyod rgyud*)—and Ngor chen's motivation for doing so—and also discussed his vision in establishing Ngor Monastery and the contents of his collected works.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Davidson introduced several literary works by prominent disciples of Ngor chen as well as by later adherents of the Ngor tradition. Recapitulating Ngor chen's life, he reached the conclusion:⁴⁸

By any standard Kun-dga'-bzañ-po appears as a towering figure in Tibetan intellectual and religious history, but I cannot help but feel that his most valuable contribution to Tibetan Buddhism as a whole was his willingness to attempt a modification of monastic policy, based on observation and brought about through careful planning.

In his later research on Sa skyā-related topics, Davidson utilised different works composed by Ngor chen. In 1991, in his article “Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skyā-pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka,” he analysed the functions of Buddhist myth and the interpretative strategies employed using the example of the subjugation of Maheśvara and the birth of Heruka. He also looked at the utilisation of this myth within the context of the *Lam 'bras* and investigated Ngor chen's Hevajra history, the *rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal kye rdo rje'i byung tshul dang brgyud pa'i bla ma*

⁴⁵ On certain aspects of Ngor chen's life, Ngor Monastery, and the Ngor tradition and its later adherents, see also AMIPA 1976: 51–52, CHOGAY TRICHEN RINPOCHE 1983: 28–29, POWERS 2007 (first edition 1995): 438, 445–446, and *passim*, EVERDING 2005: 120, CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 25–57, EVERDING 2006: 47–49 and 58, KAPSTEIN 2006: 234, THUKEN LOSANG CHÖKYI NYIMA 2009: 179, FERMER 2010: 163–175 and *passim*, and CAUMANN 2012: 98–105, [108]–121, [177]–179, 204–206, and *passim*, POWERS and TEMPLEMAN 2012: 378–379, and CAUMANN 2015: 109–116, 130–135, 140–148, and *passim*. A few details from Ngor chen's life, especially regarding his motivation in the founding of Ngor, are also mentioned by PEDRON YESHI and RUSSELL 1991: 61–62, though they mainly seem to originate from oral tradition.

⁴⁶ DAVIDSON 1981: 79.

⁴⁷ On Ngor chen's attempted revival of the two lower Tantra classes, see also DAVIDSON 2005: 36.

⁴⁸ DAVIDSON 1981: 93.

dam pa rnams kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho.⁴⁹ He further discussed Ngor chen's involvement in religious controversies, referring to the years from 1404 to 1406 as the first of "his two periods of apologetics."⁵⁰ He perceived Ngor chen's work on Hevajra, which was written in 1405 at Sa skya, to have originated in that context as well, "despite the fact that the text is not overtly polemical and does not specifically identify an antagonistic position."⁵¹

One year later, in 1992, Davidson published his article "Preliminary Studies on Hevajra's *Abhisamaya* and the *Lam-'bras Tshogs-bshad*." The first part was concerned with the meditative realisation (*mngon rtogs: abhisamaya*) of Hevajra according to the *Tshog bshad* tradition of the *Lam 'bras*. In the historical survey of the different Hevajra traditions, he discussed Ngor chen's monumental Hevajra compendium, the *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub pa'i thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer*, and utilised this work also for presenting the stages of meditative practice.⁵² In the second part of his article, he focused on the differences between the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* systems of the *Lam 'bras*, and introduced the successive parts of bestowing the *Lam 'bras* according to the *Tshogs bshad* at Ngor.

In 2005, Davidson published his fundamental study *Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in the Renaissance: Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*. For this work, he utilised several of Ngor chen's writings but mainly employed his *Lam 'bras* history, the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i man ngag gi byung tshul gsung ngag rin po che bstan pa rgyas pa'i nyi 'od*.⁵³

Another important scholar from whose publications much can be gleaned about Ngor chen and his tradition is **David Jackson**, who investigated various aspects of the Ngor pas that will be discussed in this and the following sections. In his early work on Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) and other Sa skya related topics (for example, *The Early Abbots of 'Phan-po Na-lendra*), he regularly referred to the religious activities of Ngor chen, his disciples, and later Ngor masters. For his research, he also prominently utilised several of Ngor chen's writings, such as his record of teachings received, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*.⁵⁴ In his 1987 study *The Entrance Gate for the Wise*, Jackson was the first scholar, apart from Ngor, to mention other monastic establishments founded by Ngor chen. When discussing the spread of the Pramāṇa tradition of g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal (1348–1414), he enumerated some foundations that were listed in the *Chos 'khor rnam gzhang* of Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507).⁵⁵

In 1991, Jackson wrote an important review of *A Bibliography of Sa-skyapa Literature*, remarking about the importance of that work:⁵⁶

(...) since it records the contents of many rare and inaccessible oeuvres, it is a reference work of unique value for the study of this tradition, and it occupies an important place among a small number of indigenous bibliographical compilations that are essential for Tibetan Buddhist studies.

⁴⁹ On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 54).

⁵⁰ DAVIDSON 1991: 221.

⁵¹ DAVIDSON 1991: 222.

⁵² On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 53).

⁵³ On this work along with its completing section by Ngor chen's disciple Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475), see CATALOGUE (no. 36).

⁵⁴ See JACKSON 1983a–b, JACKSON 1985a–b, JACKSON 1987, JACKSON 1989b–c, and JACKSON 1991a–c. On the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, see CATALOGUE (no. 35).

⁵⁵ See JACKSON 1987: 135–136.

⁵⁶ JACKSON 1991a: [220].

As an appendix, he provided a detailed table of contents that allowed the reader to easily navigate within that work.⁵⁷ Among the numerous titles recorded, we find detailed lists of the writings of Ngor chen and his successors to the abbatial throne of Ngor.

In 2007, writing about the monastic career of Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449), and especially about a cancelled public debate between him and mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang (1385–1438), Jackson also made mention of the controversy between mKhas grub rje and Ngor chen:⁵⁸

mKhas grub rje's polemical writings concerning the Hevajra *body-mandala* had stirred up the emotions of monks in gTsang to such an extent that the religious scholars at Sa skya were temporarily forbidden to travel until the outstanding tantric expert Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456) had written his two replies in 1426.

In his seminal study *The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting* from 2010, Jackson provided a short overview of the Ngor tradition's influence as well as a biographical sketch of Ngor chen as an introduction to the section "Ngor and Its Beri Paintings." He discussed, for instance, Ngor chen's true paternity and the significant role it played in his future monastic career, his motives in founding Ngor, and his major patrons.⁵⁹

In the same year, in his article "Preserving Endangered Ordination Traditions in the Sakya School," Jackson introduced the two distinct monastic ordination lineages that were preserved by the Sa skya school. Both lineages had been introduced into Tibet by the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrībhadra (1127–1225): one passed down through the abbots of the Jo gdan tshogs pa sde bzhi—and was received by Ngor chen—the other descended from Śākyaśrībhadra's disciple Sa skya Paṇḍita. Jackson showed that both lineages were at certain times threatened by extinction, but that when one lineage had become too dominant, the other was saved and revived by the conscious effort of far-sighted vow-transmitting masters, who gave up their existing ordination and retook full monks' vows in the other rarer lineage.

Other important aspects of Ngor chen's life can also be learned from the numerous contributions of **Leonard van der Kuijp**.⁶⁰ For instance, in his 1985 study "A Text-Historical Note on *Hevajratantra* II: v: 1–2," he discussed Ngor chen's translation of two Sanskrit verses that had been omitted in other Tibetan translations of that *tantra*. Van der Kuijp presented both a transcription of the Sanskrit original and a Tibetan translation as contained in Ngor chen's *rTsa rgyud brtag gnyis kyi 'gyur* and compared it with the translation that had been done by 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481).⁶¹ As an appendix, he introduced four other writings in which Ngor chen had dealt with the *Hevajratantra*. He attested to the polemical nature of some of these works and referred to the controversy between mKhas grub rje and Ngor chen regarding the Hevajra body

⁵⁷ See JACKSON 1991a: 224–229.

⁵⁸ JACKSON 2007: 354–355. On Ngor chen as a writer of "a series of apologetical defenses," see also CABEZON and DARGYAY 2006: 25. *Ibid.*: 25 also mention the critic of the Yamāntaka tradition of the dGa' ldan pa by Ngor chen and later adherents of the Ngor tradition.

⁵⁹ See JACKSON 2010a: 177–179.

⁶⁰ See VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 11, 45, 119–120, 260, n. 19, 303, n. 289, and 315–316, n. 367 and VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 41–42 and 46.

⁶¹ See VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 83–87. On the *rTsa rgyud brtag gnyis kyi 'gyur*, see CATALOGUE (no. 55). On tracing those two verses within the history of the *bKa' 'gyur* transmission, see EIMER 1992: 165–174.

maṅḍala,⁶² who “had a tremendous fall-out over the interpretation of the *lus-dkyil* of Hevajra,”⁶³ as he remarked in another paper from the same year.

In one 1987 publication, van der Kuijp investigated one of those works on Hevajra in more detail, namely Ngor chen’s “monumental study of the entire literary corpus on Hevajra/Heruka as contained in the Tibetan canonical collections of Buddhist text,”⁶⁴ the *dPal kye rdo rje’i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer*.⁶⁵ One aspect that Ngor chen had dealt with which van der Kuijp discussed is the correct posture of Hevajra in relation to a mistaken reading found in a corrupted version of the Hevajra eulogy **Śrīhevajrabhadraṅga-stotra* of Saroruhvajra (alias Padmavajra). On the significance of Ngor chen’s discussion, he concluded:⁶⁶

NGOR CHEN’s remarks are of considerable importance for our understanding of the potential and actual interrelationships that exist in the tantric literature among philology, the question at stake here being the correct reading of a line of verse, iconography, the line of verse evidently laying an important role in the representation of Hevajra, and spiritual praxis in which, ultimately, from the point of view of the practitioner, both philology, iconography (together with a measure of oral transmission) find their *raison d’ être*.

Van der Kuijp also briefly mentioned the critique that Ngor chen’s work had provoked from such eminent scholars as Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451) and mKhas grub rje as well as its vindication by Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), the sixth abbot of Ngor.⁶⁷ Moreover, he made the important observation that Ngor chen’s efforts in correcting corrupt readings and interpretations were not restricted to texts from India or Nepal, but “that he sought to weed out a number of Tibetan opinions which he considered to be non-supportable.”⁶⁸

In 2005, in his article “On the Transformation of the Tibetan Region into a Buddhist Landscape,” van der Kuijp was the first scholar to acknowledge Ngor chen’s exceptional position as a vegetarian:⁶⁹

For instance, it would appear that Ngor chen Künga sang po (1382–1456) was a strict vegetarian who, with the assistance of the eighth chapter of the canonical *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, vigorously argued that the eating of meat should be proscribed in its entirety. But, in Tibet, monks and men of the cloth such as he were few and far between.

⁶² See VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 87–88. For other mentions of the Hevajra body *maṅḍala* debate, see VAN DER KUIJP 1985b: 98–99, n. 18 and VAN DER KUIJP 1985d: 51. On other polemical writings by Ngor chen, see also VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 159–160. On the Hevajra body *maṅḍala* debate, see now also the important contribution by BENTOR (forthcoming).

⁶³ VAN DER KUIJP 1985d: 51.

⁶⁴ VAN DER KUIJP 1987a: 173.

⁶⁵ On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 53).

⁶⁶ VAN DER KUIJP 1987a: 173.

⁶⁷ See VAN DER KUIJP 1987a: 174. *Ibid.*: 176, n. 1 and 177 announced that he would provide additional sources on the “polemic exchanges” between Ngor chen and mKhas grub rje in another publication: “Studies in the Life and Thought of Mkhas-grub-rje 3: His Collected Works. In: *Berliner Indologische Studien* III (forthcoming).” But this paper has apparently not been published yet. On Ngor chen’s works on the “praxis of Sarvavid (*Kun-rigs*),” Bo dong Paṅ chen’s critique of the Ngor pas, and Go rams pa’s refutation, see VAN DER KUIJP 1992: 112–113.

⁶⁸ VAN DER KUIJP 1987a: 176, n. 2.

⁶⁹ See VAN DER KUIJP 2005: 4.

For his research, van der Kuijp also utilised a variety of Ngor chen's writings, including the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, his *Lam 'bras* history, or catalogues of manuscript editions of the *bsTan 'gyur* commissioned by Ngor chen in Glo bo.⁷⁰

Ngor chen's important role as teacher of the Sa skya *Lam 'bras* system was pointed out by **Cyrus Stearns** in his seminal studies on that system and its history of transmission in Tibet. For this research, he utilised some of Ngor chen's writings, such as his history of the *Lam 'bras*.⁷¹ For instance, in his 2001 study *Luminous Lives*, Stearns stated that it was "through the efforts of masters such as Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456), and Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–66)" that the *Lam 'bras* "spread very widely in Tibet."⁷² In the same work, he also introduced the *Pusti dmar chung*, a collection of minor texts on the practice of the *Lam 'bras* that had been compiled by Ngor chen. These texts were written by Sa skya masters who lived from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, but had until then not been included in any other collection of *Lam 'bras* writings, such as the *Pod ser* or *Pod nag*.⁷³ Moreover, Stearns outlined the division of the *Lam 'bras* into the two systems of *Tshogs bshad* ("explication for the assembly"), for which Ngor became the central institution, and *Slob bshad* ("explication for disciples"), introducing some of its major differences.⁷⁴

In 2003, Stearns contributed a biographical sketch of Ngor chen and briefly assessed the influence of Ngor Monastery and its tradition.⁷⁵ In so doing, he was the first scholar to mention the episode of Ngor chen's dream with regard to his *Lam 'bras* studies under Buddhaśrī (1339–1420), as told in the Ngor chen biography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. He also made the important observation that with the founding of Ngor, a second major Sa skya pa seat was established.⁷⁶

Up to this point the Sakya tradition had been centered mainly at Sakya itself, although affiliated monasteries and hermitages had been built throughout the land. With the establishment of Ewam Chöden, a new monastic mother institution (TIB *gdan sa* or *ma dgon*) was created, and it became the heart of the dynamic Ngorpa tradition.

In 2006, Stearns published his major translation of Sa skya *Lam 'bras* works, *Taking the Result as the Path*. From this translation of works dealing with the history of the *Slob bshad*,

⁷⁰ See VAN DER KUIJP 1979: 409 and 421, n. 7, VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 301, n. 276, VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 41, 44–46, and 49–50, VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 88–89, n. 5 and 87–88, VAN DER KUIJP 1985b: 103, n. 33, VAN DER KUIJP 1985c: 5, 13, 16, n. 1, and 18, n. 20, VAN DER KUIJP 1987a, VAN DER KUIJP 1989: 9, VAN DER KUIJP 1992: 112 and 119, VAN DER KUIJP 1993a: 530–531, n. 13, VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 195, n. 20, VAN DER KUIJP 1993c: 156, VAN DER KUIJP 1994a, VAN DER KUIJP 1994b: 142–144, VAN DER KUIJP 1995: 933, VAN DER KUIJP 2004: 6, n. 16, 27–29, and 56, n. 167, VAN DER KUIJP 2006b: 6, n. 18, VAN DER KUIJP 2007: 1014–1015, n. 35, VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 11, 25–26, and 30, VAN DER KUIJP 2010a: 116, VAN DER KUIJP 2010b: 443–445, VAN DER KUIJP 2013a: 186–187, n. 156, VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 143–144, 150–151, 154, 164, and 166, and VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 290, 293, n. 220, and 298, n. 229. More recently, van der Kuijp investigated the life and writings of Ngor chen's disciple and biographer Gu ge Pañḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486); see VAN DER KUIJP 2013b and VAN DER KUIJP 2015a. He also discussed a passage from the biography of Ngor chen by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, which specifies the number of volumes of a set of Bu ston's collected works; see VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 297–298.

⁷¹ See STEARNS 1996: 142, 144–145, n. 60, and 148, n. 75, STEARNS 2000: 23, n. 14, 24–25, nn. 26, 30–31, and 33, STEARNS 2001: 11–12, 27, 50, 54, 58, 64, and *passim*, STEARNS 2006: 639, n. 118, and STEARNS 2010: 98 and 239, n. 108.

⁷² STEARNS 2001: 6.

⁷³ See STEARNS 2001: 38.

⁷⁴ See STEARNS 2001: 39–45.

⁷⁵ See STEARNS 2003: 210–211 and 258. On Ngor chen and the influence of the Ngor tradition, see also STEARNS 2004: 752.

⁷⁶ STEARNS 2003: 210.

much can be learned about Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* lineage, the division of the *Lam 'bras* into *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad*, and the further transmission of the *Slob bshad*, which since the beginning of the nineteenth century was also given at Ngor.⁷⁷

Investigating the life of Thang stong rgyal po (1361?–1485) in his 2007 study *King of the Empty Plain*, Stearns discussed that adept's studies under Ngor chen at Ngor.⁷⁸ With regard to Thang stong rgyal po's founding of lHun grub steng in sDe dge, he also introduced the traditional view that "it is believed to have become a Ngor monastery of the Sakya sect as a result of the connection between Tangtong and the founder of the Ngor subsect, Ngorchen Kunga Sangpo (1382–1456)."⁷⁹

Another scholar who contributed significantly to a better understanding of the structure and transmission of teachings central to the Sa skya tradition is **Jan-Ulrich Sobisch**, whose studies were mainly based on an analysis of the collected works of A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597–1659). In 2002, Sobisch published the first results of his investigation of references to unpublished biographies of Sa skya *Lam 'bras* masters that were contained in A mes zhabs' records of teachings received.⁸⁰ He mentioned, for instance, Ngor chen's biography of his master Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406), the biography of Ngor chen by Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486), and biographies of such later Ngor abbots as dKon mchog 'phel (1445–1514), the seventh abbot, and dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot.⁸¹ Many of these works have now become available, such as in the *Tshogs bshad* section of a new *Lam 'bras* collection edited by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po (1927–2010) and in the sets of religious histories and biographical works compiled by the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang.⁸²

In 2006, Sobisch presented his comprehensive study *Life, Transmissions, and Works of A-mes-zhabs Ngag-dbang-kun-dga'-bsod-nams, The Great 17th Century Sa-skya-pa Bibliophile*. Briefly outlining A mes zhabs' records of teachings received, he drew attention to two title lists of Ngor chen's collected works as contained in the *gsan yigs* of A mes zhabs' teachers sByin pa grags pa and Kun dga' don grub.⁸³ Both lists record a few works that were not included in Ngor chen's collected works. From Sobisch's description of the individual works contained in A mes zhabs' writings, we also came to know of another composition by Ngor chen that was excluded from his collected works: a detailed explanation on Vajrabhairava, the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi rnam bshad rdo rje'i myu gu*. This work had been studied by A mes zhabs and employed in the latter's own composition,

⁷⁷ See STEARNS 2006: 4, 132, 241–242, 245–246, 270, 275–284, 300, 304, 333, 487, 494, and *passim*.

⁷⁸ See STEARNS 2007: 280–281.

⁷⁹ See STEARNS 2007: 57.

⁸⁰ The collected works of A mes zhabs contain a total of twelve different records of teachings received. SOBISCH 2002a: 164–165 pointed out that "eleven of these (...) are of A mes zhabs' personal teachers, while only the last work is supposed to be his own *thob yig*. However, those that belong to his immediate teachers have to be regarded at the same time as his own *gsan yig*, since he seems to have received all the teachings that they list." Among these eleven works, we also find the *gsan yigs* of Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1535–1602), the thirteenth abbot of Ngor, and 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub (1571–1642), the fifteenth abbot of Ngor; see the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 2, pp. 247–257 and 259–272). On these *gsan yigs*, see also SOBISCH 2002a: 165 and SOBISCH 2007: 68, D and E and 161, 5 and 6.

⁸¹ See SOBISCH 2002a: 171, 173, and 172, respectively. The existence of Gu ge Paṇḍita's biography of Ngor chen had previously been noted by SMITH 1970: 2, n. 8.

⁸² See the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vols. 27–29) and *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 1–4, respectively.

⁸³ See SOBISCH 2007: 69, G (6) and 74, K (17), respectively. The record of teachings received of Kun dga' don grub also contains text lists of the collected works of dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor, and dKon mchog dpal ldan (1526–1590), the twelfth abbot of Ngor; see *Ibid.*: 74, K (20). For these lists, see SOBISCH 2008: [187]–188, 202–207, and 211.

the *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa bdud sde ma lus pa 'joms pa'i rdo rje'i me 'od*.⁸⁴ Sobisch also mentioned additional teachings of Ngor chen that had been preserved among A mes zhabs' collected works and set down in writing by such disciples of Ngor chen as Nyag re dPal gyi rgyal mtshan and Chos dpal bzang po.⁸⁵

The work by Chos dpal bzang po, the *rje btsun sa skya pa'i gsung rab la 'jug tshul legs par bshad pa'i yi ge bod yul 'gro kun bsgrod pa'i chos sgo phyogs brgyar ring du phye ba*, constituted one of the main sources for Sobisch's 2008 seminal contribution *Hevajra and Lam 'bras Literature of India and Tibet as Seen Through the Eyes of A-mes-zhabs*.⁸⁶ He introduced this work as follows:⁸⁷

[it] focuses almost entirely on Hevajra literature up to the first half of the thirteenth century, both of Indian and Tibetan origin. This brief but indeed supremely important work is the composition of Chöpal Zangpo (15th c.), which is based on the teachings of Ngorchen Künga Zangpo, and preserved and (perhaps) edited by Ame Zhab.

The NOTES [i.e., Chos dpal bzang po's work] throws interesting light on one approach to primarily tantric teachings among the Sakyapas during Chöpal Zangpo's time, i.e., the early 15th c., and, representing the teaching of the great Ngorchen Künga Zangpo, it is certainly an authoritative approach.

In his description of the *Lam 'bras* literature, Sobisch analysed the *Pusti dmar chung*, Ngor chen's collection of minor *Lam 'bras* teachings, in much more detail than Stearns had done in 2001. Based on sources such the collection's catalogue by Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478), the fourth abbot of Ngor, and information contained in A mes zhabs' records of teachings received, he discussed the structure of the *Pusti dmar chung* and introduced its individual texts.⁸⁸ Generally, Sobisch's entire study is rich with information on the transmission of the Hevajra and *Lam 'bras* teachings within the Ngor tradition and contains numerous references to compositions by Ngor chen and his successors on the abbatial throne of Ngor.

Ngor chen's Three Glo bo Sojourns (1427–1428, 1436–1437, and 1447–1449)

In his early research on Se rib and the royal line of the old kingdom of Glo bo, **David Jackson** referred to religious activities of Ngor chen while in Lower Western Tibet (mNga' ris smad), including Glo bo, and presented a list of Glo bo's early kings along with their chief religious preceptors from Ngor.⁸⁹ For instance, in his 1978 article, he mentioned an episode where Ngor chen tried to receive from the tantric adept Bla ma bSam gtan 'od zer a special Cakrasamvara teaching, the one of the Donkey-Faced Cakrasamvara (bDe mchog bong zhal can), that had previously not been translated into Tibetan.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ See SOBISCH 2007: 274–276, 6.

⁸⁵ On the text by dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, see SOBISCH 2007: 7, n. 15 (2) and 319–320, 7. On the one by Chos dpal bzang po, see *ibid.*: 8, n. 17 and 166, n. 14.

⁸⁶ On Chos dpal bzang po's work, see SOBISCH: 2008 [1]–12, [21]–61, and [219]–233.

⁸⁷ SOBISCH 2008: [1].

⁸⁸ See SOBISCH 2008: [83], 99, and 103–112.

⁸⁹ See JACKSON 1978 and JACKSON 1980, respectively.

⁹⁰ See JACKSON 1978: 218.

In his 1984 study *The Mollas of Mustang*, Jackson researched the history of Glo bo and its royal line in much more detail, based on an investigation of several local written texts of speeches known as *mol ba* and supplemented by works such as an unpublished genealogy, the *Blo bo chos rgyal rim byon rgyal rabs mu thi li'i 'phreng mdzes*. These works mention Ngor chen's sojourns in Glo bo as well as the ones of later Ngor abbots and thus illustrate the ruler donor-preceptor donee relationship between the Glo bo rulers and their religious preceptors from Ngor. For his study, Jackson also utilised Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen and the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen, which both include details on the royal house of Glo bo and Ngor chen's visits to their domain. Working with these sources, he noted, for example, discrepancies with regard to Ngor chen's involvement in the foundation of gTsang rang Monastery and the circumstances of re-establishing rNam rgyal. However, as he mainly focussed on those local speech texts and the information they provided on the history of Glo bo and its ruling line, he did not investigate Ngor chen's activities in detail.⁹¹

In 1980, **Luciano Petech** mentioned in his article "Ya-ts'e, Gu-ge, Pu-hrañ" Ngor chen's second journey to Glo bo. Although he named Gu ge king Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po Phun tshogs lde (b. 1409) as one of Ngor chen's patrons, he did not attribute the king's ordination and his founding of a monastery to Ngor chen's influence.⁹² Petech also reported on Ngor chen's connection with the 'Bri gung monastic affiliate of Kha char, which, as one result of the temporary annexation of Pu hrangs by the kings of Glo bo, was allegedly handed over by A mgon bzang po (1420–1482) to Ngor chen. This event was dated by Petech to Ngor chen's third Glo bo sojourn.⁹³

In a series of publications, **Helmut Eimer** was the first scholar to describe in detail Ngor chen's commissioning of manuscript copies of the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur* in Glo bo under the patronage of the local rulers. Investigating the catalogues that Ngor chen wrote for his commissions, Eimer pointed out differences in the structure between these and other major editions of the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*, and presented structured transcriptions of Ngor chen's catalogues as well.⁹⁴ With regard to the transmission history of the sources utilised for the Glo bo *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*, he concluded:⁹⁵

Thus it is possible to reach the hypothesis that the Mustang Kanjur and Tanjur could have been copied from manuscript material kept in Western Tibet at that time, and which must be viewed in the context of the tradition now manifest in fragments from Tabo Monastery and from the deserted town of Tsaparang.

Another scholar who, in several publications, discussed Ngor chen's activities in mNga' ris smad is **Roberto Vitali**. For his fundamental study *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* of 1996, he assessed the information from Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen on some of the latter's activities in Pu hrangs and Glo bo, evaluating their implications for the history of and relation between Gu ge, Pu hrangs, and Glo bo.⁹⁶ For instance, regarding the ordination of the abovementioned Gu ge king Phun tshogs lde by Ngor

⁹¹ See JACKSON 1984: 154, n. 16 and 42–43, n. 6, respectively.

⁹² See PETECH 1980: 103. Ngor chen's travel to Pu hrangs and the ordination of the Gu ge king Phun tshogs lde had previously been mentioned by TUCCI 1956: 19, n. 2 and JACKSON 1978: 216, n. 77.

⁹³ See PETECH 1980: 109.

⁹⁴ See EIMER 1994, EIMER 1998, EIMER 1999, and EIMER 2002a–b. On Ngor chen's commissions, see also MATHES 1997.

⁹⁵ EIMER 2002a: 86.

⁹⁶ See VITALI 1996: 391–392, 475, n. 799, 488, n. 824, 510–511, 520–521, and 535. Some of these events are also mentioned in VITALI 1997: 1033 and VITALI 2003: 85.

chen, he noted discrepancies in the sources and argued against accepting the version contained in Ngor chen's biography.⁹⁷ He further noted:

Ngor.chen is described in dGe.lugs pa literature as a teacher who had an uncompromising approach that did not leave much room for other religious masters. If this is true, his biographers' account of him leading Phun.tshogs.lde into religion seems eulogistic and therefore questionable. However, this attitude of his towards other religious masters is not explicitly confirmed by impartial sources.⁹⁸

More significantly, this account precedes Phun.tshogs.lde's alleged ordination by Ngor.chen in *Ngor.chen rnam thar*. Hence, according to Ngor.pa literature, the king became a monk at rGyal.ti and not at Kha.char. In 1436, Ngor.chen ordained A ma dpal of Glo bo to the *bsnyen rdzogs* vow (...). Given Ngor.chen's sojourn at rGyal.ti in the same year 1436 where he met Phun.tshogs.lde, it cannot be ruled out that his biographers have decided to credit him also with the ordination of the Gu.ge king, linking it with that of A.ma.dpal. In conclusion, I am inclined to favour the version of *mNga'ri rgyal.rabs* and thus 1449 for the date of Phun.tshogs.lde's ordination, and its having taken place at Kha.char rather than 1436 and rGyal.ti.⁹⁹

In his 1999 article "On Byams pa and Thub chen lha khang of sMos thang," Vitali investigated the history of the foundation of Glo bo's capital, sMon thang. Describing in detail its two main temples, the Byams pa lha khang and Thub chen lha khang, he dated the building and consecration of the former within the context of Ngor chen's third visit to Glo bo.¹⁰⁰

In one of his three publications that appeared in 2012, *The dGe lugs pa in Gu ge and the Western Himalya (early 15th–late 17th century)*, Vitali discussed once again the ordination of the king of Gu ge.¹⁰¹ After considering additional information contained in such works as the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen and the biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, he reconsidered his previous arguments, saying that the sources "do not allow one to settle on either 1436 or 1449 as the correct date of the event or to confirm that Ngor chen was involved in it."¹⁰²

In 2012, Vitali also published *A Short History of Mustang (10th–15th century)*, a major contribution to the history of Glo bo and its political and religious relations with Tibet. Discussing the ascent of Glo bo's ruling house to predominance in mNga' ris, he presented a detailed investigation into Ngor chen's religious activities during his three sojourns in Glo bo. This presentation was mainly based on the accounts contained in Ngor chen's biography and Glo bo mKhan chen's autobiography and was supplemented by local sources from Glo bo.¹⁰³

Prior to Vitali, **Jowita Kramer**, in her 2008 study *A Noble Abbot from Mustang*, was the first scholar to provide an overview of Ngor chen's religious activities during his sojourns in Glo bo. The study was predominantly based on a discussion and translation of the

⁹⁷ See VITALI 1996: 508–509.

⁹⁸ VITALI 1996: 509. See also *Ibid.*: 509–510, nn. 862 and 863.

⁹⁹ VITALI 1996: 511.

¹⁰⁰ See VITALI 1999: [3].

¹⁰¹ See VITALI 2012c: 134–136.

¹⁰² VITALI 2012b: 136. Based on those sources, a different understanding was proposed by HEIMBEL 2011: 74–75 and 75, n. 13.

¹⁰³ See VITALI 2012a: 136–144 and 166–171.

episodes contained in Glo bo mKhan chen's autobiography.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Kramer mentioned Glo bo mKhan chen's study and teaching activities at Ngor within the context of his two journeys to central Tibet (dBus gtsang), as well as the activities of later Ngor masters in Glo bo as either teachers or students of Glo bo mKhan chen.¹⁰⁵ The 2008 publication is a revised version of Kramer's unpublished M.A. thesis from 2000, *The Life and Works of Glo-bo mKhan-chen (1456–1532)*.

In 2002, **Ramesh K. Dhungel** investigated the history of Glo bo in his book *The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)*, mentioning the activities of Ngor chen and later Ngor masters in Glo bo. For sources, he relied on previous research conducted by scholars, such as David Jackson, while also utilising Nepali and Tibetan documents from Glo bo, which he also made available as appendices. These appendices made accessible important documents that attested to the joint efforts of the kings of Glo bo and Ngor chen, or his successors, to promote Buddhism in that domain.¹⁰⁶

Ngor chen's Commissioning of *Bal ris* Style Thangkas and Later Religious Works of Art Related to Ngor

A large number of thangka paintings originating from Ngor Monastery were brought out of Tibet during the worst times of political unrest (between the early 1960s and late 1970s) and quickly appeared via dubious art dealer channels in private and museum collections in the West. Ngor was famous for its thangkas painted in the Newari-influenced *bal ris* style that was favoured by the Ngor pas until the late sixteenth century. Among the surviving thangkas, many masterpieces are found that depict, for instance, Ngor chen or his abbatial successors. There are also paintings that show *maṇḍalas*, such as of the Vajrāvalī cycle. Some of them are even known to have been commissioned by Ngor chen himself. Those thangkas were published in numerous art catalogues, though many mistakes occurred before they could be dated correctly.

The scholar who contributed most to researching the thangkas and placing them in their correct historical context is **David Jackson**. By reading their inscriptions, investigating the lineages portrayed—both stylistically and historically as based on Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*—and searching out textual witnesses that mention their being commissioned, he was able to identify much of the paintings' subject matter and to establish an approximate dating for their production.¹⁰⁷ In a series of publications, he discussed commissions by or depictions of Ngor abbots.¹⁰⁸ For example, in his seminal study *A History of Tibetan Painting* of 1996, he discussed Ngor chen's patronage of Newari painters at Ngor and introduced the painting sets he had commissioned, based on information he extracted from Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ See KRAMER 2008: 21–23 and 144–154.

¹⁰⁵ See KRAMER 2008: 21, 24, 38, 53, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65–66, 73, 75–76, and 87.

¹⁰⁶ For additional contributions attesting to the relationship between Ngor and Glo bo, see FIENI 2010a, FIENI 2010b, FIENI 2012, HELLER 2010, LO BUE 2010a, and LO BUE 2010b. See also EVERDING 2000: [509] and HARRISON 2003.

¹⁰⁷ In one of his art historical publications, Jackson gave an index of the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*; see JACKSON 1993: 124.

¹⁰⁸ See JACKSON 1986, JACKSON 1990a, JACKSON 1993: 119–129, JACKSON 1999b–c, JACKSON 2003a, JACKSON 2005, JACKSON 2010c, JACKSON 2011: 17–22, figs. 1.17 and 1.19–21, 83–85, fig. 3.12, and *passim*, and JACKSON 2012: 15–16, fig. 1.15, 74–76, fig. 4.22, 106–107, fig. 5.22, and *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ See JACKSON 1996: 77–82 and *passim*. On *The Ngor monastery's patronage of Newar artists*, see also HELLER 1999: 176–177.

In 2010, Jackson dedicated an entire catalogue to presenting the *bal ris* style, *The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting*. Within the eighth chapter, “Ngor and Its Beri Paintings,” he described thangka commissions by Ngor chen and later Ngor abbots as well as paintings that originated within the monastic circles of Ngor.¹¹⁰ He also presented two paintings depicting Ngor chen and introduced certain characteristic features of his portrayal.¹¹¹ Since in that publication Jackson already discussed the previous research on the *bal ris* style fairly exhaustively, and presented numerous Ngor-related thangkas, it would be superfluous to repeat here references to the various relevant art catalogues.

Another scholar who contributed importantly to Ngor chen’s commissioning of thangka paintings is **Masahide Mori**. Along with his numerous Japanese publications on Tibetan religious art, he discussed in a series of English articles the *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle in Tibet.¹¹² Investigating Ngor chen’s commissioning of the *Vajrāvalī* together with three *maṇḍalas* from the *Kriyāsamuccaya* by Newari artists at Ngor, he was able to establish the total number of paintings the set comprised and identified the individual *maṇḍalas* shown in each painting. Mori neatly arranged this information in different charts that, for instance, illustrated the relation between the *maṇḍalas* as mentioned in the *Vajrāvalī* ritual compendium and Ngor chen’s arrangement in the actual paintings. Moreover, he compiled various references to the existing thangkas and designated their respective known locations. He did the same for other *maṇḍala* sets of the *Vajrāvalī*, such as the one commissioned by Nam mkha’ dpal bzang (1535–1602), the thirteenth abbot of Ngor.¹¹³

Also helpful for studying Ngor *maṇḍala* paintings was the publication *The Ngor Mandalas of Tibet* by **bSod nams rgya mtsho** (alias ‘Jam dbyangs Kun dga’ bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, the seventy-fourth abbot of Ngor) and **Musashi Tachikawa**. Along with a few introductory sections, their first book of 1989 reproduced a nineteenth century set of 139 *maṇḍalas* of the *rGyud sde kun btus* commissioned at Ngor. Their second book, published in 1991, entitled *Listings of the Mandala Deities*, presented a detailed analysis of each *maṇḍala*, identifying individual deities and specifying the respective Sanskrit and Tibetan texts upon which the *maṇḍalas* were based.¹¹⁴

The surviving statues housed at Ngor Monastery were documented by **Ulrich von Schroeder** in his comprehensive two-volume study *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, which

¹¹⁰ See JACKSON 2010a: 177–215.

¹¹¹ See JACKSON 2010a: 179–181, figs. 8.2–3 and 190–192, figs. 8.8 and 8.8A. On stylistic features of Ngor chen’s portrayal, see also JACKSON 1990a: 142–144 and JACKSON 2011: 18–22, figs. 1.19–21.

¹¹² Prior to Mori, Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra dealt in 1967 with the *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* within their twenty-volume study *A New Tibetano-Mongol Pantheon*. In Part 12, they described twenty-six *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* along with eight additional *maṇḍalas* and also provided line drawings of each *maṇḍala*. With regard to Ngor chen’s commissions, VIRA and CHANDRA 1967a: Part 12, 12–13 remarked as follows: “In the fifteenth century, Kun dgaḥ bzañ po, the founder of the Nor monastery invited Nepalese artists to embellish its chapels. His biography mentions that he got Nepalese iconographers to delineate the complete *maṇḍalas* described in the *Kriyāsamuccaya* of Darpañācārya, besides a number of other series of thankas.” For some further remarks on Ngor chen’s commissions, see also VIRA and CHANDRA 1967b: Part 15, [1]–2.

¹¹³ See MORI 2002, MORI 2008, and MORI 2009: 711–715.

¹¹⁴ This collection was brought to Japan in the early 1960s by bSod nams rgya mtsho. According to bSOD NAMS RGYA MTSHO and TACHIKAWA 1989: vii, the two volumes had previously been “published by Kodansha Ltd. (Tokyo) in 1983 as bSod nams rgya mtsho, *Tibetan Maṇḍalas: The Ngor Collection*, edited by Musashi Tachikawa and Malcom Green, translated into Japanese by Musashi Tachikawa, Shunzo Onoda, and Iwao Shima, and designed by Kohei Sugiura and Akihiko Tanimura.” Two more *rGyud sde kun btus* sets from Ngor have been published. The first was printed as line drawings in VIRA and CHANDRA 1967b: Part 15 and the second by Lokesh Chandra, Musashi Tachikawa, and Sumie Watanabe in 2006. On the history of these three sets, see CHANDRA, TACHIKAWA, and WATANABE 2006: *Forward* and [1]–11.

appeared in 2001.¹¹⁵ He presented a selection of exceptional statues he had photographed in 1994 in the Lam 'bras lha khang of Ngor, which “contains a collection of approximately one hundred metal images and two miniature stone sculptures.”¹¹⁶ In a separate section, “Saṃvara Guru Lineage of the Sa skya Tradition at Ngor E waṃ Monastery,” he described in detail an incomplete set of eighteen statues of the Cakrasaṃvara lineage masters following the system of Kṛṣṇacārin that contains as one of its final statues an image of Ngor chen. Although the last master could not be identified, a manufacturing date of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century was proposed based on style.¹¹⁷ The dedicatory verse inscribed around the lower edge of the pedestal of the last image contains in its last line the name element Legs pa'i byung gnas.¹¹⁸ This suggests the master may be Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub, whose ordination name as a novice monk was bSod nams lhun grub legs pa'i 'byung gnas rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po.¹¹⁹ He visited Ngor several times during his two sojourns in central Tibet (from 1489 to 1497 and mid-1506 to 1509) and was both a student and teacher of some eminent Ngor masters. Thus a dating of the set's manufacture to the sixteenth century should be preferred, and Glo bo should be considered as a possible place of commissioning.¹²⁰

Ngor Monastery and the Life of Later Ngor Abbots

In a series of still more publications, **David Jackson** investigated both the history of Ngor Monastery and the life stories of some of its recent abbots. In 1989, he published the fundamental article “Sources on the Chronology and Succession of the Abbots of Ngor E-waṃ-chos ldan.” Drawing on a variety of sources, such as the abbatial histories (*gdan rabs*) of Ngor, he presented chronological charts of its successive abbots, specifying, for instance, dates of birth and death as well as tenure, and arranging that information into a final composite list.¹²¹ He also mentioned the Ngor pas as one of the Sa skya pa's three major sub-schools and enumerated the four chief lama palaces (*bla brang*) of Ngor and its twelve regional dormitories (*khang tshan*).¹²²

In 1999, Jackson presented his study “The Last “Paṇḍita” of Ngor,” which treated the life and works of Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b. 1830s, d. 1890s), the fifty-fifth abbot of Ngor.¹²³ This master had travelled widely, from sDe dge in eastern Tibet to as far as mNga' ris smad in the west, and had composed such works as a history of the Jo bo

¹¹⁵ On statues at Ngor, see also HENSS 1996: 59–60, fig. 7 and 64–65, fig. 18 and HENSS 2014: 693–694.

¹¹⁶ VON SCHROEDER 2001: 1206. For those statues, see *ibid.*: 152–153, pls. 40A–C, 172–173, pl. 50C, 310–311, pls. 106B–D, 522–523, pl. 170C, 1034, pl. 257A, 1082–1083, pl. 281D, 1030, pl. 255A, 1154–1155, pls. 304D–E, and 1131, fig. XVIII-4.

¹¹⁷ See VON SCHROEDER 2001: 1124 and 1206–1217, pls. 330–335E. According to *Ibid.*: 1206, n. 997, “the historical and doctrinal background for the discussion of the Ngor statues illustrated here has been kindly provided by David P. Jackson and Cyrus Stearns.”

¹¹⁸ See VON SCHROEDER 2001: 1216, pl. 335D.

¹¹⁹ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 426.5–427.4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 229.2–230.1), and KRAMER 2008: 61.

¹²⁰ Interestingly, one biography of Glo bo mKhan chen makes mention of a set of casted statues of the Cakrasaṃvara lineage masters that was commissioned by Glo bo mKhan chen in memory of his late teacher Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan and that was housed at Ngor by the time Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566) wrote that biography; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 253.7–254.1). But as the last statue of the set in question portrays Glo bo mKhan chen and not Gu ge Paṇḍita, it might be a different one.

¹²¹ For a slightly revised list, see JACKSON 1993: 127–129.

¹²² See JACKSON 1989a: 49, n. 1 and 49–50, n. 2, respectively.

¹²³ See JACKSON 1999a.

image in the Kha char temple of Pu hrangs. For the published edition of this history, which appeared in 1988, Jackson contributed an introduction, along with a short overview of the author's life and writings.¹²⁴

In Jackson's 2001 article "The 'Bhutan Abbot' of Ngor," he investigated another Ngor master. He described Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho (1902–1963), the sixty-ninth abbot of Ngor, as "one of the most powerful, dramatic, and, in the end, quixotic abbots of Ngor."¹²⁵ This master originated from sGa pa in Khams and when he came "to assume for three years the abbacy of Ngor, nobody foresaw that in two years his straightforward idealism would provoke a 'palace revolt' in the very lama-palace that had sponsored him to the abbacy."¹²⁶ This revolt was triggered by his rejection of the cult of the Shugs ldan spirit, which was practiced by the old Ngor abbot, and his critique of "certain old practices of Ngor monastery, such as its tradition of sending a monastery-appointed functionary to collect animals from the nomad regions for their flesh."¹²⁷ Jackson also discussed, for instance, Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho's religious activities in Bhutan, where he bestowed teachings on the royal family,¹²⁸ and his efforts to expel the cult of Shugs ldan from Ngor and from Ngor affiliates in Khams.¹²⁹ While investigating this lama's eventful life, he also touched on a variety of topics important for the history of Ngor, such as introducing the system of abbatial appointment, the aristocratic families connected with the individual *bla brangs*, the influential role of Khams pa monks at Ngor, and the few Ngor affiliates in Bhutan.¹³⁰ Moreover, in an appendix, he described the attempts made in the first half of the twentieth century to establish a scholastic seminary (*bshad grwa*) at Ngor.¹³¹

In 2003, Jackson published his book *A Saint in Seattle*, an extensive biography of sDe gzhung Rin po che Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma (1906–1987), a great Ngor master from sGa pa in Khams. That work is full of details on the lives of many nineteenth- and twentieth-century abbots and masters of Ngor, as well as on Ngor affiliates in Khams.¹³²

¹²⁴ For this history, see the *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum sngon byung gi gtam brjod*. Already in his *Mollas of Mustang*, JACKSON 1984: 198–199 had utilised another work by Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, namely "a series of brief verses of reverential petition to the noble monks (*zabs druñ*) who were born in the ruling family of Lo Mustang," the *Shri mi yi dbang phyug ma hā dharma rāja a haṃ kyi gdung las zhabs drung mkhas shing grub brnyes rim par byon pa rnam la gsol ba 'debs byin rlabs chu rgyun*.

¹²⁵ JACKSON 2001: 101. On Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho, see also JACKSON 2003b: 188–189.

¹²⁶ JACKSON 2001: 88.

¹²⁷ JACKSON 2001: 93.

¹²⁸ See JACKSON 2001: 95–96.

¹²⁹ See JACKSON 2001: 96–98.

¹³⁰ See JACKSON 2001: 90–92 and 95–96. Prior to that, a few peculiarities of Ngor's ritual system, the appointment of its abbots, and its *bla brangs*, had been published in 1991 in *Chö Yang* among a survey of major Sa skya monasteries; see PEDRON YESHI and RUSSELL 1991: 61–63. This section also included the first publication of an old picture of Ngor prior to its destruction; see *ibid.*: 63, fig. 45.

¹³¹ See JACKSON 2001: 101–102. In 1993, Jackson wrote an article on the life of Brag g.yab Thub bstan bzang po (ca. 1891/92–1930/31), *A Reviver of Sa-skya-pa Scriptural Studies*, mentioning Thub bstan bzang po as the head of the scholastic seminar of Ngor; see JACKSON 1997b: 147–48.

¹³² See JACKSON 2003b. On the relationship of 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892) with Ngor, see the translation of his biography by AKESTER 2012. See also JACKSON 2001: 103, n. 21.

Part Two

Tibetan Sources on Ngor chen's Life

Numerous accounts of Ngor chen's life and religious activities can be found in Tibetan religious literature. Apart from biographical sketches of various lengths in religious histories (*chos 'byung*) and related genres, the most promising sources for investigating Ngor chen's life are his independent full-length biographies. They were written either by his direct disciples or by a seventeenth-century Ngor abbot. However, out of at least six full-length biographies, only two are presently available.

In addition, important autobiographical information can also be gleaned from remarks found in biographies that Ngor chen wrote of his own teachers, the colophons of his writings, and from his record of teachings received, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*. Further significant details can also be learned from the biographies of his most prominent disciples. This corpus of texts shall be introduced in the following pages, beginning with Ngor chen's biographies.

Chapter One

Ngor chen's Biography by Mus chen

Mus chen Sems dpa' chen po dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469) was one of Ngor chen's chief disciples, and Ngor chen installed him as his successor as abbot of Ngor prior to his own passing away.¹ Mus chen composed a contemporary account of Ngor chen's life, the *Concise Biography of the Dharma Lord Kun dga' bzang po, Great Vajradhara of the Degenerating Age*.²

Mus chen was born at Gling skya in rTa mo in the upper Mus valley.³ In 1424, at age thirty-six, he encountered Ngor chen for the first time at Sa skya.⁴ However, he had wished to study under Ngor chen prior to that, while accompanying his teacher Sems

¹ The main sources for researching Mus chen's life and relation with Ngor chen are, one the one hand, Mus chen's own biographies written by his disciples Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475), and bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1444–1495), and, on the other, Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen. Go rams pa finished composing his Mus chen biography on the eighth day of the fifth month of 1465 at the monastery of Gling kha bDe ba can; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 621.5). This work constitutes the explanation of his Mus chen biography in seventy verses, of which he arranged sixty-four verses in 1462 at 'Bras yul sKyed (mos) tshal and added six more in 1465; see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 25.3–35.4). His prose biography includes a supplement covering the last years of Mus chen's life from 1465 until his death in 1469; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 621.5–627.6). This supplement is in turn the explanation of the thirty-three-verse supplement composed in 1469 at Gle lung Chos sde; see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 35.4–39.1). Gung ru Shes rab bzang po completed writing his Mus chen biography when his master was eighty-one years old on the twenty-third day of the third month of 1469 in the monastery of bDe ba can in the upper Mus valley; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 250.2–3) and VAN DER KUIJP 1994a: 177, n. 4. For a thirty-three-folio *dbu med* manuscript of that work, see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 116, pp. 191–256). Another *dbu med* manuscript in thirty folios (missing fol. 29) is housed in the Potala; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rabs rnam kyi dkar chag* (p. 20, no. 1810, text 4) and TBRC (W4PD920, vol. 1, fols. 18a–47b). bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan completed his Mus chen biography on the fifteenth day of the tenth Tibetan month of 1479 at dPal 'khor bde chen; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 33.4). Among these three biographies, the works by Go rams pa and Gung ru ba are the more detailed ones. The biography by Blo gros rgyal mtshan seems to be partly based on Go rams pa's account, which the bDag chen also mentions among the sources available on Mus chen's life; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 33.5–6). The *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 116, pp. 257–260) contains a two-folio addendum to an unknown Mus chen biography, the *Yang mus chen dkon mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar gyis [=gyi] kha bskongs*, which deals with the last years of Mus chen's life from 1464 to 1469 as well as his funeral ceremony. However, the colophon does not clarify who wrote the work. A shorter biographical sketch of Mus chen's life can be found, for instance, in the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 230.6–233.1). For thangkas portraying both Ngor chen and Mus chen, see JACKSON 2010a: 31, fig. 212 and 192–194, figs. 8.9–8.10. See also HAR (128) and pl. 3. For depictions of Mus chen along with Go rams pa, on the one hand, and 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (1396–1474) on the other hand, see HAR (368 and 73818), respectively.

² *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 432.1): *snyigs dus kyi rdo rje 'chang chen po chos kyi rje kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdus pa*. DAVIDSON 1991: 234, n. 57 mistakenly ascribes the work to a certain dKon mchog dbang phyug.

³ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 588.4) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 207.5). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 4.1) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 4.2), where instead of *rta mo* the spelling is given as *stag mo*. On that region in the upper Mus valley, see EVERDING 2006: vol. 2, 20–22. According to him, the region west of the Mus river is called rTa mo Nub and the region to the east rTa mo Shar. Mus chen's birthplace of Gling skya is located in rTa mo Shar, and it is there that we find the residence of a family that produced, along with Mus chen, numerous scholars: Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453–1524), Mus chen's nephew and eighth abbot of Ngor, Mus chen Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1542–1618), Grub chen dKon mchog blo gros (1428–1507/08), and 'Dren mchog dKon mchog rgya mtsho; see the *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 131.2–3). For an enumeration of other famous masters originating from Mus, see the *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 130.6–131.2) and *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 39.6–40.2). On the geography and history of the Mus valley, see EVERDING 2006: vol. 2, 1–59 and 17, map.

⁴ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 597.5–6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 214.3–5), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 9.5).

dpa' chen po gZhon nu rgyal mchog (fl. 15th century) as an attendant to Bo dong in 1423.⁵ At that time, a certain Nyag re Grags pa skam po (alias Nyag re Man ngag pa) had approached gZhon nu rgyal mchog, requesting full monastic ordination.⁶ Listening to Grags pa skam po's description of Ngor chen's special qualities, Mus chen developed a deep conviction in Ngor chen's teaching abilities and thought of studying the three Cakrasaṃvara traditions of Lūhipāda, Kṛṣṇacārin, and Ghaṇṭāpāda under him.⁷

When Mus chen reached Sa skya in late 1423, Ngor chen was in a strict retreat in his residence, the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum. Through a messenger, he submitted his request to study Cakrasaṃvara and received, in reply, a few texts he should begin studying. When Ngor chen emerged from the retreat at the beginning of 1424, the two finally met, and Mus chen received the empowerments of Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja and a variety of other tantric teachings.⁸ In the following years, Mus chen stayed for longer periods of time at Sa skya, also studying the *Lam 'bras* at the insistence of Ngor chen. He received this teaching cycle for the first time in the summer of 1426, over a period of four months.⁹

After some time devoted to spiritual practice, Mus chen returned in the fall of 1426 to Mus. When Ngor chen embarked in the spring of 1427 on his first journey to the kingdom of Glo bo, he sent a group of disciples to Mus to invite Mus chen back to Sa skya, making him his representative of his residence, the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum. Complying with his teacher's request, Mus chen travelled to Sa skya in 1428, moving into Ngor chen's residence.¹⁰ After the latter had returned from Glo bo later that year, Mus chen received the *Lam 'bras* from him for a second time over the course of seven months from the second half of 1428 until the first half of 1429. Initially, Ngor chen bestowed the *Lam 'bras* on a group of about seventy disciples, but eventually the group was reduced to only

⁵ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 594.5 and 596.5), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 213.3), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 8.4). In total, Mus chen relied on gZhon nu rgyal mchog as his teacher for about seven years; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 210.5). According to the *mDo smad chos 'byung 1* (vol. 1, p. 28.5) and *mDo smad chos 'byung 2* (p. 11.19), Mus chen wrote a biography of his master: *sems dpa' chen po gzhon nu rgyal mchog gi rnam thar mus chen gyis mdzad pa*. On gZhon nu rgyal mchog, see Part Four, 10.

⁶ The *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 596.6) gives his name as Nyag re Grags pa skam po, whereas both the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 213.4) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 8.4–5) specify it as Nyag re Man ngag pa.

⁷ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 596.5–597.4), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 213.3–6), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 8.4–9.2). On Mus chen's veneration for Ngor chen, see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 625.2–626.1) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 28.3–29.2). See also the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 245.5–246.1). Mus chen also composed a verse of praise of Ngor chen, the *sNyigs dus kyi rdo rje 'chang chen po ānanda bha dra'i gsol 'debs*, which is also known as *sDe snod ma*; see the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 10, pp. 150–152). The *sDe snod ma* is one of three great praises of Ngor chen; see Part Four, n. 635.

⁸ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 597.4–598.2), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 214.3–6), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 9.3–10.1). According to the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 214.3–4), Ngor chen also bestowed the *Lam 'bras* on a few disciples while in retreat.

⁹ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 598.4–599.3 and 602.2), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 215.5–6), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 11.3–4).

¹⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 537.6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 599.3–6), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 216.1–3). According to the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 599.5–6), Mus chen stayed in the summer of 1428 in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, giving teachings to a certain group of students. Cf. the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 216.1–3), which mentions that he stayed together with some masters and disciples in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, obtaining teachings, such as the *gYag ṭik* and the *dPe chos rin spungs* (of Po to ba Rin chen gsal), from Slob dpon Sangs rgyas 'phel and Tshul bzang ba. Moreover, he helped many students that were on their examination or debating round (*grwa skor*). Slob dpon Sangs rgyas 'phel is introduced as “teacher of Chos rje g.Yag pa's Prajñāpāramitā and Pramāṇa” (*chos rje g.yag pa'i phar tshad kyi 'chad nyan pa*), which suggests that Mus chen studied either g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal's (1348–1414) eight volume set of *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* commentaries or his *Tshad ma rigs gter* commentary, which are both referred to as *gYag ṭik*; see TBRC (W24766) and TBRC (W1KG3509), respectively.

fourteen select students, including Mus chen.¹¹ It is said that Mus chen received a very special transmission of the *Lam 'bras*, one not given by Ngor chen in the same way to others.¹² This remark might refer to the special *Slob bshad* transmission of the *Lam 'bras*, which, according to tradition, Mus chen received alone and in secret from Ngor chen.¹³

In the same year (1429), Ngor chen established Ngor Monastery and Mus chen was among the group of disciples who accompanied him as an attendant.¹⁴ In the fall of that year, he asked Mus chen to remain in Ngor and teach, but Mus chen declined his teacher's request, wishing instead to care for his elderly father in Mus.¹⁵ Some years later, in 1434, Ngor chen again requested for Mus chen to stay at Ngor and teach. Obviously trying to get his disciple's approval, he offered to name his newly established monastic seat in accordance with Mus chen's wishes, telling him to take from the *bla brang* whatever he needed and asking him to act as the ceremonial master in the monastic ordination of a nephew of bDag chen Grags blo ba.¹⁶ But, once again, Mus chen turned down his master's request, hoping to devote his life to spiritual practice. When Mus chen was about to leave for Mus in 1435, he revealed that he planned to go on a strict retreat for three years and was considering staying the rest of his life in seclusion. At that time, Ngor chen advised Mus chen to accept a few students. In order to achieve Buddhahood, he explained, one needs perfect insight that realises the fundamental reality of all phenomena. Though it is possible to achieve Buddhahood through profound tantric methods, it is very difficult to accomplish. Therefore, it is of greater benefit to practice by means of study and contemplation. One's personal insight will broaden by actually teaching to others what one has learned.¹⁷

From their first meeting in 1424 until Ngor chen's death in 1456, Mus chen spent much of his time studying under Ngor chen. The main exceptions were those periods when he travelled back to Mus for meditative retreats.¹⁸ During those periods, he also

¹¹ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 216.3–4). According to the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 599.6–600.1), Ngor chen gave the *Lam 'bras* immediately after his return from the fall of 1428 for a period of seven months. The *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 600.1–3) continues to describe the actual succession of teachings and spiritual practices.

¹² See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 599.6–600.3) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 216.4–5). In total, Mus chen received the *Lam 'bras* three times from Ngor chen; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 11.5–6).

¹³ By that time, the term *slob bshad* ("explication for disciples") and its counterpart *tshogs bshad* ("explication for the assembly") had not been in open use yet. A reference to both traditions was first made by bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan, who had received both transmissions from Mus chen in Mus in 1464. On the two traditions, see Part Four, 13.2.

¹⁴ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 601.5) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 216.5). Cf. the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud kyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 62.19–20), which states that Mus chen acted as a "construction worker" (*mkhar las pa*) in the establishment of Ngor Monastery. This statement is probably based on the misinterpretation of the following passage from the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 216.5): *de nas rje 'di dang dpon slob ngor du byon khar las dang gsung chos kyang dmar [= smar] po byungl*.

¹⁵ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 601.5–6).

¹⁶ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 606.5–6) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 219.2–3). bDag chen Grags blo ba can be identified as Grags pa blo gros (1367–1437/1446), who was the second son of Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399) and Ngor chen's half-brother. His nephew could probably be identified as Kun dga' dbang phyug (1418–1462), the son of Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen's first son Gu shri Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1366–1420) and nineteenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: ca. 1442–1462). On both persons, see Part Three, 3.2.

¹⁷ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 606.6–607.3) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 219.2–4). From Mus chen's biographies the picture emerges that in the first part of his life Mus chen avoided taking on monastic tasks and responsibility in favor of his own spiritual practice and development. See, for instance, the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 593.6–594.2 and 594.5–595.1), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 212.4–6, 213.6–214.1, and 219.6–220.4), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 6.6–7.2 and 9.2–3).

¹⁸ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 5.2), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 602.2), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 216.5–6), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 11.4–6).

founded the monastery of Gling kha bDe ba can (1437) and constructed the hermitage of bSam gtan phug (1454).¹⁹ At times when Ngor chen was absent from Ngor, such as during his third sojourn in Glo bo (1447–1449), he asked Mus chen to act as his representative and give such important teachings as the *Lam 'bras*.²⁰

In 1456, shortly before Ngor chen passed away, he called Mus chen back to Ngor and disclosed to him that he would be his successor to the abbatial throne of Ngor.²¹ After Ngor chen's passing, Mus chen stayed at Ngor for the next two years, taking responsibility for the monastic seat, giving teachings, and overseeing the commissioning of inner and outer sacred objects in memory of his deceased master.²² In 1458, he bestowed at bSam grub rtse teachings on Drung chen Nor bu bzang po (1403–1466), the Rin spungs pa lord that had replaced his own former overlords, the Phag mo gru pa,²³ and returned back to Mus, where he founded the monastery of bDe ldan Ri khrod.²⁴ In the following years, Mus chen continued to act as the head of Ngor, though he did not stay there continuously.²⁵ Instead, he travelled on a yearly basis between Ngor and different monastic establishments in Mus as well as Ngam ring Chos sde,²⁶ until he

¹⁹ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 607.5 and 608.6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 239.2–240.1 and 240.1–2), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 23.6). On the circumstances of founding Gling kha bDe ba can, which Mus chen was initially reluctant to establish, see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 171.12–172.7). This account is seemingly based on the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 219.6–220.4). See also EVERDING 2006: vol. 2, 48–49, who states that the monastery was founded in honour of Mus chen, and that the patron of its foundation was probably the ruler of La stod Byang. On its location in the upper Mus valley; see *Ibid.*: 22, n. 29 and 17, map. For a picture of Gling kha bDe ba can taken by Sven Hedin, see *Ibid.*: 48. For two drawings by Hedin, see *Ibid.*: 21. The hermitage of bSam gtan phug was also painted by Hedin; see *Ibid.*: 26, n. 39.

²⁰ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 608.5–6) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 219.1–2). For other occasions, see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 232.3), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 608.2–4), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 218.2–3).

²¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 561.2–562.1), *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (p. 351.1–2), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 613.4–614.1), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 220.6–221.1). More students are said to have come to Ngor during Mus chen's tenure than during Ngor chen's; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 241.2).

²² See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 614.1–615.5) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 221.1–3). See also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 95.3–8).

²³ The Rin spungs pa lord Nor bu bzang po had earlier taken control of the district-fort of bSam grub rtse. For a discussion of different datings for this event (1435, 1446, or 1447), see CZAJA 2013: 221, n. 43, 223, and 223–225, n. 54, JACKSON (under preparation), and SHEN 2002: 211–212, n. 302. On Nor bu bzang po, see the *Rin spungs pa sger gyi gdung rabs* (pp. 129.1–131.4), *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (pp. 159.13–160.11), CZAJA 2013: 218–241, TUCCI 1971: 218–219, 223, and 239–240, and TUCCI 1999: 642.

²⁴ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 232.4) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 221.3–5). Cf. the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 615.5), which states that Mus chen first left Ngor in 1458 for Mus, where he established bDe ldan ri khrod, before coming back to Ngor to teach in the autumn of that same year. Afterwards, he followed the invitation of the Rin spungs pa ruler and travelled during the same autumn back to Mus. The *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 23.6) mentions Mus chen as founder of the monasteries of bDe ba can and Ya ma bDe ldan, referring to Gling kha bDe ba can and bDe ldan ri khrod, respectively. The *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 232.4) gives the name of bDe ldan ri khrod as Ya ma bDe ldan gyi ri khrod and the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 221.5) as Ya ma'i dgon pa bDe ldan ri khrod. This monastery is located on the western side of the Mus river in the region of mDog lhad to the north of gNas gsar; see EVERDING 2006: vol. 2, 19–20. *Ibid.*: 20–21, n. 28 also refers to its foundation based on the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 220.11–12); the chronology of events as related in the latter work is in accord with the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 221.3–5).

²⁵ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 221.5–6). See also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 95.5–8), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (pp. 39.19–40.1), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 7* (p. 142.3–8).

²⁶ In 1461, Mus chen had followed the invitation of bDag chen Ta'i si tu rNam rgyal grags pa dpal bzang po (1395–1475), the ruler of La stod Byang, his son (or sons), and of Ngam ring's monastic community; see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 232.5), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 616.1–3), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 231.6–232.2). On rNam rgyal grags pa dpal bzang po, see STEARNS 2007: 283 and 546, n. 763. On Ngam ring, see *Ibid.*: 497, n. 346. On Ngam ring Chos sde, see the *Ngam ring rdzong gi dgon sde'i lo rgyus* (pp. 6–26) and *gZhis rtse sa khul gyi gnas yig* (pp. 106–107).

installed 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (1396–1474) as the third abbot of Ngor in 1462.²⁷ Later on, in 1465, Mus chen was again invited to Ngor, but instead installed, in accord with Ngor chen's wishes, Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478) as the fourth abbot.²⁸

Since Mus chen had become the teacher of Ngor chen's community of disciples, the two of them were called *bla ma yab sras*, "father, [i.e.,] the lama, and son."²⁹ This special connection is also illustrated by a dream of Ngor chen. According to Mus chen's biographies, Ngor chen dreamt that his monks were sitting close to a spring, which was said to represent the stream of his empowerments. Among the gathering, Mus chen was also present and it was he who took hold of that spring by covering it with his monk's robe, saying "This is mine" (*'di ni bdag gi'o/* or *'di bdag gi'o/*). This dream was interpreted by Ngor chen to mean that the stream of empowerments that he held would be transmitted to Mus chen.³⁰

1.1 Mus chen's Biography of Ngor chen

From its colophon, we learn that Mus chen completed the greatest part of his composition on the thirteenth day of the ninth month of 1455 at his hermitage bSam gtan phug. As requested by Ngor chen's faithful disciples, he wrote the biography while Ngor chen was still alive and in his seventy-third year.³¹ After Ngor chen's passing, he wrote a short addendum on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of 1457 in the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of Ngor, which focussed on the circumstances of Ngor chen's death and the subsequent religious activities.³² Mus chen composed the biography as a supplement to the lives of the lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras*.³³ As his scribe acted Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros (b. 1433), who is also known to have written his own biographies of both Ngor chen and Mus chen.³⁴

Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen is available in two editions. The first edition appeared as a twenty-two-folio section among the lives of the *Slob bshad* lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras* collection, reproduced from sDe dge prints from the library of Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs bsTan pa'i nyi ma (b. 1931), and published in India by the Sakya Centre in 1983.³⁵ The second edition forms sixty-eight folios in a one-volume

²⁷ The *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 232.2–3) dates Shes rab rgya mtsho's appointment to the year 1462, as does the *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (p. 351.1–2) and *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 232.5–6). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 8.3), which dates it to the fourth day of the sixth month of 1473 (*chu sprul*). As JACKSON 1989a: 53 proposed, this dating needs to be corrected to 1461 (*lcags sprul*), which is, however, still one year too early. The *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 615.6–616.4) does not mention the appointment at all. Although the *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (p. 351.1–2) dates it to 1462, it specifies Mus chen's tenure only from 1456 to 1458, as does the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 210.5).

²⁸ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 620.3–5).

²⁹ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 5.2).

³⁰ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 237.1–3) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 12.3–5). According to the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 237.3), Ngor chen's account was heard by a certain bKa' bcu ba chen po Sangs grub. The *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 12.3) reports that Ngor chen related his dream at the conclusion of a *Lam 'bras* teaching while performing the "summation of the path and prediction of practice" (*lam bsdud te sgrub pa'i lung sbyin pa mdzad pa*). This dream is also mentioned in the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 204.1–2).

³¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 467.6–468.2).

³² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 473.4–6).

³³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 473.5).

³⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 565.2).

³⁵ See the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 1, pp. 432–473). The biography is also recorded in the *Lam 'bras dkar chag* (p. 2, text 21), a catalogue of a twenty-three-volume *Lam 'bras* block-print from sDe dge. Similarly, it is recorded in a catalogue of Sa skya pa works housed in the Potala. Two block-print editions of both the lives of the *Tshogs*

edition of biographies of famous *Lam 'bras* masters, which was also published by the Sakya Centre in India in 1985.³⁶ Apart from the differing size of folios, script, and numbers of lines per page, the editions vary to a certain extent in wording and also punctuation.³⁷ Moreover, the second edition concludes with an additional five-lined stanza of merit dedication followed by four stanzas of Tibetanised Sanskrit.³⁸ Apart for these minor variations, however, there are no differences in content.

Recently, Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen has also become available in four digitally inputted reprint editions: (1) in a *Lam 'bras* collection in *po ti* format published by the rDzong sar lnga rig slob gling in 2007,³⁹ (2) in the *Slob bshad* section of a new *Lam 'bras* collection in *po ti* format arranged by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po (1927–2010) and published by Lama Guru of Sachen International (rGyal yongs sa chen) in Kathmandu in 2008,⁴⁰ (3) in the *E waṃ bka' 'bum*,⁴¹ a compendium in book format of collected works of Ngor abbots edited by the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang in 2010, and (4) in the first set of the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod*,⁴² a collection bringing together a variety of texts important to the Sa skya school edited by the Si khron bod yig dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu rtsom sgrig khang in 2013. All four newer editions seem to be based on the sDe dge print of Mus chen's Ngor chen biography as included among the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters.

Apart from those editions, two different *dbu med* manuscripts are available: the slightly incomplete *rJe kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdu pa* in thirty-six folios (fol. 11 missing) and the *rJe btsun dam pa kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa* in forty-one folios.⁴³ Another *dbu med* manuscript in forty folios, the *Chos rje kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar*, is preserved in Rome at the library of the former Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO).⁴⁴ Moreover, the catalogue of the books housed in the libraries of 'Bras

bshad and *Slob bshad* lineage masters (the former in three volumes and the latter in seven) are preserved there. Both collections contain the Ngor chen biography by Mus chen; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnam ky'i dkar chag* (p. 130, no. 1880, text 20 and p. 175, no. 1907, text 20).

³⁶ See the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 189–325). The title of the biography is given as *Chos rje rdo rje 'chang gi rnam thar*; see the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 189). The biography includes a few folios that are printed only halfway through or are totally blank; see the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 279–284). One can speculate that the original folios were torn or missing. The whole volume is part of a collection of golden manuscripts from Glo bo published by the Sakya Centre in five volumes. For a description of this collection and in particular the contents of this volume, see JACKSON 1991b: 3–5 and 30–32.

³⁷ Variations in wording include the use of differing but synonymous terms. For instance, the *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, p. 456.2) has *snga skad* and *phyi ma red*, whereas the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 269.3–4) reads *snga dro* and *phyi dro*. In this case, some archaic term might have been changed to a more common one. Other variations include the shortening of phrases. The *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, p. 467.6), for instance, reads *shin tu mdor bsdu* and *dge ba'i bshes gnyen*, whereas the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 305.4) has *mdor bsdu* and *bshes gnyen*. We also encounter further variations such as *steng nas* and *tshes bcu gsum*, on the one hand, and *stengs na* and *yar tshes bcu gsum* on the other; see the *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, p. 468.1) and *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 306.1–2), respectively.

³⁸ See the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 324.5–325.5). Some shorter or longer Tibetanised Sanskrit stanzas are found at the end of six out of seven biographies included in that volume; see the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 55.6, 107.3–5, 187.5, 325.3–5, 407.2–5, and 573.2–5). The stanzas seem to have been added to fill in the otherwise remaining blank lines of each folio. This would explain why the last biography does not feature them because its main text continues until the end of the last line; see the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud ky'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 653.5). Nevertheless, the origin of the dedication remains unknown.

³⁹ See the *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 1, pp. 614.4–675).

⁴⁰ See the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 1, pp. 535–587).

⁴¹ See the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 8, pp. 262–311).

⁴² See the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 38, pp. 182–221).

⁴³ See the *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 116, pp. 121–189) and TBRC (W2CZ7931), respectively.

⁴⁴ See DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 334, no. 670, section 11.

spungs registers another thirty-folio manuscript of that biography, the *rje btsun rin po che rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po'i zhal mnga' nas kyi rnam par thar pa*.⁴⁵

1.2 Outline of Mus chen's Biography of Ngor chen

Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen can be outlined as follows:⁴⁶

1. *Rab tu ma byon pa*[*i rnam thar*] (pp. 432.6–435.3)
2. *Rab tu byon pa'i rnam thar* (p. 432.6) / *Rab tu byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (pp. 435.3–473.5)
- 2.1. *gZhi tshul khrims rnam par dag pa ji ltar nos pa'i tshul* (pp. 435.3–437.5)
 - [2.1.1.] *So sor thar pa'i sdom pa ji ltar nos pa'i tshul* (pp. 435.3–436.4)
 - [2.1.2.] *Byang chub sems dpa'i sdom pa nos pa'i tshul* (pp. 436.4–437.1)
 - [2.1.3.] *Rig pa 'dzin pa'i sdom pa nos pa'i tshul* (p. 437.1–5)
- 2.2. *De la brten nas thos bsam la sogs pa ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul* (p. 435.3) / *Thos bsam sogs ji ltar mdzad tshul* (pp. 437.5–452.1)
- 2.3. *gZhan don phrin las ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul* (p. 435.3) / *Phrin las gzhan don ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul* (pp. 452.1–467.6)
- [3. Colophon] (pp. 467.6–468.2)
- [4. Supplement] (pp. 468.2–473.5)
- [5. Colophon Supplement] (p. 473.5–6)

⁴⁵ See the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1515, no. 17073). For a scan of that work, see now TBRC (W3CN2898, vol. 2, pp. 145–203 of the PDF document).

⁴⁶ For the outline of the biography, see also the *Lam 'bras dkar chag* (p. 2, text 21).

Chapter Two

Ngor chen's Biography by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs

The second full-length biography of Ngor chen was written by 'Jam mgon Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot of Ngor. In doing so, he compiled the older biographies of Ngor chen that had been written by the latter's disciples, such as Mus chen's, into a single extensive account, entitled *The Biography of the Victorious Vajradhara Kun dga' bzang po, The Ocean Assembling the Streams of [Biographical] Good Sayings, The Source of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel of Excellent Qualities*.⁴⁷

For the investigation of the life of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, the two most important sources have become available to Western academia rather recently. The first is his autobiographical account, the *Bya bral ba sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa nges 'byung gtam gyi rol mtsho*, and the second his biography, the *'Jam pa'i dbyangs sangs rgyas phun tshogs bkra shis grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa thub bstan snang ba'i nyin byed*, written by his disciple Tshul khriims dpal bzang (1675–1710), the twenty-eighth abbot of Ngor.⁴⁸

The autobiography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs deserves more attention, as it opens an interesting window into monastic life and its problems in seventeenth-century Tibet, in general, and with regard to Ngor, in particular. Some of the events described, such as killings of members of different regional dormitories (*khang tshan*),⁴⁹ were obviously too delicate to be included in his official biography and were thus omitted by his biographer, who otherwise follows the structure of his subject's autobiography.

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was born in 1649 into the gNam ru clan (*rigs rus*), also known as the Khyung po, within which many Bon masters and some important Buddhist figures such as rJe btsun Mi la ras pa (1040–1123), Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456–1532), and 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' dpal bzang had appeared. He was born as the son of g.Yung drung skyabs and A 'pham bu 'dren among the nomads (*'brog gseb*) of Tre

⁴⁷ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 476.1): *rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa legs bshad chu bo 'dus pa'i rgya mtsho yon tan yid bzhin nor bu'i 'byung gnas*. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also composed a supplication to Ngor chen, the *rGyal ba rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po la bstod cing gsol ba 'debs pa byin rlabs sprin phung*; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi gsung thor bu 1* (vol. 1, pp. 7–12.1) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi gsung thor bu 2* (pp. 3.4–6.2).

⁴⁸ See the *Lam 'bras 3* (vol. 29, pp. 145–264 and 265–361), respectively. A short autobiographical sketch is preserved in the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 50.6–51.4), as is a longer biographical sketch in the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 498.5–516.1). The autobiography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs consists of two parts. In the first, he relates his life until his fiftieth year in 1698; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 145–232.5). In the second, which he composed at the behest of his host, Sa skyong Bla ma Sangs rgyas bstan pa (d. 1710, r. 1675–1710), he recounts his journey to and stay at the court of sDe dge until some time prior to his passing in 1705; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 232.5–264.1). The last date he provides is the second month of the monkey year (*sprel lo*), that is, 1704, recounting that he seriously fell ill; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 257.4–5). He ends his autobiography with sharing some of his spiritual experiences; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 262.2–264.1). However, the last of these episodes was seemingly added by another hand; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 263.4–264.1). In contrast to the autobiography, his full-length biography covers only the period of time until his journey to sDe dge. It was completed by Tshul khriims dpal bzang in his twenty-fourth year on the sixth day of the twelfth month of the male earth-tiger year (*sa pho stag gi lo*; i.e., early January of 1699); see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 361.4–5). On the composition of the biography, which is based on the autobiography, see the *Tshul khriims dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 387.3–388.1).

⁴⁹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 209.4).

pa in lower mNga' ris (*mnnga' ris smad*).⁵⁰ These nomads were settled in the mountain valley (*ri sul*) of sTag sgo between the Sa skya monastery of rDzong chung—which had been founded by the aforementioned Kun dga' dpal bzang, who also served as the chaplain (*dbu bla*) of a king of Gung thang—and the dGe ldan monastery of sPug brag.⁵¹

As his father abandoned the family when Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was still a child, they were taken care of by a maternal uncle (*zhang po*), dGe slong 'Jam dbyangs (alias Shes rab lhun grub). This uncle was a monk and teacher at rDzong chung Monastery, whose monks traditionally went to Ngor for further studies. Thus, until his eleventh year, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs grew up living mostly with his mother and at times with his uncle in the monastery. At age eleven, he was sent to live with another, better off maternal uncle of his, who was named 'A pha tshe dpal and with whom he spent the next two years.⁵²

When he was thirteen years old, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs took the vows of a layman from Grub chen Sangs rgyas lhun grub at the hermitage of sPyang ku lung (or sPyang khu lung).⁵³ Until his twenty-first year, he stayed mainly at rDzong chung and studied under such masters as gNyag ston Phun tshogs rdo rje and dPon slob Kun dga' legs pa. The latter had come from Ngor, making several stopovers at rDzong chung during his sojourn in mNga' ris. During one of those stays, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs took from him at age sixteen the vows of a novice monk, giving up eating after noon and abandoning the consumption of meat.⁵⁴ In his autobiography, he tells about his earlier attempts to become a monk, and of travelling to central Tibet (dBus gtsang) for his further monastic training. Those attempts, however, failed due to both the lack of consent from his relatives and of economic support. For instance, when Kun dga' legs pa returned to

⁵⁰ On Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' previous life, see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 271.3–272.2) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 149.3–150.2).

⁵¹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 273.1–275.4) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 151.2–153.2). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 50.6) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 498.6). On some remarks on the history of the gNam ru clan, which originated from a nomadic unit that had settled in the area of the gNam mtsho phyug mo in dBus, see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 273.1–6) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 151.5–152.1). See also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 113.7–10), JACKSON 1984: 111–113, and Part Four, n. 273. In lower mNga' ris, female members of the gNam ru clan contracted marriages with male members of large clans such as of the Tre pa, Chag pa, and the *dpon* or *khri dpon* of the gSer pa. They maintained a nephew-uncle relationship (*tsha zhang gi 'brel ba*) with those clans, being the bride-givers (*zhang*) and those clans the bride-receivers (*tsha*). For instance, from such an alliance between a daughter (*bu sring mo*) of the gNam ru clan, bKra shis rgyal mo, and the Chag pa originated 'Jam dbyangs Chos rje Kun dga' chos bzang (1433–1503), and Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1596) was born into the lineage (*brgyud pa*) of Khri dpon gSer pa; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 273.4–6) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 152.5–153.1). On the lineage of the gSer dpon, see also the *Mang thos kyi rang rnam* (pp. 397.3–398.4). For the name of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' mother, we encounter different spellings: 'A pha ma bu 'dren (*Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa*, p. 153.2), 'A pha mo bu 'dren (*Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2*, p. 498.6), and 'A pham bu 'dren (*Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar*, p. 274.1 and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1*, p. 50.6).

⁵² See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 275.4–279.1) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 153.2–156.3). As Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had been abandoned by his father, he was initially named bDag med by rDzong chung dPon slob Phrin las phun tshogs; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 498.6–499.2), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 276.2–6), and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 153.3–154.1). Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had a younger half-brother on his mother's side who had become a monk prior to his own ordination; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 279.1) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 154.4 and 156.3).

⁵³ At that time, Sangs rgyas lhun grub also bestowed on him the name Sangs rgyas phun tshogs by combining the name elements of two of his own teachers, Nam mkha' sangs rgyas, the seventeenth abbot of Ngor, and Phyang ston Phrin las phun tshogs; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 284.2–285.3) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 159.2–4).

⁵⁴ At about age thirty, however, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had to give up his *rdor dkar* practice owing to his physically exhausting sojourn in Khams; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 192.5–6).

gTsang in about 1663, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' uncle accompanied that lama as his attendant. Although Kun dga' legs pa suggested that they take Sangs rgyas phun tshogs with them, the old uncle spoke against it, arguing that it was too early for his nephew to study at a monastic centre (*grwa sa*). Later on, Kun dga' tshul khirms came up from sKyed tshal to enlist monks (*grwa rgyun bskul ma*) for his home monastery.⁵⁵ But once again, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was prevented from going because he lacked the necessary economic support. But eventually, things changed for the better when he made the acquaintance of Grub thob sGong phrug pa Kun dga' lhun grub, who had visited rDzong chung after his pilgrimage to the holy sites in rTsa ri and Ti se. Together with him, by performing the funeral rites for a local nomad, he was able to secure both some financial and material means, and the Grub thob also agreed to guide him eastward to central Tibet. In the end, he also received the approval from his old uncle dGe slong 'Jam dbyangs, who provided him with a letter requesting that his nephew be committed to the care of the Thar rtse bla brang of Ngor.⁵⁶ His uncle had a close relation with Ngor, in general, and with the Thar rtse bla brang, in particular. He had been a student of Nam mkha' sangs rgyas, the seventeenth abbot of Ngor, and had visited Ngor four times, sponsoring many communal and memorial tea servings (*mang ja* and *dus ja*). In particular, after the death of Nam mkha' rin chen (1612–1657), the nineteenth abbot of Ngor, he very successfully took on the responsibility of collecting donations in his homeland, Lower Western Tibet (mNga' ris smad).

Thus Sangs rgyas phun tshogs finally realised his wish to journey to central Tibet (dBus gtsang) for further studies. Accompanied by a small group of monks and guided by the Grub thob, he left his native land at age twenty-one in 1669 and travelled to Ngor. On their way, they encountered at Nub dgon his teacher Kun dga' legs pa, who was sending off more than hundred male and female yaks (*g.yag* and *'bri*) as offerings to Sa skya. Joining that group, they headed to Sa skya and after a short stopover continued on to Ngor.⁵⁷

From 1669 until 1673, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs remained primarily at Ngor, basing himself at the Thar rtse bla brang and pursuing his religious training under the monastery's most eminent masters in residence, as well as under visiting scholars. During that time, he also took full monastic ordination from dPal mchog rgyal mtshan (1599–1673), the twenty-second abbot of Ngor, as presiding abbot, 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1611–1672), the twenty-third abbot of Ngor, as ceremonial master, Bla ma dam pa Chos bsam grub pa as instructor in private, and dBu mdzad Shar Mi nyag ston pa Kun dga' dpal 'byor as timekeeper. Another member of the monastic community that formed the necessary quorum was Chos rje bSod nams rgyal mtshan (alias mDo khams Bla ma rGyal mtshan 'bum) from sDe dge. Along with them, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also received teachings from the following masters: Shar pa bDag chen Ye shes bzang po (d. 1695), sKyed tshal 'og ma mKhan chen Kun dga' tshul khirms, Zha lu mKhan chen Rin

⁵⁵ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs met this master again later at Ngor. Within that context, he refers to him as sKyed tshal 'og ma'i mkhan chen mNga' ris pa Tshogs bsogs Rab 'byams smra ba'i dbang po Kun dga' tshul khirms; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 179.5).

⁵⁶ For this letter, see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 170.1–3).

⁵⁷ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 279.1–298.1) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 156.3–174.3). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 50.6–51.1), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 499.3–500.4), and *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 98.6–99.2). On the activities of dGe slong 'Jam dbyangs, see in particular the *Nam mkha' rin chen gyi rnam thar* (pp. 779.5–780.2).

chen bsod nams mchog grub (1602–1681), Thar rtse mKhan chen Shes rab rgya mtsho (d. 1694), and Khams ston Sangs rgyas dpal bzang.⁵⁸

After 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' dpal bzang was appointed the new abbot of Ngor in 1671, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs accompanied his master to lHa sa to pay their respects to the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682). When, one year later, the health of 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' dpal bzang declined, he attended on his sick master and also performed various meritorious actions on his behalf after his death. With the passing of Nam mkha' dpal bzang, the Thar rtse bla brang had lost its main spiritual leader, and thus Shes rab rgya mtsho was summoned from Khams to take over leadership of the *bla brang*. Then, in 1673, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' period of monastic studies came to an end when he was ordered by his host, the Thar rtse bla brang, to travel east to upper sGa (sGa stod or dGa' stod) in Khams to collect offerings (*'bul sdud*) needed for the lama palace's memorial tea servings (*dus ja*) and its votive butter lamps (*dkar me*).⁵⁹

Leaving Ngor in the ninth month of 1673, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs travelled to sGa stod where he remained thirteen years (until 1686). During that long period, he toured the local monasteries—such as the ones whose monks travelled to Ngor for full monastic ordination and further studies—collecting offerings by performing rituals and giving teachings and lay or novice ordinations. But he never granted the *Lam 'bras* or full monastic ordination, whose bestowal was restricted (*bcad rgya*) to Ngor itself. He recounts that during the time of his sojourn in sGa stod, he was able to send offerings to the Thar rtse bla brang eleven times and also made offerings to the local monasteries and lamas. At the same time, however, he was somewhat critical of this practice of exchanging the Buddha's teachings for material means. Observing that many such uninvited lamas were roaming around in Khams, he quotes a proverb (*kha dpe*) used by the laity: "In gTsang, the lamas of Sa skya wander from door to door, exchanging the empowerments of the *Vajrāvali* for a goat."⁶⁰

While in sGa stod, the monastery of gDong sprad bSam gtan gling became his main base, where he took over the encampment (*sgar*) of Khams ston Sangs rgyas dpal bzang.⁶¹ Moreover, he continued his scriptural studies and engaged in tantric propitiation retreats (*bsnyen pa*). Aiming to seclude himself in a strict retreat, he requested the Thar rtse bla brang to send a replacement for leading the encampment (*sgar 'dzin*), and, complying with his request, Shes bya bzang po (1661–1702?)—who later on would serve

⁵⁸ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 298.1–309.5) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 174.3–180.6). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 51.1–2) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 500.4–501.2).

⁵⁹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 309.5–313.4) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 180.6–183.3). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 51.2) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 501.2–3).

⁶⁰ *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 185.6): *gtsang sa skya'i bla mas sgo 'grim byed|| dbang rdo rje phreng ba ra dang brjell*.

⁶¹ gDong sprad bSam gtan gling was founded by Grub thob Gu ru mTsho skyes rdo rje (fl. 15th century); see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 188.1). According to JACKSON 2003b: 529, bSam gtan gling was one of twenty-one monasteries of the Sa skya school in lDan ma whose monks went to Ngor for ordination. Although traditionally one spoke of twenty-one monasteries, twenty-four could be enumerated in recent times. For their enumeration, see *ibid.*: 529. On the history of bSam gtan gling, see Gri rkyang Tshe ring rdo rje (b. 1971), *sGa khri 'du gdong sprad bsam gtan chos 'khor gling gi lo rgyus zla shel dngul dkar me long*, s.l.: Pho brang dmar po'i las sgrub khang, s.d. For a sketch of the monastery's history, see the *Khri 'du* (pp. 236–240), where it is also called gDong sprad bSam gtan chos 'khor gling. See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 501.3), which refers to the monastery as gDong sprad bSam gling sgar. The previous head of the encampment, Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, appears in the biographies of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs within the context of the aforementioned return of Shes rab rgya mtsho to Ngor to head the Thar rtse bla brang. Thus the sending of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs to sGa stod would have been the immediate result of reshuffling the organisation of the Thar rtse bla brang.

as the twenty-seventh abbot of Ngor—was dispatched to sGa stod in 1683. Now freed from his responsibilities, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs went into retreat, mainly applying himself to the practice of the *Lam 'bras*. However, when in 1686 word reached him that he should become the next abbot of Ngor, his plan of spending the rest of his life in retreat at gDong sprad bSam gtan gling was disrupted.⁶²

The next section of his autobiography—on his installation and tenure as Ngor abbot—is highly interesting. It illustrates, on the one hand, the procedures of appointing the abbot of Ngor in the seventeenth century and, on the other, the problems any incumbent abbot might face in heading a large monastic institution. With regard to the former, the picture emerges that the individual *bla brangs* of Ngor each appointed a candidate whose name had been forwarded by Ngor's central office to Sa skya for approval. Sa skya in turn contacted the dGa' ldan pho brang regime for the final decision, the latter issuing an official decree directing which candidate had to be installed as abbot.⁶³ But the fact that this process could even be more complicated is shown by the background of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' installation. He relates that among the candidates to the abbacy, the dGa' ldan pho brang (*gzhung sa chen po*) approved the Klu sdings Zhabs drung Ye shes bzang po. The latter, however, had no intention to become abbot and thus the Klu sdings bla brang secretly sent a messenger to lHa sa to approach the dGa' ldan pho brang. When Ngor's central administration (*bla brang gzhung*) came to know of this move, it dispatched sPang shar Bla ma Kun dga' bsam gtan to prevent the messenger from bringing forward his request (*zhu sgo 'gegs pa*). But it also added that, in case it was too late to stop the messenger, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs should be added to the list of candidates. Since the request of the Klu sdings bla brang was granted, this new list was submitted and the dGa' ldan pho brang appointed Sangs rgyas phun tshogs as new abbot of Ngor.

While in retreat, this final decision reached Sangs rgyas phun tshogs in the seventh month of 1686 via a messenger, who carried with him the official decrees from lHa sa and Sa skya, which had been issued respectively by sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705) and sNgags 'chang Ngag dbang kun dga' bkra shis (1656–1711), as well as a letter (*thugs dam*) by the incumbent Ngor abbot lHun grub dpal ldan (1624–1697). Although this story might have been told by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs to clarify that his appointment was officially authorised, it also shows that Ngor Monastery could by then not independently appoint its own abbots, but had to rely on the approval of Sa skya and the dGa' ldan pho brang.⁶⁴

Shortly after Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had been informed about his appointment, he embarked on his journey back to Ngor, paying visits on the way to Ra sgren, Glang thang,

⁶² See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi nram thar* (pp. 313.4–327.5) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 183.3–198.2). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 51.2–3 and 52.2) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 501.3–5 and 516.5).

⁶³ During the abbot's installation ceremony at Ngor representatives of the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and from Sa skya were also present. Some of those formalities are mentioned in the biographical sketches of Ngor abbots as related in the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2*. Moreover, they can be found in their full-length biographies; see, for instance, the *Khang gсар bsod nams rgya mtsho'i nram thar* (pp. 58.5–59.6), *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i nram thar* (pp. 715.4–723.2), *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi nram thar* (p. 94.1–6), and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi nram thar* (pp. 124.3–126.1). For a detailed description, see now also the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang nram 2* (pp. 28.19–33.13).

⁶⁴ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi nram thar* (pp. 327.5–328.6) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 198.1–199.3). An even more extensive account of those events is given by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs in the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi nram thar* (pp. 127.6–136.6). For the wording of the letter sent by lHun grub dpal ldan, see the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi nram thar* (pp. 131.2–136.6).

Nā lendra, holy sites in lHa sa, sKyed tshal, Zha lu, Ri mthil, and rGyan gong.⁶⁵ He arrived back at Ngor on the twenty-first day of the tenth month and was installed one month later as the new abbot on the twenty-second day of the eleventh month, which fell on the anniversary of the passing of 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280). In the ensuing account of his tenure, he reveals some rather disturbing developments at Ngor which, eventually, led to his resignation. First, he reports that the financial management of Ngor's central office was not administered properly so that when the office of the abbot was handed over a certain amount was always missing. He even mentions that funds had been stolen. Moreover, he reports later on that, though the *bla brangs* received many donations, the central office did not, implying the heavy duty of the abbot in organising offerings. Second, he faced strong opposition in administrative matters. For instance, when he wanted to appoint a new *dbu mdzad*, though he had secured the backing of Sa skya, he faced the opposition of certain regional dormitories (*khang tshan*); this conflict ended in a tumultuous scene. Third, he reports that killings occurred between members of different regional dormitories, causing the district governor (*rdzong dpon*) to doubt his management skills. Thus, in line with many other abbots of Ngor who held office for only two or three years, he resigned in the ninth month of 1689. This vivid description of the conditions at Ngor can probably serve as one explanation for why certain masters had no intention to serve as Ngor abbot and others held that position only for a short period of time.⁶⁶

After he had stepped down from the abbacy, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs retired into the gZims phrug khang, where he was based until he departed for the court of sDe dge in 1699. During those years, he spent his time in retreat or giving teachings. He also paid visits to other monastic establishments—such as Khro phu, Bo dong E, Bya rgod (g)shongs, rTse gdong, and Sa skya—also giving teachings at some of these sites. For instance, in the autumn of 1692, he travelled to dBus to pay his respects to the officials of the dGa' ldan pho brang regime. At that time, in the Potala, he also exchanged teachings with gNas brtan 'Dul ba 'dzin pa dGe slong 'Jam dbyangs grags pa, who served under both the Fifth Dalai Lama and Sixth Dalai Lama Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho (1683–1706/46).

⁶⁵ Though the sources mention that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs made offerings to the Fifth Dalai Lama and his regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in lHa sa, we have to note that the Dalai Lama had already passed away in 1682, but that his death was kept secret by the regent; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 332.2–3) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 201.3–4). See also the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 137.5–138.2), where Sangs rgyas phun tshogs mentions that he met with the sDe srid, who was staying in a one-week retreat, and joined a long-life ceremony (*brtan bzhugs*) for the Fifth Dalai lama in the Tshom chen of the Potala. He also voiced his concerns that he would not be able to bear the responsibility as abbot of Ngor; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 332.4–5) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 201.4–5).

⁶⁶ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 199.3–212.5 and 231.1). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 51.3), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 501.4–503.2), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 328.6–345.4), and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 136.6–138.6). The heavy burden of the abbot to organise offerings is also mentioned in the *Khang gsar bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (p. 64.5–6): *bla ma gong ma'i lo dus dang zla dus kyi dus mchod rnams bla brang bzhugs mkhan des shin tu 'dzin dka' ba 'dug paj de dag gi dge rgyun la phan pa'i phyir' stod mnga' ri [= ris] dangl mdo kham phyogs la 'bul sdud pa rdzong ltar yang yang gnang ba la sogs par gzhan thams cad dge ba'i rtsa ba kho na la bkod cing (...)*. See also the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 35.10–14). The fact that Ngor's monastic community was not well spoken of at that time might be learned from a letter by the Klu sdings Zhabs drung Ye shes bzang po. Provided that the dGa' ldan pho brang would decline his request, he states that he would have no other choice than to head the monastery of Ngor for two or three years, referring to its monastic community in a derogatory way as old dogs and donkeys (*Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa*, p. 198.4): *da lam nged la gzhung sa chen po nas bka' shog 'di bzhin phebs byung bas grol cha zhu ba la song yod/ gal te dgongs pa ma khrol na lo gnyis gsum khyi rjan bong ro bsrung mi byed kha med yin par 'dug pas (...)*. The term *bong ro* needs further clarification.

Subsequently, he visited bSam yas, gSang phu, and mChims phu and returned to Ngor after making stopovers in rDo rje brag, Rwa ba smad, Gong dkar, and Rong Byams chen.⁶⁷

In the autumn of 1696, while making a pilgrimage in dBus and gTsang, the sDe dge Bla ma Sangs rgyas dpal bzang (alias Bla ma Tshe dbang rdo rje) paid a visit to Ngor, and it was in 1697 that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs bestowed the *Lam 'bras* on him and his entourage.⁶⁸ As will be shown, this connection with the house of sDe dge played a decisive role in the last years of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' life. He relates that since his resignation as Ngor abbot in 1689, he had received repeated invitations from the house of sDe dge, but had declined them due to his weak physical condition, although he was aware of the importance of sDe dge as patron of both Sa skya and Ngor.⁶⁹ sDe dge, however, did not give up so easily. Sangs rgyas dpal bzang secured an official decree from the Sixth Dalai Lama and in about 1698 once again approached Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, inviting him with great insistence. He also succeeded in overcoming the opposition to his going from Sa skya, and thus it was decided that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs would travel up to sDe dge.⁷⁰

When this decision became publicly known, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was approached from all sites with requests for teachings, and thus he was very busy for the next several months. On the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month of 1699, he finally embarked on his journey to sDe dge, making stops at gSer mdog can and rTse gdong monasteries, and meeting with the Sixth Dalai Lama and sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in the dGa' ldan pho brang in 'Bras spungs. After participating in the Zho ston festival and visiting the holy sites of lHa sa, he continued via Nā lendra to lDan sGa stod in Khams. There he was picked up by a delegation from sDe dge, which was headed by gNyer pa rNam rgyal. They continued via the rDza chu river on the Northern Route (*byang lam*) by way of rMa rong to Zis phu lHa lung, where he encountered Sa skyong Bla ma bSod nams phun tshogs (d. 1714). Eventually, he reached lHun grub steng, the main monastery of sDe dge. He was given an elaborate welcome and met with Khri chen Sangs rgyas bstan pa (d. 1710, r. 1675–1710) in the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of lHun grub steng.⁷¹

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' invitation is also mentioned in the chronicle of the ruling house of sDe dge, the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs*. That work provides additional information on

⁶⁷ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 212.5–230.3). In this passage, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also gives a list of the major teachings he had obtained, comments on the amount of teachings and ordinations he himself had bestowed, enumerates some of his writings, and records the offerings he made. See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 51.3), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 503.2–3), and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 345.4–356.5).

⁶⁸ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 229.3–4). The visit of the sDe dge Bla ma is also mentioned by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs in the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 142.6–143.1). Within this context, his name is given as sDe dge Bla ma Sangs rgyas dpal bzang. An annotation remarks that he was commonly known as Tshe dbang rdo rje.

⁶⁹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 230.3–5). Cf. the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 232.6–233.2), where he mentions a slightly different timeframe and reason: *snga sor sde dge bla ma khu dbon rnam kyi lo dgu tsam nas' bod mi dang yo byad yang yang byung kyang/ sbyin bdag gal che rung de skabs rang sems kyi 'char sgor/ lo zhe bdun tshun la 'chi snyam pa'i blo rgod cig sskyes nas de mthun gyi gnas tshul phul*.

⁷⁰ For the official reply from Sa skya to Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 234.6–235.4).

⁷¹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 233.3–242.3). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 503.3–504.4). On the dating of the demise of bSod nams phun tshogs, see the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 43.3–4) and KOLMAŠ 1968: 36. See also the *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (pp. 43.20–44.19), which gives his dates with 1645 to 1714. Cf. the *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 78), where his year of birth is given as 1640. On the dating of the death of Sangs rgyas bstan pa, see the *Rang tshul drangs por brjod pa* (p. 21.2) and CHAIX 2013: 24. Cf. the *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (pp. 42.11–43.20), which gives his dates as 1628 to 1700. Cf. also *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 78), where they are specified as 1616 to 1687.

the background of his invitation and helps us identifying the members of the sDe dge family mentioned above. According to that chronicle, the official invitation came from Khri chen Sangs rgyas bstan pa, who served both as ruler of sDe dge and abbot of lHun grub steng, the family's home monastery.⁷² Prior to his appointment as abbot, he himself had visited Ngor and Sa skya and had obtained from lHun grub dpal ldan, the twenty-fourth abbot of Ngor, full monastic ordination and the *Lam 'bras*.⁷³ It was, however, his nephew, sDe dge Bla ma Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, who took on the actual responsibility (*'gan bzhes*) for inviting Sangs rgyas phun tshogs during his pilgrimage in dBus and gTsang.⁷⁴ The latter's elder brother, Sa skyong Bla ma bSod nams phun tshogs, whom Sangs rgyas phun tshogs met on this way to sDe dge, was not involved in his invitation, but received teachings from him and took over as both ruler and abbot of lHun grub steng after the demise of his uncle.⁷⁵

Having reached sDe dge, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs spent the last years of his life as court chaplain (*dbu bla*), being one of the first Ngor masters to serve in that function.⁷⁶

⁷² See the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 30.6–31.6). See also the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 302.21–303.6), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 28.4–29.1), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 45.2–14 and 173.4–8), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 43.13–15), *'Bel gtam* (p. 527.2–5), and KOLMAŠ 1968: 34–35, 50, and 52.

⁷³ See the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 29.5–30.4) and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 126.3–5). See also the *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 44.8–45.1).

⁷⁴ See the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 43.5–6). See also the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 305.9–14), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 34.3–5 and 95.1–4), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 50.10–14).

⁷⁵ See the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 39.3–40.2). See also the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 303.14–304.5), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 30.5–31.1), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 46.15–10), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (pp. 43.20–44.19), CHAIX 2013: 24, and KOLMAŠ 1968: 34–36, 50, and 52.

⁷⁶ According to tradition, a link between Ngor and sDe dge had already been established in the fifteenth century. In 1446, Thang stong rgyal po (1361?–1485) followed the invitation to sDe dge by Bo thar Blo gros stobs ldan (alias bKra shis seng ge), under whose patronage he founded the monastery of lHun grub steng; see the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 925.4–10), *rGyud sde kun btus kyi byung tshul* (pp. 329.6–330.2), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 295.7–296.9), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 9.5–12.1, 20.5–7, and 89.5–8), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 9.13–11.2), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 13.2–6), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 29.20–30.8 and 172.1–5), *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 85.5–6), KOLMAŠ 1968: 31–32, and STEARNS 2007: 56–57. Since Thang stong rgyal po had received teachings from Ngor chen, it was considered an auspicious connection with respect to lHun sgrub steng becoming a Ngor pa monastery; see the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi byung tshul* (p. 330.2), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 12.1–3), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 30.8–12 and 172.5–13), *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (pp. 84.4–85.1), and STEARNS 2007: 57. From that time on, members of the house of sDe dge relied on Ngor masters as their teachers, also travelling to Ngor for further studies and ordination. For instance, Bla ma dPal ldan seng ge, the first son of Bo thar studied under lHa mchog seng ge (1468–1535), the ninth abbot of Ngor; see the *sDe dge dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 20.7–11), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 11.3–5), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 14.1–2), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 31.1–4 and 172.8–11), and KOLMAŠ 1968: 32. Also, dGe sar bir (alias Grags pa lHun grub) is said to have studied under lHa mchog seng ge; see the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 21.15–22.1) and *sDe dge'i rgyal rgyabs* (p. 15.1–2).

Ngor related sources introduce Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis (1558–1615), the fourteenth abbot of Ngor, as the first Ngor master to have visited Khams. Following the order of dKon mchog dpal ldan (1526–1590), the eleventh abbot of Ngor, he sojourned in Khams collecting donations from 1584 to 1591; see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 666.3–675.2) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 26.6–27.1 and 37.2–39.2). According to the *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 32.9–12 and 172.21–173.2), Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis had been invited to sDe dge by Bla ma Kun dga' rin chen. By contrast, the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 296.20–22), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 21.4–7), and *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 14.5) only mention that Kun dga' rin chen relied on Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis as his teacher. The sDe dge Bla ma (or Grub chen) Kun dga' rgya mtsho, who had visited Ngor, also studied under him; see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 298.2–9), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 22.5–11), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 12.3–8), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. [16].2–4 and 105.6–106.1), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 33.20–34.8). Although the biography of Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis relates his sojourn in Khams, it neither specifies a visit to sDe dge nor mentions Bla ma Kun dga' rin chen among his disciples or patrons; see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 666.3–675.2 and 703.5–708.2), respectively. On Kun dga' rin chen, see also KOLMAŠ 1968: 32.

The first Ngor chaplain (*dbu bla*) at the court of sDe dge was dPal mchog rgyal mtshan, the twenty-second abbot of Ngor, who followed the invitation of Bla chen Byams pa phun tshogs (1585–ca. 1660), spending many years at the sDe dge court, until his appointment as abbot of Ngor in 1667; see the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 926.1–

Owing to his activities, the relationship between Ngor and sDe dge was further deepened and would intensify even further over the course of the eighteenth century, when almost continuously a series of retired Ngor abbots acted as chaplains at the court of sDe dge.⁷⁷ It goes without saying that the sDe dge court also patronised other Buddhist schools. Along with masters of other Sa skya traditions, they also invited rNying ma and bKa' brgyud lamas.

In his position as chaplain, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs moved into the residence of his late teacher dPal mchog rgyal mtshan, and he subsequently gave on a large scale teachings and ordinations in various monasteries within the domain of sDe dge. He also enforced the strict observance of the Vinaya by both introducing a new monastic constitution (*bca' yig*), the *lHag bsam rab dkar*, and by banning alcohol from monastic gatherings. Moreover, he newly instituted a variety of *sgrub mchod* rituals and liturgies (*chos spyod*). Another important project that he oversaw was the carving on wooden printing blocks a number of works, including some of his own writings.⁷⁸

Conjointly, Khri chen Sangs rgyas bstan pa and his chaplain Sangs rgyas phun tshogs appear to be responsible for the very first wood block-printing projects executed at the court of sDe dge, even prior to the founding of its famous printing house (in 1729?), the Par khang chos mdzod chen mo bkra shis sgo mang.⁷⁹ We know that they commissioned an *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the first pages of which were written in Lantsha, Vartu,

7), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 48.6), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (p. 299.14–18), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 24.9–25.7 and 92.3–93.12), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 18.15–19.10, 168.3–18, and 172–173), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 23.3–27.4), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 41.10–42.2 and 173.3–4), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 40.21–41.19), *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 85.6–86.2), *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 90.1–93.5), *'Bel gtam* (p. 526.3–4), and *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 85.2–4). Byams pa phun tshogs and dPal mchog rgyal mtshan established the tradition that monks from the majority of Sa skya monasteries under the domain of sDe dge travelled to Ngor for further studies; see the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 25.6–7), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 19.3–5 and 168.3–10), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 24.1 and 106.1–2), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (p. 41.19–21). Byams pa phun tshogs built a new residence for dPal mchog rgyal mtshan, which became known as the Thar rtse sgrub khang and also served as the residence of later Ngor chaplains; see the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 25.3–5) and *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 19.8–10). Prior to inviting dPal mchog rgyal mtshan, Byams pa phun tshogs had studied under another Ngor master, Shes rab 'byung gnas (1596–1653), the eighteenth abbot of Ngor, probably at Ngor; see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (p. 299.1–6), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 23.14–16), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 18.5–18), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 18.2 and 105.6–106.1), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 35.21–36.2). On Byams pa phun tshogs, see also KOLMAŠ 1968: 33–34. Although the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 85.1–2) refers to Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis as the first Ngor master to have visited sDe dge, the same source specifies in an annotation that dPal mchog rgyal mtshan was the first in the line of Ngor abbots that had visited sDe dge; see the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 70.1): *'dir sde dger phebs pa'i mkhan rabs kyi thog mal*. However, we have to note that dPal mchog rgyal mtshan had visited sDe dge prior to being installed as abbot of Ngor.

⁷⁷ See the *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 168.3–222), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 172.21–174.6) and *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 85.4–6). On later Ngor chaplains at the sDe dge court, see also Part Five, 1. For a list of masters that adhered to the Ngor tradition and were invited to sDe dge but did not serve as abbots of Ngor, see the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (pp. 85.6–86.2).

⁷⁸ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 242.3–261.2). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 504.4–508.3) and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 31.4–38.2). In addition, see also the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 95.4–97.13) and *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 170.6–14). The monastic code as fixed in writing by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was called *dGon gnas kyi bca' yig lhag bsam rab dkar*; see the *sDe dge par khang gi par shing dkar chag* (p. 385, no. 3). While in sDe dge, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also exchanged teachings with Thub bstan mkhan chen bZang po rgyal mtshan, who had visited sDe dge following the invitation of Sa skyong Bla ma bSod nams phun tshogs; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 257.1–2). According to Zhu chen Tshul khriims rin chen (1697–1774), bZang po rgyal mtshan was invited by Khri chen Sangs rgyas bstan pa; see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (p. 302.12–21). On bZang po rgyal mtshan, a native of mDo khams, see the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (p. 21.9–17).

⁷⁹ On printing at sDe dge before the reign of bsTan pa tshe ring (1678–1738, r. 1714–1738), see CHAIX 2010: 89–91. On the founding of the printing house, see CHAIX 2016: 51–54, who points out that “no contemporaneous document seems to confirm the common assertion that the printing house was built in 1729.”

and Tibetan scripts and adorned with illustrations of the twelve deeds of the Buddha. Their master copy was a bilingual edition from Ngor that had served as an object of worship (*thugs dam*) for previous Ngor masters and had been given to Sangs rgyas bstan pa by his teacher dPal mchog rgyal mtshan. For the sDe dge block-print, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs wrote a catalogue (*dkar chag*) and eulogy (*sngags brjod*) and performed its consecration.⁸⁰

During the reign of Sangs rgyas bstan pa, he also oversaw the carving onto wooden blocks of some of his own compositions. One was his completion of the history of Buddhism originally began by dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot of Ngor, which he had completed by furnishing it with an extensive addendum. He had completed this history in 1692 at Ngor, and under the patronage of Sangs rgyas bstan pa a block-print edition was prepared in 1705.⁸¹ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also oversaw the carving of his biography of Ngor chen, which he had completed on the fifteenth day of the ninth month of 1688 in the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of Ngor, two hundred and thirty-two years after Ngor chen's passing.⁸² The printing colophon of this biography contains the names of the project's patrons within a versified eulogy. According to my understanding, the following three members of the house of sDe dge are successively mentioned: sDe dge Sa skyong Bla ma Tshe dbang rdo rje, Sangs rgyas bstan pa, and bSod nams phun tshogs, all of whom we encountered above (Tshe dbang rdo rje, alias Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, was the one who had invited Sangs rgyas phun tshogs while on pilgrimage in dBus and gTsang, Sangs rgyas bstan pa was the ruler of sDe dge and abbot of lHun grub steng, and his nephew bSod nams phun tshogs succeeded him as both abbot and ruler after the death of his uncle in 1710).⁸³ The scribe of the biography was dGe slong bKra shis dbang phyug and one of the main block carvers was named dBu mdzad lHa

⁸⁰ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 506.5–6): 'phags pa brgyad stong pa'i glegs bam sum sgrig par du bkod pa la dkar chag bsnags brjod rtsom pa gnang ba dangl; and *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 38.1–2): sgrub khang mkhan chen dbon pos e waṃ pa'i|| bla ma gong ma'i thugs dam brgyad stong pa|| skad gnyis shan sbyar can gyi pu sta ka|| rje 'dir phul bar chos sbyin par brkos pa'i|| dbu lhar mdzad pa bcu gnyis bkod pa dangl|| zhus dag la sogs dpyis phyin 'gran bral grub|| de yi rab gnas dkar chag la sogs pa|| mkhas grub sangs rgyas phun tshogs gong gis mza||. For pictures of the printing blocks of that text, see YANG 2000: 76, nos. 39 and 40. On that text, see also the *sDe dge par khang ji ltar brtsams pa'i gleng ba* (p. 39.17–33), *sDe dge'i dgon chen lo rgyus* (p. 95.15–16), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 23.4–10), CHAIX 2010: 89–90, and SCHEIER-DOLBERG 2005: 92–93.

⁸¹ See the *Ngor chos 'byung 2* (fols. 227b7–228a7): (...) rgyal bstan byung tshul legs bshad dbang gi rgyal|| khungs ldan gtam gyi 'dod pa 'jo ba 'di|| mkhan tshan sangs rgyas kun dngos 'dren mchog rje'i|| gsung gsang phun tshogs rgyud dang sbyar ba'i glus|| yid drangs sde dge sangs rgyas bstan pa yis|| lugs gnyis yongs 'du'i lhun grub steng zhes par|| sa skyong lo la par gyi chos sbyin spell|| (...). See also CHAIX 2010: 90.

⁸² See respectively the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 242.3–260.2): snga phyir par du ma dangl khyad par rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i nram thar par du grub pa'i do dam bgvis pas (...); and *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 2* (p. 580.3).

⁸³ See the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 4–6* (fol. 65a4–7): rgyal bas lung bstan e waṃ pa|| rje btsun kun dga' bzang po zhes| snyan grags srid gsum gsal ba de yi| nram thar skyes chen snga ma yis|| mdzad pa rnam las rang mkhos kyi| gang lcogs legs bsdu' di nyid ni| dad ldan rnam la chos sbyin ched| bod chen sde bzhi dge bcu yi|| dpal ldan sa skyong bla ma mchog| tsh'e'i dbang phyug rdo rje'i thugs| sangs rgyas bstan pa'i dpal yon can| bsod nams dpal 'byor phun sum tshogs|| phrin las bzang po'i legs byas kyil| nram dkar mdzad pa'i dpal gyis bsgrubs| gang 'di'i yi ge 'du byed pa| bslab gsum rim gnyis dpal dang ldan| shes rab snang ba'i blo ldan pa| dge slong bkra shis dbang phyug gol riy byed brkos kyi 'du byed pa| dbu mdzad lha skyabs |klu 'bum nya rgyal| sogs kyis brkos|. See also the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 7* (pp. 312.6–313.4). In addition, see also the *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 26.12–15). Other block-printing projects were also patronised by Sangs rgyas bstan pa such as of the *Bod kyi brda yi bye brag legs par bshad pa sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa rtsa 'grel* of 'Gos lo Chos skyong bzang po (1441–1527/38) in 1704 and the *Legs bshad rin po che'i gter* (i.e., the *Sa skya legs bshad*) of Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) in 1705; see the *sDe dge par khang ji ltar brtsams pa'i gleng ba* (p. 39.22–30), CHAIX 2010: 90, and SCHEIER-DOLBERG 2005: 92–93. Cf. the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 305.6–9) by Zhu chen, crediting only Sangs rgyas dpal bzang with the commissioning of biographies and collected works of Ngor chen and some of his lineage holders. See also the *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 26.12–15).

skyabs.⁸⁴ The fact that those three leading members of the house of sDe dge conjointly sponsored the cutting onto woodblocks of Ngor chen's biography perfectly illustrates the intimate ties maintained between sDe dge and Ngor.

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs created still other works to be printed at sDe dge, including two texts on the practice of Vajrabhairava. The first work, the *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi bskyed rdzogs kyi nyams khrid rwa rste sems 'dzin gyi man ngag sku gsum lam byed snying gi thig le*, was written at the behest of Khri chen Sangs rgyas bstan pa and printed at the lHun grub steng gi pho brang in 1703. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had already completed the second work, the *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi sgrub thabs bdud 'joms snang ba'i go don bdud rtsi'i nying khu*, while still at Ngor, and it was later printed at lHun grub steng under the patronage of bSod nams phun tshogs.⁸⁵ Similarly, he wrote the *Thugs rje chen po'i dmar khrid nges don dpyid kyi thig le* at Ngor, which was subsequently printed by a certain bSod nams seng ge at lHun grub steng, following the orders of bSod nams phun tshogs.⁸⁶

Along with Kun dga' chos 'phel, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, too, is credited with having encouraged another important printing project: the production of a xylograph edition of the *bKa' 'gyur*. This enormous project was, however, not undertaken during the reign of Sangs rgyas bstan pa, but later on by bsTan pa tshe ring (1678–1738, r. 1714–1738), founder of the famous printing house of sDe dge.⁸⁷ Under the patronage of bsTan pa tshe

⁸⁴ Later on in sDe dge, dGe slong bKra shis dbang phyug wrote the biography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' disciple and biographer Tshul khri ms dpal bzang, the twenty-eighth abbot of Ngor; see the *Tshul khri ms dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 432.5–433.3). In the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fol. 65a8), we find below the seventh line the following annotation: *klu 'bum nya rgyal*. This annotation is not included in the published version of the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7. The placement of the annotation suggests that here the name of two more carvers are given, *Klu 'bum* and *Nya rgyal*.

⁸⁵ See the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi bskyed rdzogs kyi nyams khrid* (pp. 334.6–335.7) and *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi sgrub thabs* (pp. 311.1–3 and 312.2–4), respectively. Both works were included in the *rGyud sde kun btus* collection (vol. 24, pp. 313–335 and 249–312). Each features a number on the title page above its title. The former bears the number twelve, whereas the number of the latter is illegible in the scan available to me. This numbering has prompted the editors of the Indian reprint of the *rGyud sde kun btus* (Contents, n. 1) to draw the following conclusion: "These two sections are printed from the blocks from the *gsung-'bum* of Ngor-chen Sangs-rgyas-phun-tshogs. These two prints occur in the first of the four volume *gsung-'bum*. They are marked 32 and 12 respectively. From p. 325 we find that these blocks were carved in Sde-dge in the year *shing-yos* probably corresponding to 1735 or 1795." However, as both texts have different printing colophons, they seem to have been printed prior to the printing of Sangs phun tshogs' collected works. Thus the given dating 1735 or 1795 should be understood as referring to the printing of the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi bskyed rdzogs kyi nyams khrid*. Moreover, the rather difficult colophon dates the printing, in my understanding, to the water-sheep year (*chu mo lug*; i.e., 1703); see the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi bskyed rdzogs kyi nyams khrid* (p. 335.3–4). According to the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 114.14–115.10), both works were indeed found in the first volume (*ka*) of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' collected works.

⁸⁶ See the *Thugs rje chen po'i dmar khrid* (fols. 28b5–29a6). See also CHAIX 2010: 90, who states that "D'après les caractéristiques matérielles (dimensions, organisation de la page et graphie), on peut également admettre qu'une partie des oeuvres de Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, notamment le *Thugs rje chen po'i dmar khrid tshem bu lugs kyi nyams len gyi snying po rab tu gsal ba*, a fait l'objet d'éditions xylographiques sous le règne de Sangs rgyas bstan pa."

⁸⁷ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 506.6–507.2): *rgyal ba'i bka' 'gyur gyi par bsgrub dgos tshul yang rje nyid kyis bka' gnang zhing| kun dga' chos 'phel gyis kyang bskul nas| sa skyong chen pos mkhan chen rnam gnyis kyi dgongs bzhed ltar| thugs su g.yar dam gyis physis su rgyal ba'i bka' 'gyur ro 'tshal sogs ngo mtshar ba'i par du ma bsgrubs par mdzad dol*. See also CHAIX 2010: 90 and CHAIX 2013: 28–29. In addition, see now also CHAIX 2016: 51, who points out that "when King Tenpa Tshering (r. 1714–1738) officially launched the project in 1729, several thousand wood blocks for the *Kangyur* (at least eight thousand, representing a quarter of the total amount) or other texts had already been carved and stored in the Dergé Royal Monastery (Lhüntrup Teng)." *Ibid.*: 51 further mentions that by 1718 "4,700 wood blocks of the *Bum* [i.e., the *Satasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*] edition, later included in the *Kangyur*, were laid in a place called the *parkhang chenmo* (lit. "great printing house"), where they underwent a consecration ritual." Kun dga' chos 'phel is recorded among a list of masters that adhered to the Ngor tradition

ring, the printing of individual works of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was also continued. Two unpublished prints originating from that period are his *'Jam dpal dkar po dpa' bo gcig grub kyi chos skor las bsnyen sgrub kha skong gi sbyin sreg ye shes 'od snang* (5 fols.) and *dPal ldan bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga byin rlabs char rgyun* (13 fols.), the printing colophons of which were both written by Zhu chen Tshul khriims rin chen (1697–1774).

The four volumes of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' collected works were also carved and printed in sDe dge, although just a few sections seem to have survived.⁸⁸ For the moment, it remains unknown when they were carved onto xylograph blocks, but it seems justified to suppose that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs brought his collected writings with him to sDe dge and had them printed there, at least in part. In his autobiography, he relates that after he had decided to travel to sDe dge, his attendant (*nye gnas*) dPal ldan shes rab and secretary (*drung yig*) Shes rab lhun grub suggested having his collected works compiled. Subsequently, his writings were located and copied with great urgency by whatever scribes were available, and were then compiled into four volumes.⁸⁹

Along with the biography of Ngor chen and the completion of the *Ngor chos 'byung*, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also wrote the first abbatial history (*gdan rabs*) of Ngor and composed biographies of later Ngor abbots, which were all xylographed at sDe dge as well.⁹⁰ It was thus due to the literary efforts of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, on the one hand, and the patronage of the house of sDe dge, on the other, that important sources on the history of Ngor were circulated in xylograph editions in Tibet.

Although Sangs rgyas phun tshogs received letters from Sa skya, Ngor, and rTse gdong monasteries urging him to return to gTsang, he spent the last years of his life in sDe dge. When he fell sick in the second month of 1704, he moved to the retreat of Dra ma sgong, where he spent about one year in spiritual practice. But complying with the insistent request of the sDe dge ruling house, he moved back to lHun grub steng, though

and were invited to sDe dge but did not serve as abbots of Ngor; see the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (pp. 85.6–86.2).

⁸⁸ For a title list of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' collected works, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 114.14–120.3). Seventeen of his writings are also recorded in the *sDe dge par khang gi par shing dkar chag* (pp. 385–387). Recently, a manuscript edition of the second volume (*kha pa*) of his collected works has been made available by TBRC (W1CZ1145). Under the title *mKhan chen sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi gsung skor*, the second volume (*kha pa*) of his collected works was also published by the Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang in Kathmandu in 2007. Some of his writings were published in the *E wam bka' 'bum* (vols. 19–20) as well.

⁸⁹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 238.2–4). For earlier comments on his writings, see also the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 190.6–191.1 and 225.1–3). While in sDe dge, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also composed at the behest of Sangs rgyas bstan pa an addendum to his autobiography, dealing with his invitation to and sojourn in sDe dge; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 232.6).

⁹⁰ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs mentions (1) that he wrote a biography (*rtogs brjod*) of three masters from the Thar rtse bla brang; (2) that he supplemented the autobiography of Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1598–1674), the twentieth abbot of Ngor; (3) that he wrote the biography of dPal mchog rgyal mtshan, the twenty-second abbot of Ngor; and (4) that he wrote the biography of lHun grub dpal ldan, the twenty-fourth abbot of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 43.6, 45.4–5, 49.2, and 50.6), respectively. All these works are contained among the lineage masters' lives of the *Lam 'bras Tshogs bshad*. Those three masters from the Thar rtse bla brang were Nam mkha' sangs rgyas, the seventeenth abbot of Ngor, Nam mkha' rin chen, the nineteenth abbot of Ngor, and Nam mkha' dpal bzang, the twenty-third abbot of Ngor. For the biographies of the masters from the Thar rtse bla brang, see the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 28, pp. 745–782). For the biography of Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, see the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 28, pp. 829–865). For the biography of dPal mchog rgyal mtshan, see the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 29, pp. 79–105). For the biography of lHun grub dpal ldan, see the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 29, pp. 107–144). The latter three biographies were included in vol. 1 (*ka*) of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' collected works; see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 114.18–115.3).

his physical condition had not improved. Finally, he passed away on the eighteenth day of the eighth month of 1705.⁹¹

2.1 Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' Biography of Ngor chen

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen was carved onto blocks in two different recensions. One was included among the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters, both *Slob bshad* and *Tshogs bshad*, and a second existed as an independent volume. These recensions were first made available in the following two modern publications. The former appeared in the *Slob bshad* section of the *Lam 'bras* collection that was reproduced from prints of the sDe dge recension housed in the library of Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che and published by the Sakya Centre in 1983.⁹² The second Indian edition was published in 1976

⁹¹ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 513.4–515.1) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 244.1–2 and 257.4–5). At the time of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' death, another Ngor master was present at the sDe dge court, namely his disciple bSod nams dpal ldan (1669–1713), the twenty-ninth abbot of Ngor, who was responsible for conducting his funeral rites. In 1689, bSod nams dpal ldan had been sent to sDe dge by either Sangs rgyas phun tshogs himself or Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin (1667–1693), the twenty-sixth abbot of Ngor, to head lCags ra zil gnon sgar. Later on, he was appointed as *bla ma* of the *grwa tshang* of sDe dge. He remained in sDe dge for two decades until 1709; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 522.5–523.5). Cf. the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 70.4–5), which mentions that bSod nams dpal ldan came to sDe dge as the attendant of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.

⁹² See the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 1, pp. 475–585). For the two different traditions of transmitting the *Lam 'bras* (i.e., the *Slob bshad* and *Tshogs bshad*), two different compilations of their lineage masters' lives were compiled. Ever since the reproduction of a supplemented *Lam 'bras Slob bshad* collection was published by the Sakya Centre (1983–1985), the biographies of the *Slob bshad* lineage masters have been available for more than two decades. Although the Sakya Centre also published a *Lam 'bras Tshogs bshad* collection in 1985, it did not contain the lineage masters' lives except for biographical sketches found in the abbatial histories (*gdan rabs*) of Ngor. Thus, until recently, we did not have access to the biographies of the lineage masters in the *Tshogs bshad* transmission, whose lineage descends through the abbots of Ngor. But since the publication of a new *Lam 'bras* collection arranged by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che and published by Lama Guru of Sachen International (rGyal yongs sa chen) in 2008, we now have access to these biographies as well; see the *Lam 'bras 3* (vols. 27–29). As Lama Guru (Kathmandu, 09 March 2012) has informed me, the original biographies of the *Tshogs bshad* section that served as the base for his digital input were prints from sDe dge that comprised two volumes numbering *kha* and *ga*. For a twenty-five volume *Lam 'bras* collection from sDe dge, both the *sDe dge par khang par shing gi dkar chag* (pp. 140–143) and *Lam 'bras dkar chag* (pp. 7–20) record a five-volume compilation of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters' lives. For each volume *kha* and *ga*, they record two distinct compilations, namely *kha (ya)* and *kha (ma)* and *ga (ya)* and *ga (ma)*. This arrangement separates the lives of the lineage masters of the *Tshogs bshad*, specified as *(ya)*, from those of the *Slob bshad*, marked as *(ma)*. Prints from sDe dge of volume *kha (ya)* and *ga (ya)* are available from TBRC (W00CHZ0103345). The structure of this volume *kha* corresponds to that of volume *kha (ya)* as catalogued in the *Lam 'bras dkar chag* (pp. 7–12). The basic structure of volume *ga* corresponds also to that of volume *ga (ya)* of the *Lam 'bras dkar chag* (pp. 16–19). However, folios of the first and last work in this volume have apparently been intermixed while scanning, though they were given a progressive Arabic numbering, which is sometimes wrong as well. Scans of the original prints from sDe dge in the possession of Lama Guru will be made available by TBRC in the near future. The latter collection, which I inspected in Kathmandu (12.06.2012), seems to also be identical to the one recorded by the *Lam 'bras dkar chag*. But the Potala houses block-print editions of the lives of both the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* lineage masters—the former in three volumes and the latter in seven—the arrangement of which varies to a certain extent from the aforementioned sDe dge recensions; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnam's kyi dkar chag* (pp. 129–137, nos. 1880–1882 and pp. 173–183, nos. 1907–1913). According to Zhu chen's *bsTan 'gyur* catalogue, which is the earliest source I have been able to find so far, three volumes of the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters were compiled and cut onto woodblocks at sDe dge under the patronage of Bla chen Phun tshogs bstan pa (d. 1751, r. 1738–1751) alias Kun dga' phrin las rgya mtsho, following the request of his chaplain, dPal ldan chos skyong (1702–1760), the thirty-fourth abbot of Ngor; see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 450.7–9).

Until Ngor chen's time, there had officially been only one line of transmission for the *Lam 'bras*. With him or, according to tradition, with Mus chen's way of transmitting the *Lam 'bras* to bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the two *Lam 'bras* traditions of *Slob bshad* and *Tshogs bshad* emerged; see Part Four, 13.2. Functioning as

together with a practice text on Hevajra by the sDe dge king Yab chen Tshe dbang rdo rje rig 'dzin (1786–1847).⁹³

Recently, the *Lam 'bras* version was also included in four large collections: (1) in the *Lam 'bras* collection published by the rDzong sar lnga rig slob gling in 2007,⁹⁴ (2) in the *Tshogs bshad* section of a new *Lam 'bras* collection arranged by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po and published in 2008 by Lama Guru of Sachen International,⁹⁵ (3) in the *E waṃ bka' 'bum*,⁹⁶ a compendium of the collected writings of Ngor abbots edited by the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang in 2010, and (4) in the first set of the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod*,⁹⁷ a collection bringing together a variety of texts that are important for the Sa skya school edited by the Si khron bod yig dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu rtsom sgrig khang in 2013. All four of these digital-input versions seem to be based on the same recension of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen, that is, the one included among the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters, because all feature the same orthographic mistakes that are already present in the reproduction by the Sakya Centre introduced above.⁹⁸

Furthermore, TBRC holds scans of two volumes (*kha* and *ga*) of biographies of *Lam 'bras* lineage masters from the *Tshogs bshad* transmission that were printed from blocks carved at the sDe dge printing house and whose copies were made available from the library of Ta'i si tu Rin po che at Shes rab gling, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India.⁹⁹ The Ngor chen biography included in the aforementioned reproduction by the Sakya Centre and the one from the *Lam 'bras Tshogs bshad* section scanned by TBRC seem to originate

a lineage master of both traditions, Ngor chen's biographies were included among the lives of both lineage masters. For instance, in the *Lam 'bras* collection arranged by mKhan chen A pad Rin po che, both the biography of Ngor chen by Mus chen and the biography of Mus chen by bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan were included among the lives of the *Lam 'bras Slob bshad* masters, whereas the biography of Ngor chen by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and the two biographies of Mus chen by Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge and Gung ru Shes rab bzang po among the lives of the *Tshogs bshad* masters; see the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 1) and *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 27), respectively.

⁹³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7 (pp. 135–315). The “Preface” to this publication states that the two works “are reconstructions from two very old and faded blockprints from Sde-ge and presumably Ngor redactions.” The title page provides the information that the texts were “reproduced from tracings and manuscripts from the library of Mkhan-po Rin-chen by Trayang and Jamyang Samten”. DAVIDSON 1981: 94–95, n. 10 notes that this “published manuscript is rife with orthographic errors.”

⁹⁴ See the *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 1, pp. 677–823).

⁹⁵ See the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 27, pp. 1–133).

⁹⁶ See the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 20, pp. 1–117).

⁹⁷ See the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 38, pp. 222–314). Confusingly, the editors decided to divide the biography into two separate works: the first dealing with the prophecies of Ngor chen's appearance and achieving of Buddhahood as well as his previous lives, the *rDo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa legs bshad chu bo 'dus pa'i rgya mtsho*, and the second with his present manifestation, the *rje btsun kun dga' bzang po'i rnam thar*; see the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 38, pp. 222–225 and 226–314), respectively.

⁹⁸ For instance, compare the passage in the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2–3 (p. 482.1 / fol. 4b1): *gu ge pañ chen gyis sa bcad gsum du mdzad/ chos dpal bzang pos sngar [= lngar] mdzad pa sogs mang yang gnad don gcig gol*. The spelling mistake of *sngar* instead of *lngar* is found in all four digitally inputted editions; see the *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 1, p. 686.1), *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 27, p. 8.4), *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 20, p. 7.4), and *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 38, p. 227.3–4). It is, however, not found in the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fol. 6a4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7 (p. 146.5).

⁹⁹ See TBRC (W00CHZ0103345). In this collection, the biography of Ngor chen is included as the first work in volume *kha*; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (fols. 1a–56a). Moreover, a block-print recension of the lives of the *Tshogs bshad* lineage masters in three volumes is preserved in the Potala. It also includes the biography of Ngor chen as the first work in volume *kha*; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnam ky'i dkar chaq* (p. 133, no. 1881, text 1).

from the same xylographs, because they contain similar small front images (*dbu lha*) and the same orthographic mistakes.¹⁰⁰

A further xylograph of Ngor chen's biography is preserved in the Library of the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (ISIAO) in Rome. De Rossi Filibeck records the presence of the first three volumes of biographies (*ka*, *kha*, and *ga*) of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters, among which Ngor chen's biography is found at the beginning of volume two (*kha*).¹⁰¹

Apart from being included among the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineages masters of both *Slob bshad* and *Tshogs bshad*, the biography of Ngor chen was also printed separately as an independent volume. As shown above, this project was conjointly executed at the court of sDe dge by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and his patrons from the ruling house of sDe dge. At least six prints have survived, each comprising sixty-six folios. Scans of two prints were made available by TBRC, a third print is housed at Mang spro Monastery in La dwags,¹⁰² which was photographed by Blo gsal don grub from Gong dkar Chos sde (Dehradun, India), a fourth print can be found among the collection of the National Library of Bhutan (Thimphu, Bhutan), and two more are preserved in the Library of the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (ISIAO) in Rome.¹⁰³ The aforementioned 1976 edition of Ngor chen's biography published together with a liturgy for Hevajra is based on that recension as well.

All these prints differ slightly from the biography as it appears among the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters, as can be recognised from the small figures at the beginning and end of the text, the arrangement of the text in seven rather than six lines per page, and the appearance of some orthographic variations and mistakes.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the

¹⁰⁰ The miniatures depict on the left margin Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (*gru 'dzin mgon po pad dkar 'chang|| mi srid 'dzin pa sa skya pa||*) and on the right Ngor chen (*stobs bcu mnga' bas lung rtogs bstan|| gsal khyed ngor pa rdo rje 'chang*); see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2–3 (p. 476 / fol. 1b).

¹⁰¹ See DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 345–346, nos. 731–733. The make-up of the beginning of each volume seems to be identical to the volumes *ka*, *kha* (*ya*), and *ga* (*ya*) as recorded in the *Lam 'bras dkar chag* (pp. 1–6, 7–12, and 16–19), that is, the lives of the *Tshogs bshad* lineage masters. However, the end of each volume as recorded in the *Lam 'bras dkar chag* is missing works. DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 345–346, nos. 731–733 records three volumes (*ka*, *kha*, and *ga*) of *Lam 'bras* lineage masters' lives and specifies under "Author" Tshul khriims rin chen as the compiler of the entire three volumes. But a closer look at the colophon of the last biography reveals that it constitutes the biography of bKra shis lhun grub (1672–1739), the thirty-first abbot of Ngor, written by his nephew 'Jam mgon Sangs rgyas ye shes, the thirty-eighth abbot of Ngor. The colophon also states that it was Zhu chen Tshul khriims rin chen who revised the biography according to the wishes of Sangs rgyas ye shes. Hence, Zhu chen was not the compiler of the three volumes of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters' lives. Note that the information provided by DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 345–346, nos. 731–733 under "Scribe," "Place of writing," "Date of writing," "Note," etc. also only refers to the last work in each volume. For the biography of bKra shis lhun grub, see the *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 29, pp. 435–630).

¹⁰² On the history of Mang spro dgon Thub bstan shwa gling chos 'khor gling, see sKyong 'dul ba bStan pa dbang phyug, *Mang spro dgon thub bstan shwa gling chos 'khor gling, Chos dung dkar po*, no. 6, 2010, pp. 54–59.

¹⁰³ For the first two prints, see TBRC (W2CZ7950 and W3CZ1323). I refer to them as the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4 and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 5, respectively. The third I refer to as the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 6. The fourth print was seen by me during my visit to the National Library of Bhutan in September 2014. The fifth and sixth prints are recorded by DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 338, nos. 690 and 695.

¹⁰⁴ As an illustration, I would like to mention here only two examples, the first being an orthographic variation and the second an orthographic mistake. The Ngor chen biographies included among the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters all read *sku rims* (*Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2–3, p. 484.5 / fol. 5b5; *Lam 'bras* 2, vol. 1, p. 689.3; *Lam 'bras* 3, vol. 27, p. 11.4; and *E wam bka' 'bum*, vol. 20, p. 9.18–19), whereas the independently printed biographies have *sku rim* (*Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6, fol. 7b4; and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7, p. 150.2). The former Ngor chen biographies read as follows (*Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2–3, p. 488.3 / fol. 7b3; *Lam 'bras* 2, vol. 1, p. 694.4–5; *Lam 'bras* 3, vol. 27, p. 16.1; and *E wam bka' 'bum*, vol. 20, p. 14.3): so so'i bslab bya rnam byang ba [= sa] dangl. In comparison, the independently printed biographies all correctly have (*Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6, fol. 9b6; and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7, p. 155.6): so so'i bslab bya rnam byang sa dangl. Also, the title of the biography as

independently printed versions contain a versified printing colophon together with a dedication of merit followed by a prayer written in Lantsha script, Tibetanised Sanskrit, and Tibetan.¹⁰⁵ This recension seems to constitute the earliest block-print edition of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen.

2.2 The Editorial Work of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs

A closer look at Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' work reveals that he did not merely compose a new biography of Ngor chen. Rather, he compiled older biographies into his new work, expanding on their information through his own explanatory additions.¹⁰⁶ From some of his statements, we can see how he worked in putting together this biography. Here I would like to describe his method of compiling and editing, as I believe it will help us better understand the make-up of the whole work. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs reveals his method in a terse statement at the beginning of the work:¹⁰⁷

(...) As for how [Ngor chen] performed also in this life deeds for the teachings of the Buddha, many biographical accounts appeared that were written by disciples of the Lord himself. From among [them], [I] based [myself] here on the biography written by [Ngor chen's] chief spiritual son, Sems dpa' chen po Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan. Supplementing with the help of other texts, as I have seen them, what was unclear there, [I] wrote down [Ngor chen's biography].

When we read Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' composition, we find that this is exactly how he proceeds. He incorporates the whole of Mus chen's work, even quoting its colophons, but making a few minor changes in its wording. In between, he adds additional information that he cites from older biographies composed by Ngor chen's disciples. He also presents further descriptions and explanations that probably originated in these older biographies, cites additional sources, such as praises of Ngor chen, and presents oral accounts. Since we do not have access to those older biographies, it is impossible to verify how much of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' descriptions and explanations actually originate from them.¹⁰⁸

Regarding the origin of some of the information, it would be interesting to know, for example, where the opening part of the biography comes from. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs quotes at length two *sūtras* (*Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* and *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*) in which the Buddha, according to tradition, prophesied Ngor chen's coming and future attainment of Buddhahood and then continues with a short account of his subject's

contained in the *Lam 'bras* collection was shortened due to the fact that it forms part of the title of the entire volume of biographies of *Lam 'bras* lineage masters (*Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2–3, p. 475.3 / fol. 1a3): *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi bgrod pa gcig pa'i lam chen gsung ngag rin po che'i bla ma bgyud pa'i rnam thar glegs bam gnyis pa las rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i rnam par thar pa legs bshad chu bo 'dus pa'i rgya mtsho*. But the biography's full title is given in the incipit; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2–3 (p. 476.1 / fol. 1b1). The marginal title of the former collection reads *Lam 'bras bla ma'i rnam thar*, whereas the latter has *rDo rje 'chang rnam thar*.

¹⁰⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fols. 65a4–66a7) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7 (pp. 312.6–315.6).

¹⁰⁶ DAVIDSON 1991: 234, n. 57 designates Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' work as "pasticcio."

¹⁰⁷ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 480.6–481.1): (...) *sku tshe 'dir yang sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la bya ba mdzad tshul la' rje nyid kyi slob ma rnams kyis mdzad pa'i rnam thar gyi yi ge mang du snang ba las' 'dir thugs sras sems dpa' chen po mus chen dkon mchog rgyal mtshan gyis mdzad pa'i rnam thar gzhir bzhag der mi gsal ba rang gis ji ltar mthong ba'i yi ge gzhan gyis kha bskang nas bkod pa la'.*

¹⁰⁸ For instance, the account on the founding of Ngor Monastery is given only briefly in Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen, whereas Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' presentation is much more detailed; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 459.1–460.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 524.2–529.3), respectively.

previous lives. These parts are missing from the Ngor chen biography by Mus chen. Nevertheless, the first part cannot be attributed to Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, because we encounter short citations from both *sūtras* in a short sketch of Ngor chen's life included in a *Lam 'bras* history by 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568).¹⁰⁹

The passage on Ngor chen's family relations serves as a good example of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' method. In the paragraph below, the text in bold letters originates from Mus chen's life of Ngor chen. The parts not in bold letters are Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' remarks and additions, and the text in a smaller font is a citation from a Ngor chen biography written by Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros (b. 1433):¹¹⁰

(...) **rnam par thar pa cung zad cig brjod par bya ba la gnyis tel rab tu ma byon pa dang| rab tu byon pa'i rnam par thar pa'o||** gu ge paṅ chen gyis sa bcad gsum du mdzad| chos dpal bzang pos sngar [= lngar] mdzad pa sogs mang yang gnad don gcig goll **dang po rab tu ma byon gong gi rnam thar nil| rje 'di'i rigs dang gdung nil|** rgyal po chen po'i sku zhang du gyur pa **cog ro'am cog grur grags pa cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan la sogs pa mang du byung ba'i brgyud pa bzang po'o||** **yab mes gong ma rnams 'bring 'tshams nas sa skya phyogs su byon tel ga ra la sogs par 'brog mdzad cing bzhugs pa las rim gyis bdag chen gzhi thog pa'i gsol ja bar gyur pa yin la| khyad par rje 'di nyid kyi phyi ltar gyi yab nil sa skya tshogs kyi nye gnas chen po dpon tshang grub pa yon tan zhes bya ba dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i drung nas zhus pa'i yongs rdzogs dge bsnyen yin cing|** nang ltar na bdag chen gzhi thog pa kun dga' rin chen yin tel| grub chen srad pa kun blos| phyi ltar nye gnas chen po grub pa'i sras|| sbas pa'i yab ni bdag chen kun rin yin|| dpal ldan kun dga'i rigs brgyud sa skya pa|| dpal ldan sa skya pa la gsol ba 'debs|| zhes gsungs|.

Another aspect of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' editorial method becomes clear when we examine how he treats conflicting pieces of information from his sources. In these cases, he strictly separates the differing versions, as the following two examples illustrate:

If [I] explain a little what is not explicit in [Ngor chen's] record of teachings received, [it is as follows]: “[Ngor chen] heard by Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan five times the *Phar phyin* [i.e., the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*] based on the *Bu ṭig*,” [as] Chos dpal said. Paṅḍita [says] four and a half [times]. The Lord Mus pa says [he] heard [it] four [times], and says that [he] heard [it] also based on the notes of mKhan chen Buddhaśrī.¹¹¹

“In the tiger year, Chos rje Buddhaśrī travelled to Sa skya and stayed afterwards nine months in the two [monasteries of] Sa skya and Sa bzang,” [as] Mus chen says. Paṅ chen Grags rgyal and Chos dpal stated that [Buddhaśrī] stayed eleven months.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 150.1–5). For a discussion of those prophesies, see Part Three, 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 482.1–5).

¹¹¹ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 491.1–2): *gsan yig tu mi gsal ba cung zad bshad na| chos rje ye shes rgyal mtshan pa'i drung du| phar phyin bu ṭig gi steng nas tshar lnga gsan zhes chos dpal pa gsungs| paṅḍi tas phyed dang lngal rje mus pas bzhi gsan gsung zhing| mkhan chen buddha shri pa'i zin bris kyi steng nas kyang gsan gsung|. mKhan chen Buddhaśrī refers to g.Yag ston (or g.Yag phrug) Sangs rgyas dpal.*

¹¹² *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 499.3): *stag lo la chos rje buddha bas sa skyar byon nas| sa skya sa bzang gnyis su zla ba dgu bzhugs zhes mus chen gsung| paṅ chen grags rgyal dang chos dpal bas zla ba bcu gcig bzhugs par bshad|.*

In the colophon to his work, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs clarifies the circumstances that caused him to engage in this literary project:¹¹³

(...) [I] put on the crown of my head the diadem of command given by Khyab bdag Bla ma lHun grub dpal ldan, who performed for a long time the activities [as] the sublime regent [of Ngor chen]: “Though previous saints wrote many biographical accounts [of Ngor chen], these days it has become difficult to bring [all these] books together and it is difficult to understand the meaning of their sections. Therefore, [you] should write an account incorporating the good parts of those earlier biographies.”

From this passage, we learn that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was requested by lHun grub dpal ldan, the twenty-fourth abbot of Ngor, to engage in this project. Moreover, we learn that the lives of Ngor chen composed by his personal disciples were “difficult to bring together” (*'dzom dka'*). One can speculate that the texts were scattered across various locations, hard for even an abbot of Ngor to easily lay his hands on. Apparently, it was thus high time to preserve the older biographies of their tradition's founder for the generations to come. Following the command of his teacher, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs incorporated the information from all those old biographies into his own compilation.

It is obvious that in later years the biographies of Ngor chen were still not easy to gain access to. Their scarcity is attested to by a later list of rare Tibetan texts compiled by A khu Ching Shes rab rgya mtsho (1803–1875), which records both biographies by Mus chen and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs along with two other Ngor chen biographies by Ngor chen's disciples.¹¹⁴ Moreover, from an annotation at the end of Mus chen's Ngor chen biography—probably stemming from the editors of the *Lam 'bras* collection—we can conclude that the rarity or at least inaccessibility of these biographies persisted even then: “If the biographies of this Lord written by Gu ge Pañ chen and Ye chen po are found, [they] must be included again later.”¹¹⁵

Before we turn to considering those old biographies, let me make a few observations about the structure of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biographical compilation. He divided his work into two parts: the “Actual Subject” (*dnagos*) and a second part called “Additional Subjects” (*'phros*).¹¹⁶ In the former, he presented Ngor chen's life story as discussed above. In the latter, he added both a discussion on the meaning of the term *e wam* from sutric as well as tantric perspectives,¹¹⁷ and he supplemented the chapter entitled “Qualities of the Sacred Site” (*gnas kyi yon tan*), which includes three praises of Ngor Monastery.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 579.6–580.2): *ces pa rgyal bas lung bstan pa'i skeyes bu chen po rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzung po'i rnam par thar pa legs bshad chu bo 'dus pa'i rgya mtsho yon tan yid bzhin nor bu'i 'byung gnas zhes bya ba 'di ni dam pa gong ma rnams kyi rnam thar gyi yi ge du ma mdzad kyangl deng sang dpe rnams 'dzom dka' zhing skabs don rnams rtogs dka' bas rnam thar snga ma rnams kyi legs cha bsdus pa'i yi ge zhig bgyis [= gyis?] zhes rgyal tshab dam pa phrin las yun ring du bskyangs pa'i khyab bdag bla ma lHun grub dpal ldan gyi zhal snga nas kyi bka'i cod pan gnang ba spyi bor blangs shingl.*

¹¹⁴ See the *dPe rgyun dkon pa 'ga' zhig gi tho yig* (p. 508, nos. 10928–10931).

¹¹⁵ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 473.7): *rje 'di'i rnam thar gu ge pañ chen dangl ye chen po mdzad brnyed na slar 'dzud dgosl.*

¹¹⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 477.1): *'dir rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzung po zhes snyan pa'i ba dan srid pa gsum na g.yo ba'i rtogs pa brjod pa la don gnyis ste/ dnagos dang 'phros sol.*

¹¹⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 566.1–569.1).

¹¹⁸ For these three works, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 569.1–570.5, 570.5–571.4, and 571.4–577.6), respectively. For Glo bo mkhan chen's praise, see also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum* 1 (vol. 1, fols. 90b1–91b2 and vol. 4, fols. 104a–105b). He recorded it according to the oral account (*gsung rgyun*) or words (*gsung*) of

- ❖ Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub, *E waṃ gyi bkod pa la bstod pa'i tshigs su bcad pa theg chen sgra dbyangs ma*
- ❖ E waṃ chos ldan Zur chen Bla ma Sangs rgyas lhun grub, *dPal e waṃ chos ldan bstod pa kā li'i rgyan rnam par bkra ba*
- ❖ Karma 'phrin las pa Phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba (1456–1539), *dPal e waṃ chos ldan gsang sngags kyi pho brang chen po'i rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa la bstod pa ḍā ki rnam par bzhad pa'i glu dbyangs*

After his closing verses, colophon and short versified conclusion (*smras pa*), Sangs rgyas phun tshogs added another work, the *rJe btsun rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i lam 'bras kyi bka' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang gi gsal 'byed*, by dPal ldan don grub (1563–1636), the sixteenth abbot of Ngor. This work explains and illustrates a vision Ngor chen had, indicating that he was allowed to teach the *Lam 'bras*. In his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Giuseppe Tucci mistakenly took this text's colophon to be the colophon for the entire Ngor chen biography, which led him to wrongly ascribe it to dPal ldan don grub.¹¹⁹

2.3 Outline of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' Biography of Ngor chen

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen can be outlined as follows, mainly following Mus chen's subject headings:

1. *dNgos* (pp. 477.1–566.1)
 - 1.1. *rGyal bas lung bstan tshul* (pp. 477.1–479.5)
 - 1.2. *sKu skye ba snga ma rnam su bstan pa la bya ba byas tshul* (pp. 477.1, 479.5–480.5)
 - 1.3. *sKu skye ba 'dir sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la mdzad tshul* (p. 477.1) / *sKu tshe 'dir sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la bya ba mdzad tshul* (pp. 480.6–566.1)
 - 1.3.1. *Rab tu ma byon pa[i' rnam par thar pa]* (p. 482.1) / *Rab tu ma byon gong gi rnam thar* (pp. 482.1–486.6)
 - 1.3.2. *Rab tu byon pa'i rnam par thar pa* (p. 482.1) / *Rab tu byon nas kyi mdzad pa* (pp. 486.6–554.2)
 - 1.3.2.1. *gZhi tshul khrims rnam par dag pa ji ltar nos pa'i tshul* (pp. 487.1–490.2)
 - 1.3.2.1.1. *So so thar pa'i sdom pa ji ltar nos pa'i tshul* (pp. 487.1–488.2)
 - 1.3.2.1.2. *Byang chub sems dpa'i sdom pa nos tshul* (pp. 488.2–489.2)
 - 1.3.2.1.3. *Rig pa 'dzin pa'i sdom pa* (pp. 489.2–490.2)
 - 1.3.2.2. *De la brten nas thos bsam la sogs ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul* (p. 487.1) / *Thos bsam ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul* (pp. 490.2–510.2)
 - 1.3.2.3. *gZhan don phrin las ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul* (pp. 487.1, 510.2–554.2)
 - 1.3.2.3.1. *sDom pa gsum gyi sgo nas 'gro ba rjes su bzung tshul* (pp. 510.2–524.1)¹²⁰

his teacher Gu ge Paṅdita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486); see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 569.1 and 570.5) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum 1* (vol. 1, fol. 91b2 and vol. 4, fol. 105b6).

¹¹⁹ See TUCCI 1999: 157. Probably due to the same mistake, KHETSUN SANGPO 1979: 402 and SOBISCH 2008: 89, and 182, no. 641 ascribed the biography to dPal ldan don grub as well. The fact that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs included Mus chen's colophons in his work seems to have misled Shen Weirong in his monograph on the First Dalai Lama dGe 'dun grub (1349–1475) to ascribe the work to Mus chen; see SHEN 2002: 149, n. 92, 207–208, n. 289, and 400.

¹²⁰ For further subdivisions of this chapter, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 510.2–3): *dang po la rgya che ba sdom pa gsum gyi sgo nas 'gro ba rjes su bzung tshul| zab pa dbang rgyud man ngag gi sgo nas gdul bya du ma smin par mdzad pa| de dag la brten nas mkhas shing grub pa brnyes pa'i slob ma dang| bstan pa la phan pa'i sbyin bdag ji ltar byung ba'o|*. After the presentation of the first subchapter, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs leaves out the second and

- 1.3.2.3.2. *Pha rol gyi rgol ba ngan pa'i log rtog bzlog tshul* (pp. 510.2, 524.1–2, 546.2–547.1)
- 1.3.2.3.3. *sKu gsung thugs kyi rten bzhengs tshul* (pp. 510.2, 524.2, 548.1–551.3)
- [1.3.3. The Final Years of Ngor chen's Life], (pp. 554.4–566.1)¹²¹
2. 'Phros (p. 477.1) / 'Phros pa'i don (pp. 566.1–585.6)
- [2.1.] *E waṃ gyi don* (pp. 566.1–569.1)
- [2.1.1.] *sPyir mdo dang* (p. 566.2–6)
- [2.1.2.] *Bye brag sngags las bshad pa* (pp. 566.2, 566.6–568.4)
- [2.1.2.1.] *brJod pa sgra'i e waṃ* (pp. 566.6–567.4)
- [2.1.2.2.] *Bris pa gzugs kyi e waṃ* (pp. 566.6, 567.4–568.2)
- [2.1.2.3.] *mTshon pa brda'i e waṃ* (pp. 566.6, 568.2–3)
- [2.1.2.4.] *gNas lugs don gyi e waṃ* (pp. 566.6, 568.3–4)
- [2.1.3.] *mDor na gnas 'di nyid la e waṃ 'dogs pa'i rgyu mtshan* (p. 568.4–6)
- [2.2.] *gNas kyi yon tan* (pp. 569.1–578.3)
- [2.2.1.] [*E waṃ gyi bkod pa la bstod pa'i tshigs su bcad pa theg chen sgra dbyangs ma*] by Glo bo mKhan chen (pp. 569.1–570.5)
- [2.2.2.] *dPal e waṃ chos ldan bstod pa kā li'i rgyan rnam par bkra ba* by E waṃ chos ldan Zur chen Bla ma Sangs rgyas lhun grub (pp. 570.6–571.4)
- [2.2.3.] *dPal e waṃ chos ldan gsang sngags kyi pho brang chen po'i rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa la bstod pa dā ki rnam par bzhad pa'i glu dbyangs* by Karma 'phrin las pa Phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba (pp. 571.5–577.6)¹²²
- [3. Closing Verse] (pp. 578.3–579.6)
- [4. Colophon] (pp. 579.6–580.3)
- [5.] *sMras pa* (p. 580.4–6)
- [6.] *rJe btsun rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i lam 'bras kyi bka' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang gi gsal 'byed* by dPal ldan don grub, the sixteenth abbot of Ngor (pp. 580.6–585.6)

third subchapters as well as chapters 1.3.2.3.2. and 1.3.2.3.3; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 523.6–524.2): *gnyis pa ni dbang lung man ngag gis 'gro ba smin grol la bkod tshul dang| gsum pa ni de las bstan pa la phan pa'i sbyin bdag dang slob ma byung tshul 'og tu 'chad par 'gyur roll || spyi don gnyis pa pha rol gyi rgol ba ngan pa'i log rtog bzlog tshul ni| 'chad rtsod rtsom gsum gyi go rims dang mthun par 'og tu 'chad do|| sku gsung thugs kyi bzhengs tshul sogs kyang 'og nas gsal bar 'byung ngo||*. He continues with the account on the foundation of Ngor and Ngor chen's teaching activities at Ngor; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 524.2–530.5). This part is followed by the enumeration of Ngor chen's disciples and the account of his three Glo bo sojourns and further travels; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 530.6–536.1 and 536.1–545.6), respectively. It seems that the passage beginning with the foundation of Ngor until the end of the account on Ngor chen's travels is considered to be the presentation of his teaching activities ('chad pa). The biography continues with the account of his engagement in religious debates; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 546.2): *de ltar 'chad pa'i sgo nas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa gsal bar mdzad nas| rtsod pa'i sgo nas gzhan gyis log par rtog pa bzlog pa yang|*. The biography then goes on to list Ngor chen's writings; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 547.1–548.1): *gzhan yang legs par bshad pa rtsom pa'i skor yang|*.

¹²¹ This passage ends with the quotation of the colophon of Mu chen's supplement to his biography of Ngor chen and some additional lines by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 564.6–566.1).

¹²² The work seems not to be cited in its entirety; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 571.5–6): *dpal e waṃ chos ldan gsang sngags kyi pho brang chen po'i rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa la bstod pa dā ki rnam par bzhad pa'i glu dbyangs zhes bya ba las brjod bya raqs pa tsam bshad nal*. This part contains numerous annotations that might originate with Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.

Chapter Three

Lost Biographies

As I mentioned above, several older biographies of Ngor chen written by his disciples once existed. Here I would like to present what I have been able to learn about these works and their authors. In his abbatial history of Ngor, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs lists several of these earlier biographies:¹²³

Those and other virtuous activities [of Ngor chen] are beyond what one can imagine and shall be known from the work by **Mus pa**, the accounts written by [Ngor chen's] disciples **Gu ge Paṅ chen**, **Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan**, **Srad pa Kun blo**, **Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po** and others, and from the *Ocean of Good Sayings*, the biography I have written, which [is] a compilation of all these [works].

The first person mentioned, Mus pa, is Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, the second abbot of Ngor, whose work I have already introduced. The other four authors frequently appear as sources in Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen and are all found among Ngor chen's well-known personal disciples.¹²⁴

3.1 Gu ge Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan

The Gu ge Paṅ chen mentioned by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs can be identified as Gu ge Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486).¹²⁵ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs gives some background information on the relationship between Ngor chen and Gu ge Paṅḍita and the sources that the latter based his work upon, which Sangs rgyas phun tshogs probably took from the colophon of Gu ge Paṅḍita's life of Ngor chen:¹²⁶

[Regarding Ngor chen's] biography up to this point, Gu ge Paṅ chen said that he himself had relied [on Ngor chen as his teacher] for seventeen years and acted as [his] ritual attendant and personal assistant. [Concerning Ngor chen's] many

¹²³ *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 3.5–6): *de la sogs pa'i rnam par dkar ba'i phrin las bsam gyis mi khyab stel rje mus pas mdzad pa/gu ge paṅ chen/sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan/srad pa kun blo/gu ge chos dpal bzang po sogs/ slob ma rnams kyis mdzad pa'i yi ge rnams dang/ de thams cad kyi sdud pa kho bos bris pa'i rnam thar legs bshad rgya mtshor shes par bya'o/*. Emphasis added by the author.

¹²⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 532.3–4 and 533.5).

¹²⁵ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 343.1–2): *gu ge paṅḍi ta grags pa rgyal mtshan 'di la gu ge paṅ chen zer/*. See also the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung* 2 (p. 213.3–4). Sangs rgyas phun tshogs uses both titles. He also uses short forms like Paṅ chen Grags rgyal or just Paṅḍita; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 499.3 and 491.2), respectively. In the colophon to his biography of lHa Bla ma Ye shes 'od (947–1019/24), Gu ge Paṅḍita refers to himself as gNas lnga rig pa'i paṅḍi ta Grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po; see the *lHa bla ma ye shes 'od kyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 355.1–2). On Gu ge Paṅḍita, see also the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 162.1–163.5), JACKSON 1984: 155, n. 26, and SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 12, n. 23. On his life and works, see now also VAN DER KUIJP 2013b and VAN DER KUIJP 2015a.

¹²⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 554.2–3): *'di yan gyi rnam thar gu ge paṅ chen gyis kyang khong rang gis lo bcu bdun bsten cing mchod g.yog dang go re len bgwis pa dang/ gzhan snga phyi'i mdzad pa mang po rje rin po che lo bco lnga'i bar brten pa'i bla ma dpal ldan pa dang/ rgyal tshab chos rje kun dbang pa sogs kyi gsung sgros bzhin bkod pa yin gsungs sol/*. For a similar passage from Gu ge Paṅḍita's biographical sketch, see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 233.2–3). In addition, see also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 457.5–458.2). On Ngor chen's disciple Bla ma dPal ldan alias Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan (d. 1476), see Part Four, n. 664 and Part Four, 6.10. rGyal tshab Chos rje Kun dbang pa can be identified as Ngor chen's paternal nephew Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor.

activities before and after, [he] wrote them according to oral accounts of Bla ma dPal ldan, who [himself] had relied for fifteen years on rje Rin po che [i.e., Ngor chen], rGyal tshab Chos rje Kun dbang pa, and others.

As a further source that illuminates the relation between Ngor chen and Gu ge Paṇḍita, there also survives a nineteen-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the Paṇḍita's own biography, the *rNam thar dgos 'dod 'byung ba*.¹²⁷ It was completed shortly after the Paṇḍita's passing by his disciple mNga' ris bZhi sde pa 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' brtan pa in 1488 in Ngor.¹²⁸ According to this work, Gu ge Paṇḍita met Ngor chen for the first time in his twenty-first year while in Glo bo.¹²⁹ Their meeting took place during Ngor chen's second visit to Glo bo in 1436 or 1437 when the Gu ge king Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po Phun tshogs lde (b. 1409) had sent bZhi sde pa Drung Nam mkha' rtse mo to Glo bo to communicate to Ngor chen the king's invitation to Pu hrangs. At that time, Gu ge Paṇḍita accompanied Nam mkha' rtse mo as his attendant.¹³⁰

From Gu ge Paṇḍita's biography we learn how the Paṇḍita received the first Sa skya pa empowerment from Ngor chen in Glo bo. During his second sojourn, Ngor chen performed the consecration of Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling Monastery along with its golden Vajradhara statue. Having erected the *maṇḍala* of the condensed family of Vajrapañjara (rDo rje gur rigs bsodus), Ngor chen thought of performing the preparation rituals (*sta gon*) for that empowerment. Although a group of twenty-five monks is required for these rituals, only a total of twenty-four came together, including the king A ma dpal (var. A me dpal; 1388–ca. 1456).¹³¹ Remembering Nam mkha' rtse mo's attendant, Ngor chen sent for Gu ge Paṇḍita to reach the required quorum, but nobody could find him. Not accepting any other replacement, Ngor chen temporarily suspended the bestowal of the empowerment. When Gu ge Paṇḍita reappeared, he was scolded by Nam mkha' rtse mo for his absence and also summoned by Ngor chen. The latter inquired where he had been and whether he had been rebuked by Nam mkha' rtse mo. But Gu ge Paṇḍita, explaining himself, denied that he had been scolded. Letting him know that he

¹²⁷ This biography has been preserved in Beijing in the Nationalities Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities, catalogue no. 002813(4); see VAN DER KUIJP 2015a: 356–357, n. 63. On this biography, see also SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 12, n. 23. It has recently been published as a modern digital input in Western book format as part of two publications; see the *mChan 'grel ti se'i mgul rgyan* (pp. 373–401) and *lHa bla ma ye shes 'od kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 131–169).

¹²⁸ 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' brtan pa finished a small part of Gu ge Paṇḍita's biography in the first month of 1488 and by adding further parts ultimately completed his work in the eighth month of that year; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 19a3–7). A note after the colophon states (*Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar*, fol. 19a7): *lcags thang pas sor ma'i [= mo'i?] 'du byed||*, which, according to VAN DER KUIJP 2015a: 356–357, n. 63, identifies lCags thang pa (i.e., probably lCags thang Rab 'byams pa Byams pa bsod nams) as “the owner of the original manuscript.” I wonder, however, whether we should understand that note in the sense that the manuscript was actually written by lCags thang pa. Nam mkha' brtan pa appears under the name bZhi (or gZhi) sde Chos rje 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' brtan pa in the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 798.5) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 478.1).

¹²⁹ According to the Tibetan tradition of chronological calculation, Gu ge Paṇḍita's twenty-first year corresponds to 1435. However, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs states that Ngor chen's second visit to Glo bo took place from 1436 to 1437; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 538.4).

¹³⁰ See the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 3a2–3). For different accounts of Ngor chen's sojourn in Pu hrangs, see Part Four, 6.5.

¹³¹ For the dating of A ma dpal, see VITALI 1997: 1033 and VITALI 2012a: [127], n. 184. A modern history of Glo bo dates the passing of A ma dpal to 1447; see the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 31.16–18).

knew he was lying, Ngor chen told him that he was now going to give the empowerment and that the Paṇḍita needed to take part in it.¹³²

During the winter of that year, Gu ge Paṇḍita also received the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen, and afterwards the inviting party travelled back to Pu hrangs. Having accepted the invitation, Ngor chen followed a little while later and ordained the Gu ge king Phun tshogs lde at Kha char.¹³³ When Ngor chen was about to travel eastwards and return to central Tibet, he was requested by Gu ge Paṇḍita's teacher, Chos rje (or sPrul sku) Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, to take care of the young Paṇḍita and accept him as his attendant. Ngor chen apparently agreed, and from then on Gu ge Paṇḍita acted for seventeen years as Ngor chen's attendant (*phyag phyi*) and at times also as his ritual assistant (*mchod g.yog*, *mchod dpon*, or *phyag g.yog*).¹³⁴

During Ngor chen's third visit to Glo bo (1447–1449), Gu ge Paṇḍita accompanied him as his attendant and received full monastic ordination at Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling from Ngor chen as ordaining preceptor, 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho as ceremonial master, Khwa char bSod nams rgyal mtshan as instructor in private, and 'Dul 'dzin pa dPal ldan rdo rje as timekeeper.¹³⁵

Another episode that occurred during Ngor chen's third sojourn in Glo bo is related by A mes zhabs (1597–1659).¹³⁶ At that time, Ngor chen came to know that in Glo bo there lived a tantric adept named Bla ma bSam gtan 'od zer, who practiced the special teaching of the Donkey-Faced Cakrasaṃvara (bDe mchog bong zhal can), which had previously not been translated into Tibetan. bSam gtan 'od zer—who appeared to be a merchant trading yeast for fermenting *chang*, but who was in fact a “hidden yogi” (*sbas pa'i rnal 'byor pa*)—had received this empowerment and its oral instructions from the Newari tantric master Mahābodhi.¹³⁷ Hoping to request this teaching, Ngor chen invited bSam gtan 'od zer to his residence at Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling and instructed him in how to bestow its empowerment. However, the night before it was to take place, bSam

¹³² See the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 3a2–b3). That Gu ge Paṇḍita received his first empowerment from Ngor chen at that time is also mentioned by Glo bo mkhan chen; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 117.6–11) and Chapter Five, 6.5.

¹³³ See the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 3b2–3).

¹³⁴ See the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 3b3–b5). For the teachings that Gu ge Paṇḍita received from Ngor chen during that period of time, see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fols. 3b5–6b4). The Paṇḍita's record of teachings received, the *Yid bzhin rin po che dbang gi rgyal po -be du ya'i>(?) mdzod*, appears to be no longer extant; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 7a6–7). Some teachings might also be mentioned in the *gsan yig* of Glo bo mkhan chen, who studied under Gu ge Paṇḍita in Glo bo. On Glo bo mkhan chen's *gsan yig*, see KRAMER 2008: 52–53. For some events that occurred during the period of the Paṇḍita's studies under Ngor chen, see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fols. 7a7–9a5). On Gu ge Paṇḍita's role as ritual assistant, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 123.10–11), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 545.5), *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 162.5), and KRAMER 2008: 68, n. 91 and 153–154. Some of his activities in the service of Ngor chen are also recorded in the Paṇḍita's biographical sketch contained in the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 233.2–3).

¹³⁵ See the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 8a8–b2). During that period of time, Gu ge Paṇḍita also acted as Ngor chen's ritual assistant (*mchod g.yog*) at least once; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 123.10–11) and KRAMER 2008: 68, n. 91. For a translation of the ritual of full ordination from the *Pravrajyāvastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya, see SCHOPEN 2004. On the conferral of vows, see also JAMGÖN KONGTRUL LODRÖ TAYÉ 1998: 89–98.

¹³⁶ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 233.3–235.2). This story is also mentioned by JACKSON 1978: 218. See also the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 7a4–5).

¹³⁷ It was also Mahābodhi from whom Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412) received the empowerments of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* cycle at Pāṭan and to whom Ngor chen sent a letter; see Part Three, 6.7.1 and Part Five, 2.

gtan 'od zer became afraid of the heavy responsibility and ran away.¹³⁸ With a strong conviction to preserve the lineage of that teaching, Ngor chen sent Byams gling Chos rje dPal ldan (d. 1476), Bla ma rGyal sras (alias rGyal Mus pa), and Gu ge Paṇḍita along with presents to bSam gtan 'od zer to have them request the empowerment.¹³⁹ Complying with Ngor chen's command, bSam gtan 'od zer bestowed it on those three disciples.¹⁴⁰ Among them, it was due to Gu ge Paṇḍita's efforts that the special Cakrasaṃvara practice became widespread. He also wrote both its *sādhana* and *maṇḍala* ritual (*dkyil chog*).¹⁴¹ He bestowed the Cakrasaṃvara teaching on Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub, for whom he was a principal teacher,¹⁴² and Nam mkha' brtan pa, his biographer, who both in turn ensured that the teaching was further transmitted.

In general, Gu ge Paṇḍita had a strong connection with Glo bo, where he not only taught and translated,¹⁴³ but was also involved in the planning and design of temples and murals.¹⁴⁴ Following the invitation of A seng rDo rje brtan pa (d. ca. 1496), he moved to

¹³⁸ bSam gtan 'od zer fled to a temple called sMad lha khang at Rong gting. According to JACKSON 1978: 217–218, the area where this temple was located constituted “the lower limit of Tibetan culture” in Glo bo's Kali Gandaki valley.

¹³⁹ On Byams gling Chos rje dPal ldan (alias Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan), see Part Four, n. 664 and Part Four, 6.10. According to a gloss contained in the colophon of his *sādhana* of Donkey-Faced Cakrasaṃvara, Gu ge Paṇḍita obtained this teaching together with Chos rje dPal ldan pa and dGe slong rGyal mtshan bsod nams; see Part Two, n 156.

¹⁴⁰ For the rather unskilful way bSam gtan 'od zer bestowed the empowerment, which prompted Gu ge Paṇḍita to compose a verse, see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 234.2–5). On teachings that Gu ge Paṇḍita received from bSam gtan 'od zer, see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 7a4–5).

¹⁴¹ On both works, which are preserved at 'Bras spungs Monastery, see Part Two, n. 156. In the colophon of his *sādhana*, Gu ge Paṇḍita briefly deals with the transmission history of this teaching; see Part Two, n 156. The colophon contains also some additional remarks on the religious practices performed by bSam gtan 'od zer; see Part Two, n 156.

¹⁴² On Glo bo mKhan chen's studies under Gu ge Paṇḍita, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 457.5–503.5), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 249.5–253.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 273.3–276.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 117.10–11, 123.10–11, and 136.3–5), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 236.6–237.2), and KRAMER 2008: 38, 53, 58, 68, 76, 147, 153–154, and 165. For Glo bo mKhan chen's commissions after the passing of his master, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 536.2–537.3) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 253.2–254.2 and 308.4–6). For praises that he wrote of his master, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum 1* (vol. 1, fols. 46b5–47b2 and 47b3–48b2 and vol. 4, fols. 48a–51a, 52a–53a, and 54a–55b). On these praises, see also KRAMER 2008: 87, 268, nos. 26–28, 288, nos. 12–14, and 292, nos. 14–16.

¹⁴³ Gu ge Paṇḍita was involved in translation projects performed at the court of the Glo bo ruler bKra shis mgon (d. 1489?); see the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 29b–30a): *dbang gdams ngag sogs du ma bsgyur tshul nil* (...) *sogs sngar bod du ma bsgyur ba du ma zhig lo chen manu dang| chos rje gu ge paṇ chen grags pa rgyal mtshan| sne shangs lo tstsha ba dge slong dpal ldan grags rnam kyis zhu chen dang mchan bu'i lo tstsha mdzad| chos kyi rgyal po nyid kyis sbyin bdag mdzad nas bsgyur cing gdul bya 'phel bar mdzad*. See also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 235.1): *de dus lo chen manydzu ba dang| chos rje gu ge paṇ chen grags pa rgyal mtshan gnyis kyis zhu chen dang mchan bu'i lo tsa mdzad de gzhung 'phran bu 'ga' bsgyur ba las*. In addition, see also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 234.1–236.2), JACKSON 1984: 155, n. 26, and VITALI 2012a: 186–189.

¹⁴⁴ See the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 13a4–b1) *bstan pa'i bya ba bde bar gshegs pa'i sku gzugs gyi* [= *kyi*] *bkod pa tshad la sogs pa ni| mkhas* [= *mkha'*] *spyod u ḍi ya na'i logs bris| kun rig gi gzhal yas khang tshad dang dpes mtshon par mi nus pa| rnal 'byor rgyud kyi dal du ma'i logs bris| e waṃ gyi ston pa'i gtsbo logs bris| ka ba'i zum(?) chings| lan tstshal gnas gtag gyi* [= *kyi*] *yi ge| blo bor thub pa chen po'i ldem g.yas g.yon| khri rgyab| byams pa gling gi gtsug lag khang gi ri mo| dus gsum gyis* [= *gyi*] *sangs rgyas rnam thos sras kyi khang pa| sgrol ma nyer gcig| sgrub pa'i thabs bsod pa dang| rgya mtshor gsungs pa'i lhas skor ba'i lha khang dang| bde bar gshegs pa'i mchod rten rnam skeyes pa'i rabs kyis yongs su skor ba'i gtsug lag khang bkod pa shin du legs pa| lha bzo ba rnam kyang yid 'khrog* [= *'phrog*] *pa dang| bzhi sder 'khor lo bde mchog| dpal phyag bzhi pa bla ma rgyud pa dang bcas pa shin du legs pa dang| chos 'khor gling du gtsug lag khang gi bkod pa dang| dpal rdo rje nag po chen po gur gyi mgon po'i sku byin brlabs can dang| rten mchod bsam gyi* [= *gyis*] *mi khyab pa'i phyag rjes ni brjod gyi* [= *kyis*] *mi lang ngol*. See also the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 14b7–8): *nyer bdun gyi nyin smon thang du phebs| bkra shis sgo mangs gyi* [= *kyi*] *zhal bkod rnam rags rims rgyun du gsung ba yang| de nyin shin tu zhib par bla ma blo gros bzang po dang| dpon klu pa gnyis la gnang*. Gu ge Paṇḍita was also

Glo bo in about 1482, where he spent the last four years of his life, eventually passing away there in 1486.¹⁴⁵

Gu ge Paṇḍita was known by quite a number of different names, a fact that is important for correctly identifying his biography of Ngor chen as listed among the sources of the *mDo smad chos 'byung* of dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1801–1866) and as an entry in a list of bibliographic rarities by A khu Ching Shes rab rgya mtsho. Alongside other Ngor chen biographies, both of these sources record a biography written by a certain Gu ge dBon po Nam mkha' blo gsal.¹⁴⁶ In identifying this author, Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs comes to our aid, remarking that Gu ge Paṇḍita was also known as dBon po A tsa ra, dBon po Nam mkha' blo gsal, Ma ti tsi tra, and Gu ge Paṇ chen.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, A mes zhabs refers in his writings to Gu ge Paṇḍita by the epithet rGyud/n (b)sgul or rGyud bskul.¹⁴⁸ Taking into account two episodes related to the Paṇḍita's life, this rather unusual epithet should probably be emended to *rgyun bskul* and would thus describe him as a person who was “always making requests.” The first episode supporting such an interpretation is found in Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen. When Ngor chen revealed to 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho that at a later time he would have to take on the responsibility of Ngor Monastery, he bestowed on him the initiation (*rjes gnang*) of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla (dPal mgon zhal bzhi pa), the chief protector of Ngor. At this time, Gu ge Paṇḍita, too, requested it, but Ngor chen denied his request. However, the Paṇḍita did not give up, and owing to his insistence, Ngor chen finally gave in, though he only gave him the recitation transmission for its *mantra* (*sngags kyi blzas lung*).¹⁴⁹ The second episode is preserved in the biography of Ngor chen's nephew Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor. It is reported that after Kun dga' dbang phyug had come to Ngor in 1438, Ngor chen revealed to Gu ge Paṇḍita that in the future his nephew would become an abbot of Ngor. This statement prompted Gu ge Paṇḍita to ask whether he himself was also envisaged as a possible future abbot. Ngor chen, however, told him to keep quiet and that he would not become one.¹⁵⁰ Along with those names and epithets, Gu ge Paṇḍita was included

sent by Ngor chen to look for artists to craft the large golden statue of Buddha Śākyamuni housed in the *gtsang khang* of Ngor's dBang khang chen mo; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 552.2–5).

¹⁴⁵ See the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fols. 13b1–15b3). This last invitation to Glo bo extended by A seng rDo rje brtan pa is also recorded in the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 35b): [a seng rdo rje brtan pa zhes mtshan yongs su grags pa de nyid kyis kyang] *gzhan yang paṇḍi ta grags pa rgyal mtshan/ rin po che tshul khriṃs rgyal mtshan/ chos rje legs po shes rab sogs gdan drangs te rdo rje theg pa'i chos 'khor bskor tshul/ 'bul ba'i rnam bzhag/ dgongs rdzogs bsgrubs tshul sogs yi ge mangs kyis dogs nas ma bris/*.

¹⁴⁶ See the *dPe rgyun dkon pa 'ga' zhiḡ gi tho yig* (p. 508, no. 10930) and *mDo smad chos 'byung 1* (vol. 1, p. 25.5–6). The *mDo smad chos 'byung 1* (vol. 1, p. 25.5) correctly reads *dbon po*, whereby the *mDo smad chos 'byung 2* (p. 10.15) incorrectly has *dpon po*.

¹⁴⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 535.6). In his biography of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs refers to the Paṇḍita also as mNga' ris pa dBon po A tsa ra or simply as A tsa ra; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 552.4 and 553.4), respectively. In addition, see also the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 163.2), where he is also referred to as A tsa ra.

¹⁴⁸ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 230.5 and 233.1–2) and *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 542.4 and 545.2–3). Similarly, in Zhu chen Tshul khriṃs rin chen's *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, p. 29.6), Gu ge Paṇḍita is specified by a gloss as rGyu 'gul paṇ chen: *rgyu 'gul paṇ chen 'di pa'i mtshan gyi rnam grangs yin/*. In the *Sa skya lo tsā ba'i rnam thar* (p. 211.11), we find a similar reference in relation to his collected works: *rgyu 'gul paṇ chen gyi gsung 'bum/*.

¹⁴⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 553.1–4).

¹⁵⁰ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 520.5–521.1) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2* (p. 622.2–4). Cf. VAN DER KUIJP 2015a: 357, who remarks: “No doubt owing to his expertise in tantric ritual and practice, he seems to have been asked to take on the abbacy of Ngor Ewaṃ chos ldan, but this was not to be due

together with Gu ge mKhan chen Ngag dbang grags pa (fl. 15th century) and Zhang zhung Chos dbang grags pa (1404–1469) in the group known as the “three [masters bearing the name] Grags pa” (*grags pa rnam gsum*), who all originate from Gu ge.¹⁵¹

Regarding the Gu ge Paṇḍita's life of Ngor chen, we know from Mus chen Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan's (1542–1618) record of teachings received that the work had the title *rNam thar dngos grub dbang gi rgyal po*.¹⁵² Sangs rgyas phun tshogs states that it comprised three main topical subjects or outline sections (*sa bcad*).¹⁵³ He also informs us that due to the fact that Gu ge Paṇḍita's life of Ngor chen was, like Mus chen's, “a little bit more detailed,” he used these two as his main sources when compiling his own Ngor chen biography.¹⁵⁴

To my knowledge, only two of Gu ge Paṇḍita's writings have been published, the *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs skye dgu'i co pan nyi zla'i phreng mdzes* and *lHa bla ma ye shes 'od kyi rnam thar rgyas pa* (written in 1480 at mTho gling gSer gyi lha khang),¹⁵⁵ though others have survived at 'Bras spungs Monastery: the *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog gi dbang chog bdud rtsi gam ga'i klung rgyun ldan rgyas pa* (25 fols.) and *bDe mchog bong zhal can lha so bdun gyi bsgrub thabs phrin las mtha' yas* (12 fols.).¹⁵⁶

to unspecified ‘obstacles’ (*bar chad*.)” This remark is seemingly based on the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 9a4): *e wam nas bla mas 'bod mkhan gnang na yang bar chad kyis [= kyi] dbang gi [= gis] 'gyang nas phebs pa ma byungl*.

¹⁵¹ Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po (lHa sa, 14 October 2011). On Ngag dbang grags pa, see VITALI 1996: [89]–96.

¹⁵² See the *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 25.6) and SOBISCH 2002a: 173. The information given in the corresponding note by SOBISCH 2002a: 173, n. 25 seems to be based on a misunderstanding since it is not the Paṇḍita's Ngor chen biography that survives in the Beijing collection, but instead the Paṇḍita's own biography. The existence of such a biography had already been noted by SMITH 1970: 2, n. 8. The same title is also given by Zhu chen in his *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 384.19–20).

¹⁵³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 482.1).

¹⁵⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 554.3–4): *de ltar rje mus pa dangl paṇ chen gyi rnam thar gnyis cung zad zhib par snang bas khungs bcad pa'ol*.

¹⁵⁵ See the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 2* (vol. 36, pp. 181–454 and vol. 43, pp. 273–355), respectively. On the former work, see also the *mNga' ris lo rgyus skor brjod pa* and VAN DER KUIJP 2013b. On the latter, see also KARMAY 2013, SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 12, n. 23, and VAN DER KUIJP 2015a. The biography of lHa Bla ma Ye shes 'od has recently been published in Western book format; see the *mChan 'grel ti se'i mgul rgyan* (pp. 373–401) and *lHa bla ma ye shes 'od kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 131–169).

¹⁵⁶ See the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 279, nos. 2730 and 2731), respectively. The colophon of the first work reads (*bDe mchog gi dbang chog*, fol. 25a4–6): *rdo rje phag mos byin brlabs grub rigs kyi|| 'khor lo bsgyur rgyal ma hā bo dhi'i sras|| sbas pa'i grub chen bsam brtan [= gtan] 'od zer gyis|| gsung gi rgyun dang phreng ba'i gzhung bzang lal|| gzhir byas dbang mchog bdud rtsi gang ga'i klung dang|| rgyun ldan rgyas pa 'di ni {gu ge rgyu 'gul ba} paṇḍi tall grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal {'byor} bzang pos brtsams| dbang bskur 'di 'dra kho bo'i dpal las thob|| (...). The colophon of the second work reads (*bDe mchog bong zhal can gyi bsgrub thabs*, fol. 12a1–b3): *tshul 'di ni bal po ye rangs gi [= kyi] paṇḍi ta grub pa'i dbang phyug ma hā bo dhi dngos la bdag gi bla ma bsam gtan 'od zer gyis dbang dang man ngag dang bcas pa bsan nas| de'i drung du bdag grogs mched {chos rje dpal ldan pa dangl dge slong rgyal mtshan bsod nams} gsum gyis zhus cingl 'di'i dbang sogs nges brjod kyi rgyud kyi dngos bstan shin du dag la dkon pas| chad du phangs pa yin ces bla ma rdo rje 'chang gi bkas gnang nas brtsol ba chen pos 'bad par bya [= byas?] ste| yig cha rnam kyang grub pa'ol|| 'di ni lnga rigs [= rig] paṇḍi ta| grags pa rgyal mtshan zhes byas [= bya bas] brtsams|| (...) mahā bo dhi'i drung du| bdag gi bla mas 'di'i rgyud rims dgos zhus pas| nga'i a phal| de'i a phas tsakra sam bha ra dangl mo gi gnyis la dbang thob gsung| de ltar na rdo rje 'changl rdo rje rnal 'byor mal bha ga wan bha tra ste| ye rang gi paṇḍi ta bska| ldan bzang po| de'i sras paṇḍi ta dza ga ta ā nan ta dzi wa bha tra ste skye dgu'i 'tsho ba bzang po| de'i sras paṇḍi ta grub pa'i dbang phyug ma hā bo dhi| de la bdag gi bla ma bsam gtan 'od zer| des bdag grags pa rgyal mtshan la gnang ngo|| rgyud thag nye mo rang lta bur snang yangl 'khor lo bde mchog dangl rdo rje rnal 'byor mas byin gyis brlabs pa sha dag yin pas rgyud pa| bzangl bla ma bsam gtan 'od zer ni| ma hā bo dhi la 'di'i dbang thob phyin chad skyed rims thun gnyis su bsgom pa| rdzogs rims zhar byung rnam ma chag pa byas nas lo lnga bcu nga gsum dangl yi ge bdun pa'i sngags dung phyur phrag gsum {drug zer ba'ang 'dug ste rtag} dang 'bum mtsho [= tsho] gnyis| khri tsho lnga songl 'jam dpal mtshon brjod rgya gar skad 'ba' zhig du khri tsho bryad rnam 'don par mdzad cing grub pa'i dbang phyug kho na yin nol|| At the very end, the manuscript contains a gloss presenting the *sādhana*'s transmission line of a further unnamed person, who at one point in time obviously possessed the manuscript: 'di'i rgyud pa ni| bde mchog| skal ldan bzang po| 'tsho ba bzang po| ye rang paṇḍi ta ma hā bodhi| bla ma bsam gtan 'od zer| lnga rig paṇḍi ta| {grags pa rgyal mtshan} glo bo mkhan chen| sa skya lo**

Unfortunately, as pointed out by Leonard van der Kuijp, the Paṇḍita's own biography by his disciple, Nam mkha' brtan pa, refers to his writings only in a very general way:¹⁵⁷

Regrettably, this work is by no means among the most informative or detailed specimen of its genre, but his reticence about his master's scholarly activities is still surprising, particularly in view of the fact that the latter was after all a *paṇ chen/mahāpaṇḍita*! Indeed, Nam mkha' bstan pa makes but a few stereotypical remarks about his oeuvre and, aside from a reference to Gu ge Paṇ chen's record of teachings received (*gsan yig*), he makes no mention of even one title of a tract that his master may have written!

However, a much more detailed list of Gu ge Paṇḍita's oeuvre can be found in the *gsan yig* of dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po et al. specified that his collected works comprised three volumes, though no title list is given.¹⁵⁹

3.2 Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan

Regarding Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (fl. 15th century), along with being a disciple of Ngor chen, he also seems to have served as his attendant. He is mentioned in Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' life of Ngor chen as having counted and recorded the number of ordinations and teachings Ngor chen gave, and having accompanied him on his first sojourn in dBus (1414–1417).¹⁶⁰ He is also known by such names as Gyong por grags pa mDo khams stod pa Kun mkhyen Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan and mDo stod rTsa mdo pa Gyong po Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan.¹⁶¹ From his titles, we can infer that he was originally from Khams and might either have been born in a place called rTsa mdo or was an expert in pulse diagnosis (*rtsa mdo pa*). He was also known as being very rough or

tsa ba 'jam dbyangs kun dga' bsod nams grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po| des bdag la'ol. Below the name of Glo bo mKhan chen, small dots connect a second line of text which contains names of masters who seem to stand in an alternative lineage descending from Glo bo mKhan chen, which had also been received by that unnamed person: *rje btsun kun dga' grol mchog| rje brag stod pa lha dbang grags pa| des bdag la'ol.* This transmission line suggests that the manuscript was once owned by a disciple of both Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams and Brag stod pa lHa dbang grags pa.

¹⁵⁷ VAN DER KUIJP 2013b: [325]. See also the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 12a5–6): *rtsom la tshad ma'i bphyogs [= phyogs] chos btan [= gtan] tshigs rnams sgra bsgrub| skyes rabs du ma| rgyud sde bzhi dang 'brel ba'i rtsoms [= rtsom] log rtog dang khru| [= 'khru] pa'i dri ma'i bral ba rnams la phan pa gtso bor mdzad pa dang| sdebs [= sdeb] sbyor gtso bor mdzad pa gnyis ka yod de| kho bos byas pa'i gsung rabs [= rab] kyis [= kyi] dkar chag tu lta bar bya'o||*

¹⁵⁸ See the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (pp. 347.19–348.15): *paṇḍi ta grags pa rgyal mtshan gyi bka' 'bum gyi lung thob pa'i chos kyis grangs la| rdo rje 'chang gi rnam thar| kye rdo rje'i mngon rtogs| 'khor lo sdom chen gyi sgrub thabs| snags phreng| mchod chog| bde mchog bong zhal can gyi sgrub thabs| dkyil chog| rdo rje mkha' 'gro lha so bdun ma'i sgrub thabs| de'i dkyil chog| rdo rje lha mo'i tshes sgrub| rdo rje phag mo zhal gnyis ma'i sgrub thabs| māhā [= mahā] mā yā'i mngon rtogs| rdo rje 'jigs byed ra lugs kyis sgrub thabs dag pa dang bcas pa| skyo lugs kyis lha bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs| rta mgrin jo bo lugs kyis mngon rtogs| 'chi bdag 'joms pa'i dkyil chog| rigs gsum spyi'i bdag mdun byed lugs| de'i dbang bskur ba'i phyag len| a ra pa tsa na lha lnga'i sgrub thabs dang dbang chog| rnam 'joms ma ni badzra'i lugs lha bcu dgu'i sgrub thabs| gtso rkyang gi sgrub thabs| lha bcu dgu'i dkyil chog| gtsug tor rnam rgyal gyi stong mchod byed tshul rnams thob pa'i brgyud pa ni| paṇḍi ta grags pa rgyal mtshan| mkhan chen bsod nams lhun grub| dpal sa skya lo tsā ba 'jam dbyangs chen po| des bdag dkon mchog lhun grub la'ol.* Some works by Gu ge Paṇḍita are also mentioned among the teachings that Glo bo mKhan chen received from him; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 457.5–503.5). A few works are also recorded in the autobiography of Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566); see the *Zhen pa rang grol* (p. 352.4–5).

¹⁵⁹ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 57.7–9).

¹⁶⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 511.3–4, 516.1, and 514.6–515.2), respectively.

¹⁶¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 479.6–480.1 and 533.5).

obstinate (*gyong po*) in character.¹⁶² In one of two letters Ngor chen addressed to him, he elaborates on Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan's character by describing him as "incorporating [in himself] as one [person] the complete essence of all obstinate people of this world [who exist] in [all] the ten directions."¹⁶³ Or a little later: "at the time when he shows his rough behaviour, [he] outshines even extremely hard dry leather, and so it goes without saying that [he] is more obstinate than yaks or yak-cow hybrids (*g.yag* or *mdzo*)."¹⁶⁴ So far, except for the citations in Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' Ngor chen biography, we don't know anything more about Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan's own biography of Ngor chen.

3.3 Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros

Ngor chen's biographer Srad pa Kun blo was Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros (b. 1433), who, judging from the few quotes Sangs rgyas phun tshogs utilised from his Ngor chen biography, composed his work in verse.¹⁶⁵ Its printing blocks are said to have been once available at both Ngor and sDe dge.¹⁶⁶ According to Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, Kun dga' blo gros had acted as the scribe of Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen.¹⁶⁷ As a student of Ngor chen, he also fixed many of his master's teachings in writing. These were considered so important that A mes zhabs cited entire passages from them in his own writings.¹⁶⁸ Two of those passages enable us to deduce his year of birth as 1433.¹⁶⁹

3.4 Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po

Identifying Ngor chen's biographer Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po (fl. 15th century) is difficult. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs lists him among a group of Ngor chen's disciples associated with the region of mNga' ris (including Glo bo).¹⁷⁰ He informs us that Chos dpal bzang po's biography of Ngor chen was arranged by topic into five sections (*sa bcad*) and he quotes from it a few times.¹⁷¹ This biography is also recorded in A khu Ching Shes rab rgya mtsho's list of rare books.¹⁷² Another of Chos dpal bzang po's writings is mentioned in the opening part of the *mDo smad chos 'byung*, where he is mentioned as the author of a genealogy of the Shar family at Sa skya.¹⁷³

Chos dpal bzang po was most likely also the author of a short work of ten folios that was included among the collected works of A mes zhabs, the *rJe btsun sa skya pa'i gsung rab la 'jug tshul legs par bshad pa'i yi ge bod yul 'gro kun bsgrod pa'i chos sgo phyogs brgyar ring*

¹⁶² Although *gyong po* is used in lHa sa Tibetan for a person who is very capable, here it is used in its other meaning, referring to a person rough or obstinate in character; see GOLDSTEIN 2001: 195 (s.v. *gyong po*).

¹⁶³ See the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 4, p. 712.6): *phyogs bcu'i 'jig rten khams kyi gyong po kun|| ma lus gcig tu bsdu pa'i ngo bo la||*. On this letter, see CATALOGUE (no. 168).

¹⁶⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 4, p. 713.1): *gang gis gyong po'i kun spyod bstan pa'i tshell ko skam shin tu mkhregs pa'ang zil gnon nal|| g.yag dang mdzo bas gyong ba smos ci 'tshall||*

¹⁶⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 482.4–5, 483.3–4, and 565.3–4).

¹⁶⁶ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 437.13–15).

¹⁶⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 565.2).

¹⁶⁸ For these works, see Part Five, 2.

¹⁶⁹ See the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (p. 50.4) and *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 484.1).

¹⁷⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 532.3–4).

¹⁷¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 482.1).

¹⁷² See the *dPe rgyun dkon pa 'ga' zhig gi tho yig* (p. 508, no. 10931).

¹⁷³ See the *mDo smad chos 'byung* 2 (p. 6.16–17). See also the *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 793.5–6).

du *phyé ba*.¹⁷⁴ Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, who used this work extensively in his *Hevajra and Lam 'bras Literature of India and Tibet as Seen through the Eyes of A-mes-zhabs*, makes the following interesting remarks:¹⁷⁵

[The work] focuses almost entirely on Hevajra literature up to the first half of the thirteenth century, both of Indian and Tibetan origin. This brief but indeed supremely important work is the composition of Chöpal Zangpo (15th c.), which is based on the teachings of Ngorchen Künga Zangpo, and preserved and (perhaps) edited by A-me Zhab.¹⁷⁶

(...); it introduces its main transmissions and writings in a highly systematic fashion. As such, this work appears to be unique.¹⁷⁷

The NOTES [as Sobisch refers to the work of Chos dpal bzang po] throws interesting light on one approach to primarily tantric teachings among the Sakyapas during Chöpal Zangpo's time, i.e., the early 15th c., and, representing the teaching of the great Ngorchen Künga Zangpo, it is certainly an authoritative approach.¹⁷⁸

According to the colophon of the NOTES, A-mes-zhabs has arranged this work reproducing a teaching of Ngor-chen Kun-dga'-bzang-po (1382–1456) that had been written down by Chos-dpal-bzang-po, one of Ngor-chen's direct disciples. The exact nature of A-mes-zhabs' contribution to the NOTES is unclear.¹⁷⁹

A-mes-zhabs remained silent about the extent to which he edited the work and added to it. However that may be, it is a fact that the NOTES include only Indian and Tibetan works up to Sa-skya Paṇḍita.¹⁸⁰

The colophon ascribes the text to a master called Chos rje Chos dpal bzang po, who was a personal student of Ngor chen and who put it down in writing according to his master's oral teachings (*gsung rgyun*).¹⁸¹ Taking into consideration that only one Chos dpal bzang po, namely Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po, is listed among Ngor chen's personal disciples, we can most probably identify the author of the work in question, Chos rje Chos dpal bzang po, as Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po.¹⁸²

In a compilatory work on Cakrasaṃvara, A me zhab cites a longer passage from yet another work by Chos dpal bzang po, the *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rnam par bshad pa smra ba ngan 'joms rin chen bsam 'phel*, whom he identifies as a disciple of Ngor chen and whose name he gives as Yongs 'dzin dam pa Chos dpal bzang po.¹⁸³

Among a collection of manuscripts housed at the National Library of Bhutan, which appear to originate from Ngor Monastery, we find a seventy-eighty-folio *dbu med* manuscript of a *Lam 'bras* teaching manual by a certain bTsun pa Chos dpal bzang po,

¹⁷⁴ For this work, see the *A me zhab kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 4, pp. 167–187).

¹⁷⁵ See SOBISCH 2008: [1]–[63]. For the Tibetan text in Wylie transliteration, see *Ibid.*: [227]–233. For its translation into English, see *Ibid.*: [219]–226. On the same text, see also SOBISCH 2007: 166, no. 14.

¹⁷⁶ SOBISCH 2008: [1].

¹⁷⁷ SOBISCH 2008: [21].

¹⁷⁸ SOBISCH 2008: [21].

¹⁷⁹ SOBISCH 2008: [21].

¹⁸⁰ SOBISCH 2008: [63].

¹⁸¹ See the *gSung rab la 'jug tshul* (p. 186.2–5). On the colophon, see also SOBISCH 2007: 166, no. 14 and SOBISCH 2008: [21], n. 14.

¹⁸² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 532.4).

¹⁸³ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 461.2–506.1).

who also seems to be Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po.¹⁸⁴ In the colophon of the text, which has no title page, the author refers to his work as a commentary on a list or notes of a manual for teaching the *Lam 'bras* exactly in accord with its basic text (i.e., the *rDo rje tshig rkang* of Virūpa), the *gZhung ji lta ba bzhin du bkri ba'i khrid kyi tho yig gi 'grel pa*.¹⁸⁵ Chos dpal bzang po further informs us that he wrote down those teachings at the behest of some scholars (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen*) after having received the *Lam 'bras* many times from Ngor chen.¹⁸⁶

Moreover, Chos dpal bzang po was apparently the founder of Rab rgyas gling Monastery in mNga' ris. This foundation is mentioned in a biographical sketch of Tshul khriims lhun grub (1676–1730), the thirty-second abbot of Ngor. The second abbatial history of Ngor relates that Tshul khriims lhun grub travelled in 1711 to sTod mNga' ris Rab rgyas gling, which is noted as having been founded by Chos dpal bzang po, where he resided until about 1724, taking care of the monastery's renovation, among other things.¹⁸⁷

Further research will be needed to clarify whether the mKhan chen Chos dpal bzang po mentioned by the history *sPyi ti dkyil dgon nor bu dge 'phel gyi byung ba brjod pa* might also be Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po. The Chos dpal bzang po mentioned by this source was responsible for combining in sPyi ti (Pi ti or Spiti) an old Sa skya monastery located at mNgon dga' and the old monastery of Go mig lHun grub rtse into one institution, thereby establishing the monastery of sTeng dgon Chos 'khor gling (alias sTeng rgyud lHun grub Chos 'khor gling).¹⁸⁸

We could also speculate that Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po might be the same person as Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po (1371–1439), a senior Sa skya master who lived in the same

¹⁸⁴ The manuscript collection was photographed by Blo gsal don grub in 2008 while on his Himalayan expedition in search of Sa skya texts initiated by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che. A preliminary catalogue of those manuscripts has been compiled by Blo gsal don grub, the *'Brug rgyal yongs dpe mdzod khang du bzhugs pa'i sa skya'i dpe rnying dkar chag*, and I plan to compile a more detailed and systemized catalogue.

¹⁸⁵ More research is needed to determine whether this text might possibly be a commentary on the *Lam 'bras kyi gzhung ji lta ba bzhin du bkri ba'i khrid yig tshigs bcad ma* of rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216); see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 6, pp. 382.4–385.6).

¹⁸⁶ See the *Tho yig gi 'grel pa* (fol. 78a8–b2): *gzhung ji lta ba bzhin du bkri ba'i khrid kyi tho yig gi 'grel pa/ rje btsun dam pa thams cad mkhyen pa kun dga' bzang po'i bka' drin gyis bskyangs pa'i btsun pa chos dpal bzang po zhes bgyi bas/ snga phyir gsung ngag lan mang du thos shing de'i gsung gi rgyun rnams shin tu gces par bzung nas/ rje bla ma gsungs pa mdo tsam zhiig/ dge ba'i bshes gnyen 'gas bskul nas 'bad pas bgyis pa'ol/.*

¹⁸⁷ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 549.1–5). On some aspects of the history of Rab rgyas gling, which constituted one of the largest Sa skya monasteries in mNga' ris and was closely linked with Ngor, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (pp. 238–240). For its location in Rab rgyas gling township of rTsa mda' county, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (map, no. 15). On the Sa skya connection of Rab rgyas gling, see also the *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog* (p. 45.3–9). Rab rgyas gling was visited by Giuseppe Tucci and Captain E. Gherzi in August 1933. For their description, see TUCCI and GHERZI 1996: 120–128. For pictures of Rab rgyas gling and its murals, see *Ibid.*: picture section after p. 98. See also TUCCI 1973: pl. 77.

¹⁸⁸ See the *sPyi ti dkyil dgon nor bu dge 'phel gyi byung ba brjod pa* (p. 36.1–6). Henry Lee Shuttleworth described a picture of the monastery, which he had taken during his visit in 1917/18, as follows (*Times of India Illustrated Weekly*, April 14, 1920, p. 19): "A group of Sakya lamas before their isolated monastery at Tanyud in Spiti. The present monastery was founded in its almost inaccessible position some 2 centuries ago after the more exposed older building had been burnt down by the Tso-po, the Mongol followers of King Galdan Tsiang, who was dreaded for his bravery and cruelty throughout Tibet, and the sight of whose body is even now considered to inspire the beholder with some of his valour. The name of the builder of the present foundation is recorded as Lobsan Chekep of Gongmig village in an old Tibetan book, kept by the Head of the Establishment and shown to few outsiders. To the west the monastery looks down on the Spiti valley. To the north-east it faces the sacred snowclad twin peaked mountain of Cho Cho Gang Milta, over 23,000 feet high." The same monastery was also visited and photographed by Tucci and Gherzi on July 10, 1933; see TUCCI and GHERZI 1935: 41–44. I would like to thank Yannick Laurent for kindly sharing these references. On Shuttleworth and the history of Spiti, see LAURENT (forthcoming). The monastery was shifted back to Go mig after an earthquake in 1975.

period.¹⁸⁹ Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po was born at Sa skya as the son of Rin rgyal, who was the “great attendant” (*nye gnas chen po*) of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375). Later in his life, he acted as *sku rim pa*—a lama in charge of rituals clearing away obstacles—of the Gung thang rulers and became in 1420 the spiritual advisor or court chaplain (*dbu bla*) of the king of Gung thang, Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan (1404–1464, r. 1419–1464).¹⁹⁰ His biography, the *Bla chen chos dpal bzang po'i rnam thar*,¹⁹¹ mentions a meeting with Ngor chen when the latter during his first journey to Glo bo (1427–1428) went to pay his respects to the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po of sKyid grong. On that occasion, he also paid a visit to mNga' ris rDzong dkar (or rDzong kha), the capital of the kingdom of Gung thang, to which he might have been invited by Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan. At rDzong dkar, that king received teachings from Ngor chen and offered him his service. Also, his court chaplain, Chos dpal bzang po, met Ngor chen and his entourage at that time. As they engaged in a discussion on Buddhist topics, Chos dpal bzang po asked many questions on the practices of Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja and in particular on the Yoga tantric system.¹⁹² Based on this account, Ngor chen's visit to both sKyid grong and rDzong dkar should probably be dated to 1427, when he was on his way to Glo bo. By contrast, Ngor chen's biography makes no mention of this trip. It does, however, refer to a butter lamp offering Ngor chen made to the famous Jo bo at sKyid grong on his way back from his second Glo bo sojourn (1436–1437).¹⁹³

Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po was Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po. In the first place, Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po's name closely associates him with the region of Gu ge as his place of origin, whereas Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po was born in Sa skya, though we should note that he is sometimes referred to as Gung thang Bla chen or mNga' ris Bla chen.¹⁹⁴ Second, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs does not refer to Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po as *bla chen*. Third, Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po passed away seventeen years prior to Ngor chen's passing, which makes it unlikely that he could have composed such an early biography of Ngor chen.

¹⁸⁹ We already know a few aspects of Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po's life from the research conducted by DIEMBERGER 2007, EHRHARD 2004a, and EVERDING 2000. On Chos dpal bzang po, see also RAMBLE 2007: 710. For a detailed discussion of his life, see EHRHARD (forthcoming).

¹⁹⁰ See EHRHARD 2004a: 258 and 367, n. 90 and EVERDING 2000: 126–127 and 517–519. On the reign of Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan, see EVERDING 2000: 514–538.

¹⁹¹ I thank Franz-Karl Ehrhard in helping to obtain pictures of this biography and Hildegard Diemberger for sharing it. Recently, another forty-six-folio manuscript version of that biography has been published in the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 2* (vol. 55, pp. 221–311).

¹⁹² See the *Bla chen gyi rnam thar* (fols. 27b6–28a4) and EHRHARD (forthcoming). On the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po of sKyid grong, see EHRHARD 2004a.

¹⁹³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 539.5).

¹⁹⁴ See, for instance, the *Bo dong pañ chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 418.1) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 212.2–3 and 15–16).

Chapter Four

Further Sources on Ngor chen and His Biographies

4.1 Ngor chen's Biographies in Recent Catalogues

All the biographies mentioned so far are recorded in the *Bibliography of Sa-skyapa Literature* by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po et al., though they are mostly only referred to with descriptive titles:¹⁹⁵

- (1) the *Ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gi rnam thar mdor bsdus* by Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, the second abbot of Ngor
- (2) the *rDo rje 'chang gi rnam thar* by Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan
- (3) the *rDo rje 'chang gi rnam thar* by Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros
- (4) the *rDo rje 'chang gi rnam thar* by Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan
- (5) the *rDo rje 'chang gi rtogs brjod* by Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po
- (6) the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, the twenty-fifth abbot of Ngor

In addition, this bibliography contains an interesting entry stating that thirteen different biographies (*gsung rnam*) of Ngor chen were once available, including one written by Kong ston. A gloss specifies that their prints were once available in sDe dge, Mi nyag, and Mongolia.¹⁹⁶ According to this entry, we would also need to count a certain Kong ston among Ngor chen's biographers, though the entry for the only Kong ston recorded—Kong ston dBang phyug grub pa (b. 1443), a disciple and biographer of Go rams pa (1429–1489)—does not designate him as such.¹⁹⁷

An additional hint about another possible biography of Ngor chen is given by the catalogue to the works housed in the libraries of 'Bras spungs. It registers a twenty-four-folio biography, the *rDo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i rnam thar*, by a certain “monk” (*btsun pa*) bDe mchog dpal bzang.¹⁹⁸ Aside from Ngor chen, I have not come across any other Tibetan master with the name Kun dga' bzang po that is also referred to as Vajradhara in human form. Furthermore, we find a very interesting mention of a “secret biography” (*gsang ba'i rnam thar*) of Ngor chen in the life of Tshul khriims dpal bzang, the twenty-eighth abbot of Ngor. As recorded in Ngor chen's secret biography, the text refers to a prophecy made by Ngor chen regarding the future emergence of manifestations of Virūpa and the Five Supreme Masters of Sa skya (*sa skya gong ma rnam lnga*) as abbots of Ngor.¹⁹⁹ I am not sure, however, whether this secret biography refers to a separate

¹⁹⁵ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 54.14–15, 57.7–9, 72.10–12, 73.3–4, 73.4–5, and 114.18), respectively.

¹⁹⁶ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 437.10–13): *kong ston sogs mkhas pa mang pos mdzad pa'i ngor chen gyi gsung rnam mi 'dra ba bcu gsum* | «sde dge mi nyag sog yul sogs la par bzhugs» | *la pod brgya [= brgyad?] skor* |. The term *gsung rnam* seems to be a recent honorific form of *rnam thar*, as confirmed independently by two Sa skya mKhan pos.

¹⁹⁷ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 67.3–9). Another Kong ston active in the fifteenth century was, for instance, Kong ston mGon po rgyal mtshan (alias Kong ston Chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po), who acted as scribe of Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507); see CAUMANN 2015: 210, 395–399, and 406.

¹⁹⁸ See the 'Bras spungs *dkar chag* (p. 1555, no. 17555).

¹⁹⁹ See the *Tshul khriims dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (p. 401.3–4): *rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i gsang ba'i rnam thar las e waṃ gyi gdan sar rje btsun rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug dang | gong ma lnga'i rnam 'phrul thor bu 'ong tshul bkod pa bzhin* |. The Five Supreme Masters of Sa skya (*sa skya gong ma rnam lnga*) were Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182), rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), and 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280).

independent biography of Ngor chen. It probably could also refer to episodes from his life the nature of which were considered secret, such as spiritual experiences, which are generally not extensively outlined in biographical writing and reserved for secret biographies. This is suggested by the fact that the passage in question is also found in Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen in a section where the author reports on Ngor chen's experiences while in meditative equipoise (*mnyam gzhaq*) and also recounts some of Ngor chen's prophecies.²⁰⁰

In an annotation at the end of Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen, as translated above, we also encountered a certain Ye chen po whose Ngor chen biography should have been inserted in the collection of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters' lives, in case it is ever found later on. Here again we have a reference to a further Ngor chen biography, but I have not been able to identify who Ye (shes?) chen po actually was.

4.2 Autobiographical Information Contained in Ngor chen's Writings

Although he did not compose an autobiography, some details of Ngor chen's life can be learned from personal comments preserved among the biographies he wrote of his three main teachers: Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406), Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412), and Grub chen Buddhaśrī (1339–1420).²⁰¹ Other writings of Ngor chen are also of similar importance. For instance, with regard to his monastic training, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* is of special interest, as Ngor chen recorded in it the teachings he had received from his teachers along with their respective lines of transmission. Likewise, his collected letters contain important information attesting to the relationships he maintained with his disciples and patrons.²⁰² Further aspects of his life are also evident from the colophons he added to many of his works, which, in the best cases, specify the place and date of writing a work, as well as the circumstances leading to its composition.

4.3 Ngor chen in Biographies of His Disciples

As he was one of the Sa skya school's foremost tantric experts and Vinaya purists, Ngor chen attracted a large number of disciples, and it is thus that we find regular references to his religious activities in the biographies of his most prominent disciples. These references describe in the majority their religious training under Ngor chen, thereby adding important information not found in the latter's own biographies. They refer, in particular, to the situation in the early 1450s at Ngor.

The following list, which is not intended to be exhaustive, records those disciples whose biographies contain valuable details of Ngor chen's life:²⁰³

²⁰⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 509.3–510.2): (...) *rnal 'byor dbang phyug gi sprul pa'i gdan sa pa drug tsam dangl rje btsun gong ma lnga'i sprul pa'i gdan sa pa lnga tsam 'byung gsung ba sogs mtha' yas kyang re re nas brjod par ma nus sol.*

²⁰¹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1, *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar*, and *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1, respectively.

²⁰² See the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 3, pp. 861.4–863.6 and vol. 4, pp. 660.2–722.2).

²⁰³ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1–3, *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar*, *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar*, *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar*, *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar*, *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 1–2, *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar*, *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1–8, *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 1–3, and *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1–2, respectively.

- ❖ Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469), the second abbot of Ngor
- ❖ sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes (1397–1470)
- ❖ dPal ldan rdo rje (1411–1482), the fifth abbot of Ngor
- ❖ Gu ge Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486)
- ❖ Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478), the fourth abbot of Ngor
- ❖ Glang thang sPyan snga Kun dga' rdo rje (1424–1477/78), the fifth abbot of Nā lendra
- ❖ gSer mdog Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507)
- ❖ Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), the sixth abbot of Ngor
- ❖ Glang thang sPyan snga Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1432–1488), the seventh abbot of Nā lendra
- ❖ dKon mchog 'phel (1445–1514), the seventh abbot of Ngor

Another important work that illuminates aspects of Ngor chen's life is the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub.²⁰⁴ Although he was not a contemporary, Glo bo mKhan chen included in his life story detailed accounts of Ngor chen's three sojourns in his native land of Glo bo (1427–1428, 1436–1437, and 1447–1449).

4.4 Biographical Sketches of Ngor chen in Classical Literature

Alongside his independent full-length biographies, sketches of Ngor chen's life can also be found in religious histories (*chos 'byung*), Buddhist religious chronologies (*bsTan rtsis*), and other similar religious histories. The earliest biographical sketch is contained in the continuation of Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* history written by his disciple Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475). It focuses on Ngor chen's monastic training, in general, and his studies of the *Lam 'bras*, in particular, enumerating his major teachers.²⁰⁵ Another early sketch was included by Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1596) in his chronology of the Buddhist doctrine, the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed*, which he wrote between the years 1566 to 1587.²⁰⁶ Apparently, he based his account mainly on Ngor chen's biography by Mus chen, but added a few details. For instance, he estimates the size of the monastic communities that Ngor chen established in gTsang and mNga' ris and presents a more extensive list of his major disciples.²⁰⁷ A similar sketch is contained in the study of Indian and Tibetan traditions of Cakrasaṃvara by A mes zhabs, which he completed in 1638.²⁰⁸ This sketch cannot be considered an independent composition, however, because A mes zhabs copied it one-to-one from Mang thos' work. Prior to that, he had included a shorter sketch focussing exclusively on Ngor chen's studies, practice, and teaching of the *Lam 'bras* in his historical survey of that teaching cycle, completed in 1621.²⁰⁹ In the former work, A mes zhabs also presents a sketch of the life of Ngor chen's disciple and biographer Gu ge Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan that relates the account of Ngor chen's efforts to receive the special teaching of the Donkey-Faced Cakrasaṃvara (bDe mchog

²⁰⁴ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam*.

²⁰⁵ See the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (pp. 486.6–488.1).

²⁰⁶ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 212.20–216.14). For the dating of that work, see MARTIN 1997: 94, no. 181.

²⁰⁷ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 215.16–20 and 216.2–14), respectively.

²⁰⁸ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 227.6–230.6). On that work, see MARTIN 1997: 106, no. 218 and SOBISCH 2007: 292–293, no. 2.

²⁰⁹ See the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 202.3–203.4). On that work, see MARTIN 1997: 102–103, no. 206 and SOBISCH 2007: 330–333, no. 6.

bong zhal can) from the tantric adept Bla ma bSam gtan 'od zer.²¹⁰ A mes zhabs also included a longer sketch of Ngor chen's life in his history of the Mahākāla teachings, which he completed in 1641.²¹¹ With the focus on Ngor chen's relationship with different forms of Mahākāla, he relates various episodes from Ngor chen's life based on the latter's early biographies as well as Ngor chen's biography of his teacher Buddhaśrī. For instance, he clarifies the true paternity of Ngor chen's father—that is, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399), the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya—gives an account of Ngor chen's scriptural studies in the old libraries of Sa skya, mentions Ngor chen's commission of a set of *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī*, and describes the special role of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla (dPal mgon zhal bzhi pa) as the chief protector of Ngor Monastery.

Another interesting sketch is contained in the *Ngor chos 'byung*. This history of Buddhism was originally begun by dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor, and later completed through an extensive addendum by Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.²¹² After the latter had finished working on Ngor chen's biography in 1688, he evidently began writing the addendum to dKon mchog lhun grub's religious history, which he completed in 1692 at Ngor.²¹³ Thus his sketch can be considered a condensed version of his efforts in researching Ngor chen's life. Interestingly, he mentions one or two tiny details not found in his full-length study. For instance, he states that it was the goddess Uṣṇīṣavijayā who had revealed to Ngor chen that a certain Don grub would show him the site where he should establish his new monastic seat of Ngor.²¹⁴ By contrast, in his biography of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs only mentions that this revelation occurred in a dream.²¹⁵ He also specifies that Ngor chen bestowed full monastic ordination on more than twelve thousand monks, whereas in Ngor chen's biography he only refers to more than ten thousand.²¹⁶ Furthermore, he presents an abridged list of Ngor chen's disciples that includes two additional figures not mentioned in his full-length study, namely Grub mchog dKon mchog blo gros (1428–1507/08) and mNgon dga' Chos sde mKhan po dPal ldan sangs rgyas.²¹⁷

Much shorter accounts dealing with certain aspects of Ngor chen's life can also be found. For instance, we find such an early account in the summarising notes on the history of the *Lam 'bras* by 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568). It mainly focuses on two *sūtras* in which the Buddha, according to tradition, prophesied both Ngor chen's coming and his future attainment of Buddhahood.²¹⁸ Shākya mchog ldan, in a different kind of history, focused on Ngor chen's monastic foundations where the Pramāṇa tradition of g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal (1348–1414) had spread.²¹⁹

Later scholars continued to write biographical sketches of Ngor chen. Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802), for example, included a short account of some of Ngor chen's religious activities in his investigation of Buddhist philosophical systems.²²⁰

²¹⁰ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 233.3–235.2).

²¹¹ See the *mGon po chos 'byung* (pp. 259.6–265.2). On that work, see MARTIN 1997: 107, no. 221 and SOBISCH 2007: 358–361, no. 3.

²¹² See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (339.7–343.6). On that work, see MARTIN 1997: 112, no. 233.

²¹³ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (pp. 457.5–458.1).

²¹⁴ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 342.5). A mes zhabs also mentions that the site was prophesied to Ngor chen by Uṣṇīṣavijayā; see the *Dus 'khor chos 'byung* (p. 381.1–3).

²¹⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 524.5–6).

²¹⁶ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 341.7) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 511.3–5), respectively.

²¹⁷ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 343.4–6).

²¹⁸ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 150.1–5).

²¹⁹ See the *Chos 'khor rnam gzhag* (pp. 470.6–471.1).

²²⁰ See the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 211.3–6) and THUKEN LOSANG CHÖKYI NYIMA 2009: 179.

Similarly, 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892) included a short sketch in his study of abbatial histories in the section on Ngor Monastery.²²¹

4.5 Biographical Sketches of Ngor chen in Recent Compositions

Over the last four or five decades, numerous sketches of Ngor chen's life appeared in various works, such as in biographical compilations, Buddhist histories, catalogues, and dictionaries. Except for a few, however, they are not very informative and include mistaken information.

The most detailed and reliable sketches were compiled by mKhas btsun bzang po Rin po che (1920–2009) and gDong thog Rin po che bsTan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1933–2015).²²² The former included a long sketch in his biographical dictionary that he had extracted from the Ngor chen biography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.²²³ However, by ascribing that biography to dPal ldan don grub, the sixteenth abbot of Ngor, mKhas btsun bzang po mistakenly identified the author of his source.²²⁴ In an annotation at the end of his biographical sketch, mKhas btsun bzang po refers to other biographies of Ngor chen authored by the latter's disciples Mus chen and Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan. He also mentions works written by Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub and, once again, by dPal ldan don grub.²²⁵ It is not known whether Glo bo mKhan chen composed such a work, but, as mentioned above, he included in his autobiography detailed accounts of Ngor chen's three sojourns in Glo bo, to which mKhas btsun bzang po might refer.

In his history of the Sa skya school, gDong thog Rin po che begins his presentation of the abbatial history of Ngor with a well-informed sketch of Ngor chen's life.²²⁶ His primary source was Ngor chen's biographical sketch by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, to which he added some details from the one by Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho mentioned above. Much shorter and less informative sketches are also found in the following works:

- ❖ *Grags can mi sna* (pp. 468–470) = *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* (p. 751, s.v. *ngor chen kun dga'* bzang po)
- ❖ *sDe dge par khang gi dkar chag* 1 (pp. 301–302)
- ❖ *Bod yig tshig gter rgya mtsho* (p. 840)
- ❖ *Ming mdzod* (pp. 449–450)
- ❖ *Lam 'bras bla brgyud kyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 55–60) = *Lam 'bras dkar chag* (pp. 45–49)
- ❖ *Shes bya'i gter mdzod* (pp. 367–369) = *rNam thar mdor bsdu* (pp. 148–152) = *Mi nyag mgon po'i gsung rtsom phyogs bsgrigs* (pp. 88–90)
- ❖ *Sa skya'i chos 'byung* 1 (pp. 50.4–51.6)
- ❖ *Sa skya'i grub mtha'i rnam bzhag* (pp. 78–79.14)
- ❖ *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnam kyi dkar chag* (pp. 354–355)

²²¹ See the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (pp. 65.4–67.3).

²²² On the life and works of the late gDong thog Rin po che, see HEIMBEL 2007.

²²³ See KHETSUN SANGPO 1979: vol. xi, 391–409.

²²⁴ See KHETSUN SANGPO 1979: vol. xi, 402.4–7. Since Ngor chen's biography is followed by a work of dPal ldan don grub, the *rje btsun rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i lam 'bras kyi bka' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang gi gsal 'byed*, he obviously confused this text's colophon with the one of Ngor chen's biography; see Part Two, n. 119.

²²⁵ See KHETSUN SANGPO 1979: vol. xi, 409.13–16: *'di'i rnam par thar pa la'ang mang du snang stel gu ge pañ chen gyi gsung dang/ glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung dang/ bya bral dkon mchog rgyal mtshan dang/ dge slong dpal ldan don grub sogs kyi sbyar ba mang du snang goll*.

²²⁶ See the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung* 2 (pp. 204.1–214.4). For a translation, see DHONGTHOG RINPOCHE 2016: [125]–131.

- ❖ *Sa skya pa'i grub mtha' spyi bshad* (pp. 126–131)
- ❖ *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 9–10)

Among these sketches, the ones included in the catalogue to the works housed at the Mi rigs dpe mdzod khang (*Shes bya'i gter mdzod*) and the *Sa skya pa'i grub mtha' spyi bshad* deserve special mention since they are the most detailed accounts, even including a few episodes from Ngor chen's biographies.

However, some of these latter sketches contain a few problematic passages. For instance, some state that Ngor chen served as abbot of Sa bzang for nineteen years, though he only did so for about three years (1410–1412/13).²²⁷ Some also mention that Ngor chen engaged himself in spiritual practice at the hermitages of Na bza' brag phug, bSam gling, and E (waṃ ri khrod?), whereupon he founded Ngor Monastery at E waṃ ri khrod.²²⁸ Similarly, it is said that after Ngor chen's founding of Ngor in 1429, he went in 1430 to Na bza' brag phug, bSam gling, and E waṃ to teach.²²⁹ Both of these assertions are seemingly based on a misinterpretation of the corresponding passages from Ngor chen's biographies. According to them, Ngor chen was searching for a suitable place for his monastic foundation, examining in meditation a few existing Sa skya retreat sites, such as Na bza' brag phug and bSam gling. Both of these sites turned out to be unsuitable for his undertaking, but the mountain retreat of E waṃ chos ldan appeared clearly in his meditative examination.²³⁰

Another problem of many of those biographical sketches concerns the paternity of Ngor chen's father. In line with Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen, they introduce dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan (b. 1356) as his father, but not Ngor chen's true and secret father Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya.²³¹

²²⁷ See the *Grags can mi sna* (p. 469.3–7), *Ming mdzod* (pp. 449.21–450.2), *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 354.11–12), and *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, p. 9.15–17).

²²⁸ See the *Ming mdzod* (p. 450.2–7), *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 354.12–13), and *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, p. 9.17–10.5).

²²⁹ See the *Grags can mi sna* (p. 469.8–10).

²³⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 458.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 524.4–5).

²³¹ See the *Grags can mi sna* (p. 468.9–10), *sDe dge par khang gi dkar chag* 1 (p. 301.4–5), *Bod yig tshig gter rgya mtsho* (p. 840, s.v. *ngor chen kun dga' bzang po*), *Ming mdzod* (p. 449.9), *Lam 'bras bla brgyud kyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 55.5), *Shes bya'i gter mdzod* (p. 367.22), *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 354.5), and *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, p. 9.4).

Part Three

Childhood and Religious Training

Chapter One

Prophecies of Ngor chen's Appearance and Achieving of Buddhahood

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs opens his biography of Ngor chen by quoting at length two *sūtras* in which the Buddha, according to tradition, prophesied Ngor chen's coming and his future attainment of Buddhahood: the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* and *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*.¹ However, he quotes the first *sūtra* in a fragmentary or selective way by picking out only certain verses and skipping others, but presenting them as one citation; he even reverses the sequence of the *sūtra* by citing back to front.²

The quote from the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* begins with the prophecy of Ngor chen's future appearance: "At that time, an emanation of Lokanātha will manifest. At that time, the *bhikṣu* Kun dga' bzang po will appear."³ Analysing his entire quotation, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs concludes that Ngor chen was prophesied as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara and also as resembling *mahāsattvas* such as the *bodhisattva* Bhadrāpāla (bZang skyong).⁴

The citation from the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* begins with the prophecy of Ngor chen's Buddhahood:

I announce to the *saṃgha* of fully ordained monks:
Ānandabhadra [i.e., Kun dga' bzang po], upholder of my Dharma,
Having honoured six hundred million *sugatas*,

¹ For Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' quotations, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 477.3–479.1 and 479.1–479.4), respectively. For the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra*, see the *bKa' 'gyur dpe bsdur ma* 119 and P 769. For the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, see the *bKa' 'gyur dpe bsdur ma* 131 and P 781. Note that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs gives a different title for the first *sūtra* than that given in the *bKa' 'gyur*: 'Phags pa dge ba'i rtsa ba yongs su 'dzin pa byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod kyi mdo instead of 'Phags pa dge ba'i rtsa ba yongs su 'dzin pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Note also that a different Sanskrit title is given for the first *sūtra* in the *bKa' 'gyur* recension from sDe dge (D 101): *Kuśalamūlasaṃparigrahasūtra*. Both *sūtras* were also identified by STEARNS 2006: 245 and 654, n. 362–365.

² For the quotations from the fifth chapter of the first *sūtra*, see the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* (P 769, fols. 99a2, 99a5–8, 99b5–7, 100b1, 100b4, 100a8–100b1, 100b2–3, 100a1–2, and 100a3–4). For those from the ninth chapter of the second *sūtra*, see the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* (P 781, fol. 94a4–8).

³ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 477.3–4): *de tshe 'jig rten mgon po'i sprul pa sprull|| de tshe dge slong kun dga' bzang po 'byung||*. For the original Tibetan passage, see the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* (P 769, fols. 99a2).

⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 479.4–5).

Will become a conqueror in the future.⁵

His name will be Sāgarabuddhidhārin,
 [He] will also be known then as Abhijñāprāpta
 [In] the [buddha] field that is lovely to behold and perfectly pure [i.e.,]
 Anonata-Dhvajavajayantī.⁶

Among the prophecies of the great *śrāvakas*, these verses are given in the context of the prophesy given to Ānanda, and, consequently, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs concludes the identity of the mental continuum of Ānanda and Ngor chen.⁷ This identification seems to be illustrated by a miniature of Ānanda found at the beginning of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen that was printed as an individual volume at sDe dge. Its first page shows Buddha Śākyamuni in the centre, Ānanda on the left, and Ngor chen on the right.⁸

The citations from both *sūtras*, or any references to Ngor chen's appearance as having being prophesied by the Buddha, are completely absent from the contemporary biography of him written by his disciple Mus chen. Since the older Ngor chen biographies written by his other disciples aren't available, we don't know whether they have anything to say about those prophecies. And this time Sangs rgyas phun tshogs does not come to our help by referring to older sources that pronounce such an identification. Thus we have to ask when this identification of Ngor chen with the Kun dga' bzang po prophesied by the *sūtras* took place. An indication that it predates Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' composition is contained in a *Lam 'bras* history composed by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568) according to the teachings of Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–1566).⁹ It contains a short section on Ngor chen that already provides short citations from both *sūtras*, though they do vary to a certain extent from the originals.¹⁰ With regard to the dating of that work, Cyrus Stearns has pointed out that “according to his autobiography, Khyentsé wrote these works in 1559, after receiving the transmission of the Explication for Disciples [i.e., the *Slob bshad*] from Tsarchen near Shalu monastery.”¹¹ That observation shows that at least one hundred three years after Ngor chen's passing, he was identified as the monk prophesied by the *sūtras*. But as mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug recorded the teachings of his master Tshar chen, this identification might have been even older. Or, as he also drew on earlier historical sources, it might have originated within them.¹² Owing to those prophecies, one of Ngor

⁵ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 479.1): *ngas ni dge slong dge 'dun mos par byas [= bya]|| kun dga' bzang po nga yi chos 'dzin pa|| bde gshegs bye ba drug cu mchod byas nas|| ma 'ongs dus kyi tshé na rgyal bar 'gyur||*. For the original Tibetan passage, see the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* (P 781, fol. 94a4). For the corresponding verse in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, see WOGIHARA and TSUCHIDA 1934: 190.20–23. For the translation of Sanskrit *ārocayāmi* with Tibetan *mos par bya*, see NEGI 2003: vol. 10, 4517 (s.v. *mos par bya*).

⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 479.1–2): *de yi ming ni rgya mtsho blo 'dzin te|| mngon par shes thob ces kyang de na grags|| lta na sdug pa yongs su dag pa'i zhing|| ma bsnyal rgyal mtshan rgyal ba'i ba dan no||*. For the original Tibetan verse, see the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* (P 781, fol. 94a4–5). For the corresponding verse in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, see WOGIHARA and TSUCHIDA 1934: 190.24–191.1.

⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 479.5). See also the *Byin rlabs sprin phung* (fol. 1b2), the verse of praise that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs offered to Ngor chen.

⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 4–6* (fol. 1b) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 7* (p. 136).

⁹ On the composition of this work, see STEARNS 2006: 2–4. For its translation, see *Ibid.*: 129–251.

¹⁰ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 150.1–5). For its translation, see STEARNS 2006: 245–246.

¹¹ STEARNS 2006: 3. See also STEARNS 2001: 43.

¹² See STEARNS 2006: 3–4.

chen's common epithets became the One Prophesied by the Conqueror (*rgyal bas lung bstan pa*).¹³

Comparing the citations from both the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* in Ngor chen's biography and the *Lam 'bras* history with the *sūtra* itself, it is obvious that the original reading of the *sūtra* was considerably altered and one verse was apparently added. This finding is interesting because part of that passage is traditionally interpreted as the prophecy of a controversy between mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang (1385–1438) and Ngor chen. With regard to this controversy, mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug states:¹⁴

Even the denigration by Chos rje mKhas grub [stating] '[This] is not a *sūtra* [i.e., an authentic teaching]' was prophesied in the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra*: "Other angry, fierce, and extremely harsh *bhikṣus* will challenge that."

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs cites this part as:¹⁵

Whatever *bhikṣus* will appear in later times,
Other rough, fierce, and extremely harsh
Bhikṣus will challenge this.

He then adds a quote from two lines later in the *sūtra*:¹⁶

[They will say]: "This Dharma was not taught by the Conqueror."
Look how [those people] rejoice in the mistaken world!

The *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* reads:

Whatever *bhikṣus* will appear in later times,
[They] will be rough, fierce, and extremely harsh.¹⁷

[They will say]: "This Dharma was not taught by the Conqueror."
Look how [those people] rejoice in the mistaken world!¹⁸

Up to now, I was unable to identify the verse "Other (...) *bhikṣus* will challenge that (or this)" from the *Lam 'bras* history and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' quotation. It might have been added and the *yin* in the preceding verse (*rtsub dang gtum dang shin tu rtsub pa yin*) might have been changed to *yi* to join the next verse (*dge slong gzhan gyis de/'di la rtsod par 'gyur*).

¹³ See, for instance, the *mGon po chos 'byung* (pp. 259.6–260.1), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 3.2–3), *Mai tri don grub rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 34.5), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 202.4–5), *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 308.6), and *gSung rab la 'jug tshul* (p. 186.2–3).

¹⁴ *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 150.2–3): 'phags pa dge ba'i rtsa ba yongs su 'dzin pa'i mдор| (...) khro dang gtum dang shin tu rtsub pa yi|| dge slong gzhan gyis de la rtsod par 'gyur|| zhes chos rje mkhas grub pas mdo ma yin zhes skur pa 'debs pa'ang lung bstan pa dang (...). For the translation of this passage, see also STEARNS 2006: 245.

¹⁵ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 478.3–4): gang dag phyi dus dge slong rnam 'byung ba|| rtsub dang gtum dang shin tu rtsub pa yi|| dge slong gzhan gyis 'di la rtsod par 'gyur||.

¹⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 478.4): chos 'di rgyal bas gsungs pa ma yin zhes|| 'jig rten phyin ci log la kun dgar ltos||. By comparison with the *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* (P 769, fol. 100b4), the second line of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' verse reads *dgar* instead of *dga'*. This could be a play on words referring to Ngor chen's personal name Kun dga' bzang po and may suggest that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs intended that the line be understood as: "[This] worldly view is mistaken and [people saying like that] will lean on Kun dga' [bzang po]" or "[This] worldly view is mistaken and [people saying like that] shall look for Kun dga' [bzang po]."

¹⁷ *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* (P 769, fol. 100b1): gang dag phyi dus dge slong rnam 'byung ba|| rtsub dang gtum dang shin tu rtsub pa yin||.

¹⁸ *Kuśalamūlaparidharasūtra* (P 769, fol. 100b4): chos 'di rgyal bas gsungs pa ma yin zhes|| 'jig rten phyin ci log la kun dga' ltos||.

Chapter Two

Previous Lives

Under the second main heading of his biography of Ngor chen, “How [Ngor chen] performed in [his] previous lives deeds for the [Buddha’s] teachings,” Sangs rgyas phun tshogs compiled the information he was able to learn about Ngor chen’s previous lives from his written sources at hand as well as oral accounts.¹⁹ He cites a verse by Ngor chen’s disciple gZhon nu rgyal mchog (fl. 15th century), according to which Ngor chen had been the *bodhisattva* Dri ma med pa’i dpal in the presence of the Buddha, the *bodhisattva* ‘Dul ba’i dbang po in Tuṣita, and the *bodhisattva* gSang ba’i rgya mtsho in India.²⁰ He also quotes from the biography of Ngor chen by Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, who states that Ngor chen had for thirteen lifetimes continuously been born as a *paṇḍita*, clarifying the Buddha’s teachings in India.²¹ According to “mKhan chen Legs ’byung,” a reference to Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456–1532), Ngor chen remembered that he had been born as fourteen Indian *paṇḍitas* and *siddhas*.²² According to some oral accounts (*gsung sgros*), Ngor chen and Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486) had appeared together in a former life in India.²³

With regard to Ngor chen’s previous lives, similar information is found in an inscription on a thangka depicting Ngor chen surrounded by lineage masters. The inscription opens with the aforementioned verse by gZhon nu rgyal mchog, continues with the prediction of his future attainment of Buddhahood from the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, and also records his thirteen lifetimes as an Indian *paṇḍita*. The thangka was commissioned in 1520 by lHa mchog seng ge (1468–1535), the ninth abbot of Ngor, and consecrated by Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453–1524), the eighth abbot of Ngor.²⁴ Its inscription attests that the identification of Ngor chen with the Kun dga’

¹⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 479.5–6): *gnyis pa sku skye ba snga ma rnam su bstan pa la bya ba byas tshul ni/*.

²⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 479.6). On gZhon nu rgyal mchog, see Part Four, 10.

²¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 479.6–480.2).

²² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 480.2). A similar statement can be found in Glo bo mKhan chen’s biography of his teacher Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan (d. 1476), where he identifies one of those fourteen *paṇḍitas* as sByang dka’ zla ba; see the *Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 3b2–3). However, in his biography of Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge, Glo bo mKhan chen mentions that Ngor chen only recalled twelve previous lives; see the *Go rams pa’i rnam thar* 7 (p. 153.10–12).

²³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 480.2).

²⁴ The inscription at the bottom of the painting reads as follows: *om svasti// rgyal ba’i mdun na dri ma med pa’i dpal/ dga’ ldan gnas na dul ba’i dbang po stel/ phags pa’i yul du gsang ba’i rgya mtsho nyid/ kha ba can ’dir kun dga’ bzang por grags/ kun dga’ bzang po nga yi bstan pa ’dzin/ bde gshegs bye ba drug bcu mchod byas tel/ ma ’ongs dus kyi tsho na rgyal bar ’gyur/ ces gsungs rgyal bas lung bstan de la ’dud/ skye ba bcu gsum bar ma chad pa ru/ mkhas pa paṇḍi ta ru ’khrungs gyur tel/ ’gro mangs thar pa’i lam la rab bkod nas/ phags yul bstan pa gsal mdzad de la ’dud/ gzhi dang snying po me tog gis brygan pa zhes bya ba rgyal ba’i zhing khams mchog gi mnga’ bdag chen po nyid bdag sogs gdul bya tha mal pa’i ngor so so skye bo’i tshul bstan pa rdo rje slob dpon dmigs pa med pa’i thugs rje chen po dang ldan pa chos nyid kyi cha mngon par gzigs pa las ’bras kyi tshul ji lta ba bzhin du mkhyen cing dge ba rgyun ma ’chad pa bsgrub pa la brtson bas gdul bya rnam kyang gcig tu dge ba [three characters illegible] gs pa kho na la ’god par mdzad pa don gyi slad du mtshan nas smos na kun dga’i zhabs pad bzang po ’khor lo’i ri mo can la phyag ’tshal zhing skyabs su mchi’o/ byin gyi brlab tu gsol/ ces pa ’di rig pa ’dzin pa lha mchog seng ges ’brug lo bzhengs/ dge ba byang chub chen por bsngol/ This transliteration is based on pictures of the thangka kindly provided by David Jackson. According to JACKSON 2011: 19, the inscription on the back reads as follows: *rgyal ba rdo rje ’chang chen po mun [= kun] dga’ bzang po’i sku ’di la/ rig ’dzin dang byang sems bskor ba’i bris sku ’di la rje bla ma mus pa chen po sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rab gnas bzhugs/* For a discussion of that painting, see *Ibid.*: 18–20, fig. 1.19.*

bzang po from the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikāsūtra* predates the aforementioned composition of the history of the *Lam 'bras* by 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug.

The biography of Ngor chen that was printed as an independent volume in sDe dge includes two small images in the margins of its first folios. The first folio shows Buddha Śākyamuni in the centre with Ānanda to the left and Ngor chen to the right. The second folio depicts Nāgārjuna to the left and Āryadeva to the right; the third folio, Asaṅga to the left and Vasubandhu to the right; the fourth folio, Dignāga to the left and Dharmakīrti to the right; and the fifth folio, Guṇaprabha to the left and dPal ldan chos skyong to the right.²⁵ The last figure depicted can be identified as the Indian *mahāsiddha* Virūpa, who was formerly known by his ordination name Śrī Dharmapāla, before he turned into Virūpa, the bad or ugly one.²⁶ I at first considered whether those miniatures were intended to indicate some of Ngor chen's previous lives as Indian *paṇḍitas*, but they actually show most *paṇḍitas* from the standard group Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Ones (*rgyan drug mchog gnyis*), missing only one of the Two Supreme (*mchog gnyis*).

Entering the domain of Tibetan history, Ngor chen is said to have been born as dPyil (or dBuil) sgom Tshul khriims rgyal po, who had studied the *Lam 'bras* under rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216). This connection is illustrated by a vision Ngor chen had, indicating whether he was allowed to teach the *Lam 'bras* or not. In this vision, a light ray emanated from the hand of Grags pa rgyal mtshan and descended down into Ngor chen's, exemplifying their special karmic bond.²⁷ Moreover, Ngor chen is portrayed as having been born in the form of many other major disciples of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) and his two sons, Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and Grags pa rgyal mtshan, who upheld the profound teachings of their masters, which is illustrated by a verse from the Ngor chen biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita:²⁸

Glorious Sa skya pa [i.e., Sa chen], the personification of compassion,
Pinnacle of Merit [i.e., bSod nams brtse mo], genuinely comprehending all
knowable things,
Holder of High Reputation [i.e., Grags pa rgyal mtshan], the sovereign of the
Vajrayāna,

²⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fols. 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7 (pp. 136, 138, 140, 142, and 144).

²⁶ See STEARNS 2006: 138 and 142 and STEARNS 2009: 17 and 21. For a biography of Virūpa, see STEARNS 2006: 138–152 and STEARNS 2009.

²⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 480.3–4).

²⁸ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 480.4–5): *de la sogs pa dpal ldan sa skya pa yab sras gsum gyi gsung gi gsang mdzod zab mo 'dzin pa'i thugs sras du mar 'khrungs tel gu ge paṇ chen gyis| dpal ldan thugs rje'i bdag nyid sa skya pa|| shes bya mtha' dag legs gzigs bsod nams rtse|| rdo rje thegs pa'i mnga' bdag grags pa 'dzin|| khyod kyi mkhyen brtse las 'khrungs sras kyi gtso|| zhes gsungs so||* According to Khang gsar rGan lags 'Jam dbyangs ye shes (Ngor ma dgon, 31 January 2009), Sa chen is equated in this verse with Avalokiteśvara, bSod nams rtse mo with Mañjuśrī, and Grags pa rgyal mtshan with Vajrapāṇi, forming the trinity of the Rigs gsum mgon po. Based on a prophecy by the Bengali *paṇḍita* Atiśa (980–1054) that at the site of the future monastery of Sa skya one manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, seven of Mañjuśrī, and one of Vajrapāṇi would appear, the following identification of Sa skya masters was made by mKhan chen Chos rnam rgyal (b. 1575): Sa chen was recognised as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, Kun dga' 'bar (Sa chen's eldest son), bSod nams rtse mo, Grags pa rgyal mtshan, dPal chen 'od po (Sa chen's youngest son; 1150–1203), Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), Zangs tsha bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1184–1239), and Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (1235–1280) as manifestations of Mañjuśrī, and 'Gro mgon Phyag na rdo rje (1239–1267) as a manifestation of Vajrapāṇi; see the *bsTan pa dang bstan 'dzin gyi lo rgyus* (p. 132.8–17). On this prophecy, see also the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 24.2–25.2). For a discussion of Sa chen's manifestations, see also the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (pp. 109.2–110.2). For the translation of this passage, see STEARNS 2006: 213–214.

[Ngor chen] is the main [spiritual] son born out of your wisdom and loving kindness.

Furthermore, Ngor chen is also identified as a manifestation of Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251).²⁹

In contrast with Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' presentation, as in the case of Ngor chen's prediction by the *sūtras*, Ngor chen's previous lives were not discussed by Ngor chen's contemporaneous biographer Mus chen. This might have been due to various conceivable reasons that we do not know for sure and probably never will know. But Mus chen, having studied under Ngor chen for many years from their first meeting in 1424 until his teacher's demise in 1456, surely would have heard or known about those previous lives. One plausible reason for his silence would be Ngor chen's disapproval of attributing to him such an exalted background. By contrast, through his *sūtra* citations and his compilation of references to Ngor chen's previous lives, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs clearly emphasises the exceptional position of Ngor chen, which was one of his main aims for writing the first two chapters of his biography of Ngor chen.

²⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 508.2). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 514.6–515.2) and *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 65.5).

Chapter Three

Birth and Family Background

Ngor chen was born in 1382 at Sa skya, and, initially, the true identity of his real father seems to have been deliberately concealed. This is illustrated, for instance, by Ngor chen's contemporary biography by his chief disciple Mus chen, who followed the officially approved version of that story. According to that work, Ngor chen's alleged father was dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan (b. 1356),³⁰ a lay servant holding the rank of "great attendant" (*nye gnas chen po*) of the Sa skya tshogs.³¹ Grub pa yon tan's family line belonged to the Cog ro lineage of 'Bring mtshams whose members had moved to the area of Sa skya, where they lived as nomads in such places as Ga ra.³² In the course of time, they rose to the position of personal valets (*gsol ja ba*) to the bDag chen bZhi thog pa, which, as will be shown below, can either refer to the abbot of Sa skya or the head lama of the bZhi thog bla brang. According to A mes zhabs (1597–1659), Grub pa yon tan belonged to the gCi khung sgo pa lineage from which the valets of Sa skya originated.³³ He also achieved another position in Sa skya's monastic administration, being promoted to the rank of great attendant of the Sa skya tshogs. Members of his family also served at other residences (*bla brang*) of Sa skya such as the Bla brang Shar. It was Drung chen bDe legs, a brother of Grub pa yon tan and the father of Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478),

³⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 483.4).

³¹ The *gNas mchog sa skya* (p. 168.1–8) contains an interesting description of a courtyard called Ser skya tshogs. At this place both the monastic and lay community came together for Buddhist teachings on special occasions. The courtyard was overlooked by the throne of Sa skya Pañdita from which members of the 'Khon family had to give their first public teaching: 'di'i nye 'dabs don la che 'don chen mo sogs kyi skabs su dam chos bdud rtsi 'thung ba'i ser skya mang du 'du ba'i gnas ser skya tshogs zhes grags pa/ sa skya pañ chen gyi drangs nges chos kyi bdud rtsi lus can sgrib pa'i nad kun 'joms pa mdzad pa'i chos khri chen po deng sang gi bar du gdung rgyud [= bryud] rim par byon pa rnams kyi skal ldan 'dul bya'i tshogs la chos srid kyi sgo thog mar phye bar mdzad pa'i bzhugs khri mkhas pa zil gnon gyi chos khri yongs grags la chos khri thang mo che zhes mtshan gyi dge legs dang ldan pa 'di nyid la (...). According to Phan bde mKhan Rin po che and his contacts in Sa skya (gZhis ka rtse, 06 February), the Ser skya tshogs is also known as Sa skya tshogs. This courtyard was located just south of the bZhi thog pho brang; see SCHOENING 1990: 34–35, Map 10 (no. 15). FERRARI 1958: 150–151, n. 501 refers to this place as a stone-garden and gives the throne as the one of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa: "His chair (c'os k'ri) is still preserved in a great stone-garden (*rdo 'ts'al*) now called Sa skya ts'ogs, to the southeast of the bZi t'og; [...]." SCHOENING 1990: 47, n. 14 refers to this place as follows: "The Chos-khri-thang was later known as the 'Sa-skya Tshogs,' which is represented in Map 10 (...)." In the index to this map, *ibid.*: 34 (no. 15) states: "Chos-khri Chen mo: with a gold roof and looking over the Sa-skya Tshogs, the Sa-skya gathering place [...]." He extracted this information from the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 172–173): *de'i shar lhor 'phags pa rin po che'i chos khri thang chen deng sang sa skya tshogs su grags pa'i rdo gcal chen mo'i dbus nal 'phags pa rin po ches drang nges kyi chos 'khor bskor ba'i sa dangl gdung bryud rim par byon pa rnams che 'don mdzad sa'i chos khri chen po'i (...)*. Apparently, the Sa skya tshogs was also known as Tshogs chen mo. We encounter this term in a work by A mes zhabs describing the enthronisation (*khri r'don*) of his son Ngag dbang bsod nams dbang phyug (1638–1685). His enthronisation took place in the Tshogs chen mo; see the *Khri r'don byas skabs kyi deb bsgrigs* (pp. 254.2 and 255.4–5). On this ceremony, see also the *A mes zhabs kyi rtogs brjod* (pp. 248.1–263.3). In particular, see the *A mes zhabs kyi rtogs brjod* (p. 252.4–5). In addition, see also the *A mes zhabs kyi rtogs brjod* (pp. 252.6–253.1, 255.1, 257.1, 502.4, and 518.4–5). Ngor chen mentions that the installation of his teacher Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan as the head of the Bla brang Shar as well as the accompanying celebrations were held in a place called Sa skya'i tshogs po, which might be another reference to the Sa skya tshogs; see the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 226.4–12). For images of the Sa skya tshogs, see pls. 41–43.

³² VITALI 2004: 18, map locates the area of 'Bring mtshams to the south-east of Sa skya, north of Sikkim, and north-east of Bhutan. Ga ra was an area to the north of Sa skya; see CASINELLI and EKVAL 1969: [38], Map 4 (no. 13). On the area of Ga ra, see also *ibid.*: 111.

³³ See the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.1): *yongs grags kyi yab sa skya ba'i gsol ja ba'i bryud pa gci khung sgo pa nye gnas grub pa yon tan yin par bshad kyangl*.

the fourth abbot of Ngor, who served during the same period in the Bla brang Shar as personal attendant (*gsol dpon*) of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406). By that time, more than ten generations had passed since members of that family had begun working at Sa skya.³⁴

Ngor chen's alleged father and his paternal lineage are introduced by Mus chen in the following way:³⁵

The ancestry of this [Lord] was the Cog ro of 'Bring mtshams. [His] paternal forefathers had moved from 'Bring mtshams into the direction of Sa skya, living a nomadic lifestyle at such [places] as Ga ra. Gradually, [they] became the personal valets of the bDag chen gZhi thog pa. In particular, the father of this Lord was dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan, the great attendant of the Sa skya tshogs.

This version of Ngor chen's paternity, however, was a fiction. Citing a verse from the biography of Ngor chen by Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros (b. 1433), Sangs rgyas phun tshogs introduces another much higher-ranking figure as Ngor chen's true father, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399), the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1364–1399). His discussion is arranged according to three levels of paternity: "outward" (*phyi*), "internal" (*nang*), and "secret" (*gsang*).³⁶

The social grouping and descent line of this Lord was in the excellent lineage known as Cog ro or Cog gru, which had been the maternal uncle [lineage] of the Great Kings and in which many [great masters], such as [the great early translator] Cog ro Klu'i rgyal mtshan, had appeared. [His] paternal forefathers had moved from 'Bring 'tshams into the direction of Sa skya, living a nomadic lifestyle at such [places] as Ga ra. Gradually, [they] became the personal valets of the bDag chen gZhi thog pa. In particular, the father of this Lord according to outward appearances was dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan, the great attendant of the Sa skya

³⁴ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 1 (p. 518.1–3), *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 618.3–619.1), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 9.6–10.1).

³⁵ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 432.6–433.2): 'di'i rigs ni 'bring mtshams kyi cog ro zhes bya ba yin la| yab mes gong ma rnams 'bring mtshams nas sa skya phyogs su byon tel ga ra la sogs par 'brog mdzad cing bzhugs pa las rim gyis bdag chen gZhi thog pa'i gsol ja bar gyur pa yin la| khyad par rje 'di nyid kyi yab ni sa skya tshogs kyi nye gnas chen po dpon tshang grub pa yon tan zhes bya ba yin zhing|.

³⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 482.2–5): rje 'di'i rigs dang gdung ni| rgyal po chen po'i sku zhang du gyur ba cog ro'am cog grur grags ba cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan la sogs pa mang du byung ba'i brgyud pa bzang po'ol| yab mes gong ma rnams 'bring 'tshams nas sa skya phyogs su byon tel ga ra la sogs par 'brog mdzad cing bzhugs pa las rim gyis bdag chen gZhi thog pa'i gsol ja bar gyur pa yin la| khyad par rje 'di nyid kyi phyi ltar gyi yab ni| sa skya tshogs kyi nye gnas chen po dpon tshang grub pa yon tan zhes bya ba dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i drung nas zhus pa'i yongs rdzogs dge bsnyen yin cing| nang ltar na bdag chen gZhi thog pa kun dga' rin chen yin tel grub chen srad pa kun blos| phyi ltar nye gnas chen po grub pa'i sras|| sbas pa'i yab ni bdag chen kun rin yin|| dpal ldan kun dga'i rigs brgyud sa skya pa|| dpal ldan sa skya pa la gsol ba 'debs|| zhes gsungs| nges don gsang ba ltar na| gser 'od dam par| sku la rus pa khrag med cing|| zhes sogs gsungs pa ltar| yab yum gyi tshul bstan pa tsam ma gtogs sprul par snang stel. On Cog ro Klu'i rgyal mtshan and his translation activities, see the *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* (pp. 782–783, s.v. cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan). *gSer 'od dam pa* is short for the *gSer 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po* (*Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtreन्द्रarājāh*); see the *bKa' gyur dpe bsdur ma* 585 and P 176. The verse is cited from the second chapter on the lifespan of the *tathāgata*, the *De bzhin gshegs pa'i sku tshe'i tshad bstan pa*; see the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtreन्द्रarājāh* (P176, fol. 6a2–3): *drang srong chen po'i ring bsrel ni|| yungs 'bru tсам zhes bya ba med|| sku la rus pa khrag med na|| ring bsrel yod par ga la 'gyur||* With regard to Ngor chen's paternity, A mes zhabs differentiates between Grub pa yon tan as Ngor chen's commonly known father (*yongs grags kyi yab*) and Kun dga' rin chen as his actual father (*don gyi yab*); see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.1–2). On Ngor chen's father, see also the *'Bel gtam* (p. 505.4–5), DAVIDSON 1981: 82, and JACKSON 2010a: 177. For an important study on Tibetan terms for descent (e.g., *rigs*, *rus*, and *cho 'brang*) and their implications, see SAMUELS 2016.

tshogs. [He] was a “complete layman” who had taken [his vows] from dPal ldan Bla ma dam pa. Inwardly, [the true father of the Lord] was bDag chen gZhi thog pa Kun dga’ rin chen, as is stated by Grub chen Srad pa Kun blo: “Outwardly, [he] was the son of the great attendant Grub pa. [His] concealed father was bDag chen Kun rin. [He belonged to] the lineage of the glorious Kun dga’ [snying po], the Sa skya pa. [I] offer supplications to the glorious Sa skya pa.” Secretly, in accord with the definitive meaning, apart from just pretending [to have] father and mother, [he] appeared as an emanation like it is stated in such [sūtras] as the *gSer ’od dam pa*: “[His] body is without bones and blood.”

Reading through Ngor chen’s biographies, we can find many passages that immediately suggest and support the paternity of Kun dga’ rin chen. These indirect hints are manifested in episodes that reveal the preferential treatment Ngor chen received from Kun dga’ rin chen, which, otherwise, would not have been devoted to an ordinary valet child:

- ❖ He is said to have been brought up with a great attention given to holding on his behalf ceremonies in Sa skya’s great monastic assembly to avert any bad influences that might arise in the future (*sku rim*).³⁷
- ❖ In 1387, when Ngor chen reached his sixth year, Kun dga’ rin chen had to leave Sa skya. But prior to that, he called on Shar chen, one of the most prominent masters of Sa skya, to look after the promising boy and entrusted him into his care.³⁸
- ❖ It was also Kun dga’ rin chen who literally opened for Ngor chen the doors to the old libraries of Sa skya. Having studied more than six hundred eighty scriptures in the Bla brang Shar, Ngor chen approached Kun dga’ rin chen with the request to allow him to study the old scriptures housed in the sGo rum temple. Accordingly, Kun dga’ rin chen instructed the temple’s caretaker to grant Ngor chen access and allow him to borrow scriptures. This enabled Ngor chen to study over three thousand scriptures from the sGo rum over a period of three years.³⁹

Straightforward evidence for Kun dga’ rin chen’s paternity is preserved in form of another citation, this time from the biography of Ngor chen written by Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan. It is told by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs immediately after the first episode on the ceremonies performed for Ngor chen’s well-being: “In doing so, [Ngor chen] became known as the son of Ta dben chen po gZhi thog pa. [This I] have heard from his house servant.”⁴⁰ Another attestation of Kun dga’ rin chen’s paternity can be found in a statement occurring in the biography of sNgags ’chang Kun dga’ rin chen (1517–1584), the twenty-third throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1534–1584), where Ngor chen is recognised as a member of the ’Khon lineage of Sa skya.⁴¹ Based on all this evidence, we

³⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 484.4–5).

³⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 434.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 485.4–6).

³⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 443.3–444.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 503.5–504.4).

⁴⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 484.5): *de ltar byed pa yang <rta wen> [= ta dben] chen po gZhi thog pa’i sras yin par grags zhes khong pa’i gzims g.yog pa’i ngag las thos zhes rjes sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyis gsungs|.*

⁴¹ See the *Kun dga’ rin chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 172.4–5): *’khon dkon mchog rgyal po| rje btsun gong ma lngal dpal ldan bla ma| theg chen chos rje| rdo rje ’chang kun dga’ bzang po| sa lo chen po sogs ’khon sa skya pa’i gdung brgyud dam pa rnam kyi dus dran gyi mchod par|.* For a similar passage, see also the *Kun dga’ rin chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 210.2–3). Note that in this latter passage Ngor chen is only referred to by his common epithet rDo rje ’chang.

can thus be sure that Ngor chen was indeed the illegitimate son of Sa skya's throneholder Kun dga' rin chen, who was conceived out of wedlock in an affair Kun dga' rin chen had with the wife of his valet Grub pa yon tan.

Ngor chen's mother was bSod nams dpal 'dren (b. 1358).⁴² She was the daughter of a certain dPon Seng ge of the lower Shab district (Shab smad), who served as *dpon skya* (lay official) of Sa skya's Rin chen sgang bla brang.⁴³ Similar to her husband, she was a lay practitioner, but had taken from Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375) fewer vows as a “laywoman who observes a few [precepts]” (*sna 'ga' spyod pa'i dge bsnyen ma*). She is introduced by Mus chen in the following way:⁴⁴

[His] mother was bSod nams dpal 'dren, a daughter of dPon Seng of lower Shab, who was a *dpon skya* of the Bla brang Rin chen sgang pa.

By comparison, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs provides us with slightly more information on her background:⁴⁵

[His] mother was bSod nams dpal 'dren, a manifestation of White Tārā. [She] was the daughter of Ma dpon Seng ge, whose place of birth was the lower region of Shab [and] who was a *dpon skya* of the Bla brang Rin chen sgang pa. She was a “laywoman observing a few [precepts]” who had taken [her vows] from dPal ldan Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan. As stated by mKhas pa Kun blo: “[His] mother was bSod nams dpal 'dren, the supreme manifestation of White Tārā, born at Sa skya.”

Grub pa yon tan and bSod nams dpal 'dren had at least two more sons, both younger than Ngor chen. One of them was dPon ne bSod nams dpal, who pursued the family's traditional career as valet.⁴⁶ Another more prominent son was the Sa skya scholar gZhon nu seng ge. He is clearly identified as the younger brother of Ngor chen in the biography of sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes (1397–1470). For instance, when Kun dga' ye shes took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as ordaining preceptor in the bZhi thog bla brang of Sa skya in 1421, his younger brother (*gcung po*) Chos rje gZhon nu seng ge acted as ceremonial master.⁴⁷ Though not much seems to be known about gZhon nu seng ge and his monastic career, the scattered information contained in Tibetan sources suggests that he was a prominent master active at both Sa skya and Ngor. For instance, while at Sa skya from 1417 until 1421, Kun dga' ye shes received a huge amount of teachings from him. Their enumeration reveals that he had authored a commentary on

⁴² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 483.4).

⁴³ Shab refers to a district in gTsang located to the west of Sa skya and east of gZhis ka rtse. Shab is also the name of a river, being a branch of the Yar klungs gstang po. For the location of Shab, see CASSINELLI and EKVALL 1969: [38], Map 4 (no. 2) and SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: [299], Map A. For the location of the Shab river, see CASSINELLI and EKVALL 1969: [34], Map 2. For further information on the Shab district, see *Ibid.*: 99 and 103–106. The term *dpon skya* has also been translated as “Master of Transport” or “state servants;” see DARGAY 1998: 182 and PETECH 1990: 135, respectively.

⁴⁴ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 433.2): *yum ni bla brang rin chen sgang pa'i dpon skya shabs [= shab] smad kyi dpon seng zhes bya ba'i sras mo bsod nams dpal 'dren bya ba yin nol.*

⁴⁵ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 483.2–4): *yum ni sgrol ma dkar mo'i rnam 'phrul bla brang rin chen sgang pa'i dpon skya shab kyi smad skye yul ma [= mi?] dpon seng ge zhes bya ba'i sras mo bsod nams dpal 'dren zhes bya pa| dpal ldan bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi drung du zhus pa'i sna 'ga' spyod pa'i dge bsnyen ma yin nol| de skad du mkhas pa kun blos| yum gyur sgrol ma dkar mo'i sprul pa mchog| sa skya'i zhabs 'khrungs bsod nams dpal 'dren yin|| zhes sol.*

⁴⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 434.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 485.4).

⁴⁷ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 342.17–343.6). For further references to gZhon nu seng ge as younger brother of Ngor chen, see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 344.7, 345.19–20, and 350.10).

the *sDom gsum rab dbye* of Sa skya Paṇḍita.⁴⁸ As pointed out by David Jackson, he was one of four masters who, according to Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507), wrote “four authoritative great commentaries” (*tshad thub ’grel chen bzhi*).⁴⁹ In enumerations of those masters, gZhon nu seng ge is addressed by the title of *las chen*, which further attests to his high ranking position at Sa skya.⁵⁰ Moreover, he pursued studies under Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449) at gSang phu, where Kun dga’ ye shes had met him for the first time.⁵¹ Later on, dPal ldan rdo rje (1411–1482), the fifth abbot of Ngor, studied under gZhon nu seng ge at Sa skya. Subsequently, he accompanied gZhon nu seng ge as attendant to Ngor and was introduced by him to Ngor chen.⁵² Besides, we encounter gZhon nu seng ge also as timekeeper in ordination ceremonies performed at Ngor. When Byams chen Rab ’byams pa Sangs rgyas ’phel (1411–1485) took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as presiding abbot, mKhas pa gZhon seng functioned as timekeeper.⁵³ Similarly, gCung gZhon nu seng ge acted in 1451 as timekeeper in the monastic ordination ceremony of ’Jam dbyangs Kun dga’ chos bzang (1433–1503), which was again presided over by Ngor chen.⁵⁴

Along with gZhon nu seng ge, it is important to note that numerous other eminent Sa skya masters emerged among the family line of Grub pa yon tan. This suggests that this family might have had acquired a position much higher than that of ordinary valets. For instance, six of the first twelve Ngor abbots can directly be linked with that family:

- ❖ Kun dga’ dbang phyug (1424–1478), the fourth abbot, was the son of Drung chen bDe legs, the brother of Grub pa yon tan and personal attendant of Shar chen.⁵⁵
- ❖ dKon mchog ’phel (1445–1514), the seventh abbot, was the son of dPon ne bKra shis legs pa, the son of Ngor chen’s younger half-brother dPon ne bSod nams dpal. He was born at Gu ra bDe ldan steng of Sa skya.⁵⁶
- ❖ lHa mchog seng ge (1468–1535), the ninth abbot, was born into the family of Ngor chen’s seeming father as son of dPon ne Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan.⁵⁷
- ❖ dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot, was the son of Kun grub dar and lHa mo bu ’dren, the niece of dKon mchog ’phel. He was born at the *gzims khang* called gNyan ’og of Sa skya’s gNyan bla brang.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ See the *Kun dga’ ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 344.5–345.19).

⁴⁹ See JACKSON 1983b: 14–15.

⁵⁰ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 246.6–7), *Pod chen drug gi ’bel gtam* (pp. 257.6–258.3), and *Zhen pa rang grol* (p. 361.2–3). See also JACKSON 1983b: 14–15 and JACKSON 2010a: 177.

⁵¹ See the *Kun dga’ ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 345.21–346.1).

⁵² See the *dPal ldan rdo rje’i rnam thar* (pp. 568.5–569.3). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 12.1).

⁵³ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba’i nyin byed* (p. 226.9–11).

⁵⁴ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba’i nyin byed* (p. 237.6–9). From his biographical sketch it is evident that Kun dga’ ye shes’ monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) refers to his taking of novice-monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*) vows.

⁵⁵ See the *Kun dga’ dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1* (p. 518.1–6), *Kun dga’ dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2* (pp. 618.3–619.4), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 9.6–10.1).

⁵⁶ See the *dKon mchog ’phel gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 738.5–6), *dKon mchog ’phel gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 812.2–3), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 15.1).

⁵⁷ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 16.5) and *lHa mchog seng ge’i rnam thar* (p. 128.2–5).

⁵⁸ See the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 178.4–179.5), *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 235.4–236.1), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 20.5–6). On the gNyan bla brang, the residence of gNyan ston Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan, see the *Sa skya’i dkar chag* (p. 136.3–7), *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 75a4–6), and SCHOENING 1990: 16, 38, and 44.

- ❖ Sangs rgyas seng ge (1504–1569), the eleventh abbot, was born into the lineage of Grub pa yon tan as the son of dPon ne Tshe dbang dpal 'byor. He was born at Gu ra bDe ldan steng.⁵⁹
- ❖ dKon mchog dpal ldan (1526–1590), the twelfth abbot, was the son of lHa mo dar, the younger brother of dKon mchog lhun grub, and dPal ldan bu dga', the daughter of dPon ne Tshe dbang dpal 'byor. He was born at gNyan Khang gsar.⁶⁰

It is apparent from this list that most fathers bear the title *dpon ne*. Ngor chen's apparent father is given with the likely similar title *dpon tshang*. Further work needs to be done to establish whether these titles might have referred to some special position within Sa skya occupied by members of Grub pa yon tan's family.

When Ngor chen was conceived, his alleged father Grub pa yon tan was in his twenty-seventh year and his mother in her twenty-fifth. At that time, a certain dGe slong Tshul bkras,⁶¹ who was a *siddha* of rDo rje rnam 'joms, dreamt that light rays of different colours radiated out from the copula of the reliquary shrines of the Five Supreme Masters of Sa skya and, in particular, lots of white light from among the copula of that of rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan.⁶² All this light struck and penetrated the body of bSod nams dpal 'dren, who was sleeping on the veranda of a building close to the Sa skya tshogs.⁶³ Thereafter, dGe slong Tshul bkras approached Ngor chen's future mother and prophesied that the child she had conceived would become a saintly being and advised her to take good care of it. Thus bSod nams dpal 'dren invited Bla ma Yon tan dpal from the hermitage of Byas 'gyur.⁶⁴ This master was the abbot of the Sron monastic community with whose masters Grub pa yon tan's forefathers had maintained a doner-preceptor donee relationship (*yon mchod kyi 'brel*) when they were still living as nomads.⁶⁵ Bla ma Yon tan dpal had gained mastery over Bhairava and Ngor chen's future mother requested from him many times the empowerments of Bhairava and Amitāyus. Later on, when Ngor chen was born, Yon tan dpal was again invited to Sa skya. He bestowed the

⁵⁹ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 21.5–6) and *Sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 291.2–292.2).

⁶⁰ See the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 390.2–392.3) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 25.4–5).

⁶¹ From Ngor chen's biographies not much can be learned about dGe slong Tshul bkras. According to the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 433.3), he resided at Sa skya at a place called Brang khang byi khung sgo: *de'i tsho brang khang byi khung sgo na bzhugs pa'i dge slong tshul bkras zhes bya ba zhiq yod pa na rel*. For this place different orthographic variations are found: the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 483. 5) refers to it as Brang kha 'byi khrung sgo and the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fol. 7a4) as Grang khang byi khrung sgo. Interestingly, this place is directly linked to the family line of Ngor chen's social father, dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan. As mentioned above, A mes zhabs designates him as belonging to the gCi khung sgo pa lineage from which Sa skya's valets originated; see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.1) Thus dGe slong Tshul bkras might have taken residence at the seat of that family. The biographies also mention that dGe slong Tshul bkras was a kind person at whose death many auspicious signs appeared; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 433.3–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 483.6).

⁶² The reliquary shrines of the Five Supreme Masters of Sa skya were part of the northern complex of Sa skya Monastery. For an old picture of that complex showing the reliquary shrines, see the *Sa skya'i gnas yig* (p. 3).

⁶³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 482.6–483.2).

⁶⁴ Byas 'gyur was an ancient retreat site to the east of Sa skya. For traditional descriptions, see the *Byas 'gyur rdo rje'i brag rdzong gi gnas bshad* and *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 222–224). For modern descriptions, see the *gNa' grong sa skya'i yul skor gnas yig* (pp. 129–131), *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 194.6–196.10), and *Sa skya'i gnas yig* (pp. 106–107). On Byas 'gyur, see also CASINELLI and EKVAL 1969: 403, CHAN 1994: 888 (Chagur), and EHRHARD 2015: 143, and 144, n. 7, and *passim*. For its location, see CASINELLI and EKVAL 1969: [35], Map 3 and SCHOENING 1990: 21, Map 1.

⁶⁵ I wonder whether the Sron community was connected to the Sron tradition (*sron lugs*) of the Kālacakra. One influential master of this tradition, Sron pa Chos dpal bzang po, wrote some of his works at Sron lung bDe ba can. On the Sron tradition and Chos dpal bzang po, see Part Three, n. 412.

Bhairava empowerment on the newly born child and gave him the name 'Jigs byed bzang po. For the baby's protection, he offered a six-armed Vajrabhairava statue that had been crafted in India or China (*rgya'i yul*), which was kept by Ngor chen and later on placed in the gZims khang of Ngor.⁶⁶ Until his third year, Ngor chen received from Yon tan dpal many empowerments for Bhairava as well as longevity.⁶⁷

3.1 Ngor chen's Father, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen

Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399) was the second head of the bZhi thog bla brang and acted for more than three decades as the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1364–1399).⁶⁸ It was during his lifetime that Sa skya lost her hegemonial power to the Phag mo gru pa. From a sketch of his life we can thus learn more about the historical background into which Ngor chen was born. The sketch given below is mainly based on two short biographies contained in works on Sa skya's ruling families that were written by A mes zhabs (1597–1659) and Shākya don grub dpal bzang po (fl. 15th/16th century).⁶⁹

Kun dga' rin chen was born in 1339 at mThong smon as the only son of mKhas btsun Nam mkha' legs pa'i (blo gros) rgyal mtshan (1305–1343), alias mKhas btsun chen po, and dGe 'dun 'bum.⁷⁰ His father had been the first head of the bZhi thog bla brang and twelfth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1325–1343).⁷¹ mKhas btsun chen po in turn was the

⁶⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi mam thar* 1 (p. 433.3–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 483.5–484.4). According to the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 31.8–12), the statue had been cast out of li dmar in the size of one *tho*. It functioned as Ngor chen's meditational support. Later on at Ngor it was placed in Ngor chen's living room (*gzims khang*), which became known as the Lam zab lha khang, located on the first floor of the gZims khang ka drug ma.

⁶⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 484.5–6).

⁶⁸ Instead of *ta dben*, the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 484.5 and 486.3) employs the spelling *rta wen*. Note that the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (p. 19) wrongly lists Kun dga' rin chen among the heads of the Rin chen sngang bla brang.

⁶⁹ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 310.2–312.2) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.5–9). The latter source constitutes one of four Sa skya genealogies whose manuscripts have recently been reproduced in the *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 2 (vol. 40). The *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 304.8–9) was authored by a certain Shākya'i dGe slong Shākya don grub dpal bzang po, who completed his work on the fifteenth day of the sixth month of 1497 (*me mo sbrul*). For further short sketches of Kun dga' rin chen's life, see also the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 181.3–8), *Lo pañ gyi mtshan tho* (p. 167.1–4), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 28b4–6), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 40b4–41b1), and CZAJA 2013: 174–175, n. 202.

⁷⁰ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 40b4–5) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.5). Though the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 does not specify Kun dga' rin chen's year of birth, it is specified in the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 181.5), *Lo pañ gyi mtshan tho* (p. 167.2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 28b5), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 40b5). On Kun dga' rin chen's mother, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 181.3–4), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 310.3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 40b4–5), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 5 (p. 322.5). Along with being the wife of Nam mkha' legs pa'i rgyal mtshan, dGe 'dun 'bum was also the second wife of dBang Kun dga' legs pa'i ('byung gnas) rgyal mtshan (1308–1336) of the Dus mchod bla brang. Together with him, she had three sons: Bla chen bSod nams blo gros (1332–1362), an unnamed son that died in young age, and Sa'i len dBang Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1336–1376/77); see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 181.8–182.8), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 450.5–452.6), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fols. 29a6–30a1), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 48a6–49a3). On dGe 'dun 'bum, see also CZAJA 2013: 161, n. 157. For a biographical sketch of dBang Kun dga' legs pa'i ('byung gnas) rgyal mtshan; see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 181.8–182.7), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 449.6–452.6), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 48a1–6). mThong smon was a *bla brang* at Sa skya; see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 135.12–19), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 74b5–75a3), and SCHEONING 1991: 44 and 47, n. 15.

⁷¹ See the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 178.11–12), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (p. 162.12–13), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 660.3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 40a4–6), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.3), JACKSON 1998: 53, and SCHEONING 1983: 132 and 338. Cf. PENNY-DIMRI 1995: 87, who specifies his tenure with “circa 1324–1342” and PETECH 1990: 100 and [143], who gives it with “1325–1341(?)”. For biographical sketches of mKhas btsun chen po, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 178.7–13), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (pp. 154.18–155.5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung*

oldest son that bDag nyid chen po bZang po dpal (1262–1324), the eleventh throne-holder (tenure: 1306–1324), had fathered with his fourth wife Nam mkha' rgyal mo.⁷²

Kun dga' rin chen took monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) from his uncle Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan and Bla ma mNyam med chen po.⁷³ Along with these two, he pursued his religious training under Zhang dBang phyug rgyal mtshan, Slob dpon mGon rgyal, mKhan chen rTogs ldan, and Slob dpon 'Jam sngon, the third abbot of rTse thang (tenure: 1368).⁷⁴ He is also said to have been an important disciple of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1361), whom he visited at Jo nang in 1360.⁷⁵

“By the force of time,” as A mes zhabs puts it, Kun dga' rin chen temporarily had to move to dBus, where he continued his studies at such places as rTse thang.⁷⁶ This move can be linked to the shifting relations of power in mid-fourteenth-century Tibet. As a result of the rise of the Phag mo gru pa under Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302–1364), the Yuan-backed Sa skya hegemony came to an end. By 1354, Ta'i si tu had gained control of dBus and most parts of gTsang and within the next few years he succeeded in consolidating his power as Tibet's new sovereign.⁷⁷ The remark that Kun dga' rin chen studied at rTse thang suggests that this move was linked to Ta'i si tu's takeover, as it was also he who had established the monastery of rTse thang in 1351.⁷⁸

While engaged in his studies, Kun dga' rin chen acted in the sheep year of 1355, at age seventeen, as attendant of Ta'i si tu and travelled with him to Chu mig, where he bestowed teachings on the *Dvikalpa* (*brTag gnyis*; i.e., the *Hevajratantra*),⁷⁹ Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, and Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs gter* and *Thub pa dgongs gsal*. He also

rabs 1 (pp. 307.5–308.5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fols. 25b7–26a2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 40a2–b1), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.2–4).

⁷² For biographical sketches of bZang po dpal, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 176.10–180.13), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (pp. 153.9–154.5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 288.4–310.2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fols. 24a4–25a5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 36b3–38b2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (pp. 286.8–287.4), CASSINELLI and EKVAL 1969: 16–17, PETECH 1990: 72–82, and SCHOENING 1983: 130–132. For a chart of his wives and children, see the *Re'u mig* (p. 146) and SCHOENING 1983: 337–349. For a discussion of his year of death, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 295.5–298.1).

⁷³ For some biographical information on Bla ma mNyam med chen po (alias Bla ma mNyam med pa or mNyam med Grags pa rgyal mtshan), see VAN DER KUIJP 1994b: [139] and 143–145 and PETECH 1990: 91, 103, 105, 118, and 122. Based on the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* of Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1596), VAN DER KUIJP 1994b: 145, n. 2 dates his year of birth to 1263 and his demise to 1347 or 1348, but also mentions that in the autobiography of Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan “we see the aged lama still giving bits of good counsel in 1360!” Kun dga' rin chen's second wife, Ma gcig dGe ma, was the *dbon mo* (niece or cousin) of Bla ma mNyam med chen po; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 312.6) and VAN DER KUIJP 1994b: 144.

⁷⁴ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 310.4–5) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.6). On Slob dpon 'Jam sngon, see CZAJA 2013: 132, n. 80, 174–175, n. 202, and 197. On the abbatial succession of rTse thang, see *ibid.*: 461.

⁷⁵ See STEARNS 2010: 36, 333, n. 135, 337, n. 162, and 345, n. 233.

⁷⁶ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 310.5–6): *dus kyis shugs kyi re zhig dbus phyogs su phebs dgos byung/ rtse thang soggs su 'chad snyan dang gzigs rtogs soggs mdzad pa'i ngang nas (...)*. See also the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 40b1–2).

⁷⁷ For a detailed presentation of the political situation in Tibet at that time and the internal quarrels at Sa skya, see the *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 1 (vol. 2, pp. 153–160 and 169–195), CZAJA 2013: [109]–204, and PETECH 1990: 85–137. On the life of Ta'i si tu, see the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (pp. 128.1–140.10), *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 1 (vol. 2, pp. 169–195), *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 282–285), *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa* (pp. 103–373), CZAJA 2013: [109]–196, VAN DER KUIJP 1991, VAN DER KUIJP 1994b, VAN DER KUIJP 2010a, and PETECH 1990. On the title Ta'i si tu, see VAN DER KUIJP 1991: [277], n. 1 and SHEN 2002: 58–60.

⁷⁸ On the founding of rTse thang (var. rTsed thang and rTses thang), see the *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 1 (vol. 2, p. 200.8–9), VAN DER KUIJP 1991: 315, and PETECH 1990: 114.

⁷⁹ According to STEARNS 2001: 221, n. 65, the *brTag gnyis* (or *brTag pa gnyis pa: Dvikalpa*) refers to “the surviving text off the *Hevajra tantra*, referred to as the *Brtag pa gnyis pa* (*The Second Fascile*) because it was originally the second fascile (*brtag pa*) of the huge root tantra, most of which has been lost.”

invited Gung ru Shes rin to Chu mig and received numerous teachings from him.⁸⁰ Still acting as the attendant of Ta'i si tu, he came back to Sa skya in the dog year of 1358, his twentieth year, and was awarded the title of *guanding guoshi* (*kun ting gu shri*) by the last emperor of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), Toghan Temür (1320–1370, r. 1333–1370), receiving the great crystal and silver seals. Moreover, at Sa skya he was appointed to the high office (*go sa*) of *bzhi thog*.⁸¹

My understanding of the Tibetan sources is that the office of *bzhi thog* designated nothing less than the monastic head of Sa skya and thus would refer in our context to Kun dga' rin chen's formal installation as abbot of Sa skya Monastery. In general, we must differentiate two meanings of the term *bzhi thog*. On the one hand, *bzhi thog* can refer to the office and thus designates the monastic head of Sa skya. The name of this office derived from the eponymous building, bZhi thog or bZhi thog pho brang (Four-floored Palace), which served as the official residence of Sa skya's abbot as well as an administrative and government building.⁸² On the other hand, the bZhi thog palace also housed the bZhi thog bla brang (bZhi thog lama palace), which constituted one of Sa skya's four lama palaces (*bla brang*) that were established in the course of allocating the power and holdings of Sa skya among the many sons of bZang po dpal.⁸³ Subsequently, the lamas from the bZhi thog bla brang took on the name of their residence and became known as *bzhi thog pa*, the masters or holders of the bZhi thog bla brang.⁸⁴

Since Ngor chen's father belonged to this *bla brang*, we might be inclined to interpret his installation to the office of *bzhi thog* as referring to his appointment as the head of the bZhi thog bla brang. But that this was not the case is evident from several passages in A mes zhab's history of Sa skya's ruling families. The first telling passage is in the biographical sketch of bZang po dpal, which states that after he had mastered the teachings of his Sa skya forefathers, he took on the responsibility of the monastic seat,

⁸⁰ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 310.6–311.3).

⁸¹ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 311.3–6).

⁸² Tibetan sources do not agree on the founder of the bZhi thog bla brang. According to gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan (1424–1498), the earliest parts of the structure were established by rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan and many other parts were added by Sa skya dPon chen Shākya bzang po (d. 1270); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 69a4–b1). By contrast, we also find the opinion that the *bla brang* was founded by either Sa skya Pañḍita or his younger brother Zangs tsha bSod nams rgyal mtshan. For the former opinion, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 170.16), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 6 (p. 330.5), and *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (p. 146.19–20); and for the latter, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 19a7–b2). For still another opinion, see the most recent description in the *gNa' grong sa skya'i yul skor gnas yig* (p. 156.8–12). On the structure of the bZhi thog, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 69a4–70b3) and SCHOENING 1990: 34–35, Map 10. As the building was four stories tall, the original spelling was *bzhi thog*, but it was also often spelled *gzhi thog*; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 69b1): *'di mar chad la thog bzhi yod pas bzhi thog tu grags*; and SCHOENING 1990: 16. Thus I shall generally employ the spelling *bzhi thog* unless quoting or translating a Tibetan source that utilises the spelling *gzhi thog*. On the bZhi thog, see also the *gNa' grong sa skya'i yul skor gnas yig* (pp. 156–159), *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 128.13–142.8), SCHOENING 1990: 26–27, Map 5 (no. 24) and 43, and VENTURI 2010: 338–339 and 342–344. For images of the bZhi thog, see pls. 41–43.

⁸³ At that time, Bla chen Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mtshan (1299–1327), the oldest living son of bZang po dpal, allocated the four *bla brangs* of bZhi thog, lHa khang, Rin chen sgang, and Dus mchod to his younger brothers and invested them with the different seals that had previously been bestowed by the successive Yuan emperors; see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (pp. 227.6–229.2), *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 332.1–5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 300.1–301.1, 305.4–6, and 306.6–307.5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 39b1–4 and 55a6–b2), and PETECH 1990: 80–82. For genealogical charts of the members of these four *bla brangs*, see the *Re'u mig* (pp. 152–155), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (pp. 18–25), PETECH 1990: Genealogical Tree of the 'K'on Family, SCHOENING 1983: 335–349, and TUCCI 1999: Table 1 – Sa skya pa.

⁸⁴ For an interesting reference combining both meanings, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 319.5): *de'i skabs su gzhi thog pa mkhas btsun chen po de gzhi thog gi gdan sar bzhugs yod pa nal*. In this case, Nam mkha' legs pa'i rgyal mtshan, head of the bZhi thog bla brang, was also the throne-holder of Sa skya.

that is, Sa skya, and came to the office of *bzhi thog*.⁸⁵ Similarly, Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan occupied the office of *bzhi thog* and, in doing so, acted for many years as the abbot of Sa skya (tenure: 1344–1347/48).⁸⁶ His installation is also mentioned in his individual full-length biography written by his disciple Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo (1303/15–1379/80). According to that work, an imperial edict to invest Bla ma dam pa with the office of *bzhi thog* was delivered by the imperial envoy Si tu Dar ma rgyal mtshan, and thus the former was requested to occupy that position.⁸⁷ Another telling passage is found in the biographical sketch of Ta dben Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1332–1364) of the lHa khang bla brang, the fifteenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1347/48–1364) and successor of Bla ma dam pa: “This master acted as the *gzhi thog* monastic head and gave for eighteen years communal teachings for the Great Monastic Seat.”⁸⁸ In this passage, it is obvious that *gzhi thog* refers to the monastic office and not to the *bZhi thog bla brang*. It would be completely wrong to understand this passage in the sense that Blo gros rgyal mtshan of the lHa khang bla brang acted as the head of the *bZhi thog bla brang*. The last telling passage that I would like to mention is taken from A mes zhabs’ discussion of the abbatial succession of Sa skya after its break-up into the four *bla brangs*.⁸⁹

From then on, for the time being, it was not legitimate that anybody of the [’Khon] family line would lead the monastic seat [of Sa skya] as a whole. Nevertheless, those masters who performed important tasks of the great monastic seat, such as residing at the *gZhi thog bla brang chen mo* and bestowing communal teachings, they were referred to as “monastic head.”

Although this passage does not actually refer to the office of *bzhi thog*, I suggest that we understand the phrase “residing at the *gZhi thog bla brang chen mo*” in the sense that the person who took residence in this building was the actual head of Sa skya Monastery.

⁸⁵ See the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (p. 294.6): *de nas bla ma bdag nyid chen po ’dis yab mes kyi chos ma lus pa thugs su chud nas/ dgung lo zhe lnga pa la gdan sa’i khur chen po bzhes/ gzhi thog gi go sar byon te bstan pa’i bya ba ’chad nyan sgom sgrub/*. See also the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 38a3–4).

⁸⁶ See the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 358.6–359.1): *de lta bu’i dpal ldan bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan zhes yongs su grags pa ’di’i gzhi thog gi go sar bzhugs nas gdan sa yang lo mang du mdzad cing/*. See also the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 51b6).

⁸⁷ See the *Bla ma dam pa’i rnam thar* (fol. 18a7–b.2): *de nas rgyal po chen pos bzhi thog tu bzhugs pa’i ’ja’ sa’ang shel dam bzhi/ gser dngul/ gos dar gyi gnang sbyin dang bcas pa gnang ba/ si tu dar ma rgyal mtshan gyis khyer ’ongs tel/ gdan sa chen po’i bzhi thog tu bzhugs par gsol ba btav nas/ bstan pa’i mnga’ bdag chen por mnga’ bskur ro/*. See also the *Bla ma dam pa’i rnam thar* (fol. 22b6–7): *de nas ta dben blo gros rgyal mtshan la shel dam gyis mgo byas pa’i gnang sbyin rgya chen po mdzad nas tshogs chos ma chag par gsung ba la sogs chos ’jig rten gyis [= gyi] zhal ta gnang nas nyid kyi gdan sar bzhi thog tu bskos/*. With regard to Bla ma dam pa’s installation, VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 112 notes that his appointment to Sa skya’s *bZhi thog* “amounted to being the grand-abbot of Sa skya monastery as a whole.” Based on the *Bla ma dam pa’i rnam thar*, *ibid.*: 113 gives Bla ma dam pa’s tenure as 1344 to 1348. According to the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (p. 660.4–5), Bla ma dam pa became abbot at age thirty-three (i.e., in 1344), but served in this position only for a short time. Cf. VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 113, who, based on the same source, states that “he had held this post for some three years, roughly from 1346 to 1348.” Cf. also the *Ngor chos ’byung 1* (pp. 333.7–334.1), which specifies Bla ma dam pa’s tenure with three years and dates the installation of his successor, Ta dben Blo gros rgyal mtshan, to 1347.

⁸⁸ *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (p. 403.5): *bla ma ’dis gzhi thog gdan sa mdzad nas lo bco brgyad kyi bar du gdan sa chen po’i tshogs chos gsungs/*. See also the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (p. 660.5) and *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 43b5–6). For a biographical sketch of Blo gros rgyal mtshan, see the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 403.2–404.3) and *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 43b3–44a2). On his tenure, see the previous note. For a discussion of his dates and tenure, see also CZAJA 2013: 194, n. 270. According to the *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 27b6), he passed away in 1368.

⁸⁹ *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (p. 660.1–2): *de nas re zhig gi bar gdan sa spyi la dbang bsgyur ba zhig gdung brgyud sus kyang ma mdzad rung/ gzhi thog bla brang chen mor bzhugs shing tshogs chos gsung ba sogs gdan sa chen po’i mdzad pa khag che ba rnams mdzad pa po la gdan sa par bshad pa yin pas nal/*

Obviously, here the name *bZhi thog bla brang chen mo* does not refer to the *bZhi thog bla brang* as one of the four *bla brangs*, but to the whole building previously referred to as *bZhi thog*. Such an understanding is also supported by the account of the installation of 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1257/58–1305/06) of the *Bla brang Shar* as new abbot of *Sa skya* in 1287 or 1288. His installation is described as him having been invited to the *Bla brang chen po bZhi thog* and requested to dwell on the throne of *Chos rgyal 'Phags pa* (1235–1280).⁹⁰ His title 'Jam dbyangs *bZhi thog pa* can also be directly linked to his position as abbot.⁹¹

My understanding of the office of *bzhi thog* is further supported by the observation that in the biographical sketches of masters who served as *Sa skya's* throne-holder, *A mes zhabs* makes no other mention of their enthronement apart from their appointment to the office of *bzhi thog*.⁹²

To come back to the passage in question from the life of *Kun dga' rin chen*, I understand *bzhi thog* here in its first meaning, namely as referring to the abbacy of *Sa skya* and the formal instalment of *Kun dga' rin chen* as its monastic head. However, the date of his installation is not entirely clear. Discussing the abbatial succession of *Sa skya*, *A mes zhabs* mentions that *Kun dga' rin chen* acted for a long time as throne-holder of *Sa skya* from around his twentieth year (i.e., in 1358).⁹³ But this dating is rather problematic, as his predecessor, the aforementioned *Ta dben Blo gros rgyal mtshan*, is said to have served in that position for eighteen years until his early death in 1364. Thus it seems unlikely that *Kun dga' rin chen* was appointed to the abbacy shortly after his return to *Sa skya* in 1358.⁹⁴ As abbot of *Sa skya*, he is said to have bestowed numerous teachings on *Sa skya's* great monastic assembly and served in that position for a very long time. During his tenure, the Yuan emperor bestowed on him also the title of *thi ling skya ho si ta dben gu shri* and awarded him with the Great Seal along with a writ of authorisation (*dam kha chen mo tho shu dang bcas*).⁹⁵

By comparison, the account given in the 'Khon family history by *Shākya don grub dpal bzang po* does vary somewhat. At first, he recounts *Kun dga' rin chen's* monastic career at *Sa skya*, mentioning his studies, the awarding of the title of *quanding guoshi* (*kun ting gu shri*), his instalment as abbot, and his teaching activities.⁹⁶ Then, he records that *Kun dga' rin chen* was invited by *Ta'i si tu* to *rTse thang*, where he both studied and taught. In the sheep year of 1355, he travelled together with *Ta'i si tu* as *dpon 'og ma* (vice-governor?) to *Chu mig*. Acting as the latter's attendant, the two of them continued in the

⁹⁰ See the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fol. 5a4): (...) *bla brang chen po bzhi thog tu gdan drangs nas 'gro mgon chos rgyal gyi gdan khri la bzhus par zhus shingl*. See also the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fols. 4a3–4 and 7b1–2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 294.2), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 38a3). This was also noted by VAN DER KUIJP 1994a: 188, who refers to 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan as the "erstwhile abbot of *Sa skya's* *Bzhi thog* Residence, that is, abbot of *Sa skya* as a whole, (...)." Similarly, VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 127 refers to his appointment "as abbot of the *Bzhi thog* Residence in late 1287 or early 1288. This meant that he was in fact *Sa skya's* Grand Abbot."

⁹¹ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 644.5–6). On 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan, see Part Three, 6.1.1.

⁹² Similar passages can be found in other, older sources as well; see, for instance, the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 188.3–4), *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 7.2–3 and 9.21–10.3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 28b6–7), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 40a4–5, 41a4, 41b3, and 42a3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (pp. 287.3, 288.3–7, and 289.1–3), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 6 (p. 336.1–2).

⁹³ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 660.5–6).

⁹⁴ See also JACKSON 2010a: 177 and PENNY-DIMRI 1995: 87, who date the beginning of *Kun dga' rin chen's* tenure to ca. 1364 and 1364, respectively. Cf. the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (p. 29), where his dates as acting throne-holder are given as 1375 to 1399.

⁹⁵ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 310.5–311.6).

⁹⁶ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.6–8).

dog year of 1358 to Sa skya. At Sa skya, then, he was awarded with the aforementioned title and seal.⁹⁷ In accord with both genealogies, Kun dga' rin chen passed away in his sixty-first year on the second day of the sixth lunar month of the earth-hare year (i.e., 1399).⁹⁸

Neither Sa skya history provides us with any special information on what kind of relationship existed between Kun dga' rin chen and Ta'i si tu, far from embedding those accounts in a general way within the complicated political context of fourteenth-century Tibet. So, how did it come to pass that Kun dga' rin chen acted during those difficult times for Sa skya as the attendant of Ta'i si tu, who, in the end, was Sa skya's opponent? As a youth, Ta'i si tu received part of his religious training at Sa skya, to where he had travelled in his fourteenth year (i.e., in 1315), and stayed until about 1319.⁹⁹ In his autobiography, shortly before his departure from Sa skya, Ta'i si tu recalls his last meeting with bZang po dpal, the then acting throne-holder of Sa skya, who had taken special care of Ta'i si tu and was highly revered by the latter.¹⁰⁰ In the scope of this last meeting, bZang po dpal established a special link between Nam mkha' legs pa'i rgyal mtshan, his son and father of Kun dga' rin chen, and Ta'i si tu. At that time, Ta'i si tu went to offer his farewell prostrations to bZang po dpal and while having tea, Nam mkha' legs pa crossed the room. He was called back by his father bZang po dpal, who took Ta'i si tu's hand and joined it with the hand of Nam mkha' legs pa saying: "You, Nam mkha' legs pa, whatever will happen, look after Rin po che and his relatives. You, Rin po che and your relatives, should offer service to Nam mkha' legs pa."¹⁰¹ Moreover, regarding his connection with Sa skya, Ta'i si tu expressed that he had great devotion to the family line of Sa skya, in general, and towards Nam mkha' legs pa, in particular.¹⁰² Could this bond have been of special importance to Ta'i si tu, prompting him to take care of Kun dga' rin chen, who would only have been four years old when his father passed away in 1343? Or had Kun dga' rin chen's move to dBus been enforced by Ta'i si tu, who was planning to use the young Sa skya monk for his own ends? The answer appears to lie somewhere in-between, namely that Ta'i si tu utilised his good relation with that branch of the Sa skya family to realise his own political agenda.

⁹⁷ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.8–9).

⁹⁸ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 312.1–6) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 288.9). A mes zhabs records two different sites where Kun dga' rin chen is said to have passed away. According to the *gTsang byams pa'i gdung rabs*, he died at Chu mig dPal gyi bde chen and according to the *sTag tshang gdung rabs*, in the bZhi thog bla brang; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 312.2). The *gTsang byams pa'i gdung rabs* refers to the study of Sa skya Monastery and her related families by gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan, the *rje btsun sa skya pa'i gdung rabs rin po che'i phreng ba bstar ba* (composed in 1475); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 314.6–315.2). For the original work, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 41a6–b1). The *sTag tshang gdung rabs* refers to the Sa skya genealogy by sTag tshang Lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen (1405–1477), the *dPal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho* (composed in 1467). The passage referred to by A mes zhabs reads as follows (*Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2, fol. 28b6): *re gcig pa la bzhi thog tu bde bar gshegs so||*. I tend to understand that short passage in the sense that Kun dga' rin chen passed away while he was still in office. Such an understanding is supported by the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 181.7–8), which also states that Kun dga' rin chen passed away at gTsang Chu mig ring mo, which is identical to the aforementioned Chu mig dPal gyi bde chen. However, the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 5 (p. 322.6) specifies a third site for his demise, mThong smon Byang. On the mThong smon bla brang, see Part Three, n. 70.

⁹⁹ See the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (pp. 128.21–130.21), *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 1 (p. 170.4–18), and *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa* (pp. 120.20–134.19).

¹⁰⁰ See the *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa* (p. 127.8–15).

¹⁰¹ *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa* (p. 134.1–4): *khyod nam mkha' legs pas| rin po che sku mched kyi bdag gnyer du gang 'gyur ba gyis| khyed rin po che sku mched kyis kyang| nam mkha' legs pa'i zhabs tog tu 'gyur ba gyis gsung|*.

¹⁰² See the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (p. 130.17–21), *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa* (p. 134.4–5), and VAN DER KUIJP 1994b: 144.

The 1355 journey of Ta'i si tu and Kun dga' rin chen to Chu mig appears to have had a political background as well. As shown by Luciano Petech und Karl-Heinz Everding, the myriarchy (*khri skor*) of Chu mig constituted an estate of the bZhi thog bla brang that had fallen into the hands of Ta'i si tu:

The place, which was the theatre of the religious conference of 1277, was a private estate of the bZi-t'og branch of the Sa-skya family. Its proprietary rights and revenue was maintained to them even when C'u-mig passed in the hands of Byan-c'ub-rgyal-mts'an, who appointed a steward there and made it a favorite place for important political meetings.¹⁰³

Wie der obige Quellenbeleg verdeutlicht, war der Chu mig *khri skor*, der nach der umfangreichen Reorganisation der Zehntausendschaften unter bZaŋ po dpal allerdings auch erheblich an territorialer Ausdehnung verloren hatte, spätestens um 1323 endgültig in den Besitz der bZi thog bla brañ übergegangen. Geführt wurde diese *Bla brañ* zu dieser Zeit von bZaŋ po dpal's Sohn mkhas btsun Nam mkha' legs pa'i rgyal mtshan (1305–1343). Die Übergabe dieses Lehens an seinen 1339 geborenen Sohn Kun dga' rin chen verlief jedoch nicht reibungslos. Da Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399) beim Tode seines Vaters im Jahre 1343 noch minderjährig war und der *Khri skor* möglicherweise vorübergehend einem von der *Bla brañ* bestellten Verwalter überantwortet werden mußte, wurde die Inthronisierung des Thronerben in den Strudel des Niedergangs Sa skya's gezogen. Si tu Byaŋ chub rgyal mtshan bemächtigte sich dieses kulturträchtigen Ortes und machte Chu mig zu seiner westlichen Niederlassung in gTsaŋ. Indem er dort selbst mehrfach mit den Repräsentanten Sa skya's Verhandlungen führte, unterstellte er sich die Zehntausendschaft kraft seines Amtes selbst.¹⁰⁴

In his seminal study of the political and religious history of the Phag mo gru pa, Olaf Czaja discusses the important role Chu mig played in Ta'i si tu's plans to permanently establish himself in gTsaŋ:

It is evident that, in the coming years, the Phag mo gru pa were constantly increasing their influence in Gtsang. The pivotal point of the strategy was Rin spungs and Chu mig. Byang chub rgyal mtshan struggled hard to obtain a legal recognition that these both estates were part of his domain: Rin spungs as his own possession and Chu mig as a political entity partly independent from Sa skya and administratively dependent on the Phag mo gru pa. This struggle became the main objective for the policy of Byang chub rgyal mtshan over the next decade.¹⁰⁵

The point is that Byang chub rgyal mtshan was aiming at relocating the 'administrative heart' of Sa skya [i.e., the lHa khang chen mo] at a place that was under his control – the myriarchy of Chu mig. This very locality was continuously reinforced and enlarged by Byang chub rgyal mtshan. For his attempt at establishing a second centre of Sa skya power, he exploited the Gzhi thog branch of the 'Khon family of Sa skya, which, at that time, was with Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ PETECH 1990: 53. On the Tibetan myriarchies (*khri skor*), see PETECH 1990: 50–61.

¹⁰⁴ EVERDING 2005: 111. See also PETECH 1990: 124.

¹⁰⁵ CZAJA 2013: 161.

¹⁰⁶ CZAJA 2013: 174–175, n. 202.

It is evident that Byang chub rgyal mtshan wanted to use all means to break the hegemony of the Lha khang chen mo by shifting it to Chu mig, where the main representatives of the secular and religious sphere were under his control. It certainly is no surprise that this found fierce resistance from the Sa skya establishment, (...).¹⁰⁷

To further weaken Sa skya, Ta'i si tu thus supported Kun dga' rin chen, building him up as a counterweight by installing him at Chu mig. The importance of the Chu mig myriarchy (*khri skor*) and its control by the bZhi thog bla brang is also mentioned by Ta'i si tu himself, who regarding its administration emphasised the status of Chu mig as the paternal source of income (*yab phogs*) for Kun dga' rin chen.¹⁰⁸ The shift of Kun dga' rin chen to Chu mig seems to have occurred in 1355 while accompanying Ta'i si tu to Chu mig.¹⁰⁹ As will be shown below, it was at this time that the Chu mig branch of the bZhi thog bla brang came into being.

Kun dga' rin chen's move back to Sa skya in 1358 also has to be seen in the context of the broader political developments. After a large council had been held at Chu mig at the New Year of 1358, and Ta'i si tu invested by imperial envoys with the title and seal of a *ta'i si tu*, another important meeting was scheduled at Sa skya. According to Czaja, Ta'i si tu's main aim for this was to receive "official recognition for all those main estates, which, for the last years, had been coming into his hands and which he wished to turn into legal Phag mo gru pa settlements."¹¹⁰ So when Kun dga' rin chen journeyed with Ta'i si tu to Sa skya in 1358, they were about to attend that important meeting.¹¹¹ For the next years, during which Ta'i si tu succeeded in consolidating his power, not much is known about the activities of Kun dga' rin chen.¹¹² But as discussed above, after the death of Blo gros rgyal mtshan in 1364, he came to the abbatial throne of Sa skya and thereby Ta'i si tu's strategy to utilise his bond with members of the bZhi thog bla brang to influence Sa skya's internal affairs paid off. These developments have been aptly summarised by Everding as follows:¹¹³

Einmal mehr haben wir damit das bekannte Muster vor uns, dass ein Herrschaftsträger einer untergeordneten oder unterworfenen Macht an den Hof des neuen Machthabers geladen wird, um ihn durch die Entwicklung persönlicher Beziehungen zu einem verlässlichen Vasallen zu machen und ihm später dann die Herrschaft in seinem angestammten Territorium übertragen zu können. Nicht nur dass Kun dga' rin chen um 1355 wieder in Chu mig installiert wurde, später

¹⁰⁷ CZAJA 2013: 174–175, n. 202. On the role of Chu mig, see *Ibid.*: 151–196.

¹⁰⁸ See the *Rlängs kyi po ti se ru rgyas pa* (pp. 274.16–18, 277.7–10, and 302.14–16), CZAJA 2013: 160, n. 155 and 172, n. 196, and EVERDING 2005: 111–114.

¹⁰⁹ In or after 1354, together with Ta'i si tu and the leading dignitaries of Sa skya, Kun dga' rin chen also took part in a conference at bSam yas; see CZAJA 2013: 161–163.

¹¹⁰ CZAJA 2013: 173.

¹¹¹ On those and the following events, see CZAJA 2013: 169–196.

¹¹² For instance, along with Ta'i si tu and the latter's nephew 'Jam dbyangs Gu shri Shākya rgyal mtshan (1340–1373), Kun dga' rin chen received teachings from Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364) sometime after the latter's resignation as abbot of Zha lu in 1356; see SEYFORTH RUEGG 1966: 150. Moreover, he presided in 1360/61 over the funeral ceremony of sPyan snga Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1293–1360), the eighth abbot of rTse thang (tenure: 1311–1360); see the *Rlängs kyi po ti se ru rgyas pa* (pp. 322.9–325.10) and CZAJA 2013: 189. As he was invited to gDan sa mthil from Chu mig, Kun dga' rin chen seemingly continued to reside at Chu mig until his appointment to the throne of Sa skya in 1364.

¹¹³ EVERDING 2005: 119.

wurde er von den Phag mo gru pa auch zum Thronhalter (T *gdan sa pa*) Sa skya's befördert, da sie in ihm einen verlässlichen und loyalen Gefolgsmann sahen.

3.2 The bZhi thog bla brang and its Chu mig Branch

By his two official consorts, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen had three sons and one daughter. With his first wife Ma gcig Nam pa of the Nyi thog bla brang, he had the son Slob dpon chen po Gu shri Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1366–1420), who acted as the seventeenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1399–1420).¹¹⁴ With his second wife Ma gcig dGe ma, the niece of mNyam med Grags pa rgyal mtshan, he had the son Slob dpon chen po Grags pa blo gros (1367–1437/1446), Slob dpon chen po Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, who died at a young age, and a daughter, who is also said to have died at a young age in Shab smad.¹¹⁵

Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the eldest son of Kun dga' rin chen, had with his wife Ma gcig rGyal mo skyid from Sa skya the son Slob dpon chen po Kun dga' dbang phyug (1418–1462), the nineteenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: ca. 1442–1462), who had no offspring.¹¹⁶ Grags pa blo gros, the second eldest son of Kun dga' rin chen, had together with his wife Ma gcig Brag dkar ma the son Slob dpon chen po Chu mig pa Blo gros dbang phyug (1420–1481), who became a monk in young age and studied for a long time at Ngor.¹¹⁷ With these two grandsons of Kun dga' rin chen, the family line of the bZhi thog bla brang came to an end.

¹¹⁴ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 312.3–6 and 660.6), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 28b6–7), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 41b1–4), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 4* (pp. 288.9–289.1), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (p. 29, no. 17), JACKSON 2010a: 177–178, PENNY-DIMRI 1995: 86, and SCHOENING 1983: 338. In accord with the Sa skya genealogy by gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan, A mes zhabs dates the death of Blo gros rgyal mtshan to 1420, his fifty-fifth year, but also mentions that according to the genealogy of sTag tshang Lo tsā ba, he did not live longer than his fiftieth year (i.e., 1415); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 312.5–6), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 28b6–7), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 41b4). On the Nyi thog bla brang, the residence of 'U yug pa Rig pa'i seng ge (d. 1253), see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 136.3–9), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 66b2–3, 75a4–b2, and 89b5), and SCHOENING 1990: 15, 38, and 44. For a depiction of Kun dga' rin chen and Blo gros rgyal mtshan in the form of a mural, see pl. 44.

¹¹⁵ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 312.6–314.1), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 29a1–3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 41b4–42a1), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 4* (p. 289.1–2), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 5* (pp. 323.6–324.2). Interestingly, sTag tshang Lo tsā ba mentions that Grags pa blo gros was connected with the Phag mo gru pa. He was the teacher of Gong ma Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1374–1432, r. 1385–1432) and his brother (or brothers) and also presided over their funeral rites; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 29a1–3): *phag mo gru pa la thugs gtad/ gong ma grags pa rgyal mtshan pa sku mched kyi bla ma dang gshegs szongs [= rdzongs] kyi tshogs dpon la sogs pa mdzad/*. In 1422, for instance, he was travelling in dBus (*Byams pa gling pa'i rnam thar*, fol. 12a6–7): *lo 'di'i nang du/ dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung brgyud/ chu mig pa grags pa blo gros pa dbus phyogs su phebs pa la sa skya pa'i chos skyong che chung gnyis kyi rjes gnang man ngag dang bcas pa'ang gsan no/*. With regard to the children of Kun dga' rin chen, the presentation of the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 183.16–20) seems to be mistaken. According to that work, he had one son with his first wife, gNyas [= Nyi] thog dBon mo, who died in young age, and with his second wife, mNyam med dBon mo, he had two sons, Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal and Grags pa blo gros.

¹¹⁶ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 314.1–4), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fols. 28b7–29a1), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 42a2–3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 4* (p. 289.3–4), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (p. 30, no. 19), JACKSON 2010a: 178, PENNY-DIMRI 1995: 86, and SCHOENING 1983: 137–138 and 338. Note that sTag tshang Lo tsā ba specifies his name as dBang phyug rgyal mtshan instead of Kun dga' dbang phyug; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 28b7). A recently published manuscript of a Sa skya genealogy by a certain 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams rgyal mtshan (fl. 15th century), which was written at the time when Kun dga' dbang phyug served as throne-holder, specifies the name of his wife as Chu mig Ma gcig; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 5* (pp. 324.6–325.1).

¹¹⁷ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 314.4–315.2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 29a3–4), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 42a3–5). Based only on A mes zhabs' Sa skya genealogy, the dates of Blo gros dbang phyug's life are difficult to establish. The reading of his birth year as male water-horse (*chu pho ta [= rta]*; i.e., 1402) is

As mentioned above, with the move of Kun dga' rin chen to Chu mig in 1355 members of the bZhi thog bla brang became permanently established at that site. This move was also noted by A mes zhabs, who in a short excursus relates that it was from the time of Kun dga' rin chen until Blo gros dbang phyug, the last representative of the bZhi thog bla brang, that members of that *bla brang* bestowed teachings at Chu mig. He also mentions that some members of the bZhi thog bla brang settled at Chu mig and thereby became known as Chu mig bla brang pa. He concludes that monastic gatherings at Chu mig did not flourish on a larger scale after 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan had held the great religious council there in 1277. It was only from the time when Kun dga' rin chen had bestowed teachings at Chu mig that monastic sessions were held there again.¹¹⁸

The two members of the bZhi thog bla brang that became mainly associated with Chu mig were Kun dga' rin chen's second eldest son, Grags pa blo gros, and the latter's son, Blo gros dbang phyug. They became known as Chu mig bDag chen or bDag chen Chu mig pa.¹¹⁹ The former had been born in Chu mig and mainly resided at Shab smad and Chu mig.¹²⁰ His son, as mentioned above, became a monk at a young age and stayed for a long time at Ngor Monastery. He studied under his father, Ngor chen (for more than thirty years), Mus chen, and Thang stong rgyal po (1361?–1485).¹²¹ He taught at Sa skya, Chu mig, Bo dong, Shab smad bKra shis gling, Ngor, and Mus bDe ba can, but apparently took residence at Chu mig.¹²² We find him listed as a teacher of dPal ldan rdo rje (1411–1482),¹²³ the fifth abbot of Ngor, Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507),¹²⁴ Go rams pa bSod nams seng

problematic and should most probably be corrected to the male water-tiger year (*chu pho stag*; i.e., 1420); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 314.5). Also, A mes zhabs' argument for assuming that Blo gros dbang phyug passed away when he was close to his sixtieth year is difficult to follow based on the given date. Referring to the study of Sa skya Monastery and her families by gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan, A mes zhabs states that when gTsang Byams pa wrote his work in the female wood-pig year (*shing mo phag*; i.e., 1455), Blo gros dbang phyug was fifty-four years old; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 314.6–315.2). But a look at the colophon of gTsang Byams pa's study shows that he wrote it in the female wood-sheep year (*shing mo lug*; i.e., 1475); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3b (p. 278.16–18). Thus with both suggested corrections we would reach a dating for the passing of Blo gros dbang phyug to around 1480. gTsang Byams pa also gives his year of birth with 1420 (*chu pho stag*); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 42a4). This is also specified by the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 289.4–8), which in addition dates his death to his sixtieth year for the twenty-first day of the third month of 1481 (*clags glang*). Confusingly, a handwritten note in A mes zhabs' discussion remarks that, according to the biography of Shākya mchog ldan, Blo gros dbang phyug passed away in the iron-ox year (*clags glang*; i.e., 1481), reaching his eightieth year; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 314) and *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 65a4–5).

¹¹⁸ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 311.1–3). See also the *bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 53.4–6) and *Lo pan gyi mtshan tho* (pp. 392.1–403.3). Interestingly, Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan mentions that 'Phags pa established at Chu mig a large scripture-exposition seminary (*bshad grwa*) in Dharmapāla's Vinaya tradition, the Highland Vinaya (*stod 'dul*); see the *lHa bla ma ye shes 'od kyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 312.2–5).

¹¹⁹ See the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (p. 101.1–2) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 315.1). In the *Byams pa gling pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 12a6), Grags pa blo gros is simply addressed as Chu mig pa. For Blo gros dbang phyug, dKun dga' rol mchog employs the titles bDag chen Chu mig pa and bDag po Chu mig pa; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fols. 38b3 and 39a5), respectively.

¹²⁰ See the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 183.19–20), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 313.1–2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 29a2), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 41b5).

¹²¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 461.4), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 530.6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 618.3 and 622.6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 241.6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 25.4), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 38b5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 289.5–6), and STEARNS 2007: 349.

¹²² See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 42a4–5) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 4 (p. 289.7–8).

¹²³ See the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 588.4–5 and 594.6–595.1). Blo gros dbang phyug is further mentioned as the chief guest when dPal ldan rdo rje was installed as fifth abbot of Ngor in 1479; see the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 601.2).

¹²⁴ The contact between Shākya mchog ldan and Blo gros dbang phyug had initially been formed by Ngor chen, who, due to the fact that his eyesight had become too weak to bestow long reading transmissions, sent

ge (1429–1489),¹²⁵ the sixth abbot of Ngor, dKon mchog 'phel (1445–1514),¹²⁶ the seventh abbot of Ngor, Glang thang sPyan snga Kun dga' rdo rje (1424–1477/78),¹²⁷ and the latter's younger brother, Glang thang sPyan snga Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1432–1488).¹²⁸

Both of the aforementioned masters, Grags pa blo gros and his son Blo gros dbang phyug, are already designated as bDag chen Chu mig pa in the early biography of Ngor chen by Mus chen as well as the later one by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.¹²⁹ Even though Kun dga' rin chen himself had settled, at least temporarily, at Chu mig, he is not referred to as bDag chen Chu mig pa by the Sa skya histories.

3.3 The Monastery of Chu mig and the Chu mig khri skor

The monastery of Chu mig was founded by Glag Byang chub rgyal mtshan, a master active in the early *phyi dar* period.¹³⁰ According to Phan bde mKhan Rin po che, Glag Byang chub rgyal mtshan belonged to the disciple lineage (*slob brgyud*) of Lo ston rDo rje dbang phyug. The latter was among the group of men from dBus and gTsang that had received the monastic ordination lineage from eastern Tibet and was also the founder of the rGyan gong temple in Myang smad, in the immediate vicinity of the site where his disciple lCe btsun Shes rab 'byung gnas established Zha lu Monastery in 1040.¹³¹

Initially considered to have been a bKa' gdams monastery, Chu mig was later on transformed into a Sa skya establishment. Though it is not clear when this change

Shākya mchog ldan in 1455 to Chu mig to request from Blo gros dbang phyug the reading transmission for the *Sa skya' bka' 'bum* and teachings on Chos skyong (i.e., Mahākāla); see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 39a.4–6), CAUMANN 2012: 117, and CAUMANN 2015: 142–143. Shākya mchog ldan also composed a verse of praise of his master; see the *Shāk mchog gi gsung 'bum* (vol. 16, pp. 251.7–252.7).

¹²⁵ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 2* (p. 6.13–14), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 4* (p. 359.18–19), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 5* (p. 391.12–13), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (p. 39.12–13), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 7* (p. 142.11), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 8* (p. 185.17–19). Following the request of a certain Grags pa rgyal mtshan, Go rams pa composed a verse of praise of Blo gros dbang phyug; see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 1, pp. 40.6–42.2).

¹²⁶ See the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 777.2–3) and *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 821.2–3).

¹²⁷ See the *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 413.1).

¹²⁸ See the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 431.1–2). His biography also mentions that in 1456, during the first of his three gTsang sojourns, he received full monastic ordination from Mus chen as ordaining preceptor, bDag chen Chu mig pa (i.e., Blo gros dbang phyug) as ceremonial master, his brother Kun dga' rdo rje as instructor in private, and Don yod dpal (1398–1484) and others as members of the monastic community that formed the necessary quorum (*kha skong*); see the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 431.3–4).

¹²⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.3–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 530.6–531.1).

¹³⁰ See the *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (p. 255.6–7), *Bu ston chos 'byung* (p. 899.3), and *Myang chos 'byung* (p. 151.7–8). See also EVERDING 2005: 100 and FERRARI 1958: 146–147, n. 466.

¹³¹ Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (gZhis ka rtse, 07 February 2011). His remark is partly based on an inscription found on the remains of an old wall of the Kun rig lha khang of Chu mig that reads as follows: *lo ston rdo rje dbang phyug gi slob brgyud glag byang chub rgyal mtshan gyis phyag btabl*. On Lo ston rDo rje dbang phyug, see, for instance, the *Bu ston chos 'byung* (pp. 896.2–902.1), *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (pp. 457.2–466.9), *Myang chos 'byung* (pp. 147.22–148.3 and 149.17–151.20), UEBACH 1987: [39], Tabelle 3 and 132–135, STEARNS 2001: 204–205, n. 7, and STODDARD 2004. The *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (pp. 255.5–256.5), *Bu ston chos 'byung* (pp. 898.7–900.6), *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 462.11–12), and *Myang chos 'byung* (pp. 150.20–151.20) list twenty-four disciples of rDo rje dbang phyug, among which Glag Byang chub rgyal mtshan is enumerated as the founder of Chu mig. Among another group of eight disciples known as the *mkhan bu mi brgyad*, we find a certain gZhon ston gZhon nu brtson 'grus who took control of Chu mig ring mo; see the *Myang chos 'byung* (p. 150.2–20) and UEBACH 1987: 132–11. More research is needed to determine whether this Chu mig refers to the same monastery or another one by the same name located in Myang stod; see EVERDING 2005: 100, n. 226. An early addition to the original monastery was made by Zangs dkar Lo tsā ba 'Phags pa shes rab, who built a temple (*gtsug lag khang*) there in the latter half of the eleventh century; see the *Tshar chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 537.1–2), EVERDING 2005: 121, and STEARNS 2012: 70–71 and 137.

occurred, we find it enumerated by gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan (1424–1498) as one of the Sa skya pa's main monasteries during the time of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa.¹³² From early on, important Sa skya masters were connected with Chu mig. It was, for instance, at Chu mig that Sa skya Paṇḍita met the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrībhadrā (1127–1225) in 1204. It was also at Chu mig that, in 1267, his nephew 'Phags pa held the funeral services for his deceased brother 'Gro mgon Phyag na rdo rje (1239–1267) as well as his famous religious council of 1277.¹³³ Similarly, a large religious gathering was held at Chu mig after 'Phags pa's passing away in 1280.¹³⁴

The monastery of Chu mig, also known as (gTsang) Chu mig ring mo or Chu mig dPal gyi bde ba can, is situated around fifteen kilometres southwest of present-day gZhis ka rtse and close to the old bKa' gdams monastery of sNar thang. It lies south of the main road leading to Sa skya in the small Chu mig village. Apart from designating the monastery and the surrounding village, Chu mig was also the name of the eponymous myriarchy (*khri skor*), the Chu mig khri skor, which had been established in 1268 by the Mongol Yuan dynasty and placed along with the other newly founded Tibetan myriarchies under the jurisdiction of Sa skya. However, as outlined by Everding, both prior to the founding of the Chu mig khri skor and seemingly also for some time after that, Chu mig was apparently controlled by an independent ruling house until the turn of the thirteenth century.¹³⁵ As mentioned above, it was then administered by the bZhi thog bla brang of Sa skya until Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan took control of it. With the shift of Ngor chen's father Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen to Chu mig, the Chu mig branch of the bZhi thog bla brang was established, although Ta'i si tu's stewards economically ruined the Chu mig khri skor.¹³⁶ The further history of Chu mig has been summarised by Karl-Heinz Everding as follows:

Indem Chu mig damit von Si tu Byañ chub rgyal mtshan in einem desolaten Zustand zurückgelassen worden war, erholte sich der Ort offensichtlich nie wieder von den Schäden, die er zu dieser Zeit erlitten hatte. Auf der Grundlage des *Sa skya gduñ rabs chen mo*-Berichts dürfte Kun dga' rin chen damit um 1355, also in etwa seinem 16. Lebensjahr, wieder in Chu mig installiert worden sein. Ob Chu mig jedoch auch in herrschaftlicher Sicht seine frühere Souveränität wiedererlangte oder weiter von den Phag mo gru pa gegängelt wurde, ist den Quellen nicht zu entnehmen. Angesichts eines Berichtes, dem zufolge zur Zeit des 4. Phag mo gru pa-Herrschers dBañ Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1374–1440) ein gewisser Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan zum *Khrims dpon* von Chu mig ernannt wurde, bestehen jedoch Zweifel daran, ob die bZi thog bla brañ um die Wende zum 15. Jahrhundert dort überhaupt noch volle Souveränität auszuüben vermochte.¹³⁷

¹³² See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 32b4–33a1) and VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 131–132. 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po considered Chu mig to have originally been a bKa' gdams monastery; see the *dBus gtsang gi gnas rten gyi mtshan byang* (p. 211.1–4).

¹³³ See EVERDING 2005: 104, FERRARI 1958: 62 and 146–147, nn. 466–467, and JACKSON 1987: 26 and 107.

¹³⁴ See the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fol. 4a7–b5) and VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 127.

¹³⁵ On the history of the Chu mig khri skor, see EVERDING 2005. See also PETECH 1990: 53. SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: 187 state that the centre of the Chu mig myriarchy was in Chu mig village, “where today a memorial stone situated close to the walls of the Ngor E-wam *dgon* marks the site of the former *khri dpon* palace (...)” On the location of Chu mig, see *Ibid.*: [312], Map 9. See also MAP 1 (Chu mig) and MAP 2 (2988, D, Chumik).

¹³⁶ See EVERDING 2005: 111–117 and PETECH 1990: 53 and 124.

¹³⁷ EVERDING 2005: 119–120.

Indem bereits in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts auch die Linie der bZi thog bla brang mit Slob dpon chen po Chu mig pa Blo gros dbañ phyug (1402–1481) versiegte, verwehrte die Anlage und von dem einst glanzvollen Herrschaftsbesitz blieben nicht viel mehr als dem Verfall preisgegebene Ruinen übrig.¹³⁸

Everding mentions three factors that sealed the fate of Chu mig: (1) the further decline of Sa skya; (2) the newly founded monastery of Ngor, which became a synonym for a spiritual revival originating within the Sa skya tradition and thereby competing with Chu mig; and (3) the emergence of the new power centre of gZhis ka rtse with its aspiring ruling house of the gTsang pa sDe srid in the sixteenth century.¹³⁹

Although in a state of deterioration, the sacred site of Chu mig continued to function through the centuries as a destination for pilgrims, and we know from the guidebook by Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880–1925) that at the beginning of the twentieth century Chu mig was overseen by four monks from Ngor.¹⁴⁰ The monastery further came to ruin during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), its religious objects were lost, and the Kun rig lha khang was transformed into a granary. Finally, in around 1998, the monastery was rebuilt under the patronage of Ngor, though from the two former temples of sGrol ma lha khang and Kun rig lha khang only the latter was restored.¹⁴¹ The ruins of the old Kun rig lha khang were included in the new building and its old beams were reused.

Chu mig's main religious object was a speaking (*gsung byon*) statue of Tārā that once belonged to gNyan Lo tsā ba Dar ma grags (fl. 11th century), who is said to have brought it from India.¹⁴² According to Everding, this statue had spoken to the famous bKa' gdams master bCom ldan Rig pa'i ral gri (1227–1305) and protected Sa skya Pañḍita on his way to the Mongol court.¹⁴³ Another passage that mentions the statue is found in the biography of Shākya mchog ldan. After he had held the winter teaching session of 1484 at gSer mdog can, he gave the spring teachings of 1485 at Chu mig, bestowing the ritual permission (*rjes gnang*) for practicing the *sGrub thabs rgya mtsho* (i.e., the *sGrub thabs kun las btus pa: Sādhanasamuccaya*) on an assembly of about one thousand lay and monastic followers. On the occasion of granting the ritual permission for the Mya ngan med pa'i

¹³⁸ EVERDING 2005: 119–121.

¹³⁹ See EVERDING 2005: 120.

¹⁴⁰ See the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 447.1–7). Citing sources such as the biographies of Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho and lCe btsun Ngag gi dbang phyug (b. 1523), EVERDING 2005: 121–123 shows that the religious site of Chu mig was already in heavy decline in the middle of the sixteenth century. See also FERRARI 1958: 62 and 146–47, n. 466.

¹⁴¹ Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (Chu mig, 04 October 2010). On other erstwhile monastic structures of Chu mig, see the *Tshar chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 537.1–4) and EVERDING 2005: 121.

¹⁴² See the *Tshar chen gyi rnam thar* (pp. 537.2 and 541.1–4) and STEARNS 2012: 70–71 and 138. Apparently, the Tārā statue had been moved to sNar thang by the time when 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po paid a visit to that monastery; see the *dBus gtsang gi gnas rten gyi mtshan byang* (p. 210.11–13): *mchims ston rim byon sogs kyi gdan sa bka' gdams bstan pa'i 'byung gnas snar thang zhes grags pa der spyir rten gsum byin can mang po dang khyad par chu mig sgrol mar grags pa'i sku byin can*. On this passage, see also FERRARI 1958: 61. Nowadays, a statue labelled sNar thang Chu mig sGrol ma is housed at 'Bras spungs Monastery in the sGrol ma lha khang on the first floor of the Tshogs chen. In his travelogue, Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880–1925) does not mention the statue in his entry for Chu mig; see the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 447.1–7). Confusingly, it is, however, according to EVERDING 2005: 125, recorded as being present in Chu mig in the pilgrim's diary of the east Tibetan merchant Tshong dpon Kha stag 'Dzam yag, who travelled in Tibet, Nepal, and India between 1944 and 1956. This suggests that either the speaking Tārā image of Chu mig was relocated to different places or that there was more than one image of her.

¹⁴³ See EVERDING 2005: 122. For the respective Tibetan passage, see the *Myang chos 'byung* (pp. 213.18–214.4).

sgrol ma, though nobody was present in the *gtsang khang* housing that statue, everybody heard the sound of the ten-syllable *mantra* of Tārā.¹⁴⁴

These days, the main religious object of Chu mig is an iron *phur pa* that once belonged to Chos rgyal 'Phags pa. In front of the temple, we also find a hollowed out stone that is said to have functioned as a water trough for 'Phags pa's horse. Nowadays, Chu mig is under the management of Ngor Monastery and taken care of by two monks switched out on a yearly basis.¹⁴⁵

3.4 The Relationship of Ngor chen with Members of the bZhi thog bla brang and its Chu mig Branch

Ngor chen, as the illegitimate son of Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, was the half-brother of Blo gros rgyal mtshan and Grags pa blo gros, the two eldest sons Kun dga' rin chen had respectively with his two official consorts. Both half-brothers and their respective sons maintained a close link with Ngor chen and his early successors on the abbatial throne of Ngor. The biographies of those latter lamas list both the bZhi thog and Chu mig bDag chens as the first disciples of Ngor's early abbots. For instance, Ngor chen's biographies enumerate the following masters of that *bla brang* among his chief disciples of Sa skya's 'Khon family:¹⁴⁶

- ❖ bDag chen Chu mig pa Grags pa blo gros (1367–1437/1446)
- ❖ bDag chen bZhi thog pa/Chu mig pa Blo gros dbang phyug (1402–1481)
- ❖ bDag chen bZhi thog pa Kun dga' blo gros
- ❖ bDag chen bZhi thog pa/Chu mig pa Kun dga' dbang phyug (1418–1462), the nineteenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: ca. 1442–1462)

During the Phag mo gru pa period, the bZhi thog bla brang was the most powerful branch of the Sa skya 'Khon family, providing three of four throne-holders during Ngor chen's lifetime: Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, sixteenth throne-holder (tenure: 1364–1399), Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1366–1420), seventeenth throne-holder (tenure: 1399–1420), and Kun dga' dbang phyug (1418–1462), nineteenth throne-holder (tenure: ca 1442–1462).¹⁴⁷

Ngor chen's familial relations also played a significant role when he decided to found his new monastic retreat in the upper Ngor valley. This land belonged to the Chu mig estate under the administration of the Chu mig branch of the bZhi thog bla brang. It was Grags pa blo gros, the younger among Ngor chen's two half-brothers, who headed the Chu mig branch at that time, offering the land for Ngor chen to use freely at his disposal. The biography of Ngor chen refers to him only as bDag chen Chu mig pa, but given the

¹⁴⁴ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 72b3–6). See also VON SCHROEDER 2001: 717.

¹⁴⁵ Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (Chu mig, 04 October 2010).

¹⁴⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.3–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 530.5–531.1). It is interesting to note that both authors divide the members of the same *bla brang* in masters from bZhi thog and Chu mig, though their classification varies to a certain extent. Mus chen designates Grags pa blo gros and his son Blo gros dbang phyug as *bdag chen chu mig pa*, whereas Sangs rgyas phun tshogs does this for Grags pa blo gros and Kun dga' dbang phyug, but designates Blo gros dbang phyug as *bzhi thog pa*. Both lists also mention bDag chen mThu stobs dbang phyug bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1408–1450) of the Rin chen sgang bla brang. For the latter's biographical sketch, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 362.5–6). For Mus chen's disciples, see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 618.2–4). See also the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 241.6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 25.3–5), and *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 594.6–595.2 and 601.2–3).

¹⁴⁷ See JACKSON 2010a: 177–178.

fact that Ngor chen's older half-brother, Blo gros rgyal mtshan, had already passed away in 1420, only Grags pa blo gros remains to be addressed by this title.¹⁴⁸

By the turn of the fifteenth century, Chu mig was apparently still administrated by the Phag mo gru pa regime. According to Yar lung pa A 'bum, sGer Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (fl. late 14th/early 15th century), who had first served as *nang blon* (interior minister) of the Phag mo gru pa, was successively appointed as *rdzong dpon* (district governor) of Rin spungs, *chen po* of gTsang Chu mig, and *dpon chen* (grand-governor) of the lHa khang chen mo of Sa skya.¹⁴⁹ The modern historian Phun tshogs rnam rgyal specifies that Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan was appointed to these offices in 1408 by sDe srid dBang Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1374–1432, r. 1385–1432), whereas he refers to his office not as *chen po* but as *khri dpon* (myriarch) of gTsang Chu mig ring mo.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, either prior to or after that, Grags pa rgyal mtshan appointed Drung chen Kun dga' dpal bzang po (fl. 13th/14th century) of the Yar rgyab family as the *chen po* of Chu mig, who also ruled the myriarchy.¹⁵¹ But lacking further historical information, it is impossible to state whether the administrative control of Chu mig by the Phag mo gru pa was actually enforced or just nominal. Yet the account in Ngor chen's biography suggests that the Chu mig bDag chen could freely dispose of his estates. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs clearly states that the bDag chen offered the land to Ngor chen, although the latter requested an official certificate.¹⁵²

For almost forty years later, at a time when the influence of the Rin spungs pa gradually rose,¹⁵³ we find another reference that attests to the Chu mig bDag chen exercising control over Chu mig, namely in the Shākya mchog ldan biography by Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566). In 1468, Shākya mchog ldan attended the commemoration of Ngor chen's death at Ngor and proceeded afterwards to Chu mig to the Che sa bDag chen—that is, Blo gros dbang phyug, the last Chu mig bDag chen, who was an important patron of Shākya mchog ldan. During his stay at Chu mig, Blo gros dbang phyug asked Shākya mchog ldan to take care of Zi lung—the *grwa tshang* of Don yod dpal (1398–1484), which Shākya mchog ldan would later transform into his monastic seat of Thub bstan gSer mdog can. The bDag chen also told Shākya mchog ldan that he would make him his adoptive son (*bu tshab*) and add the estates of Chu mig (*chu mig gzhis ka*) to the monastic estates (*chos gzhis*) of Zi lung.¹⁵⁴ During a later meeting at Chu mig in 1476, the bDag chen reiterated his previous offer. He told Shākya mchog ldan that during that same year he

¹⁴⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 527.6).

¹⁴⁹ See the *Rin spungs pa sger gyi gdung rabs* (pp. 128.1–129.1) and CZAJA 2013: 213 and 482. On Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, see also EVERDING 2005: 120, JACKSON 2007: 351–352, and SHEN 2002: 43–44.

¹⁵⁰ See the *Rin spungs kyi lo rgyus* (p. 131.5–8). Cf. the *Rin spungs pa sger gyi gdung rabs* (p. 128.2), which states that Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan was appointed to the office of *dpon chen* by a certain Gu shri under whom he had previously served as *nang blon*. This Gu shri has been identified by CZAJA 2013: 213 and 482 as 'Jam dbyangs Gu shri Shākya rgyal mtshan (1340–1373, r. 1364/65–1373). The *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 1 (vol. 2, p. 534.1–7) dates the appointment of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan as *rdzong dpon* of Rin spungs to 1408 as well. In his chronicle, the Fifth Dalai Lama also recounts those events, but mentions that Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan was appointed as *khri dpon* of Chu mig and *dpon gnyer* (official care taker or steward) of the lHa khang chen mo; see the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (p. 159.7–12). In contrast, the *Deb ther kun gsal me long* (p. 240.8) states that he was appointed as *khri dpon* of Chu mig.

¹⁵¹ See the *Byams pa gling pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 4b4–5) and FERMER 2010: 52.

¹⁵² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 527.6).

¹⁵³ By that time, Nor bu bzang po had taken control of the fortress of bSam 'grub rtse. For a discussion of different datings for this event (1435, 1446, or 1447), see CZAJA 2013: 221, n. 43, 223, and 223–225, n. 54 and SHEN 2002: 211–212, n. 302.

¹⁵⁴ See the *Shākya mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 50b.5–7), CAUMANN 2012: 148, CAUMANN 2013: 68–69, and CAUMANN 2015: 174–175

would transfer the monastic estates (*gzhis ka*) and that after his passing, his disciple should also have control over his possessions. Shākya mchog ldan should make use of the Chu mig chiliarchy (*stong skor*) as funds for his teaching activities and for supporting gSer mdog can. To further assure Shākya mchog ldan, the bDag chen expressed that prior to his death he would record those directives in form of a sealed letter.¹⁵⁵

In 1481, after the death of the bDag chen, Shākya mchog ldan took charge of his teacher's funeral observances and also allocated his possessions. For the principal part of the ceremonies, he invited the monastic communities of Ngor, rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal, and gSer mdog can to Chu mig. The former two were headed respectively by dPal ldan rdo rje, the fifth abbot of Ngor, and Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge, who would later serve as the sixth abbot of Ngor. Shākya mchog ldan offered the belongings of the Chu mig bDag chen to Ngor Monastery and also to other masters and disciples that had gathered at Chu mig. All other items, such as books and ritual implements, he distributed among the assembled monastic communities. As for himself, he kept only a collection of *thangkas* among which we find a set of forty-two *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī*. This set had had been presented to him by the bDag chen himself when he was still alive, and later on it is said to have been kept in the Ka drug ma of gSer mdog can.¹⁵⁶ According to Phan bde mKhan Rin po che, the conveyance of Chu mig's estates to gSer mdog can might have been one factor contributing to the tensions that are said to have arisen between Ngor and gSer mdog can because due to its vicinity to Ngor, Chu mig would have been expected to be handed over to Ngor.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 58b.2–7), CAUMANNs 2012: 148, n. 24 and 179, CAUMANNs 2013: 69–70, and CAUMANNs 2015: 175, n. 169 and 203–204. See also the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 398.4–399.3), where the actual conveyance of the estates is mentioned within the context of the expansion of Zi lung in 1476. On this passage, see also CAUMANNs 2012: 179–180 and CAUMANNs 2015: 206.

¹⁵⁶ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 65a4–65b2), CAUMANNs 2012: 196–197, and CAUMANNs 2015: 224–225. The funeral service is also mentioned in the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 114.21–115.4), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (p. 65.4–11), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 8* (p. 231.6–14).

¹⁵⁷ Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (*gZhis ka rtse*, 07 February 2011). An incident causing tensions between Ngor and gSer mdog can during the abbacy of Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge, the sixth abbot of Ngor, is recorded in the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 69a4–b4). After the passing of Don yod dpal, Shākya mchog ldan sent offerings to Ngor to perform a religious service on behalf of his late master. At the dedication of merit gained through that service, Go rams pa allegedly spoke a disparaging formula not at all suitable for this context (i.e., *tshe las 'das pa don yod dpal ba la dgongs su gsol*), thereby offending the group from gSer mdog can. On this incident and its consequences, see also CAUMANNs 2012: 204–206 and CAUMANNs 2015: 237–238.

Chapter Four

Childhood and Youthful Studies

As with many other biographies of great Tibetan Buddhist masters, we are also told by Ngor chen's biographers that their subject did not behave like an ordinary child. Having reached his third or fourth year, Ngor chen—according to the account of his elderly nanny, the mother of his nephew Slob dpon Legs rin—liked it peaceful and calm, he loved the solitude, and was diligent about the holy Dharma. He did not engage in ordinary games. Instead, all his playing was of a religious nature: he gave or listened to teachings and performed the bathing ritual of bCom ldan 'das Ri khrod ma Lo ma gyon ma (i.e., Parṇaśabarī).¹⁵⁸

At age five (i.e., in 1386), his apparent father Grub pa yon tan put Ngor chen to a test. Regarding the family's profession as valets, he wanted to examine whether his son was able to carry large silver teapots. Thus he made Ngor chen go up and down a stairway carrying a stone of the same weight as such a teapot. But as Ngor chen was not fond of secular work, he threw the stone away, showing a displeased expression. Ngor chen's true father, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, also came to know of this incident. He decided that since Ngor chen's physique would not be suitable for working as a valet and, most notably, since he was inclined to the Dharma, it would be better to make him live a religious life and let his younger brother, dPon ne bSod nams dpal, become a valet. For that reason, Ngor chen is said to have been very delighted and developed a strong faith in Kun dga' rin chen.¹⁵⁹

When Ngor chen reached his sixth year (i.e., in 1387), Kun dga' rin chen had to leave Sa skya as it was not convenient to reside there.¹⁶⁰ Unfortunately, the biographies do not provide us with either the actual reason Kun dga' rin chen departed or the place he moved to. One could speculate that internal conflicts at Sa skya may have prompted him to move somewhere else, perhaps Chu mig. At that time, obviously concerned about Ngor chen's monastic education, he summoned the eminent Sa skya master Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406), telling him: “Since this child will become an excellent *dge bshes*, [I] request that you take good care [of him].”¹⁶¹ By instructing Shar chen in this way and presenting him with gifts, Kun dga' rin chen entrusted his son to Shar chen.

In the following years, Shar chen would become Ngor chen's principle teacher, on whom he continuously relied until Shar chen passed away in 1406. After Ngor chen had in this way been committed into the care of Shar chen, he received from him the empowerments of Kālacakra, Pañjaranātha, and Vajradhātu.¹⁶²

Still in the same year, Ngor chen learned reading according to the *Byis pa 'jug pa'i sgo* under Slob dpon Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, a rNying ma master residing at sKye 'phrang (or bsKyed 'phreng).¹⁶³ At age seven (i.e., in 1388), he memorised under that same master

¹⁵⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 433.6–434.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 484.6–485.2).

¹⁵⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 434.1–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 485.2–4).

¹⁶⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 434.4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 485.4–5): *de nas dgung lo drug bzhes pa'i tshes/ bdag chen la sa skyar bzugs stabs bde mi bde cig byung nas/*.

¹⁶¹ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 485.5): *byis pa 'di la dge bshes bzang po cig 'ong ba bdog pas/ khyed kyis mgo 'don yang dag pa cig mādaz zhu/*. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 434.4–5).

¹⁶² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 434.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 485.4–6). See also DAVIDSON 1981: 83 and JACKSON 2010a: 177.

¹⁶³ According to Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 March 2009), sKye 'phrang was the name of a building at Sa skya. CASSINELLI and EKVALL 1969: 125, n. 11 mention a family by the name of sKye

the *Dvikalpa* (*brTag gnyis*), that is, the *Hevajratantra*. Shar chen gave him the related pointing-out instructions and rTa thog Slob dpon dPal ldan bzang po helped him to internalise its topical outline sections (*sa bcad*). At age eight (i.e., in 1389), Ngor chen thought of giving his first public scriptural exposition (*rnam gzhag* or *bshad gsar*), which apparently constituted an important examination for young students at Sa skya. To further prepare himself, along with Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, he approached his teacher Shar chen, who at that time was residing at Gu ra, and completed under him the pointing-out instructions.¹⁶⁴

When the time for Ngor chen's public exposition had come, Ta'i si tu bSod nams dpal (b. 1367) announced that he would provide the *dkar ru ma* of the *ston shog* for the "exposition of the son of Nye gnas Grub pa," that is, Ngor chen, and arranged the *dkar ru ma* consisting of many donkey loads of *shog bu rtse chen ma*.¹⁶⁵ In this passage, we encounter a few terms that are lexically not attested and very difficult to understand. After discussions with both Tibetan and non-Tibetan scholars, I provisionally suggest we understand them in the following way. The term *dkar ru ma* used for the *ston shog* might be some special kind of paper, which was perhaps whiter than regular paper.¹⁶⁶ The term *ston shog*, which seems to be short for *dga' ston gyi shog bu*, may be understood in different ways. First, as some kind of letter used to announce or invite the monastic community of Sa skya to Ngor chen's public exposition. Or second, as paper that was distributed as some kind of gift to the monastic community during Ngor chen's public exposition. Mus chen adds in his biography of Ngor chen that it was customary at Sa skya that each person examined provided half a bolt (*yug*) of paper for their *ston shog*, but that Ngor chen provided *shog bu rtse chen ma*, implying that this was some special sort of paper.¹⁶⁷ The name for that special paper, *shog bu rtse chen ma*, appears to refer to its place of origin, rTse chen to the west of rGyal rtse. rTse chen was the site of an important fortress and monastery of the house of rGyal rtse and directly connected with Ngor chen's patron Ta'i si tu bSod nams dpal.

In his study of the life of dGe 'dun grub (1391–1475), Shen Weirong introduces bSod nams dpal as follows:

In *MSL* [Ming shi 明寶錄] wird berichtet, daß die Ming-Regierung im elften Jahr der Regierungsperiode Yongle (1413) vier lokalen Machthabern (chin. *toumu* 頭目, tib. *mgo dpon*) – Suoba *toumu* Lazanxiao 鎖巴頭目刺贊肖, Zhangba *toumu* Zhaba 掌巴頭目扎巴, Ba'er *tuguan* Suonanba 八兒土官鎖南巴 und Yangsi duba *toumugong* Geba 仰思都巴頭目公葛巴 – den Titel *situ* verlieh. Jeder *situ* bekam

phrang nga from 'Khril spe, whose members acted as the bearers of the sedan chair of Sa skya's throne-holder. A family ancestor had served as a sedan-bearer of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa. 'Khril spe was a settlement to the east of Sa skya; see *Ibid.*: [34–35], Map 2 (aKhril spe) and Map 3 (aKhril spe).

¹⁶⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 434.5–435.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 485.6–486.2). Gu ra probably refers to the Gu ra bla brang located to the east of Sa skya, which was a residence of members of the Shar family; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 34.4–5) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 651.3–4.).

¹⁶⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 486.3): *rta'i [= ta'i] si tu bsod nams dpal bas| nye gnas grub pa'i bu rnam gzhag byed pa'i ston shog gi dkar ru ma nged kyis byed pa yin gsung nas| shog bu rtse chen ma bong rgyab du ma'i dkar ru ma mdzad dof*. For this passage, see also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 435.1–2).

¹⁶⁶ In EHRHARD 2000a: 173.25–27, we encounter the term *dkar ru ma* in the printing colophon of the *mGur 'bum* of Nam mkha' rdo rje (1486–1553): *seng ge dpal ldan byin brlabs nyi bzang mol chos skyong skyabs dor sgrol de rnams kyil| dkar ru ma'i 'bul ba mtshon re byas|*.

¹⁶⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 435.2): *de la spyir rnam gzhag mdzad pa rnams kyis ston shog la shog yug phyed re 'bul ba yin yang chos rje rin po che pas ston shog la shog bu rtse chen ma re phul zhing de dang mthun pa'i de nas gzhan las phul du byung ba'i rnam gzhag dang dga' ston rgya chen po mdzad nas|*.

von der Zentralregierung ein Silbersiegel, eine Ernennungsurkunde sowie Seide und Geld. Obwohl außer im Falle von bNyang [sic] stod pa keine Erklärung für die Namen Suoba, Zhangba und Baer gefunden werden konnten, spricht einiges dafür, daß diese vier *situ* jeweils mit La stod lHo pa lHa btsan skyabs ma, La stod Byang pa rNam rgyal grags pa, rTse nub pa bSod nams dpal und Nyang stod pa Kun dga' 'phags identisch sind.¹⁶⁸

rTse nub pa bSod nams dpal war der jüngere Bruder des Nyang stod pa Kun dga' 'phags. Nachdem rGyal mkhar rtse von Kun dga' 'phags gegründet worden war, spaltete sich die rGyal rtse-Familie in zwei Teile. Die Grenze zwischen den beiden Gebieten bildete das Kloster rTse chen. bSod nams dpal wurde rTse nub pa genannt, während sein Neffe Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags pa den Namen rTse shar pa erhielt. bSod nams dpal stand im Dienst der Sa skya pa und verwaltete viele Landgüter. Er regierte viele Gebiete im Westen von gTsang, beispielsweise Shab Seng ge rtse, 'Jad mthong smon und Bo dong, und war einer der mächtigsten Fürsten im Gebiet zwischen seinem Neffen Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags pa im Osten und dem La stod Byang *khri dpon* rNam rgyal grags bzang im Westen. Er erhielt vom Ming-Kaiser den Titel *da situ* sowie ein silbernes Siegel. Der Sohn des bSod nams dpal, dPon po Rin chen 'phags pa, wurde vom Ming-Kaiser zum *du si* ernannt. Diese vier *da situ* oder *situ* galten als die einflußreichsten lokalen Machthaber in gTsang zur Zeit des dGe 'dun grub. Drei davon, nämlich rTse nub pa bSod nams dpal, lHo pa lHa btsan bskyabs und Byang pa rNam rgyal grags pa, waren dessen Gabenherren.¹⁶⁹

Er wird auch in der Liste der wichtigen Fürsten des Phag mo gru pa *gong ma* Grags pa rgyal mtshan als rTse nub pa *situ* bSod nams dpal aufgeführt, während sein Neffe Rab brtan [sic] kun bzang 'phags, der bekannteste rGyal rtse-Fürst, unter dem Namen rTse shar pa in derselben Liste erscheint (...), wobei rTse shar pa und rTse nub pa als Abkürzungen für rTse chen shar pa und rTse chen nub pa stehen. Die Namen machen deutlich, daß westlich von rTse chen das Einflußgebiet von bSod nams dpal war, während östlich von rTse chen das Einflußgebiet des Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags pa lag. *Situ* bSod nams dpal, einer der mächtigsten Gabenherren im westlichen Teil von gTsang, war ein bekannter Förderer der dGe lugs pa.¹⁷⁰

This presentation clarifies the identity of Ta'i si tu bSod nams dpal as an important ruler from one branch of the house of rGyal rtse, the rTse nub pa.¹⁷¹ He ruled over an area in

¹⁶⁸ SHEN 2002: 56.

¹⁶⁹ SHEN 2002: 57–58. In 1365, Nang chen 'Phags pa dPal bzang po (1318–1370), the father of Nang chen Kun dga' 'phags pa (1357–1412), laid the foundation of rGyal mkhar rtse; see the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 382.1–4), *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (p. 12.8–21), RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 14, and TUCCI 1999: 664. The *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 383.3–5) specifies that the fort (*rdzong*) of rGyal mkhar rtse was built by his son Kun dga' 'phags pa. In 1390, Kun dga' 'phags pa also established bSam 'phel rin po che'i gling, the temple inside the fort; see the *Myang chos 'byung* (pp. 47.9–50.6), *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 19.19–21.14), RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 17, and TUCCI 1999: 664.

¹⁷⁰ SHEN 2002: 185, n. 220. On the “Eastern and Western Citadels” (*rtse shar nub*) and their respective heads, the rTse shar pa and rTse nub pa, see JACKSON (under preparation). The latter identifies the fortress of rTse chen as the western citadel and the one of rGyal rtse as the eastern citadel; see *Ibid.* (under preparation).

¹⁷¹ On bSod nams dpal, see the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (pp. 383.3–4 and 383.9–384.5) and SHEN 2002: 185, n. 220. See also the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (pp. 55.6–55a3 and 80a6–81.1), TUCCI 1971: 189 and 217, and SHEN 2002: 110, 168, n. 157, 187, 199, n. 264, and 219, n. 329. The *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (p. 14.6–7)

western gTsang and was in control of districts and estates such as Shab Seng ge rtse, 'Jad (or bZhad), and Bo dong.¹⁷² Moreover, he controlled the fortress of rTse chen, which had been founded in 1365 by his father Nang chen 'Phags pa dPal bzang po (1318–1370) and at whose site an important monastery was built between 1366 and 1371.¹⁷³

According to sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705), he was married to bDag mo Shākya dpal, and under both of them the monastery of lHun po rtse in Shab stod, which had originally been founded by Bo dong E 'Bro'g pa 'Bro'g mi bSod nams, flourished greatly. At the time of its fourth abbot, the Sa skya master Seng rtse Shar gdong ba Brang pa 'Phags 'od Yon tan rgya mtsho, they invited Tsong kha pa's disciple Shes rab seng ge (1383–1445) to lHun po rtse, and he transformed the monastery into a dGa' ldan institution.¹⁷⁴ Though bSod nam dpal thus appears to have been an important patron of the emerging dGa' ldan tradition, he is also mentioned as a major patron of the Sa skya pa.¹⁷⁵

introduces a certain Hor bSod nams dpal (b. 1367) as the son of dPon mo chen mo (i.e., dPal ldan bSod nams 'bum). She was the daughter of Sa skya dPon chen dBang phyug dpal and the second wife of both 'Phags pa dPal bzang po and the latter's younger brother 'Phags pa Rin chen (1320–1376); see the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 10.17–19 and 12.21–13.2). Hence, Hor bSod nams dpal can be identified as Ta'i si tu bSod nams dpal. On this and bSod nams dpal in general, see also JACKSON (under preparation). SHEN 2002: 109–110 considers the possibility of whether bSod nams dpal could have also been the same person as Dar rgyas pa bSod nams dpal, who functioned as the main patron in the foundation of bKra shis lhun po.

¹⁷² See the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 383.15–18).

¹⁷³ See the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 383.9–10). On 'Phags pa dPal bzang po, see the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (pp. 374.17–383.3), *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 5.9–16.6), RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 11–16, and TUCCI 1999: 662–664. Note that the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 375.5–6) gives his year of birth as a bird year (*bya lo*). The monastery of rTse chen was established in several different steps by 'Phags pa dPal bzang po and continued after his death by his younger brother, 'Phags pa Rin chen, in collaboration with Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal. On the monastery of rTse chen, see the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (pp. 381.17–382.1), *Myang chos 'byung* (pp. 88.15–93.18), *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 13.6–9, 14.10–15.13, and 16.14–17.7), JACKSON 1987: 154, n. 47, RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 14–17, STEARNS 2010: 34–35, 57, 115, and 336, n. 154, and TUCCI 1999: 664. See also the *gZhis rtsa sa khul gyi gnas yig* (pp. 18–19), CHAN 1994: 328, and GYURME DORJE 2009: 313. On both, see also JACKSON (under preparation).

¹⁷⁴ See the *Baidūrya ser po* (p. 249, no. 28) and SHEN 2002: 199. However, according to Pañ chen bSod nams grags pa (1478–1554), lHun po rtse was newly established after bSod nams dpal had both Kun mkhyen 'Phags 'od (i.e., 'Phags 'od Yon tan rgya mtsho) and Chos rje Shes seng ba (i.e., Shes rab seng ge) installed as his preceptors; see the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (p. 55.6–55a3) and TUCCI 1971: 189. In his *bKa' gdams gsar rnying gi chos 'byung* (pp. 74.21–75.8), bSod nams grags pa introduces 'Phags 'od as a Sa skya master who first served bSod nams dpal and bDag mo Shākya dpal as their teacher. But when these two invited Shes rab seng ge, he became the latter's student, receiving from him Tsong kha pa's teachings, and also studied under mKhas grub rJe at dPal 'khor bde chen. He then became a dGe ldan pa, giving tantric teachings at lHun po rtse. On Shes rab seng ge and 'Phags 'od, see also the *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (pp. 751–753 and 822), *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (pp. 362.6ff.), *Baidūrya ser po* (p. 99.1–19), *Tsong kha pa'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 478.2–483.21), *Lam rim bla ma bryud pa'i rnam thar* (vol. 2, pp. 591.1ff.), and SHEN 2002: 199, n. 264, 203, n. 277, 203–204, n. 278, and 297. 'Phags 'od Yon tan rgya mtsho, who is also listed as a teacher of dGe 'dun grub, must be differentiated from Kun mkhyen 'Phags 'od (b. 1268), an important teacher of Bu ston Rin chen grub. On the latter, see Part Three, n. 291. Five works of 'Phags 'od Yon tan rgya mtsho on Cakrasamvara and Guhyasamāja are preserved in the Potala; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnam ky'i dkar chag* (p. 283, no. 1951). Four of them are given as block-prints from lHun po rtse dPal lHun grub bde chen in Shab stod. Two of them were written at lHun po rtse. In one colophon, 'Phags 'od refers to himself as a direct disciple of Shes rab seng ge. In addition, a sixth work is preserved in the Potala, consisting of notes of his teachings. Some of his works are also preserved at 'Bras spungs; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (*passim*).

¹⁷⁵ See the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 384.1–5): *rgya rta'i ming rgyal pos/ ta'i si tu'i mtshan/ dngul tham/ lung bzang po dang bcas pa gnang nas/ dpal ldan sa skya pa'i thog drangs/ gtsang srid spyi sgos kyi bstan pa'i srog shing lta bur bzhugs pa 'di lags/*. SHEN 2002: 110 makes the qualifying remark that bSod nams dpal “muß ein Anhänger der Sa skya pa gewesen sein. Dennoch zeigte er eine offenkundige Zuneigung zu den dGe lugs pa.” bSod nams dpal also received the Indian *paṇḍita* Vanaratna (1384–1468) in upper Myang during the first of Vanaratna's three sojourns in Tibet (1426–1427); see EHRHARD 2004b: 248 and SHASTRI 2002: 133.

bSod nams dpal's forefathers from the ruling house of rGyal rtse are said to have moved from Khams to gTsang, first serving as functionaries in the administration of the Sa skya regime during the Yuan dynasty. Even though the rGyal rtse lords established their own vast dominion during the Phag mo gru pa period by establishing a number of strategic fortresses, they continued to uphold good relations with Sa skya as well.¹⁷⁶ We know that the direct relatives of bSod nam dpal—his father, uncle, and brother—maintained relations with Ngor chen's father. For instance, after Ta dben Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the fifteenth throne-holder of Sa skya, had passed away in 1364, 'Phags pa dPal bzang po was sent by Kun dga' rin chen to sNe gdong to deliver a share of offerings (*'bul skal*) intended for a religious service on behalf of Blo gros rgyal mtshan.¹⁷⁷ 'Phags pa dPal bzang po had been chosen for this task due to his good relationship with Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan. However, as 'Phags pa dPal bzang po's journey coincided with either an illness or even the passing of Ta'i si tu, he fell victim to a conspiracy, resulting in his abduction to Tshong 'dus in Grwa phyi, where he was put under house arrest (*bzang btson*) for five months. After he was set free in the ninth month of the same year, that incident caused a clash with the Phag mo gru pa troops one month later at lCang ra in the upper Myang valley, the latter withdrawing defeated.¹⁷⁸

Later on, in 1372, 'Phags rin Du dben sha pa (1320–1376) and dPon Kun dga' 'phags pa (1357–1412), the uncle and elder brother of bSod nams dpal, conjointly made a huge offering at Sa skya Monastery, donating on a large scale to members of the 'Khon family headed by Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, to her numerous *bla brangs* and offices, and her monastic community.¹⁷⁹ It is in this tradition that we have to understand bSod nams dpal acting as the patron of Ngor chen's first public exposition.

With regard to that exposition, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen was approached as well. Though the person that informed him about those developments is not clearly identified by Ngor chen's biography, the sentence structure suggests that it was bSod nams dpal himself. In reply, Kun dga' rin chen gave his consent in the following way: "Well then, that is reasonable. [The child] should become a monk! Give [him] the name Kun dga' bzang po! I will write an [official] letter [of authorisation]."¹⁸⁰ So saying, he issued a letter

¹⁷⁶ See, for instance, the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 4.6–17.6). On the rise of the house of rGyal rtse and their role as Buddhist patrons, see RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 11–27. For a genealogical chart of the house of rGyal rtse, see TUCCI 1999: Genealogical Tables, Table X – Gyantse.

¹⁷⁷ See the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 10.20–11.1). My reading that the offerings were destined for that purpose is confirmed by a parallel passage found in the same work; see the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 6.21–7.3). Cf. the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 382.4–6), where the purpose of 'Phags pa dPal bzang po's journey is not further specified.

¹⁷⁸ See the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (pp. 382.4–383.3), *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 10.20–11.20), and CZAJA 2013: 195–196. See also the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (p. 176.17–19). This incident is also mentioned by RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 14.

¹⁷⁹ See the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (p. 17.7–13). Phags pa Rin chen hold the title of *du dben sha* of mNga' ris, which he had received in 1367 from the last Yuan emperor, Toghan Temür. However, by that time, this position had lost its original meaning as commander in chief and its title was, according to RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 15, "freely granted to nobleman." SHEN 2002: 60 remarks that the title was often held by the *nang chen* of Sa skya. 'Phags pa Rin chen had received the title at the same time when his older brother, 'Phags pa dPal bzang po, had been awarded the title of *ronglu dafu da situ* (*g.yung lo ta ho ta'i si tu*). Later on, in about 1372, he received the title of *si tu* and his nephew, dPon Kun dga' 'phags pa, was appointed as *nang chen*; see the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 13.14–14.1 and 17.13–20) and SHEN 2002: 60. On the titles that the house of rGyal rtse received from the Yuan and Ming emperors, see also RICCA and LO BUE 1993: 13–17. For a list of the *nang chen* of Sa skya, see the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (pp. 362.13–363.13). On the office of *nang chen*, see also TUCCI 1999: 35.

¹⁸⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 486.3–4): 'o na de 'thad/ btsun pa byas [= byos?] ming kun dga' bzang po thogs/ ngas yi ge byed gsungs nas/.

that read: “Message to our members of the gZhi thog. [I] will permit Kun dga’ bzang po to study temporarily under the great Slob dpon Shar pa. Hence, nobody should raise any objections.”¹⁸¹ This letter suggests that by that time Kun dga’ rin chen had not yet returned to Sa skya.

When in the next year, at age nine (i.e., in 1390), the monastic semester commenced, Ngor chen took monastic ordination.¹⁸² In the same year, as requested by numerous scholars, he expounded by heart the [Hevajra] *Dvikalpa* (*brTag gnyis*) at Sa skya’s Chos khri thang. Because he performed a much more outstanding exposition than other students, and hosted a more extensive festivity (*dga’ ston*)—or it would be better to say that his parents or patron did—both his exposition and festivity were considered to have been marvellous. Also, from that time on, Ngor chen is said to have expounded one *tantra* at a time for many years.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 486.4–5): *rang re gzhi thog pa la gtogs pa rnam la springs pa| kun dga’ bzang po re zhig slob dpon chen po shar pa’i drung du slob gnyer byed du bcug pa yin pas| sus kyang rtsod pa ma byed bya ba gnang|*.

¹⁸² As the discussion in the next chapter will show, the reference to Ngor chen’s monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) apparently refers to his taking of novice-monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*) vows.

¹⁸³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 435.2–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 486.5–6). An annotation remarks that, according to the biography of Ngor chen written by Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, Ngor chen gave his public exposition only at age twelve (i.e., in 1393). The Chos khri thang is identical to the Sa skya tshogs, where Ngor chen’s alleged father Grub pa yon tan had served as great attendant (*nye gnas chen po*); see Part Three, n. 31.

Chapter Five

Taking the Three Vows

Before his biographers start with the actual presentation of Ngor chen's religious training, they first look at this period from the perspective of the three different sets or systems of discipline known as the "three vows" (*sdom pa gsum: trisaṃvara*). This triple set of moral codes is associated with distinct Buddhist practices, and the three sets, though taken successively, are eventually practiced together. These three sets of discipline are the *prātimokṣa* vow (*so thar gyi sdom pa*) of a monk practitioner of the Śrāvaka schools, the *bodhisattva* vow (*byang sems kyi sdom pa*) of a practitioner following the *bodhisattva* path of the Mahāyāna schools, and the *mantra* vow of a *vidyādhara* (*rig 'dzin sngags kyi sdom pa*), that is, of a tantric practitioner of the Vajrayāna.

5.1 The Vow of Individual Liberation

At age nine (i.e., in 1390), Ngor chen received at Sa skya both the vows of a layman and novice monk. In his ordination ceremony, Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406) acted as ordaining preceptor, Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412) as ceremonial master, and Ka bzhi pa dPal ldan seng ge as timekeeper. Bla ma Kun dga' rin chen and g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal (1350–1414) were among the members of the monastic community that formed the necessary quorum of monks (*kha skong gi dge 'dun*).¹⁸⁴

As is characteristic of Tibetan biographical writing, Ngor chen's biographers continue with a passage explaining how strictly he observed his vows, not tainted by the slightest transgression and protecting them "[as dearly and carefully] as [his] eyeball (*spyang gyi 'bras bu ltar*)." For observing his vows, we are told, there was no need for Ngor chen to rely on external conditions (*gzhan rkyen*) or apply antidotes (*gnyen po*) by making special efforts. As soon as he had taken monastic vows, he naturally remained untainted by any faults.¹⁸⁵ His pure conduct is illustrated by an account related by Slob dpon Kun dga' legs pa. According to that, Ngor chen was different from everyone else, even as a young monk. Along with Kun dga' legs pa and others, Ngor chen travelled as Shar chen's attendant during breaks between monastic teaching sessions (*chos bar*). Whenever they had reached their lodging place in the afternoon, the older monks were only interested in satisfying their thirst and hunger. But Ngor chen, though he was the youngest member of the party, without turning his thoughts to food or drink, immediately began to study the scriptures.¹⁸⁶

According to his biographies, Ngor chen received, in his twentieth year (i.e., in 1401), the vow of a fully ordained monk in the midst of seven faithful members of the monastic

¹⁸⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar* 1 (p. 435.3–5), *Ngor chen gyi nram thar* 2 (pp. 486.6–487.3), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 181.4–182.3).

¹⁸⁵ This natural faultlessness is compared with the phenomenon of a few *bhikṣus* who received *upasampada* ordination by the "come here" (*tshur shog*) formula from Buddha Śākyamuni and were immediately endowed with a conduct as having been ordained for hundred years; see the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar* 1 (p. 435.6) and *Ngor chen gyi nram thar* 2 (p. 487.4). On this formula, the oldest type of ordination, see BUSWELL and LOPEZ 2013: 279 (s.v., *ehibhikṣukā*) and VAN DER KUIJP 2013a: 186–189, n. 156.

¹⁸⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar* 1 (pp. 435.5–436.3) and *Ngor chen gyi nram thar* 2 (pp. 487.3–488.1).

community.¹⁸⁷ However, in his record of teachings received, he dates his full monastic ordination to the year 1400, further specifying that it took place at Sa skya in the midst of a gathering of seventeen monks.¹⁸⁸ The ceremony was presided over by Shar chen as abbot, mKhan chen Blo gros dpal as ceremonial master, Sa bzang 'Phags pa as instructor in private, with 'Jam dbyangs dPal ldan gzhon nu as timekeeper.¹⁸⁹

5.2 Ngor chen's Lineage of Monastic Ordination

Ngor chen received full monastic ordination in the lineage of the *prātimokṣa* precepts that was introduced to Tibet by the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrībhadrā (hereafter Śākyaśrī), better known to Tibetans as Kha che Paṇ chen.¹⁹⁰ Śākyaśrī's sojourn in Tibet from 1204 until 1214 had a great impact on the development of Buddhism; one of his main contributions was his founding of a Vinaya ordination lineage and fully functioning monastic community.¹⁹¹ When he returned to his native Kashmir in late 1214, he left behind a group of disciples whom he had trained in Vinaya practice, "thus establishing an important new monastic community."¹⁹²

Successive divisions in this original group led to the formation of four different assemblies, which became known as the Tshogs sde bzhi or Jo gdan tshogs (pa) sde bzhi. These communities were the Tsha mig tshogs pa, Bye rdzing tshogs pa, dGe 'dun sgang pa, and Chos lung tshogs pa. Initially, they were mobile encampments (*sgar pa*) with no fixed abode or means of support until they were endowed with offerings of land or temples. Their earliest settlements were found in the wider region of sNye mo in eastern gTsang, and it was from these sites that the communities obtained their names. Over time, they branched off into further sub-communities, settling at different locations beyond the borders of the wider region of sNye mo: members of the Tsha mig tshogs pa settled at the rTse tshogs pa at sNe'u gdong, members of the Bye rdzing tshogs pa at the Tshong 'dus tshogs pa at Grwa phyi, members of the dGe 'dun sgang pa at the rGyal gling tshogs pa at Grwa nang, and members of the Chos lung tshogs pa at sPos khang in Myang.

The communities were important centres of Vinaya practice and became a chief source for the transmission of Śākyaśrī's monastic ordination lineage, known as the Middle Region Vinaya (*bar 'dul*) as well as *kha che lugs* or *paṇ chen sdom rgyun*. This lineage was the last of three ordination lineages introduced to Tibet; the other two being the sMad 'dul and sTod 'dul. The former had been established by the eighth-century Indian Buddhist scholastic Śāntarakṣita during the reign of Khri song lde btsan (r. 754–797) and was later revived from eastern Tibet with the full monastic ordination of Bla chen dGongs pa rab gsal (832–915 or 892–975) and his disciples from central Tibet. This transmission

¹⁸⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 436.3–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 488.1–2).

¹⁸⁸ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 182.3–5). Ngor chen specifies his time of ordination very precisely as the morning of the eighth day of the first month of the iron-dragon year (*lcags pho 'brug*; i.e., 1400) at the time of *grib tshod rkang pa gnyis dang skyes bu gcig*.

¹⁸⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 436.3–4), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 488.1–2), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 182.3–5).

¹⁹⁰ For this lineage, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 182.5–183.1): *yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas thub pa'i dbang po| shā ri'i bu| sras srag can 'dzin| bram ze sgra gcan 'dzin| 'phags pa klu srgub| gu ṅa mi tra| rin chen bshes gnyen| chos kyi bzang po| gu ṅa pa ti| chos kyi phreng ba| 'byung gnas sbas pa| paṇḍi ta chen po shākya shri| mkhan chen rdo rje dpal ba| mkhan chen 'od zer dpal| mkhan chen bsod nams dpal| mkhan chen bkra shis tshul khri| chos rje ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po| des bdag la'o|*

¹⁹¹ See the *mKhan brgyud kyi rnam thar* (fol. 12a2–4), JACKSON 1990b: 1, and VAN DER KUIJP 1994c: 613.

¹⁹² JACKSON 2010b: [211].

line became thus known as the lineage of the Eastern Tibetan or Lowland Vinaya (*smad 'dul*). The latter lineage, which was known as the Western Tibetan or Highland Vinaya (*stod 'dul*), was introduced by the East Indian scholar Dharmapāla, who had visited Gu ge in mNga' ris following the invitation of lHa Bla ma Ye shes 'od (947–1019/24). The Bar 'dul lineage transmitted from Śākyaśrī became the chief ordination lineage in the Karma bKa' brgyud and Sa skya schools and was also received by a few eminent dGe lugs masters, including Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682), and both the First Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662) and the Second Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang ye shes (1663–1737).¹⁹³

The Sa skya school preserved different branches of Śākyaśrī's ordination lineage: one that was transmitted from Śākyaśrī directly to his disciple Sa skya Paṅḍita and another that passed down via the abbots of at least two of those four communities, namely the Chos lung tshogs pa and Tsha mig tshogs pa. For instance, eminent Sa skya masters, such as bDag nyid chen po bZang po dpal and his sons 'Jam dbyangs Don yod rgyal mtshan (1310–1344) and Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, took full monastic ordination in the lineage of the Chos lung tshogs pa. Ngor chen, on the other hand, received ordination in the lineage as passed down through the abbots of the Tsha mig tshogs pa via his teacher Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, who in turn had taken his full monk's vows from bKra shis tshul khriṃs, eleventh abbot of the Tsha mig tshogs pa.¹⁹⁴

Owing to Ngor chen's influence as both one of Sa skya's greatest Vinaya abbots and tantric masters, he reportedly bestowed full monastic ordination on more than ten thousand monks and his lineage of monastic ordination soon became the dominant lineage within Sa skya's monastic circles.¹⁹⁵ At certain times, however, both Ngor chen's and Sa skya Paṅḍita's lineage—the *ngor chen sdom rgyun* and *sa paṅ sdom rgyun* (or *sa skya lha khang chen mo'i sdom rgyun*)—were threatened with extinction. But when one lineage had become too dominant, the other was saved and revived by the conscious effort of far-sighted masters who gave up their existing ordination and retook full monks' vows in the other rarer lineage.¹⁹⁶

The monastic purists of the four Jo gdan tshogs pas distinguished themselves as upholders of very strict monastic conduct by practices such as observing the ascetic discipline (*brtul zhugs*) of the “single mat” (*stan/gdan gcig*), that is, the practice of not eating food more than once per day, taking a whole day's food at a single sitting.¹⁹⁷ This practice is included among the twelve qualities of purification as listed in the *Mahāvīyutpatti* in the section on the *sbyangs pa'i yon tan bcu gnyis* (*dvādaśadhūtaguṇāḥ*): *stan gcig* (*aikāsanikaḥ*).¹⁹⁸ A description of that practice, its benefits, and exceptions is, for instance, found in the presentation of those qualities in the *Vimuktimārgadhautaguṇanirdeśa*.¹⁹⁹

Ngor chen, too, is known to have observed the *gdan gcig* practice since his monastic ordination at age nine. Moreover, he observed what appears to have been an even stricter form, limiting his single mat practice to a meatless diet (*rdor/sdor dkar*) known

¹⁹³ For an investigation into the history of the Jo gdan tshogs pa sde bzhi, see HEIMBEL 2013. On the Highland Vinaya Lineage, see MARTIN 2013.

¹⁹⁴ See HEIMBEL 2013: 197, 207–208, 214, and 218–219.

¹⁹⁵ See Part Four, 10.

¹⁹⁶ See JACKSON 2010b.

¹⁹⁷ See HEIMBEL 2013: 221–224.

¹⁹⁸ See the *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* (p. 86, no. 1132).

¹⁹⁹ See the *bKa' 'gyur dpe bsdur ma* 324 and P 972. For a translation of this work, see BAPAT 1964.

as *stan/gdan gcig rdor/sdor dkar* or *rdor/sdor dkar stan/gdan gcig*; a practice that was also observed by many of Ngor chen's successors on the abbatial throne of Ngor.²⁰⁰

5.3 The Vow of a *Bodhisattva*

As soon as he had taken full monastic ordination, Ngor chen requested from Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan the vow to generate *bodhicitta* according to the Madhyamaka tradition (*dbu ma lugs kyi sems bskyed kyi sdom pa*). Subsequently, he took this vow four more times, so that he received it from Shar chen on a total of five occasions.²⁰¹ From another of his main teachers, Buddhaśrī (1339–1420), he also took this vow according to both the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra traditions.²⁰² Moreover, under Buddhaśrī, he engaged himself in the individual training (*so so'i bslab bya*) of those two traditions by studying the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (a text that is ascribed by the Indo-Tibetan tradition to Asaṅga), the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* of Śāntideva, and the *Bodhisattvasaṃvaraviṃśaka* (which is ascribed to Candragomin).²⁰³

With regard to the *bodhisattva* vow, Ngor chen's biographers mention some special qualities that he is said to have acquired thanks to this training. For instance, his mind abided within the state of loving kindness and great compassion for all sentient beings. This went as far as his suffering unbearable grief when he merely saw others eating meat and, in particular, saw monks consuming it. As a consequence, he felt no appetite for many days. Moreover, even though some people, such as a certain gZhon nu dar, expressed terrifying misconceptions of the Buddha's teachings, far from harbouring the slightest anger or hatred, he showed compassion towards them, and in doing so resembled in many ways the compassionate *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara.²⁰⁴

Ngor chen also became a vegetarian. He related that he could not remember having eaten offal (*nang cha*) or raw meat (*sha rjen*) as a child. When he grew older, from his seventh year on (i.e., 1388), by merely seeing meat or blood he lost his appetite for many days. Thinking that it was not the proper lifestyle for monks to eat meat, and also that the Buddha himself had not consumed meat, he became a vegetarian at age thirteen (i.e., in 1394). Later on, the smell of meat alone could reportedly harm his well-being.²⁰⁵

As mentioned above, Ngor chen also observed the ascetic practice (*brtul zhugs*) known as *gdan gcig rdor/sdor dkar* (variant: *rdor/sdor dkar gdan gcig*) that restricted the meatless diet (*rdor/sdor dkar*) to a single food intake each day (*gdan gcig*). His biographies mention that he already observed this practice from the time of his monastic ordination at age nine (i.e., 1390).²⁰⁶ Thus he would have given up eating meat much earlier.

²⁰⁰ See Part Three, 5.3 and Part Four, 5.2.

²⁰¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 436.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 488.2–3). For the lineage of this vow, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 183.1–4). For a depiction of the lineage in form of a thangka, see JACKSON 2010a: 192–194, fig. 8.10.

²⁰² On these two *bodhicittopāda* traditions, see the discussion by WANGCHUK 2007: [169]–194.

²⁰³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 436.5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 488.3–4). For the lineages of the *bodhisattva* vow according to the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra traditions, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 299.2–6 and 299.6–300.3), respectively.

²⁰⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 436.5–437.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 488.4–489.1).

²⁰⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 489.1–2).

²⁰⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 468.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 554.5). See also the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 211.4), *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 341.1–2), and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i myin byed* (p. 213.18–19). On the ascetic discipline of the single mat, see HEIMBEL 2013: 221–224. A practitioner only observing the practice of *rdor/sdor dkar* is defined by the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (p. 1482, s.v. *sdor dkar ba*) as follows: *smyung gnas*

In general, Ngor chen was fundamentally against the consumption of meat by monastics. This he also expressed in his written work *Bringing Benefit to the Disciples: An Epistle of General Advice for My Own Monks* (*Rang gi grwa pa spyi la gdams pa'i spring yig slob ma la phan pa*), which instructed his students to abstain from consuming meat as well as alcohol.²⁰⁷ That Ngor chen was a strong advocate of vegetarianism has already been noted by Leonard van der Kuijp:²⁰⁸

To be sure, there were some notable exceptions in clerical Tibet as far as meat-eating was concerned. For instance, it would appear that Ngor chen Künga sang po (1382-1456) was a strict vegetarian, who, with the assistance of the eighth chapter of the canonical *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, vigorously argued that the eating of meat should be proscribed in its entirety. But, in Tibet, monks and men of the cloth such as he were few and far between.

Ngor chen's disgust for meat also manifested itself in the monastic code he established at his new monastic seat, the monastery of Ngor E waṃ chos ldan, where he prohibited the consumption of meat as well.²⁰⁹ Another interesting detail of Ngor chen's diet is mentioned in the biography of his nephew Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor. When the latter came to Ngor to pursue his studies under his uncle in 1438, he was entrusted to look after a *mdzo mo*, a female hybrid of either g.Yag and cow or ox and 'Bri, which was especially kept to yield the milk to make Ngor chen's yoghurt.²¹⁰

5.4 The Tantric Vow of a *Vidyādhara*

Within this subsection, Ngor chen's biographers present a brief survey of their subject's tantric training, praising his pure observance of the *mantra* vow of a *vidhyādhara* (*rig 'dzin sngags kyi sdom pa*).²¹¹ Ngor chen is said to have obtained and mastered all empowerments available in Tibet according to the explanations from the individual *tantras* of the Guhyamantra Vajrayāna (*gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa*), just as they originated from within the respective traditions of Indian Buddhist scholar-adepts. He also studied the related teachings on the generation and completion stages (*bskyed rdzogs kyi lam*) that are based on those empowerments along with their ancillary teachings (*cha lag*), strictly discerning and discriminating their respective traditions. For a detailed record of his wide tantric studies, the reader is referred to Ngor chen's record of teachings received, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*.²¹²

At the outset of his tantric training, Ngor chen received empowerments pertaining to the four Tantra classes from his first major teacher, Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, keeping his *mantra* vow of a *vidyādhara* perfectly pure. As soon as he had taken full monastic ordination, he once again obtained from Shar chen the initiation into the

sogs dmar zas spangs nas dkar gsum gyi zas la rten mkhan/. This definition seems to imply that the vegetarian diet was restricted to certain periods during which religious practices such as fasting were performed. This could explain why Ngor chen began his *gdan gcig rdor/sdor dkar* practice already at age nine, but became a vegetarian only at age thirteen.

²⁰⁷ On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 155).

²⁰⁸ VAN DER KUIJP 2005: 4.

²⁰⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 527.6–528.1) and Part Four, 5.

²¹⁰ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 520.3–5) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 621.6–622.2). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 10.3–4).

²¹¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 437.1–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 489.2–490.2).

²¹² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 489.2–4).

maṇḍala of the condensed family of Vajrapañjara (rDo rje gur rigs bsdus), and because his parents were extremely wealthy, he commissioned its *maṇḍala* out of precious stones.²¹³

The reason behind Ngor chen's flawless observance of the *mantra* vow of a *vidyādhara* is explained on grounds of his steadfast conviction or believing trust (*mos pa*) that the masters from whom he had received the authentic bestowal of those empowerments were no other than Vajradhara, the ultimate source of the tantric teachings, in human form.²¹⁴

²¹³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 489.4–490.1). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 437.1–4).

²¹⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 437.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 490.1–2).

Chapter Six

Ngor chen's Religious Training

Ngor chen pursued his religious training under the most important Sa skya masters of his day and received teachings from masters of other traditions as well. His biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs asserts that the teachers with whom Ngor chen formed a religious connection (*chos 'brel*) and engaged in religious discourse (*'bel gtam*) numbered twelve or thirteen. That he encountered different numbers while studying Ngor chen's life is illustrated by his references to two older sources. First, he quotes from a praise by Ngor chen's nephew Slob dpon Legs rin, according to which his uncle had studied under fifteen masters.²¹⁵ Second, he reports that, according to Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, Ngor chen had studied under about thirteen teachers. In line with the latter statement, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs enumerates the following thirteen masters:²¹⁶

- (1) Bla ma dPal ldan tshul khrims (1333–1399)
- (2) Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406)
- (3) g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal (1348–1414)
- (4) Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog dpal bzang (ca. 1340–1415)
- (5) Grub chen Buddhaśrī (1339–1420)
- (6) Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412)
- (7) mKhan chen bKra shis rin chen (fl. late 14th/early 15th century)
- (8) Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419)
- (9) Sa skya Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1344–1418)
- (10) Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399)
- (11) Bla ma Yon tan dpal
- (12) Sa bzang bKa' bzhi pa bSod nams don grub (fl. late 14th/early 15th century)
- (13) Bla ma Ānanda

By contrast, in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, Ngor chen himself records teachings received from only a total of seven teachers:²¹⁷

²¹⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 507.4–6): *gzhan bla ma bcu phrag gcig dang nyag ma gsum mam| gnyis la sogs pa rnams las chos 'brel dang 'bel gtam mdzad de| de yang slob dpon legs rin gyis bstod par| gnyis med gsung ba sna tshogs gdul bya'i ngor|| tha mal tshul 'dzin mkhyen brtse'i bdag nyid can|| bcu phrag phyed dang gnyis rnams tshul bzhin dul|| bsten nas mnyes par mdzad la gsol ba 'debs|| zhes bshad cingl.* Slob dpon Legs rin was Ngor chen's paternal nephew (*rus dbon*) Byang chub sems dpa' Kun dga' legs pa'i rin chen; see the *Nor bu ke ta ka'i do shal* (p. 522.1–2). On this identification, see also the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 33.5). He also served as Ngor chen's attendant; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 511.3). Based on teachings of his uncle, Kun dga' legs rin wrote an important instruction manual (*khrid yig*) of the *Zhen pa bzhi bral*; see Part Five, 2. Some of his writings have been preserved at 'Bras spungs; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 674, no. 7418, p. 904, no. 10166, and p. 1122, no. 11159).

²¹⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 507.6–508.2): *gyong pos bla ma bcu gsum tsam bsten par bshad| de dag kyang gang zhe na| bla ma dpal ldan pa| shar pa| g.yag pa| lo tsā ba skyabs mchog dpal| grub chen buddha pa| sa bzang 'phags pa| mkhan chen bkra shis rin chen| rje rin po che shar btsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa| mkhan chen blo gros dpal ba| bla chen kun rgyal ba| ta wen [= dben] kun dga' rin chen la tshad ma'i thun tshugs gsan| bla ma yon tan dpal la 'jigs byed kyi dbang| sa bzang bka' bzhi pa| bla ma ananda [= ānanda] la tshe dbang gsan zhes pa de rnams la chos gsan par bshad cingl.*

²¹⁷ The flipside of the first folio of the sDe dge recension of the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 180) features two miniatures displaying Sa bzang Ma ti Pañ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1294–1376) on the left and Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan on the right side. As Shar chen was one of Ngor chen's main teachers, we would expect his

- (1) Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan
- (2) Bla ma dPal ldan tshul khrim
- (3) Grub chen Buddhaśrī
- (4) Sa skya Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan
- (5) Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros
- (6) Bla ma bKra shis rin chen
- (7) Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog dpal bzang

The chronological presentation of Ngor chen's main training under his teachers varies somewhat in his biographies. His contemporary biographer Mus chen recounts his training in this order: (1) Shar chen, (2) dPal ldan tshul khrim, (3) sKyabs mchog dpal bzang, (4) Buddhaśrī, (5) Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, (6) Sa bzang 'Phags pa, (7) Sangs rgyas dpal, and (8) bKra shis rin chen. By contrast, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs presents them as: (1) Shar chen, (2) dPal ldan tshul khrim, (3) sKyabs mchog dpal bzang, (4) Buddhaśrī, (5) Sangs rgyas dpal, (6) Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, (7) Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and (8) bKra shis rin chen.²¹⁸

It is noteworthy that five of those thirteen teachers listed by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs are missing from his presentation of Ngor chen's religious training and also from Ngor chen's record of teachings received (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*). This might be due to the following reasons. From a couple of those masters, such as Yon tan dpal and Tsong kha pa, Ngor chen obtained teachings either before or after the period of time covered in the section on his main religious and scholastic training. This section encompasses the period from his monastic ordination at age nine in 1390 until probably around 1414, when he embarked on his first journey to dBus. Moreover, the teachings he received from those masters were few in number and not central or crucial to his religious training. Thus those masters cannot be considered among his principal teachers. Such an understanding is supported by the structure of the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*. Therein, Ngor chen only recorded his training under his main teachers, though he did not list his studies under g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal.²¹⁹ But that might be for another reason. I was informed by David Jackson that, according to the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po (1927–2010), Tibetan Buddhist masters were only required to record tantric teachings in their record of teachings received, but not the sutric ones.²²⁰

That the record of the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* was incomplete was also noticed by Ngor chen's biographers, who state that he had received many more teachings than are listed in that work.²²¹ Apparently, Ngor chen compiled his *Thob yig rgya mtsho* early in his monastic career when he was still based at Sa skya and had not yet founded Ngor. This is suggested by the work's colophon, which states that Ngor chen arranged the work at Sa

depiction. But it is surprising to see Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen who was already dead by the time of Ngor chen's birth. It might thus be that the editors confused Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen and Sa bzang 'Phags pa.

²¹⁸ Cf. the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.3–5), which enumerates Ngor chen's teachers for the period after Shar chen's death in the following order: Sa bzang 'Phags pa, Chos rje g.Yag pa, mKhan chen bKra rin pa, Lo tstsha ba sKyabs mchog, and Grub chen Buddhaśrī.

²¹⁹ It is also interesting to note that Ngor chen records his studies under sKyabs mchog dpal bzang as the last section of his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, leaping out of chronology; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 431.4–432.3).

²²⁰ David Jackson (Kathmandu, 01 May 2012).

²²¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 451.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 508.2–3): *rgyas par zhib tu gsan yig rgya mtshor shes par bya zhing/der mi bzhuḡs pa'i gsan pa'i rnam grangs kyang mtha' yas par shes par bya'ol*.

skya and had it written down there by scribes such as mDo khams stod pa Blo gros seng ge.²²²

In the following pages, I will present Ngor chen's training as a Buddhist monk by mainly following the chronology of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen. However, as Ngor chen relied on different teachers during overlapping and recurring periods, it is not always possible to follow in a purely chronological order. For some of his studies, no period of time can be specified at all. In the following discussion I will attempt three things: to sketch the lives of Ngor chen's main teachers, to introduce their respective teacher-student relationship, and to outline the main teachings Ngor chen received from them. Furthermore, I will describe episodes from Ngor chen's life that directly resulted from that teacher-student relationship, such as commissioning of sacred objects (such as thangkas or statues) to fulfil the wishes of his deceased masters or his installation as the abbot of Sa bzang, even though some of these events occurred in a later period of his life.

6.1 Training under Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan

Shar chen was surely one of the most important and influential teachers of Ngor chen, if not *the* most. Under him, he studied for a period of sixteen years until his master's early death in 1406. The exceptional role that Shar chen played in Ngor chen's life, in general, and for his religious training, in particular, is emphasised by Ngor chen himself, who in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, where he is otherwise very brief with autobiographical comments, concludes the section on his studies under Shar chen by saying: "In that way, [I] relied on that particular Dharma Lord for up to sixteen years and because [he] took utmost care of [me] through teachings and material support, [I] am extremely grateful [to him]."²²³ Ngor chen's gratitude also found its expression in a total of five praises that he devoted to his beloved teacher.²²⁴ Shar chen's importance is further reflected by the colophons of Ngor chen's writings, in which he is mentioned prominently as Ngor chen's main teacher.

The teacher-student relationship between Shar chen and Ngor chen was established when Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, Ngor chen's secret father, had to leave his home monastery of Sa skya in 1387, committing his young son into the care of Shar chen to oversee his religious training.²²⁵ However, the aforementioned sixteen-year period of studies seems to refer to the time beginning with Ngor chen's ordination at age nine in 1390, which was presided over by Shar chen, and ending with his master's passing in

²²² See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 433.5–6): *shākya'i dge slong kun dga' bzang pos dpal sa skya'i chos grwa chen por phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa'i yi ge pa ni| mdo khams stod pa blo gros seng ge la sogs pas bgyis te re zhiḡ rdzogs so|*. The following verse suggests that Ngor chen might have compiled the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* at the end of his religious training (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 433.2–4): *thos dang bsam pa'i shes rab mthar phyin nas| dben pa'i gnas su g.yeng ba kun spangs tel| zhi gnas lhag mthong zung du 'jug pa yis| ting 'dzin zab mo bsgom la brtson par shog||*.

²²³ *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 262.6–263.1): *de ltar na| chos kyi rje de nyid lo bcu drug gi bar du bsten tel| chos dang zang zing gis nye bar bskyangs pas na shin tu bka' drin che ba yin no|*. A similar remark is found in the colophon of Ngor chen's biography of Shar chen (*Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1, pp. 260.18–261.2): (...) *mkhams gsum chos kyi rgyal po de nyid kyi zhabs rdul rnyog pa med pa yan lag mchog gis gus pas blangs pas sdom pa gsum phyin ci ma log par thob cing| chos dang zan zing gi bka' drin gyis nye bar bskyangs pa shākya'i dge slong kun dga' bzang pos (...)* *dpal sa skya'i chos grwa chen por sbyar ba'ol|*.

²²⁴ On these praises, see CATALOGUE (no. 3).

²²⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 434.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 485.4–6). See also Part Three, 3 and Part Three, 4.

1406. During that period, Ngor chen mainly lived together with Shar chen, although he also pursued studies under dPal ldan tshul khriims and Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros.²²⁶

6.1.1 Notes on the Shar Family

Shar chen was born into the Shar family, one of a handful of prominent religious families such as Nub, Gung, and Khang gсар that had aligned themselves with Sa skya and did not directly descend from the Sa skya 'Khon lineage.²²⁷ Since the late Gene E. Smith offered the first introductory remarks on the Shar family in 1970, not much research into the history of this family has emerged.²²⁸

The Shar pa were a prominent lineage of religious princes, supposedly descended from Zhang zhung stock. There is some evidence that they had been settled in the area for a considerable time before their overlords, the 'Khon, appeared on the scene. The first of the Shar pa Bla brang of Sa skya was Ye shes 'byung gnas, a disciple of Sa skya Paṇḍita. Two of his grandchildren, Dus 'khor ba Ye shes rin chen and 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan, served as the *ti shih*, or imperial preceptors, to the Yüan emperors. The lamas of the Klu sdings Bla brang of Ngor are said to descend from this line. The Shar pa family has produced a good number of prominent figures in the religious life of Tibet.

The Shar family is associated with Zhang zhung Gu ra ba, who was one of four men that in the eleventh century controlled the region of Sa skya, in general, and who was in charge of the future site of Sa skya Monastery, in particular.²²⁹ The family of Zhang zhung Gu ra ba became associated with the 'Khon lineage by the marriage of his daughter or sister, Ma gcig Zhang mo, with 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po (1034–1102), the founder of

²²⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 437.5–6 and 445.3–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 490.2–3 and 496.6–497.2).

²²⁷ For genealogies of the Shar family, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 187–188), *Deb ther dmar po* (pp. 50.18–52.1), *Bod kyi yig tshang* (pp. 102.8–103.3), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (pp. 163.6–165.2), *Shar pa'i gdung brgyud*, *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 638.2–649.5), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (pp. 786.5–794.1), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 65b3–66a6). For genealogies of those other families, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 187–190), *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 52.1–22), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (pp. 165.2–166.9), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 66a6–67b2).

²²⁸ SMITH 2001: 112. First published as SMITH 1970: 3, n. 14. On imperial preceptors originating from the Shar family, see INABA 1975: 540–535. Some sources on the history of the Shar pa were also mentioned by VAN DER KUIJP 1994a: 189.

²²⁹ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 19.5–20.5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 6a1–6), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 638.2–4), SMITH 2001: 108–109, and STEARNS 2001: 132–[133] and 243–244, n. 166. In his history of Sa skya, gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan provides us with two differing accounts on the origin of the Shar family. Referring to a work by Nam mkha' bzang po (fl. 15th century) of Sa skya's Nyi lde bla brang, who himself had written a study of Sa skya's ruling families as well as a history of the Shar family, he relates that the originator of the Shar family was a man called Or skya pa (or Or rkyal) of Byang g.Yas ru, who descended from Zhang zhung. With his wife Jo lcam rMa bya he had two sons at Gu ra: Jo 'bum and Nyi khri 'bum. But according to another work by Bla ma Ye shes mgon, 'Khor (or Por) skya ba Jo lcam rMa bya of Byang g.Yas ru was the wife of Jo 'bum and not his mother; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 65b4–66a1) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3b (pp. 242.12–18). On Nam mkha' bzang po, see Part 3, n. 328. SMITH 2001: 301, n. 355 points out that “according to Dezhung Rinpoche, Gu ra ba is a clan name of Zhang zhung.” On the Zhang zhung connection, see also the *Chos rje 'Jam dbyangs chen po'i mam thar* (fol. 2b3): *gnas gangs can dpal ldan sa skya'i bya 'dabs su rigs bzang po lha las byung ba zhang zhung gi rigs*; *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 50.19): *shar pa'i gdung rabs ni' gdung rus zhang zhung*; and *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 8b6): *ces pas chags sa yul gyi ming zhang zhung pa yin la*. Gu ra was the name of a place in the vicinity of Sa skya; see the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 9a1–2). A *bla brang* was established there as well, the Gu ra bla brang; see Part Three, n. 164.

Sa skya. She was the latter's second wife and the mother of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158). Due to this alliance, the Shar family is considered the matrilineage of Sa chen (*rje sa skya pa'i sku zhang gi rigs*).²³⁰

In the Tibetan sources, Ma gcig Zhang mo's relation to Zhang zhung Gu ra ba is specified by different terms. For instance, 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug introduces her as the daughter (*bu mo*) of Zhang zhung Gu ra ba and owing to that relation, she was called Ma gcig Zhang mo. Due to the fact that she lived at mKhar sgo lung, she was also known by the name of Ma gcig mKhar sgo lung ma.²³¹ Similarly, A mes zhabs refers to Zhang zhung Gu ra ba as the father of Ma gcig Zhang mo, further specifying that the area of dKar gong lung was situated in the lower valley of Kha'u.²³² By contrast, Yar lung Jo bo Shākya rin chen sde (fl. 14th century) refers to her as Jo mo Zhang mo, the sister (*sring mo*) of Gu ra ba, as does sTag tshang rDzong pa dPal 'byor bzang po (fl. 15th century).²³³ The biography of Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis (1558–1615), the first Ngor abbot from the Shar family, opens with a very interesting and historically important genealogy of that family. Here we find Ma gcig Zhang mo referred to as Zhang mo bSod nams skyid and *bu sring* (daughter or sister?) of Zhang zhung Gu ra ba.²³⁴

The first religious master of the Shar family mentioned by the genealogies is Jo 'bum.²³⁵ He was an expert of the arts and medicine and particularly learned in the Chinese system of astrological calculation. He studied under both rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan and Sa skya Paṇḍita. Later on, since he acted as the royal preceptor (*rgyal po'i bla mchod*) of some people from Mi nyag, he became known as Gu shrī Jo 'bum. He also travelled to India, where he fell severely ill, prompting Sa skya Paṇḍita to sent his physician Bi ji Rin chen grags as well as to compose a *guryuyoga* text, the *Gu shrī jo 'bum ma*.²³⁶ It is important to note that during Jo 'bum's time, the family was not yet known as Shar pa ("He of the East").

²³⁰ See the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 165.10–166.4), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 638.2–4), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 7a6–b1), SMITH 2001: 109, and STEARNS 2001: 61, 132–133, and 243, n. 164. See also the *Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 3.13–15) and *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 8b6–9a2). For further remarks on Ma gcig Zhang mo, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 20.6–23.6 and 27.2–5) and STEARNS 2001: 243, n. 164.

²³¹ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 109.1–2). For the translation of this passage, see STEARNS 2006: 213.

²³² See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 26.3–24.2). See also the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 7a6). For a picture of the "Ancient ruins of the home of Ma gcig Zhang mo," see STEARNS 2001: 61, *Top: Ruins of Ma gcig Zhang mo's home*.

²³³ For the former reference, see the *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 142.2–5) and STEARNS 2001: 243, n. 164. For the latter, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 166.9–11) and SMITH 2001: 109.

²³⁴ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 638.3–4). According to SMITH 2001: 301, n. 361, the term "*bu sring ma*" means both daughter and sister and is used with a *rus* name to refer to any female born to that *rus*." Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 24 September 2012) considers Ma gcig Zhang mo a daughter of Zhang zhung Gu ra ba. For further details on Ma gcig Zhang mo, see STEARNS 2001: 243, n. 164. Note that in a manuscript of sTag tshang Lo tsā ba's Sa skya genealogy, her name is given as Gung [= Gu] ra ma Jo mo Zhang mo; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 10b2).

²³⁵ See the *Shar pa'i gdung bryud* (fols. 1b5–2a1), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 638.4–6), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 786.5–6). Jo 'bum is also referred to as Zhang zhung sNgags rnying ma ba Jo 'bum (*rGya bod yig tshang*, p. 187.4; *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 6*, p. 335.1), Zhang zhung gSang sngags rnying ma ba Jo 'bum (*Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1*, p. 163.8), or sNgags rnying ma ba Jo 'bum (*Deb ther dmar po*, p. 50.20).

²³⁶ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 638.4–639.1). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung bryud* (fols. 1b5–2a1) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 786.5–6). Bi ji Rin chen grags was a student of Sa skya Paṇḍita and also wrote a biography of his master; see JACKSON 1987: 18. For the *guryuyoga* work by Sa skya Paṇḍita, the *Bla ma'i rnal 'byor gug shi 'jo 'bum ma*; see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 12, pp. 192.1–197.5). In the colophon, Sa skya Paṇḍita explicitly mentions that he composed the work for the benefit of his disciple; see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 12, p. 197.5).

This designation directly resulted from the activities of his eldest son, Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1198–1261), alias Shar pa Ye shes 'byung gnas.²³⁷ Like his father, he was a student of Grags pa rgyal mtshan and Sa skya Paṇḍita. From the latter, he took full monastic ordination and served for thirty-five years as his attendant.²³⁸ Together with 'U yug pa Rig pa'i seng ge (d. 1253) and dPon chen Shākya bzang po (d. 1270), he is said to have held the throne of Sa skya (tenure: 1244–1264) after Sa skya Paṇḍita had left for the camp of Göden Khan (1206–1251).²³⁹ He selected as his new residence the gZim khang rnying ma, which, according to some accounts, he had bought from dPon chen Shākya bzang po,²⁴⁰ whereas others state that it was offered to him by Sa skya Paṇḍita.²⁴¹ Due to its location to the east of the dBu rtse rnying ma, it became known as the Bla brang Shar, which from then on would become the name of the family as well.²⁴² In the study of Sa skya Monastery and her families by gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan, we find an interesting passage that helps to explain the differing accounts on how Shes rab 'byung gnas obtained the *bla brang*. According to that work, Sa skya Paṇḍita had offered it to the Shar pa Gong ma (i.e., Shes rab 'byung gnas) and his brother (or brothers) when he left

²³⁷ See the *Shar pa'i gdung brgyud* (fol. 2a2), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 639.1–6), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 786.5–6). All three sources mention that Jo 'bum had five sons and daughters (*sras lcam sring lnga*), providing biographical sketches for two of his sons, Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas and Shar pa rDo rje 'od zer; see the *Shar pa'i gdung brgyud* (fol. 2a2–6), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 639.1–640.3), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (pp. 786.6–787.5). See also the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 187.4–9), *Deb ther dmar po* (pp. 50.20–51.1), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 65b6–66a1), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 6* (p. 335.2–3), which specify his number of sons as three: Shes rab 'byung gnas, rDo rje 'od zer, and 'Od zer 'phan. In addition, see also the *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 163.7–16), which also gives his number of sons as three, but only enumerates Shes rab 'byung gnas and 'Od zer phan. The *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 66a2) mentions two sisters: an older sister called 'Od zer 'bum and a younger sister called 'Od zer rgyan (alias Bal mo).

²³⁸ For biographical sketches of Shes rab 'byung gnas, see the *Shar pa'i gdung brgyud* (fol. 2a2–3), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 639.1–6), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (pp. 786.6–787.4). According to the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 187.5), *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 50.22), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 163.11), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 6* (p. 335.2–3), he lived for sixty-four years. According to the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 639.2), he received full monastic ordination at age twenty-four. An annotation in the *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 163.9) dates his ordination to the earth-horse year (*sa pho rta la*). However, by comparison with another manuscript of that work, the annotation should be read as *sa pho rta lo pa*, referring to his year of birth instead; see the *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 2* (p. 205.2). Thus we can establish his life data with 1198 to 1261.

²³⁹ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 658.2–5). For the point of view that during that time the abbacy was held alone by dKar Shākya grags, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 658.1–2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 55a2 and 55b5–6), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 4* (p. 302.3–4).

²⁴⁰ See the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 14.1–3), *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 187.5–7), *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 50.20–22), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 163.9–11), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 6* (p. 335.2). On the Bla brang Shar, which was previously known as gZim khang rnying ma, and its structure and later division, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 166.2–4), *gNa' grong sa skya'i yul skor gnas yig* (pp. 57–59), *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 148.15–156.4), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 141.16–19), *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 162–167), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 68a4–6, 78(og)a2–79a2, and 89b6–90a1), SCHOENING 1990: 15–16, SMITH 2001: 301, n. 358, and VENTURI 2010: 347–349. For the location of the Bla brang Shar, see the *gNa' grong sa skya'i yul skor gnas yig* (p. 56, lower picture, no. 33) and SCHOENING 1990: 26–27, Map 5 (no. 23). Shākya bzang po served as the first grand-governor (*dpon chen*). On him and his activities, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 191.5–192.11), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 63a3–6), and PETECH 1990: 16, 18–19, 21, 43–44, and 47–48. On the office of *dpon chen*, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 191–194.12), *Re'u mig* (pp. 161–163), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 63a2–64b1), and PETECH 1990: 43–46 and 144–145.

²⁴¹ Cf. the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 170.15–16) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 6* (p. 330.5), where it is also stated that it was Sa skya Paṇḍita who handed over the Bla brang Shar to Shes rab 'byung gnas.

²⁴² See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 639.3–4): *slar dbu rtse rnying ma'i shar ngos kyi gzims khang du bzhugs nas 'chad nyan mdzad pa'i shar pa shes rab 'byung gnas zhes grags pa (...)*. See also the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (p. 1.10–12), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 14.1–3), and *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 9a2).

Sa skya. As a token of request (*zhu rten*), they in turn offered many valuables to dPon chen Shākya bzang po.²⁴³

An early member of the Shar family, 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1257/58–1305/06), even managed to ascend the abbatial throne of Sa skya, a position generally reserved for members of the 'Khon family.²⁴⁴ He was the son of rJe btsun skyabs and Shes rab skyid and the youngest brother of the fourth imperial preceptor and Kālacakra expert Dus 'khor ba Ye shes rin chen (d. 1291/94). In his youth, he had first studied at Bo dong E and later on travelled to Sa skya to pay his respects to Chos rgyal 'Phags pa, who also bestowed on him all three vows (*sdom gsum: trisaṃvara*).²⁴⁵ After the indisposition of Bla ma Ye pa (i.e., Shar pa Ye shes rgyal mtshan, alias Bla ma Ye pa chen po or Shar pa Ye rgan pag shi), he took on his first monastic position as a teacher of the Bla brang Shar for four years.²⁴⁶ He continued to build up his reputation as a scholar and publicly displayed his abilities in monastic debates that were held as part of the funerary ceremonies of 'Phags pa in 1280 and at those in the memory of the latter's nephew Dharmapālarakṣita (1268–1287) in 1287. Even the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan (1215–1294, r. 1260–1294) of Yuan China was informed of his outstanding performances by imperial envoys that had attended the former ceremonies and a Mongol prince and officials who had taken part in the latter.²⁴⁷ When, after the early death of Dharmapālarakṣita, the ninth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1281–1287), the 'Khon lineage was on the verge of extinction and no heir was available in central Tibet, Rin chen rgyal mtshan was appointed to the abbacy of Sa skya by the emperor in 1287 or 1288 and occupied that office for eighteen years (i.e., until 1304 or 1305).²⁴⁸ In the meantime, the last living 'Khon heir, bDag nyid chen po bZang po dpal, had come to Sa skya from the imperial court in about 1298 and thus Rin chen rgyal mtshan handed over the abbacy to him. But as bZang po dpal had yet to finish his religious training,²⁴⁹ Rin chen rgyal mtshan was asked to continue in his position as abbot, and bZang po dpal did not take

²⁴³ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 68a4–6).

²⁴⁴ On the biography of Rin chen rgyal mtshan by his disciple Byang sems rGyal ba ye shes (1257–1320) and some details of his life, see VAN DER KUIJP 1994a: 188–190 and VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 126–129. I would like to thank Leonard van der Kuijp for sharing his copy of a slightly incomplete manuscript of that biography with me. For biographical sketches of Rin chen rgyal mtshan, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 188.2–7), *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 51.13–18), *Bod kyi yig tshang* (p. 103.1–2), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (p. 164.6–14), *Shar pa'i gdung brgyud* (fol. 3a4–b4), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 643.3–645.2), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (pp. 788.6.–790.1), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 288.2–3 and 290.5–292.1), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 24a2–4). Due to Rin chen rgyal mtshan's serving as abbot, later Shar masters were permitted to lead important installation ceremonies from atop Sa skya Paṇḍita's throne in the Sa skya tshogs; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 294.4–6) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 25a1–2). On this throne and the Sa skya tshogs, see Part Three, n. 31.

²⁴⁵ See the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fols. 3a2–4a1) and VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 127.

²⁴⁶ See the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fols. 4a2–3 and 7b1–2). Ye shes rgyal mtshan had accompanied 'Phags pa to the imperial court as an attendant, where he received from the emperor the Mongolian title of *pag shi*. In 1283, he wrote 'Phags pa's biography. For those and other details of his life, see the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 640.3–641.1). For his biography of 'Phags pa, see TBRC (W2CZ7935). On him, see, for instance, also the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 187.9–12), *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 51.1–5), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung* 1 (p. 163.12–16), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (p. 787.5–6). Cf. VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 127, who reads Bla ma Ye pa as Bla ma E pa and suggests to identify him as “'Khon ston Thugs rje rin chen, alias 'Jam dbyangs 'Khon ston or E pa Zhang.”

²⁴⁷ See the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fols. 4a6–b5 and 5b1–6a1) and VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 127–128.

²⁴⁸ See the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fols. 4a3–5, 4b7–5a6, and 7b1–2) and VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 127.

²⁴⁹ Rin chen rgyal mtshan is said to have overseen bZang po dpal's religious training; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 288.3) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fol. 24a3).

over until around 1306.²⁵⁰ In about 1303, Rin chen rgyal mtshan was invited to the imperial court by Temür Öljeitü Khan (1265–1307, r. 1294–1307), whom he served as imperial preceptor from 1303 or 1304 until his passing in 1305.²⁵¹

We can learn some further details about the Shar family from the writings of Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (b. 1931), who introduces his family line by three different names: Rlangs, Shar, and Klu sdings (or lding).²⁵² In the biography of his uncle Shar chen

²⁵⁰ On these developments, see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (pp. 223.3–5 and 227.1–4), *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 188.2–4), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 644.1–3), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 789.2–3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 288.2–294.6), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fols. 24a2–25a2), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 38a3), and *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (pp. 162.7–12 and 164.6–9). Regarding these sources, we face some chronological problems, however. For instance, the *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 162.8–10) dates Rin chen rgyal mtshan's tenure from 1288 (*sa pho byi*) to 1305 (*shing mo sbrul*), whereas his installation is given by the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 188.4–4) and by an annotation in the *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 164.6–9) as 1287 (*me mo phag*). Things are further complicated by a summarising statement of A mes zhabs. According to him, it was in bZang po dpal's twenty-seventh year (i.e., in 1288) that Dharmapāla died, and that it was from bZang po dpal's twenty-eighth year until his forty-fifth (i.e., 1289–1306) that Rin chen rgyal mtshan acted for a period of eighteen years as Sa skya's throne-holder; see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 227.3–4) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 294.4–5). A mes zhabs seems to have based parts of his calculation on the genealogy by sTag tshang Lo tsā ba; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 25a1–2). Nevertheless, the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 177.17), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (pp. 154.1–3 and 162.10–12), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 294.4–6) all date the beginning of bZang po dpal's tenure to 1306, his forty-fifth year. We also have to note that, though A mes zhabs repeatedly mentions that Rin chen rgyal mtshan acted for eighteen years as the abbot of Sa skya, in a later section on Sa skya's abbatial succession, he gives his tenure only from 1288 (*sa phyo byi*) to 1297 (*me mo bya*) and dates the beginning of bZang po dpal's to 1298 (*sa pho khyi*); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 659.1–2). The same dates are also given by the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 55a4–5) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 4* (p. 302.5). This contradiction can be explained by the aforementioned observation that Rin chen rgyal mtshan had already formally handed over the throne at the time when bZang po dpal came to Sa skya in his thirty-seventh year (i.e., in 1298); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 294.2–4). However, according to the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 644.2–3) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 789.1–3), Rin chen rgyal mtshan acted as monastic head until his handover for only eight years. That Tibetan historians were also puzzled about the differing dates can be learned from a discussion by gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 56a1–b1).

²⁵¹ See the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 188.4–5), *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 51.13–16), *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 164.10–12), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 644.3–4), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 789.4). According to his own biography, which does not provide the year of his birth, 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan passed away on the eleventh day of the first month of the snake year (*sbrul lo*; i.e., 1305); see the *Chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po'i rnam thar* (fol. 21a7) and VAN DER KUIJP 1994a: 189. This is also confirmed by the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 62a1), which additionally mentions that he served as preceptor in 1303 and 1304. Similarly, the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 188.2–5) and *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung 1* (p. 164.6–12) date his birth to 1258 (*sa pho rta*) and state that he died during his appointment at the imperial court at age forty-nine (i.e., in 1306). The *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 644.3–4) also mentions that he served as imperial preceptor for two years (1303 and 1304), passing away on the fourteenth day of the first month of 1305. The years 1303 and 1304 are also confirmed by the list of royal preceptors included in the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 4* (p. 302.8). For these dates, see also the *Re'u mig* (p. 157, no. 6), which lists him as the sixth preceptor, who served from 1303 to 1305, and gives his dates of birth and death as 1257 and 1305. According to PETECH 1990: 75–76, he was summoned to court after the previous preceptor, 'Grag pa 'od zer, had died in 1303: "In the same year, he was summoned to court, where on 23rd February 1304 he was formally appointed Imperial Preceptor. He enjoyed his exalted position for less than a year, dying on 5th February 1305." Similarly, INABA 1975: 536, based on the history of the Yuan dynasty, mentions that he was appointed preceptor in the first month of 1304 and passed away in the first month of 1305. On two decrees issued by him on imperial command in 1304, see VAN DER KUIJP 1994a: 190, n. 32. For a translation of one of them, see SCHWIEGER 2015: 8–9.

²⁵² See the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (pp. 1.3–2.4) and *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (pp. 13.6–15.10). In a recent biographical sketch of Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (SAKYA DOLMA PHODRANG 2010: 3) it is stated that "His Eminence was born into the noble Shar clan, also known under the name of Shang or Luding-pa, (...)." In this context, according to Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (NGOR ma dgon, 24 September 2012), Zhang does not refer to the Shar family line as a matrilineage of the 'Khon, but was an older name of Zhang zhung Gu ra ba's family line. Rin po che has included this name in his revised and updated

'Jam dbyangs Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1896–1952), the seventy-second abbot of Ngor, he links the origin of his family line with the Rlangs clan. He records Rlangs Khams pa Go cha, who is said to have been among the group of seven Tibetan men that were ordained as trial monks (*sad mi mi bdun*) at the time of Khri srong lde btsan (742–797; r. 756–797), and Rlangs chen dPal gyi seng ge, who was a close disciple of Padmasambhava, as two early members of the Rlangs clan who were related to his family.²⁵³ Rin po che also designates the Shar family as a matrilineage of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, enumerating as its earliest members Zhang Gu ra ba and Jo 'bum.²⁵⁴ Moreover, he recounts the episode when Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen handed over his young son Ngor chen into the care of Shar chen to oversee his religious training:²⁵⁵

Later on, when Ngor chen rDo rje 'chang was in [his] youth, dPal Sa skya pa Gong ma Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen entrusted [him] to Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan. By saying “This one is an unmistakable [member of the] family line of the Sa skya pa. In the future, [he] will be of benefit for the [Buddha’s] teachings and sentient beings. So you should take care [of him],” [he] entrusted [Ngor chen to Shar chen] and [the latter two] resided at the Bla brang Shar.

Owing to his close connection with Shar chen, Ngor chen, too, became obviously associated with the Bla brang Shar. For instance, in the first abbatial history of Ngor, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs refers to Ngor chen as Shar pa bDag chen rDo rje 'chang chen po, and Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che explains in his autobiography that Ngor chen took on the responsibility of the Bla brang Shar after Shar chen had died.²⁵⁶ We also have to recall that Drung chen bDe legs, the brother of Ngor chen’s socially accepted father Grub pa yon tan, had served in the Bla brang Shar as the personal attendant (*gsol dpon*) of Shar chen.

After the foundation of Ngor in 1429, masters of the Bla brang Shar successively visited Ngor until, according to Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che, Shes rab 'byung gnas (1596–1653), the eighteenth abbot of Ngor, founded the Klu sdings bla brang at Ngor during the latter half of his life. It was from that time on that masters of the Shar family became known by the title Klu sdings pa.²⁵⁷ However, from my own research on the

autobiography (*Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2*, p. 13.17–18): *de nas gdung rabs rim pas bod nub phyogs sa skya sogs su bzhugs pas zhang zhes gragsl*.

²⁵³ See the *Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 3.11–13). The connection with Rlangs Khams pa Go cha is also mentioned in the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 8b4–9a1). On “either ‘the six examined individuals’ (*sad mi drug*) or ‘the seven examined individuals’ (*sad mi bdun*),” in general, and Rlangs Khams pa Go cho, in particular, see VAN DER KUIJP 2013a: 148–189. Rlangs chen dPal gyi seng ge is enumerated among the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava; see the *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* (pp. 903–904, s.v. *rje 'bangs nyer lnga*). For an account of dPal gyi seng ge’s activities in India, see the *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa* (pp. 37.12–41.3). On him, see also CZAJA 2013: 15 and 61–63. On the genealogy of the Rlangs clan, see *Ibid.*: 27–68.

²⁵⁴ See the *Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 3.13–15).

²⁵⁵ *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (p. 1.16–20): *de rjes dpal sa skya pa gong ma ta dben kun dga' rin chen gyis ngor chen rdo rje 'chang sku chung ngu dus shar chen ye shes rgyal mtshan la gnang ste 'di sa skya pa'i gdung rigs 'khrul med yin ma 'ongs pa na bstan pa dang sems can la phan thogs pa zhi g'ong bas khyod kyi [= kyis] bdag nyar gyis gsungs te gnang ba bla brang shar du bzhugsl*. See now also the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 14.11–16).

²⁵⁶ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 9.1) and *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 14.16–17), respectively.

²⁵⁷ See the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (p. 2.2–4) and *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 15.2–7). See also the *Deb thar* (p. 164.19–20) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (p. 28, no. 10). The title Shar chen Klu lding pa is found in literature of more recent origin; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (p. 499.5) and *Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 4.2 and 10.5).

history of the four main *bla brangs* of Ngor, the picture emerges that the Klu *sdings bla brang* might have been founded earlier, namely by Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis (1558–1615), the fourteenth abbot of Ngor. He was the first Ngor abbot from the Shar family and might have founded the Klu *sdings bla brang* as his private residence at Ngor.²⁵⁸

We encounter two orthographic variations for the spelling of the *bla brang*: *klu sdings* and *klu lding*; the former being generally found in older sources and the latter in works of more recent origin.²⁵⁹ In his own writings, Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che employs the term *klu lding*. But, according to him, both spellings are correct and can be explained as follows: the element *klu* originates from the perception that the *bla brang* was founded on top of a *nāga* king's palace (*klu'i rgyal po pho brang*). The element *sdings*—meaning something like a level or flat area, a plateau—locates the *bla brang* at the lower part of Ngor Monastery, namely on a flat area, in contrast to the other parts that are spread out on the slope of a hill. The element *lding*—meaning something like to glide, to float, to circle—refers to the *bla brang* which is considered to be floating on the *nāga* king's palace.²⁶⁰

6.1.2 Biographical Sketch of Shar chen

The most promising source for investigating not only the life of Shar chen but also the relationship between Ngor chen and his teacher is the history that Ngor chen himself wrote about his master's life. Surprisingly, the biography had not been included in Ngor chen's collected works, the *Pod bzhi ma*, and became available only recently in two different publications edited by the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang: (1) as part of the modern digital input of Ngor chen's writings in the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* and (2) as a reproduction of a twenty-five-folio manuscript in the second set of the *Lo rgyus rnam thar*.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ See Part Four, n. 237.

²⁵⁹ For the references in older Tibetan sources, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 517.6), *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 709.2–3, 712.5–6, and 713.1–4), *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (pp. 800.6 and 809.3), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (pp. 74.7, 91.6, and 110.14). For the references in works of more recent origin, see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (p. 2.3), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 15.6–7), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 487.2 and 491.4), *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 45.19), *Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 5.4 and 21.5), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs lo rgyus* (p. 28, no. 10).

²⁶⁰ Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 12 May 2009). Rin po che has included this explanation in his revised and updated autobiography; see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (p. 15.7–10): 'di la ngor gyi dgon pa'i smad du yod pas klu sdings zhes yi ge 'bri srol dangl kha shas kyis 'dir klu yi rgyal po'i pho brang yod pas de'i steng du bla brang bzhengs pas klu yi rgyal po'i pho brang gi steng du lding ba'i tshul du yod pas klu lding zhes 'bri srol yod pa gang bris kyang khyad medl. In the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 9a4–5), the term *klu sdings* is explained as: *klu sdings zhes pa klu gnas pa'i shing yal 'dab rgyas pa'i ming stel ngor gyi shar pa'i gdan sa de ltar byung bas na klu sdings pa zhes grags pas (...)*. Here it is given as the name of a tree with thriving branches in which a *nāga* resides. This appears to be an allusion to the branching-out of the genealogy of the family, as it is described in that work, from the very beginning down to the founding of the Klu *sdings bla brang* at Ngor.

²⁶¹ See the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 8, pp. 220–261) and *Lo rgyus rnam thar 2* (vol. 53, pp. 405–453), respectively. The catalog of the library holdings of 'Bras spungs Monastery registers three different manuscripts of Shar chen's biography in twenty-five, twenty-three, and twenty-five folios; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1549, no. 17485 and p. 1555, nos. 17553 and 17560), respectively. As the inventory number of the reproduced manuscript on its title page is partly illegible, and also has no title on the title page, it is difficult to tell whether the manuscript comes from 'Bras spungs and may thus be a reproduction of either the first or third one mentioned. While starting to work on Shar chen's life, I first came to know of the existence of his biography from its being mentioned in such works as the Shar genealogy of Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub, the biography of Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis, the fourteenth abbot of Ngor, and the biography of Shes rab 'byung

The dating of Shar chen's biography poses difficulties, as its colophon contains an orthographic mistake and the proper word order is partly changed: *mi zad kyi tha skar byi lo zla ba'i tshes bcu'i (...)*.²⁶² To make sense out of this dating, we have to read *mi zad* together with *byi lo*. In addition, since *mi zad* refers to a fire-dog year (*me pho khyi lo*), we have to correct the mouse year (*byi lo*) to a dog year (*khyi lo*).²⁶³ Furthermore, we need to read the term *tha skar* together with *zla ba*, which then refers to the ninth month.²⁶⁴ In doing so, we can date the compilation of the biography to the tenth day of the ninth month of 1406, exactly sixth months after Shar chen's passing. Such a reading is also confirmed by the chronology of events of the last months of Shar chen's life as recounted by Ngor chen, beginning with the sentence: *de nas dgung lo bzhi bcu zhe brgyad bzhes pa na me pho khyi'i lo mi zad zhes grags pa'i lo zla ba dang po la (...)*.²⁶⁵ From the colophon, we also come to know that Ngor chen composed the work at Sa skya following the repeated requests of acquainted masters such as Slob dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan and Bla ma Byang phug pa.²⁶⁶ Along with this work, short sketches of Shar chen's life can also be found in biographies of later Shar masters within the section on their family's genealogy.²⁶⁷ Following Ngor chen's biography of Shar chen, I shall present here an overview of Shar chen's life supplemented by additional information from those sketches.

In 1359, Shar chen was born, most probably at Sa skya, as the son of Shar chen Rin chen rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po and Ma gcig bDe ldan 'bum. As a small child, he received from his father the name Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan.²⁶⁸ At eight years old (i.e., in 1366), he began his training as a Buddhist monk under Slob dpon Seng ge rgyal mtshan, learning at first how to read and continuing with the sequence of the required liturgies and the **Dvikalpa Tantra* (*brTag pa gnyis pa'i rgyud*), that is, the *Hevajratantra*.²⁶⁹ In his twelfth year (i.e., in 1370), he studied the *Hevajratantra* commentary of Bla ma rDo rje bsod nams along with its notes by Bla ma gNyan under Nyi lde Bla ma Ngag dbang bzang po, and taught it himself to numerous students, such as dGe bshes Blo gros dpal. He also mastered the *Vajrapañjaratantra* and its commentary, the *Gur rgyan*, which could most probably be identified as the commentary by rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan.²⁷⁰ In between, he

gnas, the eighteenth abbot of Ngor; see the *Shar pa'i gdung brgyud* (fol. 5b.1–2), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 647.6–648.1), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 793.6), respectively.

²⁶² *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 261.1–2). This mistake is not only found in the digital input of Shar chen's biography but also the reproduced manuscript; see the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 453.1–2).

²⁶³ See the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (p. 2078, s.v. *mi zad*): (2): (*mngon me pho khyi lo*).

²⁶⁴ See the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (p. 1132, s.v. *tha skar zla ba*): (1): *hor zla dgu pa*.

²⁶⁵ *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 446.6). The corresponding passage in the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 255.12–13) contains some mistakes that probably originate from the digital input: *de nas dgu [= dgung] lo bzhi bcu zhe brgyad bzhes pa na me pho khyi'i lo mi zad zhes grags pa'i zla [= lo zla] ba dang po la (...)*.

²⁶⁶ Bla ma Byang phug pa can be identified as Byang phug pa Kun dga' legs pa. As will be shown below, he invited Shar chen and Ngor chen to his seat at Zar Byang phug, requested an in-depth bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen, and took part in the ordination ceremony of Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor.

²⁶⁷ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 645.6–648.1) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (pp. 790.3–791.1). A much shorter biographical sketch can also be found in the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 226.6–227.6).

²⁶⁸ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 221.10–20). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 645.5–646.1), which mentions that Shar chen's father acted as the tutor (*'chad nyan*) of the Bla brang Shar and that the family also had a younger son, Chos rgyal bkra shis, through whom the family line continued. That work also gives a slightly different name for Shar chen's mother, Ma gcig Ber ldan 'bum. In addition, see also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 790.2–3).

²⁶⁹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 222.1–6).

²⁷⁰ STEARNS 2001: 22 mentions a gNyan Phul byung ba gTsug gtor rgyal po, "whose actual name was Bsod nams rdo rje." He is related to the composition and/or compiling of the *Sras don ma*, "the most extensive and important of Sa chen' eleven commentaries" on the *rDo rje tshig rkang*. On gNyan Phul ba byung ba, see also

received teachings from Bla ma Zhang Nam mkha' rin chen, such as the empowerment of Hevajra, the reading transmission for the *Hevajratantra*, and the ritual permission (*rjes gnang*) for practicing the “major and minor *dharmapālas*” (*chos skyong che chung*), that is, the two Mahākāla forms of Vajrapañjara and Four-faced Śrīmahākāla.²⁷¹ Moreover, in the sixth month of 1369, at age eleven, he took monastic ordination in the Bla brang Shing khang of Sa skya from seven fully ordained monks,²⁷² whereby Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan functioned as ordaining preceptor, Nyi lde Bla ma Ngag dbang bzang po as ceremonial master, and Slob dpon rDo rje seng ge as timekeeper. On that occasion, Bla ma dam pa also bestowed on him the name Ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po.²⁷³

At age sixteen (i.e., in 1375), Shar chen obtained, from his father, the reading transmission for the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, for its commentary by Haribhadra, the *Abhisamayālaṃkāraloka*, and for the latter's commentary by 'Jam dbyangs gsar ma ('Jam dbyangs gsar ma'i ṭika).²⁷⁴ Assisted by Lo dpe ba'i Bla ma Nam mkha' dpal,²⁷⁵ he mastered both those commentaries along with the notes of dMar nag bSod rgyal. Besides, Slob dpon Chos mchog pa supported him in acquiring many minor skills such as handwriting and chanting.²⁷⁶

Shar chen continued his training under Jo nang Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1306–1386) at the hermitage of Jo mo nang dpal (Jo nang), to where he had travelled alone and in secret at age nineteen in the fourth month of 1377.²⁷⁷ From that master, he received the

Ibid.: 252, n. 222. However, the two masters mentioned by Ngor chen, Bla ma rDo rje bsod nams and Bla ma gNyan, appear to be two different persons. Shar chen's studies of the *Dvikalpa* commentary by rDo rje bsod nams are also mentioned in the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 502.5–6). For an account on how Ngor chen obtained a manuscript of that commentary, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 508.6–509.1). The *Vajrapañjaratantra* forms part of the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* (*Kye rdor rgyud gsum*), which, according to STEARNS 2001: 173–174, n. 28, “is composed of the basic text, the *Hevajra tantra rāja* (*Kye'i rdo rje shes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po*) (...); the uncommon explanatory tantra (*thun mong ma yin pa'i bshad rgyud*) of the *Ārya dākinī vajrapañjara* ('Phags pa mkha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur) (...); and the common explanatory tantra (*thun mong bshad rgyud*) of the *Samputa nāma mahātantra* (*Yang dag par sbyor ba shes bya ba'i rgyud chen po*) (...).” For Grags pa rgyal mtshan's commentary, the 'Phags pa rdo rje gur gyi rgyan zhes bya ba'i rnam 'grel, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 7, pp. 1–145). On the textual history of this commentary, see VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 20.

²⁷¹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 222.6–14). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 646.1–2) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 790.3). gDong thog Rin po che refers to those two Mahākāla forms as Chos skyong srung ma che chung gnyis or mGon po che chung gnyis and gives their alternative names as rDo rje nag po chen po (Chos srung che ba or mGon po che ba) and Zhing skyong stobs 'phrog nag po or Drag po gzi ldan dbang phyug (Chos skyong chung ba or mGon po chung ba); see the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung 2* (pp. 175.6–196.4).

²⁷² Here the reference to Shar chen's monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) refers to his taking of novice-monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*) vows.

²⁷³ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 222.14–223.1). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 546.2–3) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (p. 790.3–4). On the Bla brang Shing khang or Shing khang bla brang, see Part Three, n. 580.

²⁷⁴ We can identify 'Jam dbyangs gsar ma as 'Jam gsar Shes rab 'od zer. Under his title 'Jam dbyangs gsar ma, we find a brief biographical sketch in the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 408.13–409.2; ROERICH 1996: 335–336). Under his full name, 'Jam gsar Shes rab 'od zer, another short sketch is included in the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 902.16–903.16; ROERICH 1996: 769–770). In the former, he is mentioned as the author of commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and *Pramāṇavinīścaya*; see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 408.17; ROERICH 1996: 336). For his *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* commentary, see the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum 1* (vol. 14, pp. 25–393).

²⁷⁵ Nam mkha' dpal was affiliated to Sa skya's Lo dpe/spe bla brang. On this *bla brang*, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 136.12–19), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 75b2–3), and SCHOENING 1990: 22, Map 2 (no. 3) and 44.

²⁷⁶ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 223.1–8).

²⁷⁷ Phyogs las rnam rgyal was an important disciple of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan and the only master who held the monastic seat of Jo nang twice for a total of about twenty years. For his biographical sketch, see the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i rnam thar* (pp. 582.6–588.7), *Jo nang chos 'byung* (pp. 39–40) and STEARNS,

experiential instruction on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*—that is, the *dPal ldan dus kyi 'khor lo'i rdzogs rim zab lam rdo rje'i rnal 'byor sbyor ba yan lag drug pa'i nyams khrid*—and by cultivating that practice, the *samādhi* arose in his mind that the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects does not differ from unchanging bliss.²⁷⁸ In between, he was assisted for a period of four months by rTogs ldan Ye shes rgyal mtshan, exercising himself in drawing some Kālacakra-related diagrams (*sa ris*) and studying the pointing-out instructions of its *rGyud 'grel* (i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*). Ngor chen reports that Shar chen left a lasting impression on his teachers and Jo nang's monastic community.²⁷⁹

In the eleventh month of the same year, Shar chen departed from Jo nang and travelled to dBus. However, that move was not made of his own accord. Ngor chen relates that Shar chen was left with no other option regarding the common welfare of the Sa skya pa (*sa skya pa spyi'i don*) than to move to dBus, and was offered the service of many religious teachers (*dge bshes*) of local political chiefs (*brgya dpon*) on the way.²⁸⁰ Unfortunately, Ngor chen does not clearly spell out the concrete reason that prevented Shar chen from staying at Jo nang or returning to Sa skya, but we could speculate that it might have been related to some repercussions of the accession to power by the Phag mo gru pa.

In dBus, Shar chen travelled to Yar lung bSam gtan gling, where he met Chos rje Byang rtse pa. From this master, whom I identify as Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo, he took the vow to generate *bodhicitta* according to the Madhyamaka tradition, the empowerment of Cakrasaṃvara in the tradition of Ghaṇṭāpāda, and a longevity empowerment.²⁸¹ Afterwards, he proceeded to Gong dkar, where he received teachings from Slob dpon Tshul khrims 'bum on the *Five Maitreya Treatises* (*Byams chos lnga*), on the *mNgon pa gong 'og*, that is, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and *Abhidharmakośa*, and on *Vinaya*.²⁸² As Shar chen was learned in the philosophical views of other traditions, he

“Chogle Namgyal,” www.jonangfoundation.org/node/1205 (accessed 21.02.2017). On him, see also STEARNS 2010: 31–32 and 332–333, n. 133.

²⁷⁸ On that kind of emptiness in the *Kālacakra* system, see HARDING 2007: 303. See also *Ibid.*: 380, n. 72, who states that “it is only this exceptional emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects that has the power to generate unchanging great bliss (*mchog tu mi 'gyur ba'i bde ba*).”

²⁷⁹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 223.9–224.5). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 646.3) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (p. 790.4).

²⁸⁰ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 224.5–8). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 646.3–4).

²⁸¹ One could be inclined to identify Chos rje Byang rtse pa as Byang rtse mKhan chen Shes rab mgon po, who acted as instructor in private in Shar chen's *bhikṣu* ordination; see the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 225.2). However, I prefer to identify him as Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo, who was also known by his title Byang rtse Lo tsā ba, because Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 183.1–4) records him among the lineage masters for the ritual procedure (*cho ga*) of generating *bodhicitta* according to the Madhyamaka tradition. According to the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 221.1–5), he also bestowed the *Tshe dpag med lha dgui'i dbang* on Shar chen, which might thus be the longevity empowerment mentioned above. On Byang chub rtse mo, see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 921.16–923.3; ROERICH 1996: 787–788), DIEMBERGER et al. 1997: 23–24, STEARNS 2006: 656, n. 380, STEARNS 2010: 332, n. 127, and WANGDU and DIEMBERGER 1996: 39, n. 103 and 70–72. Recently, his full-length biography has become available; see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 2 (vol. 54, pp. 1–135). It was written by Lo tsā ba Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1352–1405), his disciple and nephew, who completed his work in 1381. According to him, his uncle lived from 1315–1379. However, 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481) gives his dates as 1303–1380; see the *Deb ther sngon po* (pp. 921.17–18 and 923.2–3). On bSam gtan gling, see the *lHo kha sa khul gyi gnas yig* (p. 43), SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2005: 30, 109–112, n. 282, 265–266, n. 74, and 312, and GYURME DORJE 2009: 224.

²⁸² Gong dkar might refer to the Gong dkar rdzong in sKyid shod smad, the former seat of the ruling house of Yar rgyab. On Gong dkar, see CZAJA 2013: 132–133, VAN DER KUIJP 2010a: 89–90, and SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: 208–209, n. 542. On the Yar rgyab pa, see FERMER 2010: 42–59. The *Five Maitreya Treatises* are the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, *Madhyāntavibhāga*, *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*, and *Ratnagotravibhāga*

engaged with both those masters, Byang chub rtse mo and Tshul khirms 'bum, in numerous debates regarding the inconsistencies of the different tenet systems, and many of their discussions are said to have lasted from dusk till dawn. Through his studies under Tshul khirms 'bum he developed into an expert of the entire *tripiṭaka* and by obtaining many esoteric instructions, such as of the *Seven-Point Mind Training*, he freed himself from any self-cherishing attitudes.²⁸³

When Shar chen reached his twenty-first year (i.e., in 1379), he took full monastic ordination in the middle of an assembly of thirty-two monks at Yar klungs rNam rgyal. He obtained ordination in the lineage of the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrī as passed down via the abbots of the Tsha mig tshogs pa. This monastic community constituted one of the Jo gdan tshogs pa sde bzhi, the four monastic communities in Śākyaśrī's Vinaya tradition that were instrumental in transmitting his lineage of monastic ordination (*sdom rgyun*) of the *prātimokṣa* precepts. At the time of Shar chen's *bhikṣu* ordination, the Tsha mig tshogs pa was headed by Yar 'brog sBrang mda' ba mKhan chen bKra shis tshul khirms, who acted as the presiding abbot. The other persons involved were Zul phu mKhan chen Byang chub dpal bzang po (1316–1390) as ceremonial master, Slob dpon Byang rtse mKhan chen Shes rab mgon po as instructor in private, and Tshogs chen dBu mdzad Śākyaśrī as timekeeper.²⁸⁴ Shar chen also received various teachings from those masters. For instance, he received the exposition of the *Vinayamūlasūtra* along with its commentary from bKra shis tshul khirms, the empowerment of *rDo rje 'jigs byed ro lang*s *brgyad skor* according to the Rwa tradition from Byang chub dpal bzang po, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* based on the *mChims ṭik*—that is, the commentary by mChims 'Jam pa'i dbyangs—along with its pointing-out instructions from Shes rab mgon po, and, with the assistance of Dus 'khor ba Rin chen bzang po, he brought to conclusion his studies of the pointing-out instructions, diagrams (*sa ris*), and ritual application of the *Dus 'khor rgyud 'grel* (i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*) according to the Zha lu system.²⁸⁵ Shar chen also commissioned a *thangka* portraying as its main figure his ordination abbot

(also known as *Mahāyottaratantra*). For the exposition lineage of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* and its commentary as received by Shar chen from Tshul khirms 'bum, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 260.5–261.2). For the one of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 261.3–6). Tshul khirms 'bum is shown as a lineage master in a *thangka* depicting as its main figure the Vinaya master bKra shis tshul khirms; see JACKSON 2010a: 137–138, fig 7.5 and 138, diagram [C], no. 17.

²⁸³ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 224.9–19).

²⁸⁴ See the *bKa' 'gyur ba'i rnam thar* (p. 654.2–3), *mKhan brygud kyi rnam thar* (fol. 23b3), *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 182.5–183.1), *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 224.19–225.5), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 646.4–5), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (p. 790.4). On the history of the Jo gdan tshogs pa sde bzhi, Śākyaśrī's lineage of monastic ordination, and the Tsha mig tshogs pa abbot bKra shis tshul khirms, see HEIMBEL 2013. According to SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: 695–696, n. 5, Byang chub dpal bzang was the seventh abbot of Zul phu Monastery and his full name was Byang chub rin chen dpal bzang po. For some biographical notes on him, see *Ibid.*: 695–696, n. 5. He is recorded as a student of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan; see TBRC (PORK1011). On Zul phu Monastery, see SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: [301], Map 1a, 695–696, n. 5, and 700, Map 4. On its first seven abbots, see *Ibid.*: 695–696. Slob dpon Byang rtse mKhan chen Shes rab mgon po may likely be an abbot of another Jo gdan tshogs pa, the Bye rdzing tshogs pa. In 1380, one year after Shar chen's full monastic ordination, he also acted as ceremonial master in the full ordination of Tsong kha pa, which was presided over by Tshul khirms rin chen of the Tsha mig tshogs pa and which also took place at rNam rgyal. On Shes rab mgon po, see HEIMBEL 2013: 207. Tshogs chen dBu mdzad Shākyaśrī was connected to the Tsha mig tshogs pa, which was also known as Tshogs chen pa; see HEIMBEL 2013: 195–196.

²⁸⁵ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 225.5–12). For the lineage of the empowerment of *rDo rje 'jigs byed ro lang*s *brgyad skor*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 194.1–5). For the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* commentary by mChims 'Jam pa'i dbyangs, see TBRC (W1KG10788, W1KG15593, W2CZ8096, W1KG3400, and W20482). On teachings Shar chen received from Shes rab mgon po and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 222.6–224.1 and 225.3–226.1).

bKra shis tshul khriṃs surrounded by his own lineage of full monastic ordination as passed down by the abbots of the Tsha mig tshogs pa; that thangka survives.²⁸⁶

At age twenty-five, in the ninth month of 1382, Shar chen returned to Sa skya, where he stayed for the next few months fulfilling the wishes of many petitioners. In the third month of 1383, he once again went to study under Phyogs las rnam rgyal at Jo nang or elsewhere. This time, he received an explanation of Kalki Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*, the chief commentary on the *Kālacakratantra* (i.e., the *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud 'grel chen po*). He is said to have been the most eloquent expounder among the approximately eighty learned students attending that teaching. Phyogs las rnam rgyal was again very pleased with Shar chen's progress and by presenting him with the manuscript known as *rGyud 'grel 'bru che chung* ("Tantric Commentary with Greater and Smaller Letters") that he himself had prepared, he entrusted to Shar chen the teachings of the *Kālacakra*.²⁸⁷ During his two periods of study, Shar chen is said to have received teachings from Phyogs las rnam rgyal at different sites such as Jo nang, bDe chen, and the hermitage of Se mKhar chung (seat of the early *Lam 'bras* master Se ston Kun rig, 1025–1122).²⁸⁸

At age twenty-six, in the eleventh month of 1383, Shar chen succeeded his father as the new head of the Bla brang Shar. His enthronement ceremony, along with accompanying celebrations, was held in the Sa skya'i tshogs po.²⁸⁹ Subsequently, he taught during the monastic winter session from atop the throne of the previous Shar masters to an assembly of hundreds of learned students. In the morning, he gave explanations on *Phar phyin* (i.e., the *Abhisamayālamkāra*) as well as on the [Hevajra] *Dvikalpa* and in the afternoon on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.²⁹⁰

From that time on, Shar chen continued to receive teachings from his father as well as from Khyung po lHas pa gZhon nu bsod nams, a chief disciple of both Kun mkhyen 'Phags 'od (b. 1268) and Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364).²⁹¹ When Shar chen

²⁸⁶ See JACKSON 2010a: 137–139, fig. 7.5. In the upper left and right corner of the inner square above the main figure, Shar chen had depicted two other masters involved in his full monastic ordination, Byang chub dpal bzang po and Shes rab mgon po. Comparing the episode on Shar chen's ordination and the inscriptions of the figures from the thangka (A: mKhan chen Byang chub dpal bzang po and B: mKhan chen Sher mgon pa), we are able to improve the identification as proposed by Jackson; see *Ibid.*: 138.

²⁸⁷ Both Dol po pa and Phyogs las rnam rgyal wrote annotations to the *Vimalaprabhā*; see STEARNS 2009, "Dolpopa's Elusive Kālacakra Annotations," www.jonangpa.com/node/1417 (accessed 21.02.2017), and STEARNS 2010: 324–325, n. 91. Could thus the *rGyud 'grel 'bru che chung* be the text featuring Phyogs las rnam rgyal's annotations?

²⁸⁸ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 225.13–226.4). For the *Kālacakra* teachings along with their respective lineages that Shar chen had received from Phyogs las rnam rgyal and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 214.4–216.6). For other teachings, see, for instance, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 191.6–194.1 and 226.6–227.4). For a picture of bDe chen (or bDe ba chen), which was Dol po pa's main residence on the mountainside above the *stūpa* of Jo nang, see STEARNS 2010: pl. 5. Regarding the hermitage of Se mKhar chung, *Ibid.*: 32 and 334–335, n. 143 mentions that it was the site to where Phyogs las rnam rgyal temporarily retired after he had stepped down from his position as abbot of the monasteries of Jo nang and Ngam ring at the end of 1358.

²⁸⁹ On the Sa skya'i tshogs po, which seems to be identical with the Sa skya tshogs, see Part Three, n. 31.

²⁹⁰ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 226.4–17). As part of his installation ceremony, Shar chen received many sacred objects; see the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 226.6–9).

²⁹¹ For biographical sketches of Kun mkhyen 'Phags 'od, see the *Nyang stod bla ma'i mtshan gyi deb gter* (pp. 474.4–475.2), *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (pp. 401–402), and *gSang 'dus bshad thabs* (pp. 83.1–99.1). On him, see also the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 507.17–510.5; ROERICH 1996: 422–425), VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 216–217 and 295–297, SEYFORTH RUEGG 1966: 97–109, and VITALI 2015: 565. Note that both VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 216 and STEARNS 1996: 149 specify his year of birth as 1268, whereas VITALI 2014: 565 gives it as 1260. For a sketch of Khyung po lHas pa's life, see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 77.2–78.6). He was renowned for his knowledge in the three lower Tantra classes and, in particular, for his expertise in the Yoga tantric system; see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 77.4–5 and 78.6). The *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (p. 78.1–3) also lists Shar chen among the disciples of Khyung

approached Khyung po lHas pa at his seat at Zha lu Chos phug, his new teacher was already eighty-five years old.²⁹² From him, Shar chen received teachings on Guhyasamāja and explanations, pertinent quotations (*lung sbyor*), and pointing-out instructions for tantra commentaries, *sādhana* and *maṇḍala* rituals (*sgrub dkyil*), *homa* rites (*sbyin sreg*), and consecrations (*rab gnas*). He also succeeded in determining the details of minor ritual procedures (*lag len phran*).²⁹³

At different times, Shar chen also studied under Jo nang mKhan chen Byang chub seng ge, obtaining the reading transmissions for the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, bSod nams rtse mo, Grags pa rgyal mtshan, Sa skya Paṇḍita, and 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan as well as the initiations into the *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle along with the reading transmission for the *Garland Trilogy* (*Phreng ba skor gsum*).²⁹⁴

Afterwards, Shar chen thought of studying the *Lam 'bras*. In search of a qualified teacher, he approached many experienced lamas inquiring after who was the most renowned *Lam 'bras* master. Many answered that by this time Bla ma dPal ldan pa (i.e., dPal ldan tshul khirms) was the most qualified master. He thus made a formal request to study the *Lam 'bras* under him through dGe bshes Kun dga' zla ba. In line with an auspicious dream Shar chen experienced that night, his request was granted and subsequently he obtained the entire *Lam 'bras* from dPal ldan tshul khirms.²⁹⁵ Shar chen was one of only three students that received the *Lam 'bras* in its entirety from dPal ldan tshul khirms; the other two being Buddhaśrī and Mi nyag Rin chen rdo rje.

However, as dPal ldan tshul khirms forbade Shar chen from teaching the *Lam 'bras* for a period of eighteen years, he did not get the chance to give that teaching cycle in its entirety, passing away before the eighteen-year period had expired.²⁹⁶ According to

po lHas pa and remarks that through him the teaching lineage (*chos brgyud*) of Khyung po lHas pa was transmitted into the Ngor tradition (*ngor phyogs*). Along with Shar chen, the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (p. 78.1–2) mentions a second Sa skya master through whom that lineage entered the Ngor tradition, Chu mig bDag chen bZhi thog pa Kun dga' bkra shis. However, I am unable to identify him within the genealogies of the bZhi thog bla brang and its Chu mig branch.

²⁹² According to the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 77.6–78.1), gZhon nu bsod nams had established Chos phug at the end of his life to the north of Ri phug.

²⁹³ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 226.17–227.4). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 646.6). The list of teachings Shar chen obtained from Khyung po lHas pa is a preliminary attempt at understanding the following passage (*Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1, p. 226.1–4): (...) *gsang 'dus sogs gsan cing rgyud 'grel rnam dang sgrub dkyil sbyin sreg rab gnas rnam la bshad pa lung sbyor mdzub khrid sogs lag len phran sogs la'ang zhib cha gtan la phab par mdzad doll*. On the various Guhyasamāja teachings Shar chen received from Khyung po lHas pa and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 183.5–191.6). On other teachings, see, for instance, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 194.5–195.1, 201.3–208.2, 216.6–219.1, 221.5–222.1, and 225.1–3). On Guhyasamāja teachings that Shar chen received from Khyung po lHas pa, see also the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (p. 29.3–5) and *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 155.3–6).

²⁹⁴ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 227.5–11). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 646.5–6). On Byang chub seng ge, who succeeded Phyogs las rnam rgyal as abbot of Jo nang in 1381, see STEARNS 2010: 58. For the catalogue and lineage of the collected works of Sa chen and his sons as received by Shar chen from Byang chub seng ge and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 236.6–247.6). For the catalogue and lineage of the collected works of Sa skya Paṇḍita, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 247.6–250.5). For the catalogue and lineage of the collected works of 'Phags pa, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 250.5–260.6). On other teachings, see, for instance, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 208.6–210.2, 214.1–4, 222.1–4, 224.6–225.1, and 226.1–2).

²⁹⁵ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 227.11–19), *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 646.6–647.1), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (p. 790.4–5). Shar chen dreamt that dPal ldan tshul khirms gave him a blue volume said to be a section of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in 100,000 *ślokas* and one leather bowl of cooked rice soup, which was extraordinarily delicious and of various flavours that Shar chen had never experienced before; see the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 227.14–19).

²⁹⁶ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 418.6–419.1), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 214.17–20), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 202.5–203.1), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 146.2–3), and STEARNS 2006: 241.

Shar chen's own words, dPal ldan tshul khrim was highly learned and accomplished in the esoteric instructions of the Sa skya masters, he kept his tantric commitments pure, possessed a pure cast of mind, and his blessings were more effective than those of other lamas. Owing to these qualities, he requested from him once again those Sa skya teachings that he had already studied under other masters, and considering the most subtle points of both ritual practice and esoteric instructions, he also relied on him in fixing their pointing-out instructions into concrete ritual procedures.²⁹⁷ Along with the *Lam 'bras*, his biographical sketches specify that he also received the (remaining *Eight Cycles of the Path* (*Lam skor [brgyad]*) as well as its ancillary teachings (*zhar byung*), the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* along with its branches (*yan lag*), and teachings on Cakrasaṃvara.²⁹⁸ Shar chen said that he was very grateful towards dPal ldan tshul khrim, and Ngor chen mentions that Shar chen considered him the highest among all of his teachers.²⁹⁹

Apart from the aforementioned masters, Shar chen also received many teachings from Bla ma bZhi thog pa Kun dga' rin chen, the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya and Ngor chen's secret father, and Bla ma chen po Kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po.³⁰⁰

Ngor chen reports that Shar chen was engaged in a controversy regarding the authenticity of Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*, being the only master capable of defeating the opposing faction, whose identity Ngor chen does not specify here.³⁰¹ But this dispute is also mentioned in one of the sketches of Shar chen's life. According to that work, Shar chen was the most outstanding scholar regarding the position of Red mda' ba gZhon nu blo gros (1349–1412) in his argument against the *Kālacakrantra*, and Shar chen became also known as the foremost debater regarding the philosophical key issues of *rang stong* and *gzhan stong*.³⁰² This statement suggests that Shar chen might have been involved in the controversy on the authenticity of the *Kālacakrantra* and its commentary (i.e., the *Vimalaprabhā*) that emerged between the Jo nang and the Sa skya traditions.³⁰³ In addition, his biographical sketch mentions that he also wrote numerous polemical works—including two relating to classic tantric works by rJe btsun Grags pa

²⁹⁷ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 227.19–228.6).

²⁹⁸ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 646.6–647.1) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (p. 790.4–5). On the large amount of teachings Shar chen received from dPal ldan tshul khrim and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 195.1–201.3, 203.4–6, 210.2–214.1, 219.1–221.3, 222.4–6, 224.1–5, 226.2–6, 228.1–236.6, and 261.6–262.6). In total, there are *Nine Cycles of the Path* (*Lam skor dgu*) of which the *Lam 'bras* constitutes the first. On the *Lam skor dgu*, see DAVIDSON 2005: 194–204 and SOBISCH 2008: 24–28. According to STEARNS 2001: 210–211, n. 30, the nine cycles “are the most important tantric legacy of 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba. The first of the nine is the *Lam 'bras* itself. The remaining eight teachings by other Indian masters have traditionally been transmitted in the Sa skya tradition when the *Lam 'bras* is given. (...)” See also STEARNS 2006: 132–136.

²⁹⁹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 228.4–6). See also the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 646.6–647.1) and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (p. 790.4–5).

³⁰⁰ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 228.7–12).

³⁰¹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 249.13–20).

³⁰² See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 647.2–3). On the *gzhan stong* tradition in Tibet, see STEARNS 2010: [41]–83.

³⁰³ On Red mda' ba's position and its misunderstandings, see STEARNS 2010: 55–60. On Red mda' ba's position, see also ROLOFF 2010: 25–28 and 218–221. As STEARNS 2010: 60 has pointed out, even though Red mda' ba was considered a “determined enemy of both the Jonang tradition and the teachings of the *Kālacakra Tantra* (...),” an investigation of his biography and writings shows that he in fact wasn't: “While he did see internal contradictions in a literal reading of the *Kālacakra*, he did not dismiss it as a non-Buddhist teaching (*chos min*). *Ibid.*: 56 also points out that “Rendawa's main quarrel was not actually with the content of the *Kālacakra Tantra* itself, but with the prevalent practice of understanding its words literally.” At the end of his life, Red mda' ba seems to have even come more close to some Jo nang viewpoints; see *Ibid.*: 59–60. On Shar chen's *Kālacakra* link, see *Ibid.*: 27.

rgyal mtshan: the *Dag ldan kha skong* and *Dag ljon lung 'grel*—and a liturgy for maṇḍala practice (*Gur gyi sgrub dkyil*).³⁰⁴ In his master's biography, Ngor chen provides us with a list of Shar chen's writings that also records those aforementioned works:³⁰⁵

[1] *brtag pa gnyis pa'i rnam bshad* | [2] *dag ldan gyi go sla'i 'grel pa dang* | [3] *dag ljon skor gsum gyi lung gi 'grel pa* | [4] *gur rigs bsdus kyi sgrub thabs* | [5] *mchod phreng* | [6] *dkyil chog gi zur 'debs* | [7] *kye'i rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor bdun bsres* | [8] *rgyud mchog gi cho ga* | [9] *dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgol ba'i lan* | [10] *bdag 'jug* | [11] *sa chog* | [12] *lha dgu ma'i sgrub thabs* | [13] *dbang gong ma* | [14] *yongs rdzogs kyi thig rtsa* | [15] *lnga bsdus dang gza' lnga* | [16] *bde mchog lha lnga'i sgrub thabs* | [17] *dbang chog* | [18] *gsang 'dus kyi mchod phreng* | [19] *gur mgon lha brgyad* | [20] *gdong bzhi pa* | [21] *re ma ti rnams kyi gtor chog* | [22] *cha gsum 'bring po'i lan* | [23] *gnod sbyin pho dgu mo dgu'i 'khor lo bri yig* | [24] *sde snod 'dzin pa la ston gyi dris lan* | [25] *theg chen bsngo ba'i rnam gzha* | [26+27] *lam 'bras brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs kyi kha skong gnyis* | [28] *nang dang gsang ba'i maṇḍal* | [29] *bir srung gi man ngag* | [30+31] *spros med dang sbyor drug brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* | [32] *ku ru kulle la bstod pa* | [33] *sde pa bco brgyad du gyes tshull* | [34] *rang bzhin lhan skyes la nor bar 'dod pa dgag tshul rnams mdzad dof*.

Fortunately, a couple of works recorded in this list have survived. In his compilation of *Lam 'bras* practice texts, the *Pod dmar ma*, Ngor chen himself included two of his teacher's works, the *Bla ma rdor 'dzin ma'i kha skong gi gsol 'debs* (i.e., either no. 26 or 27) and the *Kha skong* of the *Phyi nang gsang gsum gyi maṇḍal* (i.e., no. 28?).³⁰⁶ The *Dag ljon skor gsum gyi lung 'grel lung don gsal ba'i nyi ma* (i.e., no. 3) has been preserved in another compilation, the *rGyud sde kun btus*.³⁰⁷ Two other works are preserved among a collection of manuscripts from Ngor housed in the National Library of Bhutan: the *Dus kyi 'khor lo'i bdag 'jug* (i.e., no. 10) and *Theg chen bsngo ba'i rnam bzhag* (no. 25).³⁰⁸ Moreover, a first survey of the

³⁰⁴ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 647.3). The *Dag ldan kha skong* was an addendum to the *Dag ldan*, that is, the *brTag pa gnyis pa'i rnam par bshad pa ma dag pa rnams 'joms par byed pa'i rnam 'grel dag ldan*; see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 1 (vol. 6, pp. 387–651). The *Dag ljon lung 'grel* was a commentary by means of quotations on the *Dag ldan* and *ljon shing*. The first work is the one just mentioned in the previous sentence and the second refers to the *rGyud kyi mngon par rtogs pa rin po che'i ljon shing*. For the latter work, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 1 (vol. 6, pp. 1–277). For a short account of a vision that prompted Shar chen to rework his *Gur gyi dkyil chog gi zur 'debs*, see the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 252.5–10).

³⁰⁵ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 250.2–15).

³⁰⁶ For the former work, see the *Po ti dmar chung* (pp. 11–14.4) and *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 11.3–13.1). For the latter, see the *Po ti dmar chung* (pp. 73.4–74.4) and *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 52.6–53.5). On both works, see also SOBISCH 2008: [103]–104.

³⁰⁷ See the *rGyud sde kun btus* (vol. 32, pp. 491–637). According to its colophon, Shar chen composed this work at dBang [= Yang] dgon, following the repeated requests of Slob dpon Nam mkha' dpal bzang; see the *rGyud sde kun btus* (vol. 32, p. 636.4).

³⁰⁸ See the *'Dus kyi 'khor lo'i bdag 'jug pa* (fol. 24a3–7): *de ltar na| bcom ldan 'das dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i dkyil 'khor du bdag nyid 'jug pa cing 'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i dbang lon pa'i tshul phyag len rnams shin tu gsal ba 'di ni| mkhan chen rin po che bu ston chen pos mdzad pa'i dbang gi cho ga spangs rtogs kyi yon tan kun nas 'byung ba las btus tel las dang po pa rnams la phan par bya ba'i phyir| chos smra ba'i btsun pa ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang pos go sla bar chu mo phag gi lo [i.e., 1383] tha skar gyi zla ba'i dkar phyogs la rdzogs par sbyar ba'o||; and *Theg chen bsngo ba'i rnam bzhag* (fol. 13b1–3): (...) btsun pa ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang pos yang dgon gyi dben gnas su sbyar ba'o||. The National Library also houses two works by Bu ston Rin chen grub—the *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i mngon par rtogs pa dngos grub kyi 'dod 'jo* (45 fols.) and *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga spangs rtogs kyi yon tan kun nas 'byung ba* (56 fols.)—that were written by the scribe dGe slong Shākya dpal bzang po and are said to have been the personal texts of Shar chen (*dge slong ye shes rgyal mtshan gyi dpe lags*).*

extensive catalogue of the library holdings of 'Bras spungs Monastery shows that some works have been preserved there as well:³⁰⁹

- (1) *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i tshul la rgol ba'i dri ma sel bar byed pa dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyan*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 36 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 98, no. 877); above no. 9
- (2) *Dag ldan gyi kha bskong gzhung don gsal ba*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 125 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 316, no. 3135); above no. 2
- (3) *Gur rigs bsdu pa'i dkyil chog gi zur 'debs*; manuscript: '*bru tsha*, 21 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 365, no. 3702); above no. 6
- (4) *Gur rigs bsdu pa'i mchod 'phreng gi rim pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 13 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 380, no. 3870); above no. 5³¹⁰
- (5) *Dag ldan gyi 'grel pa go sla'i 'grel pa gzhung don rab gsal*; (a) manuscript: *dbu can*, 99 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 389, no. 3985), (b) manuscript: *dbu can*, 99 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 390, no. 3995), and (c) manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 142 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 955, no. 10755); above no. 5
- (6) *dPal ldan sa skya pa shar pa ye shes rgyal mtshan gyi [= gyis] mdzad pa'i dmag zor lha mo'i gtor chog*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 5 fols. ('*Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 1315, no. 13390)

After a detailed description of Shar chen's scriptural studies, spiritual practices, and teaching activities, Ngor chen dedicates a large part of his master's biography to the last two years of his life, during which Ngor chen seemed to have stayed with and attended on him for most of the time.³¹¹

At age forty-seven (i.e., in 1405), Shar chen remarked: "Now, I have become old. The hair on [my] head has become white and [I] have got wrinkles. [I] have lost my teeth. [I] am struck by many such signs of [my] immediate death."³¹² Thus to spiritually prepare himself for the moment of death ('*chi kha*), he made up his mind to spend about three years at the remote site of Bar 'brog to engage himself in virtuous practice (*dge sbyor*). Subsequently, he briefed Slob dpon Du dben shā pa and Slob dpon Chos mchog pa in the administrative affairs of the Bla brang Shar and handed over his responsibility to them.³¹³

Leaving Sa skya for Bar 'brog, Shar chen was approached on his way by a certain Bla ma Grags pa rin chen, who asked for instructions and requested to be accepted as his student. Initially, Shar chen rejected this request by referring to his own plan to engage himself in spiritual practice, but owing to the repeated and urgent requests of Grags pa rin chen, he finally accepted and fulfilled the wish by bestowing on him several instructions such as on the *Five Stages of Guhyasamāja* and by numerous reading transmissions.³¹⁴

³⁰⁹ The '*Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1400, no. 15790, p. 1871, no. 21440, p. 1896, no. 21766, p. 1905, no. 21890, p. 1941, no. 22431, p. 1949, no. 22557, p. 1950, no. 22571, and p. 1951, no. 22574) registers other works by masters bearing the name Ye shes rgyal mtshan, though only further research will show whether they should also be identified as Shar chen.

³¹⁰ The survey of printing blocks ordered by sTag brag Paṇḍita Ngag dbang gsung rab mthu stobs (1874–1952, r. 1941–1950) records a block-print recension of the *Gur rigs bsdu kyi lha tshogs mchod pa'i cho ga* that was once available at the printery of Ngor; see the *sPar tho* (p. 218.2). This seems to be the same work as the *Gur rigs bsdu pa'i mchod 'phreng gi rim pa*.

³¹¹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 229.16–249.12 and 251.1–260.4), respectively.

³¹² *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 251.3–4): *da nga na so yang rgas[mgo la skra dkar dang gnyer ma yang byung/ so yang bud pa la sogs pa myur du 'chi ba'i rtags du ma phog pas]*.

³¹³ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 251.4–252.10).

³¹⁴ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 252.11–16).

At the request of Bla ma Byang phug pa, they also made a stopover at Byang phug to pay their respects to the local Jo bo statue, which was one of three effigies of the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po of sKyid grong, and Shar chen also gave teachings there following the wishes of the local monastic community. Shar chen expressed that he had desired to pay his respects to the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po, but realised that he would not be able to do so. As a substitute for that, he made many offerings to the Byang phug Jo bo, performed a large number of prostrations and circumambulations, and offered uncountable prayers.³¹⁵ Afterwards, he proceeded on his journey to Bar 'brog, where he remained in a strict retreat, sharing with Ngor chen his experiences from spiritual practice, dreams, and visions.³¹⁶

At age forty-eight, in the first month of 1406, Shar chen performed an intensive practice of the “profound path” (*zab mo'i lam*).³¹⁷ As a result, the energy of his “vital wind of fire” (*me rlung*) increased and he fell sick for three full days.³¹⁸ But ignoring his physical pain, he continued his spiritual practices, doing the visualisation of taking on himself the suffering of all sentient beings.³¹⁹

On one occasion, Shar chen said that he would probably pass away that year and in that case, it would be better if he died at Sa skya.³²⁰ Ngor chen thus made his way back to

³¹⁵ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 253.4–11). We can identify Bla ma Byang phug pa as Byang phug pa Kun dga' legs pa, whom we have encountered previously as one of two masters that had requested that Ngor chen compose Shar chen's biography. According to EHRHARD 2004a: 51 and 358, n. 72, three effigies of the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po were crafted during the twelfth century, the 'Phags pa'i snang brnyan mched gsum. Byang phug was located at Zar in gTing skyes to the south of Sa skya; see GYURME DORJE 2009: 357–358 and Map 2 (C1, Zar). On gTing skyes, see *Ibid.*: 311–313 and Map 2 (C1, Tingkye). For the location of Zar and gTings skyes, see also MAP 1 (gZar and gTing skyes) and MAP 2 (2887, D, Zar and Tingkye County and 2888, C, Tingkye County). MAP 2 (2887, C) records a town by the name of Zar and southwest of it a village by the name of Changbug, which might be the former site of Byang phug and its Jo bo. Cf. EHRHARD 2004a: 51 and 358, n. 72, who locates Byang phug at the border of Tibet and Sikkim. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 515.4 and 551.1), where a visit of Ngor chen to Zar Byang phug is mentioned. Ngor chen paid his respects not only to the Jo bo of Zar Byang phug, but also to the ones in lHa sa, sKyid grong, and Kha char, each time performing an enormous butter lamp offering; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 551.1). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 466.3).

³¹⁶ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 252.11–255.12). Based on the route that Shar chen and Ngor chen took, the Bar 'brog in question seems to have been located to the south of Sa skya in the region of gTing skyes and not too far away from the site of the Byang phug Jo bo. Cf. EHRHARD 2003: 20 and EHRHARD 2007: 84, who make mention of a Bar 'brog in La stod. Cf. also EHRHARD 2002: 65, who records a monastery called Bar 'brog rDo rje gling in the region of Zur mtsho, which had been founded by rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje (1189–1258). When Sangs rgyas phun tshogs travelled in 1669 from mNga' ris to Ngor for his further studies, he crossed a pass in the region of Bar 'brog while coming from Nub dgon; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 297.3) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 173.5).

³¹⁷ According to Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (gZhis ka rtse, 08 December 2011), the term *zab mo'i lam* should generally be understood as referring to the *guruyoga* known as *Lam zab bla ma'i rnal 'byor*. However, here in this context, it seems to refer to something else, such as the tantric *Lam 'bras* practice of the vital winds and channels (*rtsa rlung*) or inner heat (*gtum mo*). Furthermore, he explained that the Sa skya pa refer to all meditative practices on Hevajra as *zab mo'i lam*.

³¹⁸ STEARNS 2007: 505, n. 420 mentions that “many types of vital winds exist in the body, some of the basic categories of which are earth, water, fire, wind, and space.”

³¹⁹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 255.12–256.4).

³²⁰ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 256.4–6): *der skabs cig tu da lo phal cher 'gro ba 'dra zhing' dir shi na rjes ma rnams chu gal che ba zhiig 'ong bar 'dug pas sa skyar phyin pa drag pa 'dra gsungs pa la brten nas (...)*. The reason why it would be better to die at Sa skya is not clear to me. The term *chu gal* is most likely similar in meaning to *gcu gal*, which the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (p. 742, s.v. *gcu gal*) gives as: *do gal lam khag 'gan*, GOLDSTEIN 2001: 337 (s.v. *gcu gal*) as “important”, and JÄSCHKE 1881: 144 (s.v. *gcu gal*) as “importance.” I thus tentatively suggest this passage be understood in the sense that it would be important for the *rjes ma rnams* (i.e., the people taking care of Shar chen's funeral rites or the later generations?) that Shar chen would die at Sa skya and not far away at his retreat site.

Sa skya to report on Shar chen's condition to the two Slob dpons that his master had previously installed as his representatives at the Bla brang Shar. They gave Ngor chen a letter urging Shar chen to come back to Sa skya and Ngor chen then returned to Bar 'brog. After Shar chen had made an extensive offering to the Three Jewels and *gtor mas* to the *dharmapālas*, they embarked on their return journey. On the way, they stopped at the two *sku 'bums* of Bar 'brog, where for a long time, Shar chen performed prostrations and circumambulations. Immediately after having reached Sa skya, he secluded himself on a retreat, during which he seemed to have regained some physical strength. However, when Ngor chen made this observation, Shar chen replied that his condition resembled that of a butter lamp whose flame lightens up the moment before it finally extinguishes.³²¹ Over the following days, Shar chen stayed in meditation, interrupting his practice only for the purpose of drafting his last will on the third day of the fourth month of 1406.³²² After his physical condition had slightly weakened on the evening of the seventh day, he stayed continuously in meditation until the ninth and eventually passed away on the tenth.

During all that time, Ngor chen attended on his master and provides us with a detailed description of Shar chen's last days.³²³ According to one of Shar chen's biographical sketches, he passed away in the Gu ra bla brang of Sa skya and thus seemingly did not take residence in the Bla brang Shar after his return.³²⁴ Ngor chen reports that for eleven days after his death, the complexion of Shar chen's face and eyes was more glowing than before so that he appeared to still be alive.³²⁵ Ngor chen's biographers relate that Ngor chen himself accomplished the means to fulfil the last wishes (*thugs dgongs rdzogs pa'i thabs*) of Shar chen, which in this context most likely refers to performing the funeral service and the various meritorious actions on behalf of his late master.³²⁶ Later on, after the foundation of Ngor Monastery in 1429, in order to fulfil Shar chen's wishes, Ngor chen also commissioned in the lower inner sanctum or inner chapel (*gtsang khang 'og ma*) of the assembly hall (*'du khang*)—that is, in the dBang khang chen mo—a large statue of Buddha Śākyamuni made out of gold together with a *gandhola* backrest.³²⁷

As the most eminent among his numerous disciples, Shar chen's biographical sketch mentions Ngor chen, rDzong chung pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1382–1446), Gu shrī Nam mkha' bzang po, and sPyang lung Chos sding pa gZhon nu blo gros (1372–1475).³²⁸

³²¹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 256.4–19).

³²² See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 256.19–257.8).

³²³ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 257.8–259.18). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 468.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 554.5–6).

³²⁴ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 647.5): (...) *dgung lo bzhi bcu zhe brgyad pa sa ga zla ba'i tshes bcu la sa skya'i gur [= gu ra] bla brang du bde bar gshegs so!*. On the Gu ra bla brang, see Part Three, n. 164.

³²⁵ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 259.18–20).

³²⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 445.4–5 and 468.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 497.1–2 and 554.5–6). See also the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 259.20–260.4).

³²⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 548.3–4). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 464.3). Note that the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 548.4) reads *gtso khang* instead of *gtsang khang*. For *gtsang khang*, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fol. 44a2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7 (p. 254.1). On the commissioning of the large Buddha statue, see also Part Four, 5.2.

³²⁸ See the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 647.5–6). Kon ting Gu shrī Nam mkha' bzang po belonged to the Nyi lde family of Sa skya's Nyi lde bla brang; see VAN DER KUIJP 2004: 40–41, n. 117. Along with Shar chen, he also pursued studies under Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros and Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis (1349–1425), and acted, for instance, as the teacher of dPal ldan rdo rje, the fifth abbot of Ngor; see the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 568.4–5). He is known to have written two genealogies (*gdung grabts*), one of Sa skya and one of the Shar pa family. On the former, see the *dPe rgyun dkon pa 'ga' zhiq gi tho yiq* (p. 509, no. 10945) and VAN DER KUIJP 2004:

6.1.3 Shar chen's Commissions of Sacred Art

Ngor chen provides us with a list of religious objects that Shar chen commissioned in memory of his teachers, some directly linked to the studies he had pursued under them:³²⁹

- ❖ a gilded Buddha image one cubit (*khru*) tall, with back curtain and throne as “inner holy object” (*nang rten*) in memory of (his father?) Bla ma Rin chen rgyal mtshan
- ❖ a *Stūpa* of Great Awakening (*byang chub chen po'i mchod rten*) decorated with gold as an “outer holy object” (*phyi rten*) in memory of (his father?) Bla ma Rin chen rgyal mtshan
- ❖ a thangka of Cakrasaṃvara and Raktayamāri as an “inner holy object” (*nang rten*) in memory of Jo nang Phyogs las rnam rgyal
- ❖ a *maṇḍala* of the condensed family of Vajrapañjara (rDo rje gur rigs bsdu) as an “inner holy object” in memory of dPal ldan tshul khriims
- ❖ large *maṇḍalas* of Guhyasamāja and Vajradhātu as “inner holy objects” (*nang rten*) in memory of Khyung po lHas pa gZhon nu bsod nams
- ❖ statues of each of those masters

In one of his latest exhibition catalogues, David Jackson introduces some commissions of Shar chen. Among them, we find the *bal ris* style *maṇḍala* of the condensed family of Vajrapañjara (rDo rje gur rigs bsdu) that Shar chen had commissioned in memory of dPal ldan tshul khriims. Jackson's identification of that *maṇḍala* is based on reading its inscription and deciphering the masters of the depicted Sa skya lineage.³³⁰ His identification can now be further confirmed by the mention of that commission in Shar chen's biography. Another painting commissioned by Shar chen but not mentioned by Ngor chen depicts in a *bal ris* style Sa chen Kun dga' snying po with the lineage “of the exposition of the Hevajra basic tantra (Tib. *rGyud brtag gnyis pa*).”³³¹ The painting bears an inscription that mentions Shar chen as the commissioning patron.³³² A third commission was the portrait of bKra shis tshul khriims, the abbot of the Tsha mig tshogs

40. On the latter, see the *mDo smad chos 'byung 1* (p. 15.6), *mDo smad chos 'byung 2* (p. 6.16–17), and *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 2* (pp. 793.5–794.1). He also wrote a refutation against the polemic assaults on the body *maṇḍala* of Hevarja by mKhas grub rje; see Part Four, 4. His niece, dGe bsnen ma dKon mchog 'bum, was the mother of lHa mchog seng ge, the ninth abbot of Ngor, who studied as a youth under his uncle in the Nyi lde bla brang; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 16.5–17.1) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 128.4–5 and 129.4). On the Nyi lde bla brang, divided into *shar* and *nub*, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 136.3–7 and 136.12–137.1), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 75a4–b3), and SCHOENING 1990: 18, 28, Map 6 (no. 36), 38, and 44–45. For a list of masters affiliated with that *bla brang*, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 67a3–6). For a biographical sketch of sPyang lung Chos sding pa gZhon nu blo gros, see CAUMANN 2012: [416]–421 and CAUMANN 2015: 372–377.

³²⁹ See the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 228.12–229.3). Shar chen also commissioned a set of Bu ston's collected works; see the *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 491.1–2) and VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 298.

³³⁰ See JACKSON 2010a: 58–60, fig 3.5 and 139, fig. 7.6. For the inscription, see *Ibid.*: 222, n. 261: “The Tibetan from J. Huntington 1990, p. 345: ... mKhas grub bla ma pa la [=dPal] ldan tshul khriims kyi ... gongs rjo gas [=rdzogs] phyir/ ... [some words omitted] ... sby[i]n bdag ye shes rgyal ... dPal bzang po ...”

³³¹ See JACKSON 2011: 82–83, fig. 3.11.

³³² See JACKSON 2011: 83. For the inscription, see JACKSON 2012: 215, n. 150: “[thog] ma med pa nas mchog m[two characters missing]s kyang mi'i gzugs kyi 'gro ba'i don ma lus pa bcom [doubtful] par mdzad pa'i bdag nyid chen po chos kyi rje dPal ldan sa skya pa chen po kun dga' snying po zhes yongs su grags pa'i bka' drin dang yon tan tshad med pa rjes su dran pa'i sgo nas shākya'i dge slong ye shes rgyal mtshan dPal bzang po'i thog drangs kham gsum pa'i sems can thams cad rnyog pa dang bral ba'i yid rab tu gus pas phyag 'tshal lo||”

pa, who had presided over Shar chen's full monastic ordination, which I described above.³³³

6.1.4 Ngor chen's Relation with Shar chen and Teachings Received

As mentioned above, when Ngor chen's secret father Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen had to leave his monastic seat of Sa skya in about 1387, he committed Ngor chen to the care of Shar chen to oversee the young boy's religious training. Subsequently, Shar chen bestowed on Ngor chen the empowerments of Kālacakra, Pañjaraṇātha, and Vajradhātu, whose ritual practices he is said to have mastered at age eleven (i.e., in 1392). Shar chen also presided over Ngor chen's layman and novice-monk ordination and instructed him in the *Upāsakasamvarāṣṭaka* and its commentary, the *Upāsakasamvarāṣṭakavivaraṇa*, the *Śrāmaṇerakārikā*, and the *Trisatikā* along with its commentary. During that time, Ngor chen also relied on Shar chen for help with preparing himself for his first public exposition (*rnam gzhag*) that he gave on the *Hevajratantra*.³³⁴

In his seventeenth year (i.e., in 1398), Ngor chen received from Shar chen the instructions on *sPros med*, a special practice of Raktayamāri based on a basic text by Virūpa.³³⁵ After just half a day of meditative practice, all the signs of progress on the path (*lam rtags*) are said to have arisen by the next morning, as Ngor chen's biographer Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan notes. However, according to Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po, those signs already appeared on the same day Ngor chen performed the half day of meditation. Within the course of one month, Ngor chen brought the spiritual experience of those signs to completion.³³⁶ As I outlined in the section on the Three Vows, Ngor chen also took full monastic ordination from Shar chen as ordaining preceptor at Sa skya in 1400 or 1401.³³⁷

In the following folios of his Ngor chen biography, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs presents an extensive list of teachings, mainly tantric in nature, that Ngor chen studied under Shar chen.³³⁸ Though his presentation is based on the list as found in Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen, the placement of the sutric teachings varies inasmuch as Mus chen records them, following Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, at the end of his list, whereas Sangs rgyas phun tshogs presents them at the beginning.³³⁹ He first discusses Ngor chen's studies of the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, trying to clarify some inconsistencies he noticed in the sources:³⁴⁰

³³³ See Part Three, 6.1.2.

³³⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 485.4–488.1 and 490.3–5). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 434.4–436.3 and 437.5–6). In addition, see also Part Three, 4 and Part Three, 5.

³³⁵ For the root text by Virūpa, the *Shin tu spros pa med pa'i rdo rje'i tshig rkang*, and explanations by later masters such as Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho and 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug, see, for instance, the *rGyud sde kun btus* (vol. 24). For Ngor chen's writings on Raktayamāri, see CATALOGUE (nos. 19 and 115–119).

³³⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 490.6–491.1).

³³⁷ See Part Three, 5.

³³⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 491.3–495.3).

³³⁹ For Mus chen's list, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 437.5–442.1). For the enumeration of the sutric teachings, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 441.6–442.1), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 491.1–3), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 260.5–262.6).

³⁴⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 491.1–2): *gsan yig tu mi gsal ba cung zad bshad na| chos rje ye shes rgyal mtshan pa'i drung du| phar phyin bu ſig gi steng nas tshar lnga gsan zhes chos dpal pa gsungs| paṇḍi tas phyed dang lnga| rje mus pas bzhi gsan gsung zhing| mkhan chen buddha shri pa'i zin bris kyi steng nas kyang gsan gsung|.*

If [I] explain a little what is not explicit in [Ngor chen's] record of teachings received, [it is as follows]: “[Ngor chen] heard by Chos rje Ye shes rgyal mtshan five times the *Phar phyin* [i.e., the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*] based on the *Bu ṭig*,” [as] Chos dpal said. Paṇḍita [says] four and a half [times]. The Lord Mus pa says [he] heard [it] four [times], and says that [he] heard [it] also based on the notes of mKhan chen Buddhaśrī.

If we look into Mus chen's Ngor chen biography and Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, we do indeed find diverging information. Mus chen specifies that on four occasions Ngor chen received explanations of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* based on a commentary called *'Bum ṭik* and the notes of mKhan chen Dānaśrī.³⁴¹ In his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, however, Ngor chen records the transmission lineage for the exposition of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* together with its commentary, which might be Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṃkāraḥloka*, and states that he received this exposition four times based on the *Ṭi ka lung gi snye ma*, that is, the commentary by Bu ston Rin chen grub, and on the notes of mKhan chen Dharmaśrī.³⁴²

Though Mus chen records that Ngor chen studied the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* based on the notes by Dānaśrī, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, referring to Mus chen's work, confusingly designates the author of those notes as mKhan chen Buddhaśrī. This might have been an intended emendation because Ngor chen also studied the exposition of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* one and a half times under g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal along with the *g.Yag ṭik*, that is, g.Yag ston's own commentaries of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. Consequently, we could probably identify Buddhaśrī as g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal.³⁴³ Whatever the case may be, along with the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, Ngor chen also studied the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* with the *Prasannapadā*, the *Madhyamakāvatāra* with the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*, the *Uttaratantra*, and the *Bodhisattvacāryāvatāra* under Shar chen.³⁴⁴

However, most of the teachings that Ngor chen received from Shar chen were tantric in nature. In Ngor chen's biographies, they are presented in the form of a list structured according to the four Tantra classes, beginning with the highest.³⁴⁵ Similarly, Ngor chen arranged the tantric teachings in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*: (1) *niruttarayogatantras* divided in *pitṛtantras* (*pha rgyud*), *mātrtantras* (*ma rgyud*) and non-dual *tantras* (*gnyis med kyi rgyud*), (2) *yogatantras*, and (3) *cāryatantras* and *kriyātantras*.³⁴⁶ But those teachings are far too many in number to discuss here in detail.

Since Shar chen was the main teacher in terms of Ngor chen's early training as a monk, we could expect that he had also bestowed the entire *Lam 'bras* cycle on him. But owing to Shar chen's following dPal ldan tshul khirms' restriction of not teaching the *Lam 'bras* for eighteen years, Shar chen passed away before that period had expired. But

³⁴¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 441.6).

³⁴² See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 260.5–261.3). For Bu ston's extensive commentary, see TBRC (W1934: vol. 18, W22106: vol. 18, and W1PD45496: vol. 18).

³⁴³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 501.6).

³⁴⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 491.2–3). Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 441.6–442.1) and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 260.5–262.6), neither of which records the *Uttaratantra*.

³⁴⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 437.6–441.5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 491.3–495.3).

³⁴⁶ On the threefold division of the *niruttarayogatantras*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 183.4–195.1, 195.1–214.4, and 214.4–216.6). On the *yogatantras*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 216.6–220.6). On the *cāryatantras* and *kriyātantras*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 220.6–236.6). On Ngor chen's Guhyasamāja studies under Shar chen, see also the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (pp. 29.5–30.5) and *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (pp. 155.3–156.1). On Ngor chen's Guhyasamāja teachings, see the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (pp. 46.4–59.5), *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 483.5–492.3), and *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.2–3).

though Ngor chen did not receive the entire cycle, Shar chen apparently bestowed a few individual *Lam 'bras* related teachings on him. For instance, Gung ru Shes rab bzang po relates that Ngor chen obtained only an explanation of the general make-up of the path, but no instructions or commentaries.³⁴⁷ Similarly, A mes zhabs states that due to that restriction and Shar chen's early death, Ngor chen received "only a presentation of the general make-up of the *gsung ngag* and just some ancillary teachings."³⁴⁸ And 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug relates that Shar chen did not get the chance to teach the *Lam 'bras* in its entirety other than the Hevajra empowerment according to the tradition of practical instructions (*man ngag lugs*)—that is, the Hevajra meditative tradition of the *Lam 'bras*—and minor instructions on the *Lam zab bla ma'i rnal 'byor* and *Bir srung*, prompting Ngor chen to look for another teacher.³⁴⁹ Some of those teachings can be identified in the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* in the section on the Hevajra teachings that Ngor chen obtained from Shar chen. There, along with repeated expositions of the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* and initiations into related *maṇḍalas* and body *maṇḍalas*, the first entry records the lineage for the initiation into the *maṇḍala* of the Hevajra tradition of practical instructions.³⁵⁰ A few folios later, we find listed the *Lam zab mo bla ma'i rnal 'byor* and *Bir srung*.³⁵¹

From the last entry in the long list of teachings that Ngor chen obtained from Shar chen, we see that his master had also recited to him the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po and his two sons, bSod nams rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan, along with the collected works of Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan.³⁵² In his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, Ngor chen presents the index of the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po and his two sons as one set, numbering their individual volumes from *ka* to *na* and listing the individual works included in each volume.³⁵³ He presents the index for the collected works of Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa separate from the former set and also from each other, numbering the volumes of Sa skya Paṇḍita's works from volume *ka* to *nga* (this constitutes "the oldest available catalogue of Sa-skya Paṇḍita's writings")³⁵⁴ and 'Phags pa's works from *ka* to *cha*.³⁵⁵ He further provides separate transmission lineages for the former set as well as each of the latter two collections.³⁵⁶

³⁴⁷ See the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.2–3): *gsung ngag rin po che ni dpal ldan tshul khirms pa la gdams ngag ci rigs pa tsam dangl chos rje shar pa la lam gyi khog sgrig tsam las khrid dang 'brel [= 'gre]l pa gsan pa ma byungl.*

³⁴⁸ See the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 202.6–203.1): (...) *bka' rgya lo bco brgyad bsdams nas gces par bskyangs nas/ sku tshe ring du ma 'tsho ba nas gsung ngag gi khog sgrigs tsam dangl cha lag 'ga' tsam las lam 'bras yongs rdzogs gsan rgyu ma 'byungl.*

³⁴⁹ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 146.2–3): *shar chen pa la rje dpal ldan pas sgrub pa lung sbyin gyi dus lo bco brgyad kyi bka' rgya mdzad gda' ba/ dgon pa bas sa chen la mdzad pa ltar du gda' ste rje dgon pa bas tig tig byung 'dul/ 'dir cung ma thigs pa yin nam/ bka' rgya ma thims pa la shar chen pa gshegs nas/ kye rdor man ngag lugs kyi dbang tsam dangl lam zab/ bir srung sogs mang ngag phra mo las rdzogs par gnang rgyu ma byungl.* For a translation of this passage, see STEARNS 2006: 241.

³⁵⁰ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 195.1–198.2).

³⁵¹ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 200.4–5 and 200.5–201.3), respectively.

³⁵² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 441.5–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 495.3): *rje btsun sa skya pa yab sras gsum chos rje khu dbon dang bcas pa'i bka' 'bum gyi lung rnam gsan nol.*

³⁵³ On this tripartite set, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 236.6–247.6). The volumes *ka*, *kha*, and the first part of *ga* constitute the works of Sa chen; the second part of volume *ga*, *nga* to *cha* are the collected works of bSod nams rtse mo; and volume *ja* to *da* are the collected works of Grags pa rgyal mtshan. They are succeeded by volume *na* containing works on the *Lam 'bras* (*gsung ngag rin po che'i skor bzhus*).

³⁵⁴ VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 44–45. On the oeuvre of Sa skya Paṇḍita and its diverging listing of works, see *Ibid.*: 1984.

³⁵⁵ On the collected works of these two masters, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 247.6–250.5 and 250.5–260.5), respectively.

³⁵⁶ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 241.4–242.1, 250.4–5, and 260.3–5), respectively.

At the end of his register for the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons, Ngor chen makes the following interesting remark on the compilation history of the former set and its reading transmission:³⁵⁷

At first, the reading transmissions for and the volumes of those [works] had not been compiled together. Later on, to fulfil the last wishes of Bla ma dPal ldan seng ge, Chos rje bSod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po sent the two, namely mKhan po Shes rab rdo rje and dBus ma Rin rgyal, in all (lit. in “the ten”) directions, and from whosoever possessed a reading transmission [for those works], [they] requested [it] and also compiled the texts together. Thus, though there did not exist one joint transmission for all [those] reading transmissions, mKhan chen Sher rdor heard [them] from individual lamas. He [transmitted them] to mKhan chen rGyal ba bzang po; he [to] mKhan chen Byang chub seng ge; [he to] Thams cad mkhyen pa Ye she rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po; [and] he to me.

From this passage, we can see that in the mid-fourteenth century the collected works of the Five Supreme Masters of Sa skya had not yet been compiled together as the five-part set that became later known as the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*. At this time, only the works of the Three Supreme Masters of the Glorious Sa skya pa (*dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gong ma gsum*) had been compiled due to the efforts of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, who, by fulfilling the last wishes of his master Bla ma dPal ldan seng ge, had sent his students mKhan po Shes rab rdo rje and dBus pa Rin chen rgyal mtshan in a quest to collect the reading transmissions for and writings of those three Sa skya masters. Masters such as Shar chen's teacher Byang chub seng ge (abbot of Jo nang) gathered then the reading transmissions for all five collections and gave them together.³⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the works of the three earliest founding masters were still considered a separate set in the first part

³⁵⁷ *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 241.4–242.1): 'di rnam kyis lung dang/glegs bam dang po na phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa ma byung ba la/ dus phuyis bla ma dpal ldan seng ge'i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa'i phyir du/ chos rje bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang pos/ mkhan po shes rab rdo rje dang/ dbus ma rin rgyal gnyis phyogs bcur btang stel/ lung su yod la zhus shing dpe rnam kyang phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pas na lung thams cad phyogs gcig brgyud pa ni med mod/ 'on kyang mkhan chen sher rdor bas bla ma so so las gsan/ des mkhan chen rgyal ba bzang po la/ des mkhan chen byang chub seng ge/ thams cad mkhyen pa ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po/ des bdag la'ol. On this account, see also JACKSON 1983a: 4–5 and VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 39. The passage from the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 241.4–247.6) served as the reference for a similar remark in the much later catalogue to the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* recension from sDe dge; see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 1 (vol. 15, pp. 928.3–935.1) and VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 39.

³⁵⁸ On the compilation of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, see JACKSON 1987: 72–73: “As mentioned above, when Sa-pan's works were first compiled there did not exist a *Sa skya bka' 'bum* consisting of his three predecessors' writings because these had not yet been systematically compiled. Thus the collected works of Sa-pan circulated independently of the early founders' works for a century or more. But after the mid-14th-century compilation of the first three founders' writings, it was only a matter of time before the works of Sa-pan and 'Phags-pa were added to them to form a single, inclusive *Sa skya bka' 'bum*. By the late-14th century the *lung* for all five masters' works had been gathered together by single teachers, and those teachers began to give all five *lungs* together. In the early-15th century, the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* as composed of only the first three founders' works was sometimes still considered to be a separate and distinct collection. This is indicated for instance by an index preserved in the writings of Ngor-chen Kun-dga' bzang-po (1382–1456). But there also existed an urge to consolidate. By the early-15th century, sets of all five founders' works were commissioned together, and by the late-15th century or early-16th century one finds Glo-bo mkhan-chen stating unequivocally that the term *Sa skya bka' 'bum* signifies the collected works of all five Sa-skya founders.” See also JACKSON 1983a and VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 37–39. Note that Mus chen in his 1455 biography of Ngor chen already employs the term *Sa skya bka' 'bum*; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 454.5). But also note that in another context, he still differentiates between the set of the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons and the ones of Sa-pan and 'Phags-pa; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 441.5–6). For the term *dpal ldan sa skya pa'i bla ma gong ma gsum*, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum dkar chag* (p. 607.3–4).

of the fifteenth century, as suggested by a catalogue Ngor chen wrote for the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons, which had been commissioned as a manuscript edition at Sa skya in 1426.³⁵⁹

6.1.5 Ngor chen's Investigation of the Writings of the Founding Fathers of the Sa skya Tradition

Ngor chen's biographers successively relate a variety of episodes that illustrate how Ngor chen developed a strong resolve to thoroughly investigate the writings of the founding fathers of the Sa skya tradition, which resulted in him immersing himself totally in these scriptures in the old libraries of Sa skya for about three years. Mus chen's biography of Ngor chen inserts these episodes between the presentation of Ngor chen's studies under Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and dPal ldan tshul khriims.³⁶⁰ However, in Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography, they appear much later, after the presentation of Ngor chen's studies under Shar chen, dPal ldan tshul khriims, and Buddhaśrī, but prior to his studies under Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros.³⁶¹ As the relevant episodes took place when Shar chen was still alive, Mus chen's presentation seems in accord with the true chronological order. Thus I shall discuss them here, within the section devoted to Ngor chen's studies under Shar chen.

As a youth, Ngor chen is said to have approached the majority of the outstanding masters residing at Sa skya with questions about the different philosophical systems and ritual practices. But he also was trying to find out who owned which kind of texts. When he approached dGe slong mGon po dpal of the Zur khang bla brang, he was advised that if he really wanted to understand the Sa skya teachings properly, he would need to thoroughly investigate the writings of the previous Sa skya masters (referring probably mainly to the writings of the five great founders in particular).³⁶² Developing a deep conviction in the truth of these words, Ngor chen made up his mind to follow that advice and approached Shar chen with the following words: "If the scriptures of our previous lamas flourish, [there] will be a great benefit for the teachings of the Sa skya pa."³⁶³ Strengthening Ngor chen's resolve, Shar chen advised his disciple: "Do like that, by all means. You should thus also thoroughly investigate what is stated in which text of the previous masters."³⁶⁴ Shar chen's advice was based on his personal experience as he himself had utilised those texts for his own studies, compositions, and teaching activities. In the end, Shar chen is said to have also benefitted from Ngor chen's scriptural studies because his student showed him a few texts that he had found in Sa skya's

³⁵⁹ On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 154). On that commission, see Part Four, 6.8.

³⁶⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 442.1–444.1).

³⁶¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 502.2–504.4). Ngor chen's scriptural studies in the libraries of Sa skya are also mentioned in the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.2–4) and *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 228.4).

³⁶² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 442.1–2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 502.2–4). On the Zur khang bla brang, the residence of dKar Shākya grags, see the *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 181.9–182.11), *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 136.3–9 and 177–180), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 75a4–b2), and SCHOENING 1990: 15, 18, 24–25, Map 4 (no. 13), 40, and 44. On other masters affiliated with this bla brang, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 66b6–67a1). In those works, the term "previous masters" (*bla ma gong ma*) usually refers to the writings of the five early founders, and not Sa skya lamas in general. On the five early founders, see Part Two, n. 199.

³⁶³ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 502.5): (...) 'o skol gyi bla ma gong ma'i gsung rab 'di tsho dar ba byung na|sa skya pa'i bstan pa la khyad che bar gda' (...). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 442.3).

³⁶⁴ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 502.5): *de bzhin cis kyang byed pas| khyed kyis kyang bla ma gong ma'i dpe cha gang na ci 'dug gi rtsad gcod legs po gyis shig* (...). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 442.3–4).

libraries. Through examining them, Shar chen developed a thorough understanding of them, retaining in his mind the philosophical viewpoints of the previous masters and remembered their various kinds of writings, even the most minor ones.³⁶⁵

Another episode illustrates how Ngor chen was further motivated to pursue his textual studies. On one occasion, he came into contact with the edge of the robe of a monk of impure behaviour by the name of Chos ldan seng ge. Owing to this incident, he was unable to settle his mind in meditation and was afflicted by great suffering.³⁶⁶ He subsequently went to see Shar chen at Yang dgon, and his master succeeded in liberating him from his suffering through bestowing the empowerment of the Seventeen-Deity [*Maṇḍala* of] Tārā.³⁶⁷ This occurrence strengthened Ngor chen's resolve to benefit the Buddha's teachings and sentient beings by studying and reflecting on those teachings along with their commentaries, and also equipped him with the confidence to proceed on that path.³⁶⁸

With his newly gained confidence, he began by investigating the texts housed in the Bla brang Shar, which was headed by Shar chen at that time. There he is said to have studied over six hundred eighty volumes of texts including glosses (*mchan*) that Sa skya Paṇḍita had made to works from the Sūtra section (*mdo sde*) of the *bKa'* 'gyur.³⁶⁹ After he had finished studying all of them, he thought of also investigating those housed in the sGo rum temple and with this in mind, approached his father Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya, in the bZhi thog bla brang.³⁷⁰ There, in a small

³⁶⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 442.4–443.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 503.2–3).

³⁶⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 443.2): *thugs rnal du mi phebs sdug bsngal chen po dang bcas pa'i khams 'dus drag po cig byung ba la!*; and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 503.4): *thugs mnal du mi phebs sdug bsngal chen po dang bcas pa'i khams 'dus drag po cig byung ba la!*. In the latter passage, *mnal* appears to be mistaken for *rnal*, though the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fol. 18b2) read *mnal* as well. The term *khams 'dus* is not entirely clear to me, but seems to refer to some obstruction in Ngor chen's spiritual practice. Later on, he was once again struck by a *khams 'dus*; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 450.1–2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 505.6–507.1). STEARNS 2001: 227, n. 87 and STEARNS 2006: 689 use the term *khams 'dus pa* ("gathering of the essential constituents") in the context of yogic practices. According to *Ibid.*: 689, "the first, the middle, and the final gatherings represent the gradual clearing and purification of the nine or ten essential constituents within the body. The four or five vital winds and the five enlightenment minds gather into different channel locations within the body due to the practice of yoga. As the nine or ten essential constituents—the *ḍākinīs* and *ḍākas* or buddhas—gather into those specific locations, the ordinary body is transformed into a rainbow body." This description suggests that Ngor chen might have encountered serious difficulties in controlling those winds and minds.

³⁶⁷ Yang dgon probably refers to the Yang dgon bla brang of Sa skya, which is also mentioned in another context in Ngor chen's biography; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 527.1). On the Yang dgon bla brang, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 136.3–10), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 75a4–b2), and SCHOENING 1990: 16 and 44. For a list of masters affiliated with this *bla brang*, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 66b5–6).

³⁶⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 443.1–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 503.3–5).

³⁶⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 503.5–6) and *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.2–3). Cf. the *Ngor gyi chen rnam thar* 1 (p. 443.3–4), which only mentions that Ngor chen investigated the texts (*phyag dpe*) housed in the Bla brang Shar, but does not specify the amount of volumes.

³⁷⁰ The sGo rum, also spelled dGu rum, was the earliest temple of Sa skya built by 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po in 1073. It was initially known as gZim spyil dkar po. On the etymology of the temple's name sGo rum, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 140.13–16), *Sa skya'i gnas bshad snyan bryud ma* (p. 49.9–14), SMITH 2001: 301, n. 355, and VITALI 2001: 12. On the temple itself, see the *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 60.13–62.20), *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 137–150), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 67b2–4, 68a2–4, and 75b5–78('og)a2), FERRARI 1958: 63 and 148, nn. 486–487, SCHOENING 1990: 13–14 and 26–27, Map 5 (no. 19), VITALI 2001: 11–13, and VENTURI 2010: 338–342. For the earliest description of the dGu rum dpe khang, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 76b5–77a6). For the content of the sGo rum dpe khang between the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 144.11–146.3) and VENTURI 2010: 341. On the sGo rum dpe mdzod, see also the *dBus gtsan gnas yig* (p. 413.9–13), SCHOENING 1990: 14, and VITALI 2001: 40, n. 56. On the sGo rum dpe khang chen mo, see also the *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 63.1–64.14). According to the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 504.3), Ngor chen's

bag containing a chaotic jumble of books, he found a bound text that turned out to be a catalogue of the works housed in the sGo rum.³⁷¹ With great delight, he made the following request to his father:³⁷²

I desire to investigate the scriptures of the sGo rum one time. Since [I] am not very familiar with the caretaker of the sGo rum, could the bDag chen kindly advise the caretaker [as follows]: “He wants to investigate the scriptures one time. Thus, if [he wants to] read [them] in the sGo rum, provide [him] with a place to read and if [he wants to] read [them] elsewhere, [allow him] to borrow the scriptures.”

In reply, Kun dga' rin chen gave his approval and called in the caretaker to instruct him in accord with Ngor chen's wishes. From then on, Ngor chen engaged himself, for a period of three years, in the study of nearly three thousand volumes, at times investigating them in the sGo rum and at other times borrowing them. Through this intense period of scriptural studies, Ngor chen is said to have immensely broadened his understanding of the contents of the Buddha's teachings, in general, and of the writings of the previous Sa skya masters, in particular.³⁷³

We find a slightly different version of that episode in the recent *Bibliography of Sa-skya-pa Literature* by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po et al. According to that work, Ngor chen studied about three thousand volumes in the dGu rum library (dGu rum dpe mdzod) and about one thousand volumes of Sa skya Paṇḍita's personal texts in the dBu rtse. Among those scriptures, Ngor chen investigated alone more than twenty major commentaries of the *Hevajratantra*, all of which had been written by previous Sa skya masters.³⁷⁴

Moreover, Ngor chen apparently also studied texts housed in other libraries of Sa skya. While reviewing Ngor chen's studies under different masters at the end of the chapter on Ngor chen's monastic education, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs remarks that Ngor chen had studied three times all the texts housed in the different libraries of Sa skya such as the ones of the Bla brang Brang mo che, Zur khang bla brang, and Gung bla brang.³⁷⁵

biographer Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan stated that it served as Sa skya Paṇḍita's library. This is also mentioned in the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.3). On Sa skya's libraries, see also SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 19.

³⁷¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 443.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 503.6–504.1).

³⁷² *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 504.1–2): *bdag sgo rum gyi phyag dpe rnam la lta rtog tshar gcig byed 'dod lags pa| sgo rum gyi dkon gnyer dang 'driś zab po med pas| bdag chen gyi drung nas dkon gnyer la| khong phyag dpe rnam la rtog tshar gcig byed 'dod par 'dug pas| sgo rum du blta na blta sa yod pa dang| gzhan du blta na dpe cha g.yar po gyis gsungs pa'i zhal ta cig thugs rjes 'dzin par zhu zhes zhus pas|. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 443.5–6).*

³⁷³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 443.6–444.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 504.2–4). See also the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.3–4) and *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 228.4). On this episode, see also DAVIDSON 1981: 82 and VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 303, n. 289.

³⁷⁴ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 37.4–38.15): *gzhan yang ngor chen kun dga' bzang pos sa skya'i dgu rum dpe mdzod du glegs bam sum stigs [= stong] tsam dang dbu rtser sa pañ gyi phyag dpe pu sti chig stong tsaṃ la gzigs rtog mdzad pas kye rdor rtsa rgyud kho na yang sa skya pa'i mkhas grub rnam kyis mdzad pa'i 'grel chen nyi shu lhag tsaṃ dang dka' 'grel sogs mang du gzigs par gsal tel rgyud 'grel gyi dkar chag las| (...). Cf. JACKSON 2010a: 178, who based on that same work remarks that Ngor chen read “more than sixteen hundred volumes of Sakya Paṇḍita's books in the 'dGu rtse' (the library in the upper floor of the Gurum Library).” For Ngor chen's catalogue of commentaries on the *Hevajratantra*, see CATALOGUE (no. 56).*

³⁷⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 508.5). See also the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 260.4). On Brang mo che, the residence of mNyam med Grags pa rgyal mtshan, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 136.3–5 and 191–192), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 67a2 and 75a4–b2), and SCHOENING 1990: 28, Map 6 (no. 41), 37, 39, and 44. On the Zur khang, see Part Three, n. 362. On the Gung bla brang, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 136.3–11), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 75a4–b2 and 89b5–6), and SCHOENING 1990: 15, 39, and 44. On masters affiliated with this *bla*

Ngor chen's detailed examination of the writings of the previous Sa skya masters surely exerted a strong influence on his intellectual development and the shaping of his personal understanding of what he perceived as the correct religious views and practices. It prepared him well for his efforts to clear the Sa skya teachings of what he perceived as mistaken opinions and interpretations and to engage in religious disputes with other Sa skya and non-Sa skya masters. Moreover, Ngor chen's learnedness manifested itself in his own compositions, in which he frequently utilised the writings of previous Sa skya masters such as Sa chen Kun dga' snying po and his two sons, bSod nams rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan.

6.2 Training under Bla ma dam pa dPal ldan tshul khrims

dPal ldan tshul khrims was another eminent Sa skya master that became an important teacher of Ngor chen. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen preserves a verse from the supplement to the *Lam 'bras phyag mchod* that illustrates the high devotion Ngor chen felt for dPal ldan tshul khrims.³⁷⁶

Glorious, supreme root guru,
Endowed with discipline, learning, contemplation, and meditation,
The unmistakable guide through affection,
Gracious one, [I] pay homage to you.

However, apart from a list of teachings that Ngor chen received from dPal ldan tshul khrims, his biographies include little information on their relationship as master and disciple. We are only informed that, along with his studies under Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan from age nine until age twenty-five (i.e., from 1390 until 1406), he also relied on teachers such as dPal ldan tshul khrims during that period of time.³⁷⁷

For investigating the life of dPal ldan tshul khrims, a short biography written by Mus chen is found among the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters of the *Slob bshad* tradition.³⁷⁸ According to its colophon, Mus chen's work consists of a summary of dPal

brang, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 66b3–4). For references to genealogies of the Gung family, see Part Three, n. 227.

³⁷⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 496.6): *dpal ldan rtsa ba'i bla ma mchogll tshul khrims thos bsam sgom par ldanll brtse bas ma nor lam ston pa'i'll bka' drin can khyod la phyag 'tshallll*. The sDe dge recension of Ngor chen's collected works does not contain the *Lam 'bras phyag mchod*. However, three title lists of Ngor chen's collected works record a similar work, the *Lam 'bras phyag mchod kyi kha skong*; see the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (p. 344.4–5), *sPyan snga chos kyi spyen ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 114.4), and *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 303.6). The verse cited above is contained in a manuscript version of the *gSung bsngags [= ngag] rin po chen [= che] lam 'bras bla ma rgyud [= brygyud] pa'i phyag mchod*; see the *Lam 'bras phyag mchod* 2 (fol. 7b1–2). Since this section ends with a verse offered to Buddhaśāri, it could be the supplement by Ngor chen. The beginning of the work is identical with the *Lam 'bras brygyud pa'i phyag mchod* by 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan; compare the *Lam 'bras phyag mchod* 1 (pp. 71–75.2) and *Lam 'bras phyag mchod* 2 (fols. 1a–7a2). The fact that Ngor chen wrote such a supplement to 'Phags pa's work is confirmed by Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774) in his *bsTan 'gyur catalogue*; see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (p. 386.14–15): *lam 'bras phyag mchod chen mo 'phags pas mdzad pal kha skong shar pa dang rdo rje 'chang sogs kyis mdzad pa'i tshigs bcad thor bu ba rnam dang bcas pal*. Ngor chen's devotion to dPal ldan tshul khrims is also obvious from his *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 263.1): *phul du byung ba'i yon tan bsam gyi mi khyab pa la mnga' brnyes pa'i bdag nyid chen po drin chen rtsa ba'i bla ma dam pa rdo rje 'dzin pa chen po dpal ldan tshul khrims pa'i drung dul*. For a depiction of dPal ldan tshul khrims in the form of a statue, see DINWIDDIE 2003: 254–[255], pl. 68 and HAR (2121).

³⁷⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 445.3–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 496.6–497.1).

³⁷⁸ See the *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, pp. 406.2–413.5), *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 1, pp. 576.2–586.6), and *Lam 'bras* 3 (pp. 502.1–511.3). For manuscript versions of this biography written in *dbu med*, see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 116, pp.

ldan tshul khrim's biography by Buddhaśrī, which he wrote as a supplement to the lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters.³⁷⁹ The original biography by Buddhaśrī has surfaced only recently.³⁸⁰ Its author was a close disciple of dPal ldan tshul khrim and also another important teacher of Ngor chen. His biography is indeed much more extensive than Mus chen's summary, including such additional information as interesting episodes about his subject's studies and detailed lists that record the individual teachings that dPal ldan tshul khrim had received from his masters.³⁸¹ Buddhaśrī wrote the biography when he was staying at dGa' ldan Sa bzang, drawing on the accounts by his master's disciples and also on dPal ldan tshul khrim's personal reports.³⁸² Along with those two works, I also came across three sketches of dPal ldan tshul khrim's life. One is found in the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* by A mes zhabs and two in Tibetan literature of more recent origin, whereby the latter two sources rely heavily on Mus chen's biography.³⁸³

6.2.1 Biographical Sketch of dPal ldan tshul khrim

dPal ldan tshul khrim was born as the only son of Bla ma Dar ma rgyal mtshan (d. 1340), the head of dBu ri Monastery, and Rin chen skyong. He was born in 1333 at 'Bras khud sGang skya of 'Bring mtshams Mungs zangs. As he is said to have behaved like a lama from an early age, the disciples of his father paid homage to the young boy and he became known as Bla ma Bu chung. At age four (i.e., in 1336), he received from his father the empowerments of Hevajra and Vajrapāṇi and also mastered reading. When he was eight years old (i.e., in 1340), his father passed away and he was requested by his father's students as well as his relatives to take over his father's monastery of dBu ri.³⁸⁴ But since

79–90) and TBRC (W2CZ7934). The former text is a reproduction of the manuscript housed at 'Bras spungs; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1514, no. 17072). Moreover, an eighty-folio *dbu med* manuscript is recorded by DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 334, no. 670, section 9.

³⁷⁹ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 413.4–5). Ngor chen also lists Buddhaśrī's biography of dPal ldan tshul khrim among the former's writings; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 424.4). See also the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 43.10–11).

³⁸⁰ See the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 4* (vol. 116, pp. 41–78). The published facsimile of that biography's manuscript consists of nineteen folios. Above the title of the title page, we read *phyi/ra/7* as the inventory number of the library in which the manuscript is housed. Two other manuscripts of that biography are also housed at 'Bras spungs Monastery; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1551, no. 17502 and p. 1574, no. 17774): the first consists of eighteen folios (*phyi/ra/148*) and the second of fourteen (*phyi/ra/199*).

³⁸¹ I am very grateful to the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang for providing me with a PDF of that manuscript even prior to its publication. But since by this point I had already compiled dPal ldan tshul khrim's biography based on Mus chen's summary, my presentation follows his account. References to the respective passages from Buddhaśrī's work, and also to additional information contained in it, will be mainly given in the footnotes.

³⁸² See the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 77.1–78.1). For the year 1410, a visit of Buddhaśrī to Sa bzang is documented by Ngor chen; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 427.2).

³⁸³ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 226.2–6), *rNam thar mdor bsud* (pp. 91–94), and *Lam 'bras bla brgyud kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 47–51), respectively.

³⁸⁴ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 406.3–5) and *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 43.1–44.1). Neither biographer specifies the year of birth for dPal ldan tshul khrim, only providing his age for certain events of his life. But for his death, they specify the animal sign of that year. According to both biographies, he passed away at age sixty-seven on the tenth day of the fifth month of the hare year (*yos lo*); see the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 412.6–413.1) and *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 75.5–76.2). Based on those passages, as well as information from biographies of his contemporaries, we can establish his dates of birth and death as 1333 and 1399. Cf. the *rNam thar mdor bsud* (pp. 91–94), which gives his year of birth as 1309 (*sa bya*) and his year of death as 1375 (*shing yos*). For additional information about Dar ma rgyal mtshan, who had successfully passed his examination as a *dge bshes* (i.e., a religious scholar or teacher) of the

he was not happy living in the countryside, he made up his mind to become a monk at Sa skya and told his older maternal half-brother, Bla ma rGyal rin pa, again and again about his intention. His half-brother advised him that it would be best to become a monk at Sa skya because one Jo gdan tshogs pa was in residence there. Consequently, dPal ldan tshul khrims made his way to Sa skya with two things in mind: to deliver a share of offerings for performing meritorious actions on behalf of his late father and to become a monk.³⁸⁵

At the lHa khang chen mo of Sa skya, he encountered the dGe 'dun sgang pa, which was one of the Jo gdan tshogs pa sde bzhi, the four monastic communities in the Vinaya tradition of the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrī, and received from this community's abbot, Yar 'brog pa 'Jam dbyangs Don grub dpal, both monastic ordination and the name dPal ldan tshul khrims.³⁸⁶ He also obtained from him Vinaya teachings, such as on the *Vinayamūlasūtra*, *Prātimokṣasūtra*, and *Ka ri ka lnga bcu pa* (i.e., the *Mūlasarvāstivādi-śrāmaṇerakārikā*).³⁸⁷

At age eleven (i.e., in 1343), dPal ldan tshul khrims met at Klang phu Yang dgon his first major teacher, Chos rje Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa (1316–1358). From this important disciple of Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277–1350), he received teachings on the *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor* and developed immense devotion to him. Perceiving a connection from a previous life, he made up his mind to study under him and forwarded through his older brother his request to become his disciple. Chos rje Ri khrod pa delightedly accepted with the words “As for this one, [I] will make [him] my son,”³⁸⁸ and dPal ldan tshul khrims became his attendant. At first, they stayed for three months at sPrin lag Monastery, where Chos rje Ri khrod pa bestowed the initiation into Bhagavat Hevajra, using a coloured sand *maṇḍala*, which was also received by dPal ldan tshul khrims.³⁸⁹ Afterwards, they went to Sa skya, where they remained for the time

Sa skya school, see the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 43.2–4). According to the *rNam thar mdor bsdus* (p. 916–7), the place of sGang skya was situated at the border of Tibet and Sikkim. The *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 226.2) specifies his place of birth simply as 'Grig 'tshams (i.e., 'Bring mtshams). On the larger area of 'Bring mtshams to the south of Sa skya, see Part Three, n. 32, Part Four, n. 34, and Part Four, 8. The *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (p. 329.19) mentions a site called 'Bras khud that was visited by Ngag dbang kun dga' blo gros (1729–1783), the thirty-first throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1741–1783). From the enumeration of other places that he visited at that time, we learn that 'Bras khud must have been located in the larger area of rGyal rtse. See also GOLDSTEIN 1971: 16 and 16, Map 2 (Drigu Monastery), who records a 'Bras khud Monastery to the south of rGyal rtse.

³⁸⁵ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 406.5–6) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 44.1–5).

³⁸⁶ dPal ldan tshul khrims' monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) refers to his taking of novice-monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*) vows.

³⁸⁷ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 406.6–407.1) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 44.5–7). See also the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 226.2–3). On the Jo gdan tshogs pa sde bzhi, see HEIMBEL 2013.

³⁸⁸ *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 407.2) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 45.3): 'di la nga'i bu byed do (...).

³⁸⁹ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 407.1–3) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 44.7–45.4). Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal was an important master in the transmission lineage of the *Lam 'bras*; see STEARNS 2006: 240. Along with Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan and Brag phug pa dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, Chos rje Ri khrod pa was one of three disciples that had received the entire *Lam 'bras* from bSod nams dpal; see *Ibid.*: 240. A biography of bSod nams dpal was written by Chos rje Ri khrod pa in 1351; see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 1, pp. 367.4–374.5), *Lo rgyus rnam thar 4* (vol. 115, pp. 11–24), and TBRC (W2CZ7927). Moreover, DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 334, no. 670, section 4 records an eight-folio *dbu med* manuscript of that biography. The *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor* may likely be identical with the *lHan cig skyes sbyor*, as mentioned by JACKSON 1994: 11, n. 19, 33, n. 76, and 44. It is a tantric instruction of the Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmūdra*) composed by sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079–1153), which, according to *Ibid.*: 11, n. 19, constitutes “an instruction which on several levels applied (*sbyor*) Emptiness as innately and simultaneously arisen (*lhan cig skyes*).”

being, and dPal ldan tshul khirms engaged in studying the *rGyud gsum* (i.e., the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*).³⁹⁰

But after Chos rje Ri khrod pa had gone ahead to Na bza' brag phug, he was called to come to this rock cave as well. He was instructed to stay at the hermitage and told that it would be best to become a serious practitioner of meditation. Subsequently, he received from Chos rje Ri khrod pa the entire *Lam 'bras*, and engaged himself for six years in spiritual practice in a small hut he had built at the uppermost point of the rock cave. As the result of his practice, he is said to have developed a high level of both meditative experience (*nyams*) and concentration (*ting nge 'dzin: samādhi*). Chos rje Ri khrod pa was also pleased with his result, praising him in the following way: “A good [level of] meditation has arisen in you. [You] are a capable great meditator.”³⁹¹ So saying, he completely bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khirms the *Uncommon Oral Instructions (gdams ngag thun mong ma yin pa)* of the *Lam 'bras* such as for the removal of impediments (*gegs sel*).³⁹² Moreover, dPal ldan tshul khirms received from him many other instructions, such as on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, and the complete cycle of Cakrasaṃvara, including the empowerment of the three Cakrasaṃvara traditions of Lūhipāda, Kṛṣṇacārin, and Ghaṇṭāpāda.³⁹³ He also obtained the empowerments of Vajrabhairava, Raktayamāri, Guhyasamāja, and Tārā, and the initiations (*rjes gnang*) for the major and minor Mahākāla forms (*chos skyong che chung*), that is, Vajrapāñjara and Four-faced

³⁹⁰ See the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 407.3) and *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 45.4). The *rGyud gsum* might either refer to the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* (*Kye rdor rgyud gsum*) or the Three Continua (*rgyud gsum*) as the main subject of the *Lam 'bras*. On the former, see Part Three, n. 270. The latter are introduced by STEARNS 2001: 184, n. 163 as follows: “The ‘three continuums’ (*rgyud gsum*) are the cause continuum of the universal ground (*kun gzhi rgyu rgyud*), the method continuum of the body (*lus thabs rgyud*), and the result continuum of Mahamudra (*phyag rgya chen po 'bras bu rgyud*).” Both biographers relate dPal ldan tshul khirms’ initial studies of the *rGyud gsum*. However, later on, when he receives from Chos rje Ri khrod pa the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* in its entirety, Mus chen refers to those works as *rGyud gsum*, whereas Buddhaśrī enumerates the individual works that trilogies is constituted of: *brTag gnyis, Gur, Samputa*; see the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 408.1) and *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 45.4). Thus I suggest that we understand *rGyud gsum* here as the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*.

³⁹¹ *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 407.5): (...) *khyod la sgom dga' mo cig skyes 'dugl sgom chen pa pher ba 'dug* (...). See also the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 47.3).

³⁹² See the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 407.1–5) and *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 45.4–47.4). Note that the latter account by Buddhaśrī includes an additional episode on dPal ldan tshul khirms’ journey from Sa skya to Brag phug. For four smaller texts for the removal of impediments (*gegs sel yig chung bzhi*) as part of the *Pod ser*, see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 11, pp. 260.6–292.6). On these texts, see also SOBISCH 2008: 56–57, STEARNS 2001: 34, and STEARNS 2006: 302. For some *Lam 'bras* teachings that had been bestowed by Chos rje Ri khrod pa (and also Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan) on dPal ldan tshul khirms and further transmitted to Ngor chen via Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 271.1–272.1, 272.5–273.2, 273.4–276.5, 277.4–278.2, 278.3–279.5, and 282.3–283.2).

³⁹³ The *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* is the completion stage practice (*rdzogs rim*) of Kālacakra called *vajrayoga* (*rdo rje'i rnal 'byor*), which, as SHEEHY 2009: 220 explains, “is composed of six ancillary phases (Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*, Tib. *sbyor ba yan lag drug*).” On the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*, see also STEARNS 1986: 147–149. For a brief discussion of the six phases or branches, see STEARNS 2010: 104–105. For further references on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, see *Ibid.*: 317, n. 31. There were once seventeen different transmission lineages of the six-fold *vajrayoga* in Tibet, which were synthesised by Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus (1243–1313); see SHEEHY 2009: 220 and 230, n. 5. For a Kālacakra teaching, the *Sor sdud bsam gtan*, that had been given by Chos rje Ri khrod pa to dPal ldan tshul khirms and further transmitted to Ngor chen via Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 291.3–4). For teachings on Cakrasaṃvara that dPal ldan tshul khirms had received from Chos rje Ri khrod pa and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 264.5–266.4). For another Cakrasaṃvara teaching that had been given by Chos rje Ri khrod pa to dPal ldan tshul khirms and transmitted via Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 204.6–205.4).

Śrīmahākāla.³⁹⁴ Afterwards, dPal ldan tshul khrims was instructed by his master as follows: “If you want to practice genuine meditation, [you] will have to study the sutric and tantric volumes. Thus, since this *rGyud gsum* (i.e., the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*) is the ‘paternal Dharma’ of us rock cave hermits, study [it]. I will teach [you].”³⁹⁵ So saying, Chos rje Ri khrod pa also conferred the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* on him, and they completed the study session in about one and a half years.³⁹⁶ In general, dPal ldan tshul khrims received the entire teachings that Chos rje Ri khrod pa himself possessed, such as the ones that were transmitted from Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal, and resided at Na bza’ brag phug from his thirteenth until his twenty-second year (i.e., from 1345 until 1354).³⁹⁷

By age twenty-one (i.e., in 1353), dPal ldan tshul khrims had already taken full monastic ordination in the residence (*gzims khang*) of Na bza’ brag phug, whereby Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan acted as ordaining preceptor, Chos rje Ri khrod pa as ceremonial master, Drung dKon mchog rgyal ba as instructor in private, and ’Dul chung mKhan po rGyal bzang ba as timekeeper.³⁹⁸

At age twenty-three (i.e., in 1355), dPal ldan tshul khrims went to Byang chub rdzong in Tsha mo rong, where he engaged himself for a period of three years in spiritual practice.³⁹⁹ The hermitage of Tsha mo rong was apparently an important retreat site of eminent Sa skya masters, such as Bla ma dam pa and Chos rje Ri khrod pa.⁴⁰⁰ In dPal ldan

³⁹⁴ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 407.5–6) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 47.4–48.4). Note that the latter account by Buddhaśrī includes a much more detailed list of the teachings that dPal ldan tshul khrims received from Chos rje Ri khrod pa while at Brag phug. A few teachings are also mentioned in the *bDe mchog chos ’byung* (p. 226.3–4). For teachings on Guhyasamāja that had been bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrims by Chos rje Ri khrod pa and further transmitted to Ngor chen via Buddhaśrī; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 285.2–286.1). For teachings on Tārā that had been transmitted in a similar way, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 292.5–6). For teachings on those two Mahākāla forms that had been received by dPal ldan tshul khrims from both Chos rje Ri khrod pa and Bla ma dam pa and transmitted to Ngor chen via Shar chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 210.2–211.1 and 212.6–214.1). For other teachings that had been given by Chos rje Ri khrod pa to dPal ldan tshul khrims and transmitted via Shar chen to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 206.4–6, 219.1–220.3, 221.1–3, 224.4–5, and 226.4–6).

³⁹⁵ *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 407.6–408.1): (...) *khyod sgom gsha’ ma cig byed na mdo rgyud kyi pusti bslab dgos pas rgyud gsum ’di rang re brag phug pa’i pha chos yin pas slob/ ngas bshad kyis* (...). For this passage, see also the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 48.4–5). Note that Buddhaśrī does not use the term *rGyud gsum*, but instead enumerates the individual works constituting the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* (*brTag gnyis, Gur, and Samputa*).

³⁹⁶ For the transmission lineage of the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* as it was bestowed by Chos rje Ri khrod pa on dPal ldan tshul khrims and further transmitted to Ngor chen via Shar chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 196.5–198.2).

³⁹⁷ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 407.6–408.2) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 48.4–49.1). See also the *bDe mchog chos ’byung* (p. 226.5).

³⁹⁸ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 408.2–3) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 49.1–3). See also the *bDe mchog chos ’byung* (p. 226.4). Drung dKon mchog rgyal ba can probably be identified as Brag phug pa dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, who, as mentioned above, was along with Bla ma dam pa and Chos rje Ri khrod pa one of three disciples that had received the entire *Lam ’bras* from Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal; see STEARNS 2006: 240.

³⁹⁹ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 408.3) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 49.3–4). According to the *Bla ma dam pa’i rnam thar 2* (p. 394.5), the retreat site of Byang chub rdzong was located in La stod Byang: (...) *byang chub rdzong zhes bya ba’i dge ru ’brog sde cig la stod byang gi sa cha la* (...). Other Sa skya related sources specify its location with Tsha mo rong, which might have formed a part of La stod Byang; see the *dKon mchog dpal gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 367.3), *Bla ma dam pa’i rnam thar 1* (fols. 14a6–b2 and 17a2), *Ri khrod pa’i rnam thar 1* (pp. 385.6 and 386.4), and *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (p. 333.2–3).

⁴⁰⁰ See the *Bla ma dam pa’i rnam thar 1* (fols. 14a6–b2 and 17a2–5), *Bla ma dam pa’i rnam thar 2* (p. 394.5–6), *Ri khrod pa’i rnam thar 1* (pp. 383.4 and 385.4–6), and *Sa skya pa’i gdung rabs 1* (p. 333.2–3).

tshul khrim's time, it was overseen by Chos rje Ri khrod pa, who prior to his early demise entrusted the site to the care of dPal ldan tshul khrim:⁴⁰¹

Take possession of these scriptures, personal practice objects, and deity receptacles of [our] previous masters. As for this *gzims khang*, Chos rje pa [i.e., Bla ma dam pa] liked [it] very much. Since [it] is a site where virtuous practice flourishes, [in managing it], you should do just in the same way like I do. Be a lama. dGe slong Rin rgyal should become [your] attendant. Engage conscientiously in spiritual practice.

After his master had passed away at Byang chub rdzong in 1358, dPal ldan tshul khrim fulfilled his last wishes, performing meritorious actions on his behalf and commissioning his “inner sacred objects” (*nang rten*). In accord with his late master's instructions, he remained at Byang chub rdzong and engaged himself exclusively in meditative practice, achieving a very great increase in experience and realisation (*nyams rtogs*).⁴⁰²

According to Buddhaśrī's account, dPal ldan tshul khrim remained at Byang chub rdzong until his thirty-first year (i.e., 1363). During a break in his meditation practice, at age twenty-seven (i.e., in 1359), he embarked on a journey to the Ri phug hermitage above Zha lu Monastery to request teachings from Bu ston Rin chen grub. On the road, however, he got to know that Bu ston was on his way to Bo dong, following the invitation of Bla chen bSod blo. Thus dPal ldan tshul khrim hurried to catch up with Bu ston, tracing him while taking a rest. After a short introduction, dPal ldan tshul khrim was allowed to join Bu ston and followed him as attendant to Bo dong. However, since Bla chen bSod blo wanted to request teachings from Bu ston alone and in a private session, he did not allow dPal ldan tshul khrim to join them. Nevertheless, as an invocation of blessings (*byin 'bebs*) for a future reunion to grant his desired teachings, Bu ston bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrim the empowerment of dPal mchog rigs bsdus.⁴⁰³

At age thirty-four (i.e., in 1366), dPal ldan tshul khrim renewed his attempt to request teachings from Bu ston and travelled to Ri phug. However, since Bu ston had already passed away in 1364, we face a chronological problem with that dating.⁴⁰⁴ We thus need to predate his studies to sometime between his first unsuccessful attempt in 1359 and Bu ston's death in 1364. While at Ri phug, he received from Bu ston the empowerments for the cycles of the Yoga tantric system (*yo ga'i skor gyi dbang*), which played an important role within the monastic tradition of Zha lu and had been revived

⁴⁰¹ *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 408.4–5): (...) *gong ma'i phyag dpe thugs dam/ lha rten 'di bzung [= zung] la gzims khang 'di la chos rje pa thugs zhen chen po mdzad/ dge sbyor 'phel po 'ong ba'i gnas yin pas/ nyid kyis nga ji ltar byed pa bzhin gyis la bla ma gyis/ dge slong rin rgyal gyis nye gnas gyis la sgrub pa la nan tan du gyis (...)*. The original quotation by Buddhaśrī is slightly longer, adding as the first quality of the residence that it was offered by Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal. It concludes with Chos rje Ri khrod pa saying that all the teachings he possessed were now owned by dPal ldan tshul khrim and that he was his heart son (*snying gi bu*). For this passage, see the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 49.5–50.1). See also the *Ri khrod pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 385.5–6).

⁴⁰² See the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 408.3–6). Note that Buddhaśrī's presentation is slightly different and more extensive; see the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 50.1–5).

⁴⁰³ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 50.5–53.3). This entire passage is missing from the account by Mus chen. For Bu ston's works on Paramādyā, see TBRC (W1934: vol. 13, W22106: vol. 13, and W1PD45496: vol. 13).

⁴⁰⁴ Bu ston had passed away on the twenty-first day of the sixth month of 1364; see SEYFORTH RUEGG 1966: 165. On Bu ston's last years from his resignation as abbot of Zha lu in 1356 until his death, see *Ibid.*: 147–165.

owing to the special efforts of Bu ston himself.⁴⁰⁵ He received numerous empowerments of *yi dam* deities, such as of Guhyasamāja and Raktayamāri, and many esoteric instructions of the completion stage, such as of the *Five Stages of Guhyasamāja* and *Shin tu spros med*, a special practice of Raktayamāri.⁴⁰⁶

Then, on one occasion, dPal ldan tshul khrims approached Shangs dKar po brag pa mKhas grub Rin chen seng ge (fl. 14th century). He spent three years with this master, during which he completely obtained the *Lam 'bras* teachings along with its esoteric instructions (*bka' lung mang ngag dang bcas pa*) as Rin chen seng ge himself had received them from Chos rje Nyan chen bSod nams brtan pa (1222–1317).⁴⁰⁷ At another time, he went to Ba lung and obtained from Chos rje Ba lung pa bSod nams grags pa (fl. 14th century) in its entirety the cycle of Shangs pa bKa' brgyud teachings, including the instructions for the *Six Dharmas of Niguma*.⁴⁰⁸

Both Buddhaśrī and Mus chen continue their accounts by discussing their subject's religious training under Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, whom we saw presiding over dPal ldan tshul khrims' full monastic ordination in 1353. Although Buddhaśrī does not provide any time frame for that training, Mus chen relates out of chronology that dPal ldan tshul khrims approached Bla ma dam pa at age twenty-six, in the horse year (i.e., 1358), and followed him from that time on for seventeen years as an attendant until his master's demise in 1375.⁴⁰⁹ At times, he also acted as *khrid gnyer*, that is, as the person responsible for overseeing whether disciples met the requirements to attend very esoteric teachings.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 457.2–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 522.4–5). See also SEYFORTH RUEGG 1966: xii, 14, and 142.

⁴⁰⁶ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 408.6–409.1) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 53.4–7). For teachings on Guhyasamāja that had been given to dPal ldan tshul khrims by Bu ston (and Bla ma dam pa) and then transmitted to Ngor chen via Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 286.4–288.2). On Guhyasamāja teachings, see also the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (pp. 29.5–30.3) and *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.1–2). For teachings that Bu ston bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrims, who in turn passed them on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 270.4–5 and 291.6–292.1). For a teaching on Tārā, the *sGrol ma dpal mo gsar gyi snying thag can gyi man ngag*, that had been bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrims by Bu ston and transmitted to Ngor chen via Shar chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 226.2–4).

⁴⁰⁷ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 409.1–2) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 53.7–54.2). See also the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (pp. 489.6–490.2). Rin chen seng ge stands in the transmission line of the *Lam 'bras* works by dMar ston Chos kyi rgyal po (ca 1198–ca 1259); see STEARNS 2001: 198, n. 305. See also the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 277.3–4) and STEARNS 2006: 239. Ngor chen received some of those teachings from Buddhaśrī, who in turn had obtained them from dPal ldan tshul khrims; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 272.1–2, 272.5–273.2, 273.4–274.2, 277.3–4, and 279.6–280.1). Rin chen seng ge is also recorded among an alternative lineage of the Nairātmyā empowerment that he had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrims and that was received by Ngor chen via Shar chen; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 195.5–196.1). Moreover, he is recorded in an alternative lineage of the Cakrasaṃvara empowerment according to the tradition of Ghaṅṅāpa, which he had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrims and the latter granted to Ngor chen; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 264.5–266.2). For different editions of Rin chen seng ge's autobiography, see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 1, pp. 345.4–362.3), *Lo rgyus rnam thar 4* (vol. 114, pp. 363–392), and TBRC (W16488). Moreover, an eighteen-folio *dbu med* manuscript is recorded by DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 334, no. 670, section 8. For different editions of the biography Rin chen seng ge wrote of bSod nams brtan pa, see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 1, pp. 341.2–345.4) and TBRC (W25571). A five-folio *dbu med* manuscript is recorded by DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 334, no. 670, section 7. On bSod nams brtan pa, see also STEARNS 2001: 36–37 and STEARNS 2007: 240.

⁴⁰⁸ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 409.2–4) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 54.2–55.2). For those teachings as they had been bestowed by Chos rje Ba lung pa on dPal ldan tshul khrims and then transmitted via Buddhaśrī to Ngor chen; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 294.2–296.2).

⁴⁰⁹ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 409.4–5).

⁴¹⁰ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 64.4–5).

During those seventeen years, he received from Bla ma dam pa all the *Lam 'bras* teachings his master possessed and became his chief disciple. For instance, for a third time, he obtained the complete *Lam 'bras* cycle as well as the remaining *Eight Cycles of the Path* (*Lam skor brgyad*). According to the Sa skya system, he also received various initiations (*dbang*, *rjes gnang*, *byin rlabs*) along with minor esoteric instructions (*man ngag phra mo*) and the cycle on the major and minor forms of Mahākāla (*chos skyong che chung gi skor*), that is, Vajrapañjara and Four-faced Śrīmahākāla. Moreover, he got explanations on the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*: in total, eight times the *Dvikālpa* (i.e., the *Hevajratantra*) based on Bla ma dam pa's own commentary; one time the *Vajrapañjara* based on its commentary by rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, the *Gur rgyan*; and one time the *Samputa* based on its commentary by Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo, the *gNad kyi gsal byed*, and three times based on Bu ston's commentary.⁴¹¹ Furthermore, he obtained the complete Indian and Tibetan teachings on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* and became an expert in the esoteric instructions and teachings for the removal of impediments (*gegs sel*) of its Sron pa cycle (*sron pa'i skor*).⁴¹² Based on Bla ma dam pa's own commentary, he also

⁴¹¹ Bla ma dam pa wrote a commentary on the *Hevajratantra*, the *rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal kyai rdo rje'i rgya cher 'grel pa nyi ma'i 'od zer*, which might be the commentary in question; see TBRC (W23215). For Grags pa rgyal mtshan's commentary, the *'Phags pa rdo rje gur gyi rgyan zhes bya ba'i rnam 'grel*, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 7, pp. 1–145). On the textual history of this commentary, see VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 20. For bSod nams rtse mo's commentary, the *Sambu ta'i ti ka gnad kyi gsal byed*, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 4, pp. 1–477). Bu ston's commentary on the *Samputa* might probably be the *Sam pu ta'i 'grel pa snying po'i de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa*; see TBRC (W1934: vol. 8, W22106: vol. 8, and W1PD45496: vol. 8). Besides, Bu ston also composed a summary of the *Samputa*, the *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i bsdus don*; see TBRC (W1934: vol. 8, W22106: vol. 8, and W1PD45496: vol. 8).

⁴¹² The Sron cycle refers to teachings on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* of the Sron tradition (*sron lugs*). This tradition is shortly introduced by 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal in his *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 907.15–908.2; ROERICH 1996: 774) in the chapter on Kālacakra. It is associated with the Tibetan master Sron pa Kun (dga') rgyal who—along with Byang sems rGyal ba ye shes, La stod pa dBang rgyal, and Mun me Brag kha pa Grags pa seng ge—was one of four close disciples of Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus who were known as the “four sons of Kun spangs” (*kun spangs pa'i bu bzhi*); see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 905.15–17; ROERICH 1996: 772). Along with his short biographical sketch by 'Gos Lo tsā ba, Kun dga' rgyal is also introduced by Buddhaśrī, who calls him Bla ma Sron pa Kun dga' rgyal po, within the section of dPal ldan tshul khrim's studies of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* under Bla ma dam pa; see the *dPal ldan tshul khrim kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 62.7–63.6). According to those presentations, he was of Mongolian descent and the *zu gur che* of Kublai Khan, which Buddhaśrī explains as chamber-servant (*gzims g.yog*). As a young boy, the emperor entrusted him to Chos rgyal 'Phags pa, who took him to Sa skya, made him a monk (*btsun pa*), and also taught him. After 'Phags pa's death, he received the esoteric instructions of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* at Jo nang from Thugs rje btsun 'grus, who is known to have synthesised the seventeen different transmission lineages of that teaching system. After he succeeded in removing impediments to his spiritual practice with the help of visions of Avalokiteśvara and the *mahāsiddha* Śavaripa, Kun dga' rgyal is said to have developed an extremely high level of experience and spiritual realisation (*nyams rtogs*), and benefitted others through the special oral instructions of the Sron tradition. For the lineage of the Sron lugs beginning with Kun dga' rgyal, see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 907.13–15; ROERICH 1996: 774): *sron pa kun rgyal gyi slob ma sron pa chos dpal la' brag nag pa chos skyong dpal gyis sron lugs gsan/ de la bka' bcu pa gzhon nu seng ges gsan no/*.

'Gos Lo tsā ba also mentions that a certain dPal ldan bla ma received the transmission of the Sron lugs from Sron pa Kun dga' rgyal, his disciple Sron pa Chos dpal, and mKhan chen bSod grags pa; see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 908.1–2; ROERICH 1996: 774). Based on the records in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 288.3–291.3) about the lineages of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, we can identify that dPal ldan bla ma as Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, through whom the different lineages descended via dPal ldan tshul khrim and Buddhaśrī to Ngor chen.

A number of writings by Sron pa Chos dpal bzang po (Awadhūtipa Dharmaśrī) have survived among a manuscript collection from Ngor housed at the National Library of Bhutan: the *Nges don sku bzhi'i lam 'jug* (25 fols.), *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo lhan cig skyes pa'i bsgrub thabs* (5 fols.), two manuscripts of the (incipit title) *sByor ba yan lag drug las/ so sor sdud dang bsam gtan gyi ngo sprodl rin po che'i snying po* (12 fols.), *bTsan thabs kyi nyams khrid gsang pa'i nye lam* (5 fols.), and *Srog rtsol lung sbyor* (3 fols.). Moreover, the collection contains a praise by Chos

received the exposition of the *Commentary on the Kālacakra* (*Dus kyi 'khor lo'i ṭi kā*, i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*) and became very learned in that important tantra commentary.⁴¹³ Along with that, he also obtained teachings on all the other works Bla ma dam pa had written on Kālacakra.⁴¹⁴

Regrettably, neither biography is very informative about the actual places that dPal ldan tshul khrims visited along with Bla ma dam pa. We only come to know of a visit to lHa sa and a Kālacakra teaching given by Bla ma dam pa at his monastic foundation of Chos rdzong in Central Tibet (dBus).⁴¹⁵

The occasion of that Kālacakra teaching is mentioned by Buddhaśrī within a longer episode about dPal ldan tshul khrims' determined effort to obtain the esoteric instructions of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* of Bla ma gNyo ston dBang rgyal, an important disciple of Kun spangs Thugs rje btson 'grus (1243–1313), who had gained a high level of spiritual realisation and experience in them.⁴¹⁶ He was not only a skilful teacher but had also put his instruction methods in writing. With the wish to study those works, and thinking of their importance for practitioners, dPal ldan tshul khrims investigated who was in possession of those instructions. At first, he came to know of a direct disciple of Bla ma dBang rgyal, an outstanding female meditator (*sgrub pa mo*), living in the higher reaches of Gye ri. Unfortunately, she passed away before Bla ma dam

dpal bzang po, the *rDo rje bzhi'i brgyud pa la rdo rje bzhi yi sgo nas dpal ldan bla ma la bstod pa rin po che'i phreng ba* (1 fol.). He wrote those works either at Seng ge rdzong or Sron lung bDe ba can. For a list of some of his writings, see also the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 60.6–61.3). As becomes clear from the aforementioned sources, Chos dpal bzang po was a student of both Kun spangs Thugs rje brtson 'grus and Sron pa Kun rgyal and bestowed teachings of the Sron tradition on Bla ma dam pa. Bla ma dam pa in turn commented on the *bTsan thabs kyi nyams khrid gsang pa'i nye lam* of Chos dpal bzang po. Two different manuscripts of this work are housed at the National Library of Bhutan, the *bTsan thabs kyi nyams khrid gsang ba'i nye lam gyi 'grel pa* (13 fols.) or *bTsan thabs kyi nyam khrid chen mo gsang ba'i nye lam zhes bya'i rnam par bshad pa rnal 'byor gyi snying po* (11 fols.). For Bla dam pa's studies under Chos dpal bzang po, see the *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar 1* (fol. 13b1–3).

⁴¹³ Bla ma dam pa wrote an extensive commentary on the *Vimalaprabhā*; see VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 117, no. 19: *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud kyi 'grel chen po'i ṭi kā* and 122, no. 18: *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud kyi ṭikka chen [po] glegs bam drug yod pa*. The *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 448.6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 502.1) refer to the same work as the *Dus 'khor ṭik chen* and *Dus 'khor 'grel chen gyi 'grel bshad chen mo*. The fifth volume (ca) of Bla ma dam pa's collected works contains two chapters of that commentary: the *Nges pa'i don gyi gsal byed ces bya ba las dbang gi le'u yi 'grel bshad* and *Nges pa'i don gyi gsal byed ces bya ba las ye shes kyi le'u yi 'grel bshad*; see TBRC (W00KG02390: vol. ca, fols. 34b–211a and 212a–464b), respectively. On these two chapters, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 140, nos. 2–3 and VAN DER KUIJP 2004: 30.

⁴¹⁴ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims rnam thar 1* (pp. 409.4–410.4). In contrast to Mus chen's summary, Buddhaśrī provides a detailed list that records all the teachings that dPal ldan tshul khrims received from Bla ma dam pa, interspersed with episodes from his studies; see the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 55.2–69.5). On his studies, see also the *Dus 'khor chos 'byung* (p. 123.1–3) and *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 226.3–5). For those and other teachings that dPal ldan tshul khrims had received from Bla ma dam pa and transmitted via Shar chen to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 195.1–196.5, 198.2–201.1, 208.3–4, 210.2–212.1, 212.6–214.1, 220.3–6, 222.4–6, and 224.1–3). For teachings that Bla ma dam pa had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrims, who in turn transmitted them to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 264.5–266.1, 267.3–268.4, and 270.1–4). For teachings that Bla ma dam pa had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khrims and that were received by Ngor chen through Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 271.1–272.1, 272.2–274.2, 276.5–277.3, 277.4–279.2, 279.4–6, 280.1?–282.2?, 282.3–6, 283.2–284.2, 284.4–285.2, and 286.4–290.6). dPal ldan tshul khrims also became the lineage holder of Bla ma dam pa's Cakrasaṃvara transmission; see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 226.1–2).

⁴¹⁵ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 64.6–65.4 and 67.1–2), respectively. On Chos rdzong, see SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2005: 201, no. 14.

⁴¹⁶ On gNyo ston dBang rgyal (alias La stod pa dBang rgyal), see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 906.2–5; ROERICH 1996: 772–773). On him, see also STEARNS 1996: 149–150, n. 78, who refers to Ngor chen's critique of dBang rgyal's synthesis of the *ṣaḍāṅgayoga* and *Lam 'bras* systems. On Ngor chen's critique of dBang rgyal's *Lam 'bras* system (*lam 'bras dbang rgyal lugs*), see the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (pp. 470.4–472.1). dBang rgyal was one of the “four sons of Kun spangs” (*kun spangs pa'i bu bzhi*), see Part Three, n. 412.

pa had finished his Kālacakra teaching at Chos rdzong. However, dPal ldan tshul khirms succeeded to obtain those instructions in the meditator's lineage. She had bestowed them on rTogs ldan Ye shes mgon po, who in turn granted them to Slob dpon Tshul khirms 'byung gnas, from whom dPal ldan tshul khirms received them. Another master who had obtained those instructions directly from Bla ma dBang rgyal was sTod lung pa Bla ma Rin chen dpal. It was in his lineage that dPal ldan tshul khirms received teachings on the writings of Bla ma dBang rgyal along with their practical application through Rin chen dpal's disciple Slob dpon dBang phyug rin chen.⁴¹⁷

Among other teachers of dPal ldan tshul khirms, his biographers enumerate bKa' bzhi pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan, Bla ma Grags mgon, Bla ma mGon po 'bum, Bla ma Gung pa bKra shis bzang po, Bla ma gZungs kyi dpal (1306–1389), and Bla ma bSod nams mgon po.⁴¹⁸ From the teaching lineages recorded in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, we come to know that Bla ma Tshul rgyal and Ri pa gZhon nu rgyal mtshan (1311–1390) were also teachers of dPal ldan tshul khirms.⁴¹⁹

At one point later in his life when residing at Sa skya, bDag po 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' rin chen (b. 1348) invited dPal ldan tshul khirms to La stod Byang. The ruler provided him with a manorial estate of a monastery (*dgon gzhis*), and in doing so seemingly secured the livelihood of dPal ldan tshul khirms, who for many years stayed on certain occasions in that ruler's locality, bestowing on a large scale such teachings as the *Lam 'bras*. One of his disciples from that time was Buddhaśrī.⁴²⁰ This episode is also briefly mentioned by Ngor chen in his biography of Buddhaśrī. He relates that dPal ldan tshul khirms was invited by the ruler of La stod Byang. At that time, Buddhaśrī

⁴¹⁷ See the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 65.7–68.7). For the lineage of the teaching cycle according to the tradition or system of Bla ma dBang rgyal (*sbyor drug dbang rgyal lugs kyi skor*) as received by dPal ldan tshul khirms from dBang phyug rin chen and successively bestowed to Ngor chen via Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 291.4–6).

⁴¹⁸ See the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 69.5–70.3): *bka' bzhi pa shes rab rgyal mtshan pa la' 'phags pa dkon mchog brtsegs pa dangl 'buml nyi khri/ khri bryad stong pa la sogs pa sher phyogs thams cad dangl gzhān yang lung mang po bsan [= gsan]l bla ma grags mgon pa la phal po che dangl bstan bcos kyi lung mang po gsanl bla ma mgon po 'bum pa la mdo sde dangl rgyudl sgrub thabs brya rtsa dangl bstan bcos la sogs pa'i lung mang po bsan [= gsan]l bla ma gung pa bkra shis bzang po la/ sgrub thabs rgya mtsho dangl rgyud 'bum la sogs pa'i bka' lung mang po gsanl bla ma gzung kyi dpal ba la/ chos skyong che chung la sogs pa'i gdam ngag mang po bsan [= gsan]l bla ma bsod nams mgon po la dbu [= u] rgyan bsnen sgrubl gags sel rlung ltag(?) then(?) la sogs pa'i man ngag mang po bsan [= gsan] nol. For the same passage with slight differences in wording and also omitting bSod nams mgon po, see the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 410.4–6). For the sutric teachings that mGon po 'bum had given to dPal ldan tshul khirms and that were successively transmitted to Ngor chen via Shar chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 261.6–262.3). For the *sGrub thabs kun las btus pa* (*Sādhanasamuccaya*)—also simply known as *rGya mtsho* or *sGrub thabs rgya mtsho*—that was transmitted in a similar way, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 228.1–236.4). For tantric teachings that mGon po 'bum had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khirms and the latter transmitted to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 263.5–264.5 and 268.5–6). For the *sGrub thabs brya rtsa* as it had been bestowed by gZungs kyi dpal on dPal ldan tshul khirms and successively transmitted to Ngor chen by Shar chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 236.3–6). For other teachings that had been transmitted in a similar way, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 212.1–6).*

⁴¹⁹ For teachings that Tshul rgyal had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khirms and that were successively transmitted to Ngor chen via Shar chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 200.6–201.3 and 220.1–3). For teachings of Tshul rgyal that were given directly by dPal ldan tshul khirms to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 268.4–5 and 269.2–6). For teachings that Tshul rgyal had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khirms and that were successively transmitted to Ngor chen via Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 280.3–4, 286.1–4, and 293.4–294.1). For teachings that gZhon nu rgyal mtshan had bestowed on dPal ldan tshul khirms and that were also successively transmitted to Ngor chen via Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 296.2–5).

⁴²⁰ See the *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 411.3–4) and *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 73.6–74.2). On the La stod Byang ruler 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' rin chen, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 191.13–15), EVERDING 2000: 460 and 516, and ROLOFF 2009: 176, 255, 274, 281–282, and 421, n. 784.

approached dPal ldan tshul khrims at the monastery of mKha' spyod to request teachings on the *Lam' bras*.⁴²¹ From the chronology of Ngor chen's biography of Buddhaśrī, we can infer that dPal ldan tshul khrims was invited to La stod Byang sometime after 1377.

About one year before dPal ldan tshul khrims passed away, he wrote his testament and instructed his disciples on his last wishes. The relevant passage in his biography is difficult to understand, however. Concerned about the future development of Byang chub rdzong, he seemingly addressed an unnamed disciple, whom he requested to take care of the hermitage:⁴²²

This Byang chub rdzong was the residence of both Chos rje Rin po che [i.e., Bla ma dam pa] and Ri khrod pa. [It] is also really favoured by myself, [i.e.,] the master, and [my] disciples. Hence, in case [this site] here would be plundered, the reputation of [our] lamas would be damaged and sentient beings harmed. Thus [you should] become a good resident lama of this [place]. [You] should make [it] a dwelling place for only those people who engage in virtuous practice.

Afterwards, he travelled to Tsha mo rong to bestow on his local disciples some still unfinished teachings. Similarly, later on, he also granted other unfinished teachings to individual disciples. Prior to his passing, he seemingly resided at Sa skya because it was there in his residence, the Shar stod kyi gzims khang, that he gave his last instructions, passing away on the tenth day of the fifth month of the hare year at age seventy-seven (i.e., in 1399).⁴²³

As two of his most eminent disciples, his biographer Mus chen mentions Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and Buddhaśrī. Similarly, A mes zhabs emphasises the important role of these two, introducing Shar chen as the chief disciple in upholding the tradition of explaining the Buddha's doctrine and Buddhaśrī as the one who upheld the tradition of applying those teachings in spiritual practice.⁴²⁴ It was also on these two that dPal ldan tshul khrims had bestowed the *Lam' bras* in its entirety, considering both of them genuine upholders of that teaching cycle. This is illustrated by another instruction that he gave prior to his passing. As a few of his disciples could not finish their *Lam' bras* studies, dPal ldan tshul khrims advised them to request the remaining teachings from Shar chen and Buddhaśrī.⁴²⁵ A third master who had also received the complete *Lam' bras* was Mi nyag

⁴²¹ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 418.1).

⁴²² dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 2 (p. 75.1–4): *byang chub rdzong 'di chos rje rin po che dang ri khrod pa gnyis ka'i gzim khang yin| drung pa dpon slob kyang thugs zhen chen po rang yod pas| 'di ru <gyag gyer> [= jag khyer] zhugs na| bla ma'i mtshan dang| sems can la gnod pa 'dug pas 'di la gdan sa ba dga' mo zhiig byas [= byed?]| dge sbyor ba kho na sdod sa zhiig bya dgos pa 'dug (...)*. For the same passage but with a slightly different reading, cf. the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 412.3–4). Note that this version has *jag khyer* instead of *gyag gyer* and also reads “after [this site] here had been plundered” (*'di ru jag khyer zhugs nas*) instead of “in case [this site] here would be plundered” (*'di ru gyag gyer zhugs na*).

⁴²³ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 412.3–413.1) and *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 75.4–76.2). The Shar stod kyi gzim khang is also mentioned in the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 417.5–6) as the place where Buddhaśrī received *Lam' bras* teachings from dPal ldan tshul khrims for the first time.

⁴²⁴ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 226.5–6): *zab rgyas dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo rgyun mi chad par bskor bas slob ma'i mchog shin tu mang yang| bshad sgrub gnyis kyi nang nas bshad pa'i bka' gtso bor 'dzin pa shar chen ye shes rgyal mtshan| sgrub pa'i bka' gtso bor 'dzin pa grub chen buddha shri gnyis yin la| de'i nang nas kyang chos 'di'i brgyud pa 'dzin pa ni shar pa stel*. The last part of this passage identifies Shar chen as the lineage holder of the Cakrasaṃvara teachings transmitted by dPal ldan tshul khrims. Gung ru Shes rab bzang po makes a similar statement; see the *Lam' bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.1–3): *khong gi slob ma la bshad pa gtso bor gyur pa 'jam dbyangs shar pa ye shes rgyal mtshan la sogs pa dang| sgrub pa gtso bor gyur pa grub chen buddha shri ste (...)*.

⁴²⁵ See the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 411.3–4 and 412.5–6).

Rin chen rdo rje, but he had passed away at an early age in Khams.⁴²⁶ Because Shar chen passed away before his eighteen-year restriction on bestowing the *Lam 'bras* had expired, Buddhaśrī became the chief lineage master of dPal ldan tshul khirms' *Lam 'bras* transmission, which, as will be shown below, he passed on to Ngor chen.

Both Mus chen and Buddhaśrī also provide us with lists of dPal ldan tshul khirms' writings, whereby Mus chen reproduces a shortened version of Buddhaśrī's much more extensive list:

[1] *zhang dkon mchog dpal gyi rnam thar* | [2] *chos rje bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* | [3] *chos rje ri khrod pa'i rnam thar* | [4] *lam 'bras brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* | [5] *'phrin las so gnyis kyi sdom tshig* | [6] *sbas bshad 'khrul 'khor so gnyis kyi yi ge* | [7] *sde snod gsum gyi dbye ba nyi ma'i 'od zer rgyas pa* | [8] *gzungs gra lnga'i dkyil chog la sogs pa dangl* | [9] *pu ta ming sring gi gtor chog la sogs pa mang po mdzad dol*⁴²⁷

[1] *zhang ston chos rje dangl* | [2] *chos rje bla ma dam pa* | [3] *bla ma ri khrod pa rnam kyi rnam thar* | [4] *lam 'bras brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs gzhung khrid sbyar ba* | [5] *gsung ngag rin po che'i gzhung bshad chos rje bsod nams rgyal mtshan pas mdzad pa la mchan bu* | [6] *lam 'bras phrin las so gnyis kyi sdom* | [7] *sbas bshad 'khrul 'khor so gnyis kyi yi ge* | [8] *sde snod gsum gyi dbye ba nyi ma'i 'od zer rgyas pa* | [9] *kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs bcu bzhir byed pa'i man ngag* | [10] *dkyil 'khor bdun bsres* | [11] *bdag med lha mo bcwa lnga'i bstod pa* | [12] *rtsa ltung gi bshad pa* | [13] *slob dpon intra bhu tis mdzad pa'i kha bskongl* | [14] *gnod sbyin pho mo dangl* | [15] *pu tra ming sring gi gtor chog* | [16] *tshe dpag med grub rgyal ma'i sgrub dkyil* | [17] *gzungs gra lnga'i dkyil chog* | [18] *ka mad sum bcu'i gsol 'debs* | [19] *ma ni'i 'gur [= mgur] ma dbyangs chu* | [20] *ri khrod lo ma can gyi cho ga'i khrigs chags* | [21] *sgrol ma'i lus dkyil gyi dbang chog* | [22] *rab gnas rgyas bsod kyi sdom* | [23] *dkyil 'khor phyi nang gi thig rtsa* | [24] *spyen ras gzigs ni la kandha la'i sgrub thabs* | [25] *kun rig gi snyin bsreg* | [26] *kun rig gi ro bsreg gi cho ga chas 'jug dang bcas pa mdzad de*⁴²⁸

The biographies that dPal ldan tshul khirms wrote of his teachers Bla ma dam pa (no. 2) and Chos rje Ri khrod pa (no. 3) as well as the one of Zhang dKon mchog dpal (1240–1307; no. 1) can all be found among the compiled lives of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters.⁴²⁹ Some of his other writings can be located as well. It was Ngor chen himself who included the *Lam sbas bshad kyi 'khrul 'khor so gnyis kyi rtsa 'grel* (i.e., no. 6) into his collection of *Lam 'bras* practice works, the *Pod dmar ma*.⁴³⁰ In the same collection we also find the *Gegs sel*

⁴²⁶ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 418.6–419.1), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 214.17–20), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 202.6), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 146.1–3), and STEARNS 2006: 241.

⁴²⁷ *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 411.5–412.1).

⁴²⁸ *dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 72.2–73.3). STEARNS 2001: 183–184, n. 162 mentions that dPal ldan tshul khirms also wrote annotations (*mchan*) to the *Man ngag gter mdzod*, a commentary on the *rDo rje tshig rkang* by Bla ma dam pa, but also notes that they “do not seem to have survived.” Those annotations are also recorded in Buddhaśrī's list (no. 5).

⁴²⁹ For different versions of his biography of Bla ma dam pa, see, for instance, the *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, pp. 386.4–406.2), *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 115, pp. 163–197), and TBRC (W2CZ7928). Moreover, a nineteen-*folio dbu med* manuscript is recorded by DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 334, no. 670, section 5. On the biography of Bla ma dam pa, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 114–115. For different versions of his biography of Chos rje Ri khro dpa, see, for instance, the *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, pp. 374.5–386.4), *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 115, pp. 25–45), and TBRC (W8668). For his biography of dKon mchog dpal, see, for instance, the *Lam 'bras* 1 (pp. 362.3–367.4), *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 115, pp. 1–9), and TBRC (W18652). Furthermore, DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 334, no. 670, section 3 records a six-*folio dbu med* manuscript of this biography.

⁴³⁰ See the *Po ti dmar chung* (pp. 431–440) and *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 316.1–322.3). On this work, see also SOBISCH 2008: 108–109.

gyi yi ge bzhi'i zhal shes, which had neither been recorded by Mus chen nor Buddhaśrī.⁴³¹ Moreover, some of dPal ldan tshul khrims' writings have also been preserved at 'Bras spungs, as we come to know from the catalogue to the monastery's extensive library holdings:

- (1) *dPal kyai'i rdo rje'i dal sgrub mchod kyi phyag len ngag 'don gyi rim pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 10 fols. ('Bras spungs dkar chag, p. 365, no. 3705)
- (2) *Kyai'i rdo rje'i mngon par rtogs pa gsal byed nyin zhag phrug gcig gi nyams len mdor bsdus*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 10 fols. ('Bras spungs dkar chag, p. 365, no. 3708)
- (3) *gTsug gtor rnam par rgyal ma'i rjes gnang*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 2 fols. ('Bras spungs dkar chag, p. 1308, no. 13322)
- (4) *Chos rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i rnam par thar pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 18 fols. ('Bras spungs dkar chag, p. 1550, no. 17496); above no. 2
- (5) *Chos rje ri khrod pa'i rnam thar rin chen phreng ba*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 10 fols. ('Bras spungs dkar chag, p. 1550, no. 17497); above no. 3
- (6) *Pu tra ming sring rjes gnang gtor chog dang bcas pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 5 fols. ('Bras spungs dkar chag, p. 1809, no. 20726); above no. 9

6.2.2 Ngor chen's Relation with dPal ldan tshul khrims and Teachings Received

Ngor chen began his studies under dPal ldan tshul khrims by receiving the Hevajra empowerment according to the "tradition of practical instructions" (*kye rdo rje man ngag lugs kyi dbang*)—that is, the meditative Hevajra tradition of the *Lam 'bras* in contrast to the commentarial tradition (*'grel pa lugs*) of the Hevajra *tantras*—which constituted the first gate to enter into the teachings of the Sa skya tradition.⁴³² Along with that, Ngor chen also obtained other Hevajra empowerments and teachings.⁴³³ Gung ru Shes rab bzang po informs us that, though Ngor chen received many teachings on Hevajra from dPal ldan tshul khrims, those pertaining to the *Lam 'bras* were restricted to just a few oral instructions, but not any guiding instructions or commentaries.⁴³⁴ This is confirmed by Ngor chen, who in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho* refers to just a few *Lam 'bras* related esoteric instructions for removing impediments (*gegs sel*) that he had received from dPal ldan tshul khrims.⁴³⁵

Ngor chen's biographies preserve an account that directly relates to those instructions on the removal of impediments. At one time, Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan approached dPal ldan tshul khrims, requesting a few ancillary *Lam 'bras* teachings (*lam 'bras kyi cha lag*) along with those instructions. As he was about to give

⁴³¹ See the *Po ti dmar chung* (pp. 229–272) and *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 158.5–191.1). On this work, see also SOBISCH 2008: 106.

⁴³² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 444.1–2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 495.3–4): *gzhan yang chos rje dpal ldan tshul khrims pa'i drung du/ kye rdo rje man ngag lugs kyi dbang gsan tel dpal ldan sa skya pa'i bstan pa la 'jug pa'i sgo dang po 'di yin gsungs/*. See also the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 263.2–3).

⁴³³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 444.1–3), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 495.3–5), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 263.2–264.5).

⁴³⁴ See the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.1–3): *khyad par du kye rdo rje'i chos skor mang po dang/ dpal ldan tshul khrims pa dang chos rje shar pa dpon slob gnyis ka la gsan kyang/ gsung ngag rin po che ni dpal ldan tshul khrims pa la gdams ngag ci rigs pa tsam dang/ chos rje shar pa la lam gyi khog sgrig tsam las khrid dang 'brel [= 'grel] pa gsan pa ma byung/*.

⁴³⁵ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 270.6): *lam 'bras kyi gegs sel gyi man ngag 'ga' zhig rnam thos sol/*

some esoteric teachings, dPal ldan tshul khrim sent all other religious scholars (*dge bshes*) in his presence away. Ngor chen, who had either accompanied Shar chen or was studying under dPal ldan tshul khrim, was also present at that time. But since Ngor chen was not asked to leave, he received those ancillary *Lam 'bras* teachings as well. Because of that, Ngor chen is said to have said that a special devotion towards dPal ldan tshul khrim was then born in his heart and that he felt extremely happy.⁴³⁶

Through the course of his religious training under dPal ldan tshul khrim, Ngor chen received numerous tantric teachings that are listed in an abbreviated form in his biographies and in much more detail in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*. The major part consisted of teachings pertaining to such *yi dam* deities as Cakrasaṃvara and his consort Vajrayoginī in her various forms (Two-Headed Vajravāhī, Nāro Khecarī, and Maitrī Khecarī). In this regard, Ngor chen's biographies contain another account dealing with his training in the three Cakrasaṃvara traditions of Lūhipāda, Kṛṣṇacārin, and Ghaṅṭāpāda. Due to his good progress, dPal ldan tshul khrim is said to have praised Ngor chen as follows: "This *slob dpon* has become an excellent *dge bshes*. Very well. We should become *dge bshes* that practice in rock caves."⁴³⁷ We encounter the last sentence once again within the foundation account of Ngor Monastery. According to that, Ngor chen recalled the words of dPal ldan tshul khrim while thinking of moving away from Sa skya to establish a monastic retreat far away from the distractions of the monastic seat. He was looking for a suitable place at famous Sa skya retreat sites like Na bza' brag phug and bSam gling.⁴³⁸

Along with those teachings on Cakrasaṃvara, Ngor chen also received the initiation into the twelve *maṅḍalas* of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* (i.e., the *sByong rgyud dkyil 'khor bcu gnyis kyi dbang*) and the empowerment of Uṣṇīśasitāpatrā.⁴³⁹ Moreover, he obtained teachings on the extensive exposition of the Tantra classes by Bu ston Rin chen grub, which dPal ldan tshul khrim himself had studied under Bu ston.⁴⁴⁰

Though not mentioned by his biographies, it is interesting to note that dPal ldan tshul khrim conferred on Ngor chen the empowerment of Vajrakīla and related teachings as well as the *Phur pa drag po'i rjes gnang*. Along with that, he also gave the initiation (*rjes gnang*) of the special protectors of Vajrakīla (*phur srung*), dKar mo nyi zla and bDud rgyal thod phreng can (or sTong gi thod phreng can).⁴⁴¹ With the exception of these Vajrakīla practices—which were performed by the 'Khon family since Klu'i dbang po bsrung ba had received them from Padmasambhava—Ngor chen's entire monastic training was gSar ma pa based.⁴⁴² As I was informed by David Jackson, Ngor Monastery did almost no rNying

⁴³⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 444.6–445.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 496.2–4).

⁴³⁷ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 445.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 496.5): *slob dpon nyid dge bshes dga' mo cig byung 'dug nan tar bzangl'u cag brag phug pa'i dge bshes cig byed pa yin no (...)*. For the entire passage, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 445.2–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 496.4–5).

⁴³⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 448.2–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 524.2–4).

⁴³⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 444.3–6), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 495.5–496.2), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 264.5–270.6).

⁴⁴⁰ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 270.4–5). For Bu ston's exposition, see TBRC (W1934: vol. 15, W22106: vol. 15, and W1PD45496: vol. 15).

⁴⁴¹ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 267.5–269.2). Ngor chen's biographer Mus chen mentions only the initiations (*rjes gnang*) of dKar mo nyi zla and bDud rgyal thod phreng can, whereas Sangs rgyas phun tshogs lists only the former; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 444.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 496.1), respectively.

⁴⁴² On the Vajrakīlaya tradition within the 'Khon family, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 161.1–164.17), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 11.5–18.6), CANTWELL and MAYER 2008a: [15]–17, CANTWELL and MAYER 2008b: [277]–282, SMITH 2001: 107, STEARNS 2001: 104–109 and 230, n. 104, and THUKEN LOSANG CHÖKYI NYIMA 2009: 170.

ma practices with the exception of the late nineteenth-century abbots of the Khang gsar bla brang, who avidly practiced Vajrakīla.⁴⁴³ Only an investigation of the *gsan yigs* of later Sa skya masters will show whether Ngor chen himself taught Vajrakīla and whether it was owing to him that practices of that meditation deity were not performed at Ngor, at least not initially.⁴⁴⁴

6.3 Training under Chos rje Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog dpal bzang

After he had fulfilled the last wishes of his late master Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, Ngor chen thought about studying the *Lam 'bras*, which he had not been able to obtain in its entirety yet. As mentioned above, his disciple Gung ru Shes rab bzang po informs us in the continuation of his master's *Lam 'bras* history that, though Ngor chen had received a few oral instructions of the *Lam 'bras* from dPal ldan tshul khriims and teachings on its general make-up from Shar chen, he had not obtained any guiding instructions and explanations.⁴⁴⁵ Thus, when Ngor chen heard of the great reputation of Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog dpal bzang, who had been a personal disciple of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan as well as a teacher of both Red mda' ba gZhon nu blo gros and Tsong kha pa Blo bzang gras pa, he made up his mind to request the *Lam 'bras* from him. Subsequently, he departed for sKyabs mchog dpal bzang's monastic foundation at sTag tshang Chos 'khor sgang, located in the Shangs district of gTsang province.⁴⁴⁶

When he arrived at Chos 'khor sgang, sKyabs mchog dpal bzang was teaching the '*Dul ba me tog phreng rgyud* (i.e., the *Vinayakārikā*?) and his exposition had just reached the verse "Having been liberated from the bonds of a household."⁴⁴⁷ Due to this auspicious coincidence, sKyabs mchog dpal bzang made the following prediction:⁴⁴⁸

How wonderful! The common saying is true that you are a distinguished and excellent [monk]. Because the point [that my teachings had reached] was auspicious [when you arrived], [you] will become an excellent Vinaya holder that benefits the [Buddha's] doctrine.

⁴⁴³ David Jackson (email, 04 November 2009).

⁴⁴⁴ An early reference to Vajrakīla teachings at Ngor dates to 1587 when bSod nams dbang po (1559–1621), the twenty-fourth throne-holder of Sa skya, visited Ngor. At that time, dKon mchog dpal ldan, the twelfth abbot of Ngor, bestowed teachings such as the *Vajrāvalī* on bSod nams dbang po. In return, bSod nams dbang po conferred the empowerment of Vajrakīla and the related *Drag po sgröl dbang* on the monastic community of Ngor. On these teachings, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 27.3). On the special relation of bSod nams dbang po with Vajrakumāra and Padmasambhava, see EHRHARD 2015: 140 and *passim*.

⁴⁴⁵ See the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.2–3).

⁴⁴⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 445.4–6), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 497.1–3), and ROLOFF 2009: 213, 292, 364–365, n. 388, and 380, n. 475. The dates of sKyabs mchog dpal bzang are given by VAN DER KUIJP 2015b: [253] as ca. 1340–1415, and *Ibid.*: [253], n. 3 states that his biography was written by sTag tshang Lo tsā ba, which has not yet been retrieved, however. sKyabs mchog dpal bzang also studied under Bu ston's disciples Lo tsā ba Rin chen rnam rgyal (1318–1388) and Dus 'khor ba Chos kyi dpal (1316–1397); see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 63.4 and 84.5), respectively. He also was the first teacher of the bDe ba chen college, the only dGe lugs pa *grwa tshang* of Byams chen Chos sde in Rong; the other colleges were four Sa skya pa and two Bo dong pa; see the *Baiḍūrya ser po* (p. 230, no. 14). On Chos 'khor sgang, see the *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (p. 527.1–2) and EHRHARD 2004b: 248, n. 8.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 497.3): *khyim gyi 'ching ba las grol tel*.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 497.3–4): *a la la nyid khyad 'phags dga' mo zhig yin zer ba bden par gda' tshing mtshams bzang po byung bas bstan pa la phan pa'i 'dul 'dzin bzang po cig 'byung gi zhes lung bstan tel*.

After this fairly detailed introduction, Ngor chen's biographies present a rather brief account of his ensuing religious training under sKyabs mchog dpal bzang. In just one short sentence, it is mentioned that Ngor chen did not succeed in obtaining the entire *Lam 'bras*, though this had been his main objective in approaching sKyabs mchog dpal bzang. Without any further explanation, his biographers continue with the enumeration of other teachings that he obtained from his new master.⁴⁴⁹ Among them, we find a reference to the *Lam 'bras* teachings that Ngor chen had received, namely the instructions on the Three Appearances (*snang gsum*).⁴⁵⁰ The Three Appearances, as pointed out by Cyrus Stearns, constitute the preliminary subjects of the *Lam 'bras*: "The Mahayana basis of the Path with the Result is fully presented in the explanation of the Three Appearances, which contains all the preliminary topics of meditation necessary for beginning the Vajrayana path."⁴⁵¹

The real reason Ngor chen did not receive the *Lam 'bras* in its entirety is revealed in the *Lam 'bras* history of 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug:⁴⁵²

Therefore, when Ngor chen rDo rje 'chang wished to study the *Oral Instructions* [i.e., the *Lam 'bras*], because Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog was a very famous personal disciple of rje Bla ma, [he] went there. When [he] heard [the *Lam 'bras*] up through the Three Appearances, [he] was not satisfied because [it] was to a slight degree not the unadulterated Sa [skya] tradition.

The teaching style of sKyabs mchog dpal bzang was obviously not in accordance with the traditional *Lam 'bras* as given within the Sa skya school, prompting Ngor chen to discontinue his *Lam 'bras* studies under him. Nevertheless, this partial bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* was not the only teaching Ngor chen obtained from sKyabs mchog dpal bzang. His biographies and record of teachings received list both tantric and non-tantric teachings.⁴⁵³ According to them, he also received expositions of the following works: Aśvaghōṣa's *Gurupañcāśikā*, the extensive commentary of the *Hevajratāntra* (*brTag gnyis 'tik chen*) by Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, the *gSang 'dus spyi don*, and the *Vajrayānacaturdaśamūlāpattivṛtti* of Lakṣmīkara.⁴⁵⁴ He also obtained teachings on an

⁴⁴⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 445.6–446.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 497.4–6): *gsung ngag rdzogs pa ni ma byung* | *on kyang* (...).

⁴⁵⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 445.6), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 497.5), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 431.5).

⁴⁵¹ STEARNS 2006: 5. See also STEARNS 2001: 37 and 184, n. 163, where he expounds on the individual parts of the Three Appearances as follows: "According to the *Lam 'bras* teachings, all phenomena are mental appearances (*sems kyi snang ba*). The 'three appearances' (*snang gsum*) are the impure appearances (*ma dag pa'i snang ba*) of ordinary living beings, the experiential appearances (*snyams kyi snang ba*) that arise for a yogin, and the pure appearances (*dag pa'i snang ba*) experienced by a buddha." On the Three Appearances, see also DAVIDSON 1992: 126 and STEARNS 2006: 5. For the translation of 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug's summarising notes on the Three Appearances, see *Ibid.*: [319]–394.

⁴⁵² *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 146.3–4): *des na ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gis gsung ngag gsan bzhed pa na* | *lo tsā ba skyabs mchog rje bla ma'i zhal slob grags che ba yin pas* | *der phebs te snang gsum yan gsan pa na* | *sa lugs 'dres med cig cung ma byung bas thugs kha ma khengs pa dang* |. For the translation of this passage, see also STEARNS 2006: 241. The fact that Ngor chen only received the *Lam 'bras* until the Three Appearances is also mentioned in the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 340.6), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 214.9–10), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 228.6), *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.4), and *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 203.1).

⁴⁵³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 445.6–446.2), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 497.4–6), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 431.4–432.5).

⁴⁵⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 445.6), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 497.4–5), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 431.4–5). For Bla ma dam pa's *Dvikalpa* commentary, the *rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal kye rdo rje'i rgya cher 'grel pa nyi ma'i 'od zer*, see the *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 9) and TBRC (W23215).

unspecified *guruyoga* text, the *bKa' gdams lam rim gyi khrid rgyas pa* of mChims Blo bzang grags pa (1299–1375), and the *Blo sbyong don bdun ma* of rGyal sras Thogs med bzang po (1295–1369). Moreover, based on Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*, he received explanations on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakārikā*, based on sKyabs mchog dpal bzang po's own commentaries, explanations on Nāgārjuna's *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* and *Uttaratantra*, and teachings on the *Prātimokṣasūtra* and *Śīlasaṃyuktasūtra*.⁴⁵⁵

Through his training under sKyabs mchog dpal bzang, Ngor chen is said to have improved his understanding of the general meaning of those works and to have properly understood the ritual practices of the Vinaya.⁴⁵⁶ In his biographical sketch of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs especially emphasises the great benefit of Ngor chen's Vinaya training.⁴⁵⁷ This is not at all surprising because sKyabs mchog dpal bzang himself was an important Vinaya master. For instance, as shown by Carola Roloff, he was involved in Tsong kha pa's activities in strengthening the *prātimokṣa* vows:⁴⁵⁸

In winter 1401/1402 the three masters Red mda' ba, Tsong kha pa and Chos rje Lo tsā ba went together to gNam rtse ldeng, a monastery founded by Ar Byang chub ye shes (b. 11th cent.), where they passed the rainy season retreat (...) with 600 monks. They studied the basic texts of the Vinaya thoroughly and re-introduced the careful observation of the Vinaya vows. This purification or strengthening of the *prātimokṣa* vows is considered to be the second of the four great deeds of rje Tsong kha pa.

Thus Ngor chen's Vinaya training under sKyabs mchog dpal bzang might have greatly influenced him in shaping his strong conviction of how essential it was to observe a pure monastic discipline.

From the chronology of his biographies, we can conclude that Ngor chen pursued his studies under sKyabs mchog dpal bzang sometime between the years 1406 and 1408, that is, after the demise of Shar chen and prior to his studies under Buddhaśrī. Before returning to Sa skya, the conclusion of Ngor chen's studies is presented in connection with a prophetic dream that he experienced while still at Chos 'khor sgang. In this dream, his future studies of the *Lam 'bras* under Buddhaśrī were prophesied; it is to these studies that we will turn next.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 445.6–446.1), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 497.5–6), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 431.5–432.2). Moreover, Ngor chen records the following teachings in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 431.5–432.2): *thugs rje chen po'i bsgom bzlas rnams thos* (...) *bzang po spyod pa'i smon lam| klu sgrub kyis mdzad pa'i smon lam nyi shu pa| slob dpon dpa' bos mdzad pa'i smon lam bdun cu pa rnams thos so*. As the only source, the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 497.6) also lists an exposition of the *Kun las btus*, which might refer to the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* or the *Sūtrasamuccaya*. For sKyabs mchog dpal bzang's *dBu ma rtsa ba shes rab kyi 'grel pa tshig don gsal ba*, see the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum 3* (vol. 76, pp. 11–205.)

⁴⁵⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 446.1–2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 497.6): (...) *sogs pa gsung rab spyi'i go ba la thugs bskyed chen po dang| 'dul ba'i phyag len yang legs par mkhyen pas*.

⁴⁵⁷ See the *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (p. 340.6): *snang gsum tsam las gsung ngag yongs rdzogs ni ma byung| gzhan bka' chos mang po gsan| 'dul ba la khyad che bar byung gsung zhing* (...).

⁴⁵⁸ ROLOFF 2009: 400, n. 607. See also *Ibid.*: 247 and 295. On this event, see also THUKEN LOSANG CHÖKYI NYIMA 2009: 247–248.

⁴⁵⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 446.2–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 498.1–2).

6.4 Training under Grub chen Buddhaśrī

The preeminent *Lam 'bras* master Grub chen Buddhaśrī was another of Ngor chen's main teachers.⁴⁶⁰ Their master-disciple relationship was established in 1408 when Ngor chen approached Buddhaśrī at his seat at Zhi dgon to request the *Lam 'bras*, after he had not succeeded in obtaining its unadulterated tradition from Chos rje Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog dpal bzang. For investigating Ngor chen's relationship with Buddhaśrī we have along with Ngor chen's lives in a variety of editions also Buddhaśrī's own biography, which was composed by Ngor chen at Sa skya, probably not long after his master's passing away in 1420.⁴⁶¹ This biography also contains some autobiographical remarks by Ngor chen that clarify Ngor chen's own life.

6.4.1 Biographical Sketch of Buddhaśrī

Buddhaśrī was born in 1339 as the son of Gu shrī dPal 'byor legs pa and sGrol ma 'bum at the monastery of sGo phu in mDog of La stod Byang.⁴⁶² His mother had tried to abort her unborn child by taking lots of "cleansing medicine" (*sbyong sman*) because she feared the shame that would come over her family if people were to come to know that dPal 'byor legs pa had fathered a child after having become the abbot of sGo phu.⁴⁶³ Buddhaśrī's father had once served as the great attendant (*zhabs 'bring ba chen po*) of the imperial preceptor Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1310–1358) from the lHa khang bla brang of Sa skya.⁴⁶⁴ Later on, after Buddhaśrī's monastic ordination in 1361, he travelled to Mongol ruled China (*rgya yul*) and also journeyed to Mongolia (*hor yul*), where he was responsible for making the printing blocks of a commentary on the *Kālacakrantra* (*dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i*

⁴⁶⁰ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 271.1): *lung dang rtogs pa'i dpal gyis mngon par mtho ba drin chen rtsa ba'i bla ma dam pa grub chen chos kyi rje buddha shrī pa (...)*. Ngor chen also devoted a eulogy to Buddhaśrī; see CATALOGUE (no. 4). For a depiction of Buddhaśrī in the form of a thangka, see pl. 4. For a depiction together with Ngor chen, see HAR (219). For a depiction in the form of a statue, see DINWIDDIE 2003: [256]–257, pl. 69 and HAR (2125).

⁴⁶¹ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 431.6). For different versions of Buddhaśrī's biography, see, for instance, the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 145.6–169.2), *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, pp. 413.5–431.6), and *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 132–155). For a twenty-folio *dbu med* manuscript, see TBRC (W2CZ7930). For another seventeen-folio *dbu med* manuscript (inventory number: *phyi/ra/167*), which might originate from 'Bras spungs Monastery, see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 2 (vol. 53, pp. 371–404). However, the catalogue of the library holdings of 'Bras spungs registers only a fourteen-folio manuscript; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1551, no. 17503, inventory number: *phyi/ra/148*). The biographies included in Ngor chen's collected works as well as the *Lam 'bras* collection are seemingly based on sDe dge recensions. By comparison, both manuscripts vary to a certain extent in wording, orthography, and punctuation and also differ to a certain extent from each other. The biography included in the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 132–155) differs from both.

⁴⁶² See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 413.6–414.2). According to EVERDING 2000: vol. 2, 355, n. 908, mDog was the name of a valley located to the north of Ngam ring. On the location of mDog, see also Part Three, n. 501.

⁴⁶³ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 415.5).

⁴⁶⁴ Ti shrī Kun dga' rgyal mtshan was the younger of two sons that bZang po dpal, the eleventh throneholder of Sa skya, had fathered with his fifth wife, Kun dga' nam mkha'i rgyal mtshan. The family line of the lHa khang bla brang originated with Kun dga' rgyal mtshan. For a biographical sketch of him, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 400.6–402.2) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 42b2–43a3). His older brother was Ti shrī Kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (b. 1308). For the latter's biographical sketch, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 400.3–6) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 42a5–b2). On the two brothers and a discussion of their service as imperial preceptors, see VAN DER KUIJP: 2004: 38–44.

rgyud 'grel). Owing to his service in Mongolia, his family apparently became quite wealthy.⁴⁶⁵

From an early age, Buddhaśrī received the vows of a layman from Bla ma Shākya bzang po, who also bestowed on him the (longevity?) empowerment of Amitāyus and gave him the name Sangs rgyas dpal. Because a nanny taking care of Buddhaśrī recited as her daily prayer the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the young boy is said to have mastered that work. After he had learned reading and writing, he performed his first scriptural exposition (*bshad gsar*) by Bla ma Shākya bzang po at sGo phu. Under his maternal uncle Slob dpon Dhwa dza shrī (i.e., rGyal mtshan dpal), he pursued various studies such as of the *Hevajratantra* (i.e., the *brTag pa gnyis pa'i rgyud*: **Dvikalpatantra*) and on the practice of Hevajra (*kye rdo rje'i lag len*).⁴⁶⁶

At the age of twenty-three (i.e., in 1361), Buddhaśrī took in the temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of bZang ldan, on the same occasion, monastic ordination as novice and full monk from Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1294–1376) as presiding abbot, Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo as ceremonial master, and mKhan chen Sangs rgyas bzang po as instructor in private. Translating his previous name Sangs rgyas dpal into Sanskrit, he received his ordination name Buddhaśrī.⁴⁶⁷ About that time, festivities were also held to celebrate his ordination as well as his father's impending journey to China.⁴⁶⁸

In the following years, Buddhaśrī pursued his monastic training under such masters as mKhan chen Shes rab rgya mtsho and mKhan chen mGon rgyal.⁴⁶⁹ Under the former, he studied the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, and under the latter, for a short period, Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*. He studied under both masters at

⁴⁶⁵ See the *Buddhaśrī'i nram thar* 1 (pp. 414.1–5 and 421.3–6). For a discussion whether the *Kālacakratantra* commentary might have been Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā* exegesis by Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, see VAN DER KUIJP 2004: 27–31. *Ibid.*: 29–31 also mentions the possibility that Bla ma Legs pa ba, who was a Kālacakra expert present at the Mongol court and acquaintance of Bla ma dam pa, might have been Buddhaśrī's father dPal 'byor legs pa.

⁴⁶⁶ See the *Buddhaśrī'i nram thar* 1 (p. 414.2–3).

⁴⁶⁷ See the *Buddhaśrī'i nram thar* 1 (p. 414.3–5). His biography refers to Buddhaśrī's *pravrajā* and *upasampadā* ordinations. But in this context of his ordination, *pravrajā* has to be understood as *śrāmaṇera*. For a biographical sketch of Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan, see the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i nram thar* (pp. 577.4–582.6) and *Jo nang chos 'byung* (p. 35.9–20). Ma ti Paṅ chen is recorded as the first abbot of bZang ldan; see the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 299.3) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 180.20–21 and 247.6–7). On Byang chub rtse mo, see Part Three, n. 281. Sangs rgyas bzang po was the third abbot of bZang ldan, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 247.6–7). The monastery of bZang ldan is located in La stod Byang about 40 to 50 km south of the Ngam ring county seat (*rdzong*). It was founded by Kun spangs Chos grags dpal (or Chos grags dpal bzang po), a member of the ruling family of La stod Byang, who also founded the monasteries of 'Ga' rong and Chud kha (or Chu kha); see the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 299.1–2), *Chos 'khor nram gzhag* (p. 469.7), *Byang pa'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 171.1–2 and 181.3–183.5), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 180.15–19 and 246.20–21), *gShin rje gshed kyi chos 'byung* (p. 26.5–6), JACKSON 1987: 134, and PETECH 1990: 103, n. 75. He is also listed as the second abbot of bZang ldan; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 247.6–9). He may be the same person as Kun spangs Chos grags dpal bzang po (1283–1363), the famous disciple of Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan; see CZAJA 2013: 117–119, n. 28 and STEARNS 2010: 333–334, n. 136. For biographical sketches of the latter, see the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i nram thar* (pp. 566.7–573.1) and *Jo nang chos 'byung* (p. 34.16–25). For two recent presentations of bZang ldan's history, see the *Ngam ring rdzong gi dgon sde'i lo rgyus* (pp. 208–217) and *gZhis rtse sa khul gyi gnas yig* (pp. 109–111). According to these works, the monastery was originally founded by Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan (fl. first half of the 12th century). It was first called Zangs sder, which was later changed to bZang ldan. Its full name is given as bZang ldan Thub bstan Byams pa gling dgon.

⁴⁶⁸ See the *Buddhaśrī'i nram thar* 1 (p. 414.5) and VAN DER KUIJP 2004: 28.

⁴⁶⁹ mKhan chen mGon rgyal might have also been the teacher of Ngor chen's secret father Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya, and Ngor chen's teacher Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros. The former is addressed as Slob dpon mGon rgyal and the latter as Bla ma mKhas bstun mGon po rgyal mtshan; see Part Three, 3.1 and Part Three, 6.7.1.

various times and is said to have received many teachings from them. At Sa skya, he continued his studies of the *Pramāṇavārttika* under rTog ge pa dPal ldan bzang po (alias Shangs pa Blo mchog) and acted until his thirty-first year (i.e., 1369) as the substitute (*las tshab*) and head teacher (*bshad nyan*) of the Nyi thog bla brang.⁴⁷⁰

In the meantime, he studied under a variety of other teachers, including some of the most important masters of his time. Chos rje Kun mkhyen chen po, who might be identified as Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan, recited to him the reading transmission for the *maṇi mantra* (*ma ṇi'i lung*) of Avalokiteśvara. Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen conferred on him, for instance, the empowerment of Kālacakra and the reading transmission for the *Yum rgyas pa* (i.e., the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāparamitā*). From rGyal sras Thogs med bzang po, he requested the instructions on the *Seven-Point Mind Training*, *rTen 'brel snying po*, and *sKyid sdug lam 'khyer*, and also the ritual procedures (*cho ga*) for generating *bodhicitta* according to the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra systems as well as for fasting.⁴⁷¹ From Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo, he requested that master's practical meditation instruction (*dmar khrid*) for the *Five Stages of Guhyasamāja*, the reading transmission for the *bKa' 'bum thor bu* of Thogs med bzang po, and, for treating an illness, the *rDo za ba'i man ngag*. He also obtained that master's blessing for the recovery from diseases.⁴⁷² From Jo nang Phyogs las rnam rgyal, he received the exposition of the *Dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud 'grel* (i.e., Kalki Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*). According to the Sa skya system, Chos rje dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, a disciple of Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal, bestowed on him the initiation into the *maṇḍala* of Vajrabhairava, the Thirteen-Deity [*Maṇḍala* of] Raktayamāri, the Seventeen-Deity [*Maṇḍala* of] Tārā, and the body *maṇḍala* of Cakrasaṃvara.⁴⁷³ Ngor chen relates that along with those masters, Buddhaśrī also received many teachings from others teachers, putting most of his effort into studying the *Pramāṇavārttika*.⁴⁷⁴ As we learn from Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, those other teachers were, for instance, mKhan chen Kun dga' dpal bzang, mGon po 'bum, and Mus srad pa dPal ldan seng ge.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁰ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 414.5–415.1). On the Nyi thog bla brang, see Part Three, n. 114.

⁴⁷¹ For the lineages of those three instructions as they had been conferred by Thogs med bzang po to Buddhaśrī and by the latter to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 298.1–4, 298.4–6, and 299.1–2), respectively. On the origin of the *sKyid sdug lam 'khyer*, see STEARNS 2007: 550, n. 798. For the lineages of the ritual procedures of both systems for generating *bodhicitta*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 299.2–6 and 299.6–300.3), respectively. For the lineage of the fasting procedures of Ekādaśamukhamahākāruṇika, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (300.3–4).

⁴⁷² For the lineage of the *gSang 'dus rim lnga'i dmar khrid* as Buddhaśrī had received it from Byang chub rtse mo and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 286.4–287.2). The lineage via Byang chub rtse mo is the third of three alternative lineages Buddhaśrī himself had obtained. For a title list of one hundred and seven works of Thogs med bzang po's *bKa' 'bum thor bu* as it had been recited by Byang chub rtse mo to Buddhaśrī and transmitted by the latter to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 300.5–303.4). For the collected works of Thogs med bzang po, see TBRC (W00EGS1016240, W1CZ895, W1CZ1084, W1KG12765, and W2CZ6641). For the lineage of the *rDo za ba'i man ngag*, along with the one of the *Sangs rgyas mkha' 'gro'i byin rlabs*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 303.5–6).

⁴⁷³ Some of those initiations were passed on by Buddhaśrī to Ngor chen. For the lineage of the *gShed dmar lha bcu gsum ma'i dbang*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 292.2–5). For the lineage of the *sGrol ma lus dkyil gyi dbang*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 292.5–6). For the one of the *bDe mchog dril bu pa'i dbang*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 293.1–2). Buddhaśrī also obtained from dKon mchog rgyal mtshan the reading transmission for the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, which he in turn passed on to Ngor chen; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 297.6).

⁴⁷⁴ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 415.1–5).

⁴⁷⁵ Kun dga' dpal bzang conferred on Buddhaśrī the *bKa' gdams lam rim* and *dBu ma lta khrid*, which the latter in turn passed on to Ngor chen; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 296.5–297.3 and 297.5–6). From mGon po 'bum, he received the *mDo sil bu pa bcu bdun*, which contained, for instance, the *Chos nyid rang gi ngo bo tha dad snang ba'i mdo* (i.e. the *Dharmatāsvabhāvasūnyatācalapratīsarvālokaśūtra*), which he in turn transmitted to Ngor chen along with its topical outline (*sa bcad*) by mChims Nam mkha' grags (1210–1285); see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*

Owing to his mother's efforts to abort him as an unborn child, Buddhaśrī's physical condition was very bad and he was tormented by painful stomach aches. After the physicians he had consulted did not succeed in bringing forth any relief, he was advised to contact the outstanding *sādhikā* (*sgrub pa mo*) Ma gcig Chos sgron, who was living at mKhar steng in the Mus valley.⁴⁷⁶ She was endowed with clairvoyant knowledge and said to have cured many sick people. Thus Buddhaśrī approached Ma gcig Chos sgron for her advice. She told him that due to his previous *karma*, his condition would not better much in the future, but for the moment would not affect his studies too much. She taught him the gCod practice of *Nam mkha' sgo 'byed* and Buddhaśrī practiced it constantly.⁴⁷⁷ Since a longer stay at mKhar steng would have interrupted with his religious studies, Ma gcig Chos sgron told him to leave and go into retreat. In doing so, his physical condition is said to have improved slightly. With much effort, he continued his monastic training and completed, under great physical pain, his studies of the *Pramāṇavārttika*. Afterwards, Buddhaśrī performed a public scholastic examination (*grwa skor*) at Sa skya and took on the responsibility as *las pa* (chair?) of the Nyi thog bla brang and head teacher (*'chad nyan*) of Chud kha (or Chu kha).⁴⁷⁸

Then, in the mouse years (i.e., in 1372), Buddhaśrī again approached Ma gcig Chos sgron, requesting the *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor*.⁴⁷⁹ Cultivating this instruction in meditation in a roofless enclosure, he developed an excellent yogic experience (*nyams myong*). He said that it was probably at that time that the appearances of the signs (*rtags snang*) of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* manifested. In Buddhaśrī there then arose an aversion to worldly affairs and he thought of dedicating his whole life to spiritual practice. However, his wish to stay and practice at mKhar steng was rejected by Ma gcig Chos sgron. Foreseeing Buddhaśrī's fruitful relation with Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan and dPal ldan tshul khriims, she instructed him that he by all means needed to return to Sa skya.⁴⁸⁰

Buddhaśrī reached Sa skya in about the middle of 1372, at the same time as when Bla ma dam pa returned from his famous *chos 'khor* at Bo dong, where he had bestowed

(297.6–298.1). mGon po 'bum was also a teacher of dPal ldan tshul khriims; see Part Three, 6.2.1. From Mus srad pa dPal ldan seng ge, he received the *Tshe dpag med kyi tshe sgrub rlung sbyor dang bcas pa* and passed it on to Ngor chen; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 303.6–304.1).

⁴⁷⁶ Ma gcig Chos sgron originated from Mus. For an enumeration of famous masters from this valley, see the *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 131.1–3) and *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 39.6–40.2). Another disciple of Ma gcig Chos sgron was Hor bKa' bzhi pa Seng ge rgyal mtshan; see the *Seng ge rgyal mtshan gyi ngo sprod* (pp. 5.6–6.1).

⁴⁷⁷ On this gCod practice, STEARNS 2007: 549–550, n. 795 remarks as follows: "Opening the Door to the Sky (Nam mkha' sgo 'byed) is a special practice for the transference of consciousness (*'pho ba*) according to the Severance, or Chöd (Gcod), tradition. It is considered to be the most profound essence of the Severance teachings and one hundred times superior to ordinary transference practices."

⁴⁷⁸ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 415.5–416.2). Along with the monasteries of bZang ldan and 'Ga' rong, the monastery of Chud kha (or Chu kha) had been founded by Kun spangs Chos grags dpal; see the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 299.1–2) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 180.15–19 and 246.20–21). Chud kha (or Chu kha) was both the name of a monastery and of a region situated in La stod Byang. Its location is confirmed by the biographical sketch of the Indian *paṇḍita* Vanaratna as contained in the *Blue Annals*. Therein, we read that Vanaratna gave teachings in La stod Byang that were also attended by a certain bDag po Chud kha pa; see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 969.10–12; ROERICH 1996: 830): *la stod byang du bdag po chud kha ba sogs sngags bon shin tu mang ba la zhi khro sogs kyi dbang/ gsang snying gi bshad pa/*. In his biography of Buddhaśrī, Ngor chen informs us of a famine that occurred in Chud kha. At that time, Buddhaśrī sold all his household belongings to the local ruler of Chud kha and invested the proceeds in barley that he donated to the needy; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 421.4–5).

⁴⁷⁹ On the *Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor*, see Part Three, n. 389.

⁴⁸⁰ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 416.2–4).

teachings on a gathering of more than thirty thousand monks.⁴⁸¹ When Buddhaśrī went to pay a visit to his future master, he met Bla ma dam pa while on his way from the Zha lu khang gsar to the Shing khang bla brang to give teachings.⁴⁸² Buddhaśrī approached him requesting a blessing (*byin rlabs*). It happened that at the same time the erstwhile Sa skya dPon chen dBang phyug dpal also approached Bla ma dam pa, asking for some sort of advice (*zhal ta*).⁴⁸³ For the whole time during which dBang phyug dpal brought forward his matter, Bla ma dam pa kept on reciting the blessing of Tārā, holding on to Buddhaśrī's hair with his hand. Buddhaśrī was overcome by joy and developed a strong faith in Bla ma dam pa. Subsequently, he joined his teaching in the Shing khang bla brang, where Bla ma dam pa gave an in-depth esoteric instruction (*man ngag zhib mo*) on the transference of consciousness (*'pho ba*) and the intermediate state (*bar do*) in relation to the *guruyoga* practice of the *Lam 'bras*, thereby forming a religious connection (*chos 'brel*) between them.⁴⁸⁴

At that time, Bla ma dam pa was also bestowing on a couple of *dge bshes*, who had received the meditative instructions (*dmigs pa*) of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, his own exegesis, the *Great Introduction (Ngo sprod chen mo)*.⁴⁸⁵ Wishing to receive this teaching, Buddhaśrī approached dPal ldan tshul khrims—who acted as *khrid gnyer*, that is, as the person responsible for overseeing whether one had obtained the prerequisite instructions—to forward his request to Bla ma dam pa. dPal ldan tshul khrims notified Buddhaśrī that he first needed to obtain the necessary instructions and because he had not, it would not be possible for him to take part. Nevertheless, Buddhaśrī insisted that he wanted to attend that teaching and thus dPal ldan tshul khrims forwarded his request. Remembering the blessing he had bestowed on Buddhaśrī, Bla ma dam pa gave him permission to join, even without having received those necessary instructions. By that time, the teachings had already completed the transmission for the lineage masters' biographies, but Buddhaśrī was able to receive the remaining parts.

Buddhaśrī remarked that his permission to attend this teaching was related to the fact that Bla ma dam pa knew of the slight yogic experience (*myong ba cung zad*) of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* that he had previously achieved.⁴⁸⁶ Along with Buddhaśrī, some other students were also establishing religious connections (*chos 'brel*) with Bla ma dam pa, and Buddhaśrī was fortunate to obtain on these occasions the teachings on mind

⁴⁸¹ On the *chos 'khor* of Bo dong, see Part Four, n. 341. In his biography of Buddhaśrī, Ngor chen never addresses Bla ma dam pa by his full name. Instead, he uses honorific titles such as 'Gro mgon Chos rje; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 417.5, 418.4, and 424.3).

⁴⁸² On the Zha lu khang gsar and Shing khang bla brang, see Part Three, n. 580.

⁴⁸³ On dBang phyug dpal, see CZAJA 2013: *passim*, VAN DER KUIJP 1991: 285, n. 8 (continuation from p. 281, n. 8), and PETECH 1990: 95, 98–99, and 113. The *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 64a3) refers to him as Shab rDzi lung pa dPon chen dBang phyug dpal.

⁴⁸⁴ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 416.4–417.1).

⁴⁸⁵ Under the title *Ngo sprod chen mo* that work is also recorded in title lists of Bla ma dam pa's writings; see VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 117, no. 25 and 119, no. 23. For works that Bla ma dam pa wrote on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 291.2–3): *de ltar bryud pa thams cad kyi man ngag gcig tu dril pa'i sngon 'gro thar lam gsal sgron| thog mar dge ba'i khrid yig stong nyid gsal sgron| bar du dge ba'i khrid yig srog 'dzin gsal sgron| tha mar dge ba'i khrid yig bde chen gsal sgron| bsgam [= bsgom] bya'i ngo bo'i zin bris| ngo sprod sbas don gsal ba rnams chos rje bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang pos mdzad pa rnams thos so|*. The aforementioned *Ngo sprod chen mo* might refer to the last work cited, the *Ngo sprod sbas don gsal ba*. The latter work is found in Bla ma dam pa's collected works under the title *sByor ba yan lag drug gi ngo sprod sbas don gsal ba'i sgron ma*; see TBRC (W00KG02390: vol. 4, text no. 13). On the other titles recorded in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, see also the *dkar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 39.10–14) and VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 122, nos. 20–23.

⁴⁸⁶ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 417.1–3).

training by Sum pa Lo tsā ba and the *gSang 'dus rim lnga'i nyams len rgyas pa*.⁴⁸⁷ Ngor chen relates that as a later outcome of the auspicious connections that Buddhaśrī had formed at that time, he would later on receive from dPal ldan tshul khriṃs the esoteric instructions of the *Lam 'bras*, the *Five Stages of Guhyasamāja*, and the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, and would gain a high level of understanding and experience of all these three.⁴⁸⁸

Afterwards, Buddhaśrī received from Bla ma dam pa other teachings as well. For instance, he received the ritual procedures (*cho ga*) for generating *bodhicitta* according to the Madhyamaka tradition three times, and attended a few teaching sessions (*chos thun 'ga' re*) on the *Pramāṇavārttika*, *Kālacakra*, and the *rGyal sras lam bzang*, the latter being an alternative title for Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*.⁴⁸⁹

In the snake year (i.e., in 1377), Buddhaśrī began his studies of the *Lam 'bras* under dPal ldan tshul khriṃs in his master's residence at Sa skya, the Shar stod kyi gzim khang. From his biography, we learn that he first requested the "causal initiation" (*rgyu dus kyi dbang bskur*) into the coloured sand *maṇḍala* of Hevajra and afterwards received for the most part the esoteric instructions of the *Lam 'bras* such as its meditative instructions and Sa chen Kun dga' snying po's commentaries' on Virūpa's *rDo rje tshig rkang (gzhung bshad)*.⁴⁹⁰ Later on, when dPal ldan tshul khriṃs had been invited by the La stod Byang ruler 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' rin chen (b. 1348), Buddhaśrī went to visit his master while he was residing at mKha' spyod Monastery. At that time, he once again obtained the majority of the instructions (*bka' lung*) of the *Lam 'bras* and gained an excellent spiritual experience (*nyams myong*). Subsequently, he rigorously engaged himself in meditation and is said to have almost achieved the stage of the experiential appearances (*nyams kyi snang ba*) of the *Lam 'bras*.⁴⁹¹ Sometime later, he invited dPal ldan tshul khriṃs to his hermitage of Zhi dgon, where his master stayed for a period of one year and five months. Offering an enormous amount of wealth, Buddhaśrī once again requested the *Lam 'bras* and it was now that dPal ldan tshul khriṃs bestowed it on him in its entirety. He obtained the whole path of ripening and liberation (*smiṃ grol gyi lam*), that is, all the empowerments and instructions. He cultivated the instructions according to the *gZhung*

⁴⁸⁷ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 417.3–4). On Sum pa Lo tsā ba's "Ear-Whispered Mind Training," see JINPA 2006: [215]–216.

⁴⁸⁸ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 417.4–5).

⁴⁸⁹ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 417.5). For an alternative lineage of those ritual procedures for generating *bodhicitta* as Buddhaśrī had received it from Bla ma dam pa and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 299.2–6). For a list of teachings that Bla ma dam pa gave in Sa skya after his return from Bo dong, see the *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* 1 (fols. 43b7–44b7).

⁴⁹⁰ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 417.5–6). The two main sections of the *Lam 'bras* are teachings on the Three Appearances (*snang gsum*) and Three Continua (*rgyud gsum*). On these two sections, see DAVIDSON 1992: 126–129 and STEARNS 2001: 184, n. 163 and 253–254, n. 229. STEARNS 2006: 5 explains that the first section presents "the Mahayana basis of the Path with the Result" and "contains all the preliminary topics of meditation necessary for beginning the Vajrayana path." With the latter section begins the tantric path (*sngags lam*) that includes the main practices of the *Lam 'bras*. On the term *gzhung bshad*, see STEARNS 2001: 17–18, who mentions that this was one term to describe Sa chen's commentaries and that, according to Gung ru Shes rab bzang po, the "explication of the treatise' (*gzhung bshad*) must be understood to mean 'a commentary on the *Rdo rje tshig rkang*' (...)."

⁴⁹¹ STEARNS 2000: 181–182 (s.v. experiential appearances (*nyams kyi snang ba*)), explains that this fundamental term of the *Lam 'bras* "is used to describe everything that appears to a yoga practitioner in whose mindstream at least one experience of meditative concentration has arisen." Along with the impure appearances (*ma dag pa'i snang ba*) of an ordinary being and the pure appearances (*dag pa'i snang ba*) of a *buddha*, the experiential appearances (*nyams kyi snang ba*) that arise for a *yogin* are known as the Three Appearances (*snang gsum*); see Part Three, n. 451.

ji lta ba bzhin gyi khrid in meditation until he had completely achieved its direct spiritual experience (*thad ka'i nyams*) and by investigating that instruction, his understanding reached final clarification (*brdar sha bcad*).⁴⁹²

Within the presentation of his *Lam 'bras* studies, Ngor chen relates an interesting incident that resulted in Buddhaśrī's recovering from all the diseases that had plagued him as a result of his mother attempting to abort him. While he received the empowerment of the body *maṇḍala* of Hevajra, Buddhaśrī experienced as the manifestation of yogic attainment the blissful warmth in his body (*lus la bde drod*) and developed an insight into the lucidity and emptiness of the mind's essence (*sems la gsal stong gi ye shes*). Afterwards, he joined in the tantric feast offering (*tshogs 'khor: gaṇacakra*), but felt like he had to throw up. Unable to withstand this feeling, he vomited three large globules of dark coagulated blood. He then left the assembly and again vomited a lot of bad smelling and disgusting blood. From that time on, he is said to have been cured.⁴⁹³

As mentioned above, Buddhaśrī was only one of three disciples on whom dPal ldan tshul khriṃs had bestowed the entire *Lam 'bras*; the other two being Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and Mi nyag Rin chen rdo rje.⁴⁹⁴ Ngor chen adds that, though dPal ldan tshul khriṃs bestowed the majority of the *Lam 'bras* on numerous students, only those three received the *Lam 'bras* as dPal ldan tshul khriṃs himself had obtained it from his own teachers Chos rje Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa, Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, and Grub chen dKar po brag pa Rin chen seng ge.⁴⁹⁵ While performing the prediction of practice (*sgrub lung sbyin pa*) at the conclusion of the *Lam 'bras*, dPal ldan tshul khriṃs gave Buddhaśrī the following prophecy: "You will have a long life and achieve an excellent realisation. So strive at gaining experience through meditative practice. At a later time, [you] will also benefit a few students."⁴⁹⁶

Along with the *Lam 'bras*, Buddhaśrī received a variety of other teachings from dPal ldan tshul khriṃs, which he in turn would transmit to Ngor chen later on. For instance, he obtained teachings on the meditative practices of Guhyasamāja and the majority of oral instructions on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* that were extant in Tibet at that time. He also received the empowerment of the body *maṇḍala* of Cakrasaṃvara and the empowerment of Tārā, Sarvavid Vairocana, Amitāyus, and of the *Pañcarakṣā* collection. Moreover, he received teachings on different Mahākāla forms and Uṣṇīṣavijayā, the

⁴⁹² See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 417.5–418.3). The *gZhung ji lta ba bzhin gyi khrid* was written by rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan and, as STEARNS 2001: 253, n. 229 explains, it was "the first instruction manual focusing on the 'three appearances' (*snang gsum*) and the 'three continuums' (*rgyud gsum*), which are two main sections of the *Lam 'bras*. This text (...) was the model for a new genre in the *Lam 'bras* literature." According to the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 279.4–5), the *gZhung ji lta ba bzhin gyi khrid* belongs to a collection of four instructions known as the *gZhung shing bzhi*. See also STEARNS 2001: 34, who refers to these four as the "'four great fundamental works' (*gzhung shing chen po bzhi*)." They form part of the *Pod ser*, the compilation of early *Lam 'bras* texts by Grags pa rgyal mtshan. For the *gZhung ji lta ba bzhin gyi khrid*, see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 11, pp. 300.4–314.5). For the *Lam 'bras* teachings that dPal ldan tshul khriṃs had bestowed on Buddhaśrī and the latter transmitted to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 271.1–285.2). For the transmission line of the *gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gzhung ji lta ba bzhin du bkri ba'i nyams khrid*, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 273.4–274.2).

⁴⁹³ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 418.3–4).

⁴⁹⁴ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 214.17–20), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 202.6), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 146.1–3), and STEARNS 2006: 241.

⁴⁹⁵ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 418.4–419.1).

⁴⁹⁶ *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 419.1–2): *khyod la tshe ring po dang rtogs pa bzang po 'ong bas nyams len la 'bad pa thon' phyi dus slob ma 'ga' zhiig la phan pa 'byung (...)*. On the "'summation of the path and prediction of practice' (*lam bsdu te bsgrub pa'i lung sbyin pa*)," see STEARNS 2001: 237, n. 136.

reading transmission for the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*, the *Mountain Dharma* of Bla ma Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal (1213–1258), and the *Six Dharmas of Niguma*.⁴⁹⁷

Now let me briefly describe Buddhaśrī's hermitage of Zhi dgon, the site where he had received the *Lam 'bras* for the third time from dPal ldan tshul khirms. In their religious chronologies, both Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs assert that Buddhaśrī founded Zhi dgon in 1377 in the mDog valley of La stod Byang.⁴⁹⁸ The mDog valley was Buddhaśrī's native region, where he had been born and where his father's monastery of sGo phu was located. By contrast, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs specifies the monastery's location in his Ngor chen biography as Chu kha, although that locality is also found in La stod Byang.⁴⁹⁹ From the sources emerges that Chu kha (or Chud kha), as mentioned above, was both the name of a monastery where Buddhaśrī had acted as head teacher (*'chad nyan*) and of a locality to whose ruler (*chud kha sde pa*) Buddhaśrī at a time of famine had sold all his household belongings, investing the proceeds in barley that he donated to the needy.⁵⁰⁰ The relation of Chu kha to mDog needs further clarification, however.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁷ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 419.2–420.6). For those and other teachings that dPal ldan tshul khirms had bestowed on Buddhaśrī and which the latter transmitted to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 285.2–296.5). On Guhyasamāja teachings, see also the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (pp. 29.5–30.3) and *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.1–2). On Buddhaśrī's Kālacakra studies, see also the *Dus 'khor chos 'byung* (p. 123.3–4).

⁴⁹⁸ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 337.7): *me sprul la mdog gzhi [= zhi] dgon grub chen bud dha shrīs btabl*; and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 247.15–18): *sum stong nga brgya dang bcu ru son pa me mo sbrul (spyi lo 1377) la mdog zhe dgon gyi sngags dgon byonl de nas brgya dang brgyadl 'debs mkhan grub chen buddha shri lnga bcu rtsa gcig bzhes pasl rje dpal ldan tshul khirms la gsung ngag thog mar gsan pa'i tshe yinl*. According to the latter passage, Buddhaśrī obtained the *Lam 'bras* for the first time from dPal ldan tshul khirms when he was fifty-one years old (i.e., in 1389). By contrast, according to the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 417.5–6), he received it in the snake year (i.e., in 1377) at Sa skya. Only later on, he received it for a third time at Zhi dgon. Since the difference between Buddhaśrī's age as given in those two works amounts to about twelve years, a possible explanation for the contradictory presentation as found in the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* might be that by calculating Buddhaśrī's age an error was made in determining the element sign. In that case, the work would also refer to the first *Lam 'bras* teaching at Sa skya in 1377. The other dating (i.e., *de nas brgya dang brgyadl*) is not clear to me. It seems that two different ways of counting are employed that run through the whole work and are also encountered in the histories of other monastic establishments. Zhi dgon is also often spelled Zhe dgon; see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 263.6), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 223.12 and 247.16), and *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 3 (p. 231.1–2). In the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (p. 318.10), it is spelled gZhis dgon. But in accord with all the different editions of Buddhaśrī's biography by Ngor chen, I employ the spelling Zhi dgon. SCHOENING 1990: 44 mentions a Zhi dgon bla brang at Sa skya that might have been related to Zhi dgon. For a list of masters associated with this *bla brang*, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 67a6–b1). On this *bla brang*, see also the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 136.3–11) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 75a4–b2).

⁴⁹⁹ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 2 (p. 498.6): *byi ba'i lo la byang gi chu kha'i zhi dgon du byon pasl*. On Chu kha (or Chud kha), see Part Three, nn. 478 and 501.

⁵⁰⁰ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 416.2 and 421.4–5), respectively.

⁵⁰¹ As pointed out by 'Jam dpal bshad sgrub (WeChat, 26.09.2016), Zhi dgon is located in present-day Ngam ring county (*rdzong*), about half an hour by car northeast of the Ngam ring county seat. It is located in Chu 'og township (*shang*) in a region that is known by two names: mDog (or mDog gzhung) and Chu kha. It is located atop a mountain to the north above the mDog valley (mDog gzhung) in which the mDog river (mDog chu gtsang po) flows eastwards, and it takes about an hour by foot to climb that mountain and reach the monastery's remains; see pls. 45–48. In the opposite direction to the south one finds mDog Lo phu dgon pa, which was founded, in 1472, by the Sa skya rDzong master Grub chen Chos kyi rin chen (1421–1494?). Other rDzong monasteries in that region were rDzong rtse dgon, which nowadays adheres to the Jo nang tradition, and mDog Ya ga chos sdings, which was founded (in 1429?) by mKhas btsun dPal ldan bzang po, though these days only a few traces remain. Moreover, the rNying ma nunnery of Chos gling dgon is said to have once been a Sa skya monastery, and Se mkhar chung rDo rje brag, the seat of the *Lam 'bras* master Se ston Kun rig, is also located in mDog. On the foundation of mDog Ya ga chos sdings, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 248.14–16). On that of mDog Lo phu, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 248.21–249.2) as well. mDog gzhung and the

The foundation of Zhi dgon is also recorded in Ngor chen's biography of Buddhaśrī and recounted in the context of a dream that Buddhaśrī had after having studied the *Lam 'bras* for the first time under dPal ldan tshul khriṃs at Sa skya in 1377. Developing the intention to focus himself on gaining the spiritual experience of the *Lam 'bras* through meditative practice, he dreamed one night that he climbed up the mountain of his future monastic site and went to a small house, where he encountered a white coloured *paṇḍita* whom he considered to be rJe btsun Gayadhara. That *paṇḍita* was reciting a verse from Virūpa's *Vajra Verses (rDo rje tshig rkang)*: "Through meditation on the four initiations in four sessions of the path, and in dependence on the body, the obscurations to great bliss cease and enlightenment is clear, so it is the explanatory continuum."⁵⁰² Waking up, he made up his mind to live at that place and subsequently built at Zhi dgon the hermitage that he had encountered in his dream. Until his passing away, Buddhaśrī mainly resided at Zhi dgon, devoting himself to spiritual practice.⁵⁰³

It was also at Zhi dgon that Ngor chen approached Buddhaśrī for the first time. In his master's biography, Ngor chen relates that he reached Zhi dgon in the third month of the mouse year (i.e., in 1408) when Buddhaśrī was seventy-one years old.⁵⁰⁴ For this and the next year (i.e., 1408–1409), he stayed at Zhi dgon and studied under Buddhaśrī. In his master's biography, he provides an interesting insight into the teaching activities at Zhi dgon. For example, he reports on the difficulties that some disciples faced with regard to their spiritual practice and relates Buddhaśrī's guiding instructions, even sharing some details of his own *Lam 'bras* studies.⁵⁰⁵

In the tiger year (i.e., in 1410), Buddhaśrī remarked that he would travel to Sa skya because, unless he went then, he would never make it. Together with Ngor chen, he subsequently journeyed to Sa skya and Sa bzang, where he resided for nine months in all. At Sa skya, he made various offerings to the statue of Śrīmahākāla (i.e., Vajrapañjara) housed in the sGo rum temple and made a supplication to that important protector. As a result, he said that an auspicious interconnection had been formed so that the Sa skya

monasteries of Lo phu, (sGyi chu, gZhis [= Zhi] dgon,) and Ya ga chos sdings are also mentioned in the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (p. 318.10–11). sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho also lists Ya ga chos sdings and Chos gling among the fifteen Sa skya pa *grwa tshangs* of Ngam ring Chos sde; see the *Baiḍūrya ser po* (p. 267.17–20). It needs to be further clarified (1) whether these *grwa tshangs* were based at Ngam ring, or (2) whether they were considered branches of Ngam ring who had their own monasteries, or (3) whether they had both a *grwa tshang* at Ngam ring and their own monastery. A Sa skya master connected to Ya ga chos sdings was rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1382–1436), who headed both Ngam ring Chos sde and (the *grwa tshang*?) of Ya ga chos sdings; see the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 344.3), *Baiḍūrya ser po* (p. 264.3), and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 217.13–15). Similarly, Paṇ grub bZang po bkra shis (1495–1564), a teacher of Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, is said to have, in 1543, served as *dbu mdzad* of Ngam ring and headed the *bshad grwa* of Ya ga chos sdings, before he was installed as abbot of Ngam ring in 1547; see the *Baiḍūrya ser po* (p. 264.9) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 241.2–5). Apparently, the *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* (p. 1267, s.v. *paṇ chen bzang po bkra shis*) and SHEN 2002: 232, n. 376 confused Paṇ grub bZang po bkra shis with Paṇ chen bZang po bkra shis (1410–1478). Besides many other positions, Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho also briefly served as *slob dpon* of Chos gling (end of 1552–beginning of 1553) and of Ya ga chos sdings (1556–1573); see the *Klu sgrub rgya mtsho'i rang rnam* (pp. 427.6–428.4, 435.3–4, and *passim*) and *Baiḍūrya ser po* (p. 264.10). He makes mention of a Ngam ring Chos gling bla brang and Chos gling *grwa tshang*; see the *Klu sgrub rgya mtsho'i rang rnam* (pp. 432.5 and 578.4), respectively.

⁵⁰² STEARNS 2006: [13]. For the verse, see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 422.4): *lam gyi thun bzhi la dbang bzhi bsgoms pas lus la brten nas bde chen gyi sgrub pa 'gag cing 'tshang rgya bar gsal bas bshad rgyud (...)*. For an alternative translation of this verse, see DAVIDSON 2005: [477].

⁵⁰³ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 422.3–6). For an overview of Buddhaśrī's daily practices, see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 422.6–424.2).

⁵⁰⁴ Here we face a chronological problem. In 1408, according to the Tibetan system of chronological calculation, Buddhaśrī would have been seventy years old instead of seventy-one.

⁵⁰⁵ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 424.6–427.2).

tradition would become slightly stronger. While at Sa skya and Sa bzung, numerous scholars, such as g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal, requested many empowerments, meditative instructions, and esoteric instructions from Buddhaśrī and also Ngor chen completed his religious training under him. With his mind at ease, Buddhaśrī returned to his hermitage of Zhi dgon.⁵⁰⁶

From the hare year (i.e., 1411) on, Buddhaśrī secluded himself in a strict retreat for three years, which he only interrupted for granting a couple of teachings to very few important religious scholars (*dge bshes*). From the horse year (i.e., 1414) on, he made his seclusion even stricter. That same year, Ngor chen departed on his first journey to dBus and when he arrived back at Sa skya in the fifth month of the bird year (i.e., in 1417), he heard that Buddhaśrī had fallen sick. He thus immediately went to visit his master, and as he drew near to Zhi dgon, he was received by Buddhaśrī's attendant Nam mkha' mgon.

Surprised by this reception, Ngor chen asked from whom Nam mkha' mgon had heard about his coming. The attendant replied that since last month Buddhaśrī had already repeatedly been saying that Ngor chen had arrived back at Sa skya and that he should make preparations for his arrival at Zhi dgon. In particular, he was told to look out for him yesterday and today. After his arrival, Ngor chen went right away to visit his master and though Buddhaśrī was still slightly sick, he was very happy to see him. The two of them drank a lot of tea and engaged in a long conversation.

The next day, Buddhaśrī told Ngor chen about a dream he had on the night of the fifth day of the fourth month. In this dream, Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan had appeared, prophesying that Buddhaśrī's disciple would come on the eighth day. If that disciple would make supplications, Buddhaśrī would continue to live for another four years. This dream was interpreted by Buddhaśrī to mean that Ngor chen would come to visit him very soon. Because the night of the present day would seemingly coincide with the auspicious eighth day of each month, he advised Ngor chen to perform the ritual propitiation (*bskang gso*) of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, who, since last year, had been of special help in his "practicing of the path" (*lam sgrub pa*).⁵⁰⁷

After more talks over tea on the progress of Buddhaśrī's spiritual realisation, on the tenth day, the monastic community of Zhi dgon made supplications and performed rituals for the recovery of Buddhaśrī. Together with six other attendants, Ngor chen performed the *sgrub mchod* ritual of Cakrasaṃvara in the tradition of Ghaṇṭāpāda and by offering on a large scale *gtor mas* to the *ḍākinīs* and *dharmapālas*, they brought forward supplications. dBon po Shes rab seng ge requested Buddhaśrī to continue to live until his hundredth year.⁵⁰⁸ Obviously amused by this request, the latter replied:⁵⁰⁹

Who lives for about one hundred years? [I] am [already] long-lived. If this time Bla ma pa [i.e., Ngor chen] had not come, there would have been the risk that [I] would have died. But owing to an auspicious connection, he came. Now [I] can die. [I] do not have a single regret or mental obligation. Well, some time ago, it also occurred

⁵⁰⁶ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 427.2–4). On the interpretation of that prophecy, see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (pp. 264.5–265.2). The sGo rum was dedicated to Vajrapañjara; see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 137.10–142.14) and VENTURI 2010: 339–340.

⁵⁰⁷ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 427.4–428.4).

⁵⁰⁸ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 428.4–429.5).

⁵⁰⁹ *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 429.5–6): lo brgya tsam sdod mkhan su yod/ tshe ring po yin/ da len [= lan] bla ma pa ma sleb na shi nyen 'dug na yang rten 'brel gyis khong slebs/ da shi rung 'gyod pa dang/ sems kyi 'khri ba cig kyang med/ da khar sang 'gro mgon chos rjes lo bzhi mi 'chi gsungs pa yang byung/ khyed rnam de ring phul pa'i gdan 'di yang bzhi 'dug pas lo bzhi sdod/ de nas phyin pa drag (...).

that 'Gro mgon Chos rje [i.e., Bla ma dam pa] said “[You] will not die [in the next] four years.” Since also these cushions that you have offered today are four, [I] will live for [another] four years. Then, it is better that [I] depart [i.e., die].

After the conclusion of those ceremonies, Ngor chen stayed with his master for one month. He reports that until his death, Buddhaśrī only remained in meditation and did not receive anybody except for one attendant. As he had already given away all his personal belongings, he was economically supported during his last years by the monastery of Chud kha (or Chu kha).⁵¹⁰

In the spring of the dog year (i.e., in 1418), Ngor chen paid another visit to his aged master. He reports that Buddhaśrī was in a good physical condition and engaged in virtuous practices (*dge sbyor*), advising his disciple to follow his example.⁵¹¹

At the beginning of 1419, Buddhaśrī terminated his teaching activities by conferring yet unfinished teachings and retreated afterwards completely from worldly life, intensifying his practice in seclusion.⁵¹²

In the ninth month of 1420, he developed a slight health problem with his legs. Only reluctantly he followed the request of his attendant and disciples to interrupt his retreat to travel to the hot springs of Blon po to treat it. He departed for the hot springs on the eighth day, but the hope for cure failed to materialise. Even worse, he was approached by many local people wanting to establish a religious connection (*chos 'brel*) as well as requesting blessings (*byin rlabs*) and blessed protective cords (*srung skud*) from him, resulting in his suffering a “defilement” (*grib*). Without any improvement in his health, he returned to Zhi dgon on the tenth day and passed away on the evening of the fifteenth day of the ninth month of 1420.⁵¹³

Ngor chen's presentation of the last days of Buddhaśrī suggests that he might have spent that time together with his master at Zhi dgon.⁵¹⁴ But except for his mentioning of Buddhaśrī's cremation and the subsequent appearance of some extraordinary relics (*ring bsrel*),⁵¹⁵ we are neither told by Ngor chen nor the latter's biographers whether he himself was actually engaged in the funeral services of his late teacher.⁵¹⁶

In his master's biography, Ngor chen includes an interesting list of works that Buddhaśrī had composed.⁵¹⁷

*de dag gi bar skabs su man ngag zab mo yi ger bkod pa yang 'ba' zhid yod de/ [1] 'gro mgon chos kyi rje la gsol ba gdab pa/*⁵¹⁸ *[2] bla ma dam pa dpal ldan tshul khriṃs pa la gsol ba gdab pa/ [3] mkhan chen shes rab rgya mtsho'i gdung mchod dus kyi gsol 'debs/ [4] bla ma dam pa dpal ldan tshul khriṃs kyi rnam thar/ [5] gsung ngag rin po che'i khrid yig [6]*

⁵¹⁰ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 429.6–430.2).

⁵¹¹ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 430.2).

⁵¹² See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 430.2–4).

⁵¹³ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 430.4–431.3).

⁵¹⁴ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 430.4–431.3).

⁵¹⁵ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 431.3–4).

⁵¹⁶ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 431.3–4).

⁵¹⁷ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 424.3–6). In the biography, some titles are not separated by the *shad* punctuation marker. I have differentiated the individual works by comparison with the other available versions of Buddhaśrī's biography; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 2 (pp. 391.3–392.3), *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 3 (fol. 12a6–b4), and *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 4 (pp. 159.4–160.1). For a slightly varying list, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 43.7–17).

⁵¹⁸ As mentioned above, Ngor chen refers to Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan as 'Gro mgon Chos rje. See also the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 2 (p. 391.5–6), where the full title of this work is given as 'Gro mgon chos kyi rje bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po la bsol ba gdab pa.

lam 'bras gzhung bshad dang [7] gegs sel gyi zin bris [8] 'chi ltas brtag pa'i gdams ngag tshigs bcad ma [9] grub chen bcu dang phra mo brgyad kyi zhal shes [10] phrin las so gnyis kyi sdom tshig [11] sbyor drug gi khrid yig [12] sron lugs kyi rlung sbyor sogs kyi zin bris [13] dbang rgyal ba'i sbyor drug gi zhal shes yi ger bkod pa [14] khrid zhu spyi la gdams pa [15] tshe sgrub kyi man ngag [16] dbu ma'i gzhi lam 'bras gsum rnam mdzad do!

So far, I have been able to locate six of Buddhaśrī's works. Two of them were included by Ngor chen himself in his compilation of *Lam 'bras* practice works, the *Pod dmar ma*: the *Phrin las so gnyis kyi sdom tshig dang zhal shes* (i.e., no. 10) and *Grub chen bcu dang phra mo brgyad kyi zhal shes gsal byed* (i.e., no. 9).⁵¹⁹ Three other works are preserved among a collection of manuscripts originating from Ngor Monastery housed at the National Library of Bhutan: the *Dus kyi 'khor lo'i gegs sel mig gi sgron ma* (9 fols.), *Zab lam khrid kyi yi ge* (alias *Srog rtsol yid bzhin nor bu'i 'jug gtsugs* or *Srog rtsol gyi man ngag lag len du bstan pa/ yid bzhin nor bu'i snying po*; 6 fols.), and *Srog dus bzhi pa* (4 fols.). All three texts were originally written by gNyos ston dBang phyug rgyal mtshan from La stod, an important disciple of Kun spangs Thugs rje btson 'grus, and, according to annotations, their many interlinear notes were added by Buddhaśrī, who had set down oral accounts (*gsung sgras*) in writing.⁵²⁰ The first text corresponds to the one listed above under number seven, the *Gegs sel gyi zin bris*, the second might be identical to number eleven, the *Sron lugs kyi rlung sbyor sogs kyi zin bris*, and the third might be number thirteen, the *dBang rgyal ba'i sbyor drug gi zhal shes yi ger bkod pa*. Finally, there is the reproduction of a nineteen-folio-manuscript of the biography of dPaI ldan tshul khriims (no. 4).⁵²¹

6.4.2 Ngor chen's Relation with Buddhaśrī and Teachings Received

While studying under Chos rje Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog dpal bzang at Chos 'khor sgang, Ngor chen's biographer tells us of a prophetic dream that his subject experienced in connection with his future studies of the *Lam 'bras* under Buddhaśrī:⁵²²

⁵¹⁹ For the former work, see the *Po ti dmar chung* (p. 273.1–4) and *Pod dmar ma* (p. 191.2–4). It consists of two parts, the *sdom tshig* and *zhal shes*, but only the first part ends with a colophon by Buddhaśrī. For the latter work, see the *Po ti dmar chung* (pp. 473–483) and *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 341.5–348.3). On both works, see also SOBISCH 2008: 106 and 109, respectively.

⁵²⁰ See respectively the *Dus kyi 'khor lo'i gegs sel mig gi sgron ma* (fol. 9a2–3): *dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i gegs sel mig gi sgron ma zhes bya ba/ gnyos ston dbang phyug rgyal mtshan gyis sbyar ba'o// {gsung sgras mchan du bud dha shris btab}*; *Zab lam khrid kyi yi ge* (fol. 6b2–3): *srog rtsol gyi man ngag lag len du bstan pa/ yi bzhin nor bu'i snying po// zhes bya ba/ gnyos ston dbang rgyal gyis sbyar ba'o// {gsung sgras mchan du bud dha shris btab}*; and *Srog dus bzhi pa* (fol. 4b5): *bla ma dbang rgyal bas mdzad pa'o// {gsung sgras chan [= mchan] du buddha shris btab}*. On dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (alias La stod pa dBang rgyal or Bla ma gNyos ston dBang rgyal), see Part Three, 6.2.1 and Part Three, n. 412. On some of his writings, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 291.5–6).

⁵²¹ See the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 4* (vol. 116, pp. 41–78). On two other manuscripts of that biography housed at 'Bras spungs Monastery, see Part Three, n. 380.

⁵²² *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 498.1–2): *de'i dus nub gcig mnal lam du/ zgugs 'di ltar yin gyi nges pa med pa'i sgra cig la/ bla ma kun dga' bzang po lam 'bras zhu na 'di na yar byon zer ba zhig byung bas/ der byon pas ri 'bor cig na/ dang ra sgo byang bstan rtsig pa khro le ba byas pa/ nang na yar rdo khrob se byas pa cig gi nang na khang pa sgo shar bstan cig 'dug pa'i skas cig la 'dzegs byon pas skas mgo na dge bshes sha rtsi smug se ba cig gis spos sna byas gdan drangs byon pas/ mtshams shig gi kha lhor bstan cig na/ bla ma sku bgres se ba ber thul 'dra ba bsname pa cig dang mjal ba rmis so/* On this dream, see also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 446.2–4), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 214.10–17), and

One night at that time, [Ngor chen] had a dream in which in a sound coming from an indefinite body the words occurred: “If Bla ma Kun dga’ ’bzang po requests the *Lam ’bras*, come up here.” Thus [he] went there. At [the side of] a small mountain was an enclosure [in form of a] rough wall [with its] gate facing north. Inside was upwards in a courtyard plastered with raw stones a house [with its] door facing east. Climbing up the stairs, [he] was invited at the top by a *dge bshes* of very dark complexion who guided [him inside] with incense. In one section facing south [he] met an old aged master wearing a thick robe.

After the completion of his studies under sKyabs mchog dpal bzang, Ngor chen returned to Sa skya, still cherishing the wish to study the *Lam ’bras*. At that time, two of the three disciples on whom dPal ldan tshul khrims had bestowed the complete *Lam ’bras* were no longer present. Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan had already passed away in 1406, and Mi nyag Rin chen rdo rje had left for Khams.⁵²³ Thinking of who might be the best teacher, Ngor chen’s inquiry led him to Buddhaśrī. First, he remembered some words of dPal ldan tshul khrims, who had mentioned that for a thorough investigation of the esoteric instructions of the *Lam ’bras*, Buddhaśrī would be an even greater expert than Shar chen. Second, he came to know of the advice that dPal ldan tshul khrims had given to a religious teacher (*dge bshes*) who was unable to receive the entire *Lam ’bras* from him prior to his death. He was instructed to request the remaining parts from either Shar chen or Buddhaśrī.⁵²⁴ Third, he had a conversation with another religious teacher (*dge bshes*) who had actually met Buddhaśrī, who praised him as an outstanding master.⁵²⁵

Making up his mind to study the *Lam ’bras* under Buddhaśrī, Ngor chen travelled in the mouse year (i.e., in 1408) to his future master’s seat at Zhi dgon in La stod Byang. When he reached that place, he found a hillside, an enclosure, and a house exactly as in his previous dream while at Chos ’khor sgang. Climbing up the stairs of that house, he was received by a certain Slob dpon Nyi ma, who was of the same appearance as in Ngor chen’s dream and who guided him inside, holding incense. In the centre of one section facing south, he met Buddhaśrī, who was wearing an old thick robe. As soon as Ngor chen remembered his previous dream, he was nearly carried away by the deep faith and devotion that arose in him for his new master. But pulling himself together, he was able to stay focused. He sat down and the two of them engaged in a long conversation.⁵²⁶

For the remaining months of the mouse year and the entire ox year (i.e., 1408–1409), Ngor chen stayed at Zhi dgon completing under Buddhaśrī the instructions on the main

gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed (p. 146.4–5). For the translation of the passage from the last work, see STEARNS 2006: 241–242. On that episode, see also STEARNS 2003: 210–211 and 257.

⁵²³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 446.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 498.2). See also the *Buddhaśrī’i rnam thar 1* (pp. 418.6–419.1), *Lam ’bras khog phub* (p. 202.6), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 146.1–3), and STEARNS 2006: 241.

⁵²⁴ This kind of advice is also mentioned in the *dPal ldan tshul khrims kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 412.5–6). Prior to his death, dPal ldan tshul khrims advised a couple of his disciples that those who had not received the complete *Lam ’bras* from him should request the remaining teachings from either Shar chen or Buddhaśrī.

⁵²⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 446.4–447.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 498.2–6). Both reasons for Ngor chen’s decision to approach Buddhaśrī—that is, his auspicious dream and the accounts introducing Buddhaśrī as a genuine teacher—are also mentioned in the *Lam ’bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.4–5).

⁵²⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 447.1–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 498.6–499.3). See also STEARNS 2003: 211 and 257. In his biography of Buddhaśrī, Ngor chen specifies that he reached Zhi dgon in the third month of the mouse year (i.e., 1408) when his teacher was seventy-one years old; see the *Buddhaśrī’i rnam thar 1* (p. 424.6). However, according to Tibetan chronological calculation, Buddhaśrī would have been seventy-years old and not seventy-one.

text (*gzhung khrid*) of the *Lam 'bras*, the *Vajra Verses* (*rDo rje tshig rkang*) of Virūpa.⁵²⁷ In the tiger year (i.e., in 1410), he accompanied his master to Sa skya and Sa bzang, where they stayed nine months.⁵²⁸ Up to that time, he received in their entirety all the oral instructions of the *Lam 'bras* and other teachings that Buddhaśrī himself possessed. He obtained the *Lam 'bras* related empowerments, explanations, experiential instructions (*nyams khrid*), and esoteric instructions on such topics as the removal of impediments (*gegs sel*).

In a meditative session of nine months, Ngor chen practiced those instructions and the related signs of spiritual progress on the path (*lam rtags*) clearly appeared.⁵²⁹ Along with the *Lam 'bras*, Ngor chen also received the esoteric instructions of both the remaining eight cycles of the path (*lam skor brgyad*) and the ancillary teachings (*zhar byung*).⁵³⁰ In his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, Ngor chen provides us with a detailed overview of all those *Lam 'bras* teachings, specifying their respective main and alternative lineages. His presentation is divided into the oral instructions of the *Lam 'bras*, the cycles of the path (*lam skor*)—that is, the remaining eight cycles of the path (*lam skor brgyad*)—and the ancillary instructions (*zhar byung*). He again arranges the presentation of the first part, the *Lam 'bras*, into the path of ripening empowerments (*smin byed kyi dbang*) and liberating instructions (*grol byed kyi khrid*).⁵³¹

In addition, Ngor chen obtained a large amount of other, mainly tantric teachings from Buddhaśrī. For instance, his biographies list the esoteric instructions on the cycles of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, the *Six Dharmas of Niguma*, and Guhyasamāja, referring the reader to the complete list of those teachings as recorded in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya*

⁵²⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 447.4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 499.3). See also the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 215.2). In his master's biography, Ngor chen remarks that Buddhaśrī was teaching the *Lam 'bras* in 1409; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 426.1). To illustrate Buddhaśrī's realisation, Ngor chen reproduces a question he posed on the practice of the *Lam 'bras* and relates his master's answer; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 426.1–3). It has to be questioned whether Ngor chen continuously stayed at Zhi dgon because he remarks that he finished writing the *dPal kye rdo rje'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i 'byung po thams cad pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga phrin las rgyas byed* in the seventh month of 1408 at Sa bzang; see CATALOGUE (no. 66).

⁵²⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 447.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 499.3). See also the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 264.5–6) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 214.3–5). Sangs rgyas phun tshogs points to some inconsistencies in the biographies of Ngor chen by by Mus chen, Gu ge Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, and Chos dpal bzang po. According to the former, Buddhaśrī and Ngor chen stayed at both Sa skya and Sa bzang for nine months, whereas according to the latter two they stayed for a total of eleven months; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 499.3–4). Based on Ngor chen's own presentation in his biography of Buddhaśrī, we are able to clarify that they only stayed for nine months; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 427.2). During the fifth month of 1410, Ngor chen was at Sa bzang writing his *Tshogs kyi 'khor lo'i cho ga kun bzang rnam rol*; see CATALOGUE (no. 93).

⁵²⁹ In my understanding, the nine-month period that Buddhaśrī and Ngor chen stayed at Sa skya and Sa bzang and Ngor chen's practice session of nine months seem to refer to one and the same period of time. Cf. DAVIDSON 1981: 84, who takes this as two successive periods.

⁵³⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 447.5–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 499.4–5). In total, there are nine cycles of the path (*lam skor dgu*) among which the *Lam 'bras* constitutes the first path. On the remaining eight cycles of the path (*lam skor brgyad*), see Part Three, n. 298. In his biography of Buddhaśrī, Ngor chen mentions that during that period of time he completely received all of the unfinished teachings; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 427.2–4). On Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* studies under Buddhaśrī, see also the *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (pp. 340.7–341.1), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 214.10–215.5), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 228.6–229.3), *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.5), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 203.2–3), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 146.4–5), DAVIDSON 1981: 84, STEARNS 2003: 210–211 and 257, and STEARNS 2006: 241–242.

⁵³¹ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 271.1–2). For the empowerments, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 271.2–273.3). For the instructions, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (273.4–280.1). For the remaining cycles of the path (*lam skor*), see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 280.1–282.3). For the ancillary instructions (*zhar byung gig man ngag*), see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 282.3–285.2).

mtsho.⁵³² The biographies continue with a list of further teachings that Ngor chen received: the ritual procedures for generating *bodhicitta* according to both the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra systems;⁵³³ the fasting (*smyung gnas*) on Ekādaśamukhamahākāruṇika;⁵³⁴ the reading transmission for the collected works of rGyal sras Thogs med bzang po;⁵³⁵ empowerments of the Thirteen-Deity [Maṇḍala of] Raktayamāri, of the body maṇḍala of Tārā, and of Cakrasaṃvara in the tradition of Ghaṇṭāpāda;⁵³⁶ blessings or empowerments (*byin rlabs*) of different forms of Vajravārāhī (Nāro Khecarī, Two-Headed Vajravārāhī, Siddhārthā, and Cinnamastā);⁵³⁷ different initiations (*rjes gnang*) for Vajrapañjara and Four-faced Śrīmahākāla;⁵³⁸ and the *sādhana* of Amitāyus.⁵³⁹

At the time when the transmission of the *Lam' bras* had come to an end, Buddhaśrī is said to have told Ngor chen:⁵⁴⁰

[I] thought [it would be good] if you completely obtain these oral instructions that Chos rje dPal ldan tshul khirms had bestowed on me. Because [you] have received [them], [I] feel at ease.

This passage is also mentioned in Ngor chen's biography of Buddhaśrī, but given in a slightly different context. In 1414, Ngor chen approached Buddhaśrī asking for his permission to travel to Cenral Tibet (dBus).⁵⁴¹

In the horse year, I asked: "If [I] would travel to dBus for about one year, would [you let me] go?" [Buddhaśrī] replied: "Since last year, you are repeatedly saying that [you] will go. However, [I] thought [it would be better] if you completely receive these oral instructions that Chos rje dPal ldan tshul khirms had bestowed on me. As [you] did not finish earlier and [I] did not know for how much longer

⁵³² For the teachings on Guhyasamāja, the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, and the *Six Dharmas of Niguma* along with their respective lines of transmission, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 285.2–288.3, 288.3–292.2, and 294.2–296.2), respectively. On those Guhyasamāja teachings, see also the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (pp. 29.5–30.3) and *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.1–2). On Ngor chen's Kālacakra studies and his yogic experiences (*nyams snang*), see also the *Dus 'khor chos 'byung* (pp. 123.4–124.5). His Kālacakra studies are also mentioned in the *Lam' bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.5–6).

⁵³³ For the transmission lines of both ritual procedures, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 299.2–6 and 299.6–300.3), respectively.

⁵³⁴ For the transmission line of fasting on Ekādaśamukhamahākāruṇika, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 300.3–4).

⁵³⁵ For a title list of Thogs med bzang po's collected works, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 300.5–303.4). According to the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 303.4), his collected works comprised one hundred seven texts. For the transmission line of these texts, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 303.4–5).

⁵³⁶ For the transmission lines of these three teachings, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 292.2–5, 292.5–6, and 293.1–2), respectively.

⁵³⁷ For the transmission lines of these teachings, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 293.2–294.1).

⁵³⁸ For the transmission lines of these teachings, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 294.1–2).

⁵³⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 447.6–448.4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 499.6–500.4). For the transmission line of the Amitāyus longevity ritual (*tshe sgrub*), see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (303.6–304.1). For still other tantric and non-tantric teachings that Ngor chen received from Buddhaśrī, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 296.2–299.2, 303.5–6, and 304.1–2).

⁵⁴⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 500.4–5): *nged la chos rje dPal ldan tshul khirms pas gnang ba'i gdams ngag 'di rnams khyed la rdzogs par 'phrod na snyam pa de 'phrod pas sems bde (...)*. For this passage, see also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 448.5).

⁵⁴¹ *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 427.5–6): *rta lor bdag gis lo gcig tsam dBus la phyin na mchi'am zhus pas| khyod na ning nas kyang yang yang 'gro zer gyin 'dug na'ang| nged la chos rje dPal ldan tshul khirms kyi gnang ba'i gdams ngag 'di rnams khyod la rdzogs pa cig 'phrod na snyam pa de sngar ma tshar ba dang| chos rje 'phags pa'i sku tshe ji 'dra 'ong mi shes pas sdod byas pa yin| da lan song (...)* *gsungs (...)*.

Chos rje 'Phags pa [gZhon nu blo gros] would live, [I] have told [you] to stay. This time, go!

Prior to that, while staying together with Buddhaśrī at Sa skya and Sa bzang in 1410, Ngor chen mentions that numerous masters, such as g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal, requested teachings from Buddhaśrī and that his master also bestowed on him all the as of yet unfinished teachings. Remarking “Now [I] feel relieved,”⁵⁴² Buddhaśrī is said to have returned to Zhi dgon.⁵⁴³

Ngor chen's biography goes on to mention the prediction of practice (*sgrub pa lung sbyin*) that Buddhaśrī gave to Ngor chen at the conclusion of the *Lam 'bras*:⁵⁴⁴

If you one-pointedly engage in spiritual practice in the rock cave of Re sa,⁵⁴⁵ [you] will attain Buddhahood just in this life. If [you] explain [the Dharma] and act for the benefit of others, [you] will illuminate like the day the Buddha's doctrine, in general, and the Sa skya pa doctrine of teaching and practice, in particular. In that case, since the [Buddha's] doctrine is degenerating, it is most important [that you] principally teach.

Along with that, Buddhaśrī also prophesied that Ngor chen would have many *Lam 'bras* students and that numerous lineage holders would emerge among them.⁵⁴⁶ Ngor chen's biographer specifies that up to the prediction of practice eleven months had passed. That date is difficult to assess, however. As I understand it, it might refer to the nine-month period of Buddhaśrī and Ngor chen's visit to Sa skya plus two additional months.⁵⁴⁷ Afterwards, Ngor chen engaged for six months in practicing the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*. In doing so, he realised certain yogic experiences (*nyams snang*) as outlined in the *rGyud 'grel* (i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*) and experienced other signs of spiritual development as well.⁵⁴⁸ According to my reading of the sources, Ngor chen would have completed his *Lam 'bras* studies under Buddhaśrī in 1411.

As outlined in the previous section, Ngor chen mentioned in his biography of Buddhaśrī later meetings with his master in 1417 and 1418 that are not recorded by his own biographies.⁵⁴⁹ He might have even spent time with his master prior to the latter's passing in 1420.⁵⁵⁰ He also mentioned his commissioning of a set of eleven paintings of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters to fulfil the last wishes of his deceased master, which will be discussed in the next section.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴² *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 427. 4): *nga [= da] sems bde (...)*.

⁵⁴³ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 427.3–4).

⁵⁴⁴ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 500.5–501.1): *khyed kyis rtse gcig tu re sa brag phug tu sgrub pa byas na lus 'di kho na la grub mtha' snyogs shingl bshad pa dang gzhan don byas nal spyir sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dangl bye brag tu dpal ldan sa skya pa'i bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa nyin mo ltar gsal bar byed doll de lta na yang bstan pa nyams dma' bas gtso bor bshad nyan byed pa gal che'o zhes dangl.*

⁵⁴⁵ Re sa is another name for the cave of Na bza' brag phug where the famous *Lam 'bras* master Na bza' Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal spent many years in solitary meditation. By the name of Re sa, the cave is generally referred to in colloquial Tibetan spoken in that area (Zhabshar Zla ba tshe ring, lHa sa, 01 December 2011). In the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 126.14–16), we find a monastery called Ra sa, where Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge spent one night in 1489, before paying a visit to Na bza' brag phug on the following day.

⁵⁴⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 501.1).

⁵⁴⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 501.1): *de yan chad zla ba bcu gcig songl*. Cf. DAVIDSON 1981: 84, who adds these eleven months to the previous nine.

⁵⁴⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 501.1–6).

⁵⁴⁹ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 428.1–429.6 and 430.2), respectively.

⁵⁵⁰ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 430.2–431.4).

⁵⁵¹ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 431.4–5).

6.4.3 Ngor chen's Commissions for Fulfilling the Last Wishes of Buddhaśrī

His biographers provide us with a detailed list of religious objects Ngor chen commissioned in memory of his late master:⁵⁵²

As a means of fulfilling the intentions of Grub chen Buddha ba, [Ngor chen] commissioned eleven great paintings of the complete lineage masters of the *Oral Instructions* [i.e., the *Lam 'bras*]. Moreover, [he] commissioned in the upper inner sanctum, which is nowadays known as the *Lam 'bras lha khang*, [a set of statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters consisting of] a magnificent gilt image of Vajradhara and large magnificent clay statues [of the subsequent lineage masters] from Nairātmyā until Grub chen Buddha pa, small clay statues of the entire lineage from Vajradhara until Grub chen Buddha pa, which are housed in the *Lam bzang lha khang*, and as murals of the inner sanctum of the lamas' residence, the lineage masters of Hevajra, Cakrasaṃvara, Guhyasamāja, and countless *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*.

It is interesting to note that Ngor chen mainly honoured Buddhaśrī with sets of paintings and statues whose subject was directly linked to the teachings he had received from him, the *Lam 'bras*. This observation also applies to his later commissions of *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* in memory of his teacher Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu no blo gros, from whom he had received those ritual compendiums along with initiations into the related *maṇḍalas*.

As his biographies do not provide dates for Ngor chen's commissions, scholars have so far dated them to the period between 1429 and 1456, the period from Ngor chen's founding of Ngor until his passing away.⁵⁵³ However, that this was not the case for the commissioning of the *thangka* set of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters is made evident in Ngor chen's biography of Buddhaśrī, which was written by him at Sa skya, probably not long after his master's death in 1420. This work suggests both an earlier date and different place of commissioning, namely the early 1420s at Sa skya, where Ngor chen

⁵⁵² *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 548.4–549.1): *grub chen buddha ba'i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa'i thabs suḷ gsung ngag gi bla ma bgyud pa yongs su rdzogs pa'i bris sku chen mo bcu gcig dangl gzhana yang gtsang khang steng ma da lta lam 'bras lha khang du grags parl rdo rje 'chang gi gser sku khyad par du 'phags pa dangl bdag med ma nas grub chen buddha pa'i bar lder sku khyad par du 'phags pa che ba rnams dangl rdo rje 'chang nas grub chen buddha pa'i bar du bgyud pa yongs su rdzogs pa'i lder sku chung ba rnams lam bzang [= zab?] lha khang du bzhugs pa dangl bla ma rnams bzhugs pa'i gtsang khang gi logs bris laḷ kye rdo rje dangl 'khor lo bde mchog dangl gsang ba 'dus pa rnams kyi bla ma bgyud pa dangl sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' dpag tu med pa bzhangs/. On this passage, see also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 464.3–5), JACKSON 1996: 78, and JACKSON 2010a: 183. For an account of Ngor chen's commissioning of clay statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters at Ngor, see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 262.3–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 552.6–553.1). The *Lam 'bras lha khang* was located on the first floor of the thirty-pillared assembly hall of Ngor, the *dBang khang chen mo*. The *Lam bzang lha khang* is most probably a reference to the famous *Lam zab lha khang*, which was located on the first floor of the seven-pillared *gZims khang ka drug ma*. Initially, it served as Ngor chen's living quarters, the *gZims chung ka gnyis ma*, but became later known as *Lam zab lha khang*. This is confirmed by another passage from the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 550.4): *gzims chung deng sang lam zab lha khang du grags pa'i gsung ngag bgyud pa'i lder sku chung ba rnams bzhugs sa 'di yin nol*. According to Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 24 September 2012), the *bla ma rnams bzhugs pa'i gtsang khang* might refer to the *Lam 'bras lha khang* on the first floor of the *dBang khang chen mo*.*

⁵⁵³ For instance, see JACKSON 2010a: 183–184 and JACKSON 2011: 85.

had spent most of his life until shifting to Ngor only in 1429. As the last subject of his master's biography, Ngor chen mentions his commissioning of the *thangka* set.⁵⁵⁴

To infuse with the blessings of that Sublime One and to fulfil [his] intentions, I commissioned eleven paintings of the main lineage masters of the *Precious Oral Instructions* from the Victorious Vajradhara until the Lord [Buddhaśrī] himself and that [depict] the lineage masters surrounded by many *yi dam* deities. In order to prepare the cloth for that [painting set], [I] pulverised [the cremated] remains of the Lord together with some fragrant aroma. From within the grounded remains for applying [on the cloth], two extraordinary relics appeared.

The fact that Buddhaśrī's ashes were used in preparing the cloth for the *thangkas* suggests that Ngor chen commissioned that set not long after Buddhaśrī's death in 1420. Since Ngor chen makes no mention of the statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters, it is likely that it was the first of his commissions while he was still based at Sa skya and that his other commissions were most probably executed later on, at Ngor.

However, at one time, the set was obviously brought to Ngor, where it was displayed during the annual bestowal of the *Lam 'bras*. This can be inferred from Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen, which also provides us with further information on other painting sets of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters that were once housed at Ngor:⁵⁵⁵

The eleven *Lam 'bras* *thangkas* [commissioned as] a means to fulfil the intentions of Grub chen Buddha ba, together with the supplement [of *thangkas*] of later lamas, are this [very set] that is displayed during the path initiation of the *Oral Instructions* in [annual] alternation with the [set of] golden *thangkas* commissioned by Lord dKon mchog dpal ldan. The continuation of the golden *thangkas* has been commissioned by Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis. [These *thangkas*] are kept in the erstwhile gZims chung ka gnyis ma that is nowadays known as the *Lam zab lha khang*. If [they] are forcibly taken from this [repository] to somewhere else, the adamant Dharma protectors are going to perform acts of defeating [such attempts].

As the main figures of those eleven paintings, which are mostly shown as successive pairs facing each other, Ngor chen had depicted his own *Lam 'bras* lineage:⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 431.4–5): *dam pa de nyid kyi byin rlabs 'jug cing thugs kyi dgongs pa rdzogs pa'i ched du bdag gis rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang nas rje nyid kyi bar gyi gsung ngag rin po che'i bla ma brgyud pa rnam gtso bor gyur ba la| bla ma brgyud pa la yi dam mang pos bskor ba'i bris sku bcu gcig bzhengs tel de'i ras 'dul la rje nyid kyi gdung dri bzang po dang lhan cig phye mar byas te bgo ba'i ched du gdung btags pa'i gseb nas ring bsrel khyad 'phags gnyis byon to|.*

⁵⁵⁵ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 549.2–549.4): *grub chen buddha ba'i dgongs rdzogs thabs lam 'bras thang ka bcu gcig| bla ma phyi ma'i kha skong dang bcas| gsung ngag gi lam dbang skabs su| rje dkon mchog dpal ldan pas bzhengs pa'i gser thang rnam dang res mos su 'grem pa 'di yin| gser thang 'phros rnam byams pa kun dga' bkra shis kyi bzhengs par 'dul| bzhugs sa sngar gyi gzims chung ka gnyis ma da lta lam zab lha khang du grags par bzhugs| 'di las gzhan du 'khyer bcom byed na rdo rje chos skyong rnam kyi tshar gcod kyi las mdzad par 'gyur rol.* On this passage, see also JACKSON 1996: 78 and JACKSON 2010a: 83–84. Cf. the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 468.3), which merely mentions dKon mchog dpal ldan commissioning *thangkas* as a continuation of the *Lam 'bras* lineage, and also the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 676.6–677.1), which credits Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis with the commission of seventeen golden *thangkas* of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters. According to Phan bde mkhan Rin po che (gZhis ka rtse, 08 December 2011), the term *rdo rje chos skyong* refers to the Dharma protectors in general, but in the case of Ngor, we should understand it as referring to Vajrapañjara and Four-faced Śrīmahākāla. Among these two, it was the latter that became the chief protector of Ngor; see Part Four, 5.2.

⁵⁵⁶ See JACKSON 2010a: 184.

- (1) Vajradhara
- (2) Virūpa and Kṛṣṇapāda
- (3) Damarūpa and Avadhūtipa
- (4) Gayadhara and 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Shākya ye shes (993–1077?)
- (5) Se ton Kun rig (1025–1122) and Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053–1135)
- (6) Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158)
- (7) Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216)
- (8) Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) and Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (1235–1280)
- (9) Zhang ston dKon mchog dpal (b. 1240) and Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277–1350)
- (10) Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa (1316–1358) and dPal ldan tshul khrim (1333–1339)
- (11) Buddhaśrī (1339–1420)

Noticeably, Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan was not depicted on any of the thangkas. That is surprising, as the main *Lam 'bras* lineage was passed down through him and thus his depiction would have been expected on thangka number ten as the lineage master of dPal ldan tshul khrim. However, since the latter had received the entire *Lam 'bras* from Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan, Shangs dKar po brag pa mKhas grub Rin chen seng ge, and Bla ma dam pa, it seems that Ngor chen wanted to stress the teaching line of Blo gros brtan pa. By contrast, in his supplication to the masters of the *Lam 'bras*, he listed Bla ma dam pa making no mention of Blo gros brtan pa.⁵⁵⁷ Both masters can also be found as lineage masters in Ngor chen's record of teachings received: the main *Lam 'bras* lineage descending through Bla ma dam pa and an alternative lineage through Blo gros brtan pa.⁵⁵⁸

Moreover, it is interesting to note that on the first painting of the set, Vajradhara, Ngor chen paid tribute to his late teacher Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, having him depicted twice above to the right and left shoulders of the main figure, even though he had only received a few *Lam 'bras* related teachings from him.⁵⁵⁹

Among those eleven paintings, at least three (nos. 1, 2, and 7) are known to have survived. In a series of publications, David Jackson investigated these three paintings and identified them as belonging to Ngor chen's commission. His identification is based on a detailed description of the entire set written by Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub.⁵⁶⁰ During his two sojourns in central Tibet (from 1489 to 1497 and 1506 to mid-1509), Glo bo mKhan chen had visited Ngor several times and it was during one of his stays there that he wrote his description, as we come to know from the colophon.⁵⁶¹ The fact that Glo bo mKhan chen encountered those paintings at Ngor further supports my

⁵⁵⁷ See the *Lam 'bras bla brgyud kyi gsol 'debs* (p. 7.1–4).

⁵⁵⁸ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 271.1–6).

⁵⁵⁹ See JACKSON 2010a: 184–185, fig. 8.4.

⁵⁶⁰ In his article *A Painting of Sa-skya-pa Masters From an old Ngor-Pa Series of Lam 'Bras Thangkas*, Jackson discussed painting number seven; see JACKSON 1986. This painting was again shortly mentioned by Jackson in his *A History of Tibetan Painting* and discussed in much more detail in his recent exhibition catalogue *Mirror of the Buddha: Early Portraits from Tibet*; see JACKSON 1996: 78 and 81–82 and JACKSON 2011: 83–85, fig. 3.12, respectively. In his exhibition catalogue *The Nepal Legacy in Tibetan Painting*, Jackson presented the first two paintings of the set; see JACKSON 2010a: 183–187, figs. 8.4, 8.5, and 8.5A. For these three paintings, see also pls. 5–7. For Glo bo mKhan chen's description of the entire set, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum* 1 (vol. 1, fols. 99a–104a; vol. 4, fols. 309a–312b; and vol. 5, pp. 225–234). On this description, see also KRAMER 2008: 88–89 and 176, no. 85 and JACKSON 2010a: 226, n. 376.

⁵⁶¹ On Glo bo mKhan chen's two sojourns in central Tibet, see Part Four, 6.

assumption that the whole set was brought to Ngor after its commission at Sa skya. In conclusion, I would say that the thangka set of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters was one of Ngor chen's earliest commissions when he was still based at Sa skya, but that the set was later on brought to Ngor, perhaps by Ngor chen himself.

6.5 Scholastic Training under g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal

On several occasions within a period of four or five years, Ngor chen studied such subjects as Prajñāpāramitā and Pramāṇa under g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal (1348–1414), most probably at Sa skya.⁵⁶² Prior to that, an early connection between the two had been established in 1390 when g.Yag ston functioned as one of the members of the monastic community that formed the necessary quorum of participants in Ngor chen's ordination of taking at once the vows of a layman and novice monk.⁵⁶³

As g.Yag ston is a much better known figure in the field of Tibetan Buddhist studies than Ngor chen's other teachers, I will only make a few remarks on his person that are directly relevant to Ngor chen's studies under him.⁵⁶⁴ g.Yag ston was a great Prajñāpāramitā scholar who was famed for his eight-volume set of commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, the *g.Yag ṭik*.⁵⁶⁵ He is also considered a reviver of Pramāṇa studies, owing to whom Sa skya Paṇḍita's Pramāṇa tradition was perpetuated at many Sa skya seminaries.⁵⁶⁶ He is honoured by the Sa skya school as one of its Six Ornaments that Beautify the Snow Land Tibet. Within that group, along with either Rong ston Shes bya kun rig or Red mda' ba gZhon nu blo gros, he is considered as one of two scholars that were experts in the sutric (i.e., non-tantric) side of scholastic learning.⁵⁶⁷

Ngor chen's biography contains only a very short passage on his studies under g.Yag ston, and in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, Ngor chen did not record those studies at all. It is thus difficult to chronologically determine this period of studies within the context of Ngor chen's religious training as a whole. Nevertheless, since g.Yag ston passed away in 1414, we can determine that Ngor chen studied under him in his youth while he was still residing at Sa skya. Though his biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs presents the section on Ngor chen's studies under g.Yag ston after the completion of his *Lam 'bras* studies under Buddhaśrī in about 1411, Ngor chen must have begun his studies prior to that year.⁵⁶⁸ This is confirmed by the chronology given by Gung ru Shes rab bzang po in the completion of Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* history. According to him, Ngor chen studied under g.Yag ston prior to his studies under Lo tsā ba sKyabs mchog dpal bzang and Buddhaśrī.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 501.6). See also the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.3). In addition, see also the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 213.20–21), where only Ngor chen's Pramāṇa studies are emphasised.

⁵⁶³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 435.3–5), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 487.1–3), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 181.3–182.3).

⁵⁶⁴ For a biographical sketch of g.Yag ston, see the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung 2* (pp. 224.3–225.4).

⁵⁶⁵ For this eight-volume set, see TBRC (W24766). g.Yag ston's commentaries are listed in the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 41.8–11) as follows: *sher phyin mngon rtogs rgyan gyi 'grel pa don gsal gyi ṭikka 'bring po* | *sher phyin mngon rtogs rgyan gyi spyi don* | *sher phyin mngon rtogs rgyan gyi ṭikka bdsud pa rin chen bsam 'phel* | *de nyid kyi ṭikka shin tu rgyas pa rin chen phreng ba*.

⁵⁶⁶ See JACKSON 1987: 135.

⁵⁶⁷ On the "Six Ornaments that Beautify the Snow Land [Tibet]" (*gangs can mdzes par byed pa'i rgyan drug*), see Preface, n. 1.

⁵⁶⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 498.6–502.1).

⁵⁶⁹ See the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (pp. 487.3–488.1). See also the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 213.20–215.5), where a similar chronology is given. Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 450.4), where Ngor chen's studies under g.Yag ston are mentioned after the completion of his *Lam 'bras* studies.

From Ngor chen's biography of Buddhaśrī, we also come to know of a later meeting between g.Yag ston and Ngor chen for the year 1410. At that time, Buddhaśrī had travelled together with Ngor chen to Sa skya and Sa bzang, where they stayed for nine months. During their stay, Buddhaśrī bestowed teachings on many scholars such as g.Yag ston.⁵⁷⁰

Regarding his scholastic training, we learn that, one and a half times, Ngor chen received from g.Yag ston explanations on Prajñāpāramitā, which might here refer to the *Abhisamayālamkāra* (*phar phyin gyi bshad pa*) along with his teacher's own *Abhisamayālamkāra* commentaries, the *g.Yag ṭik*.⁵⁷¹ Among the other many teachings Ngor chen is said to have obtained, the following are enumerated by name: the *Uttaratantra*, Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvātārabhāṣya*, Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, and Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs gter*.⁵⁷²

According to Shākya mchog ldan, Ngor chen and Rong ston Shes bya kun rig were considered the main upholders of g.Yag ston's Pramāṇa tradition. At his monastic seat of Ngor, Ngor chen is said to have established a *grwa khang* for the purpose of teaching the *sūtras* and *tantras* and especially the *Pramāṇavārttika*, g.Yag ston's commentary on Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs gter* (i.e., the *sDe bdun gyi dgongs 'grel tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa'i rigs pa'i 'od stong 'phro ba*), and the *Tshad ma rigs gter* itself. He also established an estate for the *grwa khang*'s material support.⁵⁷³ But as it is not generally known that Ngor chen founded a scripture-exposition seminary (*bshad grwa*) at Ngor, the meaning of the term *grwa khang* is difficult to understand. Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che suggested that it be understood in a more general sense as referring to a residence of monks.⁵⁷⁴ David Jackson, on the other hand, translates the term as "schoolhouse,"⁵⁷⁵ and further remarks that Ngor chen "is not best known as a great teacher of Pramāṇa, but he taught the *Rigs gter* and used his influence to spread the exegetical tradition of G.yag-ston."⁵⁷⁶ Shākya mchog ldan continues with a list of five monasteries, which were either directly or indirectly founded by Ngor chen, that maintained the Pramāṇa tradition of g.Yag ston: Glo bo Thub bstan rnam rgyal, Pu rangs Chos sde rGyal byed tshal, Chu 'dus Chos sde Chos 'khor Nor bu gling, Gu ge brGya gling thang, and rTing khebs kyi Chos 'khor dGa' ldan rtse mo.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁰ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 427.3).

⁵⁷¹ On Ngor chen's studies of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* under Shar chen and some ambiguity in the sources concerning his Prajñāpāramitā studies, see Part Three, 6.1.4.

⁵⁷² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 501.6–502.1). Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 450.4), where only the *Pramāṇavārttika*, *Rigs gter*, and *Uttaratantra* are enumerated by name.

⁵⁷³ See the *Chos 'khor rnam gzhag* (p. 470.6–7): *mdo sngags gnyis ka dang khyad par rnam 'grel g.yag ṭik dang rigs gter 'chad pa'i grwa khang dang chos gzhis btsugs*]. See also JACKSON 1987: 135. For g.Yag ston's commentary on Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs gter*, see TBRC (W1KG3509). In this context, the *g.Yag ṭik* does not refer to g.Yag ston's exegesis of the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, but has to be understood as referring to his commentary on the *Tshad ma rigs gter*.

⁵⁷⁴ Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 24 September 2012).

⁵⁷⁵ JACKSON 1987: 135.

⁵⁷⁶ JACKSON 1987: 135.

⁵⁷⁷ See the *Chos 'khor rnam gzhag* (pp. 470.6–471.1) and JACKSON 1987: 135–136. On those five monasteries, see Part Four, 8.

6.6 Training under bDag po Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan

After summarising Ngor chen's studies under g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal, his biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs continues with the brief passage on Ngor chen's religious training under bDag po Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1344–1418), though he does not give any details where and when those studies were pursued.⁵⁷⁸ But some details from the life of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan can help us to better understand his role as one of Ngor chen's teachers and also help determine a probable time frame for Ngor chen's studies under him.

A mes zhabs' study of the Sa skya's 'Khon ruling family provides some basic information about the life of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan. According to that source, he was the younger of two sons that 'Jam dbyangs Don yod rgyal mtshan of the Rin chen sgang bla brang had fathered with his wife Zha lu ma Yon tan dpal 'bum.⁵⁷⁹ He was born in 1344 at Sa skya in the Zha lu khang gsar.⁵⁸⁰ He received his monastic education under such

⁵⁷⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 502.1–2). Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 448.5–6), where Ngor chen's monastic training under Kun dga' rgyal mtshan is given after the completion of his *Lam 'bras* studies under Buddhaśrī and prior to his training under Sa bzang 'Phags pa. Cf. also the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 304.3–306.3), where the section on the teachings that Ngor chen received from Kun dga' rgyal mtshan directly follows the section on Buddhaśrī.

⁵⁷⁹ On 'Jam dbyangs Don yod rgyal mtshan, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 318.2–321.2 and 660.3–4) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 50b3–51a4). He was the second oldest of three sons that bZang po pal had fathered with his sixth wife Ma gcig gZhon 'bum (alias Ma gcig Lug skyes), who was the daughter of sKu zhang mGon po dpal, the ruler of the Zha lu myriarchy. His two brothers were Ta dben Gu shri Kun dga' nyi ma (1309–1322) and Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan. He later served as the fourteenth throne-holder of Sa skya for about three years. From a passage in the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 6.21–7.3), we can infer that he served as abbot in 1342.

⁵⁸⁰ Along with the Shing khang bla brang, the establishment of the Zha lu khang gsar at Sa skya is directly linked with the birth of Dharmapālarakṣita (1268–1287), the son of 'Gro mgon Phyang na rdo rje and Zha lu ma mKha' 'gro 'bum, who was born in the first month of 1268, six months after the death of his father. For his biographical sketch, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 286.2–288.2) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 35b3–36b1). The *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* contains two short episodes on the foundation of both *bla brangs*. One in the section on Sa skya's ruling families and another in the history of the Zha lu *khri skor*. According to the former, the Shing khang bla brang was established to protect Dharmapālarakṣita from obstacles following the advice of his uncle Chos rgyal 'Phags pa. The Zha lu khang gsar was established by the Zha lu ba to administer the Shing khang bla brang; see the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 332.10–16). According to the shorter version of that account as contained in the briefer *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 175.12–17), the Zha lu khang gsar was founded by the Zha lu ba to offer service to Dharmapālarakṣita and handed over to him. According to the latter episode on the Zha lu *khri skor*, the two *bla brangs* were established by the Zha lu *khri skor* as the residence of Dharmapālarakṣita; see the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (pp. 369.17–370.6) and also EVERDING 2007: 78. This latter foundation episode is missing from the slightly different version as found in the briefer *rGya bod yig tshang* (pp. 199.18–200.2). gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan also mentions those obstacles involved in the founding of the Shing khang bla brang, specifying that it was especially established owing to concerns about harm caused by earthquakes and thus built out of wood; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 35b5 and 72a6–b1). See also the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 286.5). On the Zha lu khang gsar, gTsang Byams pa states that it was the residence of Phyang na rdo rje and built by the Zha lu dPon chen following the instructions of Sa skya dPon chen Shākya bzang po; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 75a2–3). Similarly, he ascribes the foundation of the Shing khang bla brang to Shākya bzang po; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 63a2–5). On the Shing khang bla brang, see also the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 95a4–6). On both *bla brangs*, see also the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 135.12–18). On the relation between the Zha lu *khri skor* and Sa skya, see EVERDING 2007 and VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 110.

Also, 'Jam dbyangs Don yod rgyal mtshan and his brother Bla ma dam pa were born in the Zha lu khang gsar; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (pp. 318.6 and 321.3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fols. 50b3 and 51a4), and EVERDING 2007: 78–79, n. 192. sTag tshang Lo tsā mentions that Don yod rgyal mtshan's son, Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, was in control of both the Shing khang bla brang and Zha lu khang gsar; see the *Sa skya'i gdung rabs 2* (fol. 29a4–5). The Zha lu khang gsar belonged to the Rin chen sgang bla brang; see the *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* (fols. 2b7–3a1). But as the Rin chen sgang's family line was rather shortlived, Bla ma dam pa affiliated the *bla brang* later on to the Dus mchod bla brang; see VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 110–111 and the *rGya bod yig tshang*

masters as his uncle Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, from whom he also took full monastic ordination, and Bla ma mNyam med chen po (alias mNyam med Grags pa rgyal mtshan).⁵⁸¹ After Bla ma dam pa had declined an invitation to the Yuan court by Toghan Temür, reputedly owing to his advanced age, the invitation was renewed, this time requesting that one of Bla ma dam pa's nephews come.⁵⁸² Thus Kun dga' rgyal mtshan embarked on a journey to the imperial court, but having reached mDo khams, he was forced to return on account of the “welfare of the country” (*rgyal khams kyi bde dog*).⁵⁸³ Afterwards, he resided at Sa skya and bSam yas mainly serving as the attendant of his uncle Bla ma dam pa and compiling his collected works.⁵⁸⁴

When his uncle passed away in 1375, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan oversaw the funeral services as well as the preparation of the “inner and outer sacred objects” (*phyi rten nang rten*). During that time, he was invited by a certain Gon jo dBon po (= Go 'jo dPon po?) and subsequently travelled once again to mDo khams, where he gave teachings on a large scale.⁵⁸⁵ Later on, back at Sa skya, he followed the request of Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros and gave in the Shing khang bla brang an enormous amount of tantric teachings based on Bla ma dam pa's collected works. Eventually, he passed away at the age of seventy-five (i.e., in 1418) at dGe sdings in Shab.⁵⁸⁶ Until his monastic ordination, he had been known by the name of Zla ba rgyal mtshan, and prior to his full monastic ordination he had, with his wife Ma gcig Zha lu ma Nam mkha' rgyal mo, fathered two sons and two daughters: bDag chen 'Jam dbyangs chen po Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1397/98–1472), mThu stobs dbang phyug bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1408–1450) alias bDag chen Zha lu ba, Phyag rdor 'bum, and dGe ma.⁵⁸⁷ However, if we take a closer look

(p. 182.101–2), respectively. For the location and outline of both *bla brangs*, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 67b2–6, 72ba–4, and 75a2–5). On both *bla brangs*, see also SCHOENING 1990: 17, 40–41, and 43.

⁵⁸¹ Another teacher of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan was Bla ma Ngag gi dbang phyug grags; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 304.3–6).

⁵⁸² According to VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 112, Bla ma dam pa's “formal relations with the Mongol court in China as one of Sa skya's leading prelates began in 1338 when two imperial envoys (...) led the first of as many as three parties who had come to Sa skya during that year to invite him to the court.” *Ibid.*: 112 specifies that Bla ma dam pa declined the invitations “due to an unspecified but stubborn ailment of his feet (*zhabs bsnyung*), which lasted several years.” On this invitation, see also the *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 14b3–16a2). However, that cannot be the invitation in question here.

⁵⁸³ On this journey, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1991: 307–308, n. 36.

⁵⁸⁴ On the oeuvre of Bla ma dam pa, see VAN DER KUIJP 1993b and VAN DER KUIJP (forthcoming). For instance, one twenty-five-volume set of his collected works was commissioned for the personal practice (*thugs dam*) of sPyan snga Grags pa byang chub (1356–1386); see the *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 50a5–6) and VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 118. Another set was commissioned after his death; see the *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 64b4–5). On another edition commissioned in thirty-one volumes, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 38.16–39.16) and VAN DER KUIJP 1993b: 121–122. A set with more than thirty volumes is also mentioned in the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 502.1–2). A retyped version of his collected works was published recently: rDzong pa'i dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu khang (ed.), *Bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung 'bum*, 26 vols., Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2016.

⁵⁸⁵ The region of Go 'jo in eastern Tibet was related with Sa skya and ruled by Sa skya monk officials; see PETECH 1990: 44, n. 33, PETECH 1991, and SPERLING 1990. The inviting party might have probably been one of those monk officials from Go 'jo. Cf. the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 53b2), where the inviting person is given as Gon jo bDag po.

⁵⁸⁶ On the Shab district, see CASSINELLI and EKVAL 1969: [38], Map 4 (2. Shab), 99, and 103–106. For the location of dGe sdings, see CASSINELLI and EKVAL 1969: [34], Map 2 (dGe sDings). On Shab and dGe sdings, see also GYURME DORJE 2009: 340–341 and Map 2 (B2, Shab Geding). TUCCI 1999: 701, n. 635 describes Shab dGe sdings (šab dge ldiñ) as “a monastery and a fortress in the valley of She kar lung, on the right of the road P'un ts'o'gs gliñ K'ro pu Tashilunpo.”

⁵⁸⁷ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 360.1–363.1). A mes zhabs remarks that, according to the Sa skya genealogy of Nyi lde ba Nam mkha' bzang po, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan died at age seventy-six (i.e., in 1419); see

at the year of death of Bla ma dam pa, from whom he took full monastic ordination, and the birth dates of his two sons, it seems impossible that he fathered his children prior to having taken full monastic ordination.

Returning to Ngor chen's studies under Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, we have to note that his biographers list only a very few teachings that he actually received from that master: the empowerments of Hevajra in the tradition of Ḍombi Heruka and of the Seventeen-Deity [*Maṇḍala* of] Tārā.⁵⁸⁸ However, the most emphasis is placed on the efforts that Ngor chen made in receiving the reading transmission for the collected works of Bla ma dam pa, which, as mentioned above, had been compiled by Kun dga' rgyal mtshan himself. According to Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan was reciting the reading transmission for more than thirty volumes of Bla ma dam pa's writings, including such works as his uncle's extensive commentary on Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā* (i.e., the *Dus 'khor 'grel chen gyi 'grel bshad chen mo*), to many Sa skya religious teachers (*dge bshes*), though the majority of them did not obtain the transmission in its entirety. Ngor chen, on the other hand, took great pains from a young age onward to receive the transmission and thus succeeded in obtaining it completely.⁵⁸⁹ Interestingly, in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, Ngor chen makes no mention of having received that transmission. He does, however, record other teachings that are not mentioned by his biographers: the *rNal 'byor dbang bskur gyi byin rlabs*, *bDe mchog rim lnga'i byin rlabs*, *gShed dmar bdud rts'i'i bying rlabs*, *guryuyoga*, and mind training of Sum pa Lo tsā ba.⁵⁹⁰

In conclusion, I would say that Ngor chen pursued his studies under Kun dga' rgyal mtshan on different occasions at Sa skya. With regard to the reading transmission for Bla ma dam pa's collected works, it seems that he began to receive it from a young age and over a period of several years.

6.7 Training under Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros

During his religious training at Sa skya, Ngor chen was connected with Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412) from his early youth on and received an enormous amount of both sutric and tantric teachings from him, probably more than from any other teacher. Sa bzang 'Phags pa was involved in all of Ngor chen's ordination ceremonies and it was also under him that he began at age thirteen his studies of the common sciences. After their relationship had grown for a period of about twenty years,

the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 361.5). On Nam mkha' bzang po, see Part 3, n. 328. On Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, see also the *rgya bod yig tshang* (p. 182.8–12), *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* (fols. 32b5–6, 41b1–2, 46a2–3, and 63b6), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 53a3–54a3). On the special role of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan and his son Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan in the transmission of Mahākāla teachings, and also some other biographical details, see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (pp. 231.5–232.3 and 243.6–244.4). Along with Ngor chen, his other students were, for instance, Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis, Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and an unnamed member of the Shar family who might be Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan; see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 244.1–2) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 361.3–4). On Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1991: 300, n. 24 and STEARNS 2007: 242.

⁵⁸⁸ For the transmission line of the initiation into the *maṇḍala* of Hevajra in the tradition of Ḍombi Heruka and the empowerment of the Seventeen-Deity [*Maṇḍala* of] Tārā, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 304.3–6 and 304.6–305.4), respectively.

⁵⁸⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 502.1–2). Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 448.5–449.1), which along with those two empowerments only makes mention of the reading transmission for Bla ma dam pa's *Vimalaprabhā* commentary (i.e., the *Dus 'khor 'tik chen*). On this commentary, see Part Three, n. 413.

⁵⁹⁰ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 304.6–306.2). On Sum pa Lo tsā ba's "Ear-Whispered Mind Training," see JINPA 2006: [215]–216.

Sa bzang 'Phags pa entrusted Ngor chen with the responsibility of his own monastic seat and installed him as his successor to the abbatial throne of Sa bzang, though Ngor chen acted in that capacity only for a short period of time.

As in the case with his two other principal teachers, Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and Buddhaśrī, Ngor chen composed a biography of his master.⁵⁹¹ In the colophon, he informs us that he wrote that work at Sa skya, having first been encouraged by Slob dpon Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan and in response to the immediate request of bShes gnyen dGe slong bSod nams rin chen, who provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink.⁵⁹² In the biography, Ngor chen does not mention his later commissioning of the collected *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* along with three additional *maṇḍalas* of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* to fulfil the last wishes of the late Sa bzang 'Phags pa. Thus we can assume that he wrote his master's biography not long after Sa bzang 'Phags pa's passing away in 1412 and prior to the foundation of Ngor in 1429. Along with that biography, Ngor chen also composed a praise of Sa bzang 'Phags pa.⁵⁹³

6.7.1 Biographical Sketch of Sa bzang 'Phags pa

Sa bzang 'Phags pa was born, according to my own emendation of the text, in 1346 at dMu rdzing as the son of dGe slong gZhon nu dpal and sGrol ma 'bum.⁵⁹⁴

At age five (i.e., in 1350), the young boy experienced a harmful obstacle (*bar chad*), probably consisting of some kind of illness he had caught. Consequently, Bla ma lHa rtse rtse mo bestowed on him the initiation into the *maṇḍala* of Hayagrīva according to the rNying ma tradition and also the vows of a layman, conferring on him the name rDo rje sra brtan. Assisted by his mother, Sa bzang 'Phags pa engaged in a tantric propitiation retreat (*bsnyen pa*) of Hayagrīva that helped bring about his recovery.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (pp. 169.2–177.6), *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 156–164), and CATALOGUE (no. 34). Two manuscripts of this biography are also registered in the catalogue of the library holdings of 'Bras spungs; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1550, no. 17498 and p. 1571, no. 17751).

⁵⁹² bShes gnyen dGe slong bSod nams rin chen is the same person as Brag dkar Sems dpa' chen po bSod nams rin chen; see Part Four, n. 690.

⁵⁹³ See CATALOGUE (no. 5).

⁵⁹⁴ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 169.6–170.1). Originally, his year of birth is given as 1358 (*Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar*, p. 170.1): *sa pho khyi'i lo la 'khrungs te*. But I propose to change the earth element (*sa*) to the fire element (*me*), thereby antedating Sa bzang 'Phags pa's year of birth to twelve years from 1358 (*sa pho khyi*) to 1346 (*me pho khyi*). This change does not only solve the chronological problems we would otherwise encounter in his biography but it is also supported by the following fact: Sa bzang 'Phags pa's predecessor on the throne of Sa bzang was Sa bzang Ma ti Pañ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan, who installed Sa bzang 'Phags pa as his successor in the latter's twenty-ninth year (i.e., in 1374); see the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 174.1–2). According to the original reading of the biography, this would have taken place in 1386, at a time when Sa bzang Ma ti Pañ chen would have already been dead for ten years. VAN DER KUIJP 2004: 29 speculates whether the mother of Buddhaśrī and Sa bzang 'Phags pa, who both bore the name sGrol ma 'bum, were one and the same person: "Sgrol ma 'bum is of course not an unusual name for a Tibetan woman. Yet, one cannot help but wonder whether she is not the same Sgrol ma 'bum, who later became the mother of Sa bzang Gzhon nu blo gros (1358–1412), another one of Ngor chen's teachers. His father was the monk Gzhon nu dpal and Ngor chen's silence on their possible identity may, perhaps, be interpreted in the sense that this was a delicate and sensitive issue. After all, his father was a monk!" In comparison with Ngor chen's biography of Buddhaśrī, the argument by van der Kuijp does not seem justified. Ngor chen relates that the father of Buddhaśrī was the abbot of sGo phu Monastery and clearly voices the mother's fear of the shame that the birth of that child would bring on here family and thus tried to abort it.

⁵⁹⁵ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 170.1–3). His illness was obviously caused by some demon (*'byung po*); see the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 170.3): (...) *'byung po'i bar chad las grol lol*.

With eight years (i.e., in 1353), Sa bzang 'Phags pa received monastic ordination from Bla ma Thugs rje rDzong pa rGyal mtshan 'bum and under him, for a long time, studied Guṇaprabha's *Vinayamūlasūtra* and its exegesis by 'Dzims pa Shes rab 'od.⁵⁹⁶

In his twenty-first year (i.e., in 1366), he took the vows of a fully ordained monk at the monastery of bZang ldan from sDe snod 'dzin pa chen po Sangs rgyas bzang po as presiding abbot, Bram Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan as ceremonial master, and Bla ma mGon po 'bum as instructor in private.⁵⁹⁷ Subsequently, he studied, under Sangs rgyas bzang po, the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and its commentary, which probably refers to Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṃkāraloka*, and mainly engaged numerous times in tantric propitiation retreats (*bsnyen pa*) for Avalokiteśvara's tantric form Amoghapāśa and performed the *Rig pa stong phrag brgya pa* three times. As a result of his continuous engagement in austere practices such as fasting (*smyung gnas*), Sa bzang 'Phags pa was compared to an *ārya*, a saint or spiritually advanced being, and became thus known by the name 'Phags pa.⁵⁹⁸

Afterwards, he went to visit rGyal sras Thogs med bzang po, but first stopped on his way at the monastery of Sa bzang to pay his respects to Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. The two of them knew each other from a previous encounter when Sa bzang 'Phags pa had served as Ma ti Paṅ chen's ritual assistant (*mchod g.yog*) at bZang ldan. With reference to that connection, and pointing to the visit of Rin po che Shes rab dpal, who is introduced as a relative (*sku nye*) of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, Ma ti Paṅ chen asked him to stay for a while at Sa bzang. In the period that followed, Sa bzang 'Phags pa received from Ma ti Paṅ chen all the teachings that lama possessed: the Sūtra section (*mdo sde*) of the *tripitaka*, the respective explanations of and reading transmissions for the treatises (*bstan bcos*) clarifying the intent of those *sūtras* along with oral instructions on the stages of meditation (*bsgom rim*), and empowerments, explanations, and esoteric instructions pertaining to the four classes of Tantra.⁵⁹⁹

Then, on one occasion, Sa bzang 'Phags pa went ahead to meet and study under Thogs med bzang po and received from him his instructions of the *Seven-Point Mind Training* many times, the reading transmission for his collected works as well as commentaries on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and *Sūtrālaṃkāra*.⁶⁰⁰ Complying with Sa bzang 'Phags pa's

⁵⁹⁶ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 170.3–4). Sa bzang 'Phags pa's monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) refers to his taking of novice-monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*) vows. On 'Dzims pa Shes rab 'od, see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 106.13–17; ROERICH 1996: 77–78).

⁵⁹⁷ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 170.4–6). On the monastery of bZang ldan, see Part Three, n. 467. In 1361, Sangs rgyas bzang po had also been involved in the full monastic ordination of Buddhaśrī at bZang ldan; see Part Three, 6.4.1. In the meantime, he apparently had become the abbot of bZang ldan. According to the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 247.6–7), he served as third abbot of bZang ldan. Bram Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan was a teacher of Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen and a student of mGon po 'bum; see, for instance, the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 361.2–3). mGon po 'bum was also a teacher of dPal ldan tshul khirms and Buddhaśrī; see Part Three, 6.2.1 and Part Three, 6.4.1.

⁵⁹⁸ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 170.6–171.2).

⁵⁹⁹ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 171.2–5). On Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen, see Part Three, n. 467. For the sutric teachings that Sa bzang 'Phags pa had received from Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen and transmitted to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 382.1–410.2). For the tantric teachings that were transmitted in a similar way, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (311.2–312.2, 313.2–315.1, 315.4–5, 316.3–318.3, 319.3–6, 322.3–5, 326.6–327.3, 329.3–5, 331.2–5, 332.4–333.1, 338.4–339.3, 340.1–341.2, 341.4–6, 344.3–4, 349.4–350.2, 350.6–352.2, and 352.4–382.1).

⁶⁰⁰ In his *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 300.5–303.4), Ngor chen gives a title list for a total of one hundred seven works of Thogs med bzang po's *bKa' 'bum thor bu* of which he had received the reading transmission from Buddhaśrī; see Part Three, n. 472. For the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* commentary of Thogs med bzang po, see TBRC (W00KG03, W1KG1795, and W1KG12289). For his *Sūtrālaṃkāra* commentary, see TBRC (W13914). For both works printed together as one volume, see TBRC (W1KG11957).

insistent request, Thogs med bzang po also bestowed on him the initiation into the *maṇḍala* of Sarvavid Vairocana according to the tradition of gNur.⁶⁰¹

Afterwards, he proceeded to Jo nang to request from Jo nang Phyogs las rnam rgyal the initiation into the *maṇḍala* of Kālacakra. Later on, at the hermitage of bDe chen, he also received explanations on the *rGyud 'grel* (i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*), instructions on the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, and the reading transmission for all the texts that Phyogs las rnam rgyal had written on Kālacakra.⁶⁰²

In total, Sa bzang 'Phags pa is said to have pursued his religious and scholastic training under forty-two masters. Among them, his biography specifically mentions Lo tsā ba Byang chub rtse mo—from whom he requested the bestowal of initiation into the *maṇḍala* of Guhyasamāja according to the tradition of Nāgārjuna and received a few esoteric instructions such as of the *sKyid sdug lam khyer*—Bla ma mKhas btsun mGon po rgyal mtshan, mKhan chen sGra tshad pa Rin chen rnam rgyal (1318–1388), and Chos rje Byang chub seng ge.⁶⁰³ From Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, we come to know who some of his other teachers included: Bla ma dPal ldan don grub, 'Bri gung Lo tsā ba Maṇiśrījñāna (1289–1363), Bla ma (or Lo tsā ba) Nor bu dpal bzang po, 'Jam dbyangs Kha che, Bla ma Shākya, Bla ma bSod nams mgon, and Bla ma lHa dbang.⁶⁰⁴

From those teachers, Sa bzang 'Phags pa obtained the majority of the Buddhist teachings, sutric as well as tantric, that had been translated into Tibetan by that time, also including teachings from such other traditions as bKa' gdams, Zhi byed, Phyag rgya chen po, gCod, and rNying ma.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰¹ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 171.5–172.1). Sa bzang 'Phags pa also received from Thogs med bzang po the *Thugs rje chen po skyer sgang lugs kyi rig gtab*, *sKyid sdug lam khyer*, and *rTen 'brel snying po*, which he later on transmitted to Ngor chen; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 341.2–4 and 353.2).

⁶⁰² See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 172.1–3). For the lineage of the Kālacakra empowerment as Sa bzang 'Phags pa had obtained it from Phyogs las rnam rgyal and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 331.2–6). It had also been imparted to Sa bzang 'Phags pa by Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen and was in that lineage received by Ngor chen as well.

⁶⁰³ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 172.3–5). On Byang chub rtse mo, see Part Three, n. 281. For the biography of Bu ston's disciple Rin chen rnam rgyal written by his disciple So ston Shākya dpal (1355–1432), see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 2* (vol. 51, pp. 385–456) and VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 222–223 and 223, n. 56. For a sketch of his life, see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 43.5–64.2). This abbatial history also lists Sa bzang 'Phags pa as his student; see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (p. 63.5). For teachings that Rin chen rnam rgyal had bestowed on Sa bzang 'Phags pa and the latter imparted on Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 312.3–313.2, 315.1–316.3, 322.1–3, 326.4–6, 327.3–5, 329.1–3, 332.2–4, and 343.6–344.2). For teachings that Byang chub seng ge had bestowed on Sa bzang 'Phags pa and the latter imparted on Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 312.2–3, 319.6–320.3, 320.5–321.6, 322.5–323.1, 323.3–326.3, 327.5–329.1, 329.5–331.2, 331.6–332.2, 333.2–335.2, 336.3–337.3, 337.5–338.3, and 342.3–343.4). Byang chub seng ge is given with titles such as gNyangs ston or gNyan ston; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 326.3, 331.1–2, and 333.6). He might be the same person as Jo nang mKhan chen Byang chub seng ge, the teacher of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan; see Part Three, 6.1.2. We also encounter a Byang chub seng ge with the title *Bya sder ba* as a teacher of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, though I am unable to tell whether he might be the same person as well; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 337.2–5).

⁶⁰⁴ For teachings that dPal ldan don grub had bestowed on Sa bzang 'Phags pa and the latter imparted on Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 318.3–319.3). For the teachings of Maṇiśrījñāna, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 320.3–5, 335.3–336.2, 339.3–340.1, 345.3–349.1, and 349.3–4). For the latter's biographical sketch, see the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i rnam thar* (pp. 589.1–593.7) and *Jo nang chos 'byung* (pp. 35.21–36.3). For the teachings of Nor bu dpal bzang po, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 323.1–3 and 349.2–3). For the teachings of 'Jam dbyangs Kha che, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 341.6–342.3). For the teaching of Bla ma Shākya, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 343.4–6). For the teachings of bSod nams mgon, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 344.4–345.2). For the teachings of Bla ma lHa dbang, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 350.2–6 and 352.2–4).

⁶⁰⁵ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 172.5–173.1).

As one of Sa bzang 'Phags pa's special achievements, Ngor chen recounts his master's ability to introduce to Tibet some heretofore unknown teachings that he had received during a journey to Pāṭan (Ye rang) in the Kathmandu valley of Nepal:⁶⁰⁶

In particular, undertaking hardships and with vigour, [Sa bzang 'Phags pa] travelled to the great Newari city of Pāṭan and brought to Tibet many teachings that had until then not been translated into Tibetan by other scholars such as the Mañjuśrī emanation [Jam dbyangs rnam 'phrul, i.e., Sa skya Paṇḍita]. From the great Newari *paṇḍita* Mahābodhi, [he] requested the bestowal of initiation into the great *maṇḍalas* of the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, which [constitutes] a compendium of the [ritual] activities of a *vajrācārya*, and [also received] explanations of that [compendium] together with teachings of [its] practical procedures, the empowerment of the extensive *maṇḍala* of Yogāmbara, and the reading transmission for [its] *sādhana*.

In his biography of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, Ngor chen provides only this short presentation of the introduction of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* in Tibet. For a fuller account, and particularly to learn the circumstances that led to Sa bzang 'Phags pa's journey to Nepal, we have to take a look into Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*. There we read that the ritual compendium of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* had not been translated into Tibetan until about the mid-fourteenth century when a Sanskrit manuscript was brought to Sa skya by a Newari trader. It was obtained by 'Jam dbyangs Don yod rgyal mtshan, the fourteenth throneholder of Sa skya (tenure: three years around 1342), and somehow passed on to the Jo nang master Kun spangs Chos grags dpal bzang po (1283–1363). Owing to Chos grags dpal bzang po's initiative and sponsorship, the manuscript was conjointly translated into Tibetan by Mañjuśrī, the great Indian *paṇḍita* from the Buddhist university of Vikramāśīla, and the Tibetan translator Sa bzang pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (alias Sa bzang Ma ti Paṇ chen), who was a disciple of Chos grags dpal bzang po.⁶⁰⁷ However, after the translation work had been completed, they were unable to find any master that possessed the empowerment and reading transmission of the *Kriyāsamuccaya*. At that time, they came to hear of a master by the name of mNga' ris pa rDo rje dpal who was said to have had received the empowerment at Pāṭan (Ye rang). Subsequently, Sa bzang 'Phags pa, along with six disciples, embarked on a journey to Nepal and obtained from Paṇḍita Mahābodhi the entire empowerments and reading transmissions of the *Kriyāsamuccaya*. At his future monastic seat of Sa bzang, he is said to have spread the *Kriyāsamuccaya* on a large scale.⁶⁰⁸ It is interesting to note that Ngor chen himself was in

⁶⁰⁶ Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar (p. 173.1–3): *khyad par bal po ye rong [= rang] gi grong khyer chen por dka' spyad dang brtson 'grus kyis byon tel bal po'i paṇḍi ta chen po ma hā bodhi las rdo rje slob dpon gyi bya ba kun las btus pa kri ya samutstsha'i dkyil 'khor chen po rnam su dbang bskur ba zhus nas de'i bshad bka' lag len gyi bka' dang bcas pa dang rnal 'byor nam mkha'i dkyil 'khor rgyas pa'i dbang bka' sgrub thabs kyi lungl 'jam dbyangs rnam 'phrul la sogs pa sngon chad mkhas pa gzan gyis bod du ma 'gyur ba'i chos mang po bod du spyang drangl.*

⁶⁰⁷ For biographical sketches of Kun spangs Chos grags dpal bzang po, see the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i rnam thar* (pp. 566.7–573.1) and *Jo nang chos 'byung* (p. 34.16–25). On him, see also Part Three, n. 467.

⁶⁰⁸ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 310.1–5). For similar accounts, see also the *Ngag dbang chos grags kyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 388.2–5), *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 1216.6–16; ROERICH 1996: 1045–1046), and STEARNS 2001: 172, n. 15. Mahābodhi's father, Dza ga ta Paṇḍi ta, had no son. But as he went to offer supplications at the Mahābodhi temple at the *varjasana*—that is, the site of Buddha Śākyamuni's awakening—, his wife became pregnant and a son was born. Hence, he named him Mahābodhi; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 310.6). Ngor chen also refers to Mahābodhi's father as Dza ga ta ānanda dzīwa bha dra (i.e., Jagadānandajīvabhadra), the Newari *paṇḍita* of Pāṭan (*bal yul ye rang gi paṇḍi ta dza ga ta ānanda dzīwa bha dra*); see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 309.6). For this episode, see also the *Ngag dbang chos grags kyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (pp. 387.6–388.2), where

contact with Mahābodhi, as attested by a letter he had sent to that Newari *paṇḍita* and his son.⁶⁰⁹

Sa bzang 'Phags pa kept the original Sanskrit manuscript of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* and entrusted it, along with other religious objects, into the care of Ngor chen.⁶¹⁰ It was later kept at Ngor Monastery, which was famous for its collection of palm-leaf Sanskrit manuscripts. The fact that such manuscripts were kept at Ngor from early on is confirmed by the biography of Zha lu Lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441–1528). Along with sTag tshang Lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen (1405–1477), Chos skyong bzang po visited Ngor in about 1467, which was already his second visit, and investigated many Sanskrit manuscripts (*rgya dpe*), such as the 'Grel chen sgron gsal (i.e., the *Pradīpodyotana*) and the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, editing earlier translations of those works.⁶¹¹ The original manuscript of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* was also seen and catalogued by dGe 'dun chos 'phel (1903–1951), who had visited Ngor as an assistant of Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana (1893–1963) in the latter's quest for Sanskrit manuscripts. dGe 'dun chos 'phel prepared a list of the manuscripts housed at Ngor, in which he records and comments on the text in question, perceiving it as the original *Kriyāsamuccaya* manuscript.⁶¹²

the Tibetan translation of the name of Mahābodhi's father is given as sKye dgu Kun dga' 'tsho ba bzang po. Mahābodhi and his father are also mentioned by Gu ge Paṇḍita in the colophon of his *sādhana* of Donkey-Faced Cakrasaṃvara; see Part Two, n. 156.

⁶⁰⁹ This letter, the *Bal yul ye rang gi paṇḍi ta shri ma no bo dhi yab sras la springs pa*, is recorded in four title lists of Ngor chen's collected works; see the *Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum dkar chag* (fol. 2b3), *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (p. 347.10–11), *sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 118.2), and *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 307.4). Unfortunately, it is not contained in Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge (*Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum*).

⁶¹⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 450.2–4), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 506.1–3.), and *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 176.3–6).

⁶¹¹ See the *Chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 386.2) and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 40. Later on, in about 1483, Chos skyong bzang po visited Ngor for a third time, doing further editing work on the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, preparing translations, and receiving teachings from Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge, the sixth abbot of Ngor; see the *Chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 404.6–405.2). On the dates of Chos skyong bzang po and his biographies, see VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 16, n. 53. On Chos skyong bzang po's life, see SCHAEFER 2009: [44]–72. Another Sa skya scholar studying Sanskrit manuscripts at Ngor was Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams (1485–1533); see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 245.3–4) and *Sa skya lo tsā ba'i rnam thar* (p. 211.18–20).

⁶¹² See the *gSer gyi thang ma* (p. 28.8–17): *kriyasamutshshayaḥ grub thob darban gyis mdzad paḥ di yang bal po'i tshong pa zhiḡ gis sa skya pa la phul ces deb sngon du gsungs pa'i dpe de rang yin nam snyam stel rgyud kyi skor 'di dag dpe re re tsam las mi bri ba'i srol sngon dus su yod cingl dpe gcig pu de bla mas slob ma sogs la rim gyis brgyud pa yin laḥ lhag par bod kyi yul du slebs pa dka' bas dper na da lta rang res gsang snying gi rgya dpe shog gyar zhiḡ snar thang lta bur mthong nal rigs [= rig] ral sogs kyis gzigs pa de 'di yin ces yid ches rung ba zhiḡ tu smras pa yin gyil smra kham bya 'dod pa ma yin pasḥ rgya dpe dkon pa'i rgyus mi shes pa rnam kyis rnam rtog mang po slong bar mi bya'oḥ. dGe 'dun chos 'phel also told Roerich about that manuscript; see ROERICH 1996: 1045. On that manuscript, see also SĀṅKRTYĀYANA 1935: 35, XIII, 84. According to its colophon, the manuscript was written in 1305. The prints of Sāṅkrtyāyana's film negatives are preserved in Göttingen; see BANDURSKI 1994: 77, 39, Xc 14/40. dGe 'dun chos 'phel states that about forty volumes of Sanskrit manuscripts were preserved at Ngor. For the full catalogue, see the *gSer gyi thang ma* (pp. 27.20–31.5). Prior to that, Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho had visited Ngor, remarking that those manuscripts were housed in the Lam zab mDzod nag; see the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 400.16–18). With regard to the manuscripts' repository, Kaḥ thog Si tu seems to be mistaken, however. The Lam zab lha khang was part of the gZims khang ka drug ma and also known as mDzod bKa' rgya ma (which he also mentions), whereas the mDzod nag formed part of the *gtsug lag khang* of Ngor known as dBang khang chen mo; see Part Four, 5. During their visits, according to Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 May 2009), Sāṅkrtyāyana and dGe 'dun chos 'phel stayed in the Khang gsar bla brang and the Sanskrit manuscripts were brought down from the Lam zab lha khang to have pictures taken of them. Rin po che remembers having played as a child with some kind of black paper with holes that was used in the process of taking pictures and left behind by those two. Note that dGe 'dun chos 'phel's description seems to suggest that those manuscripts were housed at the Khang gsar bla brang; see the *gSer gyi thang ma* (p. 28.3–6): *der* [i.e., Ngor] *khang gsar bla brang gi bar shod 'og ma zhiḡ na ngor chen gyi phyag dpe rnam 'dug par mjalḥ bstan 'gyur phal cher bzhuḡḥ bod dpe**

In his presentation of Sa bzang 'Phags pa's life, Ngor chen deals once again with his master's studies, relating that he received from both Chos rje Paṅ chen (i.e., Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen) and Chos rje Byang chub seng ge the explanations of the *Tantra Commentary* (*rGyud 'grel*) of Kālacakra (i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*) many times, and trained himself for a long time in that very text.⁶¹³ Similarly, he investigated and trained himself for a long time in the textual traditions of both Sūtra and Mantra and the language sciences (*tha snyad kyi gtsug lag*), studying such works as the *Sūtrālaṃkāra*, *Uttaratantra*, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, *Kalāpasūtra*, Daṇḍin's classical treatise on poetics, the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, and Ratnākaraśānti's metrical treatise, the *Chandoratnākara*.⁶¹⁴ He also mastered all the esoteric instructions of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, *U rgyan bsnyen sgrub*, *Lam 'bras*, *Five Stages of Guhyasamāja*, and *Five Stages of Cakrasaṃvara*.⁶¹⁵

In his twenty-ninth year (i.e., in 1374), rejoicing in the countless good qualities that he possessed, Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen installed Sa bzang 'Phags pa as his successor on the abbatial throne of Sa bzang.⁶¹⁶ During his long teaching career and tenure of more than thirty-five years, Sa bzang 'Phags pa gave an enormous amount of teachings, which are enumerated by Ngor chen. He gave as teaching cycles (*spyi bka'*) the complete empowerments for the *Kriyāsamuccaya* and *Vajrāvalī* nearly one hundred times, the bestowal of initiations into the *maṅḍalas* of the enlightened body, speech and mind of Kālacakra thirty-five times, and the complete *maṅḍalas* of the Yoga tantric system six times. Moreover, he gave an infinite number of individual teachings (*zur bka'*) pertaining to deities such as Guhyasamāja, Hevajra, Cakrasaṃvara, and Catuḥpīṭha, gave the initiations (*rjes gnang*) of the *sGrub thabs rgya mtsho* (i.e., the *sGrub thabs kun las btus pa: Sādhanasamuccaya*) over sixty times, and gave an enormous amount of reading transmissions: for different sections of the *bKa' 'gyur*—such as the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*), which he gave nineteen times, the Sūtra section (*mdo sde*) (fifteen times), the Vinaya section (*'dul ba*) (eight times), the sūtras of the Prajñāpāramitā section (*sher phyin gyi mdo*) (three times), and others—the collected works of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa, which he gave five times, and those of Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen, which he gave seven times. He also taught all the guiding instructions (*khrid bka'*) for esoteric instructions such as of the profound *Vajrayoga* (i.e., the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*).⁶¹⁷

Among his numerous disciples, which included both scholars and *yogins*, we find such eminent masters as Bla ma chen po (alias rDzong pa) Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1382–1446), Chos rje Sangs rgyas dpal, who could probably be identified as g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas

rnams ci bas kyang spus legs la gras mtshungs pa rkyang 'dul 'dir rgya dpe pod che chung bzhi bcu lhag bzhug par. On Sāṅkrtyāyana's expeditions to Tibet, see SĀṅKRTYĀYANA 1935, SĀṅKRTYĀYANA 1937, and SĀṅKRTYĀYANA 1938.

⁶¹³ For the lineage of the Kālacakra empowerment as Sa bzang 'Phags pa had obtained it from Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen and passed it on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 331.2–5). For the lineage of the 'Khor lo sdom chen empowerment as explained by the *Kālacakratāntra* that was imparted by Byang chub seng ge on Sa bzang 'Phags pa, who in turn bestowed it on Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 331.6–332.2).

⁶¹⁴ On some of these and other treatises that Sa bzang 'Phags pa had obtained from Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen and passed on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 406.5–409.5).

⁶¹⁵ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 173.3–6). On the *U rgyan bsnyen sgrub* as Sa bzang 'Phags pa had obtained it from Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen and passed it on to Ngor chen, see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 344.3–345.2). On this “special meditation practice related to the Six-branch Yoga of the Kālacakra system,” see STEARNS 2001: 5.

⁶¹⁶ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 173.6–174.2).

⁶¹⁷ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 174.2–175.2). The term *zur bka'* does not refer to any side or ancillary teaching complementing a major teaching. The term has to be understood as a single teaching, such as an initiation into the *maṅḍala* of a *yi dam* deity, that is given independently. Its complimentary term is *spyi bka'*, which refers to entire teaching cycles made up out of many related teachings, such as the *Vajrāvalī* or *Lam 'bras*. For such a division, see, for instance, the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 515.6–516.3).

dpal, and Chos rje Lam 'bras pa Blo bzang pa, who might be Lam 'bras pa Blo bzang dkar mo.⁶¹⁸

Ngor chen also relates an account of Sa bzang 'Phags pa recollecting his previous life, as it was told to him by Ba ri ba Blo gros rgyal mtshan, who had apparently accompanied Sa bzang 'Phags pa as an attendant on a pilgrimage to lHa sa. While on their way to do circumambulations of the holy Jo bo statue, Blo gros rgyal mtshan was leading the horse of Sa bzang 'Phags pa. As soon as they reached the vicinity of dGon pa rGan mo lHas, which was not visible at that time, Sa bzang 'Phags pa remarked: "Behind this mountain is the monastery called rGan mo lHas. Prior to this life, I was born as a lama of this monastery named mKhan po Rin chen rgyal mtshan."⁶¹⁹

In his sixty-fifth year (i.e., in 1410), Sa bzang 'Phags pa handed over the abbatial throne of Sa bzang to Ngor chen, to which I will return in more detail in the next section, and retired to his residence at Sa skya, where he engaged in meditation and continued to bestow teachings on a few genuine disciples.⁶²⁰

When he had reached his sixty-seventh year (i.e., in 1412), even though his body had lost some strength, Sa bzang 'Phags pa once again bestowed the initiations into the *maṅḍalas* of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* on a small group of distinguished disciples. During these initiations, however, he fell slightly sick. He accordingly instructed Ngor chen to complete the teaching, and he passed away shortly afterward, on the eighteenth day of the third month of 1412.⁶²¹ Complying with his master's command, Ngor chen is said to have given those initiations again, starting all over from the preparatory stage (*stagon*).⁶²²

In contrast with the biographies of his other principal teachers, Ngor chen unfortunately has nothing to say about the writings of Sa bzang 'Phags pa. But according to the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po et al., there once existed a collection of his works, though the author of that entry specifies that he has not seen any

⁶¹⁸ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 175.2–6). On Blo bzang dkar mo and his transmission line of the *Lam 'bras*, see VAN DER KUIJP 1994a: 184.

⁶¹⁹ *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 167.3): *ri 'di'i rgyab na rgan mo lhas bya ba'i dgon pa yodl nga skye ba 'di'i sngon ma dgon pa de'i bla ma mkhan po rin chen rgyal mtshan bya ba skyes pa yin (...)*. In Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 327.5–328.1 and 409.6–410.2), we encounter a master by the name of mKhan chen rGan mo lHas pa (or rGan lHas pa) in a few transmission lines of teachings that Sa bzang 'Phags pa had obtained from Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen. In these lines, he is given as the disciple of gNyal pa Chos grags and 'Dre lHas pa. In the biographical sketch of the Ngam ring abbot Gangs khrod pa Grags pa dpal, the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 182.9–16) mentions a master by the name of rGan mo lHas pa mKhan chen Byang chub dpal in the transmission line of the Zha ma tradition (*zha lugs*) of the *Lam 'bras*, who himself had obtained that teaching cycle from Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1170–1249). On the latter, see STEARNS 2000: 1–19 and STEARNS 2001: 66. Only future research can show whether those references might refer to one and the same master and whether he was connected to that eponymous monastery.

⁶²⁰ See the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 176.3–6). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 450.2–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 506.1–3). The residence of Sa bzang 'Phags pa at Sa skya was seemingly the Shāk bzang sku 'bum, where Ngor chen himself would reside after the death of his master; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 512.5–514.1). The residence took its name from the relics it preserved, namely that of dPon chen Shākya bzang po; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 89b4): *shākya bzang sku 'bum nal dpon chen shākya bzang po'i gser 'bum lha khangl*. See also the *gNas mchog sa skya* (p. 164.17–19). For its location, see the *gNa' grong sa skya'i yul skor gnas yig* (p. 56, lower picture, no. 6) and SCHOENING 1990: 24–25, Map 4 (nos. 4–5). It was divided into a western and eastern part, the Shāk bzang Nub and Shāk bzang Shar; see *Ibid.*: 41.

⁶²¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 512.5–6 and 515.6–516.1) and *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 176.6–177.3). Ngor chen specifies that Sa bzang 'Phags pa taught until twenty-three days prior to his death; see the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 175.2–3).

⁶²² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 515.6–516.1).

catalogue of it.⁶²³ As of yet, only two of Sa bzang 'Phags pa's writings are available, namely a thirty-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *'Phags pa gnas brtan bcu drug la phyag mchod bya tshul*, which he completed on the seventh day of the sixth month of 1398 at dGa' ldan Sa bzang,⁶²⁴ and an unpublished *dbu med* manuscript of his *rDo rje phreng ba dang kri ya sa mutstsha'i bsgrub dkyil* (113 fols.), which he completed compiling on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of 1405.⁶²⁵ Another manuscript of the latter work is also preserved at 'Bras spungs, as we come to know from the catalogue of the monastery's library holdings:

- (1) *Kri yang mu tsa dang rdo rje phreng ba'i bsgrub dkyil rin chen phreng mdzes cho ga kun las btus pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 134 fols. ('Bras spungs dkar chag, p. 1239, no. 12568)

These and three of his other writings are also preserved in the Potala:

- (1) *Kri ya sa mun dza zhes bya ba'i bla ma brgyud pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 2 fols., 7 lines per folio (*Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag*, p. 262, no. 1941, text 3)
- (2) *dPal kye rdo rje'i lus dkyil gyi sgrub thabs nang gi de nyid gsal ba*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 10 fols., 7 lines per folio (*Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag*, p. 262, no. 1941, text 5)
- (3) *Sa bzang 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros kyis mdzad pa'i dkyil chog rdo rje phreng ba'i bshad pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 140 fols., 8 lines per folio (*Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag*, p. 262, no. 1941, text 6)
- (4) *Kye rdo rje'i lag len gyi zin bris bzhugs pa'i dbu phyogs lags so*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 8 fols., 8 lines per folio (*Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag*, p. 262, no. 1941, text 12)
- (5) *gNas brtan bcu drug gi cho ga*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 39 fols., 7 lines per folio (*Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag*, p. 263, no. 1941, text 16)

Moreover, there are references to other writings of his in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*. There Ngor chen mentions a *sādhana* that Sa bzang 'Phags pa composed in relation to the empowerment of the Seventeen-Deity [*Maṇḍala* of] Hevarja as taught in the *Samputatantra* and both a *sādhana* and the ritual liturgy (*cho ga*) for the initiation (*rjes gnang*) of Ucārya Vajrapāṇi.⁶²⁶

⁶²³ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 43.5–6): *sa bzang 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros kyi bka' 'bum yod kyang dkar chag ma mjal*.

⁶²⁴ See TBRC (W1CZ1188). For the colophon, see TBRC (W1CZ1188, fols. 29b8–30a7): (...)
dam pa mang po'i gsung gis bskul ba la rten nas| dge slong 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros zhes bya bas| 'bru mang po'i lol chu stod kyi zla ba'i tshes bdun la| dge ldan sa bzangs su sbyar ba'i yi ge pa ni chos kyi seng ge'ol. The work is also recorded by Ngor chen in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 409.6–410.2): *gnas brtan bcu drug gi cho ga'i brgyud pa ni| (...)* *chos rje 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros| de las bdag gis bla ma nyid kyis mdzad pa'i cho ga shin tu rgyas pa'i lung dang bcas pa legs par zhus so*.

⁶²⁵ See the *rDo rje phreng ba dang kri ya sa mutstsha'i bsgrub dkyil* (fol. 113a7–9): *zhes pa 'di ni| mkhyen rabs kyi dbang phyug chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang ba pañ chen blo gros rgyal mtshan bzang po la sogs pa| bod kyi mkhas pa mang po'i gsung gi bdud rtsi myang ba dang| bal po'i pañdi ta ma hā bo dhi'i legs par bshad pa dang| rgya bod kyi mkhas grub mang po'i gsung rabs la brten nas| cho ga kun las btus pa 'di ni| dam pa mang po'i gsung gis bskul ba'i ngor| sa bzang 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros zhes bya bas| shing mo bya'i lo smin drug gi zla ba'i tshes bcwo lnga la sbyar ba 'dis kyang bstan pa dang sems can mang po la phan thogs par gyur cig||*

⁶²⁶ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 318.6–319.3 and 343.2–4). Ngor chen also mentions a *gsan yig* that might be the one of Sa bzang 'Phags pa (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 405.4): *zhes bla ma 'phags pa'i gsan yig las byung ngo*.

6.7.2 Notes on a Painting of Sa bzang 'Phags pa

One realistic representation of Sa bzang 'Phags pa in form of a scroll painting survives in a private collection. The painting was identified by David Jackson based on the verse of praise found beneath the main subject's throne. The painting was probably commissioned by one of Sa bzang 'Phags pa's disciples between 1420 and 1450.⁶²⁷ Other features of the painting verify David Jackson's identification: above the head of the main subject, in the centre of the throne backrest is Sa bzang 'Phags pa's principal teacher, Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. He is recognisable not only from his central placement in the painting, but also by a tiny inscription beneath his lotus throne. This inscription is partly covered by the head nimbus of the main figure, but what I could read based on a picture of that thangka is as follows: *sa bzang ma ti (...)* [*la phyag*] *'tshal lo||*. In the upper corners of the painting two teachers of Sa bzang 'Phags pa are shown: in the proper right corner (i.e., from the point of view of the subject), rGyal sras Thogs med bzang po, and in the proper left corner, Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo.⁶²⁸

6.7.3 Ngor chen's Relation with Sa bzang 'Phags pa and Teachings Received

In Ngor chen's biographies, we first encounter Sa bzang 'Phags pa in his role as ceremonial master when Ngor chen received both the vows of a layman and of a novice monk in his ninth year (i.e., in 1390). Similarly, when Ngor chen took full monastic ordination in 1400 or 1401, Sa bzang 'Phags pa functioned in the ceremony as well, but this time as instructor in private.⁶²⁹

At age thirteen (i.e., in 1394), Ngor chen began his studies in the language arts under Sa bzang 'Phags pa. On Sanskrit grammar (*sgra*), he was taught the two most popular systems for studying Sanskrit, namely the grammars of Kalāpa (or Kātantra) and Cāndra, "which formed the core of the grammatical curriculum in Tibet."⁶³⁰ Sa bzang 'Phags pa taught him the Kalāpa system based on Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen's extensive subcommentary on the *Kalāpasūtravṛtti* of Durgasiṃha and the Cāndra system based on a commentary by Bu ston Rin chen grub.⁶³¹ The latter work is difficult to identify because although Bu ston did write an extensive subcommentary on Durgasiṃha's *Kalāpasūtravṛtti*, he is not known to have written such a commentary on the Cāndra system.⁶³² However, we should note that he did compose a brief grammatical instruction

⁶²⁷ See JACKSON 2011: 17–18, fig. 1.17. For the verse, see *Ibid.*: 18: *||gzhon nur rab byung dam pas rjes su bzung|| blo gros khang bzangs rgyud sde'i nor bus gang|| dbang bzhi'i rgyun gyis 'gro kun tshim par mdzad|| chos rje 'phags pa'i zhabs la phyag 'tshal lo||*. For the scroll painting, see also HAR (88595) and pl. 8.

⁶²⁸ Both can be identified by inscriptions: Thogs med pa and Byang rtse pa.

⁶²⁹ On Ngor chen's ordinations, see Part Three, 5.

⁶³⁰ VERHAGEN 1994: 52. On these two Indian grammar systems and their respective basic texts, commentaries, and subcommentaries, see *Ibid.*: 50–84.

⁶³¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 490.4–5): *dgung lo bcu gsum pa la sa bzang 'phags pa'i drung du/ sgra'i bstan bcos ka lā pa'i gzhung 'grel ma tis mdzad pa'i steng nas dang/ tsandra pa buṭik gi steng nas gsan cing/*. On the *Kalāpasūtravṛtti*, see VERHAGEN 1994: 66–67 (CG 11). On Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen's subcommentary, see *Ibid.*: 67 and 142–143 and VERHAGEN 2001: 91–98. *Ibid.*: 91 describes this commentary as follows: "Extensive commentary on the *Kātantra* grammar, containing a full-length commentary on the basic *sūtra*-text of the *Kātantra* system of grammar, or rather in effect a subcommentary on Durgasiṃha's *vṛtti* on that *sūtra*-text."

⁶³² For Bu ston's subcommentary, commonly designated as *dPe 'grel chen po*, see VERHAGEN 1994: 67, 95–96 and 210–211 and VERHAGEN 2001: 81–89.

manual on the *Kālacakratantra* that is based on the Cāndra system.⁶³³ Regarding the Kalāpa system of Sanskrit grammar, Ngor chen engaged in studying at least two further texts. From the short titles provided in his biography, we can infer that he might have studied either the *Kalāpasūtravṛtti* or *Kā la pa'i 'grel pa* (**Kalāpavṛtti*), which are both attributed to Durgasiṃha, and either the *Kalāpalaghuvṛttiśiṣyahitā* or *Kalāpavyākaraṇasūtravṛttiśiṣyahitā*.⁶³⁴ On poetics (*snyan dngags*), he was taught Daṇḍin's classical Indian treatise, the *Kāvyaḍarśa*; on synonymics (*ming gi mngon brjod*), Amarasimha's lexicon, the *Amarakośa*; on performing arts (*zlos gar*), Candragomin's five act drama *Lokānandanāṭaka* and Harṣadeva's *Nāgānandanāmanāṭaka*; and on prosody (*sdeb sbyor*), Ratnākaraśānti's metrical treatise, the *Chandoratnākara*, and the *sDeb sbyor sna tshogs kyi me tog gi chun po* of Sa skya Paṇḍita.⁶³⁵

For his further studies, both of Ngor chen's biographies provide nearly identical lists of the teachings that he obtained from Sa bzang 'Phags pa.⁶³⁶ But by far the most extensive list is contained in the *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, where Ngor chen not only records the lineages of those individual teachings but also provides few of his own additional explanatory remarks. For instance, he relates there the account of the introduction of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* in Tibet, discusses different transmission lines of groups of *sūtras* and the efforts made by lamas to unify those lines, and shares his doubts about the authenticity of some lineages.⁶³⁷

⁶³³ See VERHAGEN 1994: 96 and VERHAGEN 2001: 79–81.

⁶³⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 490.5): *ka lā pa'i 'grel pa dur siṃdharma [= siṃ dharma] dha sa slob phan rnams kyang mkhyen cingl*. It remains unclear to me whether Ngor chen's biographer might have attributed the *Slob phan* to Dharmadāsa. Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fol. 11a2–3): *ka lā pa'i 'grel pa dur sing* [empty space of one syllable] *dharma dha sa {chos khol} slob phan rnams kyang mkhyen cingl*. The gloss (*chos khol*) is not marked as such in the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 490.5–6) and is found in the running text at another position: *sdeb sbyor shānti pas mdzad pa'i rin chen chos khol 'byung gnas dangl*. On the *Kalāpasūtravṛtti*, see VERHAGEN 1994: 66–67 (CG 11) and on the *Kā la pa'i 'grel pa* (**Kalāpavṛtti*), see *Ibid.*: 69 (CG 13). On the *Kalāpalaghuvṛttiśiṣyahitā*, see *Ibid.*: 67–68 (CG 12) and on the *Kalāpavyākaraṇasūtravṛttiśiṣyahitā*, see *Ibid.*: 69–70 (CG 14).

⁶³⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 490.5–6): *snyan ngag danḍi'i gzhung me longl ming gi mngon brjod 'chi med mdzodl zlos gar la 'jig rten gsum kun du dga 'ba/ klu kun du dga' ba/ sdeb sbyor shānti pas mdzad pa'i rin chen chos khol 'byung gnas dangl sa paṅ gyi gsung rab me tog chung po sogs gsan zhing mkhas par gyur tol*. Note that the phrase *chos khol* is the misplaced annotation mentioned in the previous note. For the *sDeb sbyor sna tshogs kyi me tog gi chun po*, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 1 (vol. 10, pp. 530.6–569.6).

⁶³⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 449.1–450.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 504.4–506.1).

⁶³⁷ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 306.3–410.3). The presentation of the teachings that Ngor chen received from Sa bzang 'Phags pa is given based on the following structure:

1. *rgyud sde rin po che bzhi dang 'brel ba'i dbang bka'* byin rlabs rjes gnang rig gtaḍ lung man ngag sogs zhus pa las/ *thog dmar dbang bka' la/ spyi dang bye brag gnyis las/*
 - 1.1. *dang po rgyud sde spyi'i dgongs 'grel* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 306.4–311.1)
 - 1.2. *gnyis pa bye brag gi dbang bka' la bzhi las/*
 - 1.2.1. *thog mar rnal 'byor bla med kyi skor la/ thabs kyi rgyud/ shes rab kyi rgyud/ gnyis su med pa'i rgyud dang gsum gyi dang po ni/*
 - 1.2.1.1. [*thabs kyi rgyud la*] (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 311.1–318.3)
 - 1.2.1.2. *gnyis pa shes rab kyi rgyud la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 318.3–331.2)
 - 1.2.1.3. *gsum pa gnyis med rgyud la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 331.2–332.2)
 - 1.2.2. *gnyis pa rnal 'byor rgyud la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 332.2–333.2)
 - 1.2.3. *gsum pa spyod rgyud la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 333.2–4)
 - 1.2.4. *bzhi pa bya ba'i rgyud la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 333.4–344.3)
 - 1.3. *rdzogs rim zab mo'i skor zhus pa la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 344.3–353.2)
 - 1.4. *rgyud sde rin po che rnams kyi lung zhus pa la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 353.2–382.1)
2. *phar phyin theg pa'i skor la/ bka' dang bstan bcos gnyis kyi dang po*
 - 2.1. *theg pa chen po'i mdo sde sna tshogs kyi skor la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 382.2–406.5)
 - 2.2. *gnyis pa bstan bcos la* (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 406.5–410.2)

Prior to the actual enumeration of those teachings, the biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs opens his account by briefly mentioning some offerings that Ngor chen presented to Sa bzang 'Phags pa, probably at the time when he made his formal request to study under him. He is said to have offered monk's robes, a cloak, and a bolt of brocade that had all been made of red silk brocade originating from the time of the Yuan dynasty.⁶³⁸

Since Ngor chen received far too many teachings from Sa bzang 'Phags pa to discuss them all here, I shall limit myself to a few basic remarks. Since both masters were highly instrumental in the propagation of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*, I will return to these teaching cycles in more detail in the next section. A large part of Ngor chen's training under Sa bzang 'Phags pa was tantric in nature, pertaining to the principal *yi dam* deities and associated *tantras* practiced by the Sa skya tradition such as Guhyasamāja, Vajrabhairava, Hevajra, Cakrasaṃvara, and Kālacakra.⁶³⁹ But he also obtained teachings on less common deities, such as those associated with the *Catuḥpīṭhatantra*.⁶⁴⁰ Along with those teachings, he also obtained a huge number of reading transmissions for the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) and Sūtra section (*mdo sde*) of the *bKa' gyur*.⁶⁴¹ Moreover, he was trained in treatises such as the intermediate stage of meditation (*sgom rim bar ma*) of Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanākrama*, Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* and *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the *Sūtrālamkāra*, the *Uttaratantra*, and the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, whereby he obtained explanations of the four latter texts based on the commentaries by Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen chen.⁶⁴² He also received (presumably as reading transmissions) the collected works of Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen.⁶⁴³

It is interesting to note that Ngor chen also obtained the *U rgyan snyen sgrub* cycle of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1309) as well as teachings originating within the *bKa' brgyud* traditions, such as the complete *bDe mchog snyan brgyud* cycle, which Sa bzang 'Phags himself had received from 'Bri gung Lo tsā ba Maṅikaśrījñāna.⁶⁴⁴ Along with that, he obtained teachings on the *Six Dharmas of Nāropa* and Mahāmudrā, albeit in different lines of transmission.⁶⁴⁵

⁶³⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 504.4–5): *hor dus kyi ta hun gyi chos gos ber thull gos yug gan rgya ma nyams pa sogs zhabs tog dang bsnyen bkur gyis shin tu mnyes par mdzad del*.

⁶³⁹ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 311.1–344.3). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 449.1–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 504.5–505.4). On Ngor chen's studies of different Yamāntaka cycles under Sa bzang 'Phags pa and other of his teachers, see also the *gShin rje gshed kyi chos 'byung* (pp. 107.2–6, 111.1–4, 124.3–127.1, 132.6–134.5, and 136.3–5).

⁶⁴⁰ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 326.1–4). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 449.4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 505.2).

⁶⁴¹ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 353.2–406.5). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 449.6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 505.4–5).

⁶⁴² See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 406.5–409.4). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 449.6–450.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 505.5). For the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* commentary, see TBRC (W1660, W22248, W1PD95808, and W2MS2240). For the *Sūtrālamkāra* commentary, see TBRC (W1KG9031). For the *Uttaratantra* commentary, see TBRC (W1PD95809, W24879, and W28044). For the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* commentary, see TBRC (W27558 and W2DB4617).

⁶⁴³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 450.1), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 505.5), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 409.5–6).

⁶⁴⁴ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 344.3–345.2 and 345.2–349.4), respectively. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 449.6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 505.4). Ngor chen himself is said to have bestowed the *Ras chung snyan rgyud* on Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal (1398–1458); see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 273.2–5).

⁶⁴⁵ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 349.4–350.6).

Ngor chen's biographer emphasises that he also once again received the entire tantric teachings of the Zha lu tradition that Bu ston Rin chen grub had written.⁶⁴⁶ This statement is difficult to verify. Though Ngor chen obtained empowerments in lineages of Bu ston that had mainly been transmitted to Sa bzang 'Phags pa via Bu ston's disciple Rin chen nam rgyal, we only find a few references to actual works of Bu ston that he had studied.⁶⁴⁷ As will be shown in the section on Ngor chen's studies under Bla ma dam pa bKra shis rin chen, the majority of teachings in the Zha lu tradition were transmitted by that latter lama.

The accounts in Ngor chen's biographies do not specify a time frame for his studies under Sa bzang 'Phags pa. The picture that emerges from them is that he pursued his training both at Sa skya and Sa bzang at different intervals over a long period, from the time of his monastic ordination at age nine (i.e., in 1390) until his master's passing away in 1412.⁶⁴⁸ After Sa bzang 'Phags pa had fallen sick, Ngor chen spent the last days of his master's life with him, taking care of him and his medical treatment and organising religious services for his recovery (*sku rim*). After his master's demise, he oversaw the preparation of Sa bzang 'Phags pa's remains and officially announced his passing (*gsang brtol*). In performing various meritorious actions on behalf of his deceased master, he distributed large scale donations (*gral 'gyed*) and offerings (*'bul gtong*) in Sa skya's central monastic assembly. For reciting supplications, he invited lamas residing at Sa skya into the Bla brang Nyi thog, where he organised a prayer service, which lasted many days.⁶⁴⁹ For forty-nine days, Slob dpon Chos seng and others performed the *Yan lag bdun pa* and Ngor chen covered all the expenses for the weekly rituals and offerings without keeping any of his master's belongings for himself. Ngor chen distributed, on the same scale, donations at Sa bzang and held a similar prayer service there. Moreover, he commissioned realistic clay statues of his master in different sizes along with garments and seats (*bzhugs stan*). As "inner sacred objects" (*nang rten*), he commissioned magnificent statues of the *Buddhas* of the Three Times—Dipaṃkara, Śākyamuni, and Maitreya—along with a five-pointed *gandhola* backrest made of gilt copper. Out of the cremation ashes and bone fragments, he had one hundred thousand *sku gdung* images stamped. They were placed in a silver reliquary of the *Stūpa* of Great Awakening, which was another of Ngor chen's commissions. He furnished the *stūpa* with a canopy and a thousand *buddha* images, provided the latter with garments made out of silk, and performed the consecration of all those objects. The *stūpa* was placed into the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, where it was still in existence when Sangs rgyas phun tshogs wrote his biography of Ngor chen.⁶⁵⁰

6.7.4 Ngor chen as Abbot of Sa bzang Monastery

Not much is known about the history of Sa bzang Monastery, which is also referred to as Sa bzang dGa' ldan or dGa' ldan Sa bzang. It was located in the vicinity of Sa skya, standing to the north-west of the monastery. It served as the seat of such prominent

⁶⁴⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 505.5–6): *slar yang rgyud sde bzhi dang 'brel ba'i zhwa lu pa'i chos skor bu ston rin po ches mdzad pa phra mo yan chad kyang ma lus par yongs su rdzogs par gsan zhiñj*.

⁶⁴⁷ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 329.1–3, 333.2–4, and 343.6–344.3).

⁶⁴⁸ Ngor chen also authored two of his works while at Sa bzang, one in 1408 and another in 1410; see CATALOGUE (nos. 66 and 93), respectively.

⁶⁴⁹ On the Nyi thog bla brang, see Part Three, n. 114.

⁶⁵⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 512.5–513.5).

masters as Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan and his abbatial successor Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros.⁶⁵¹ Both masters have been confused to a large extent in non-Tibetan literature mainly owing to a remark by George N. Roerich in his translation of 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal's *Deb ther sngon po* that Sa bzang 'Phag pa was also known as Ma ti Paṅ chen.⁶⁵²

According to Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' continuation of the *Ngor chos 'byung*, the monastery of Sa bzang was established by Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen.⁶⁵³ By contrast, Rigs ldan rGyal ba Jo bzang dpal bzang po (fl. 15th century) specifies that Bla ma Zla ba rgyal mtshan had invited Ma ti Paṅ chen as *tshogs dpon* of Sa bzang, where the latter taught the *rGyud 'grel* (i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*) for one year during the monastic summer and winter sessions. Afterwards, the whole monastery was offered to him and he made it his residence. It is said that many great lamas visited it, coming from monasteries of dBus and gTsang—such as sNar thang, Nag phug, Zha lu, Rwa lung, sNye thang, Sa skya, and gSang phu—and that numerous monks gathered at Sa bzang to listen to his teachings.⁶⁵⁴

As with the history of Sa bzang in general, not much is known about Ngor chen's tenure there. Nevertheless, by investigating the biographies of Sa bzang 'Phags pa and Ngor chen, some of the circumstances of his appointment as abbot can be learned and we can establish his time in office. In the tiger year (i.e., in 1410), bKa' bzhi pa bSod nams don grub and Sa bzang 'Phags pa held discussions, apparently about the future of Sa bzang Monastery. Afterwards, Sa bzang 'Phags pa disclosed to Ngor chen that, because he was not sure how much longer he would live, Ngor chen should make efforts to receive from him all the teachings he had not yet completed and take control of Sa bzang. He instructed him to continuously teach for the benefit of others, and by presenting him with the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, a *samaya vajra* and *ghaṅṭa*, and a religious conch horn, he officially enthroned Ngor chen as his successor.⁶⁵⁵ The conch horn was later kept at Ngor and was highly prized. It became one of the holy objects that was handed over to each successive Ngor abbot in the course of the enthronement ceremony and had to be blown once as an auspicious omen.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵¹ For the location of Sa bzang, see CASSINELLI and EKVALL 1969: [34], Map 3.

⁶⁵² See ROERICH 1996: 1045.

⁶⁵³ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 299.3–4).

⁶⁵⁴ See the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i rnam thar* (pp. 580.6–581.1).

⁶⁵⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 450.2–4), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 506.1–3.), and *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 176.3–6). Sangs rgyas phun tshogs further adds that Ngor chen was twenty-eight years old (i.e., 1409) in that tiger year (i.e., 1410); see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 506.1). However, according to Tibetan chronological calculation, Ngor chen would have been twenty-nine years old (i.e., 1410). The year 1410 is further confirmed by Ngor chen himself, who states that Sa bzang 'Phags pa was sixty-five years old (i.e., 1410) when he installed him as his successor at Sa bzang; see the *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 176.3–5). bKa' bzhi pa bSod nams don grub was somehow related to Sa bzang. He is also addressed as Sa bzang bKa' bzhi pa and bestowed a longevity empowerment (*tshe dbang*) on Ngor chen; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 508.1). In 1421, he was in residence at Sa bzang when sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes visited that monastery; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 347.20–348.5).

⁶⁵⁶ Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 May 2009 and 24 September 2012) and Phan bde mkhan Rin po che (gZhis ka rtse, 9 December 2011). See also the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 203.4–5): *gts'o cher sa bzang 'phags pa'i chos dung dangl lam 'bras glegs baml bkra shis rdzas brgyad rnam gnod srol 'dug pa bzhin dang bcas rgyal ba lung bstan pa'i skyes chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i chos khri'i steng du 'gro dgos pa byungl; and Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 589.3–5): *de'i tshe sngon gyi dus su 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros kyis rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po de nyid dge ldan sa bzang gi khri la mnga' gsol ba'i dus su phul ba'i chos dung rin po che dangl snyan brgyud bstan pa'i bdag po gcig pur gyur pa'i mtshon ched du lam 'bras glegs bam pod ser rje btsun rin po che'i phyag dpe 'khrul medl rin chen gnyis pa las grub pa'i bkra shis rtags brgyad kyi bkod pa ngo mtshar ba rnam dangl. In addition, see also the *Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros kyi rnam thar* (p. 827.2–3), *Klu**

Ngor chen's instalment at Sa bzang seems to have taken place at the same time as the period of his *Lam 'bras* studies under Buddhaśrī was coming to an end. As mentioned above, in 1410 Buddhaśrī and Ngor chen left Zhi dgon and travelled to Sa skya and Sa bzang, where they stayed for nine months.

Except for a few general remarks, Ngor chen's biographies provide almost no details about his activities at Sa bzang. He is said to have engaged in virtuous activities such as taking care of the temples, making ritual offerings, and holding *sgrub mchod* rituals of worship in order to fulfil the last wishes of the previous masters.⁶⁵⁷

Ngor chen acted as the head of Sa bzang for only a short period of years, from 1410 until 1412 or 1413. Then he resigned. The exact reason for his resignation is not specified, but he obviously faced some opposition there, which is expressed by one biographer in this way:⁶⁵⁸

At that time, [Ngor chen] had acted for three years as abbot [of Sa bzang] without being agitated by the wind of the wrong actions of a [certain] evil person, and [he] entrusted [the monastery] into the hands of bKa' bzhi pa [bSod nams don grub]. Then, avoiding all mental involvements such as ill-will toward others or a mind that desires to obtain wealth [that one] had not acquired and mental involvements [trying to] achieve such [things] as fame and veneration, [he] made his residence in [his] lama's living quarters, the [Shāk bzang] sKu 'bum, and taught the holy Dharma of the *trīyāna*, such as the *Lam 'bras*, and, to fulfil the last wishes of [his] lama, [he] exerted himself in performing dedications.

Though this episode aims at stating that Ngor chen did not resign due to some opposition he faced, it suggests exactly the opposite. For now, I am unable to identify his adversary, but we know that he was engaged in religious polemics. His main opponent was Tsong kha pa's disciple mKhas grub rJe dGe legs dpal bzang, although during Ngor chen's tenure at Sa bzang, the polemic attack by mKhas grub rJe had yet to come. But prior to that, between the years 1404 to 1406, Ngor chen had already composed polemical works that were also directed against doctrinal trends existing within the Sa skya school. Hence, we need to consider whether the opposition he faced at that time might have originated within his own school. I will return in more detail to the involvement of Ngor chen in such controversies in Part Four.

lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2 (p. 32.3–8), *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 423.1–2), *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 79.4–5), *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 94.5–6), *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, p. 162.4–5), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (p. 217.2–3), *Tshul khriims dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (p. 406.1–2), *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 802.2–3), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 333.6), and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 125.4–126.1).

⁶⁵⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 506.3–4). From the colophons of his writings we come to know that Ngor chen was present at Sa bzang in the seventh month of 1408 and the third and fifth month of 1410; see CATALOGUE (no. 66), LIST (no. 7), and CATALOGUE (no. 93), respectively.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 513.5–514.1): *de'i tshe skye bo ngan pa'i log bsgrub kyi rlung gis mi bskiyod par gdan sa lo gsum mdzad de/ bka' bzhi pa rang gi phyag tu gtad nas gzhan la gnod pa'i sems dang/ rnyed pa ma thob pa thob par 'dod pa la sogs pa'i thugs dang/ grags pa dang bsnyen bkur la sogs pa bsgrub pa'i spros pa thams cad spangs nas bla ma'i gzims khang sku 'bum du bzhugs nas lam 'bras la sogs pa'i theg pa gsum gyi dam pa'i chos gsungs shing/ bla ma'i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa'i ched du bsngo ba mdzad pa la brtson par mdzad dol/*. Note that in Tibetan sources of recent origin, Ngor chen's tenure at Sa bzang has mistakenly been specified as nineteen years; see the *Ming mdzod* (pp. 449.21–450.2) and *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, p. 9.13–15). When sGa Rab 'Byams pa Kun dga' ye shes visited Sa bzang in about 1421, bKa' bzhi pa bSod nams don grub was still in residence there; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 347.19–348.5).

After his resignation, Ngor chen moved back to Sa skya, where he resided in Sa bzang 'Phags pa's residence, the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, giving teachings and exerting himself in the practice of merit dedication to fulfil the last wishes of his late master. Having acted as the abbot of Sa bzang, Ngor chen earned himself the title *sa bzang pa* and thus he is sometimes also referred to as Bla ma Sa bzang pa or Sa bzang pa Kun dga' bzang po.⁶⁵⁹

6.7.5 The *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*

Ngor chen had received the teachings of the tantric ritual compendiums of both *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* along with the initiations into their *maṇḍalas* from Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros. In the course of his monastic career, these teachings figured prominently in Ngor chen's teaching schedule. Following in the steps of his teacher, he bestowed the empowerments for the *Vajrāvalī* along with the ones for the *Kriyāsamuccaya* more than sixty times.⁶⁶⁰ At first, he had imparted them to a group of Sa bzang 'Phags pa's disciples after the demise of his master in 1412. From that time on, he is said to have bestowed them on a yearly basis, according to the records of his disciples such as his biographer Sangs rgya gyal mtshan.⁶⁶¹

With regard to the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, Shar Mi nyag Paṇḍi ta Grags pa rdo rje relates in his biography of dPal ldan rdo rje, the fifth abbot of Ngor, an instruction Ngor chen gave to his most prominent disciples, illustrating how important Ngor chen considered these tantric teachings and rituals.⁶⁶²

After [dPal ldan rdo rje] had requested the bestowal of the empowerments of the *maṇḍalas* that are taught from the *Vajrāvalīnāmamaṇḍalopāyikā*, which had been written by Slob dpon chen po Abhayākara, [he] also heard the reading transmissions for the [works] known as the *Garland Trio* (*Phreng ba skor gsum*): *Vajrāvalī*, *Niṣpannayogāvalīnāma*, and *Jyotimañjarī*. Also, [he] requested the empowerments of the forty-two *maṇḍalas* that are taught from the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, which had been written by Slob dpon Darpañacārya, in exact accordance with the *Vajrāvalī* and together with three supplementary *maṇḍalas*, and afterwards also heard [its] reading transmissions, including that for the Indian works. At that time, the Dharma Lord [Ngor chen] said: "The text of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* was first translated by Sa bzang Ma ti Paṇ chen. Sa bzang 'Phags

⁶⁵⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 454.2), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 517.5 and 531.5), and *Lo paṇ gyi mtshan tho* (p. 124.1). In the colophon of his famous eulogy to Ngor chen, the *Rab dkar ma*, Rong ston Shākya rgyal mtshan refers to Ngor chen as Sa bzang pa as well; see the *Sa skya pa'i zhal don phyogs bsgrigs* (p. 94.11–15): *ces snyigs dus kyī rdo rje 'chang gnyis pa sa bzang pa kun dga' bzang po la gsol ba 'dab pa 'di ni (...)*.

⁶⁶⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 453.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 512.5).

⁶⁶¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 453.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 515.6–516.1).

⁶⁶² dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar (p. 578.1–6): *slob dpon chen po a bha yā ka ras mdzad pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga rdo rje phreng ba nas gsungs pa'i dkyil 'khor rnams kyī dbang bskur ba zhus nas rdo rje phreng ba rnal 'byor rdzogs phreng/ sbyin sreg 'od kyī snye ma stel phreng ba skor gsum du grags pa'i lung yang gsan no/ yang slob dpon darpaṇa ā tsāryas mdzad pa'i kri ya sa mutstsha las gsungs pa'i dkyil 'khor bzhi bcu zhe gnyis phreng ba ji lta ba bzhin dang kha skong gi dkyil 'khor gsum dang bcas pa'i dbang zhus nas rgya gzhung gi lung dang bcas pa yang gsan no/ de'i tshe chos rje'i zhal nas/ kri ya samutstsha'i gzhung 'di sa bzang ma ti paṇ chen pas thog mar bsgyur/ sa bzang 'phags pas bal po ye rang gi paṇḍi ta ma hā bho dhi la dbang bka' gsan nas bod du dar bar mdzad cing/ khyad par du nged rang la gtaḍ pa yin pas chos 'di'i bdaḡ po deng sang nged rang yin/ ngas kyang khyed rnams la gtaḍ pa yin pas/ sems dpa' chen po dang/ 'jam dbyangs chos rje/ mkhas pa dpal gyi mtshan/ mkhas grub gung ru ba/ rje 'di nyid la sogs pa'i mtshan smos nas khyed rnams kyis dar rgyas sa mdzod gsungs pa'i bka' lung yang gngang na' angl chos rje rnam pa gnyis kyis ni 'di'i dbang ma gngang/ dpal gyi bas ni sku tshe thung bas mdzad long ma byung/ slob dpon gu [= gung] ru bas tshar gcig gnyis mdzad 'dul/ rang res tshar mang du byas pa yin gsung/.*

pa heard the empowerments by Mahābodhi, the Newari *paṇḍita* of Pāṭan, and spread [them] in Tibet. In particular, because [he] has entrusted [them] to me, I myself am the keeper of this teaching these days. I have passed [it] on to you.” Calling on Sems dpa’ chen po [i.e., Mus chen], ’Jam dbyangs Chos rje [i.e., Shes rab rgya mtsho], mKhas pa dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, mKhas grub Gung ru ba [i.e., Shes rab bzang po], and this Lord [i.e., dPal ldan rdo rje] and others, [Ngor chen] also instructed [them]: “Hence, you should spread [it]!” However, the two Chos rjes [i.e., the first two Ngor abbots] did not bestow its empowerments. Because dPal gyi ba was short-lived, [he] did not get an occasion to bestow [it]. Slob dpon Gung ru ba has given [it] once or twice. [dPal ldan rdo rje] said: “I have given [it] many times.”

The end of this passage suggests that some of Ngor chen’s disciples did not consider the *Kriyāsamuccaya* as important as Ngor chen had hoped.

The best known expression of Ngor chen’s high appreciation of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*, at least outside of Tibet, is a magnificent set of fourteen *maṇḍala* paintings that he commissioned for depicting the forty-two *maṇḍalas* explained in the *Vajrāvalī*, together with three additional *maṇḍalas* originating from the *Kriyāsamuccaya*. In fulfilling the last wishes of Sa bzang ’Phags pa, Ngor chen commissioned this set after the foundation of Ngor in 1429 and had it executed by Newar artists.

6.7.6 A Short Introduction of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*

The *Vajrāvalī* (or *Vajrāvalīnāmamaṇḍalopāyikā*) constitutes, as pointed out by Masahide Mori, “one of the largest ritual works of tantric Buddhism and deals exhaustively with the various rituals and ceremonies to be performed within a monastic compound.”⁶⁶³ It was compiled by Abhayākara Gupta (late 11th–early 12th century), a famous abbot of Vikramaśīla. It was arranged along with two other ritual works of his—the *Niṣpanna-yogāvalīnāma* (*rDzogs pa’i rnal ’byor gyi phreng ba zhes bya ba* or *rNal ’byor rdzogs phreng*) and the *Jyotimañjari* or *Jyotimañjarīnāmamahomopāyikā* (*sByin sreg gi cho ga ’od kyi snye ma zhes bya ba* or *sByin sreg ’od kyi snye ma*)—into the compilation known in Tibet as *’Phreng ba skor gsum*.⁶⁶⁴ Over the last twenty years, important research on the *Vajrāvalī* has been contributed by the aforementioned Japanese scholar Masahide Mori.⁶⁶⁵ By way of introduction, I would like to quote here some passages from his studies that are most relevant in ours:

The three main topics of the VA [*Vajrāvalī*] are the *maṇḍala* construction, the consecration (*abhiṣeka*) of a disciple, and the installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) of various deities within religious icons. Abhaya also appends a number of minor rituals such as the *homa* ritual, oblations (*bali*), and water offerings (*argha*) to these three main

⁶⁶³ MORI 2009: 1.

⁶⁶⁴ See MORI 2002: 267 and MORI 2009: 1 and 8.

⁶⁶⁵ I like to thank Amy Heller for pointing out Mori’s research to me and Masahide Mori for sharing it. For the edition of the *Vajrāvalī* in Sanskrit and Tibetan with an introduction to its historical and textual context as well as charts of its *maṇḍalas* and listings of its deities, see MORI 2009. On Abhayākara Gupta and his works and translations, see BÜHNEMANN and TACHIKAWA 1991: xiii–xx and MORI 2008: 1–16. On the contents, structure, and topics of the *Vajrāvalī* and related Tibetan sources, see *Ibid.*: 16–30.

topics, and explains the ritual activities of the master (*ācārya*) throughout the procedural stages of all rites.⁶⁶⁶

The VA provides detailed information on maṇḍalas. On the other hand, another of his works, the *Niṣpammayogāvalī* (NPY), also describes the deities included in the maṇḍalas, but iconographically. The maṇḍalas are identical with those in the VA, though the VA only mentions the structure of the maṇḍala and the symbols that stand for the deities. In other words, the VA explains the drawn maṇḍalas (*lekhyamaṇḍala*) on the ground in consecration and installation rituals, and the NPY describes the envisaged maṇḍalas (*bhāvyaṁḍala*). The descriptions given in both texts enable us to recreate the images of the maṇḍalas that were selected by Abhaya as representative of his period.⁶⁶⁷

The key terms to assist us in clarifying the relationship between the VA and the NPY must be *bhāvyaṁḍala* and *lekhyamaṇḍala*. The author mentions these two terms in the first chapter of the NPY to indicate two fundamental types of *maṇḍala*. The former type of *maṇḍala*, which literally means the envisaged *maṇḍala*, is a three-dimensional *maṇḍala* to be visualized by the meditator. On the other hand, the latter *maṇḍala* ('drawn *maṇḍala*') is a two-dimensional form which is materially created: drawn and painted on the ground with powdered grains and colours. This *lekhyamaṇḍala* also served as a ritual device employed during the performance of such rites as the consecration ceremony. In the NPY Abhaya describes the structure and details of the *bhāvyaṁḍala* one by one. He then elaborates the procedure for creating *lekhyamaṇḍalas* in the VA, (...).⁶⁶⁸

While the VA explains the practical procedures of producing *lekhyamaṇḍalas*, the major part of the NPY is preoccupied with describing the iconographic characteristics of the deities that dwell within—which is why the NPY is sometimes misunderstood as an iconographic manual.⁶⁶⁹

The JM [*Jyotimāñjarī*] is one of the largest manuals on Tantric Buddhist *homa* rites to have been written in India. For the most part this text describes 'external *homa*' (*bāhyahoma*), but Abhaya also briefly mentions three higher rites: mental *homa* (*manaso-homa*), internal *homa* (*antarhoma*) and supreme *homa* (*anuttarahoma*).⁶⁷⁰

Abhaya systematised the structure and the lists of deities of twenty-six *maṇḍalas* in the VA (...). His other *maṇḍala* treatise, the NPY, also provides the procedure of visualizing the identical *maṇḍalas* in the same order. It is problematic to sort out the order of twenty-six *maṇḍalas* in these two works, because it does not follow the divisions in tantra classes, i.e., Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga, and Anuttara-yoga. Moreover, Abhaya does not put the different *maṇḍalas* of the same root text in successive positions (...). The order of the twenty-six *maṇḍalas* may be related to their own structure. Abhaya consistently explains the *maṇḍalas* of a similar

⁶⁶⁶ MORI 2008: 223.

⁶⁶⁷ MORI 2008: 223.

⁶⁶⁸ MORI 2009: 10.

⁶⁶⁹ MORI 2009: 10–11.

⁶⁷⁰ MORI 2009: 11.

structure, because it is convenient to him to abridge the explanation of the same part, when he wrote the procedure of drawing lines in the VA.⁶⁷¹

The VA and the NPY are concerned with many kinds of *maṇḍalas* because Abhayākaragupta possibly collected the representative *maṇḍalas* transmitted in his age. The author, however, did not specify the number of the *maṇḍalas* discussed. He might be assumed to explain twenty-six *maṇḍalas* since the NPY consists of twenty-six chapters, but, actually, some chapters introduce two or more *maṇḍalas* by changing the central deities and / or the surrounding deities included in them. In Tibet, the number forty-two was generally regarded as the total of the *maṇḍalas* in both texts.⁶⁷²

The *Kriyāsamuccaya* constitutes another compendium on tantric ritual that is closely related to the *Vajrāvalī*. The text, which is also called *Vajrācāryakriyāsamuccaya* or *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*, was written by Jagaddarpaṇa alias Maṇḍalācāryā Darpaṇa or Darpaṇācārya.⁶⁷³ In comparison with the structure of the *Vajrāvalī*, Bühnemann states that “Jagaddarpaṇa added, rearranged and modified the text of the V [*Vajrāvalī*], but took over many parts literally.”⁶⁷⁴ Moreover, Abhayākaragupta’s *Niṣpannayogāvalī* also appears in the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, but without being referred to by name. In this regard, Bühnemann remarks:⁶⁷⁵

The complete text of the NSP [*Niṣpannayogāvalī*] appears in the KS [*Kriyāsamuccaya*] section dealing with *maṇḍalas*. (...) The text immediately preceding the inserted NSP text is the *maṇḍala* section of the V [*Vajrāvalī*], altered with many changes. The V describes the *maṇḍalas* within the context of rituals in a rather concise manner, while the NSP is a separate treatise on *maṇḍalas*. According to Abhayākaragupta’s own statements, the NSP, dealing exclusively with *maṇḍalas*, and the *Jyotirmañjarī*, dealing exclusively with fire rituals, are supplementary texts to the V. Apparently Jagaddarpaṇa did not want to miss one of the descriptions. Instead of presenting his own version based on the V and the NSP descriptions, he incorporated the elaborate descriptions of the NSP after the concise one found in the V.

I shall not discuss here the transmission history of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* to Tibet because the former has been described by Mahaside Mori and the latter I discussed in the previous section.⁶⁷⁶ Thus I turn now to Ngor chen’s *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, to where he records the transmission lines along their respective sub-lineages for the initiations into the *maṇḍalas* of both the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*.⁶⁷⁷ He begins each section with an enumeration of the individual names of the *maṇḍalas* as elaborated by each compendium. For the *Vajrāvalī*, he lists forty-two *maṇḍalas* and records three initiation

⁶⁷¹ MORI 2009: 711. See also MORI 2008: 223.

⁶⁷² MORI 2002: 269.

⁶⁷³ See BÜHNEMANN 1992/93: [18].

⁶⁷⁴ BÜHNEMANN 1992/93: 19.

⁶⁷⁵ BÜHNEMANN 1992/93: 20. According to MORI 2002: 275, the *Kriyāsamuccaya* “is a voluminous ritual text based on Abhayākaragupta’s ‘triple cycle of garland’ and some other works, (...)”

⁶⁷⁶ See MORI 2008: 224–225 and MORI 2009: 28–30. See also the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 1217–1220.1; ROERICH 1996: 1046–1048).

⁶⁷⁷ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 306.4–311.1). For other transmission lines such as via Bu ston Rin chen grub, see MORI 2002: 273–274, MORI 2008: 233, and MORI 2009: 29, n. 91.

lineages, which also correspond to the lineage of the reading transmission for the *Garland Trio* (*'Phreng ba skor gsum*):⁶⁷⁸

- (1) Vajradhara, Vajrayoginī, Abhayākara, Anupamarakṣita, Vikhyātadeva, Paṇ chen Śākyaśrī, Bhūmiśrī, Vimalaśrī, Bodhisīmha (i.e., Mang mkhar Lo tsā ba Byang chub seng ge), sKyi ston 'Jam dbyangs (Grags pa rgyal mtshan), Kun mkhyen chen po (i.e., Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan), Ma ti Paṇ chen, Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and Ngor chen.
- (2) Alternatively, from Abhayākara to Nāyakapa, Daśabalaśrī, Vikhyātadeva, and then continuing as above.
- (3) Alternatively, from Paṇ chen Śākyaśrī to Glang bang so ba, gNyag rDo rje 'dzin pa, Khams pa dKon mchog rin chen, Lo tstsha ba mChog ldan (i.e., Mang mkhar Lo tsā ba mChog ldan legs pa'i blo gros), from him Kun mkhyen chen po (i.e., Dol po pa) received most of it mainly following the Jñānapāda tradition (*ye shes zhabs lugs*), Ma ti Paṇ chen, Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and Ngor chen.

In a gloss, Ngor chen remarks that even though Abhayākara Gupta had received the initiation into the *maṇḍalas* from different masters, these individual lineages did not spread to Tibet. The lineage that was transmitted constituted one combined bestowal of all the *maṇḍalas* as it had been imparted on Abhayākara Gupta by Vajrayoginī.⁶⁷⁹

Ngor chen continues with the lineages for the initiations into the fifty-five *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī*, specifying in an annotation that one reaches this number by subdividing the *maṇḍalas* of Pañcarakṣā, Pañcaḍāka, and Ṣaṭcakravartī:⁶⁸⁰

- (1) Abhaya, Śākyarakṣita, Ghoṭaguru, Vibhūticandra, Godevaśrī, Kṣantiśrī, Paṇḍita Buddhaśrī, Paṇḍita Nātha, sKyi ston 'Jam dbyangs, Kun mkhyen chen po, Ma ti Paṇ chen, Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and Ngor chen.
- (2) Abhaya, Legs spyod 'byung gnas sbas pa, bDe ba'i 'byung gnas sbas pa, Ratnarakṣita, Zhang Lo tstsha ba Grub pa dpal, Khams pa Shākya rdo rje, Bla ma dBus pa (i.e., dBus pa Blo gsal Sangs rgyas 'bum), Lo tstsha ba mChog ldan, sKyi ston 'Jam dbyangs, Kun mkhyen chen po, Ma ti Paṇ chen, Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and Ngor chen.

Ngor chen presents next the lineages for a concise transmission of the *Vajrāvalī* in twenty-eight *maṇḍalas*:⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁸ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 306.4–308.3). For the enumeration of the forty-two *maṇḍalas*, see also the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (pp. 191.5–193.4). For the first lineage, see also the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 193.5–6). Thereafter the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 194.1–3) presents three alternative lineages without differentiating between the transmission for forty-two and fifty-five *maṇḍalas*. The first seems to be a combination of the second and third lineage of Ngor chen's record for the *Vajrāvalī* in forty-two *maṇḍalas*. The second and third correspond to Ngor chen's record of the two transmission lines for the *Vajrāvalī* in fifty-five *maṇḍalas*. Note that the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* provides more complete names for each individual lineage holder than Ngor chen does.

⁶⁷⁹ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 307.5–6): *ji ltar nal a bha yas bla ma so so las gsan mod| de dag gi brgyud pa ni bod du ma dar bas| 'dir rdo rje rnal 'byor mas dkyil 'khor thams cad phyogs gcig tu bsdu ba'i gnang ba thob pa la brten nas|*. See also the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 193.5–6). On Abhayākara Gupta's special relation with Vajrayoginī, see the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, pp. 1217.9–1218.4; ROERICH 1996: 1046) and MORI 2002: 274.

⁶⁸⁰ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 308.3–6). For charts of the Pañcaḍāka and Ṣaṭcakravartī *maṇḍalas* with listings and indices of deities, see MORI 2009: 658–660, chart 27–30 and 685–688, nos. 24–25.

⁶⁸¹ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 308.6–309.2). See also the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 194.3–5). The latter work gives the names of some Indian masters in Tibetan translation, which I have given in brackets.

- (1) Down to Kha che Paṅ chen [i.e., Śākyaśrī] the same as the lineage of the forty-two *maṅḍalas*, then from lHo pa Thams cad mkhyen pa to lHa khang dKar ru pa, Yar lung pa Slob dpon Ral gri, the latter's younger brother Shes smon, Bla ma Byang seng (i.e., Mang mkhar Lo tsā ba Byang chub seng ge), and from sKyi ston 'Jam dbyangs down to Ngor chen is again similar to the first lineage above.
- (2) Alternatively, from Abhaya to Anupamarakṣita (dPe med srung ba), Vikhyātadeva (rNam bshad lha), Paṅ chen Śākyaśrī, dPon po Bhūmiśrī, the latter's son Vimalaśrībhadra (Dri med dpal bzang), Lo tstsha ba Blo brtan, Byang seng pa, mKhas mchog pa, Kum mkhyen chen po, Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen, Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and Ngor chen.

With regard to the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, Ngor chen explains that it consists of a total of forty-five *maṅḍalas*, comprising the forty-two *maṅḍalas* as taught in the *Vajrāvalī* plus three additional *maṅḍalas* of Grahamātrkā, Vasudhārā, and Uṣṇīṣavijayā.⁶⁸² The latter three are considered to be the three *maṅḍalas* that make the conclusion of the whole initiation auspicious (*dge legs su byed pa'i dkyil 'khor gsum*).⁶⁸³ For the extensive empowerment ritual (*dbang bskur ba'i cho ga rgyas pa*) of the forty-five *maṅḍalas* of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* along with the reading transmission for its textual tradition, Ngor chen records the following lineage:⁶⁸⁴

- (1) Mahāvajradhara, Vajrayoginī, Darpañācārya, Samantabhadra (Slob dpon Kun tu bzang po), Jñānajyoti (Ye shes kyi glog), Śrī Hanumantra (dPal Myur ba'i mtha'), Śrī Mañjubhadra ('Jam dpal bzang po), Śrī Bhadra (dPal bzang po), Dharmājyotibhadra (Chos glog bzang po), Manajayabhadra (Yid 'tsho bzang po), Śotamśrībhadra (Ngag dpal bzang po), Śrī Vijayabhadrapāda (dPal rNal 'byor bzang po), Śrī Mādanabhadrapāda (dPal Myos byed bzang po), Śrī Lakṣmībhadrapāda (dPal Phun tshogs bzang po), Gaganabhadra (Nam mkha' bzang po), Udakajīvabhadra (Chu'i 'tsho ba bzang po), Śrī Harakabhadrapāda ('Phrog byed bzang po), Bhagibhadra (sKal ldan bzang po), Bal yul Ye rang gi Paṅḍi ta Jagadānandajīvabhadra (Kun dga'i 'tsho ba bzang po), the latter's son Paṅḍi ta Mahābodhi (Paṅḍi ta Byang chub chen po), Sa bzang 'Phags pa, and Ngor chen.

At the end of his lineage record, Ngor chen remarks that he also requested from Sa bzang 'Phags pa the *sādhanas* of both the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*, the *dKyi chog rin chen phreng mdzes*, and the *sByin sreg gi cho ga ye shes me dpung*, and was also taught their ritual

⁶⁸² See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 309.2–4): *yang slob dpon chen po dar paṅ ā tsaryas mdzad pa'i kri ya sa mutstsha zhes bya ba' rdo rje slob dpon rnam la nye bar mkho ba'i cho ga mtha' yas pa phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i bstan bcos chen po nas 'byung ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi rnam grangs la' sngar rdo rje phreng bar gsungs pa'i dkyil 'khor bzhi bcu zhe gnyis po ci lta bar bzhugs la' de'i steng du gza' yum gyi dkyil 'khor dang' nor gryun ma'i dkyil 'khor dang' rnam rgyal gyi dkyil 'khor te gsum bstan pas dkyil 'khor zhe lnga'i (...)*. See also the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 193.4): (...) *phreng ba'i dngos bstan gyi dkyil 'khor zhe gnyis dang' de'i khar lha mo nor rgyun ma lha bcu dgu ma' gza' yum rig pa chen mo lha zhe drug gam lnga bcu ma' gtsug tor rnam par rgyal mo lha so gsum ma ste (...)*.

⁶⁸³ See the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 191.6), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 464.6), and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 549.1–2).

⁶⁸⁴ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 309.4–310.5). See also the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (pp. 194.5–195.2). The latter source gives the names of all the Newari masters in Tibetan translation, which I have given in brackets. Note that it includes two further masters after Vajrayoginī and before Darpañācārya, namely Abhayākara and Anupamarakṣita (dPe med srung ba). It also records the further transmission line of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* down to Blo gter dbang po (1847–1914) along with four sub-lineages; see the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 195.2–6).

procedures.⁶⁸⁵ By contrast, in his biographies, Ngor chen's studies of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* are only mentioned in short at the beginning of the list of teachings that he had received from Sa bzang 'Phags pa. There it is stated that he obtained the complete empowerments of the *Vajrāvalī*, the reading transmissions for the *Garland Trio* (*Phreng ba skor gsum*), the empowerments of the *Kriyāsamuccaya*, and the reading transmission for the *maṇḍala* ritual (*dkyil chog*).⁶⁸⁶

6.7.7 Ngor chen Commissioning the *Maṇḍalas of the Vajrāvalī and Kriyāsamuccaya*

Over the last forty years, individual *thangkas* of the set of fourteen *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* that had been commissioned by Ngor chen have been the focus of numerous publications on Tibetan art.⁶⁸⁷ However, with a few notable exceptions, the historical setting of this commission has been largely overlooked. Much internal evidence provided by the paintings themselves, such as inscriptions, has been ignored.⁶⁸⁸ Hence, I will here locate Ngor chen's commission within the historical framework of his life and provide some additional information, partly drawing from the fundamental research of David Jackson and Masahide Mori.⁶⁸⁹

Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs provides us with some background information about the commissioning of the *maṇḍala* painting set. While relating certain events illustrating the activities that the *dharmāpalas* performed for the benefit of Ngor chen—or, in other words, that illustrate the spiritual power Ngor chen had gained over them—Sangs rgyas phun tshogs describes the circumstances under which the group of Newari artists that would paint the *maṇḍala* set embarked on a long journey from their native land to Ngor, to where they had been summoned by the *dharmapālas*:⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁵ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 310.5–311.1).

⁶⁸⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 449.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 504.5): *rdo rje phreng ba'i dbang yongs su rdzogs pa' phreng ba skor gsum gyi lungl/ kri ya samutstsha'i dbangl/ dkyil chog gi lungl*.

⁶⁸⁷ For a table listing some of these publications, see MORI 2009: 715, Table D.

⁶⁸⁸ For instance, see JACKSON 1996: 78 and 82, JACKSON 2010a: 186–187, MORI 2008, and MORI 2009: 711–715.

⁶⁸⁹ MORI 2009: 712–715 prepared useful tables relating, for instance, the *maṇḍalas* described in the *Vajrāvalī* to the ones as depicted in Ngor chen's commission. For charts of the *maṇḍalas* from the *Vajrāvalī* with an index of their deities and symbols, see *Ibid.*: 645–693.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 551.4–552.2): *e waṃ chos ldan gyi ri khrod du phebs pa'i tshel rdo rje phreng ba'i dkyil 'khor yongs su rdzogs pa bzhengs par dgongs pa nal bal po'i lha bzo ba wanggu li spun la sogs pa mkhas pa drug yod pa'i gtam yang med par glo bur du sku mdun du slebs nas ji ltar dgongs pa'i dkyil 'khor rnams dangl/ gzhan yang thugs dam kyi rigs mtha' yas pa 'bad med du grub pa'i tshel lha bzo ba a khe rā dza zhes bya ba cig yod pa na re/ nged 'di rnams phan tshun gcig gis gcig gleng ba ma yin par/ thams cad bod du bla ma 'phags pa'i bu can du 'gro zhes phyogs gcig tu gros 'chams te bod du 'ong ba'i tshel la stod shel dkar dangl chu 'dus/ sa skya rnams su khyed rang rnams 'di tsho ru las dka' byas na yon rdzongs legs po ster zer yang/ de tsho gang du 'ang sdod ma 'dod cingl/ gnas po mi nyag cig yod pa na re/ khyed rang an tsha khar phyin nas las dka' byas na yon rdzongs thams cad gser du 'ong bas 'gro na ngas skyel zer yang 'gro ma 'dod par/ bla ma'i drung du zangs sleb pa 'di/ bla mas sgom byas pa nged kyi snying la phog pa yin mod zer te chos skyong gis rang dbang med par bkug pa yin nol. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 466.5–467.3). According to Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 March 2009), the term *zangs* could be understood as in the sense of *lam seng* (“immediately, right away, at once”), *hob de kha la* (“suddenly”), or as *shar rgyag* (“direct, straight”); see GOLDSTEIN 2001: 1069 (s.v. *lam seng*), 1175 (s.v. *hob de kha la*), and 1094 (s.v. *shar rgyag*). That episode is also included in the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 261.1–6). On that passage, see also JACKSON 1996: 83 and JACKSON 2010a: 186–187. On Newar painters in Tibet, see LO BUE 1985, LO BUE 1986, and LO BUE 2012. On the *bal ris* style of Tibetan painting, see JACKSON 2010a.*

When travelling to the hermitage of E waṃ chos ldan, [Ngor chen] thought of commissioning the complete *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī*. At that time, all of a sudden, six skilled Newari artists such as Wanggu li and [his] brother appeared before [him] without any [prior] notification. Afterwards, [they] effortlessly accomplished the *maṇḍalas* just as [Ngor chen] had intended and, in addition, infinite kinds of sacred art. During that time, one of the present artists named A khe rā dza said: “I and they, without mutual consultation, conjointly decided ‘Let [us] all go to Tibet to the son of Bla ma ’Phags pa.’ Coming to Tibet, [at places] such as La stod Shel dkar, Chu ’dus, and Sa skya, [we] were told ‘If [you] work at these [places], [you] will be given a good payment.’ However, [we] did not like to stay anywhere at these [places]. There was one host [of ours], Mi nyag, who said: ‘If you go and work at An tsha kha,⁶⁹¹ all [your] payment will be in gold. Thus, if [you] go, I will take [you there].’ But not wanting to go, [we] directly reached before the Bla ma. This [coming of mine before the Bla ma is due to] the meditation practice by the Bla ma that struck my heart.” Even though [A khe rā dza] spoke [like this], [the artists] had been summoned by the *dharmapālas*, not having any other choice.

From this account, we can infer that Ngor chen commissioned both the *maṇḍala* set and the other religious objects made by those Newari artists after the 1429 foundation of Ngor Monastery. The first sentence might even suggest that he had decided to have the set painted during his first visit to the Ngor valley to inspect the site of his future retreat and had the paintings executed soon after the foundation. It further illustrates Ngor chen’s active patronage of Newar artists at Ngor, which would have a strong influence on his abbatial successors who, as David Jackson has pointed out, “continued, well into the late sixteenth century, to commission paintings that preserved the main elements of the venerable Newar-inspired Beri style, after most other schools had wholeheartedly adopted the newer Sinic styles.”⁶⁹²

In another section, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs provides an overview of Ngor chen’s commissions of statues, paintings, and murals in fulfilling the last wishes of his late masters.⁶⁹³ In this section, he also mentions the set of *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*.⁶⁹⁴

As a means to fulfil the last wishes of Chos rje ’Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros, [Ngor chen commissioned] the complete *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* along with three *maṇḍalas* explained from the *Kriyāsamuccaya* that make [the conclusion of the whole empowerment] auspicious, which were painted by Newari master artists.

⁶⁹¹ Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 467.2), which gives the spelling as En tsha kha. According to JACKSON 2010a: 186, En tsha kha was “a famous Bon center in Tsang.” We need to note, however, that by this time that monastery had already been destroyed by floods, as pointed out by MARTIN 2001: 70: “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.” Both monasteries had been located in the sTobs rgyal valley of gTsang; see CHAN 1994: 764–765. If the An tsha kha mentioned in Ngor chen’s biography could be identified as the Bon monastery of dBen sa kha, it should refer to its newly established replacement of sMan ri.

⁶⁹² JACKSON 2010a: 215. See also JACKSON 1996: 77–82.

⁶⁹³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 548.3–549.4).

⁶⁹⁴ *Ngor chen rgyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 549.1–2): *chos rje ’phags pa gzhon nu blo gros pa’i thugs dgongs rdzogs pa’i thabs su| bal po’i lha bzo ba mkhas pa rnam kyis bris pa’i rdo rje phreng ba’i dkyil ’khor yongs su rdzogs pa| kri ya samutstsha nas bshad pa’i dge legs byed pa’i dkyil ’khor gsum dang bcas pa (...)*. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 464.5–6). On the former passage, see also JACKSON 1996: 78.

Each painting of the *maṇḍala* set features a golden inscription at the bottom centre that allows us to link the painting with the passage just quoted: “May the last wishes of dPal ldan Bla ma dam pa Sa bzang 'Phags pa be completely fulfilled.”⁶⁹⁵ A further golden inscription at the top centre identifies the position of each painting in the set such as, for instance: “The seventh cloth painting of the *Vajrāvalī*.”⁶⁹⁶ The total number of paintings in the whole set can also be learned from a short additional inscription. After specifying the position of the painting in the set, the inscription for painting number fourteen continues with the aspirational formula “May it be virtuous” (*shu bham*), which is not found on any of the other paintings accessible to me.⁶⁹⁷ This aspiration is often found at the end of a text; with this in mind, the fact that we find it on painting number fourteen indicates that this must be the last painting of the set. The total number of fourteen is further confirmed by a depiction of Ngor chen in the position of the patron in the lower left corner of the painting number fourteen.⁶⁹⁸ Though he appears in the guise of what seems to be an Indian monk, he is recognisable by an inscription that reads: “May [I,] dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po be blessed” or “Blessed be dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po.”⁶⁹⁹

Ngor chen's set of fourteen *maṇḍala* paintings depicts a total of forty-five *maṇḍalas*: the forty-two *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* plus an additional three from the *Kriyāsamuccaya*. The latter three are the *maṇḍalas* of Vasudhārā, Grahamāṭṛkā, and Uṣṇiṣavijayā, which are considered to be three *maṇḍalas* that bring the whole rite to an auspicious conclusion (*dge legs su byed pa'i dkyil 'khor gsum*).⁷⁰⁰ The forty-five *maṇḍalas* have been arranged by dividing them into four paintings depicting one *maṇḍala*, nine paintings depicting four *maṇḍalas*, and one painting depicting five *maṇḍalas*. Comparing the order of the *maṇḍalas* as presented in the *Vajrāvalī* and in Ngor chen's commissioning, Masahide Mori observes:

⁶⁹⁵ See, for instance, BRAUEN 2009: pl. 14: *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*.

⁶⁹⁶ See, for instance, KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: [170], pl. 47c: *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris bdun pa'o||*.

⁶⁹⁷ See BRAUEN 2009: pl. 14: *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris bcu bzhi pa'o|| shu bham||*. From the whole set of fourteen *maṇḍala* paintings, at least seven are known to have survived and are found in museum or private collections outside of China; see pls. 9–15. For a table listing the extant *maṇḍala* paintings arranged by their respective numbers in the set, references to publications in which they have appeared, and the identification of the collection in which they are preserved, see MORI 2009: 715, Table D.

⁶⁹⁸ In at least one other painting of the set, Ngor chen appears in the same position as well. On that painting (no. 11), the *maṇḍala* of Kālacakra, his name is given in Tibetanized Sanskrit in a tiny inscription on both sides of his body (pl. 13): *a nanta* to his left and *bha tra* to his right. This inscription was also mentioned by KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: 171, n. 17. However, in this painting Ngor chen is not shown as the patron of the entire set but as the last master in the lineage for the initiation into Kālacakra according to the 'Bro tradition ('*bro lugs*). The depicted lineage splits into two lines after the Kālacakra master Kun spangs Thugs rjes brtson 'grus, one that Ngor chen received from his teacher Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (the lineage masters of which are depicted on the left side of the *maṇḍala*) and bKra shis rin chen (the lineage masters of which are depicted on the right side of the *maṇḍala*). These two lineages are recorded in Ngor chen's record of teachings received; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 215.3–216.4 and 419.2–6), respectively.

⁶⁹⁹ The inscription is only partly legible, however. What I could read is as follows: *dge slong kun dga' bzang po la byin gyi[s] [b]rlo[bs]||*. On the inscription, see also MORI 1989: 62 (no. 42), who in a Japanese article on that painting records it as: *dge slong kun dga' bzang po la byin gyi*. Note that MORI 1989: 55 confuses Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan and Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros. See also RHIE and THURMAN 1991: 227, no. 73, who translate the inscription as “Bless the monk Kunga Sangpo.”

⁷⁰⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 549.1–2), *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 309.2–3), and MORI 2009: 711 and 713, Table B.

The order of forty-five *maṇḍalas* as seen in this set is completely different from that of the VA and the NPY. It is obvious that the four or five *maṇḍalas* painted on the same *thangka* belong to the same *tantra* class, tradition or root text.⁷⁰¹

This new order reflects the classification of *tantra* and the root texts on which each *maṇḍala* depends. The first *thang-ka* (I) depicts the *maṇḍalas* of the Anuttarayoga-tantra class, especially the Father tantra (*pha rgyud*), and the following ten *thang-kas* (II–XI) represent those of the Mother tantra (*ma rgyud*) of the same class. Out of these ten, two *thang-kas* (II, V) combine the *maṇḍalas* of the same central deity, two (IV, VII) combine the *maṇḍalas* of the central deities who are closely related, and one (IX) combines four *maṇḍalas* belonging to the same root text. The *maṇḍalas* of the Yoga-tantra are divided into two *thang-kas* (XII, XIII) and two *maṇḍalas* of the Kriyā-tantra are added to XIII. The last *thang-ka* (XIV) consists of one *maṇḍala* from the VA and three *maṇḍalas* from the *Ācaryakriyāsamuccaya*, all of which belong to the Kriyā-tantra class.

The reason why four *thang-kas* (III, VIII, XI, XII) contain one *maṇḍala* each may be that all of them are comparatively large-scale *maṇḍalas*. In other words, all of them have the structure of so-called “complex *maṇḍala*,” i.e., the Pañcaḍāka-*maṇḍala* (III) has five small *maṇḍalas*, the Ṣaṭcakravartin-*maṇḍala* (VIII) has six, the Kālacakra-*maṇḍala* (XI) has three concentric *maṇḍalas*, the Dharmadhātuvāgiśvara-*maṇḍala* (XII) has four areas.⁷⁰²

Regarding this arrangement of the *maṇḍalas* according to their respective Tantra classes, Masahide Mori calls to our attention a relevant passage in the *Blue Annals*. There it is stated that the Kashmiri *paṇḍita* Śākyasrī, whom we encountered as a lineage master in all transmission lines of the twenty-four *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī*, thrice gave in Tibet the *Vajrāvalī* empowerments. For the first two times, he bestowed all empowerments according to the Niruttarayoga tantric system. However, the Tibetans were very suspicious about conferring the empowerments without any proper classification into the respective Tantra classes. Thus when he bestowed it for the third time, he is said to have divided the empowerments according to the Tantra classes.⁷⁰³ Based on that account, Masahide Mori wonders whether the order of the *maṇḍalas* of Ngor chen’s set “might be arranged to meet the classification in order to comply with such a request by the Tibetan people.”⁷⁰⁴

It is interesting to note that the *Blue Annals* contains a similar discussion regarding the two times that the empowerments were given at the court of sNe’u gdong by the Bengali *paṇḍita* Vanaratna (1384–1468). He is said to have given all empowerments according to the Niruttarayoga tantric system. When he was questioned whether it would not be better to give the empowerments by classifying them according to the different Tantra classes, Vanaratna acknowledged that it would be good to do so. When asked further why he had not done so, he remarked that he had given the empowerments following the tradition of Abhayākara-gupta, who had not classified them according to the four Tantra classes.⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰¹ MORI 2009: 711.

⁷⁰² MORI 2002: 276.

⁷⁰³ See the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 1218.4–8; ROERICH 1996: 1046–1047) and MORI 2008: 224–225.

⁷⁰⁴ See MORI 2008: 225.

⁷⁰⁵ See the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*, p. 1218.12–19; ROERICH 1996: 1047) and VIRA and CHANDRA 1967: Part 12, 12. On the relationship between Vanaratna and the Phag mo gru pa rulers, see EHRHARD 2004b. *Ibid.*: 251

6.7.8 A Later Ngor Commission of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*

Ngor chen's magnificent set of *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* may have served as an iconographic example for the commissioning of similar sets by later Ngor abbots. We know of at least one more set ordered by Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1535–1602), the thirteenth abbot of Ngor, in memory of his deceased teacher Sangs rgyas seng ge, the eleventh abbot of Ngor.⁷⁰⁶ Nam mkha' dpal bzang was a specialist of tantric ritual and completed in 1581 his own instruction manual of the *Vajrāvalī*, the *rDo rje phreng ba'i sgrub dkyil sbrags ma rdor phreng mdzes rgyan*,⁷⁰⁷ which would soon become the standard liturgy for the practice of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle and was also highly praised by the Fifth Dalai Lama.⁷⁰⁸

Until now, I was able to identify five paintings from that set (nos. 2, 7, 10, 11, and 12), which are all kept in private or museum collections.⁷⁰⁹ They serve as a good example of

mentions that Vanratna bestowed the empowerment on the court of Grags pa 'byung gnas (1414–1445), the sixth Phag mo gru pa ruler. For a discussion of a thangka depicting Vanaratna surrounded by lineage masters of the *Vajrāvalī*, see *Ibid.*: 264–265 and JACKSON 2011: 50, fig. 2.19 and 94–97, fig. 3.20.

⁷⁰⁶ For other *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī*, see HELLER 2004 and MORI 2009: 715, Table D.

⁷⁰⁷ For Nam mkha' dpal bzang's manual, see the *sGrub thabs kun btus* (vol. 22, pp. 262–650.5). The manual's title is taken from its colophon (*rDor phreng mdzes rgyan*, p. 648.4–5) and the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 192.1). The manual is also mentioned in the *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 602.2–4): *rtson pa la (...)* *dpal rdo rje phreng ba'i mngon dkyil sbrags pa dangl*. The title page of the manual as reproduced in the *sGrub thabs kun btus* reads (*rDor phreng mdzes rgyan*, p. 262.1–2): *'di na grub chen a bha ya'i|| rdor phreng sgrub dkyil mdzes bryan [= rgyan] bzhugs|| 'di la slob par 'dod rnam kyis|| 'di sngon rgyud sde'i rnam bzhag rnam|| 'dir nges sa bcad tshom dang ni|| 'di gzhung dkyus bzhag bsam don ser|| 'di don cho ga'i rnam dbye rnam|| 'di ltar byas pas 'khrul med rtogs||*. Moreover, two different, unpublished manuscript versions in *dbu med* are available—one in 185 folios, the other in 243 folios—both of which feature a slightly different title: *'di ni grub chen a bha ya'i|| 'di yi sgrub dkyil mdzes rgyan bzhugs|| 'di la slob par 'dod rnam kyis|| 'di yi sngon du rgyud sde bzhi'i|| 'di dag rnam bzhag sa bcad tshos [= tshom?]* *'di gzhung dkyus bzhag bsam don ser|| 'di nges dka' tshogs med par 'gyur|| 'di ni kho bo'i legs bshad yin||*; and: *'di na grub chen a bha ya'i|| 'dir phreng sgrub dkyil mdzes rgyan bzhugs|| 'di la slob par 'dod rnam kyis|| 'di sngon rgyud sde'i rnam bzhag rnam|| 'dir nges sa bcad chos dang ni|| 'di gzhung dkyus bzhag bsam don ser|| 'di don cho ga'i rnam dbye rnam|| 'di ltar byas pas 'khrul med rtogs||*. The latter manuscript is now available at TBRC (W4PD1494, vol. 1).

⁷⁰⁸ On Nam mkha' dpal bzang, his manual, which “was ordered to be used one century later by no less of a connoisseur of ritual and tantric learning than the Fifth Dalai Lama,” and his commission, see JACKSON 2010a: 208–210, fig. 8.20 and JACKSON 2010c: 96–97, no. 2. See also the short addendum to the manual on its printing by Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870), the fifty-fourth abbot of Ngor (*rDor phreng mdzes rgyan*, pp. 649.6–650.2): (...) *thar rtse pan chen nam mkha' dpal bzang gi zhal snga nas mdzad pa'i legs par bshad pa rdor phreng mdzes rgyan zhes bya ba 'di nyid|| rgyal mchog lnga pa rin po che la sogs pa'i mkhas rnam kyis bsngags brjod mdzad cing|| deng sang thams cad kyis yig cha 'di'i steng nas phyag bzhes su bstar ba la brten nas||* Nam mkha' dpal bzang also functions as a main lineage holder of both the *Vajrāvalī* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*; see the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi thob yig* (p. 195.2–6).

⁷⁰⁹ For painting number two, see HAR (59875). The existence of painting number seven is mentioned by HAR, “Painting Set: Vajravali (Drangti Namkha Palzang),” www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=2772 (accessed 21.02.2017), though its number is not specified. For painting number ten, see, for instance, HAR (59864), HELLER 1999: 150, no. 91, and HUNTINGTON and BANGDEL 2003: 321–322, no. 89. Note that in the latter publication the plates for nos. 89 and 90 have been interchanged, and the respective captions of the texts appear to be confused. For painting number eleven, see JACKSON 2010a: 208–210, fig. 8.20, JACKSON 2010c: 96–97, no. 2, and RHIE and THURMAN 1996: 481, no. 237. For painting number twelve, see LAUF 1976: 94–95, no. 26. The last three paintings (nos. 10–12) are also identified by MORI 2009: 715, Table D. The identification of the number that each painting has in the whole set is based on a golden inscription at the top centre of each painting such as, for instance: “The tenth cloth painting of the *Garland*” (*'phreng ba'i ras bris bcu pa'o*); see HAR (59864). Inscriptions at the top left of paintings that depict only one *maṇḍala* specify which *maṇḍala* and lineage are depicted; see JACKSON 2010a: 228, n. 407, JACKSON 2010c: 102, n. 9, and LAUF 1976: 94, n. 26. The arrangement of the *maṇḍalas* of the extant paintings is similar to Ngor chen's commission discussed above.

late-sixteenth-century commissioning of religious art at Ngor that preserved the main elements of the old *bal ris* style.⁷¹⁰

All *maṇḍala* paintings bear inscriptions allowing us to identify the commissioning patron and establish a time frame for the preparation of the set. Similar to Ngor chen's commission, a golden inscription at the bottom centre of the red border of each painting specifies the patron and his objective in having the *maṇḍalas* painted: "Deferentially commissioned by Brang btsun Nam mkha' dpal bzang to fulfil the last wishes of rDo rje 'chang Sangs rgyas seng ge."⁷¹¹

The set is also mentioned in the biography of Nam mkha' dpal bzang, which was written by Drung chen bSod nams shes rab (fl. 16th/17th century). His biographer states that his subject commissioned a large number of *maṇḍala* paintings among which the forty-five *maṇḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* along with the three of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* constituted his main commission.⁷¹²

Considering that Sangs rgyas seng ge, on whose behalf the whole set was ordered, passed away in 1569 and that bSod nams shes rab finished the first part of Nam mkha' dpal bzang's biography, which mentions the commissioning, in 1596, we are able to establish a dating for the production of the set to between 1569 and 1596.⁷¹³

As suggested by Amy Heller, at one point in time Ngor might have become home to another famous thangka set of *Vajrāvalī maṇḍala* paintings, namely the one that had been commissioned in honour of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan by the very influential Phag mo gru pa official rDzong ji rGyal mtshan bzang po.⁷¹⁴

Other as of yet unknown sets of *Vajrāvalī maṇḍala* paintings are mentioned in the biographies of Shākya mchog ldan and Go rams pa. The former set, which is recorded by Kun dga' grol mchog, consisted of forty-two *maṇḍala* paintings. The set had formerly belonged to Chu mig bDag chen Blo gros dbang phyug, the last scion of the bZhi thog bla brang and a disciple of Ngor chen, who prior to his passing transferred the Chu mig estate to his disciple Shākya mchog ldan. The latter was in charge of his master's funeral service, for which he invited to Chu mig the monastic communities of Ngor, rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal, and gSer mdog can and divided his master's belongings among those communities. For himself, he only kept a collection of thangkas among which we find a set of forty-two *Vajrāvalī maṇḍala* paintings. This set had been given to him by Blo gros

⁷¹⁰ See JACKSON 2010a: 208–210, fig. 8.20. Newari artists were also working at Ngor later on, for instance, after the death of Shes rab 'byung gnas (1596–1653), the eighteenth abbot of Ngor; see the *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 825.2–4).

⁷¹¹ HAR (59864): *rdo rje 'chang sangs rgyas seng ge'i dgongs pa rdzogs phyir du/grang [= brang] rtsun [= btsun] nam mkha' dpal bzang gis gus pas bzhengs so!*. By comparison, the inscriptions on all four accessible paintings contain different misspellings. For instance, the inscription of number ten reads (HAR 59875): *rdo rje 'chang sangs rgyas seng ge'i dgongs pa rdzogs phyir du/grang [= brang] btsun nam mkha' dpal bzangs [= bzang] gis gus pas bzhengs so!*. As far as I can make it out on the plate, the inscription of painting number twelve reads (LAUF 1976: 95): *rdo rje 'chang sangs rgyas seng ge'i dgongs pa rdzogs phyir du/grang [= brang] rtsun [= btsun] nam mkha' dpal bzang gi [= gis] gus pas bzhengs so!*. In comparison with these three, the inscription on painting number eleven reads slightly differently (JACKSON 2010a: 209, fig. 8.20 and 228, n. 407 and JACKSON 2010c: 97, no. 2 and 102, n. 9): *rdo rje 'chang sangs rgyas seng ge'i dgongs pa rdzogs phyir du/grang [= brang] btsun nam mkha' dpal bzang bzangs [= bzang] gis dgo [= sgo] gsum gus pa chen pos bzhengs so!*. All inscriptions misspell the patron's family name *grang* instead of *brang*, which is short for Brang ti.

⁷¹² See the *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 599.2): *rdo rje phreng ba kri ya'i kha bskang dang bcas pa'i dkyil 'khor bzhi bcu zhe lngas gtsos pa'i dkyil thang mang po dang!*.

⁷¹³ See the *Sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 372.2–5) and *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 607.4–6), respectively.

⁷¹⁴ See HELLER 2004: 71. On this set, see also HELLER 2009: 99–102 and JACKSON 2010a: 131–135, figs. 7.2–7.3. In addition, see also MORI 2008: 224 and MORI 2009: 715, Table D.

dbang phyug prior to his death, and it was later housed in the Ka drug ma temple of gSer mdog can.⁷¹⁵ The latter set consisted of forty-two *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvalī* plus three of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* and was given by the Rin spungs pa ruler Don yod rdo rje (1463–1512) to Go rams pa.⁷¹⁶

6.8 Training under Bla ma dam pa bKra shis rin chen

In Tibetan sources on Ngor chen's life, Bla ma dam pa bKra shis rin chen (fl. 14th/15th century) is introduced as a lineage holder of the Zha lu tradition.⁷¹⁷ His religious affiliation is further confirmed by Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, where he is recorded in teaching lineages that were predominantly transmitted via Bu ston Rin chen grub and his disciples. From this lineage record, we also learn that he was a student of Bu ston's disciples Khyung po lHas pa gZhon nu bsod nams, Lo tsā ba Rin chen rnam rgyal, Dus 'khor ba Chos kyi dpal (1316–1397), Bla ma (or Slob dpon) rGyal mtshan grags, and Slob dpon Don grub rgyal mgon.⁷¹⁸ Apart from that, hardly anything is known about bKra shis rin chen or his background.

Though Ngor chen wrote a eulogy in honour of his teacher, in which he outlines his monastic training and qualities as a master, he does not provide any concrete details about his life. The only information we gain is that bKra shis rin chen was born as the son of Jo sras 'Phags 'ju, a close disciple of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa, in his previous life.⁷¹⁹ He also seems to be the same person that we encounter by the name of Zha lu pa Rab 'byams pa bKra shis rin chen in a passage contained in the biography of Zha lu Lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po.⁷²⁰

We also do not know the circumstances under which Ngor chen met with bKra shis rin chen. But as he is said to have invited him to his residence at Sa skya, the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, Ngor chen must have made a conscious decision to train himself in the practices of Bu ston's tradition.⁷²¹ Similarly, it is difficult to date those studies. For now, we can only note that sources such as Ngor chen's biographies generally present his studies after the section on his training under Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros.⁷²²

⁷¹⁵ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 65a4.–b2). See also Part Three, 3.2 and Part Three, 3.4.

⁷¹⁶ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 345.9–10) and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (p. 242.11–13).

⁷¹⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 506.4): *gzhan yang zha lu pa'i chos brgyud 'dzin pa'i bla ma bkra shis rin chen pa'i drung dul*. See also the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 340.5): *zha lu pa'i chos rgyud bkra shis rin chen (...)*; and *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.3–4): *zha lu pa'i chos rgyud 'dzin pa mkhan chen bkra shis rin pa (...)*.

⁷¹⁸ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 410.3–431.4). Another teacher of bKra shis rin chen was Lo tsā ba Byang chub rtse mo; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 430.6–431.2). Though Byang chub rtse mo was also a disciple of Bu ston, the teaching he bestowed on bKra shis rin chen had been transmitted to him by mChims Blo bzang grags pa. For a biographical sketch of Dus 'khor ba Chos kyi dpal, see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 80.1–84.6). On biographies of Khyung po lHas pa and Rin chen rnam rgyal, see Part Three, nn. 291 and 603, respectively.

⁷¹⁹ See CATALOGUE (no. 6).

⁷²⁰ See the *Chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 406.3–6): *de ltar sne gdong du bzhugs tshel chos rgyal mi'i dbang po bstan pa stobs kyis 'dzin pa sngon gyi rgyal blon de dag gi sprul pa lta bu yar rgyab dpon chen kun dga' bsod nams rin chen ngag gi rgyal po ba'i zhal snga nas kyis rje 'di'i snyan pa gsan tej sne gdong dul de na sngar gyi zhwa lu lo tsā ba de min pa'i zhwa lu lo tsā ba mkhas pa rang gcig yod 'dug pa spyir 'di phyogs su 'byon pa'i lung zhu zer ba'i zhu yig mdzad/ sngar gyi zhwa lu lo tsā ba'i min pa'i zer ba de/ zhwa lu pa rab 'byams pa bkras rin chen pa la zhwa lu lo tsā ba zer ba'i ming yod pas yin skad do/*.

⁷²¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 507.4).

⁷²² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 450.4–451.3), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 506.4–507.4), *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 340.4), *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 410.3–431.4), and *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.2–3). Note, however, that both the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 450.4–451.3) and *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.2–3) mention in between Ngor chen's studies under g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal. Note also that both the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p.

From Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, we learn that he mainly received tantric teachings for *yi dam* deities of all four Tantra classes and the associated *tantras*, *maṇḍalas*, and ritual practices.⁷²³ With a few exceptions, Ngor chen received all those teachings in lineages passed down by Bu ston. It is interesting to note that he also obtained Cakrasaṃvara teachings primarily associated with the bKa' brgyud tradition such as the system of the Indian *mahāsiddha* Maitrīpa and (as a reading transmission?) the *Man ngag brgya rtsa* of Khro phu Lo tsā ba Byams pa'i dpal (1172–1236).⁷²⁴ His biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs adds that bKra shis rin chen also recited to Ngor chen the reading transmission for Bu ston's collected works in about thirty volumes, excluding the *sGra'i ṭik chen*, the great commentary of Sanskrit grammar.⁷²⁵ However, this is not confirmed by Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, where no mention is made of a reading transmission for Bu ston's entire oeuvre, though references to some of his works can be found.⁷²⁶

Regarding Ngor chen's studies of Bu ston's tradition, we should remember that he had also received such teachings from Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, dPal ldan tshul khirms, and Buddhaśrī. Among these three, dPal ldan tshul khirms had been a personal disciple of Bu ston and a teacher of both Shar chen and Buddhaśrī. Thus Ngor chen received teachings that had been directly transmitted by Bu ston to dPal ldan tshul khirms and also teachings as passed down by Bu ston's disciples to Shar chen and Buddhaśrī. Moreover, it was said that Ngor chen also studied under Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros all of Bu ston's writings on the four Tantra classes. Considering the great impact Bu ston had on later generations through his classification of tantric literature and exegesis of the *tantras*, I wonder to what extent Ngor chen may have been influenced by studying Bu ston's tradition and how this might have been reflected in his own writings. We know, for instance, that he utilised Bu ston's works for his exposition of the Kriyā tantric system.⁷²⁷ Ngor chen was seemingly also inspired by Bu ston's efforts at reviving the Yoga tantric system. While looking back on his own endeavour to revive the Kriyā and Caryā systems, which will be discussed in more detail in Part Four, Ngor chen referred to Bu ston's successful undertaking.

340.4) and *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.2–3) continue with Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* studies under sKyabs mchog dpal bzang and Buddhaśrī.

⁷²³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 450.4–451.3), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 506.4–507.4), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 410.3–431.4). Ngor chen begins by first listing the teachings of the highest Tantra class (*Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 410.3–4): *rgyud sde bzhi dang 'brel pa'i chos skor zhus ba la/ rnal 'byor bla med dang/ rnal 'byor rgyud dang/ bya spyod gsum kyi dang po la/ pha rgyud dang/ ma rgyud dang/ gnyis med rgyud dang gsum gyi dang po ni/*. See also the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 487.3–4), which emphasises the teachings of the Yoga tantric system: *zha lu pa'i chos rgyud 'dzin pa mkhan chen bkra rin pa la yo ga la sogs pa'i chos mang po dang/*.

⁷²⁴ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 414.4–5 and 431.2–4), respectively. On the *Man ngag brgya rtsa*, see VAN DER KUIJP 1994c: 601, n. 7. For a *dbu med* manuscript of that compilation, see TBRC (W00KG03569).

⁷²⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 507.3–4). See also VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 297 and SEYFORTH RUEGG 1966: 41–42, n. 3. The *sGra'i ṭik chen* refers most likely to Bu ston's extensive subcommentary on Durgasimpha's *Kātantravṛtti*. For this work, see vol. 25 (*ra*) of Bu ston's collected works (TBRC W1934, TBRC W22106, and TBRC W1PD45496). See also VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 297, VERHAGEN 1994: 67, 95–96, and 210–211, and VERHAGEN 2001: 81–89. In addition, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs mentions that Ngor chen may have also received the following teachings (*Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2, p. 507.2–3): *gzhan yang dus 'khor bsdu rgyud/ 'grel chen bshad pa bu ston nas bryud pa/ sdom byung gi bshad pa/ dbang mdor bstan gyi bshad pa/ gzhan sgra'i sa rigs thog pa mdzad kyang/ lung zhib tu ma gsan kha cig zer ro/*. On editions of Bu ston's collected works, see VAN DER KUIJP 2016: 297–304 and SEYFORTH RUEGG 1966: 41–42, n. 3.

⁷²⁶ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 413.6–414.1, 416.2–3, 417.3–4, 418.1, 418.4–5, and 429.2–5).

⁷²⁷ See CATALOGUE (no. 131).

6.9 Studies under Further Masters

As mentioned above, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs lists a total of thirteen masters under whom Ngor chen is said to have pursued his religious training. Among them, five have not been discussed yet. They are Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, Bla ma Yon tan dpal, Sa bzang bKa' bzhi pa bSod nams don grub, and Bla ma Ānanda.⁷²⁸ With the exception of Bla ma Ānanda, all those masters figure in certain episodes of Ngor chen's biography. Following the order given by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' enumeration, I will shortly introduce the context in which Ngor chen received teachings from them and specify their nature.

During his first sojourn in dBus (1414–1417), Ngor chen paid a visit to Tsong kha pa at Ri bo dGe ldan (i.e., dGa' ldan Monastery), receiving the reading transmissions for the *Lam rim gnyis* (Tsong kha pa's two main treatises on the path: the *Lam rim chen mo* and *sNgags rim chen mo*), the *gSang 'dus kyi bshad rgyud gsum gyi tik*, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra*, and *Dhyānottaraṭaḥārikā*. However, Ngor chen's main reason for approaching Tsong kha pa at that time was not merely to request teachings, but rather to gain support for his undertaking to revive the two lower tantric systems of Kriyā and Caryā, which will be discussed in more detail in Part Four.⁷²⁹ A meeting between the two is also confirmed by the biographies of Tsong kha pa and his disciple mKhas grub rje. In his extensive biography of Tsong kha pa, rGyal dbang Chos rje Blo bzang 'phrin las rnam rgyal (b. 19th century) reports such a meeting, but predates it to 1399, fifteen years prior to Ngor chen's first dBus sojourn. According to him, Tsong kha pa came to the sKyid shod area in the autumn of 1399. While residing at the Potala in lHa sa, he bestowed teachings on hundreds of disciples, headed by the abbots of the six famous monastic seminaries of sKyid shod: dGa' ba gdong, sKyor mo lung, and Zul phu (*dga' skyor zul*) and sNye thang bDe ba can, gSang phu Ne'u thog, and Gung thang Chos 'khor gling (*bde gsang gung*).⁷³⁰ During that period of time, Tsong kha pa was also approached by Rong ston Shākya rgyal mtshan and Ngor pa Kun bzang, who by establishing a Dharma connection (*chos 'brel*) received teachings on a large scale.⁷³¹ However, the nature of these teachings is not further specified and Ngor chen is also not recorded among the lists of Tsong kha pa's disciples.⁷³² Similarly, no further details can be learned from the biography of mKhas grub rje compiled by Se ra rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469–1544), who only mentions that Ngor chen received many profound Vajrayāna teachings.⁷³³

As shown in much detail, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya, was Ngor chen's true and secret father. From him, Ngor chen is said to have obtained the *Tshad ma'i thun tshags*.⁷³⁴

⁷²⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 507.4–508.1).

⁷²⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 514.1–6 and 522.4–523.4).

⁷³⁰ See the *Tsong kha pa'i rnam thar* 2 (p. 174.3–6).

⁷³¹ See the *Tsong kha pa'i rnam thar* 2 (p. 175.10–12). Likewise, Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1732–1802) states that a Dharma connection existed between both Ngor chen and Rong ston and Tsong kha pa and thus the former two could be counted among the latter's direct disciples; see the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 340.5–6).

⁷³² See the *Tsong kha pa'i rnam thar* 2 (pp. 391–417).

⁷³³ See the *mKhas grub rje'i gsang rnam* 1 (fol. 11b1–2).

⁷³⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 508.1). I do not know how to understand *thun tshags* here and, hence, are not sure whether the *Tshad ma'i thun tshags* is indeed a text on Pramāṇa. But such a reading is suggested by a similar passage from the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 595.3–4): *bdag chen gzhi thog pa blo gros rgyal mtshan pa la tshad ma'i thun tshags gsan*l. Kun dga' rin chen is also listed as an early teacher of Ngor chen in the *Lam 'bras kyi*

Bla ma Yon tan dpal appears in the context of Ngor chen's conception and birth. As mentioned above, he is introduced as the abbot of Sron and a master of Vajrabhairava whom Ngor chen's mother had invited to Sa skya after her conception, requesting many times the empowerments of Bhairava and Amitāyus. After Ngor chen's birth in 1382, she once again invited him to Sa skya, where he bestowed the Vajrabhairava empowerment on the newly born child and gave him the name 'Jigs byed bzang po. He also offered a six-armed statue of Vajrabhairava for the baby's protection. Until his third year, Ngor chen received from him many Bhairava empowerments as well as longevity empowerments.⁷³⁵ From the two remaining masters, Sa bzang bKa' bzhi pa bSod nams don grub and Bla ma Ānanda, Ngor chen received longevity empowerments as well.⁷³⁶ We encountered the former in the chapter on Ngor chen's term as abbot of Sa bzang. Sa bzang 'Phags pa had discussions with him prior to Ngor chen's appointment, and Ngor chen handed over the abbatial throne to him after his resignation.⁷³⁷ The final teacher, Bla ma Ānanda, however, remains to be identified.

6.10 Concluding Reflections

The investigation of Ngor chen's religious training has shown that he received a comprehensive and thorough training in both the *sūtras* and *tantras* and also cultivated those teachings through meditative practices. He not only studied under the most prominent Sa skya masters of his time but also received teachings from other traditions as well. On the basis of his biographies, we can date the period of Ngor chen's principal religious training from his taking of ordination at age nine (i.e., in 1390) until about 1414, when he embarked on his first journey to dBu.

Even though his religious training focussed mainly on tantric teachings, which became his speciality and for whose expertise he became most renowned, it is obvious that Ngor chen also received a solid non-tantric scholastic education, comprising a range of subjects such as Yogācāra, Madhyamaka, Prajñāpāramitā, Pramāṇa, and Vinaya. Moreover, his education also included the non-doctrinal fields of knowledge such as grammar (*sgra*), poetics (*snyan dngags*), synonymy (*mngon brjod*), performing arts (*zlos gar*), and prosody (*sdeb sbyor*). In particular, his knowledge of Sanskrit enabled him to do some text-critical studies.⁷³⁸ Owing to his personal interest, he engaged himself in the old libraries of Sa skya in a thorough investigation of the writings of the previous Sa skya masters, giving rise to a deep understanding of the teachings of his forefathers. Moreover, he became acquainted with the textual treasures housed in those libraries and utilised them for his own writings.

As his first major exam, Ngor chen gave at age nine (i.e., in 1390) a public exposition (*rnam gzhaq*) of the *Hevajratantra* at Sa skya. But his biographies make no mention of any further examinations such as the traditional public scholastic examination (*grwa skor*) at Sa skya. It seems that his biographers can not be blamed for withholding this piece of information because Ngor chen never did perform such an examination. From the Shākya mchog ldan biography of Kun dga' grol mchog, we learn that Ngor chen himself

byung tshul (pp. 486.6–487.1): *kun dga' bzang po zhes bya ba| des dang por bdag chen kun rin dang| chos rje shar pa la sogz pa bsten nas gsan sbyangs rgya chen po mdzad del.*

⁷³⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 433.3–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 483.5–484.6).

⁷³⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 508.1).

⁷³⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 506.1–2 and 513.5–6).

⁷³⁸ See VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 84–86 and CATALOGUE (no. 55).

advised Shākya mchog ldan to perform that examination at Sa skya because the exposition of the Buddha's doctrine at the monastic seat constituted the traditional way of becoming a Sa skya *dge bshes*. Moreover, Ngor chen is credited with having told his disciple that though he himself wanted to do that examination, it never materialised because owing to his strong interest in the tantric tradition, he only received a partial training in the *sūtras*. Hence, Shākya mchog ldan should consider his own scholastic examination as performing it in place of Ngor chen.⁷³⁹

For Ngor chen's religious training, his familial connection with Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya, as his true and secret father was of great benefit. It not only literally opened for him the doors to Sa skya's libraries, but also secured for him a preferential treatment that otherwise would never have been given to the son of a valet. An early and highly important outcome of that relationship was the fact that his father entrusted him to the care of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan to oversee the young boy's religious education. However, in the course of his training, Ngor chen established himself as a promising Buddhist master in his own right, irrespective of his paternal patronage. Otherwise, it would be difficult to imagine that he would be installed as abbot of Sa bzang in 1410 or could take responsibility for the funeral services of his teachers such as Shar chen and Sa bzang 'Phags pa. Moreover, along with his studies, Ngor chen began to teach and write, his earliest compositions dating to the year 1404.

We can also find a short concluding review of Ngor chen's religious training in his biographies.⁷⁴⁰ Interestingly, that passage contains a few details about Ngor chen's self-studies that are not mentioned in other parts of his biography. According to it, while studying the Buddha's discourses and their commentaries in Sa skya's libraries, Ngor chen also investigated the many apocryphal (*brdzus ma*) texts contained in the volumes of the *bKa' gyur* and *bsTan gyur*, clarifying for himself their illogical nature. During that period, he also studied the writings of the majority of the important Tibetan Buddhist masters and is said to have kept in mind their viewpoints.⁷⁴¹ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs closes his section with short accounts on Ngor chen's extrasensory perception while in the state of meditative equipoise (*mnyam gzhag*) and enumerates certain prophecies (*lung bstan*) he gave.⁷⁴² These episodes are probably intended to illustrate the special qualities Ngor chen gained as a result of his spiritual training.

⁷³⁹ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 35b5–7): *der bka' lung la| spyir sa skya pa'i dge bshes su 'jog pa la gdan sa chen por bstan pa'i rnam bzhag re nges par gnang ba srol du 'dug cing| khyed lta bu'i mkhyen rab yod pas grwa skor cig gnang na ma 'ongs pa'i mig ltos la yang phan pas ci kyang mdzod| ces bkas bskul tshul rnam thar rje dbon ma ti ma las 'byung zhing| 'di skabs de gnyis ka dang gzhan dag gi snyan na mi bzhugs pa'i khyad par ba'i brjod pa dag cig rnam thar rdor rgyal mar bris pa ni| gong gi bka' dang rjes 'brell| sngon nged grwa skor cig gi bzhed pa yod kyang| sngags phyogs la 'dun pas mdo'i slob gnyer tsam ma 'grub pas ma byung| da de'i tshab tu dmgis nas khyed kyis mdzod ces|. On this episode, see also CAUMANN 2012: 110–111 and CAUMANN 2015: 132–133.*

⁷⁴⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 451.3–452.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 508.3–509.3).

⁷⁴¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 451.4–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 508.3–5).

⁷⁴² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 509.3–510.2).

Part Four

Major Episodes from Ngor chen's Life

The presentation of Ngor chen's life in his two extant biographies proceeds within the framework of the extensive subchapter *How [Ngor chen] Performed Activities for the Benefit of Others*, which constitutes the third and last section of the chapter on Ngor chen's activities after his monastic ordination. While Mus chen presents those episodes as one chapter, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs divides them into three subchapters with even further subdivisions, though following the principal sequence of Mus chen's arrangement. The period of time chronicled within that chapter encompasses more than forty years, from about 1414 until Ngor chen's passing away in 1456, or even longer, as it also refers back to events that occurred during his religious training. The major part of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' presentation is included in the first subchapter *How [Ngor chen] Spiritually Sustained Migrators by Way of the Three Vows*.¹

Within the present study, it is impossible to discuss each and every episode of Ngor chen's eventful life. I will have to limit my presentation to those episodes that seem crucial for a better understanding of the life and times of Ngor chen and his legacy within Tibetan religious history, in general, and for the Sa skya school, in particular. As some events are interrelated, a certain amount of repetition cannot be avoided.

¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 435.3): *gnyis pa rab tu byung nas kyi rnam thar la gsum ste/ gzhi tshul khrims rnam par dag pa ji ltar nos pa'i tshul/ de la brten nas thos bsam la sogs pa ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul/ gzhan don phrin las ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul lo/*; *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 486.6–487.1): *gnyis pa rab tu byon nas kyi mdzad pa la gsum ste/ gzhi tshul khrims rnam par dag pa ji ltar nos pa'i tshul/ de la brten nas thos bsam la sogs pa ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul/ gzhan don phrin las ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul lo/*; and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 510.2): *gsum pa gzhan don phrin las ji ltar mdzad pa'i tshul la/ sdom gsum gyi sgo nas 'gro ba rjes su bzung tshul/ pha rol gyi rgol ba ngan pa'i log rtog bzlog tshul/ sku gsung thugs kyi rten bzhengs tshul dang gsum/*. For the entire chapter, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 452.1–467.6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 510.2–554.2). For the outline of both biographies, see Part Two, 1.2 and Part Two, 2.3.

Chapter One

Early Teaching Activities and Travels

Ngor chen is said to have begun teaching at age fifteen (i.e., in 1396) by instructing monks from Khams in ritual practices (*laq len*).² After this point in time, nothing more can be learned about any further concrete teaching activity until 1412. In that year, his master Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412) fell sick and passed away soon thereafter. Prior to his death, Sa bzang 'Phags pa had been giving the initiations into the *maṇḍalas* of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* in his residence at Sa skya, the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum. But after falling ill, he had to abandon his teaching activity and instructed Ngor chen to take over and complete those initiations. Repeating the preparatory section (*sta dgon*), Ngor chen now conferred the *Kriyāsamuccaya* for the first time. Along with the *Lam 'bras*, that teaching cycle became one of the most important cycles he bestowed in his long monastic career. Beginning with this first bestowal in 1412, he is recorded to have imparted those initiations at least once a year for a total of more than sixty times, in all.³

Following his resignation as abbot of Sa bzang in about 1412 or 1413, Ngor chen taught again at Sa skya, where he took up residence in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum.⁴ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' presentation suggests that beginning about then Ngor chen taught on a more regular basis.⁵ Details of those early teaching activities can be found within the account of Ngor chen's first journey to Central Tibet (dBus). Before embarking on this long trip, he approached his master Buddhaśrī to request a prediction. He was told to travel to dBus but only for three years so that the two of them would meet before Buddhaśrī's death.⁶ The same episode is also related by Ngor chen in the biography he wrote of his master:⁷

In the horse year, I asked: "If [I] would travel to dBus for about one year, would [you let me] go?" [Buddhaśrī] replied: "Since last year, you are repeatedly saying that [you] will go. However, [I] thought [it would be better] if you completely receive these oral instructions that Chos rje dPal ldan tshul khrims had bestowed on me. As [you] did not finish earlier and [I] did not know for how much longer Chos rje 'Phags pa [gZhon nu blo gros] would live, [I] have told [you] to stay. This time, go! In dBus, [it] will take [you] four years. Because a good auspicious connection was formed, [you] will encounter no obstacles. [You] will meet me [again] when I am about to die.

In this passage, Ngor chen dates his meeting with Buddhaśrī to a horse year, which can be specified as the male wood-horse year (*shing pho rta*), which corresponds to 1414. He

² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 452.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 510.3–4).

³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 512.5–6 and 515.6–516.1) and *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 176.6–177.3). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 453.1).

⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 513.6–514.1).

⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 514.1).

⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 513.6–514.1).

⁷ *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar 1* (p. 427.5–6): *rta lor bdag gis lo gcig tsaṃ dbus la phyin na mchi'am zhus pas/ khyod na ning nas kyang yang yang 'gro zer gyin 'dug na'ang/ nged la chos rje dPal ldan tshul khrims kyis gnang ba'i gdams ngag 'di rnam khyod la rdzogs pa cig 'phrod na snyam pa de sngar ma tshar ba dang/ chos rje 'phags pa'i sku tshes ji 'dra 'ong mi shes pas sdod byas pa yin/ da lan song dbus su lo bzhi 'gor bar 'dug/ rten 'brel dga' mo cig byung bas bar chad mi 'ong/ nga yang ma shi tsaṃ dang 'phrad par 'dug gsungs nas (...).*

also mentions his return from dBus to Sa skya in the fifth month of a bird year, the female fire-bird year (*me mo bya*) of 1417.⁸ By contrast, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs dates Ngor chen's sojourn one year earlier. He recounts that Ngor chen embarked on that journey at age thirty-two, which corresponds to 1413. He adds that Ngor chen spent four years in sKyi shod (or sKyid shod), the area of the lHa sa valley, before returning to gTsang.⁹ Considering the peculiarities of Tibetan chronological calculation, this four-year period would have lasted until 1416.

During his travels in dBus, Ngor chen visited lHa sa, where he performed a liquid gold and butter lamp offering in front of the holy Jo bo statue. He also undertook numerous prostrations and circumambulations and spoke many aspirational prayers. Afterwards, he successively visited the monastic seminaries of gSang phu, bDe ba can, and dGa' ba gdong, travelled to the hermitage of Se ra Chos sdings,¹⁰ which was one of the main retreats of Tsong kha pa (1357–1419) located in the foothills just above the site where in 1419 the monastery of Se ra would be founded, and also paid a visit to Mal gro.¹¹ At these sites, Ngor chen is said to have bestowed a variety of teachings: expositions of the *Samputatantra* and *Vajrodaya*, the empowerments of the *Vajrāvalī* and that of entrusting the pure awareness (*rig gtad*) of the *Sādhanaśāgara*, teachings on the completion stage of *Mahāmāyā*, on both the development and completion stages of the *Lam 'bras*, and the reading transmission for the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) of the *bKa' 'gyur*. Furthermore, by giving *guruyoga* teachings to those who requested a Dharma connection (*chos 'brel*), Ngor chen also conferred teachings to many monks from the monasteries of gSang [phu], sDe [= bDe ba can?], and mTshur [phu] (*gsang sde mtshur gsum*).¹²

Ngor chen's visit to some of those monasteries is also confirmed by the biography of sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes (1397–1470), a disciple of Ngor chen and the founder of Thar lam Monastery in the sGa region of Khams. In 1412, Kun dga' ye shes had travelled to dBus for his religious training and studied intensively under Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449) at gSang phu Ne'u thog. During teaching breaks, when Rong ston was travelling and teaching at other sites, Kun dga' ye shes approached some of the other most famous masters of dBus, studying under sNye thang Paṅ chen Blo brtan bzhi pa, dMar ston bGres po dPal ldan rin chen, the latter's nephew dMar ston rGya mtsho rin chen, Gung ru rGyal mtshan bzang po (1383–1450), and Shākya bsod nams (b. 1357?) alias

⁸ See the *Buddhaśrī'ī nram thar 1* (pp. 427.5–428.1).

⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 2* (pp. 514.1–2 and 514.6), respectively. During his sojourn, Ngor chen was accompanied by his attendant and biographer Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan; see the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 2* (pp. 514.6–515.2).

¹⁰ The *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 2* (p. 514.2) reads: (...) *se ra/ chos sdings/ (...)* *rim par byon tel*. Given the fact that Se ra was only founded in 1419 by Tsong kha pa's disciple Byams chen Chos rje Shākya ye shes (1354–1435), I suggest to emend the text to: (...) *se ra chos sdings/ (...)* *rim par byon tel*.

¹¹ gSang phu, bDe ba can, and dGa' ba gdong constituted part of a group of six famous monastic seminaries known as *chos grwa chen po drug* (or *nyi ma dbus phyogs kyi mtshan nyid chos grwa chen po*): dGa' ba gdong, sKyor mo lung, and Zul phu (*dga' skyor zul*) and sNye thang bDe ba can, gSang phu Ne'u thog, and Gung thang Chos 'khor gling (*bde gsang gung*); see SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: [685] and [689]. For their location, see *Ibid.*: 700, Map 4. On the abbatial succession of gSang phu Ne'u thog, see *Ibid.*: [685]–688. On the history of bDe ba can, see *Ibid.*: 696–697, no. 6, and on that of dGa' ba gdong, see *Ibid.*: 695, n. 4. The *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 2* (p. 544.4–5) specifies Mal gro as the furthest easterly point of Ngor chen's sphere of activity.

¹² See the *Ngor chen gyi nram thar 2* (p. 514.1–4). The term *gsang sde mtshur gsum* apparently refers to a well-known triple of monastic seminaries that were grouped together owing to some shared characteristics. The elements *gsang* and *mtshur* probably refer to gSang phu and mTshur phu, whereas the element *sde* awaits further clarification. See also ARGUILLÈRE 2007: 129, nn. 181–182, where we encounter the term *gsang mtshur sde gsum*, and the *Dus 'khor chos 'byung* (p. 235.6), where the trio *gsang sde gung gsum* is mentioned.

Byang sems Rwa sgreng pa.¹³ While he was studying Sanskrit grammar (*sgra*) at sNye thang, he came to know that Ngor chen was on his way to gSang phu and thus immediately set out for that monastery. At gSang phu, he received from Ngor chen the empowerments of the *Vajrāvalī* along with those of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* and also the ritual permission (*rje gnang*) for practicing the *Sādhanasāgara*. Under the patronage of some local leaders (*sde dpon*), Ngor chen was then invited to such monasteries as dGa' ba gdong, sKyor mo lung, Zul phu, and bDe ba can, where he gave the reading transmission for the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) of the *bKa' 'gyur* and an extensive exposition of the *Samputatantra*, which was based on the *Upadeśamañjari* and supplemented by teachings on the writings of the early great Sa skya masters. Kun dga' ye shes accompanied Ngor chen on that teaching tour and also set down lecture notes (*zin bris*) of his master's teaching on the *Samputatantra*.¹⁴

The presentation from Kun dga' ye shes' biography is largely consistent with that of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. It possesses, however, the anachronistic claim that Ngor chen had been invited to dBus by the ruler of the Phag mo gru pa dynasty, the dBus Gong ma.¹⁵ Such an invitation was indeed extended by Gong ma Grags pa 'byung gnas (1414–1445), the sixth Phag mo gru pa sovereign (r. 1432–1445), but over twenty years later, when Ngor chen embarked in 1441 on his second journey to dBus. Thus it seems that the biographer of Kun dga' ye shes confused the occasion of Ngor chen's first and second visits.

While in dBus, Ngor chen also paid a visit to Ri bo dGe ldan (i.e., dGa' ldan Monastery), where he approached Tsong kha pa to request support for his undertaking to revive the two lower tantric systems of Kriyā and Caryā, which will be discussed in a later chapter. At dGe ldan, Ngor chen also received a few reading transmissions from Tsong kha pa, namely for the *Lam rim chen mo*, *sNgags rim chen mo*, *gSang 'dus kyi bshad rgyud gsum gyi 'tik*, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, and *Dhyānottaraṭaṭikā*. Ngor chen was also requested by such masters as gNas brtan rGyal 'od to confer such empowerments as those of Kālacakra. But Ngor chen denied those requests, establishing merely a few religious connections (*chos 'brel*) by giving teachings on *guruyoga*.¹⁶ His rejection of the requests was related to a dream that he had while at dGe ldan. In the dream, a white figure (*mi dkar po*) was laying with his right side on the ground, saying: "You should not teach the Dharma here. Do not stay for a long time. I will not do [you any] harm."¹⁷ This dream might have been the forerunner of the upcoming involvement of Ngor chen in a controversy between the Sa skya pa and dGa' ldan pa, which will be described in a later chapter.

After returning to Sa skya in 1417, Ngor chen sponsored a communal tea serving for the monastic assembly (*mang ja*) and distributed offerings (*'bul ba*) and donations (*'gyed pa*). He also offered liquid gold and clothing to the statue of his late master Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406) and conducted *sgrub mchod* rituals and sponsored a meal (*tsha 'dren*) on the occasion of the death anniversary of his other late master Sa bzang 'Phags pa. Moreover, he paid a visit to Buddhaśrī (1339–1420) at Zhi dgon,

¹³ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 327.6–336.12). In his middle age (*dar yol*), rGyal mtshan bzang po is said to have received his tantric training under Ngor chen; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 327.6–336.12).

¹⁴ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 336.12–337.2).

¹⁵ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (p. 336.13–15).

¹⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 514.4–6).

¹⁷ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 514.6): *khyed 'dir chos ma 'chad|yun rings ma 'dug ngas gnod pa mi byed (...)*.

presenting him with a “golden flower” (*gser gyi me tog*), which appears to be a metaphor for an offering of wealth.¹⁸

Ngor chen also mentions this meeting in his biography of Buddhaśrī. According to that work, when he returned to Sa skya during the fifth month of 1417, he learned that Buddhaśrī had fallen sick and immediately travelled to Zhi dgon, where he stayed along with his master for one month.¹⁹

Returning to Sa skya, he continued his teaching activities in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, bestowing a number of requested teachings, including the reading transmission for the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) and his two sons—Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216)—, empowerments, and the ceremony for generating *bodhicitta*. Afterwards, he travelled to such places as gTing khebs and Byang phug, where he bestowed many empowerments and reading transmissions for such *tantras* as the *Ḍākārṇava* and *Vajradāka*.²⁰ Both places were located within the larger region of gTing khebs (or gTing skyes) to the south of Sa skya. Though gTing khebs was the name of that region, it also seems to refer in this context to a specific locality therein.²¹ The second site, Byang phug, was located in gTing khebs in an area that was further specified as Zar. It was the site of the Byang phug Jo bo, one of three effigies of the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po of sKyid grong, which Ngor chen had previously visited when accompanying his master Shar chen on the way to Bar 'brog.²²

Some of Ngor chen's teaching activities after his return to Sa skya are also recorded in the biography of his disciple sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes. After accompanying Ngor chen in dBus, Kun dga' ye shes travelled to gTsang in 1417. At Sa skya, he first paid his respects to the highest 'Khon lamas and then went to see Ngor chen, who was residing in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum.²³ Making a *maṇḍala* offering to request teachings, he received from him at first the initiation into the Five-Deity *Maṇḍala* of Red Yamāntaka (*gShed dmar lha lnga'i dkyil 'khor*) and related teachings. Soon thereafter, Kun dga' ye shes joined an extensive bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen gave to many Sa skya scholars.²⁴ Afterwards, he remained at Sa skya and studied at different times under Ngor chen and also gZhon nu seng ge (Ngor chen's half-brother), Chos rje gZhon nu rgyal mchog, and sPos khang pa Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1348–1430).²⁵

During that period, Kun dga' ye shes also received from Ngor chen the *bodhisattva* vow via the rituals of both traditions of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra.²⁶ Following the wishes of his disciples, Ngor chen is said to have bestowed the *bodhisattva* vow in one or both

¹⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 514.6–515.3).

¹⁹ See the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 428.1–429.6). For a detailed account of the events during Ngor chen's stay at Zhi dgon, see Part Three, 6.4.1.

²⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 515.3–4).

²¹ On gTing khebs, see Part Three, n. 315 and Part Four, 8.

²² On Zar, the Byang phug Jo bo, and Ngor chen's journey to Bar 'brog, see Part Three, 6.1.2.

²³ Kun dga' ye shes is said to have paid his respects to Ta dben Gu shrī Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the seventeenth throne-holder of Sa skya and his siblings, 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1397/98–1472) of the Rin chen sGang bla brang, and a certain Bla chen bSod nams blo gros of the Dus mchod bla brang; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 338.19–339.1). On Ngor chen's half-brother Blo gros rgyal mtshan and his siblings, see Part Three, 3.4. For a biographical sketch of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 361.5–362.5) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 53b5–54a2). I am not sure whether the reference to bSod nams blo gros is mistaken. The only person by that name and *bla brang* affiliation recorded in the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 450.5–451.6) lived much earlier, from 1332 to 1362.

²⁴ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 337.11–340.15).

²⁵ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 340.15–347.2).

²⁶ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (p. 342.12–15).

traditions. But since the vow of the Madhyamaka tradition could also be granted to persons that had performed evil deeds (*gang zag sdiḡ can*), he predominantly gave it in that tradition and only a few times according to the more restrictive Yogācāra tradition, as explained by the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and *Samvaraviṃśaka*. In the special context of the *Lam 'bras*, as an introductory practice (*sngon 'gro*) for entering the *mantra* path (*sngags lam*), Ngor chen utilised the non-*maṇḍala*-based ritual of generating *bodhicitta* as passed down from rje btsun Gayadhara (d. 1103) or the *maṇḍala*-based ritual of the Cakrasaṃvara system.²⁷

In 1421 at age twenty-five, Kun dga' ye shes took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as ordaining preceptor and gZhon nu seng ge as ceremonial master in the bZhi thog bla brang.²⁸ Initially, Ngor chen is said to have granted novice- and full-monk ordinations only to a few disciples about whom he was firmly convinced that they could observe their vows.²⁹ However, after an incident at Chu 'dus, a dream caused Ngor chen to reconsider his strict approach. He was approached by a monk who had violated his vows. This monk had received his vows from Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and requested Ngor chen to restore them. But Ngor chen did not comply with that request for a long time. Then, one night, he dreamed that he was sitting along with his two teachers Shar chen and Buddhaśrī in the 'Og smin (temple?) of the Bla brang Shar. Buddhaśrī remarked that if Ngor chen would grant monastic ordinations on whoever approached him, all those aspirants would come in contact with the Buddha's teachings. But as Ngor chen was extremely strict, he did not do so. Holding the same opinion, Shar chen agreed with Buddhaśrī and shot a glance at Ngor chen, who then woke up. From that time on, Ngor chen is said to have bestowed monastic ordinations on whoever requested it and in doing so bestowed as ordaining preceptor more novice- and full-monk ordinations than any other Tibetan Buddhist master.³⁰ According to the records of his disciples—Bla ma Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, his nephew Slob dpon Legs rin, rDo rje rgyal mtshan, and Grub thob Nam mkha' dpal bzang—he gave full monastic ordination to more than ten thousand monks, not counting ordinations he gave as layperson or novice monk.³¹ In his continuation of the *Ngor chos 'byung*, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs even specifies that Ngor chen bestowed full monastic ordination in the lineage of the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrī (1127–1225) on twelve thousand monks.³²

Until the foundation of Ngor Monastery in 1429, Ngor chen predominantly resided and taught at Sa skya and at times also at Sa bzang. In between teaching sessions (*chos bar*), he also visited other monastic institutions in gT sang—such as Chu 'dus, gTing khebs, Ri bo sgang, Khro phu, and Thar pa gling—and bestowed a variety of teachings in them. For instance, he gave the instructions of the *Lam 'bras*, the reading transmission for the

²⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 511.5–512.2). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 452.4–6). For instance, when Kun dga' ye shes received the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen, after the conclusion of the Three Appearances (*sngang gsum*)—that is, the preliminary Mahāyāna basis of the *Lam 'bras*—the generation of *bodhicitta* was performed based on the *maṇḍal tshom bu lnga*; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (p. 339.20–21).

²⁸ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 342.17–343.6).

²⁹ In this episode those ordinations are referred to as *pravrajyā* and *upasampadā* vows (*rab byung bsnyen rdzogs kyi sdom pa*). Here *pravrajyā* can be understood in two different ways, either as referring to “going forth,” that is, leaving behind the household life of a layperson to take monastic ordination, and thus *upasampadā* would specify the type of ordination, or specifically to the ordination as novice monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*), and then the phrase would refer to both novice-monk and full-monk ordinations, which is the interpretation I prefer.

³⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 510.5–511.3). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 452.3–4).

³¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 511.3–5). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 452.3–4).

³² See the *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (p. 341.7).

Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) of the *bKa' 'gyur*, explanations of the *tantras* of Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja, explanations of many *maṇḍala* rites (*dkyil chog*) and teachings on the related ritual procedures, conducted *sgrub mchod* rituals of *maṇḍalas* made out of sand and other materials, and granted various types of empowerments (*dbang, byin rlabs, rjes gnang*). During the monastic summer and winter sessions, he gave expositions of the tantric system (*rgyud sde*), teachings on the ritual procedures of *sādhanas* and *maṇḍalas*, and on the various systems of instructions (*khrid kyi rim pa*), such as of the *Lam 'bras*. During the autumn and spring sessions, he imparted the empowerments of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle and also of individual *maṇḍalas* and their associated *yi dam* deities.³³ At those sites, Ngor chen is also said to have established monastic institutions, designed the layout of temples, and commissioned religious objects. Unfortunately, no concrete details are given about those foundations and commissions. But we do know that Ngor chen set up monastic institutions in the regions of Chu 'dus and gTing khebs, which will be discussed in more detail below. However, for Ri bo sgang, Khro phu, and Thar pa gling, we do not have further references, and thus Ngor chen seems to have mainly taught there.³⁴

Ngor chen is further said to have secluded himself in retreat for about seven years in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum. During that time, he received water, wood, and other daily necessities through a small door and only permitted the most serious students to be let inside.³⁵ A reference to this period spent in seclusion is found in the biographies of Mus chen. When he travelled to Sa skya in late 1423 to request teachings from Ngor chen, he came to know that his future master was staying in a strict retreat at his residence, the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum. Thus he submitted his request to study Cakrasaṃvara through a messenger and obtained in reply texts that he should study in preparation. At the beginning of 1424, Ngor chen came out of retreat and the two finally met, Mus chen beginning his religious training under Ngor chen.³⁶

Ngor chen is portrayed as having bestowed teachings without aiming at gaining material wealth.³⁷ Owing to his generosity, his teachings attracted many students that are said to have exclaimed: “Bla ma Sa bzang pa is donating empowerments. Let's go to

³³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 453.6–454.2 and 454.5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 517.1–5 and 518.4). For an account of Ngor chen teaching the *Cakrasaṃvaramūlatantra* in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 454.5–455.4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 518.4–519.3).

³⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 517.1–4). The monastery of Ri bo sgang is further specified as having been located in the region of 'Bring mtshams; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 455.4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 520.5). Cf. the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang* (p. 585.4), where its location is given as gCan lung. But gCan (or gCen) lung was also located in 'Bring mtshams; see MAP 1 (gCen lung). For gCen lung, the *dGa 'ldan chos 'byung* (p. 250, no. 31) records the mKha' spyod Chos sde, which was founded by a certain dPal rdo rje, who was a disciple of Grub chen Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, and which originally was a Sa skya monastery. Later on, it was converted to the dGe lugs pa by a certain Bla ma rGya chen pa. On Khro phu Monastery in Shab, see GYURME DORJE 2009: 340. The monastery of Thar pa gling is difficult to identify, but might have also been located in 'Bring mtshams. We know, for instance, that Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa (1316–1358) received his early monastic education at Thar pa gling in the Zar region of 'Bring mtshams; see the *Ri khrod pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 376.2–4). On the location of Zar and 'Bring mtshams, see Part Three, n. 315 and Part Four, 8.

³⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 517.6–518.1).

³⁶ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 597.4–598.2), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 214.3–6), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 9.2–10.1). The *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 214.3–4) also confirms that Ngor chen taught a few disciples while in retreat: *rdo rje 'chang chen po thams cad mkhyen pa rje ngor pas shāk bzang sku 'bum du mi nyung ngu zhig la lam 'bras gsungs nas 'tsham se bzhugs 'dugl*.

³⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 454.2–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 517.5).

request [them]."³⁸ In a similar context, his biographers relate an account of the erstwhile custom of making huge offerings when requesting the *Lam 'bras*:³⁹

As illustrated by that [kind of episodes], whatever Dharma [Ngor chen] taught, thinking alone of the [Buddha's] doctrine, [he] sacrificed [his] life and exclusively engaged [himself] in the generosity of Dharma without [expectations for] material goods. When in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum a historical account emerged that [one] had to offer a lot of wealth in earlier times to request the *Oral Instructions* [i.e., the *Lam 'bras*], the Lord spoke: "Since in the past it was the time when the [Buddha's] doctrine was expanding, students strived after the Dharma, undertook hardships [for the Dharma], and were very generous [in offering] wealth. Thus, to establish an exceptional auspicious connection with the mental continuum of [their] students, the previous lamas have taken a lot of wealth. These days, the [Buddha's] doctrine has declined and [the lineages of] such teachings as the *Oral Instruction* are on the verge of dying out. Hence, if there appear students endowed [with qualities making them a] suitable vessel [for the Buddha's doctrine], the time has come that [we] need to hope that [freely] bestowing such [teachings] as the *Oral Instructions* and empowerments will benefit the continuity of the [Buddha's] doctrine.

³⁸ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 517.5): *bla ma sa bzang pas dbang sbyin gnang gin yod pa zhu ba la 'gro (...)*. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 454.2).

³⁹ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 518.1–4): *de lta bus mtshon nas chos gang gsungs kyang bstan pa 'ba' zhid la dgongs nas/ sku srog blos btang ste zang zing med pa'i chos sbyin kho na mdzad de/ shāk bzang sku 'bum du sngon kyi dus su gsung ngag zhu ba la longs spyod mang po 'bul dgos pa'i lo rgyus cig byung ba'i tshel rje'i zhal na/ sngon gyi dus na bstan pa yar so'i dus su song bas gdul bya rnams chos don gnyer dka' spyad dang/ longs spyod gtong phod che bas gdul bya'i rgyud la rten 'brel khyad par can bsgrigs pa'i ched du sngon gyi bla ma rnams kyi longs spyod mang po 'bul bzhes mdzad pa yin la/ deng sang bstan pa 'gribs nas gsung ngag la sogs pa'i bka' chad la khad du song 'dug pas/ gdul bya snod ldan byung na/ gsung ngag dang dbang la sogs pas gdal gtod lta bu byas nas kyang bstan pa'i rgyun la phan du re byed dgos pa'i dus su song 'dug pa gsung ngo/|. The comparison *gdal gtod lta bu* is not clear to me and is omitted from my translation. We also find this episode with slight variations in other biographies; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 454.2–5), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 598.5–599.2), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 214.6–215.2). With regards to that comparison, the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 454.5) reads: (...) *gsung ngag dang dbang bskur la sogs pas brdal gtod lta bu byas nas kyang (...)*; the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 599.2) has: (...) *gsung ngag dang dbang bskur la sogs pa brdal gtod lta bu byas nas kyang/|*; and the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 215.2): (...) *chos gdal gtod lta bu byed dgos par 'dug gsungs tel/*. From Mus chen's biographies, we learn the context in which Ngor chen told that story. According to those biographies, in 1426 at Sa skya, Ngor chen instructed Mus chen to request from him the *Lam 'bras*. Referring to the accounts that, in order to request the *Lam 'bras*, one needed a lot of wealth and had to undergo many hardships, Mus chen responded that he would not be able to make such a request. In reply, Ngor chen then related the account translated above. On the custom of demanding much gold from one's disciples, see also STEARNS 2001: 56.*

Chapter Two

First Bestowals of the *Lam 'bras*

Before Ngor chen bestowed the *Lam 'bras* for the first time, he is said to have experienced a vision that allowed him to impart that important cycle of tantric theory and practice. Initially, the content of his vision was transmitted only orally in the form of a seven-line verse that Ngor chen himself had spoken:

[In] the middle of an extraordinary [and] pure sphere,
The Almighty *Yogin Sa skya pa*,
[Along with] a few venerable lineal masters and
A divine assembly of the *maṇḍalas* of *yi dams* and
The shape of *mudrās* and *stūpas* and
[Mahākāla and his] consort, protecting me like a son,
The appearance of [this] single seeming appearance was inconceivable.⁴⁰

lHa mchog seng ge (1468–1535), the ninth abbot of Ngor, first revealed this vision to the broader public. Fearing that it might otherwise fade into obscurity, he had it commissioned as a painting (*ri mo*), either a *thangka* or mural, for which he himself designed the plan. As an inscription, he had Ngor chen's seven-line verse along with his own short explanation written at the bottom of the painting.⁴¹ Later on, a much more detailed description of Ngor chen's vision along with its transmission history was set down in writing by dPal ldan don grub (1563–1636), the sixteenth abbot of Ngor. He wrote it in verse to make it easy to memorise.⁴² More than one century later, Ngag dbang kun dga' blo gros (1729–1783), the thirty-first throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1741–1783), wrote a short record of how to paint (*'bri tho*) Ngor chen's vision.⁴³

By comparison, the presentations by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and dPal ldan don grub vary to a certain extent. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' description consists of a short summary of the vision and an overview of its transmission history, referring his readers to dPal ldan don grub's composition for a more detailed account. According to him, Ngor chen experienced the vision while residing at mGron la g.Yu thog when the number of years for which Buddhaśrī had restricted his teaching of the *Lam 'bras* had expired. Ngor

⁴⁰ *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzig snang* (p. 581.1–2): *khyad par gyi thig le dangs ma'i dbus|| rnyal 'byor gyi dbang phyug sa skya pa|| rje bla ma bgyud pa 'ga' re dang|| yi dam dkyil 'khor lha tshogs dang|| phyag rgya'i gzugs dang mchod rten dang|| bdag bu bzhin skyong ba'i lcam dral rnam|| ltar snang gcig gi snang ba bsam mi khyab|| (...)*. dPal ldan don grub explains the uneven metre of some of these lines by the spontaneous and unfabricated manner in which they were spoken; see the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzig snang* (p. 581.5).

⁴¹ See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzig snang* (pp. 581.5–582.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 520.1–2). lHa mchog seng ge's explanatory addition reads (*bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzig snang*, p. 581.2–4): *rje btsun rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos gsung ngag gi bka' rgya thim nas gsungs pas chog gam mi chog thugs la 'khrungs pa'i tshel mgon lha g.yu thog tu rje btsun chen pos gsungs chog pa'i brda dru bu sna lnga'i zhal gzig 'di|| skal ldan gyi gdul bya rnam dad pa gsal 'debs pa'i phyr|| bla ma bgyud pa dang bcas pa la gsol ba btab cing|| mkha' 'gro chos skyong la mchod gtor phul te|| lha mchog seng ges gsang brtol ba la mkha' 'gro rnam kyis bzod par gsol zhing|| dad ldan rnam yid ches pa'i gnas su mdzod cig|| manga lam bha wan tu zhes pa ste||*. A *thangka* of Ngor chen's vision was also commissioned by dKon mchog dPal ldan (1526–1590), the twelfth abbot of Ngor; see the *dKon mchog dPal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 468.3–4).

⁴² See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzig snang* (p. 582.1).

⁴³ See the *Kun dga' blo gros kyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 3, pp. 543–546).

chen was wondering whether he was now allowed to teach the *Lam 'bras* and experienced the vision in a dream one night during that time.⁴⁴

dPal ldan don grub relates that while travelling to mGron lha g.Yu thog, Ngor chen thought that Buddhaśrī's restriction had expired. Sitting in an upright posture, his right hand in the gesture of supreme generosity (*mchog sbyin gyi phyag rgya*), the left in that of equipoise (*mnyam bzhaq gi phyag rgya*) and holding a scripture, he wondered whether he was now allowed to teach the *Lam 'bras*. When a slight doubt arose in his mind, he immediately experienced the vision, which revealed to him that he was allowed to teach the "oral instructions" (*gdams pa*) and that the "marvellous tradition" (*srol rmad byung*) would persist for a long time.⁴⁵ In his painting description, Ngag dbang kun dga' blo gros has nothing to say about the historical context of Ngor chen's vision, but makes the important remark that the site of mGron lha g.Yu thog was located in 'Grig mtshams (i.e., 'Bring mtshams), the large area to the south of Sa skya from where the forefathers of Ngor chen's alleged father had moved to Sa skya and where Ngor chen himself was predominantly active in the region of gTing khebs.⁴⁶

The actual vision is described by dPal ldan don grub in the following way. In a five-coloured pavilion of light, Ngor chen perceived the group of the Five Supreme Masters of Sa skya. The centre was occupied by Sa chen Kun dga' snying po. To his right and left were sitting his sons, bSod nams rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan. On the right beneath Sa chen appeared Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), and, to his left, Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (1235–1280). This group was surrounded by Hevajra to the top right and Cakrasaṃvara to the top left, each in union with their respective consorts; and below by the two *dharmapālas* Mahākāla and his consort (*Śrīdevī?*). As the most important part of the vision, Ngor chen saw a white ray of light, which radiated out from the right hand of Grags pa rgyal mtshan, and which changed its appearance first into blue and then further into the five colours of the rainbow, eventually descending into the palm of Ngor chen's right hand. In an instant the light ray pooled into a bundle of light resembling a clew or ball of thread, which in turn emanated out in the ten directions. From that mass of light originated again an unceasing five-coloured light ray, the tip of which merged into the scripture Ngor chen was holding in his left hand.⁴⁷

dPal ldan don grub offers a series of interpretations for the successive parts of the vision, only four of which shall be mentioned here. First, Grags pa rgyal mtshan's radiating of light into Ngor chen's direction is linked to a previous karmic connection from a time when Ngor chen was born as Grags pa rgyal mtshan's disciple dByil sgom Tshul khrims.⁴⁸ Second, the rolling up of the five-coloured light ray in Ngor chen's hand into a clew of thread is interpreted as Ngor chen being the "sovereign" (*mnga' bdag*) in whose person the "excellent and supreme path" (*lam bzangs mchog*) together with its branches (*yan lag*) was unified. Third, the emanation of the bundle of light in the ten directions illustrated that Ngor chen would set all fortunate ones (*skal ldan*) dwelling in the ten directions on the path of spiritual ripening and liberation. Fourth, the merging of the five-coloured light ray into the scripture symbolised that the "good tradition" (*srol bzang*) would last unimpaired for the benefit of sentient beings until the end of time.⁴⁹ By

⁴⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 519.3–4).

⁴⁵ See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang* (p. 582.1–3).

⁴⁶ See the *'Bri tho* (p. 544.1–2).

⁴⁷ See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang* (pp. 582.1–584.2).

⁴⁸ On Ngor chen's previous lives, see Part Three, 2.

⁴⁹ See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang* (pp. 584.2–585.1).

contrast, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs mentions that both a volume of the *Lam 'bras* and a coiled-up bundle of a white silk thread was given to Ngor chen by Grags pa rgyal mtshan. Ngor chen then held, in his hand, one end of the thread, which in turn separated into many parts, pervading all directions, but remaining interconnected.⁵⁰

It is interesting to note that dPal ldan don grub does not refer to the *Lam 'bras* by name. Instead he gives rather cryptic references such as “oral instructions” (*gdams pa*), “marvellous tradition” (*srol rmad byung*), “excellent and supreme path” (*lam bzangs mchog*), and “excellent tradition” (*srol bzang*). Only at the end of his presentation, when clarifying the mistaken context of the vision as found in other works, does he clearly refer to the vision as the “sign” (*rtags*) that was interpreted by Ngor chen as his permission to teach the *Lam 'bras*.⁵¹

According to some oral and literary accounts, such as the Ngor chen biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486), the origin of the vision had erroneously been placed into another context and its meaning was also mistaken. According to those accounts, Ngor chen experienced the vision within the context of his first bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* at Ri bo sgang. This is refuted, however, by both dPal ldan don grub and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, because the vision granting permission to teach the *Lam 'bras* must have had occurred prior to its first bestowal. While at Ri bo sgang, they inform us, Ngor chen experienced another vision, seeing three extremely beautiful statues of Sa chen and his two sons of luminous nature and one statue of Sa paṇ, which, in comparison, appeared slightly lacklustre. This vision was interpreted as a sign that Ngor chen had succeeded in cleansing (*byi dor*) the teachings of Sa chen and his sons.⁵² After the foundation of Ngor in 1429, Ngor chen is said to have experienced a similar vision, though with the difference that now the statue of Sa paṇ also appeared as luminous as the other three. This vision was taken as a sign that Ngor chen would be of great benefit for the Buddha’s teachings, in general, and for the Sa skya’s, in particular.⁵³

Although Ngor chen’s first actual teaching of the *Lam 'bras* is not explicitly mentioned in his biographies, his early bestowals are associated with the larger region of ‘Bring mtshams to the south of Sa skya. It was there that Ngor chen experienced at mGron lha g.Yu thog the vision granting permission to impart the *Lam 'bras* and gave it later on at Ri bo sgang. For a more precise dating, one would have to know the number of years for which Buddhaśrī had restricted Ngor chen from teaching the *Lam 'bras*. Unfortunately, this is specified neither in his biographies nor in the description of that vision by dPal ldan don grub. Nevertheless, he considers Ngor chen’s teaching at Ri bo sgang to be his very first *Lam 'bras* bestowal.⁵⁴

The earliest reference to Ngor chen teaching the *Lam 'bras* dates to after his resignation as abbot of Sa bzang in about 1412 or 1413 when he took up residence in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum at Sa skya.⁵⁵ Given the fact that Ngor chen only finished his

⁵⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 519.5–6).

⁵¹ See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang* (p. 585.5–6).

⁵² See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang* (p. 585.4–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 519.6 and 520.5–521.1).

⁵³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 528.2–4).

⁵⁴ See the *bKa' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang* (p. 585.5): ‘*di la gsung sgros 'ga' zhig las| gcan lung ri bo sgang du rje btsun dkar po rnam gsum sa paṇ dang bzhi gzigs pa de nyid bka' rgya thim pa'i gzigs snang yin gsung pa ni sgros ma nges par snang stel ri bo sgang du gzigs pa ni| thog ma'i lam 'bras gsungs bzhin pa'i skabs yin zhing| gzigs pa'i rgyu mtshan yang gzan yin la|*. Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 455.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 520.5–521.1), which both mention Ngor chen’s bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* at Ri bo sgang, but do not specify it as his first *Lam 'bras* teaching.

⁵⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 513.6–514.1).

Lam 'bras studies under Buddhaśrī in about 1411, his master's restriction on teaching would have been rather short if Ngor chen was already bestowing the complete *Lam 'bras* by that time. Thus that early reference may refer to Ngor chen imparting just a few *Lam 'bras* related teachings, but not the complete cycle. This reminds us of Ngor chen's studies under Shar chen, from whom he received only a few *Lam 'bras* related teachings owing to the restriction that dPal ldan tshul khriims (1333–1399) had placed on his teacher.

The first detailed accounts of Ngor chen bestowing the *Lam 'bras* date to after his return from dBus to Sa skya in 1417. While residing in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, he was approached by sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes to whom he (together with other Sa skya scholars) granted an extensive bestowal of the *Lam 'bras*.⁵⁶ After having taught at Sa skya, Ngor chen travelled south and bestowed teachings at gTing khebs and Byang phug. During that time, he was approached by a certain Bla ma Kun legs pa requesting the *Lam 'bras*. He told Ngor chen that though he had previously received the *Lam 'bras*, it amounted to nothing more than merely having formally obtained it, implying that he had not then carefully performed the accompanying spiritual practices. He thus expressed his wish to engage in its meditative practices and requested Ngor chen to consider giving him an in-depth transmission. Complying with his request, Ngor chen bestowed on Kun legs pa the longest, most extensive, and most complete version of the *Lam 'bras* that he is said to have ever granted. He began teaching when the fields were ploughed in spring and finished on the verge of the beginning of the next year. Kun legs pa himself is said to have made great efforts in investigating, studying, and writing his own texts on the *Lam 'bras* and also prepared annotations (*mchan*) and lecture notes (*zin bris*) on its oral accounts (*gsung sgros*).⁵⁷

My reading of the Tibetan sources suggests that Kun legs pa can probably be identified as Byang phug pa Kun dga' legs pa. Though Ngor chen's biographies do not specify a location where that *Lam 'bras* teaching took place, we might assume that he imparted it at Kun dga' legs pa's seat of Byang phug. Kun dga' legs pa might even be the same Byang phug pa who had invited Shar chen and Ngor chen to Byang phug while they were on their way to Bar 'brog.⁵⁸ Later on, Kun dga' legs pa would become well-known in Sa skya's monastic circles, as illustrated by his participation in the monastic ordination of Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478), Ngor chen's nephew and fourth abbot of Ngor.⁵⁹ This ordination took place in 1435 in the Bla brang Shar of Sa skya, when Kun dga' dbang phyug was twelve years old. It was headed by Ngor chen as ordaining preceptor and Kun dga' legs pa functioned as ceremonial master. Subsequently, Kun dga' legs pa took Kun dga' dbang phyug with him to Byang phug, where he trained him in the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*. Kun dga' legs pa was thus himself an expert in Tantra trusted by Ngor chen.⁶⁰ Moreover, we know that he commissioned fine *maṇḍala* paintings, a fact which further

⁵⁶ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 338.17–340.15). The *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 515.3–4) also mentions that Ngor chen taught after his return to Sa skya in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, but makes no mention of a *Lam 'bras* teaching.

⁵⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 515.4–6). Kun dga' legs pa is recorded to have written a Hevajra related commentary; see SOBISCH 2008: 72, no. 12 and 153, no. 255.

⁵⁸ On this episode, see Part Three, 6.1.2.

⁵⁹ Kun dga' dbang phyug's monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) refers to his taking of novice-monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*) ordination.

⁶⁰ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 519.5–520.3), *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2* (p. 621.2–6), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 10.2–3). See also JACKSON 2010a: 187 and 190.

acknowledges his tantric expertise and also attests to his standing, as he was able to secure the material means for those commissions.⁶¹

⁶¹ For one of Kun dga' legs pa's commissions made for his own spiritual practice (*thugs dam*), see PAL 1991: 152–153, no. 85 and 196, no. 85 and RHE and THURMAN 1991: 231–232, no. 75 (who identify Kun dga' legs pa as a teacher of Tsong kha pa and thus date the thangka to the late fourteenth century). For the latter painting, see also HAR (1041). For another of Kun dga' legs pa's commissions, see JACKSON 2010a: 187–190, fig. 8.7, who dates his *maṇḍala* paintings to 1415 to 1435.

Chapter Three

An Attempt to Revive the Two Lower Tantra Classes

Ngor chen's biographies contain a longer episode on his endeavour to revive the two lower tantric systems of Kriyā and Caryā. This episode is presented in the form of a narrative that Ngor chen himself related in 1426 at Sa skya to his disciples mNga' ris pa dKon mchog 'od zer and Mus chen, disappointedly reflecting on his unsuccessful undertaking.⁶² Though we are not told when Ngor chen made up his mind to engage in that project, it must have been early in his religious career, because it was during his first sojourn in dBus (1414–1417) that he approached Tsong kha pa in that regard. His meeting with Tsong kha pa at dGa' ldan Monastery was not an incidental one. On the contrary, Ngor chen deliberately went to see Tsong kha pa to secure support for his undertaking. It is more than interesting to note that Ngor chen purposely sought out Tsong kha pa, for which I can think of two main reasons, which are partly in line with the reasons put forward by Ngor chen's own narration. First, there is good cause to believe that Ngor chen had heard of Tsong kha pa's activities to reform and revitalise Tibetan Buddhist scholarship, religious practice, and monasticism, and may have been motivated and inspired by them. Second, Tsong kha pa occupied a central position as one of the most powerful and influential masters in Tibet at that time. Moreover, Ngor chen's approach shows that he not only aimed at a revival limited to within the circles of his Sa skya school but rather envisaged an overarching movement.⁶³

Let us now return to Ngor chen's narration as found in his biography by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.⁶⁴

⁶² Not much is known about the person of mNga' ris pa dKon mchog 'od zer. He was a Sa skya monk and seems to have followed Ngor chen to Ngor, where he acted as a member of the monastic community that formed the necessary quorum (*kha skong gi dge 'dung*) when Shākya mchog ldan took full monastic ordination in 1452; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 27a7–b2).

⁶³ On reasons that may have motivated Ngor chen to engage in his undertaking, see DAVIDON 1981: 84–85.

⁶⁴ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 522.4–523.4): *da lta bod na sde snod kyī bshad nyan dar po yod pas phar phyin theg pa'i bstan pa legs po yod/ gsang sngags bla med kyang sa skya la sogs pa'i dgon pa so so na dga' mo yod/ yo ga 'di bar skabs cung zad 'gribs nas/ phyis thams cad mkhyen pa bu ston rin po che bas thugs rtsol chen po mdzad nas gsos pa'i rgyun da dung yang ma nyams pa yod/ bya spyod gnyis po 'di deng sang bka' ma chad tsam las mi 'dug pas/ 'di gnyis sos pa cig byung na bod du bstan pa yongs su rdzogs pa legs po cig 'ong ba 'dug snyam ste/ de la chos rje ri bo dge ldan pa chen po dang tshugs dang gsang sngags kyī nyams len gcig tu mdzad pa dang/ bya spyod kyī spyod lam dang tshugs mthun shas che zhing/ khong pa gang zag stobs can yin pas/ khong pas thugs rtsol mdzad na sos pa cig e 'ong snyam nas de kho na la rkang btsugs ri bo dge ldan du phyin nas bla ma'i drung du rgyu mtshan zhus pas/ bla ma'i gsung nas khyed kyis bstan pa'i khur ngo mtshar che ste rang re la gang la yin kyang slob gnyer ni byed dgos par snang/ slob gnyer byed pa mnyam po la bla med la byed pa 'di khe che bar snang bas/ bla med la byed pa yin gsungs nas rang re'i bzhed pa de ma byung/ de nas rang res rtsol ba bskyed nas bya spyod kyī rgyud/ 'grel pa rgya gzhung/ bod kyī dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po rnams kyis mdzad pa'i yig cha rnams lo bdun rtsam gyi bar du slob gnyer byas/ bya spyod gnyis kyī rgyud sde'i rnam gzhag 'di rnams kyang brtsams byas pa yin tel 'di da dung yang 'dod pa bzhin sos pa cig ma byung bas/ 'di la rang gi grogs mched dam/ grwa pa lta bu la khyed kyis brtson pa bskyed la bya spyod kyī bstan pa 'di sos pa cig gyis shig zer ba'i kha da cig bzhag sa med pas 'di sems kyī rtser bcung [= cung?] che bar 'dug (...). This episode was copied by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs with slight variations from Mus chen's *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 457.2–458.1). It is also briefly mentioned in the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 598.2–4), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 215.3–5), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 10.1–4). According to an explanation given by Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 24 September 2012), I have translated the term *dang tshugs* as “pure discipline.” The expression *sems kyī rtser bcung che bar 'dug* is not entirely clear to me and has been translated based on an explanation by Khang gсар rGan lags 'Jam dbyangs ye shes (Ngor ma dgon, 8 March 2009). By comparison, the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 458.1) reads *sems kyī gtser pa cung che bar 'dug*.*

At present, because teaching and study of the *piṭaka* are flourishing in Tibet, the [Buddha's] teachings of the Pāramitāyāna exist in excellent [condition]. The Niruttara [tantric teachings] of the Secret Mantra also exist in good [condition] at individual monasteries such as Sa skya. The Yoga [tantric teachings] had slightly declined for some time. Later, the Omniscient Bu ston Rin po che undertook great efforts and revived [those teachings], the stream of which still persists unimpaired. [As for the tantric teachings of] both Kriyā and Caryā [systems], these days [the lineage for their] teachings is almost broken off. Thus [I] thought if these two could be revived, the complete teachings [of the Buddha] would persist in Tibet in an excellent [condition]. In that regard, because the Great Master of Ri bo dGe ldan, the Dharma Lord, combined a pure discipline with the spiritual practice of the Secret Mantra, the conduct of the Kriyā and Caryā [tantric teachings] is for the most part in line with a pure discipline, and he was a powerful person, [I] thought whether a revival [of both tantric systems] could be achieved if he would make an effort. Exclusively in this regard, [I] then deliberately went to Ri bo dGe ldan and presented the subject matter to the lama. The lama then replied: "The responsibility for the teachings [of the Buddha] that you [are carrying] is remarkable. It appears that we should pursue studies in any given [field, including the two lower tantric systems]. While pursuing studies [in these fields] is equal [in importance], pursuing studies in the Niruttara [tantric teachings] seems more beneficial. Thus [I] study the Niruttara [tantric teachings]." So saying, that wish of mine was not achieved. Subsequently, in making efforts, I pursued for about seven years studies of the *tantras* of the Kriyā and Caryā [systems], [their related] commentaries [and] Indian treatises, and the texts written by the great Tibetan *kalyāṇamitras*. [I] have also written these presentations of the Tantra classes of both Kriyā and Caryā. However, still these [two systems of tantric teachings] did not experience a revival as [I had] desired. Thus, because [I] have nobody such as my friends or monks whom [I] could advise in this regard saying "You should be industrious and revive the [Buddha's] teachings of the Kriyā and Caryā [systems]," [I] am somehow worried.

From Ngor chen's narration, we learn that he did not succeed in securing the support he had hoped to gain, because Tsong kha pa considered the training in the lower tantric systems less beneficial than that of the highest. But this negative reply did not discourage Ngor chen from continuing his project. On the contrary, he engaged for a period of seven years in a thorough investigation of the corpus of tantric literature pertaining to the Kriyā and Caryā tantric systems. His efforts further resulted in his composing a systematic presentation of both systems in 1420 at Sa skya.⁶⁵ First, he finished compiling his presentation of the Kriyā tantric system, the *Bya ba'i rgyud spyi'i rnam par bshad pa legs par bshad pa'i rgya mtsho*,⁶⁶ which comprises more than one hundred folios, followed by

⁶⁵ Two title lists of Ngor chen's writings also record an exposition of the Yoga tantric system, the *rNal 'byor rgyud kyi spyi rnam rtsom 'phro*, among the works that were not included in his collected works; see the *sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 118.4) and *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (pp. 307.6–308.1).

⁶⁶ See CATALOGUE (no. 131). For a reference to this work in Ngor chen's biographies, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 463.1–2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 547.1–2): *bya ba'i rgyud rang rkang gi chos skad la bdag bskyed sgrub pa la sogs bkag nas 'grél tshul sna tshogs kyi dgongs pa gsal bar ston cing bya rgyud bstan pa rgyas par bya ba'i phyir/ bya rgyud spyi'i rnam par gzhaq pa legs par bshad pa'i rgya mtsho zhes bya ba dang/*

that of the Caryā system, the *sPyod pa'i rgyud spyi'i rnam par gzhaḡ pa legs par bshad pa'i sgron me*.⁶⁷

But from Ngor chen's reflection on his activities, we learn that his further attempts bore no immediate fruit and he perceived his whole undertaking as having failed. His final statement that he had nobody he could advise to strive for the revival is difficult to understand as no further reason is specified. I can think of three possible explanations: (1) nobody showed an interest in Ngor chen's activities, not even at Sa skya; (2) because Ngor chen himself did not succeed in his own venture, he would have been in no position to advise anybody else on this matter; or (3) as an indirect piece of advice to his two disciples to follow in his footsteps and make personal efforts for the revival. As his biographers have nothing more to say about whether Ngor chen engaged in any further activities, it seems that when briefing his disciples in 1426, he had already abandoned his own overt efforts.

As a last point, we need to take a closer look at the overall context in which the entire episode of Ngor chen's undertaking is presented by his two biographers, Mus chen and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. According to them, during the winter teaching session at the end of 1425 or the beginning of 1426, many monks experienced dreams that a misfortune (*sku chag*) would befall Ngor chen and divinations also confirmed this impending threat. Consequently, several senior monks approached Ngor chen requesting that he perform a *spong dag* offering, which consists in the distribution of one's personal belongings, and to go into a strict retreat. Though questioning the certainty of those divinations, Ngor chen complied and distributed his possessions in the Bla brang Shar to the monastic community of Sa skya. Afterwards, he secluded himself in a strict retreat in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum until about the sixth month of 1426, performing tantric practices of Uṣṇīṣavijayā and the generation of "protective circles" (*srung 'khor*) of Vajrapañjara aimed at repelling the pending threat.⁶⁸ As a positive outcome, he had a prophetic dream according to which he would live for another thirty-nine years.⁶⁹ In the evening two days

⁶⁷ See CATALOGUE (no. 130). For a reference to this work in Ngor chen's biographies, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 463.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 547.1–2): *de bzhin du sbyod rgyud la ye shes pa 'jug pa sogs bkag nas spyod rgyud bstan pa'i gsal byed/ spyod rgyud spyi'i rnam par gzhaḡ pa legs par bshad pa'i sgron me dangl*. For an introduction of both works, see DAVIDSON 1981: 86.

⁶⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 455.6–456.4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 521.1–6). Ngor chen's biographies date the beginning of this episode to the winter session of the male fire-horse year (*me pho rta'i lo'i dgun chos*), which corresponds to the end of 1426 or beginning of 1427, and provide us with further information about Ngor chen being in retreat in the first, second, and sixth months of what would then be the year 1427. Due to the following reasons, I suggest predating the episode by one year, beginning with the winter session of the female wood-snake year (*shing mo sbrul*), which corresponds to the end of 1425 or beginning of 1426: First, while in retreat, Ngor chen composed praises that are contained in his collected works, which, according to their colophons, were written on the fifteenth day of the second month of 1426; see CATALOGUE (nos. 28 and 30). Second, the chronology of both Ngor chen and Mus chen's biographies require that the episode took place in 1425 or 1426. Third, the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 215.3–4) dates both the impending threat and Ngor chen's retreat to the first half of 1426 (*rta lo'i stod*); the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 598.2–3) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 10.1–2) dating it merely to the male fire-horse year (*me pho rta'i lo*; i.e., 1426).

⁶⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 456.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 521.6–522.1). For details about Ngor chen's retreat, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 456.1–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 521.3–522.1). While in retreat, Ngor chen also composed praises of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Pañjaranātha with his consort Śrīdevī, Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, and Pu tra ming sring, beseeching them for their help in overcoming his obstacles. The praise he composed of Uṣṇīṣavijayā—who is one of three deities associated with long-life practices (*tshe lha rnam gsum*)—is directly linked to his dream. In this dream, Ngor chen found himself at Sa bzang holding a text of the *mDzangs blun* in his hand. Counting its folios, from wherever he began, he always reached the number thirty-nine. This number was disclosed to him as the amount of years he would continue to live. Thirty-nine was at the same time also the total number of *ślokas* his praise comprised. On the praise of

prior to the conclusion of his retreat, he called mNga' ris pa dKon mchog 'od zer and Mus chen, narrating to them the account translated above.⁷⁰ This narration is preceded by the following passage about the threat Ngor chen had just repelled:⁷¹

Apart from performing a few refutations and proofs of our doctrine, [I] have not done anything that turned out to be harmful to anybody. Nevertheless, some have performed a kind of sorcery [to magically cause harm] based on the Six-armed one. The magical display of this [sorcery] should have occurred last year, but because [the practice of] the Dharma by me, the master, and [my] disciples was flawless, [I] have not been harmed [by it]. Also the agitated dream from some days ago seems to be for me like a magical display for a positive outcome. If [I] had entered into retreat half a month later, [it] would have turned out harmful. In that regard, even if [it] had been harmful, there is no moral (lit. “mental”) responsibility of other [people] at all.

After the conclusion of Ngor chen's narration, his biographies relate a short conversation between him and his two disciples about the fact that he had now overcome the imminent threat (*sku chag* or *chag sgo*).⁷² Sangs rgyas phun tshogs then refers once again to Ngor chen's aforementioned dream that occurred while he was staying at dGa' ldan, in which he was told not to stay there for a long time and thus would not suffer any harm.⁷³

The larger context in which Ngor chen's attempt to revive the two lower Tantra classes is told is the controversy between the emerging dGa' ldan and old Sa skya schools, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. In 1426, this controversy was in full swing, prompting Ngor chen to take on the responsibility to defend his own Sa skya school against the polemic assaults of mKhas grub rJe (1385–1438). mKhas grub rJe's secret biography reveals the identity of both the Six-armed one who was requested to attack Ngor chen and the person behind that request. According to that work, because mKhas grub rJe could not be defeated by scholastic means, the Sa skya pa also utilised all sorts of spellcasting sorcery (*mthu*) against him, such as throwing magical *gtor ma*

Uṣṇīṣavijayā, see CATALOGUE (no. 28). The remaining praises, those of Pañjaranātha, Śrīdevī, Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, and Pu tra ming sring, were arranged as one work, the *dPal ldan sa skya pa'i bka' srung rnam la bstod pa'i tshigs su bcad pa bdud las rnam par rgyal ba*; see CATALOGUE (no. 30). Ngor chen wrote all these praises from between the first month of 1426 until the fifteenth day of the second month. Regarding the praise of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, he wrote one *śloka* each day for a period of thirty-nine days. The colophons of both praises confirm that they were finalised by the fifteenth day of the first half of the second month of 1426. Since Ngor chen wrote the first praise for the fulfilment of his own wishes (*rang gis [= gi] 'dod don zhu ba'i phyir du*) and the second to request for his own ends the activities of the *dharmapālas* (*rang gi 'dod pa'i phrin las zhu ba'i phyir du*), it is evident that he was worried. The sorcery and other parts of that account are also mentioned by A mes zhabs; see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (pp. 260.6–261.1 and 261.6–262.1).

⁷⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 456.5–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 522.1–2). See also the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 598.2–3), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 215.2–3), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 10.1–2).

⁷¹ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 522.2–4): *rang re'i grub mtha'i dgag sgrub re tsam ma gtogs su la yang gnod par 'gyur ba ma byas kyangl 'ga' zhi gis phyag drug pa la brten pa'i byad kha 'dra byas par 'dul' di'i cho 'phrul na ning 'ong rgyur 'dug na'ang na ning rang re dpon slob rnam kyis chos smar po byung bas ma tshugs par gda' | khar sing nas kyi rmi lam tshab tshub de pa'ang rang re la dkar phyogs 'dra'i cho 'phrul 'dra yin tshod du 'dul mtshams byed pa zla phyed ky'i 'phyis na skyon du 'gro bar gda' | de la skyon du song na'ang gzhan sems ky'i 'khri ba ci yang mi 'dul. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs copied this passage with slight variations from Mus chen's *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 456.6–457.2). See also the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 598.2–4), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 215.3–5), and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 10.1–4).*

⁷² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 458.1–2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 523.4–5).

⁷³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 523.5–6).

weapons (*gtor zor*) in his direction. Though mKhas grub rje considered the Sa skya's chief protectors Vajrapañjara and Four-faced Śrīmahākāla to be his main personal protectors, in repelling those attacks, he relied on another form of Mahākāla, namely Six-armed Mahākāla (i.e., mGon po phyag drug pa), who was also an important protector of Tsong kha pa and his tradition.⁷⁴ Considering the passages from both Ngor chen and mKhas grub rje's biographies, the "Six-armed one" can surely be identified as Six-armed Mahākāla, and the person behind the sorcery as originating within monastic circles of the dGa' ldan pa. Though perhaps some future scholar may be able to think of a way to challenge that identification, the relevant passages from both sides certainly convey the sectarian tensions and animosities that arose between the emerging dGa' ldan and Sa skya schools. Ngor chen's biographies, the earliest of which dates to 1455, convey that the sorcery originated within the dGa' ldan movement, if not from mKhas grub rje personally or his immediate circle.

⁷⁴ See the *mKhas grub rje'i gsang rnam* 1 (fols. 24b1–25a5).

Chapter Four

Involvement in Religious Disputes

During Ngor chen's lifetime, a number of religious disputes regarding both doctrine and tantric practice emerged, culminating in a heated controversy involving mKhas grub rJe.⁷⁵ Though Ngor chen's engagement in those disputes has traditionally been perceived as mainly aimed at mKhas grub rJe—as illustrated by the previously discussed verse from the *Kuśālamūlaparidharasūtra*, which is interpreted as a prophecy for the controversy between mKhas grub rJe and Ngor chen—it will become clear that his written refutations were also directed against Tsong kha pa and other factions within his own Sa skya school.

Here I cannot investigate in great detail the actual points those masters were discussing. That would require a study in its own right, which would need to thoroughly analyse both Ngor chen's writings and those of his opponents. My main focus here lies in merely identifying the religious debates Ngor chen was involved in and locating them and his polemical writings within the larger context of his life. Moreover, I shall deal with certain outcomes of those disputes and the disparaging picture some dGa' ldan and later dGe lugs enthusiasts painted of Ngor chen as a highly sectarian figure. In doing so, I cannot avoid conveying some of the tensions that arose between members of the emerging dGa' ldan and Sa skya schools in the middle of the fifteenth century, the peak of Ngor chen's career as a religious teacher.

4.1 Religious Disputes

Ngor chen's biographers do not provide many details about the disputes he was involved in, who his opponents were, against whom his refutations were directed, or the impact his writings had. Nevertheless, the minimal amount of information that they do contain, if considered together with the colophons of his refutations, allows us to form a preliminary picture. In the section on his engagement in the arts of exposition, disputation, and composition (*'chad rtsod rtsom*), Ngor chen's biographers inform us about his polemical writings in the passage on disputation:⁷⁶

After [he] had in this way clarified the Buddha's doctrine by means of exposition, [Ngor chen] repudiated the false conceptions by others through disputation: The misapprehension of one faction emerged that has explained the view of the *Tantra*

⁷⁵ For the representation and role of the religious controversy between mKhas grub rJe and Ngor chen as found in Tibetan life writing, see HEIMBEL (forthcoming 1).

⁷⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 546.2–6): *de ltar 'chad pa'i sgo nas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa gsal bar mdzad nas/ rtsod pa'i sgo nas gzhan gyis log par rtog pa bzlog pa yangl kha cig sngon gyi dus su dpal ldan chos skyong sems tsam gyi pañḍi ta yin pas/ birwa pa'i rgyud gsum man ngag dang bcas pa'i dgongs pa sems tsam du bkral ba yin no zhes pa'i log par rtog pa byung ba/ lung rigs kyis sun 'byin par byed pa'i bstan bcos chen po rgyud gsum gnod 'joms rtsa 'grel mdzad/ yang physis kyis kye rdo rje'i lus dkyil rgyud rgya gzhung gang nas kyang ma bshad pa'i rtog brtags yin no zhes pa'i log rtog 'jigs su rung ba lam dus blangs pa mthol bshags byed pa'i skabs byung ba de lung rigs man ngag gi sgo nas legs par sun phyung nas/ rgyud gzhung gi dgongs pa bla na med pa sgrub par byed pa'i bstan bcos chen po'i lus dkyil rtsod spong smra ba ngan 'joms zhes bya ba dang/ lta ba ngan sel zhes bya ba gnyis mdzad do/ gzhan yang bla ma gong ma'i lugs kyi bde kye gsang gsum gyi don ma rtogs pa dang/ log par rtogs pa mtha' dag sun 'byin pa'i bstan bcos chen po legs bshad gnad kyi zla zer/ spring yig dbang po'i rdo rje/ de bzhiḅ du dris lan sna tshogs kyi sgo nas log rtog zlog par byed pa'i bstan bcos du ma mdzad do/ For this passage, cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 462.4–463.1), which makes no reference to the *Legs bshad gnad kyi zla zer* and *sPring yig dbang po'i rdo rje*.*

Trilogy of Hevajra along with the *Esoteric Instructions* [i.e., the *Lam 'bras*] of Virūpa as “mind only,” because at an earlier time Śrī Dharmapāla had been a *paṇḍita* of the *Cittamātra* [school before turning into Virūpa]. [In reply, Ngor chen] wrote the *Destruction of Objections to the Tantra Trilogy, Root Text and Commentary*, which are great treatises that refute through textual authority and reasoning. Also, there emerged the terrifying mistaken conception by a later day [faction] that the body *maṇḍala* of Hevajra (...) was a fabrication nowhere taught in the *tantras* [and] Indian treatises. [Ngor chen] correctly refuted that [misapprehension] by means of textual authority, reasoning, and esoteric instructions, and wrote two [rebuttals] entitled *Eliminating the Argument about the Body Maṇḍala, Destruction of the False Position* and *Destruction of the False View*, which are great treatises that establish the unsurpassed intent of the *tantras* and treatises. Furthermore, [he wrote] the *Excellent Discourse, Moonlight of Crucial Points* and the *Epistle, Mighty Vajra*, which are great treatises that refute all miscomprehensions and false conceptions of the three [yi dam deities of] Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja of the previous lamas' [i.e., the great founders of Sa skya's] traditions. Similarly, [he] wrote many treatises that repudiate misapprehensions through various replies to questions.

The first two works mentioned—the *Destruction of Objections to the Tantra Trilogy, the Root Text and Commentary* (rGyud gsum gnod 'joms rtsa 'grel)—were written by Ngor chen early in his religious career. The first work—the *Destruction of Objections to the Tantra Trilogy* (rGyud gsum gnod 'joms)—consists of a short presentation in verse (3 fols.). It is followed by the second more extensive work—the *Lamp [Illuminating] Crucial Points of the Tantra Trilogy* (rGyud gsum gnad kyi sgron ma)—which is an explanation in prose of the first work, which also reproduces its root verses.⁷⁷ This explanation contains a colophon, dating its compilation to the seventeenth day of the ninth month of 1406 at Sa skya.⁷⁸ In this polemical work, Ngor chen defends the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* along with the *Lam 'bras* (rGyud gsum man ngag dang bcas pa) against some scholars learned in the Prajñāpāramitā system who maintain that the ultimate intent of those works rested upon the philosophical system of the Vijñaptivādins (rnam rig smra ba).⁷⁹ The group of people against whom Ngor chen aimed his critique has been identified by Leonard van der Kuijp:⁸⁰

It is a polemical text against Ratnākaraśānti and his Tibetan followers, who maintained that the *Hevajratantra* was mentalistic (*sems-tsam-pa*) in philosophical

⁷⁷ On these two works, see CATALOGUE (nos. 50 and 51), respectively.

⁷⁸ See CATALOGUE (no. 51).

⁷⁹ See the rGyud gsum gnad kyi sgron ma (pp. 630.5–631.4): gnyis su med pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal kye rdo rje rgyud gsum man ngag dang bcas pa la sgro 'dogs pa'i tshul 'ga' zhig dgag par bya ste| (...) kha cig brtag pa gnyis pa yil brjod bya'i gts'o bo mthar thug don|| rang bzhin lhan skyes ye shes ni| gsal rig tsam la 'chad par phyr|| rgyud 'di'i dgongs pa mthar thug pa|| rnam rig smra bar gnas zhes zer|| zhes smos tel pha rol du phyin pa'i tshul la mkhas pa kha cig| brtag pa gnyis pa bshad pa'i rgyud dang| de dag gi man ngag gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i brjod bya'i gts'o bo mthar thug pa'i don gyur pa rang bzhin lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes ni| rgyud las| rang rig bde ba chen po nyid|| rang rig nas ni byang chub 'gyur|| zhes sog|| myong rig ston pa'i gzhung du ma gsungs shing|| 'grel byed dag gis kyang|| ye shes zhes bya ba ni gsal zhing shes pas na ye shes tel zhes gsal rig tsam la 'chad pa'i phyr|| rgyud gsum man ngag dang bcas pa 'di'i dgongs pa mthar thug pa ni|| rnam rig tu gnas pa kho na yin zhing|| slob dpon shānti pas mdzad pa'i rtsa rgyud kyi dka' 'grel mu tig phreng bar yang rnam rig gi tshul du bkral ba yin no|| zhes zer rol||

⁸⁰ VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 87. See also DAVIDSON 1981: 88 and 96, n. 22 and DAVIDSON 1991: 221–222 and 234, n. 62. See now also VAN DER KUIJP 2014: 158–160, where he singles out Red mda' ba.

persuasion. These Tibetan followers included Red-mda'-ba Gzhon-nu blo-gros (1348/49–1412) and Bo-dong Paṅ-chen.

The next two refutations—*Eliminating the Argument about the Body Maṇḍala of the Glorious Hevajra, Destruction of the False Position* (*dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor la rtsod pa spong ba smra ba ngan 'joms*) and *Eliminating the Argument about the Body Maṇḍala of the Glorious Hevajra, Destruction of the False View* (*dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor la rtsod pa spong ba lta ba ngan sel*)—both originated within the controversy about the Hevajra body maṇḍala.⁸¹ According to their colophon, both were completed on the third day of the third month of 1426 at Sa skya, the first work comprising eighteen and the second twenty-two folios in the block-print recension of Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge. They were written in direct reply to the tantric polemic attack of mKhas grub rJe against what the Sa skya pa took to be the authenticity of their Hevajra body maṇḍala practices.⁸² Confusingly, both refutations appear very similar in structure and content and even entire passages and also the colophon are exactly the same.⁸³ Moreover, in Ngor chen's biographies, collected works, and title lists of his writings both are treated as individual works. A probable solution to this puzzle could be to consider them as different drafts of one and the same work, which were both finalised and furnished with the same colophon.

If we look closer at the period of time when Ngor chen wrote his refutations, it is interesting to note that it coincides with the aforementioned period when he stayed in retreat, engaging in tantric practices aimed at repelling the effects of the Mahākāla sorcery (*byad kha*).⁸⁴ While in retreat, he also composed praises of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, Pañjaranātha with his consort Śrīdevī, Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, and Pu tra brother and sister, beseeching them all for help in overcoming those obstacles.⁸⁵

Originally, the dispute over the interpretation of the Hevajra body maṇḍala has been linked with a chapter on the body maṇḍala that mKhas grub rJe had included in his presentation of the creation stage of Guhyasamāja (the *rGyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho*),⁸⁶ though, as shown by Yael Bendor and as discussed below, this work “did not initiate the debate as such, but contains responses to one argument and gives rises to another.”⁸⁷ In his colophon, mKhas grub rJe does not specify a date for his composition, only remarking that he wrote it while at dPal 'khor

⁸¹ On these two works, see CATALOGUE (nos. 48 and 49), respectively.

⁸² At the beginning of the first work, Ngor chen refers to mKhas grub rJe's assertion, though not mentioning him by name (*sMra ba ngan 'joms*, p. 547.2–4): *'dir dpal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs sems dpa' chen po dpal ldan birwa pa'i man ngagj rgyal ba'i ring lugs pa chen po rje btsun sa skya pa yab sras la sogs pa/ mkhas shing grub pa brnyes pa'i bla ma rnam kyis thos bsam sgom gsum gyis gtan la phab pa'i gdams ngag khyad par can la/ mun sprul dang rtogs brtag yin noll zhes skur pa 'debs pa dag byung la/*. On this debate, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 88, VAN DER KUIJP 1985b: 98–99, n. 18, VAN DER KUIJP 1985d: 51, JACKSON 2007: 354–355, and BENDOR (forthcoming).

⁸³ See DAVIDSON 1981: 96, n. 23, who remarks that both works “are very closely allied in structure and content.” Both works were also briefly described by VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 88: “(...) these are two prints of the same text, with some interesting variant readings.”

⁸⁴ On Ngor chen's retreat, see Part Four, 3. Though his biographies present Ngor chen's schedule while in retreat, they do not make any mention of him composing those refutations; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 456.1–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 521.3–522.1).

⁸⁵ See Part Four, n. 69.

⁸⁶ See the *bSkyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho* (pp. 233.6–263.6). For a harsh critique by mKhas grub rJe attacking his opponents in the body maṇḍala context, see the *bSkyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho* (p. 250.2–4) and BENDOR (forthcoming).

⁸⁷ BENDOR (forthcoming).

sde chen (i.e., dPal 'khor Chos sde).⁸⁸ We know that he was involved in the foundation of dPal 'khor sde chen in 1418 and acted as its abbot from the winter session of 1421 for six years.⁸⁹ Given that Ngor chen completed his refutations in 1426, mKhas grub rje's work can be dated to the first half of the 1420s, the year 1426 serving as the *terminus ante quem*.

In reply to Ngor chen's refutations, mKhas grub rje wrote a rejoinder, his *Treatise to Annihilate the Evil Proponents Who Have Engaged in the Compilation of Perverted Discourses, Wheel of Thunderbolts (Phyin ci log gi gtam gyi sbyor ba la zhugs pa'i smra ba ngan pa rnam par 'thag pa'i bstan bcos gnam lcags 'khor lo)*.⁹⁰ In the colophon, he again does not date his composition, only specifying that he compiled it at dGa' ldan.⁹¹ But as he had left gTsang in 1431 and served as the abbot of dGa' ldan from 1432 to 1438, we can suppose that he wrote his rejoinder during the last years of his life when residing at dGa' ldan.⁹²

Along with those polemic writings, there are at least two other works that should be considered in connection with the body *maṇḍala* debate. The first is a heretofore unknown work by Ngor chen on the Hevajra body *maṇḍala* practice, the *Method for Accomplishing the Body Maṇḍala of the Glorious Hevajra, Essence of Yoga (dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs rnal 'byor snying po)*.⁹³ According to its colophon, Ngor chen completed his *sādhana* on the fifteenth day of the first half of the third month of 1410 at Sa bzang.⁹⁴ He wrote it during the same year in which he also visited Sa bzang together with Buddhaśrī and was installed as its abbatial successor by Sa bzang 'Phags pa. Interestingly, the *sādhana* was neither included in Ngor chen's collected works nor mentioned in any of the extant title lists of his writings. The reason for this exclusion is not known. But we know that not all of his writings were included in his four-volume collected works, the *Pod bzhi ma*, as will be shown in a later part of this study.

The second work that should be considered is another rejoinder by mKhas grub rje that also originated within the context of the body *maṇḍala* controversy. mKhas grub rje wrote it in reply to a refutation by the Sa skya master Kon ting Gu shrī Nam mkha' bzang po of the Nyi lde bla brang, who had initially attacked mKhas grub rje for his remarks on the body *maṇḍala*.⁹⁵ mKhas grub rje's rejoinder bears no title, but in his biography by Paṅ

⁸⁸ See the *bsKyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho* (pp. 380.3–381.1).

⁸⁹ See the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (p. 226.4–5) and JACKSON 2007: 353. Cf. CABEZÓN 1993: 16–17, who dates the foundation of dPal 'khor sde chen to 1424, and states that mKhas grub rje remained at the monastery for four years until 1428.

⁹⁰ See the *mKhas grub rje'i rnam thar* (fol. 12b6), *mKhas grub rje'i gsang rnam 1* (fol. 25b4–5), and VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 88. For mKhas grub rje's rejoinder, see the *mKhas grub rje'i gsung 'bum 1* (vol. 2, pp. 3–95). The *Ngor lan* was also included in a collection of polemical writings; see DE ROSSI FILIBECK 2003: 152, no. 379, section 1.

⁹¹ See the *gNam lcags 'khor lo* (pp. 94.5–95.2).

⁹² See CABEZÓN 1993: 18–19, DREYFUS 1997: 36, and JACKSON 2007: 356.

⁹³ See LIST (no. 7). A retyped version of this work was recently published in the first set of the forty-volume *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 28, pp. 296–312). This collection was edited in 2013 by the Si khron bod yig dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu rtsom sgrig khang, which was founded by the Sa skya lama Khrom thar mKhan po 'Jam blo (alias 'Jam dbyangs Yon tan rgya mtsho). This retyped form was most likely based on the unpublished manuscript described below; see MANUSCRIPT VOLUME (no. 7).

⁹⁴ See the *Lus dkyil gyi sgrub thabs* (pp. 311.17–312.3).

⁹⁵ On Nam mkha' bzang po, see Part Three, n. 328. In his rejoinder, mKhas grub rje refers to Nam mkha' bzang po simply as "Kon ting Gu shrī, the great universal *kalyānamitra* of the Great Monastic Seat;" see the *Yang lan* (p. 775.2): *gdan sa chen po'i yongs kyi dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po kon ting gug shri bas*. However, based on a remark in the *mDo smad chos 'byung* of dKon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1801–1866), it is possible to identify Kon ting Gu shrī as Nam mkha' bzang po; see the *mDo smad chos 'byung 2* (p. 6.16–17): *glo bo mkhan chen gu ge chos dpal bzang po/ kwan ting ku shri nam mkha' bzang po rnam kyis mdzad pa'i ngor shar ba'i gdung rabs lngal rjes ma 'dis mkhas grub rin po cher dgag pa'i rnam pa zhig phul ba'i lan gsung 'bum thor bur bzhugs*. Cf. VAN DER KUIJP 1985e: 34, who identifies him as Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis. The polemic exchange is also mentioned by the *mKhas grub rje'i gsang rnam 1* (fol. 11b3–4).

chen bDe legs nyi ma (fl. 16th century) the work is listed as the *Rejoinder to the Response that Kon ting go'u shri Gave about the Guhyasamāja Body Maṇḍala* (*Kon ting go'u shris gsang 'dus lus dkyil lan tbat pa'i yang lan*).⁹⁶ After discussing what he considered to be Kon ting Gu shri's misconceptions of Buddhism, in general, and of the body *maṇḍala*, in particular, mKhas grub rJe also deals with Ngor chen, attacking him harshly, though without identifying him by name.⁹⁷ In a long introductory passage full of caustic rhetoric he portrays Ngor chen as a religious master who, though having received Vajrayāna teachings from Tsong kha pa, discarded his tantric pledges out of hope for the riches and honours of this life and disparaged Tsong kha pa, holding much hate and jealousy. Though Ngor chen had not received religious training under teachers skilled in the *sūtras* and *tantras*, as mKhas grub rJe argues, he took on the burden of refuting the fine explanations of true scholars, writing texts that made others feel ashamed. mKhas grub rJe continues in this way, also attacking Ngor chen's supporters, who "with the firewood of [exaggerated] words ignited ever greater the flame of hatred" (*tshig gi bud shing gis zhe sdang gi me lce ches cher sbar ba*), before he finally comes to his main point, the flaws that he perceived in a work by Ngor chen, which he describes as an explanation of the Hevajra *sādhana* (*kye rdor gyi sgrub thabs kyi bshad pa zhig*), and continues with his critique of the presentation of the celestial mansion (*gzhal yas khang*) of Hevajra.⁹⁸ A preliminary comparison with Ngor chen's writings suggests that the first part of mKhas grub rJe's critique was directed against Ngor chen's extensive 1419 exposition of the Hevajra *sādhana*, which will be introduced below, and the second part against Ngor chen's aforementioned Hevajra body *maṇḍala* *sādhana*.⁹⁹ At the end of his critique, mKhas grub rJe once again points out mistakes in Ngor chen's exposition of the Hevajra *sādhana*, saying that in the copy of that work that he possessed, Ngor chen had wrongly ascribed Jñānagarbha's auto-commentary (i.e., the *Satyadvayavibhaṅgavṛtti*) of his *dbu ma bden gnyis* (i.e., the *Satyadvayavibhaṅgakārika*) to Śāntarakṣita, who had merely written a commentary on the difficult points of the *Satyadvayavibhaṅgakārika*. Next he mentions that he has heard that Ngor chen had corrected that mistake, though it could still be found in the earlier versions that were circulated.¹⁰⁰ The "corrected" passage can indeed be found in the Hevajra *sādhana* contained in Ngor chen's collected works.¹⁰¹

The dating of mKhas grub rJe's rejoinder is rather difficult, however. From its incipit, we learn that Kon ting Gu shri had sent his refutation to rGyal mkhar rtse, challenging mKhas grub rJe to reply.¹⁰² As with his other writings, mKhas grub rJe does not provide

⁹⁶ See the *mKhas grub rje'i rnam thar* (fol. 12b5–6). In the table of contents of a modern collection of mKhas grub rJe's works, the work is listed as the *dGe ba'i bshes gnyen chen po kon ting gug shri ba'i rtsom lan*; see the *mKhas grub rje'i gsung 'bum* 2 (vol. 9, p. 4).

⁹⁷ See the *Yang lan* (pp. 796.5–801.2).

⁹⁸ See the *Yang lan* (pp. 798.3–800.2).

⁹⁹ For instance, mKhas grub rJe states in his *Yang lan* (p. 799.2–3): *gzhal yas khang gi rnam gzhab byed pa na blos btags tshan can bris nas/ rje btsun rtse mo'i gzhal yas khang gsal byed dang rgyab 'gal la song ba du ma zhig bris gda'/ kye rdor gyi steng zhal dud kha rgyab zhal bzhi nag ces pa gang nas kyang ma bshad pas mi 'thad/*. The original passage in Ngor chen's work reads (*Lus dkyil gyi sgrub thabs*, p. 298.20): *steng zhal dud kha rgyab zhal bzhi nag pa/*.

¹⁰⁰ See the *Yang lan* (p. 800.2–6): *dbu ma bden gnyis slob dpon ye shes snying pos mdzad pa yin pa la/ zhi ba 'tshos mdzad pa'i bden gnyis kyi rang 'grel las/ zhes bris pa sogs bzhad gad kyi gnas du ma zhig bris gda' ba la/ (...) kho bos bzhad gad du byas pas/ da lta rang gi lag na yod pa'i dpe la/ zhi ba 'tshos mdzad pa'i bden gnyis rang 'grel las/ ces pa med pa byas 'dug go zhes thos mod kyi/ snga rol tu bris nas yul gzhan dang gzhan na slebs pa'i dpe rnam la bltas pas gsal bar bdog/ rje btsun gong ma sus bkag rtog dpyod yod na bltas pas gsal ba 'dir gda/*.

¹⁰¹ See the *Kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa* (p. 12.4–6): *dbu ma bden gnyis las (...)// zhes dang/ de'i dka' 'grel slob dpon zhi ba 'tshos mdzad par (...)// zhes gsungs shing/*.

¹⁰² See the *Yang lan* (p. 775.2–4).

any date for his rejoinder, only specifying that he wrote it when living in Nyang stod.¹⁰³ But based on the course of events of his life, and also the content of his rejoinder, he must have written it between the years 1427 and 1431. In about 1427, as has been pointed out by David Jackson, mKhas grub rJe gave up the monastic seat of dPal 'khor sde chen, remaining within the rGyal rtse region until leaving gTsang for good in 1431.¹⁰⁴ In his rejoinder, mKhas grub rJe mentions his original remarks on the body *maṅḍala* from his presentation of the creation stage of Guhyasamāja and singles out a statement by Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364), which, as will be shown below, played an important role in the body *maṅḍala* dispute.¹⁰⁵ This suggests that either Kon ting Gu shri had criticised him for his distortion of Bu ston's remark or that mKhas grub rJe alludes to Ngor chen's refutations from 1426, in which also Ngor chen attacked him for that distortion. Otherwise, Ngor chen's refutations are surprisingly not mentioned at all.

Some of those polemical passages served as the model for the presentation of the conflict between mKhas grub rJe and Ngor chen as related by Se ra rJe btsun pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469–1544). In his secret biography of mKhas grub rJe, rJe btsun pa styles his subject as the innocent target of the baseless allegation that he had refuted the doctrinal system of the Sa skya pa. People claiming to adhere to that tradition were spreading that rumour everywhere, “getting ready to take [their] shoes off by [hearing] the sheer sound of water” (*chu'i sgra kho nas lham 'phud [= 'bud] pa'i rtsom pa*), that is, precipitately jumping to wrong conclusions. Among them, Ngor pa Kun bzang (i.e., Ngor chen) is given as the main player who took on the responsibility of dealing with mKhas grub rJe. As rJe btsun pa continues, Ngor chen sent messages to Rong ston Shes bya kun rig and a certain Chos rJe bSod blo to gain their support in challenging mKhas grub rJe, because the latter was refuting the Sa skya pa's doctrinal system.¹⁰⁶ To uphold that system, Ngor chen wanted to debate on tantric subjects and asked Rong ston to do the same on Prajñāpāramitā and Chos rJe bSod blo on Pramāṇa. But since the latter two perceived this as highly inappropriate, it fell on Ngor chen alone to write a text refuting the doctrinal system of Tsong kha pa and his disciples. Ngor chen had his polemic writing (*rtsod yig*), which was said to be full of mistakes making himself an object of shame, delivered by an envoy to mKhas grub rJe.¹⁰⁷ rJe btsun pa mentions only two such mistakes, which he also extracted from mKhas grub rJe's rejoinder, one being the mistaken ascription of the *Satyadvayavibhaṅgavṛtti*. Confusingly, he continues to state that mKhas grub rJe wrote in reply the *Rejoinder, Wheel of Thunderbolts* (*rTsod lan gnam lcags 'khor lo*), which is otherwise perceived as a rejoinder to Ngor chen's refutations from 1426.¹⁰⁸

mKhas grub rJe also engaged in other controversies, such as the quarrel with Rong ston at dPal 'khor Chos sde in about 1427.¹⁰⁹ Leonard van der Kuijp has pointed out that mKhas grub rJe “became embroiled in a series of bitter controversies which created an

¹⁰³ See the *Yang lan* (pp. 807.6–808.1).

¹⁰⁴ See JACKSON 2007: 355–356.

¹⁰⁵ See the *Yang lan* (pp. 776.3–5, 782.5–783.1, and 793.3–797.2).

¹⁰⁶ Chos rJe bSod blo may be the Chos rJe bSod nams blo gros given as a teacher of 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, the third abbot of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 7.1).

¹⁰⁷ CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 12 translate *rtsod yig* as “disputational document or record,” and *Ibid.*: 251, n. 39 explain that the term refers “to the written accusation that initiates a polemical exchange.” This shows that rJe btsun pa perceived Ngor chen as having initiated the dispute.

¹⁰⁸ See the *mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 1 (fols. 24b1–25b5).

¹⁰⁹ See the *mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 1 (fols. 11a3–5 and 14a2–18a6), *Rong ston gyi rnam thar* (pp. 346.3–347.1), CABEZÓN 1993: 6–8, 17–18, [389]–390, and 399, n. 20, JACKSON 2007: 352–356, and JACKSON 2010a: 178–179.

enormous stir among the intellectual elite of Gtsang province and antagonized a number of their patrons including his own,¹¹⁰ and elsewhere that “Mkhas-grub was expelled from Rgyal-rtse in 1427 by its ruler and his erstwhile patron Rab-brtan kun-bzang-’phags, and that this was mainly caused by his bitter polemicising with Ngor-chen and Rong-ston, thereby antagonizing the powers that were at Sa-skya monastery and his own patron.”¹¹¹

In his aforementioned rebuttal of Kon ting Gu shrī, mKhas grub rJe voices his lack of understanding for certain misinterpretations that his remarks on the body *maṇḍala* had provoked, such as that he was accused of having refuted the entire *Lam ’bras* system or the founding fathers of the Sa skya tradition, which he vehemently denies.¹¹² He also reaffirms to Kon ting Gu shrī his faithfulness to the basic Sa skya teachings, defending and vindicating his polemics.¹¹³

That mKhas grub rJe was slightly mischaracterised has recently been shown by Yael Bendor in her important contribution on what was at the very heart of the body *maṇḍala* dispute. She points out that the main critique of mKhas grub rJe—and prior to him also that of Tsong kha pa—was directed against certain correlations between parts of the body of the practitioner and elements of the celestial mansion of the *maṇḍala* of Hevajra as drawn by Chos rgyal ’Phags pa,¹¹⁴ one of the five founding fathers of the Sa skya tradition, and also his completing of the missing correlations for Cakrasaṃvara in accordance with those of Hevajra. However, what especially outraged Ngor chen in this discussion was mKhas grub rJe’s distortion of a statement originally made by Bu ston. Though Bu ston had only remarked that he had not seen some of those explanations in the cycle of Cakrasaṃvara, mKhas grub rJe exaggerated this much further by stating that no Indian treatise would explain it in such a way. Ngor chen could accept Bu ston’s critique, but mKhas grub rJe’s extreme misrepresentation of Bu ston provoked him to write his refutations.¹¹⁵ “However,” as Bendor states, “taking these charges against specific correlations [between the yogi’s body and the *maṇḍala*] as a total refutation of the authenticity of the Sa skya tradition of Hevajra body *maṇḍala* is something that could have taken place in the context of very high tensions.”¹¹⁶ Bendor thus concludes that she has “found no evidence to support the contention that mKhas grub rJe refuted the authenticity of the Sa skya Hevajra cycle,” and that “while mKhas grub rJe may indeed have been the ‘liar’ Ngor chen claimed he was, there is no evidence that he refuted outright the authenticity of the Sa skya tradition of the Hevarja body *maṇḍala*.”¹¹⁷

The next work mentioned in the passage translated above is Ngor chen’s monumental study of Hevajra literature, the *Extensive Exposition of the Sādhana of the Glorious Hevajra, the Moonlight [Brightening] the Crucial Points [of] the Generation Stage (dPal kye rdo rje’i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer)*.¹¹⁸ This work, as mentioned by

¹¹⁰ VAN DER KUIJP 1985b: 75. See also *Ibid.*: 98–99, n. 18.

¹¹¹ VAN DER KUIJP 1985d: 69–70, n. 8.

¹¹² See the *Yang lan* (pp. 775.4–5 and 796.5–6). See also BENDOR (forthcoming) and DAVIDSON 1991: 222 and 234–235, n. 64.

¹¹³ See the *Yang lan* (pp. 775.5–776.5, 793.3–798.3, and 801.2–5). See also VAN DER KUIJP 1985e: 34.

¹¹⁴ BENDOR (forthcoming) mentions that “in Sa skya works on the Hevajra body *maṇḍala* these correlations have been the standard,” and lists along with Ngor chen the Sa skya masters Mus chen, sTag tshang Lo tsā ba, and dKon mchog lhun grub, who all follow ’Phags pa in their works on that topic.

¹¹⁵ See BENDOR (forthcoming).

¹¹⁶ BENDOR (forthcoming).

¹¹⁷ BENDOR (forthcoming).

¹¹⁸ On that work, see CATALOGUE (no. 53).

Leonard van der Kuijp, “is frequently polemical,”¹¹⁹ and was completed by Ngor chen on the eighth day of the seventh month of 1419 at Sa skya.¹²⁰ It is characterised by Ronald Davidson as an “astonishing compendium of historical, philosophical, comparative, and meditative material, all oriented towards an elaborate discussion on the various facets of the practice of Hevajra according to the *Upadeśanaya” (i.e., the *man ngag lugs*).¹²¹ In reply, Ngor chen must have faced a number of objections. Otherwise, there would have been no need for Go rams pa (1429–1489) to write in 1466 a rejoinder (the *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub pa'i thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer la rtsod pa spong ba gnad kyi gsal byed*).¹²² Go rams pa lists three persons who repudiated Ngor chen's compendium: dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po (1410–1452?), mKhas grub rJe, and Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451).¹²³ The work by dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po, a Sa skya master from the ruling family of La stod Byang and a disciple of rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1382–1446), is available and he compiled it at Ngam ring Monastery.¹²⁴ In his opening section, dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po announces that he will discuss his objections to the works by Ngor chen and mKhas grub rJe and clarify some of Bo dong Paṅ chen's statements. According to him, Ngor chen had given explanations that were not in line with those of the founding fathers of the Sa skya tradition and had also objected to the views and treatises of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa. Similarly, he says that mKhas grub rJe had refuted the views of Sa chen and his sons, bSod nams rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan, and points out three works that contain mKhas grub rJe's refutations.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 87.

¹²⁰ See CATALOGUE (no. 53).

¹²¹ DAVIDSON 1992: 113. On that work and its approach to the *abhisamaya* on Hevajra, see *Ibid.*: 114–124. See also DAVIDSON 1981: 88 and VAN DER KUIJP 1987a.

¹²² See the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 12, pp. 557–693). Go rams pa completed compiling his work on the fifteenth day of the first part of the fourth month of 1466 when at Ngam ring Chos sde in La stod Byang. For the colophon, see the *bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer la rtsod pa spong ba* (pp. 692.3–693.4). On Go rams pa's writing of this work, see also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 101.20–102.5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (pp. 322.9–323.3), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 4 (pp. 362.18–363.5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 6 (p. 47.6–12), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (pp. 201.14–202.21). Go rams pa's rejoinder was also mentioned by DAVIDSON 1981: 96, n. 25.

¹²³ See the *bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer la rtsod pa spong ba* (p. 560.1–3). See also DAVIDSON 1991: 234, n. 60, VAN DER KUIJP 1985a: 87, and VAN DER KUIJP 1987a: 174.

¹²⁴ See the 'Khrul 'joms nyi ma'i 'od zer (pp. 369.6–370.6). dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po also wrote the biography of his main teacher, rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, and the *Byang pa'i rgyal rabs*. For the former, see the *Sa skya pa'i bla ma kha shas kyi rnam thar* (vol. *kha*, pp. 165–253). On the latter, see EVERDING and DZONGPHUGPA 2006: 17–19 and SERNESI 2016. Other writings of his remain unpublished: the *sGrub thabs rgya mtsho'i rjes gnang bya tshul* (manuscript in *dbu med*, 86 fols.), *dPal 'khor lo sdom pa'i lus dkyil du dbang nyams su len pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga* (manuscript in *dbu med*, 28 fols.), and *Yi dam rgya mtsho'i bsgrub thabs dang dbang gi cho ga nor bu'i gter mdzod* (manuscript in *dbu med*, 56 fols.), which is housed at 'Bras spungs Monastery; see the 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 723, no. 7999). As will be shown below, the interpretation of certain features of teaching and practicing Hevajra, the *Lam 'bras*, and also other tantric rituals differed slightly between followers of the different Sa skya sub-schools. From a transmission lineage mentioned within the aforementioned work on the practice of the Cakrasamvara body *maṅḍala*, it is evident that dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po was a follower of the rDzong tradition (*dPal 'khor lo sdom pa'i lus dkyil*, fols. 27b4–28a3): *nyams su blang ba'i rim pa 'di'i brgyud pa ni/ chos rje sa skya paṅḍi ta yan ni dril bu pa'i brgyud pa spyi dang mthun la/ de nas tshogs bsgom rin po che/ nyan chen pa/ rgyal ba brag phug pa/ bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan/ theg chen chos kyi rgyal po/ rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po/ des bdag la dges bzhin du gnang stel.*

¹²⁵ See the 'Khrul 'joms nyi ma'i 'od zer (pp. 4.3–6.2). For the three works of mKhas grub rJe that dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po lists (the *dPal kyai rdo rje'i sgrub thabs 'khrul spong*, *dPal kyai rdo rje'i mchod 'phreng rdo rje sems dpa'i bsgom bzlas dang bcas pa*, and *dPal brtag pa gnyis pa'i rnam par bshad pa rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma nams kyi gsang ba'i mdzod*), see the *mKhas grub rje'i gsung 'bum* 1 (vol. 8, pp. 89–135, vol. 8, pp. 137–143, and vol. 7, pp. 469–961), respectively

The last title mentioned by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs is the *Epistle, the Mighty Vajra* (*sPring yig dbang po'i rdo rje*), whose addressees are specified by Ngor chen merely as the practitioners of Hevajra according to the system of Ḍombi Heruka.¹²⁶ However, their concrete identity is revealed by gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan (1424–1498) in his rebuttal of Ngor chen's work. He tells us that Ngor chen's critique was directed against the works that Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis' (1349–1425) had written on the Hevajra *sādhana* and *maṇḍala* according to the system of Ḍombi Heruka.¹²⁷

Moreover, we can count another of Ngor chen's works among his polemical writings. It constitutes his earliest polemical work, entitled *Thorough Explanation of the Threshold of the Great Yuganadha Vajradhara, Clarifying Evil Misconceptions* (*Zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang chen po'i sa mtshams rnam par bshad pa log rtog ngan sel*).¹²⁸ Ngor chen completed it on the thirteenth day of the third month of 1404 at Sa skya. The work consists, as explained by Ronald Davidson, of a “defense of the superiority of the Vajrayāna enlightenment—the theory that buddhahood obtained by the Path of Secret Spells is more exalted than that obtained by the standard Mahāyāna perfections.”¹²⁹

Ngor chen is also said to have criticised the dGa' ldan pa's tradition of Vajrabhairava. In a short summary of the controversies that emerged between the followers of the new *tantra* schools (*gsar ma ba*), Gu ru bkra shis (b. 18th century) refers to the critique of the dGa' ldan pa's Vajrabhairava tradition by Ngor chen and his followers, who are said to have considered the dGa' ldan pa's practice as a fabrication nowhere to be found in the scriptures.¹³⁰ The fact that such a debate existed was also confirmed by Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (b. 1931), who specified that the debate concerned the Thirteen-Deity *Maṇḍala* of Vajrabhairava.¹³¹ Several topics of that debate can be found in a discussion by A mes zhabs (1597–1659) in his study of Yamāntaka cycles in Tibet in the chapter about Kṛṣṇayāmāri.¹³² Interestingly, we know of a detailed exposition of Vajrabhairava that was written by Ngor chen but not included in his collected works, the *Thorough Explanation of Vajrabhairava, Adamantine Sprout* (*rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi rnam bshad rdo rje'i myu gu*). This work was studied by A mes zhabs, who utilised it for his own explanation of the Vajrabhairava *sādhana*, the *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa bdud sde ma lus pa 'joms pa'i rdo rje'i me 'od*.¹³³ I will return to the discussion of this work and its transmission history in a later part on Ngor chen's collected works.

The subject matter of two other disputes needs further clarification. The first is mentioned by Ronald Davidson within the context of Ngor chen's presentation of the *kriyā* and *caryā* tantric systems:¹³⁴

¹²⁶ On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 58).

¹²⁷ See Part Four, 13.1.

¹²⁸ On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 52).

¹²⁹ DAVIDSON 1991: 221. See also DAVIDSON 1981: 88. On that work, see also CATALOGUE (no. 52).

¹³⁰ See the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 992.12–14): *ngor chen rdo rje 'chang slob tshogs dang bcas pas dge ldan pa'i 'jigs byed 'di lung rigs du mas bkag nas/ rgyud 'grel bshad dang bcas pa gang nas kyang ma bshad pas/ rtogs [= rtog] bzo kho na yin pa'i sgrub byed mang po bris 'dug pa dangl*. On that passage, see also CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 25. As mentioned by *Ibid.*: 260, n. 116, “it appears that what was at stake was not so much the authenticity of texts as their interpretation and ritual enactment.”

¹³¹ Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 24 September 2012).

¹³² See the *gShin rje gshed kyi chos 'byung* (pp. 39.3–57.5).

¹³³ See the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 15, pp. 247–538) and SOBISCH 2007: 274–276, no. 6.

¹³⁴ DAVIDSON 1981: 86. According to BENTOR (forthcoming), in his presentations of the two lower tantric systems, Ngor chen objected to Tsong kha pa's position on deity yoga, as expressed in the latter's *sNgags rim chen mo*.

(...) in 1420 he composed his famous general introductions to the *kriyā* and *caryā-tantras*. (...) Finally, Nor-chen maintained that generation of oneself into the deity (*bdag-bskyed*) can only be understood in the *caryā-tantras* as the cause of maintaining strict discipline. At the same time self-generation has no place in the *kriyā-tantras*, the lack of this generation being the major characteristic distinguishing the *kriyā* from the other kinds of *tantra*. The arguments on this last point are well worked out and apparently Kun-dga'-bzañ-po and mKhas-grub-rje exchanged polemics on this issue, the official dGe-lugs-pa position being that *bdag-bskyed* is inherent in the *kriyā* class.

The second dispute is about the practice of Sarvavid Vairocana, the chief deity of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*. We know that Go rams pa wrote a rebuttal to Bo dong Pañ chen's critique of the Sa skya pa practice, as it had initially been outlined in a very influential work by rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, the *Kun rig gi cho ga gzhan phan 'od zer*.¹³⁵ In 1442 at Ngor, Ngor chen wrote two works on the practice of Sarvavid Vairocana, the *Sādhana for the Entire Maṇḍalas of the Glorious Sarvavid, Clearing Completely [All] Obscurations* (*dPal kun rig gi dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs sgrub pa rnam sel*) and *Glorious Sarvavid, Boundless Benefit For Others* (*dPal kun rig gzhan phan mtha' yas*).¹³⁶ This dispute has also been discussed by Leonard van der Kuijp, who states that "Mi-bskyod rdo-rje repeatedly has it that Bo-dong Pañ-chen criticized the Ngor-pa sect of the Sa-skyapa school which was led by Ngor-chen."¹³⁷ But noting that Ngor chen has nothing to say about any polemical attack by Bo dong Pañ chen, he is "inclined to consider Bo-dong's objections to postdate 1442."¹³⁸

As a last point, it is important to point out that Ngor chen's refutations were also directed against Tsong kha pa, though the actual content of his critique deserves more research. This important task has recently been begun by Yael Bentor, who discusses, for instance, Ngor chen's objections to some of Tsong kha pa's positions, such as on deity yoga, as expressed in the latter's *sNgags rim chen mo*, and to certain methods for practicing the Cakrasaṃvara body maṇḍala.¹³⁹ Ngor chen expressed the latter critique in his *Definite Analysis of the Extremes of the Difficult Points of the Glorious Cakrasaṃvara Body Maṇḍala Sādhana, Sun Rays Destroying Confusion* (*dPal 'khor lo bde mchog lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi*

¹³⁵ For the *Kun rig gi cho ga gzhan phan 'od zer*, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 1 (vol. 9, pp. 1–117). For Go rams pa's rebuttal, which he compiled in 1466 at Ngam ring, see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 10, pp. 415–469). With regard to Bo dong Pañ chen's involvement, Go rams pa states (*gzhan phan gnod 'joms*, pp. 418.4–419.3): *snyan brgyud du bzhugs pa phyi rabs kyi gdul bya rnam kyis snyan brgyud 'dzin par mi nus pas bka' srol nub par dogs nas| (...) rje btsun grags pa rgyal mtshan gyis| rgyud bshad thabs kyi man ngag gzhan phan spyi chings| rgyud kyi sa bcad| rgyud kyi mchan| lag tu blang ba'i rim pa gzhan phan 'od zer| gzhan phan nyer mkho rnam mdzad do| (...) bo dong phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba dpal 'jigs med grags pa zhes mtshan yongs su grags pa de nyid kyis| spyir bod kyi kun rig gi cho ga mtha' dag dang| khyad par du gzhan phan 'od zer gyi lugs de dag rgyud kyi dgongs pa la zhugs pa ma yin no zhes bkag nas| rang lugs kyi rgyud don rang dgar 'grel pa las byung ba'i cho ga rgyud don gsal| de nyid lung dang sbyar ba lung gi rnam nges| rigs pa'i rnam nges te gsum mdzad do||* On Go rams pa's writing of this work, see also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 101.20–102.5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (pp. 322.9–323.3), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 4 (pp. 362.18–363.5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 6 (p. 47.6–12), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (pp. 201.14–202.21). On Go rams pa's rebuttal, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1992: 113 and 122, nn. 12–13.

¹³⁶ On these two works, see CATALOGUE (nos. 125 and 126), respectively.

¹³⁷ VAN DER KUIJP 1992: 113.

¹³⁸ VAN DER KUIJP 1992: 113. After his passing away, Ngor chen's two works also faced the critique of Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432–1496), the founder of Gong dkar Chos sde; see Part Four, 13.1.

¹³⁹ BENTOR (forthcoming) points out that Ngor chen voiced a critique against Tsong kha pa in his expositions of the two lower tantric systems, his Guhyasamāja *sādhana* and its appendix, and his commentary on the body maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara Vajraghaṇṭa. On these works, see CATALOGUE (nos. 130 and 131, 103 and 104, and 182), respectively. On Ngor chen's Guhyasamāja *sādhana* and its appendix, see also BENTOR 2015: 176–177 and 183.

sgrub pa'i thabs kyi dka' ba'i gnas kyi mtha' rnam par dpyad pa' 'khrul 'joms nyi ma'i 'od zer).¹⁴⁰ Bentor shows that the first part of mKhas grub rje's chapter on the body *maṇḍala* that he had included in his aforementioned presentation of the creation stage of Guhyasamāja was written in direct response to this very critique that Ngor chen had voiced against Tsong kha pa. Though disproving some positions hold by Tsong kha pa, who had criticised one of the Sa skya founding fathers, bSod nams rtse mo, she also points out that Ngor chen agrees with him on other topics and that both apparently attacked the Jo nang school.¹⁴¹ This led mKhas grub rje, as Bentor notes, to ridicule

“the very uneasy position in which Ngor chen found himself. On the one hand he agreed with Tsong kha pa while on the other hand he belonged to the tradition attacked by Tsong kha pa. Ngor chen agrees with Tsong kha pa on the issue of *tathāgata-garbha*, although he belongs to the same school as bSod nams rtse mo. Thus in the following passage, mKhas grub rje criticizes unnamed Tibetans who accept the position of bSod nams rtse mo regarding *maṇḍalas* naturally present in the bodies of sentient beings, but who at the same time reject the theory of *tathāgata-garbha*.¹⁴²

In general, the dispute over the interpretation of the body *maṇḍala* was not merely a polemical exchange written in a cutting tone, but was also conducted from a sectarian standpoint that shaped the historical and religious realities of fifteenth-century Tibet. One direct outcome of the controversy was a travel ban placed on the religious scholars of Sa skya. The intense debate had inflamed passions to such an extent that the administration of Sa skya prohibited her own scholars from traveling, probably aiming at easing the boiled up emotions and preventing further disputes. The imposition of a travel ban is mentioned within the context of Ngor chen's three sojourns in Glo bo in both the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456–1532) and Ngor chen's biography by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. Within his presentation of Ngor chen's second visit (1436–1437), Glo bo mKhan chen quotes from a letter that Ngor chen is said to have sent in reply to the invitation by A ma dpal (1388–ca. 1456), king of Glo bo and Ngor chen's patron.¹⁴³

Later on, thinking to invite [Ngor chen] again for a second time, [A ma dpal] submitted a series of messages. As one of [Ngor chen's] early answers, [he] received a reply, saying: “This time, initially, [I] have planned to come. However, owing to the writing of a text by lCang ra bKa' bcu pa [i.e., mKhas grub rje] stating that the Hevajra body *maṇḍala* is not an authentic teaching, all in residence at the Monastic Seat [i.e., Sa skya] got angry. A decree has been issued that [Sa skya pa] *dge bshes* not go anywhere until this [matter] has been resolved. This is why I, too,

¹⁴⁰ See BENTOR 2014: 67 and BENTOR (forthcoming). On Ngor chen's work, see CATALOGUE (no. 182).

¹⁴¹ BENTOR (forthcoming). *Ibid.* (forthcoming) also points out that mKhas grub rje “continues to subtly allude to other works of Ngor chen that do not agree with bSod nams rtse mo,” such as the *Zung jug rdo rje 'chang chen po'i sa mtshams rnam par bshad pa log rtoq ngan sel* (CATALOGUE, no. 52), “and refutes the reasoning of Red mda' ba gZhon nu blo gros (...), one of his teachers.”

¹⁴² BENTOR (forthcoming).

¹⁴³ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 2.1(c). For other translations, cf. KRAMER 2008: 146–147 and VITALI 2012a: 139. mKhas grub rje was also known as lCang ra bKa' bcu pa, because he had taken charge of the religious affairs of lCang ra Monastery in Myang stod from about 1413 until 1420, following the invitation of Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags (1389–1442), the new ruler of rGyal mkhar rtse; see CABEZÓN 1993: 16 and 409, n. 36, JACKSON 2007: 353, and VAN DER KUIJP 1985b: 78.

got no opportunity to come. If one master in Gu ge came [to Glo bo], would [your] intention be fulfilled? [Provided that this] would not fulfil [your intention], if I have to come by all means, [I] will try to come for a short while if [you] could kindly arrange that [I] will not have to visit other places and [my stay] will not take a long time. Thus, to make things easier in case an inviting party shows up from the neighbouring areas (lit. “right [and] left”) there [in Glo bo], and for [seeking] the trust of those present here [at Sa skya], [I] request [you] to provide [me] with an official signed and sealed letter [of invitation].”

The presentation by Glo bo mKhan chen indicates that the travel ban was enacted sometime between 1428 and 1436. Thus it would have been enacted after Ngor chen had written his refutations in 1426, sojourned in Glo bo from 1427 to 1428, and probably also after his 1429 foundation of Ngor Monastery. By the time he embarked on his second journey to Glo bo in 1436, the ban had probably been lifted. In the letter he had sent to A ma dpal, he was apparently describing a prohibition made in the past that was still continuing at his time of writing, which is why he offered to send someone from Gu ge and, if that would not be sufficient, requested an official invitation with a seal from A ma dpal to convince the people at Sa skya to let him go.¹⁴⁴ By contrast, the account given by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs is more problematic.¹⁴⁵

Hearing of the fame of this Vajradhara [i.e., Ngor chen], [A me dpal] invited with deeply believing trust and through great efforts [Ngor chen] again and again. But since previously the dispute had emerged that the view of the *Tantra Trilogy* [of Hevajra] along with the *Esoteric Instructions* [i.e., the *Lam 'bras*] of the Sa skya pa was “mind only” and that the Sa skya pa body *maṇḍala* [practice of Hevajra] was not taught from the *tantras* [and] treatises, the monastic rule was established that there was no place where Sa skya pa *dge bshes* could go. Thereupon [Ngor chen] got no opportunity to visit [Glo bo].

It is odd that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also refers to the debate regarding the philosophical nature of the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*, in which Ngor chen had already written his refutation in 1406. It seems highly unlikely that the travel ban was imposed as early as then. The crucial factor that caused the Sa skya pa elite to restrict the movement of her scholars was directly related to mKhas grub rje's polemic assault on the body *maṇḍala*. I will return to this event and discuss its chronological problem in more detail in the chapter on Ngor chen's three journeys to Glo bo.

My discussion of the disputes Ngor chen was involved in suggests that the intense conflict with mKhas grub rje about the interpretation of the Hevajra body *maṇḍala* was the final outburst in a string of pre-existing tensions that had gradually arisen, and that it was also fuelled and intensified by several other arguments. The polemic-loving mKhas grub rje can be singled out as one of the main players in antagonising the Sa skya pa—the very school he himself was closely linked to through his own religious training prior to meeting Tsong kha pa—with his harsh attacks against their most prominent masters.

¹⁴⁴ Another possibility would be to understand Ngor chen's answer as describing a past problem with the travel ban, implying that he could then either send someone from Gu ge or come himself briefly to Glo bo. But the travel ban would then still have been enacted sometime between 1428 and 1436.

¹⁴⁵ *Ngor chen gyi nmam thar 2* (p. 537.3): *rdo rje 'chang 'di'i snyan pa thos nas dad 'dun dang bka' [= dka'] spyod chen pos yang yang spyan drangs kyang/ snga ma sa skya pa'i rgyud gsum man ngag dang bcas pa'i lta ba sems tsam yin zer ba dang/ sa skya pa'i lus dkyil rgyud gzhung nas ma bshad zer ba'i rtsod pa byung nas/ sa skya pa'i dge bshes rnam 'thor sa med pa'i bca' khriims byas nas 'byon stabs ma byung/.*

But the Sa skya pa also played their role in the conflict with Ngor chen objecting to some of Tsong kha pa's positions, which mKhas grub rJe felt impelled to defend. Ultimately, these polemical exchanges directly shaped the religious history of fifteenth-century Tibet, contributing to an ever-growing divide between followers of Tsong kha pa and those of the Sa skya tradition.¹⁴⁶ But discussions of the practice of Hevajra also continued within the Sa skya school and contributed to the development of different sub-schools, as will be discussed below.

4.2 Troublemaker or Target of the dGa' ldan pa?

As translated above, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs portrays Ngor chen as a defender of true doctrinal views and authentic tantric practices against a series of misconceptions brought forward by his contemporaries. However, later dGa' ldan pa accounts give, not surprisingly, a totally different picture, portraying Ngor chen as a highly sectarian figure who stirred up tensions between the Sa skya and the emerging dGa' ldan schools.

One of the earliest disparaging portrayals can be found in the aforementioned secret biography of mKhas grub rJe by Se ra rJe btsun pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan.¹⁴⁷ When presenting the various debates and disputes mKhas grub rJe involved himself in, rJe btsun pa paints a highly negative picture of Ngor chen.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, the one known as Ngor pa Kun bzang, whom the Sa skya pa worship like Vajradhara, though he had received many profound teachings of the Vajrayāna from rJe btsun Tsong kha pa, due to [his] very clinging to the riches and honours of this life, ignoring [his] tantric pledges and vows like grass, he engaged in disparaging Tsong kha pa, the father, and his spiritual sons, and also expressed verbally a lot of terrifying slander by simply regurgitating [others].

It would be unjust, however, to think that rJe btsun pa simply fabricated this portrayal of Ngor chen. He actually drew on the slanderous passage that mKhas grub rJe had included in his aforementioned rejoinder to Kon ting Gu shrī. But that does not justify his mud-slinging portrayal, which shows how he wanted Ngor chen to be perceived within the monastic circles of his dGa' ldan pa.

¹⁴⁶ On the sectarian divide between the dGa' ldan pa and Sa skya pa, see DREYFUS 1997: 33–41. See also DREYFUS 2005: 293–297, JACKSON 2007: 352–357, and JACKSON 2010a: 178–179.

¹⁴⁷ There exist different block-print editions of mKhas grub rJe's collected works, such as from sKu 'bum, Zhol, and bKra shis lhun po. Interestingly, his secret biography contained in the sKu 'bum recension (*mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 1) is much more extensive than that in those from Zhol (*mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 2) and bKra shis lhun po (*mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 3). It contains passages that are entirely missing from the other two, and numerous individual sentences are either extended in the former or shortened in the latter two. Note that the Zhol and bKra shis lhun po recensions also vary to a certain extent from each other. mKhas grub rJe's secret biography was utilised by ARY 2015 as a major source in his important study on the early dGe lugs pa history, showing, among other things, how mKhas grub rJe's position within that school's hierarchy was elevated throughout the centuries and how he was styled as one of Tsong kha pa's two closest disciples and his chief spiritual heir and interpreter. For his translation of mKhas grub rJe's secret biography according to the reading of the Zhol recension, see *Ibid.*: 121–149.

¹⁴⁸ *mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 1 (fol. 11b1–3): *gzhan yangl ngor pa kun bzang pa zhes grags pa sa skya pa rnam* *kyis rdo rje 'chang lta bur bkur ba des kyangl tsho 'di'i myed bkur la ha cang zhen pa'i dbang gis/ rje btsun tsong kha pa las rdo rje theg pa'i chos zab mo du ma zhig nyan yangl dam tshig dang sdom pa rtswa ltar yal bar dor tel/ rje tsong kha pa yab sras la skur ba 'debs pa la zhugs nas/ ngag tu yang rdzes [= rjes] zlos byed pa tsam gyi [= gyis] ya nga ba'i ngan smras du ma byas shingl. Cf. the briefer versions contained in the Zhol and bKra shis lhun po prints (*mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 2, p. 434.4–6 and *mKhas grub rJe'i gsang rnam* 3, pp. 577.7–578.1).*

Another example of later calumny is the well-known account of Paṅ chen bSod nams grags pa (1478–1554), who in his *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* recounts Ngor chen's alleged efforts in urging the Rin spungs pa lord Nor bu bzang po (1403–1466) to withdraw the support he was granting the dGa' ldan pa.¹⁴⁹

Though the religious traditions [to which Nor bzang] was inclined were the Sa [skya pa] and dKar [brgyud pa], [he] also saw the good side of the dGe ldan pa. In fact, when he began to request from Chos rje Ngor pa instructions, that lama said: "If [you] accomplish my three wishes, [I] will give you the instructions." With this regard, [he] replied: "If [I] am capable to accomplish [your wishes], [I] will do accordingly." At the time when the instructions took place, the lama spoke: "[I] want the conversion of the dGe ldan pas that are under [your] rule to Sa skya pas, the end of the construction work of the monastic foundation [of] dKa' bcu ba dGe 'dun grub [i.e., bKra shis lhun po], and an offering of many *mor ban* servants to the new monastery of Ngor." As to that, Nor bzang is said to have replied: "In general, it is not worthy for anyone in power to convert a religious tradition and, in particular, because I have established a Dharma connection with Chos rje rGyal tshab [i.e., Dar ma rin chen], [I] also have to uphold the commitment [I made] to him [and] the dGe ldan pa. Even though [I] have offered no assistance to bKa' bcu ba for [his] monastic foundation, in case [I] would bring [the construction] to a halt, I and [my] office would suffer from a bad reputation. Thus [I] do not dare to stop [it]. [It] is not convenient [for me] to provide a large number of *mor ban* servants to the new monastery [of Ngor], because [I have many] obligations, such as the responsibility for hosting the successive [Phag mo gru pa] rulers who are making formal visits to the estates, the officials delivering orders for official duties, the *rgya ban* servants, [and the responsibility for] the incidents of warfare-related disturbances [occurring here in my domain].

However, it was stated by the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) that this account was fabricated and lacked credibility. In his history of Tibet, he

¹⁴⁹ *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (pp. 99a.1–100.5): *chos lugs sa dkar la mos kyang dge ldan pa la'ang dag snang mdzad/ de yang khong gis chos rje ngor pa la khrid zhu bar rtsam [= brtsams] pa'i tshes bla ma'i zhal nas/ nged kyi 'dod pa gsum sgrub na khrid ster gsung [= gsungs]/ de la khong gis sgrub par nus na de bzhin byed zhus/ khrid thon pa na/ bla mas mnga' zhabs kyi dge ldan pa rnams sa skya par sgyur ba dang/ dka' bcu ba dge 'dun grub dgon pa 'debs pa'i mkhar las 'di 'gog pa dang/ ngor dgon gsar la mor ban mang po 'bul ba rnams dgos zhes gsungs/ de la nor bzang pas/ spyir chos lugs bsgyur ba dbang yod sus kyang bya mi 'os shing/ khyad par nged kyis <chos chos> [= chos] rje rgyal tshab pa la chos 'brel zhus pas khong dge ldan pa la dam tshig srung dgos pa'ang yod/ dka' bcu ba dgon pa 'debs pa la grogs dan byed pa ma byung kyang bkag na nged sde pa la gtam ngan phog 'ong bas dgag mi spobs/ dgon gsar la mor ban ltos [= gtos] chen po 'bul ba/ gong ma na rim gzhis bskor la phebs pa'i zhabs tog las ka skyel mi'i rgya ban rnams kyi sna len/ sde bzar [= gzar] gyi rkyen khur sogs dgos pas 'bul mi bde zhes zhus pa yin skad/. Emendations made by the author. For Tucci's emendations, see TUCCI 1971: 125–126. For his translation, see *Ibid.*: 239–240. Based on explanations by Khri byang Blo bzang ye shes bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1901–1981), *Ibid.*: 239, n. 2 and 240, n. 1 provides explanations and paraphrases for otherwise lexically unattested terms: *mor ban* were "female servants as a part of the mi ser provided as servants of a monastery and attached to its property and service;" *zhabs tog las ka skyel mi* is paraphrased as *zhabs zhu'i las don gyi bka' yig skyel mkhan*; and *rgya ban* clarified as *bran g.yog*, who in gTsang are "also called *skye'o* = *ban c'en*." Cf. *Ibid.*: 125, where he suggests to emend *rgya ban* to *skya ban*. This passage by Paṅ chen bSod nams grags pa has previously also been mentioned by gDong thog Rin po che (1933–2015) in his *Dus kyi me lce* (pp. 136.15–137.17), VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 260, n. 19, SHEN 2002: 65, n. 97, 109, 149, n. 92, 207–208, n. 289, and 211–212, n. 302, VITALI 1996: 509, n. 862, CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 44 and 271, n. 216, and CZAJA 2013: 223–225, n. 54.*

corrected and strongly criticised bSod nams grags pa's remarks, dismissing them based on what he perceived to be a historical anachronism.¹⁵⁰

That Chos rje Ngor chen told Rin spungs Nor bzang that [he] wants [him] to stop the foundation of [bKra shis lhun po] Monastery by rje dGe 'dun grub is a fabricated rumour of a false oral tradition, which appears to have been written down by Chos rje bSod grags. Because when the Omniscient dGe 'dun grub founded bKra shis lhun po, the district governor of bSam 'grub rtse was 'Phyong rgyas pa Hor dPal 'byor bzang po. That this [governor] acted as the foremost among the patrons of rJe dGe 'dun grub is clearly stated in the *Genealogy of Yar rgyab* written by Pañ chen Byams pa gling pa bSod nams rnam par rgyal ba, whose fame for *not* being a scholar in name only was justified.

The fact that bSod nams grags pa sought to denigrate Ngor chen in other contexts is further evident from remarks he made in two other writings. In his history of the old and new bKa' gdams schools, the *bKa' gdams gsar rnying gi chos 'byung*, he mentions as a side note that Chos rje Kun bzang showed an "attitude of jealousy" (*phrag dog pa'i rnam 'gyur*) towards bKra shis lhun po.¹⁵¹ And while discussing in his *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* the patronage the Sa skya school received from the kings of Glo bo, he relates that with the invitation of Ngor chen all the monasteries in that domain were converted into the Sa skya pa, in general, and the Ngor pa, in particular.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs (p. 160.2–11): *chos rje bsod grags pas| chos rje ngor chen pas rin spungs nor bzang pa la| rje dge 'dun grub kyi dgon pa 'debs pa 'gog dgos tshul gsungs pa ni ngag rgyun ma dag pa'i 'chal gtam zhig bris par snang stel thams cad mkhyen pa dge 'dun grub kyi bkra shis lhun po 'debs skabs| bsam 'grub rtse'i rdzong dpon 'phyong rgyas pa hor dpal 'byor bzang po yin zhing| di nyid kyi rje dge 'dun grub kyi sbyin bdag gi mthil mdzad par ming tsam gi mkhas pa ma yin pa'i grags pa don dang mthun pa'i pañ chen byams pa gling pa bsod nams rnam par rgyal bas mdzad pa'i yar rgyab kyi gdung rabs na gsal bar gsungs soll. For the translation of this passage, see also AHMAD 2008: 127. This passage has previously been mentioned by numerous scholars; see the *Dus kyi me lce* (p. 137.5–17), VAN DER KUJJP 1983: 260, n. 19, VITALI 1996: 509, n. 862, SHEN 2002: 207, n. 289, and CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 271, n. 216. On the foundation of bKra shis lhun po, a discussion of dPal 'byor bzang po's role in its foundation, and the accuracy of the Fifth Dalai Lama's argument, see SHEN 2002: 106–111 and CZAJA 2013: 223–225, n. 54. On the *Yar rgyab kyi gdung rabs* by Byams pa gling pa bSod nams rnam rgyal (1400–1475), see MARTIN 1997: 63, no. 99 and SHEN 2002: 207–208, n. 289. The Fifth Dalai Lama's regent, sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, alludes to tensions between Ngor chen and dGe 'dun grub, mentioning as an aside in his biographical sketch of the latter that dGe 'dun grub composed his famous song (*gsung mgur*) known as *Shar gangs ri ma* because of the jealousy shown by Ngor chen; see the *Baidūrya ser po* (p. 238.20): *gsung 'bum gras ngor pa kun bzang pas phrag dog mdzad par brten pa'i shar gangs ri ma sogs (...)*. Indeed, after having praised his own masters (i.e., Tsong kha pa and his disciples) in the first part, dGe 'dun grub criticises certain hostile masters in his second part. For instance, he says: (*Shar gangs ris ma*, p. 367.5): *lar da lta gangs ri'i khrod 'di na|| rang bstan pa 'dzin par khas len zhing|| gzhan bstan 'dzin dgra bo'i dwangs mar 'dzin|| tshul 'di la skyo ba gting nas skyes||*. Partly, the song thus reflects the tensions and animosities between the emerging dGe lugs pa and old Sa skya pa schools. The song, the colophon of which is by a different hand and does not provide any date or place of composition, may have been written somewhere in gTsang or even in bKra shis lhun po because dGe 'dun grub refers in it to dGa' ldan Monastery as located in the east. For the song's translation, see MULLIN 1985: 119–121.*

¹⁵¹ See the *bKa' gdams gsar rnying gi chos 'byung* (p. 148.11–18). This and the previous statement was criticised by the late Sa skya master gDong thog Rin po che; see the *Dus kyi me lce* (pp. 136.15–138.7). The former statement was defended by the dGe lugs master mDo smad pa Yon tan rgya mtsho (1932/33–2002); see the *Kun khyab 'brug sgra* (pp. 30.19–31.16). A similar comment like the previous statement of bSod nams grags pa was also made by a much later non-dGe lugs historian, though it seems to have been based on it. In a short summary of controversies that emerged between, and even among, the followers of the new *tantra* schools (*gsar ma ba*), Gu ru bkra shis mentions that a "passionate and aggressive attitude" (*chags sdang gi rnam pa*) was shown from Ngor when dGe 'dun grub established bKra shis lhun po; see the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 992.19–20). On this passage, see also CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 271, n. 216.

¹⁵² See the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (p. 39a2–6): *blo 'o ni rdzong kha ba'i dpon sa skya 'phar ba'i sde dpon du 'dug la| de yang dpon a ma dpal gyi ring snga sor chos rje phyogs las pa dang| phis ngor pa kun bzang pa spyen drangs pa rtsa*

Given bSod nams grags pa's bias as a staunchly pro-dGe lugs historian, and the fact that his accounts were sometimes dismissed by less sectarian lamas of his own tradition, the reliability of his accounts is questionable.¹⁵³ As far as we know, Ngor chen was on good terms with the house of Rin spungs, whose lords are recorded among his chief patrons, and he would have had no need to win them over for the sectarian activities alleged by bSod nams grags pa.¹⁵⁴ The biographical sources mention at least two visits that Ngor chen paid to Rin spungs. The first is recorded as being in the year 1441 or 1442, while he was on his way back from the Phag mo gru pa court.¹⁵⁵ The second took place a couple of years later in 1446, when he was invited by Nor bu bzang po and his brother dPal bzang rin chen (b. 1405). When this invitation reached him, Ngor chen was bestowing the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor. He discontinued his teaching, and installing Mus chen as his representative, he travelled to Rin spungs.¹⁵⁶ We should also not forget that Ngor chen embarked in 1447 on his third journey to Glo bo, only returning in the second half of 1449, and thus he might have had already left by the time bKra shis lhun po was founded.¹⁵⁷ However, it is conceivable that Ngor chen was at least unamused when he learned of dGe 'dun grub's (1391–1475) plan to establish a dGa' ldan institution less than a day's walk away from his own seat. But until new sources prove otherwise, there is no reason to accept bSod nams grags pa's remarks. Like the lords of rGyal rtse, the Rin spungs pa lords in the 1420s through 1440s were trying to be even-handed in religious patronage.¹⁵⁸

It is difficult to say whether high sectarian tensions actually arose between bKra shis lhun po and Ngor during the time of their first few abbots. If they did, they eased over time. From the seventeenth century onwards, we find regular references to visits paid by Ngor lamas to bKra shis lhun po, as would be expected during the dGa' ldan pho brang period when bKra shis lhun po dominated much of gTsang politically. For instance, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs made various offerings at bKra shis lhun po and paid a visit to the Second Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang ye shes (1663–1737).¹⁵⁹ From the eighteenth century onwards, Ngor abbots made stops at bKra shis lhun po when travelling, paying their

ba'i bla mar khur te/ mnga' zhabs kyi chos sde rnam spyir sa skya pa dang dgos ngor pa yin na min na byed du bcug ste/ dge ldan pa la sdang zur re tsam yang ston/ de rjes dpon bkra shis mgon gyi ring yang chos lugs sngar bzhin la dge las stobs che/ For the translation of this passage, see TUCCI 1971: 170. On this passage, see also VITALI 1996: 499, n. 843 and 509, n. 862.

¹⁵³ According to VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 260, n. 19, sDe gzhung Rin po che Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma (1906–1987), “is also inclined to hold this allegation as a fabrication on Bsod-nams grags-pa's part.” Cf. SHEN 2002: 107–108 and 207–208, n. 289, who perceives bSod nams grags pa's account as accurate. For further critique of bSod nams grags pa by the Fifth Dalai Lama, see JACKSON 2007: 351–352, n. 20 and VAN DER KUIJP 2013a: 138–145. On distorted accounts by later dGe lugs pas on the dispute between mKhas grub rJe and Rong ston Shes bya kun rig, see JACKSON 2007: 354, n. 32.

¹⁵⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 535.3–5). The Rin spungs pa were important patrons of the Sa skya school in gTsang. Under their patronage, many Sa skya monasteries were established, including Rong Byams chen Chos sde (1427), 'Bras yul sKyed mos tshal (1448), Zi lung at Pan Khyung tshang (1452), which Shākya mchog ldan transformed into gSer mdog can in 1471, rTa nag gSer gling (1467), and rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal (1473).

¹⁵⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 545.1–6).

¹⁵⁶ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 608.2–4). Cf. the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 218.2–4), which states that Ngor chen travelled to sNubs Chos lung. But this does not contradict the former statement, because that monastery of the Chos lung tshogs pa was located in the Rong valley forming part of the domain of the Rin spungs pa lords.

¹⁵⁷ On Ngor chen's third Glo bo sojourn, see Part Four, 6.6.

¹⁵⁸ See JACKSON 2007: 352 and 354–355. There was, for example, a dGe lugs *grwa tshang* in Byams chen Chos sde in Rong, one of the main Rin spungs pa monasteries; see the *Baiḍūrya ser po* (pp. 230, no. 14, and 401.5–15).

¹⁵⁹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 238.1–2).

respects to the Paṅ chen Bla mas and visiting the monastery's numerous temples.¹⁶⁰ A religious service is mentioned that was held at bKra shis lhun po after the passing of Byams pa bSod nams bzang po (1689–1749), the thirtieth abbot of Ngor.¹⁶¹ When 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892) stayed for the first time at Ngor during the early 1840s, it was the Fourth Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang dpal ldan bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853) who honoured him with the name Great Scholar of Thar rtse (*thar rtse ma hā paṅdi ta*). mKhyen brtse'i dbang po had previously been recognised as one of the first *sprul skus* of the Ngor tradition—namely that of Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med (1765–1820), the forty-fourth abbot of Ngor—, chosen as a “candidate to the abbacy” of the Thar rtse bla brang (*thar rtse zhabs drung*), and in 1851 even considered for the abbacy, but rejected that owing to his lack of sufficient wealth.¹⁶²

More than three hundred years after the founding of bKra shis lhun po, the fairly sectarian dGe lugs scholar Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1732–1802) looks back on those developments from a different point of view, thereby revealing the great significance his school ascribed to the foundation of bKra shis lhun po as a foothold in hostile territory. In his *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*, he relates that dGe' dun grub was offered the abbatial throne of dGa' ldan after the death of Zha lu pa Legs pa rgyal mtshan (1375–1450), the fourth abbot of dGa' ldan (tenure: 1438–1450). However, concerned about the future development of his newly established seat, dGe' dun grub is said to have declined the offer, arguing:¹⁶³

A hostile fort needs to be built on the enemy's land. [I] have the hope that my own [monastery] will also develop here just about [the same as] dGa' ldan.” [So] saying, [he] did not go [for the abbatial throne of dGa' ldan].

Thu'u bkwan specified the sectarian reason that allegedly prompted dGe' dun grub to decline that offer:¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 565.4), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 639.1–2), *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 411.5–412.2 and 437.5–6), *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 89.4–5 and 110.3–6), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 459.4–460.2, 504.2–4, 609.2–3, 640.3, and 665.2–3), and *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 169.4, 228.5–6 and 251.2–5).

¹⁶¹ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 538.2–3).

¹⁶² See the *mKhyen brtse'i dbang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 29.3–30.6 and 116.1–4), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 583.5–585.6), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (p. 285.5–6), and JACKSON 2001: 103, n. 21. While at Ngor, mKhyen brtse'i dbang po was involved in establishing (in the Thar rtse bla brang) a school (*bslab gra* [= *grwa*?]) for the study of the secular fields of knowledge; see the *mKhyen brtse'i dbang po'i rnam thar* (p. 116.1–2) and *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 138.10–139.9). On the later foundation of a scholastic seminary (*bshad grwa*), see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 139.9–149.3) and JACKSON 2001: 101–102. During his first sojourn at Ngor, mKhyen brtse'i dbang po stayed until 1843. He returned in 1848 and remained until 1851; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 271.1–5, 272.6–273.1, and 273.4–274.5).

¹⁶³ *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (pp. 354.6–355.1): *dgra mkhar dgra'i lung par rgyag dgos pa yin| nged rang gi 'dir yang dga' ldan tsam zhig 'ong ba'i re ba yod gsungs nas ma phebs|*. For the translation of this passage, see also THUKEN LOSANG CHÖKYI NYIMA 2009: 280 and SHEN 2002: 223, n. 341. Cf. the *Lam rim bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* (vol. 2, p. 634.5–6), where dGe' dun grub's rejection of the dGa' ldan abbacy is not phrased in such a harsh tone: (...) *bdag dge ldan gyi gdan sa byed du mi 'grol de'i rgyu mtshan yang dgon pa 'di yang btab ma thag tu song bas rgyun brtan pa cig ma byung dogs shing| khyad par snang byas pa thams cad kyang bstan pa spyi sgos 'ba' zhig la bsams da dung yang rje btsun tsong kha pa chen po'i bstan pa 'ba' zhig la bsams te 'di khar sdod pa yin|*. Cf. also the *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (pp. 790.23–791.2): *zhal nas| nga nyid la 'di bas re che ba cig yod pa yin| nga 'di kha ru dga' ldan tsam zhig e yong lta ba yin| zhes gsungs pa gda'|*. On both passages, see also SHEN 2002: 223 and 223–224, n. 341.

¹⁶⁴ *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 355.1–2): *de dus chos sde 'di'i nye 'khor na ngor pa dang go shāk sogs rje'i ring lugs la log par lta ba mang bas de skad gsungs par snang la| phyis su bkra shis lhun po rim gyis dar rgyas su song ba'i gzi brjid kyis| ngor dang| rta nag thub bstan dang| gser mdog can sogs nyi ma'i drung du me khyer bzhi'n snang mi rung gi*

It appears that [dGe 'dun grub] spoke like that because in the vicinity of this monastery [i.e., bKra shis lhun po] were many at that time with wrong views about the doctrine of the Lord [Tsong kha pa], such as Ngor pa, Go [rams pa], and Shāk[ya mchog ldan]. But later on, by the splendour of bKra shis lhun po, which had gradually unfolded, [Sa skya monasteries] such as [the seats of those aforementioned masters of] Ngor, rTa nag Thub bstan [rnam rgyal], and gSer mdog can were characterised by [their] invisibility like fire flies in front of the sun.

A similar statement is contained in another eighteenth-century source, namely the compilation of the lives of *Lam rim* masters by Yong 'dzin Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1713–1793), though it is given within in a slightly different context: dGe 'dun grub is said to have declined the throne of dGa' ldan for a second time after the passing away of Chos rje Blo gros chos skyong (1389–1463), the fifth abbot of dGa' ldan (tenure: 1450–1463):¹⁶⁵

Because a hostile fort needs to be built on the enemy's land, just at this [monastery] here, I am upholding the teachings of the Lord [Tsong kha pa].

Those accounts suggest that some dGa' ldan enthusiasts considered Ngor chen and his monastic foundation to be one of the major obstacles to their expansionist ambitions in gTsang. By the time of the foundation of bKra shis lhun po, Ngor chen was surely a towering figure on the religious scene of gTsang and formed a counterweight to the dGa' ldan movement. Similar to Tsong kha pa, he can be considered a reformer in his own right, who not only tried to renew the Sa skya school from within but also, as Leonard van der Kuijp has put it, “sought to weed out a number of Tibetan opinions which he considered to be non-supportable.”¹⁶⁶

Ngor chen's efforts are best illustrated by two visions he had that reveal at the same time how his undertaking was assessed by his own tradition. When he was teaching the *Lam 'bras* at Ri bo sgang, one night in a dream, he saw three extremely beautiful statues of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po and his two sons, bSod nam rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan, all of which had a luminous nature, and one statue of Sa skya Paṇḍita, which, by comparison, appeared slightly lacklustre. This vision was interpreted as a sign that Ngor chen had succeeded in “cleansing” (*byi dor*) the teachings of Sa chen and his two sons,

mtshan nyid can du gyur tol. For the translation of this passage, see also THUKEN LOSANG CHÖKYI NYIMA 2009: 280 and SHEN 2002: 223, n. 341. The passage was also discussed in polemics exchanged between the dGe lugs master mDo smad pa Yon tan rgya mtsho and the Sa skya master gDong thog Rin po che; see the *Dus kyi sbrang char* (pp. 130.5–131.5), *Dus kyi me lce* (pp. 40.15–43.8), and *Lung rigs thog mda'* (pp. 13.16–18.11). gDong thog Rin po che also discussed a second passage from Thu'u bkwan's *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*, in which the latter belittles the Sa skya pa's influence in Eastern Tibet; see the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 214.3–4), *Dus kyi sbrang char* (pp. 128.18–130.5), and *Dus kyi me lce* (pp. 36.16–40.14). For the response to that criticism by Yon tan rgya mtsho, see the *Kun khyab 'brug sgra* (pp. 40.4–41.10) and *Lung rigs thog mda'* (pp. 11.16–13.15). Moreover, such debates as that between mKhas grub rje and Rong ston and that between mKhas grub rje and Ngor chen are also discussed; see the *Dus kyi me lce* (pp. 43.18–52.12) and *Lung rigs thog mda'* (pp. 18.14–22.8). The fact that those tensions were remembered for a long time, even until the twentieth century, can be learned from an account by dGe 'dun chos 'phel (1903–1951). While visiting Ngor in the 1930s, he remarks that some Ngor monks were disparaging Tsong kha pa; see the *gSer gyi thang ma* (pp. 30.20–31.5): *grwa pa yon tan can 'ga' zhig rje btsun tsong kha pa chen po la lam dman par zhugs pa zhes mi 'os pa'i ngan smras cher byed* | *rigs pa'i rgyu mtshan ci smras kyang phan par mi 'dug* | *der ngas 'o na rgyal ba rin po che yang lam ngan du zhugs par thal* | *de tsong kha pa'i rjes su 'brangs pa'i phyir smras pas khong tsho'i kha rbad kyis chod* | *deng sang gi rigs pa'i gsang tshig chen po zhig de nas gol*.

¹⁶⁵ *Lam rim bla ma bryud pa'i rnam thar* (vol. 1, p. 926.2): (...) *kho bo dgra yul du dgra mkhar brtsig [= rtsig?] dgos pa yod pas 'di kha rang du rje'i bstan pa 'dzin pa yin*!. For the entire passage, see the *Lam rim bla ma bryud pa'i rnam thar* (vol. 1, pp. 925.6–926.6) and SHEN 2002: 223–224, n. 341.

¹⁶⁶ VAN DER KUIJP 1987a: 176, n. 2.

which was surely one objective of his literary activities.¹⁶⁷ Through investigating the writings of the Sa skya tradition's founding fathers in the old libraries of Sa skya, he had familiarised himself for a long time with the viewpoints of his tradition. Drawing on that knowledge, he now aimed at eliminating what he considered to be false interpretations and, in so doing, tried to restore what he perceived as the "original" Sa skya teachings.¹⁶⁸ After the foundation of Ngor in 1429, he experienced a similar dream when thinking about setting up an assembly hall (*'du khang*), but now with the difference that the statue of Sa skya Paṇḍita also appeared as luminous as the other three. This vision was taken as a sign that Ngor chen would be of great benefit for the Buddha's teachings, in general, and for the Sa skya's, in particular.¹⁶⁹ This vision seems to imply that with the foundation of Ngor, which will be discussed in the next chapter, Ngor chen had successfully completed his efforts at restoring the "original" Sa skya teachings.

A similar statement is made by Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475) in his continuation of Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* history:¹⁷⁰

In particular, at the time when the precious teachings of the glorious Sa skya pa were drowned in the swamp of superimposition and depreciation by ourselves and others, and were thus unclear, this Great Being [i.e., Ngor chen], showering down a heavy rain of textual authority and reasoning (...), performed the clean-up of washing off all filth of misconceptions.

It should be emphasised that Shes rab bzang po mentions the distortion of the Sa skya teachings by both internal and external forces. This brings us back to Ngor chen's role in counterbalancing the dGa' ldan movement. That he was allotted such a role even by his own Sa skya school is evident from Mus chen's biography of Go rams pa. At one point, Go rams pa presents in direct speech a long remark Mus chen is said to have made about the reason why he felt deeply grateful towards Ngor chen. Simply put, his line of argumentation was: Though in Tibet there existed a variety of tantric teaching systems, Tsong kha pa established a new separate tantric system that stood in contradiction to the old ones. Nevertheless, Tsong kha pa succeeded in gaining a large following in dBus and gTsang. Ngor chen then investigated the key points of the old and new systems and performed many refutations and proofs. In doing so, he re-established the old Sa skya system and made it again possible to follow.¹⁷¹ We could thus assume that the

¹⁶⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 520.5–521.1). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 453.4–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 516.5–6).

¹⁶⁸ See also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 7 (p. 153.7–14): *de yang kha ba can gyi ljongs 'dir sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la log par smra ba mang du byung yang dpal ldan sa skya paṇḍi ta chen po byon tej bstan pa'i dri ma shas cher bsal ba'i tshul yan chad ni sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye bar gsal zhingl de nas kyang phyis byon pa'i skyes bu dam pa gzhan dang gzhan gyis kyang cung zad gsal bar byas sojl dus phyis rigs drug gi bdag nyid rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po zhes bya ba 'phags yul gyi paṇḍi ta bcu gnyis tsam gyi sku'i skye ba dran pa de nyid kyis spyir sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa mtha' dag dangl khyad par rje btsun sa skya pa gong ma rnams kyi lta grub phyin ci ma log pa dar rgyas su mdzad cing rgyal ba'i gsung rab rnams nam lang pa la nyi ma shar ba ltar mdzad pa'i rjes su (...).*

¹⁶⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 528.2–4).

¹⁷⁰ *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 496.4–6): *khyad par du dpal ldan sa skya pa'i bstan pa rin po che rang gzhan gyis sgro 'dogs dang skur 'debs kyi 'dam du bying ste mi gsal ba'i skabs su| bdag nyid chen po 'dis rang gzhan gyi grub mtha' rgya mtsho'i pha rol tu son pa'i lung rigs kyi char chen phab nas| log rtog gi dri ma thams cad 'khrud pa'i byi dor byas tej.*

¹⁷¹ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 625.2–5): *nged la bla ma du ma yod pa'i nang nas chos rje rin po che kun dga' bzang po pa de shin tu sku drin che ba cig byungl de'i rgyu mtshan bod du rdo rje theg pa'i lam srol la bla ma gong ma nas brgyud pa'i lam srol 'di dangl mar pa nas brgyud pa'i rngog gzhang gi bka' sroll shangs pa nas brgyud pa'i ni gu sogs kyi bka' srol dangl bu ston rin po che nas brgyud pa'i yo ga'i bka' srol sogs mang du yod kyangl dus phyis chos rje ri bo dge ldan pas| gsang sngags kyi bka' srol la grub mtha' bsam pa rkang btsugs nas bshad nyan gyis gtan la phabs par mdzadl de sngar gyi bka' srol de dag gang dang yang mi mthun pa 'dug kyangl dbus gtsang gi dge ba'i bshes gnyen phal*

aforementioned portrayals of Ngor chen as a sectarian figure from the pens of highly partisan dGe lugs historians were simply aimed at discrediting him by any means—fair or foul—because they feared him and his influential tradition as one of their main rivals in gTsang.

cher de la dad pa cig byung| de la chos rje rin po ches grub mtha' snga phyi'i gnad gzigs nas dgag sgrub mang du mdzad| bla ma gong ma'i bka' srol gyi rkang btsugs te de'i rjes su zhugs pas chog pa cig byung pa yin|. See also the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 28.3–6): *nga la bla ma du ma yod pa'i nang nas chos rje rin po che kun dga' bzang po pa 'di sku drin shin tu che ba zhig byung| de'i rgyu mtshan spyir bod du rdo rje theg pa'i bka' srol la sa skya pa'i bla ma gong ma nas brgyud pa dang| mar pa nas brgyud pa'i rngog gzhung pa'i bka' srol dang| bu ston rin po che nas brgyud pa dang| shangs pa nas brgyud pa'i ni gu'i bka' srol sogs mang du byung kyang| dus phyis de dag gang yang mi mthun pa'i rdo rje theg pa'i bka' srol gsar btsugs byung ba skye bo phal cher kyang de lta bu la dad pa mang| de la chos rje rin po che'i zhal snga nas grub mtha' snga phyi'i gnad gzigs| bla ma gong ma'i bka' srol la bzung nas nyams len rnam dag yin min so sor phye ba 'di'i rjes su zhugs pas chog par byung|*.

Chapter Five

Foundation of Ngor E waṃ chos ldan Monastery

Withdrawing from both the worldly distractions of the bustling town of Sa skya and from sectarian conflicts, in 1429 at Tibetan age forty-eight, Ngor chen founded the monastic retreat of E waṃ chos ldan in the remote Ngor valley, located about 30 km southwest of bSam 'grub rtse (present-day gZhis ka rtse). Though Ngor chen founded many other monastic institutions, he clearly envisioned Ngor as his own new seat, where he hoped to go back to traditional Sa skya teaching and practice in a more supportive environment. In the following pages, I would like to focus on the foundation account of Ngor Monastery as found in Ngor chen's biographies. As the presentation by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs is much more detailed than that by Mus chen, I will first present the former in translation and then discuss it.¹⁷²

5.1 Translation of the Foundation Account

Up to that point, [Ngor chen] performed in that way inconceivably [great] activities for the benefit of others in the vicinity of the Monastic Seat [i.e., Sa skya]. Nevertheless, though [his] altruistic activities at the Monastic Seat were inconceivably [great], the extremely [numerous] distractions and festivities [existing] at the Monastic Seat exerted a negative influence on the studies of the monks, resources were wasted, and a few monks unable to overcome those temptations (lit. "with small antidotes") were even spoiled. Thus [Ngor chen] thought that [it] would be of greater benefit for the teachings [of the Buddha] and for monks if teaching and studying were exerted while living at a remote place devoid of women selling alcohol.

Based on a previous statement of Chos rje dPal ldan tshul khrims, who had said "We [all should] become *dge bshes* that live in rock caves,"¹⁷³ [Ngor chen] considered Na bza' brag phug and also many solitary places, such as bSam gling, and presented offering *gtor mas* to Pañjaranātha, entreating [him for guidance]. As a result, without obtaining a prediction for any of those [sites], the mountain retreat of E waṃ chos ldan itself, which [he] had not taken into consideration, appeared clearly in luminosity, though it was not quite evident that the sacred site was here [at Ngor].

Then, one night in a dream, it was said: "Your monastery will be shown by Don grub." There was someone called Nyag re dGe bshes Don grub with whom [Ngor chen] happened to have a conversation later on. He had stayed at Chu mig and went up the Ngor [valley] to collect fire wood, thereby seeing the site of [the future retreat of] E waṃ chos ldan. After he had arrived at Sa skya, [he] appeared in front of the Lord [Ngor chen] and happened [to relate] such stories as how he went for fire wood. Thus [Ngor chen] realised

¹⁷² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 458.2–459.6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 524.1–528.6), respectively. For the Tibetan text, see Appendix Two, 1.1. For the location of Ngor Monastery and the layout of the upper Ngor valley, see pls. 16 and 17. For images of Ngor Monastery, both before its destruction and after its rebuilding, see pls. 18–27.

¹⁷³ This statement was originally given within the context of Ngor chen's studies under dPal ldan tshul khrims. Having bestowed teachings on the three Cakrasaṃvara traditions of Lūhipāda, Kṛṣṇacārin, and Ghaṅṭāpāda, dPal ldan tshul khrims delightedly witnessed the progress Ngor chen had made, saying (*Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2*, p. 496.5): *slob dpon nyid dge bshes dga' mo cig byung 'dug nan tar bzangl' u cag brag phug pa'i dge bshes cig byed pa yin no* (...). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 445.3).

that [it] was that site that had appeared in the previous prophecy and sent the two attendants bKra shis rgyal mtshan and Nyi ma rgyal mtshan to look [for it]. [Approaching the site from the lower part of the Ngor valley, the two attendants only] saw the sunlit and shaded sides of the mountains below [the area of] Wa rong and thus reported that [the site] existed like this. On that account, [Ngor chen] said: "Still, [that] is not quite [the right place]." [During] the winter of the monkey year [i.e., 1428], [he] sent mKhan chen Shākya bzang po, the master, [and] a few disciples on an inspection tour. [Approaching the Ngor valley from a pass above the future site of the monastery, they] saw all the sunlit and shaded sides of the mountains below the crest of the pass. Between the present lDan ma communal house and the pond, there [they] piled up barley grain to a throne for the *dharmapālas* and travelled up [to Sa skya], reporting the series of events.¹⁷⁴ On that account, [Ngor chen] remarked: "Exactly that seems to be [the site]." As [it] existed in accord with how [Ngor chen] had given instructions, and though it was winter at that time, [the group of mKhan chen Shākya bzang po] had even seen a fresh flower growing, [Ngor chen] said: "[This] has been an excellent auspicious connection." Subsequently, in the summer of the female earth-bird year [i.e., 1429], [Ngor chen] travelled to the [future] mountain hermitage of E waṃ chos ldan. At the spot where the flower had grown, [he] founded a *bla brang*.

In addition, this monastic site [features] favourable conditions [according to the system] of geomantic calculations: [it displays] the Eight Auspicious Symbols; [its ground along with the surrounding mountains resembles] an eight-petaled lotus flower;¹⁷⁵ the [sky's] shape of a wheel is complete because the "gateways of the sky" and a "lengthwise sky" are not prominent;¹⁷⁶ [it has] many *siddhi*[-bestowing] springs; [it features] many mountains and rocks that are endowed with images of wealth[-bestowing] deities and *dharmapālas*; the main site is triangular shaped; all of the *siddhi*[-bestowing] material substances are complete; [the site] is not different from the sacred land of Oḍḍiyāna; and [it] is powerful and sacred. Due to the fact that the shape of the ground [on which the monastery is founded] resembles the form of the auspicious conch shell [coiling to the right, it] is said that the great fame [of Ngor] is contained in the conch shell [-like shaped ground]. (...) ¹⁷⁷ [It] is a very sacred site of natural spontaneous existence. [It] is a sacred site prophesied by *yi dams* and *dākinīs* such as Uṣṇīṣavijayā and Pañjaranātha.

To explain further: When the Lord [along with] masters and disciples travelled to this site, [they] went on an inspection tour [of] the main part of the site. [They reached a pond below, and Ngor chen] while looking [around] instructed dGe bshes Don grub: "Blow the conch shell!" As [he] blew [it], a very pleasant [sound was produced] and it seemed that everyone was warmed to the cockles of [their] hearts. Because of that, the name of the place became known as Bla rdzing ("Life Essence Pond"), and [there] is also

¹⁷⁴ The pond, which still exists today, and the lDan ma khang tshan were both situated at the upper left side of the monastic complex. On the area of Wa rong, see pls. 17 (D) and 40.

¹⁷⁵ The lotus flower symbolises the flat area in the centre, and the eight petals the mountains surrounding that area. This pattern is quite commonly associated with sacred places. For instance, the lHa sa valley with its surrounding mountains is said to resemble this outline as well.

¹⁷⁶ Both terms, "gateways of the sky" (*gnam sgo*) and "lengthwise sky" (*gnam gzhung*), refer to the position of the mountains in relation to the sky. If one looks at the sky, their position should permit an unobstructed view revealing a circular shaped sky. Individual mountains, which are the gateways to the sky (*gnam sgo*), could obstruct such a view. In the same way would a long stretched valley with mountains to the left and right only reveal the sight of a "lengthwise sky" (*gnam gzhung*).

¹⁷⁷ As a longer gloss, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs included here a passage that seems to originate from a text on geomantic calculations (*sa dpyad*); see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 525.5–526.1).

a stone on which a name inscription of the Lord was carved. [Ngor chen] looked back and forth [and] up and down from that place where at present the main temple is located, and by pointing towards the site where the Thog ka ba'i spyi khang {nowadays called gZims khang 'og} is situated, [he] said: "Nearby this [spot] should be a spring, but [it] appears not to be there. Apart from that, this exactly seems to be [the prophesied site]. At that [spot], [he] offered *gtor mas* to the *dharmapālas* and local place-owning deities. [It] is said that five crows appeared for taking the *gtor mas*. [Ngor chen and his entourage] went to the site where some time ago mKhan po [Shākya bzang po] had piled up the barley grain. [It] is said that there were three excellent stalks of barley.

As this site was extremely powerful and sacred, the construction workers departed from Sa skya on the twelfth day of the twelfth month of the bird year [i.e., January 1430]. [They] reached Ngor on the eighteenth [day]. The constellation of the stars was auspicious on the seventh day of the third month and thus the construction work [began by] laying the foundation of the gZims khang ka drug ma. On the second day of the fifth month, a thunderstorm descended on the monastery. A person being able to sense deities and ghosts perceived (lit. "dreamed") in [his] visual perception that a large, black A tsa ra was protecting [the monastery]. It became well-known to say: "The building would have had to collapse [if it had not been protected by the A tsa ra]." Also, the Dharma Lord [i.e., Ngor chen], who stayed at gTing khebs [at that time], recounted: "[I] experienced signs of that [event]. (...)"¹⁷⁸

At the summer teaching session, [Ngor chen] bestowed on an assembly of about three hundred monks the *Lam 'bras*. Thus also the teaching of the *Lam 'bras* to an assembly has begun from then on. Having witnessed [how the gathering of monks] engaged in meditation, performed the daily Hevajra method for accomplishment, and engaged [in these spiritual practices] over and over again, the Dharma Lord himself was delighted.

[Ngor chen] established [his] hermitage at that excellent site described above, and the name of the monastery [was given as follows]: After [Ngor chen] had come back from sTod [i.e., Western Tibet, including Glo bo], [he] announced [on] the next morning when [he] led a renewal and purification ritual: "Last night, [I] dreamed that explanations were given such as 'From the two syllables *e* and *waṃ* appears the *dharmaskandha*.' Thus [I] will name this monastery of mine E waṃ chos ldan." [He] performed with great delight [its] consecration and led the rainy season retreat. At the summer teaching session, [he] taught the 'Dul ba'i bslab bya, *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, *Lam 'bras*, and other [teachings].

Though bDag chen Chu mig pa [Grags pa blo gros] had offered the entire land to [Ngor chen's] free disposal, [the latter] went to Chu mig and requested an official certificate. As an equivalent of the land, [he] offered such [valuables] as a crystal bowl.

[Ngor chen] set up excellent disciplinary regulations: Within the monastery, there was no place where meat and alcohol were distributed or women could go; all the monks residing there [had to] abide in pure discipline; and whatever [kind of] hostilities, disputes, and the like existed at other places, E waṃ chos ldan was no place to nourish hatred and engage in disputes and so on.

At one day during that time, [Ngor chen] looked at the [site of] the Rong po spyi khang 'og ma [i.e., the lower Rong po communal house] and said: "On a field over there, Sa skya's

¹⁷⁸ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs included here short episodes from Ngor chen's life that illustrate how Ngor Monastery was overseen by the protective deities of the Sa skya school; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 526.6–527.3).

two monastic dance images of Pañjaraṇātha [and] consort had been sitting. [This] must be a sign that a building will come up over there. [It] is necessary to have a protector's chapel." It appears that [the dance images] were previously seen [by Ngor chen] when the mountain hermitage [of Ngor] had appeared in [his] visionary prophecy.

Later on, while thinking to build an assembly hall, [Ngor chen] said: "One night, [I] dreamed that [I] saw at the walled enclosure of the great assembly hall that [I] intended to build the statues of the trinity of Bla ma Sa chen, the father, and [his two] sons similar [in appearance] as before and also the statue of the Dharma Lord Sa paṅ being luminous with boundless splendour like those [other statues]."¹⁷⁹ Those are said to be signs [that Ngor chen] would be of great benefit for and bring to a large extent the flourishing and spread of the Buddha's teachings, in general, and of the Sa skya pa's teachings, in particular.

The catalogue of [Ngor chen's art commissions], such as the wall paintings of the main temple, will be presented below.

Since [he] had taught the *Lam 'bras* at the summer teaching session, [Ngor chen] mainly turned the Dharma Wheel of the four Tantra classes [of] the Secret Mantra, the Vajrayāna. After [he] had come to this hermitage, *kalyānamitras* seeking the Vajrayāna arrived from all directions at indefinite times and occasions, and thus [he] also continuously gave [teachings]—such as empowerments and blessings [and] *tantras* and esoteric instructions—at indefinite times and in indefinite order by complying with the interests of [his] students. {As for the tantric commitments of the Secret Mantra, there exists the story that relates that owing to the power of some favourable conditions, such as the Jambhala water offering, a *mantra* seminary will prosper more than a scholastic seminary.}

5.2 Discussion of the Foundation Account

The foundation account given by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs can, roughly speaking, be divided into three parts. First, the reasons that prompted Ngor chen to leave Sa skya and establish his own monastic retreat are presented along with the hopes that he cherished in relation to his undertaking and his search for a suitable site that eventually led him to the valley of Ngor, culminating in the foundation there of a *bla brang*. Second, the auspicious characteristics of the holy site where Ngor chen founded his new monastic seat are enumerated in connection with the Tibetan tradition of geomantic calculations (*sa dpyad*). Third, we are provided with additional historical details regarding the actual order of events in the founding of Ngor, Ngor chen's early teaching activities at Ngor, and the naming of the monastery. In my discussion, I present the first and third parts in more detail.

There were two major reasons that Ngor chen left behind his home monastery, where he had spent most of his life and received much of his religious training. The monastic

¹⁷⁹ Prior to that dream, Ngor chen had had another dream, in which he saw extremely beautiful statues of Sa chen and his two sons of luminous nature. Though he also saw the statue of Sa paṅ, it was, in comparison, rather lacklustre. This vision had been interpreted as a sign that Ngor chen had succeeded in "cleansing" (*byi dor*) the teachings of Sa chen and his two sons. For this passage, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 520.5–521.1). Prior to listing Ngor chen's commissions, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs refers once again to that vision of Ngor chen while building the assembly hall. However, in this context, he states that Ngor chen perceived the Five Supreme Masters of Sa skya, which would then also include Chos rgyal 'Phags pa; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 548.1–2).

seat of Sa skya, which had served as the government seat of Tibet during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), had by Ngor chen's time obviously developed into a bustling town, attracting all kinds of people and offering a variety of distractions and entertainment.¹⁸⁰ This atmosphere exerted a negative influence on the education of the monastic community and some monks succumbed to those temptations, losing their vows. The worsening behaviour of some students prompted Ngor chen already by 1425 to write his *Epistle of General Advice for My Own Monks: Bringing Benefit to the Disciples* (*Rang gi grwa pa spyi la gdams pa'i sprin yig slob ma la phan pa*), instructing his monks to abstain from consuming meat and alcohol.¹⁸¹ In addition, as outlined above, the Sa skya school, as prominently represented by Ngor chen, had in recent years become embroiled in a bitter controversy with mKhas grub rJe regarding the authenticity of the Hevajra body *maṇḍala* practices, leading to a self-imposed ban on travel for Sa skya scholars.

In response to those adverse conditions, Ngor chen decided to set up his own monastic retreat away from Sa skya and its alcohol-selling women. He intentionally sought an isolated place where monks could pursue studies in a supportive environment free from worldly distractions and sectarian conflicts. To counter those developments at Sa skya, he instituted a set of strict monastic rules, prohibiting the consumption of meat and alcohol, banning women from entering the monastic complex, and forbidding his monks to engage in any form of sectarian debates. Similarly, in the territories of his patrons, Ngor chen is said to have put restrictions on hunting wild animals and fishing, stopping meat and blood sacrifices, and also banning meat and alcohol from monastic institutions.¹⁸² The proscription of meat was mainly motivated by his strong conviction that its consumption was inappropriate for Buddhist monks. He himself had become a vegetarian at an early age and strongly argued against its consumption.¹⁸³ It is thus justified to speak of Ngor, at least initially, as a vegetarian monastery.

Two accounts suggest that the ban on meat was observed and that vegetarianism was a customary practice of the early Ngor pas. The first account is found in the biography of dPal ldan rdo rje (1411–1482), the fifth abbot of Ngor. Like Ngor chen, he observed the ascetic discipline (*brtul zhugs*) of the single mat in its even stricter vegetarian form (*stan/gdan gcig rdor/sdor dkar* or *rdor/sdor dkar stan/gdan gcig*). While he had already observed this discipline during his sutric studies at bZang ldan and Ngam ring as well as his tantric training at Sa skya, his biographer informs us that it goes without saying that

¹⁸⁰ In his 1475 study of Sa skya Monastery, gTsang Byams pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan lists not only religious structures of Sa skya but among the common ones of everyday life he also lists two taverns (*chang rwa*); see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 72a5 and 73a4). In the secret biography of mKhas grub rje, Se ra rJe btsun pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan lets his subject draw an unfavourable picture of Sa skya Monastery when discussing the debate with Ngor chen. When Vajrapañjara appeared to mKhas grub rje asking him to remain at Sa skya, the latter refused that request, stating among others that he did not dare to remain in a place whose temples were filled with women, donkeys, oxen, and barmaids; see the *mKhas grub rje'i gsang rnam* 1 (fols. 25b5–26a5).

¹⁸¹ On this work, see CATALOGUE (no. 155). The fact that this was an important work both taught and studied by Ngor chen's followers is confirmed by it being mentioned in biographies of Sa skya masters; see, for instance, the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 180.6–181.1), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 319.6–321.1), *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 9a.3–6), *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 157.2–158.4), and *Sangs rgya rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 162.3–163.5). For other works on abstaining from meat by Zhabs dkar Tshogs drug rang grol (1781–1851), see Shabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol, *Food of Bodhisattvas: Buddhist Teachings on Abstaining from Meat*, Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group, New Delhi: Shechen Publications, 2008.

¹⁸² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 541.6–542.1). For a letter that Ngor chen sent to the Jumla king Bālirāja (r. 1404–1445) advising him to abandon in his domain the practice of sacrificing animals, see CATALOGUE (no. 174).

¹⁸³ On Ngor chen becoming a vegetarian, see Part Three, 5.3.

he also did so when he came to Ngor to pursue his training under Ngor chen. This narrative takes for granted that its readers are familiar with both Ngor chen's observance of a vegetarian single mat practice and the strict monastic code that he had established at Ngor.¹⁸⁴ The second account is found in two biographies: first in that of Glo bo mkhan chen bSod nams lhun grub by Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566) and second in that of Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1542–1618) by A mes zhabs. Both present the same account as rendering a conversation (*gsung 'phros*) in which the speaker emphasises the importance of giving up the consumption of both meat and alcohol as a highly important practice for an adherent of Ngor chen's tradition:¹⁸⁵

(...) At the time when the Dharma Lord, the Great Vajradhara, travelled to dBus, [he] saw that all the great *kalyānamitras* of dBus were shamelessly enjoying all kinds of meat and thus [he] felt extremely sad. [He] then collected from the Sūtra section authoritative works that point out the faults of [consuming] meat and alcohol and later on arranged them as a treatise. [His] composition is the *Slob springs*.¹⁸⁶ We Ngor pa followers should rely on the conscientious armour that does not transgress the prescribed rules taught in the *Slob springs*. The Lord, the Great Vajradhara, had never placed meat [or] alcohol on [his] tongue and had never touched women with [his] bare hands. Having investigated the activities of how [he] set an example of the [Buddha's] teachings, [we] must live up to [his] intentions, at least to a portion of those [activities], because at the very end of the *Slob springs* [he states]: “Hey! If [you] like to be followers of mine, give up the

¹⁸⁴ See the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i nram thar* (p. 596.5–6).

¹⁸⁵ *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi nram thar 2* (pp. 319.6–321.1): yang skabs shig gi gsung 'phros la| chos rje sa skya pa| chen gyis|| so sor thar pa 'dul ba bzhi|| byang sems sdom pa mdo sde bzhi|| gsang sngags rgyud sde bzhi du zhes pa'i tshig 'di ding sang 'chad pa po kun gyis kha ton du byed pa zhig yod del 'di'i don phyag bzhes la thebs nges pa| chos rje rdo rje' chang chen po yab sras rnam yin| chos rje rdo rje 'chang chen po dbus la phebs pa'i skabs su| dbus kyi dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po kun kyang sha sna tshogs la 'dzem bag med par longs spyod pa gzigs pas thugs lhag par byung ste| sha chang gi nyes dmigs ston pa'i mdo sde las lung bsdu su gnang ba| phyis bstan bcos su bsgrigs pa'i thugs rtsom mdzad pa slob spring 'di yin| jung [= rang] re ngor pa'i rjes 'jug rnam kyis slob springs nas bshad pa'i bcas mtshams rnam las mi 'da' ba'i bag yod kyi go cha re bsten dgos| rje rdo rje 'chang chen pos ljags thog tu sha chang 'jog ma myong ba dang| phyag rjen pas bud med la reg ma myong ba sogs bstan pa'i mig rkyen ji ltar bzhes [= bzhed] pa'i nram thar rnam la gzhig pa bcug nas| de'i phyogs tsam re'i dgongs pa bsab dgos pa yin te| slob springs kyi mjug rang na| ka [=kwa] ye kho bo'i rjes su slob 'dod na|| chang [= sha chang] la sogs ma dag 'tsho ba spongs|| rmad byung yon tan kun gyi gzhi gcig poll| tshul khirms rin chen srog las gces par zung|| zhes sogs bstan pa'i babs dang bstun pa'i lam rim tshigs bcad du bsgrigs pa 'di tсам re blo la yod na yang don chen por 'gyur ba yin|| so so [= sor] thar pa'i bslab pa'i rtsa ba chang dang| byang chub sems dpa'i bslab pa'i rtsa ba sha yin pas| sha chang gnyis spong ba'i phyag len 'di sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa rmangs [= rmang] nas slong ba'i mig rkyen rab cig yin| chos rje pañdi ta chen pos| rdo rje 'chang la bstod pa mdzad pa'i nang na yang| khyed la bsten nas log 'tsho spangs pa yill| legs byas phra mor gyur pa gang lags pa|| mgon gzhan bska| brgyar bsten yang ma mchis na|| de slad gdung ba'i spu long lhag par g.yo|| zhes pa 'dis kyang shes par nus shing| mdo na sha chang spong ba 'di rang re ngor pa'i phyag bzhes cig yin pas ci nas kyang nan tan du bya dgos pa yin no|| zhes <gsung zhing> [= gsungs shing]. For this passage as used by A mes zhabs with a few additions and omissions as well as different spellings, see the *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi nram thar 1* (pp. 157.2–158.4) and *Sangs rgya rgyal mtshan gyi nram thar 2* (pp. 162.3–163.5). The emendations made in the preceding passage are based on a comparison of the different versions of that account. For the original quotation from Ngor chen's work, cf. the *sPring yig slob ma la phan pa* (p. 658.1): kwa ye kho bo'i rjes su slob pa rnam|| sha chang la sogs ma dag 'tsho ba spangs|| rmad byung yon tan kun gyi gzhi gcig pull| tshul khirms rin chen srog bas gces par zung||.

¹⁸⁶ As Ngor chen completed compiling the *sPring yig slob ma la phan pa* (p. 660.1–2) on the fifth day of the first half of the first month of 1425 at Sa skya, the dBus sojourn refers to his first visit to that area from 1414 to 1417. Though a different reason is given here for composing the *Spring yig slob ma la phan pa*, I do not think we can rule out the possibility that the overall situation at Sa skya and the behaviour of his own students also played a role in it. This is, at least, suggested by the longer title of that work as found in the incipit and colophon; see the *Spring yig slob ma la phan pa* (pp. 620.1 and 659.6): Rang gi grwa pa spyi la gdams pa slob ma la phan pa and Rang gi grwa pa spyi la gdams pa'i sprin yig slob ma la phan pa.

impure lifestyle of [consuming] meat, alcohol, and the like! Cherish the precious discipline, the sole basis of all marvelous qualities, more than [your] life!” If [one] only keeps this verified Stages of the Path [teaching], which is in accordance with the transmission of the [Buddha’s] doctrine, [it] will be very meaningful. Since the root [transgression] of the *pratimokṣa* training is alcohol and the root [transgression] of the *bodhisattva* training is meat, the practice of renouncing both meat [and] alcohol is the best example to build up the Buddha’s teachings from [their] foundation. (...) In short, this renunciation of meat [and] alcohol is one customary practice of us Ngor pa and must thus in any case be practiced painstakingly. (...)

Moreover, it is also interesting to note that among Ngor chen’s abbatial successors many Ngor abbots are said to have either observed the ascetic discipline of the single mat in its vegetarian form or adhered to a meatless diet (*rdor/sdor dkar*).¹⁸⁷

Ngor chen thus seems to have envisioned his new monastic seat as a place where the strict observance of a pure monastic discipline served as the foundation for the study and spiritual practice of Sa skya’s traditional teachings, which he held in the highest esteem. This has been summarised by David Jackson with these words:¹⁸⁸

Ngorchen’s founding of Ngor in the late 1420s brought closer to fruition his desire to transmit faithfully and purely the rich spiritual legacy of the Sakya founders to his students and later generations. He must have considered it impossible to achieve his project of revitalizing monastic practice at the old seat of Sakya, which as the capital of the previous government had become a veritable town, full of laymen, laywomen, and nuns.

In search of a suitable place for his undertaking, Ngor chen considered a couple of existing Sa skya retreat sites such as Na bza’ brag phug and bSam gling. The former was the famous site where the *Lam ’bras* master Na bza’ Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277–1350) had spent many years in solitary meditation.¹⁸⁹ As suggested by Klu lding mKhan

¹⁸⁷ For instance, see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 182.2–6), *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 241.4–242.2), *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po’i rnam thar* (pp. 716.2–6, 723.4–5, 724.5, and 752.6–753.1), *Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi rang rnam* (p. 850.1–3), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 33.3–4 and 42.3), *dPal ldan rdo rje’i rnam thar* (p. 596.6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 228.1–2), *Shes rab ’byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 817.4), and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 166.3–4 and 192.5–6). In his autobiography (the fourth work mentioned above), Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, who in 1658 briefly acted as the twentieth abbot of Ngor, gives the *dkar rdor* practice as his reason for resigning from the abbacy. One could read into this statement that a vegetarian diet was expected from the incumbent abbot of Ngor. This is confirmed by Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po (1723–1779), the fortieth abbot, who explains that the incumbent abbots had to adhere to a meatless diet (*rdor dkar*); see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po’i rnam thar* (p. 723.4–5). Prior to him, dPal ldan chos skyong (1702–1760), the thirty-fourth abbot, had included a similar remark in his autobiography; see the *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, p. 164.2–3). However, at one point in time, Ngor chen’s prohibition on consuming meat was broken by members of the monastic community. For instance, Rin chen mi ’gyur rgyal mtshan (1717–1780), the thirty-seventh abbot of Ngor, complains about the fact that during his tenure there were only a few people left following Ngor chen’s advice to give up the consumption of both meat and alcohol. On top of that, the use of tobacco had become a huge problem as well; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 583.4–584.4) and *Rin chen mi ’gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 13b5–14a5). According to JACKSON 2001: 93, the tradition existed at Ngor “of sending a monastery-appointed functionary to collect animals from the nomad regions for their flesh.”

¹⁸⁸ JACKSON 2010a: 178.

¹⁸⁹ A short biographical sketch of Na bza’ Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal was authored in 1351 by Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa, who was one of three disciples upon whom Brag phug pa had bestowed the complete *Lam*

chen Rin po che, bSam gling may refer to a site south of Sa skya that appears in Tibetan sources mainly under the homophone name bSam brling.¹⁹⁰ However, both of these places turned out to be unsuitable for Ngor chen's undertaking and, similar to many other important decisions in his life, he was guided by a visionary experience in searching for a proper place. In that vision, he clearly perceived the future site of his new monastic seat and was further directed by a dream to a person called Don grub, who would come to his help in determining its exact location.¹⁹¹

This person turned out to be Nyag re dGe bshes Grub thob Don grub (alias Grub chen dMar ri ba),¹⁹² who had first spotted the site while staying at Chu mig and going up the Ngor valley to collect fire wood. He is recorded among the list of Ngor chen's disciples and introduced as a great *siddha*. After the monastery's foundation, he stayed at Ngor engaging for a long time in meditational practices in the darkroom (*mun khang*) of the Nyag re khang tshan. Afterwards, he proceeded to lHo rong (the "southern gorges"), where his experience and realisation (*nyams rtogs*) are said to have developed further, until he became an accomplished *yogin*. He also acted as the lama of three monasteries—Ri tshogs, Chos sdings, and Nas bam—and, to avoid dissent among their communities, is said to have taken residence at all three of them flying back and forth. At the time of his death, he manifested three bodies, one in each of them.¹⁹³

From Bhutanese sources, we learn that those three Ngor pa monasteries were actually located in present-day Bhutan and were said to have been founded by Nyag re dGe bshes Grub thob Don grub himself. Thus he would have been one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of Ngor chen's disciples who had established a link between Ngor Monastery and Bhutan; a connection that was seemingly continued until the mid-twentieth century. Another master introduced by those sources who is also said to have founded Ngor pa branch monasteries in Bhutan is Phrin las rab yangs, who is most likely the same person as Blo gros rab yangs (alias sKal ldan rab yangs).¹⁹⁴ Among others, Blo gros rab yangs (b.

¹⁹⁰ *'bras*; see the *Lam 'bras* 1 (vol. 1, pp. 367.4–374.5). For an eight-folio *dbu med* manuscript of this biography, see TBRC (W2CZ7927).

¹⁹⁰ Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 March 2009). bSam gling (or brling) was an old hermitage of Sa skya where such masters as sGom pa Kyi 'bar, a disciple of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, had meditated. The site was also the birthplace of Zangs tsha bSod nams rgyal mtshan, the younger brother of Sa skya Paṇḍita and father of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa. Members of the Shar family are said to have taken care of the site. On bSam brling, see the *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 190.7–192.2), *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 92.18–93.10), and *Sa skya'i gnas yig* (p. 100). According to the *gNas mchog sa skya* (p. 190.7), the site is located around one earshot or 2000 cubits (*rgyang grags*) south of the lHa khang chen mo. For its location, see the *Sa skya'i gnas yig* (pp. 121–122, map, no. 23) and SCHOENING 1990: 21, Map 1. *Ibid.*: 18, no. 14 records bSam gling among the twenty-seven temples of Sa skya and Kha'u brag rdzong that were repaired by sNgags 'chang Kun dga' rin chen (1517–1584). Further renovations were executed by Ngag dbang kun dga' bkra shis (1656–1711), the twenty-ninth throneholder, as depicted on a thangka; see PAL 1983: 156–157, P20 and TUCCI 1999: 372–373, no. 32, pls. 54–58. One scene illustrates Ngag dbang kun dga' bkra shis' activities in renovating bSam brling; see PAL 1983: 261, P20, no. 16: *kun bkras nas bsam brling dgon pa nyams gso mdzad tshul*.

¹⁹¹ In a later biographical sketch of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs specifies that it was Uṣṇiṣavijayā who revealed that Don grub would show him the site of his future monastic seat; see the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 342.5). A mes zabs also mentions that the site was prophesied to Ngor chen by Uṣṇiṣavijayā; see the *Dus 'khor chos 'byung* (p. 381.1–3). We have to note, however, that later in his foundation account Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also states that the site was prophesied by *yi dams* and *ḍākīnīs* such as Uṣṇiṣavijayā and Panjaranātha; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 526.1).

¹⁹² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.4).

¹⁹³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.1–4).

¹⁹⁴ The enumeration of the monasteries founded by Grub thob Don grub and Phrin las rab yangs varies, however. According to the *lHo 'brug chos 'byung* (pp. 177.5–178.2) by the Sixty-ninth 'Brug rje mKhan po dGe 'dun rin chen (1926–1997), it was during the eighth sixty-year cycle (1447–1506) that Phrin las rab yangs founded

1460 or 1474) was a disciple of Go rams pa, Kong ston dBang phyug grub pa (b. 1443), and Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453–1524), the eighth abbot of Ngor, and he functioned as the fourth abbot of Go rams pa's monastic foundation of rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal.¹⁹⁵

such Ngor pa branch monasteries as sPyi zhing at Wang yul, Shel dmar at sKyabs khra, and Ne pa at Shel snga and Grub thob Don grub established monasteries such as Ri tshogs and Dol ma can: *de nas rab byung bryyad pa'i skor 'di nang sa skya'i ngor chen kun dga' bzang po'i slob bryud phrin las rab yangs par grags pa'i mkhas mchog de nyid 'gro don ljongs 'dir byon nasl wang yul du spyi zhing dgon dangl skyabs khrar shel dmar dgon dangl shel snga ne pa dgon sogs ngor pa'i dgon lag rnams dangl yang ngor lugs 'dzin pa grub thob nya rong don grub zhes pas dgon yul ri tshogs dgon dangl dol ma can sogs btabl*. But the brief history of Nas rnying Sha ba Monastery as given by the Bhutanese Monastic Body (in 2006) refers to Grub thob Don grub as the founder of Ri tshogs, Thed Chos sdings, and Nas bab and records two other Sa skya monasteries that were established in the fifteenth century, sPyi zhing and Phang yer. It further mentions Phrin las rab yangs as the founder of Nas rnying Sha ba (*Nas rnying sha ba'i lo rgyus*): *sngon dus rabs bco lnga pa'i nang ngor chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i slob ma nyag re dge bshes grub thob don grub byon nas dgon ri tshogs dgon pa thed chos sdings dgon pa nas bab dgon pa gsum btabl de dang dus tshungs (dus rabs bco lnga par) spyi zhing dgon pa phang yer dgon pa sogs btab 'dugll dus rabs bco lnga pa'i nangl ngor chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i slob ma phrin las rab yangs kyis nas rnying sha ba dgon pa'i gdans a btabl da lor 2006 tshun lo ngo 506 song 'dugll*. In contrast, the lHo 'brug chos 'byung (p. 178.2–4) ascribes the foundation of Nas rnying Sha ba, here referred to as Nags rnying Shar wang, not to Phrin las rab yangs but to rKyang 'dur Pañ chen sGra pa: *de bzhin dpal ldan sa skya'i lugs 'dzin rkyang 'dur pañ chen sgra pas kyangl wa lung spa sgar dgon dangl nags rnying shar wang dgon dangl shar lung phang ye dgon sogs sa skya'i dgon lag rnams btap par mdzad pa lasl sa ngor gnyis nas gdan 'dzin bla rabs rim par byon kyang chos kyi phrin las rgya chen po ma byungl*. From the lHo 'brug gi lo rgyus (p. 45b16–23)—a text compiled by gNyer chen bgres pa in ca. 1963 at the order of H.M. 'jigs med rdo rje dbang phyug (1928–1972) and typed by the late Gene E. Smith—, we learn of the existence of a group of four Ngor pa monasteries, the Ngor sde bzhi (sPyi zhing, Chos lding, Ri tshogs, and Nas spags), whose heads made a large offering to bsTan 'dzin rab rgyal (b. 1638) on the occasion of the latter's installation as fourth *sde srid* in 1680: *sa skya spyi bla bzod pa rin chenl ngor gong ma'i gdan 'dzin spyi zhing sprul sku ngag dbang bstan 'dzin dangl gzhan yang chos ldingl ri tshogsl nas spags tel ngor sde bzhi 'i dgon 'dzin gyi chos sde rnams dangl sha wang bla ma 'jam dbyangs sogs lho ljongs 'dir sa skya ngor gsum gyi chos sde che phra thams nas khri ston 'bul chen gyi rnam bzhag rgya cher phul zhingl*. The same work mentions that a woman, who was the daughter of a master related to Ngor's Klu sdings bla brang and the niece of the Bla ma of sPyi zhing, was given to 'Jam dpal rdo rje (1631–1681), the son of Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594–1651), as consort (lHo 'brug gi lo rgyus, p. 51b1–6): *physis sde srid mi 'gyur bstan pa'i skabs sras dgung lo bzhi bcu bryyad bzhes pa'i thog sa rta lor (1678) dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung ngor zhabs drung klu sdings pa'i sras mo grags pa spyi zhing bla ma'i dbon mo de 'dir phyogs byon pa dang chabs gcig tu sras kyi las rgya ma byed phull*. The custom that the lama of sPyi zhing was sent from Ngor Monastery was established during the tenure of Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po (1723–1779), the fortieth abbot of Ngor, following the order of the 'Brug sDe srid after the previous sPyi zhing sKu skye had passed away; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 733.3–5). On the history and location of those Ngor pa monasteries, see also KUMAGAI 2014. On sPyi zhing (Chizhing Gönpa), dGon gsar (Gönsar Temple)—a temple located above sPyi zhing at the site where Phrin las rab yangs had established a temple in the fifteenth century, which was destroyed by a fire—and Chos lding (or sdings) (Chöding Temple), see THINLEY 2008: 266, 270–271, and 325–326. On the history of the Sa skya school in Bhutan, see also ARIS 1979: 196–197, BARUAH 2000: 265, JACKSON 2003b: 643–644, n. 852, and PHUNTSHO 2013: 184–185. On the Ngor connection, see also JACKSON 2001: 95–96. Recently, the monastic library of sPyi zhing was digitally documented by Karma Phuntsho, and an investigation into the texts housed at that monastery might further help to illuminate the history of those Ngor pa establishments; see http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_project.a4d?projID=EAP570#project_outcome (accessed 21.02.2017). As mentioned by Seiji Kumagai (“History and Current State of the Sakya School in Bhutan,” Fourth International Seminar of Young Tibetologists, September 07–12, 2015, Leipzig, Germany), a small, old statue of Grub thob Don grub is preserved in Ri tshogs and a newer one in Chos sdings.

¹⁹⁵ See the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (p. 13.5–14). See also the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi lo rgyus* (p. 37, 2nd col., line 9–18), a modern contribution that is most likely based on the former source. A block-print edition of Blo gros rab yangs' secret biography and parts of his collected works were found and digitally documented by Karma Phuntsho at sPyi zhing Monastery; see http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=159669;r=8365 (accessed 21.02.2017). The biography of Blo gros rab yangs, which was composed prior to his visiting of Bhutan, constitutes the second volume (*kha*) and some of his writings the third volume (*ga*) of his collected works. Though a secret biography, some of the aforementioned details can be confirmed and a few new ones added. For Blo gros rab yangs taking the vows of a layman at age eight from 'Tshums bDe chen mkhan chen Nam mkha' dpal skyong and sKyed tshal mkhan po Chos rje Chos grags, see the

Ngor chen's biographies do not provide us with a date for his initial activities in implementing his plan to set up a new monastic seat. Nevertheless, given that he sojourned in Glo bo from 1427 to 1428, I would suggest dating his visionary dream and meeting with Nyag re dGe bshes Grub thob Don grub to after the time of his return in about 1428.

After establishing the location for his future monastic seat, Ngor chen sent out two successive teams to inspect the site. The respective accounts are barely comprehensible without a knowledge of the layout of the Ngor valley. The first group, consisting of Ngor chen's attendants bKra shis rgyal mtshan and Nyi ma rgyal mtshan, approached the site from the lower reaches of the valley known as Ngor mda'. Going up the valley, they reached an area called Wa rong that is marked by a rock formation. The view further up the valley is blocked by this formation, from where the direction of the valley makes a slight change to the northeast from its original east-west alignment. As the two attendants did not proceed further up, they could only give Ngor chen a description of the lower parts of the valley up to Wa rong. Thus Ngor chen had to send out a second group to further determine the exact location. During the winter of 1428 to 1429, the second group, headed by mKhan chen Shākya bzang po, approached the future site of Ngor from above and behind, via one of two passes—the rTogs ldan la (or gTor 'ded la) and lCags la—at the upper end of the valley, from which they could see the whole area below.¹⁹⁶ Back at Sa skya, mKhan chen Shākya bzang po's report assured Ngor chen that they had found the place that had appeared in his vision. Subsequently, he travelled in

sKal ldan rab yangs kyi gsang ba'i rnam thar (fol. 7b1-6). For his relationship with Go rams pa and Kong ston, see the *sKal ldan rab yangs kyi gsang ba'i rnam thar* (fols. 7b6-8b5). He is mentioned as a disciple of Go rams pa also in the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (pp. 246.17-19 and 256.4-6). For his installation as abbot of Thub bstan rnam rgyal, his first teaching activities, and his relationship with Sangs rgyas rin chen, see the *sKal ldan rab yangs kyi gsang ba'i rnam thar* (fols. 13b3-18a3). According to the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (p. 13.5-6), Blo gros rab yangs was born in 1474 (*shing pho rta*), but the first incomplete text of volume three of his collected works (*Blo gros rab yangs kyi gsung 'bum*, vol. 3, fol. 2a3), which is also missing its first folio, predates his birth to 1460 (*lcags pho 'brug*). In the *sKal ldan rab yangs kyi gsang ba'i rnam thar* (fols. 13b3-16b2 and 47a1-48a2), his installation as abbot of Thub bstan rnam rgyal is dated to a horse year (*rta lo*) and his resignation to a hare year (*yos lo*). With the help of a parallel passage from the biographies of Sangs rgyas rin chen, his installation can be dated to 1522 (*chu pho rta*) and would thus have lasted until 1531 (*lcags mo yos*); see the *sKal ldan rab yangs kyi gsang ba'i rnam thar* (fols. 16b2-18a3), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 115.4-6), and *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 93.3-6). However, according to the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (p. 13.13), he served as abbot for a period of twelve years. He taught the young Sangs rgyas seng ge (1504-1569), the eleventh abbot of Ngor, when the latter came to Thub bstan rnam rgyal for his philosophical studies; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 22.1-2) and *Sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 294.4-6). For a letter that was sent to him by Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams (1485-1533), see the *Sa skya lo tsā ba'i gsung 'bum* (pp. 450.3-451.6) and SOBISCH 2008: 127, no. 46. On two block-print editions of his collected works housed at dGra med rtse and sPyi zhing, see GYALTSÉN 2016: 382-386, who also refers to two prints of Blo gros rab yangs' autobiography. Among his references, *Ibid.*: 390 lists three biographies (but no autobiography) of Blo gros rab yangs: *sPrul pa'i skyes mchog blo gros rab yangs kyi phyi nang gsang gsum gyi rnam thar*, *sPrul pa'i skyes mchog blo gros rab yangs kyi phyi nang gi rnam thar rgyas pa*, and *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa'i gsang ba'i rnam thar*. On Blo gros rab yangs' meeting with the Eighth Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507-1554), see the *sKal ldan rab yangs kyi gsang ba'i rnam thar* (fols. 50b4-51b4). On his bKa' brgyud connection, see also the *sKal ldan rab yangs kyi gsang ba'i rnam thar* (fols. 2a4-b1 and 53a5-54a2), *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (p. 13.11-13), *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod* (vol. 69, pp. 223.6-226.2), and GENTRY 2014: 347, n. 730. The Slob dpon Rab 'byams pa Blo gros rab yangs whom we encounter in the biography of Yol mKhan chen gZhon nu blo gros (1527-1599) seems to be another religious figure, who flourished some decades later and was connected to bKra shis rtse Monastery; see the *Yol mkhan chen kyi rnam thar* (pp. 348.1-3, 375.6, and 376.6) and VAN DER KUIJP 1985f: 92.

¹⁹⁶ When Shākya mchog ldan left Ngor in 1454 and travelled to Zha lu, he went via lCags, which might be a reference to the pass in question; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (39b1-2): *der zha lu'i rten mjal ba bsnyags nas lcags bryud yongs/*. For the location of the lCags la, see MAP 2 (2988, D, Cha la).

the summer of 1429 to the site of his future retreat and established a *bla brang* at the spot where mKhan chen Shākya bzang po's group had seen a flower growing.

After presenting certain characteristics of the site relating to the Tibetan tradition of geomantic calculations (*sa dpyad*), Sangs rgyas phun tshogs returns to the actual foundational account of Ngor, reporting individual events in more detail. According to that report, Ngor chen himself embarked on an inspection tour of the site with a group of people that included also Nyag re dGe bshes Grub thob Don grub. When they reached a pond some hundred meters below the site, he told Don grub to blow a conch shell. The sound he produced seems to have had such an overwhelming effect on the whole group that in reference to this event the pond became known as Bla rdzing (“Life Essence Pond”). The pond still exists today, but its original shape, which is said to have been like a conch, was altered twice. At first, with the expansion of the old road leading up to Ngor Monastery, its size was reduced. Recently, with the tarring of that road, the original pond was destroyed and a new one created.¹⁹⁷

Regarding that episode, Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che added further information from Ngor's oral tradition, according to which when Ngor chen with his group of attendants made their first visit to Ngor, they met Nyag re dGe bshes Grub thob Don grub at that very pond. The Grub thob was coming down the valley reciting the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. At the moment when the two groups met, Grub thob Don grub's recitation had just reached the line: “The victory banner of the Dharma is set up in an excellent way.”¹⁹⁸ This was perceived to be an auspicious connection, and they sat down to have some tea. Suddenly, a conch shell emerged from out of the pond. Ngor chen made Grub thob Don grub blow it, resulting in the whole group being affected by a very frightening sensation (*bla 'dar*).¹⁹⁹ Hence, the pond was named Bla rdzing. Later on, Grub thob Don grub stayed at the Nyag re khang tshan of Ngor. As a result of this connection, it became customary for the conch horn player (*dung 'bud*) of Ngor to come from the Nyag re khang tshan. Only he was allowed to play the large conch shell once blown by Grub thob Don grub to call the monastic community of Ngor to the early morning assembly.²⁰⁰

Ngor once housed two famous conch shells. The one that had been handed over by Sa bzang 'Phags pa to Ngor chen at the time that he installed him as his successor to the abbatial throne of Sa bzang. As previously mentioned, this conch shell became one of the holy objects that were handed over to each successive Ngor abbot in the course of the enthronement ceremony. The other conch shell was the one blown by Grub thob Don grub. Today, one conch shell, the mThong thos rnam grol, is still preserved at Ngor and seems to be that of Grub thob Don grub.²⁰¹ Likewise, the large stone that bears the

¹⁹⁷ See pls. 35 and 36.

¹⁹⁸ The complete verse reads (WAYMAN 1985: 94, no. 28.): *sdug gu 'jig rten gsum gyi mchog|| dpal ldan rgyu skar dkyil 'khor can|| phyogs bcu nam mkha'i mthar thug par|| chos kyi rgyal mtshan legs par 'dzugs||*.

¹⁹⁹ Note that Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 Mai 2009) explained the term *bla dros pa*, which I have translated above as “to get warmed to the cockles of one's heart,” in the sense of *bla 'dar ba* (“to be very scared”).

²⁰⁰ Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 May 2009).

²⁰¹ Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 May 2009). See also the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 136.18–137.1). This conch sell was furnished with a silver mount by Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub (1696–1755), the thirty-third abbot of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 556.3): *bla brang du sbyor 'jags mang po gnang zhing khyad par chos dung rin po ches dngul gshogs gsar bsgron la phra rgyan ngo mtshar ba|*. The mount bears the following inscription: *bkra shis chos dung mthong thos rnam grol la| rin cen sna lnga las grub zo [= bzo] bkod kyi| mtshang du mnga' 'di thar pa rtse nas bsgrub [= bsgrubs]| 'di phyr dge zhing byang chub myur thob shog|| sarba manga lam||*. For an image of the conch shell, see pl. 39.

inscription Kun dga' bzang po has survived. After having been moved a couple of times, it can now be seen at the upper end of the old, dried-out pond.²⁰²

The construction workers are said to have departed from Sa skya on the twelfth day of the twelfth month of the bird year (i.e., 1429/30), which fell in January 1430, and to have reached Ngor six days later on the eighteenth. The construction work began by laying the foundation of the gZims khang ka drug ma on the seventh day of the third month. As for that dating, Phan bde mKhan Rin po che suggested to emend the dating of the worker's departure from Sa skya from the twelfth to the second month due to the following reasons: First, Ngor chen's biography specifies only one year for the foundation, recording successively the workers' departure as in the twelfth month, the start of the construction in the third, and the descend of a thunderstorm in the fifth. A turn of the year is not specified, however. Second, we saw above that Ngor chen travelled in the summer of 1429 to Ngor establishing a *bla brag*. If the construction work commenced in the third month of 1430, how could Ngor chen have already established a *bla brag* in the summer of 1429?²⁰³

The gZims khang ka drug ma was the first religious structure established at Ngor, and it also housed Ngor chen's living quarters.²⁰⁴ The latter became known as the Lam zab lha khang, and, as it housed the most sacred objects of Ngor, it was later also called mDzod bKa' rgya ma.²⁰⁵ The gZims khang ka drug ma further housed the sixteen-pillared g.Yab chen, where the abbatial quarters were located and both monastic ordinations and the summer teachings were bestowed. Later on, the gZims khang ka drug ma became known as bSam grub mthong grol chen mo, and 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1903–1960), the sixty-seventh abbot of Ngor, enlarged its original structure, beginning in 1943.²⁰⁶ Since the gZims khang ka drug ma housed Ngor chen's living quarters, a good argument can be made that the *bla brag* established by Ngor chen in the summer of 1429 was the gZims khang ka drug ma.

The second major monastic structure mentioned by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs is the thirty-pillared assembly hall or *gtsug lag khang* of Ngor, better known as dBang khang chen mo. It housed, among other things, the Lam 'bras lha khang and the mDzod nag (ma), the famous storehouse of Ngor that was entirely dark because it had no windows and was only approachable via a ladder from above.²⁰⁷ For the assembly hall and its inner

²⁰² See pls. 37 and 38.

²⁰³ Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (gZhis ka rtse, 10 February and 08 December 2011). See also the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 28.17–35.4).

²⁰⁴ For a reconstruction of the original outline of the gZims khang ka drug ma, see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 28.11–35.5). For a description of some of its temples, see also the *dBus gtsang gi gnas rten rags rim gyi mtshan byang* (p. 211.6–8) and *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (pp. 399.13–401.9). It also housed Ngor chen's kitchen (*gsol thab khang*); see the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 401.6–7).

²⁰⁵ See the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 34.16–18), *dBus gtsang gi gnas rten rags rim gyi mtshan byang* (p. 211.7–8), and *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 401.6). For the religious objects originally housed in the Lam zab lha khang, see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 29.16–30.8 and 31.6–32.3).

²⁰⁶ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 477.5–478.1). See also the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam* 2 (p. 21.6–8). According to accounts of senior monks (*bla rgan*) from Ngor as told to Phan bde mKhan Rin po che, the original structure of the gZims khang ka drug ma had been torn down before the construction work for the new temple (*gtsug lag khang*) began; Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (gZhis ka rtse, 08 December 2011). After the Cultural Revolution, Ngor Monastery was rebuilt in different stages. In 1995 or 1996, the bSam grub mthong grol chen mo was newly built and also became known as sTong sku lha khang. In 2015, it was torn down again and an enlarged temple is currently being built. On the rebuilding of Ngor, see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 125–138).

²⁰⁷ For a reconstruction of the original outline of the dBang khang chen mo and the religious objects it once housed, see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 35.5–39.14). See also the *dBus gtsang gi gnas rten rags rim gyi mtshan byang*

sanctum (*gtsang khang*), it was Ngor chen himself who commissioned the iconographic programme of its murals. This programme, which is also outlined in his biographies, consisted solely of depictions of *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, devoid of any tantric elements.²⁰⁸ With regard to this characteristic feature of Ngor's murals, David Jackson pointed out that the Ngor tradition "did not allow depictions of the higher tantric deities or their mandalas to be painted as murals on the temple walls."²⁰⁹ Along with those murals, at Ngor, Ngor chen also commissioned the majority of paintings, statues, and murals mentioned in Part Three, many other paintings depicting various kinds of *maṇḍalas* of individual *yi dam* deities (*zur bka'i dkyil 'khor*) and sacred beings of the pure realms (*zhing khams ma'i sku*), and the large golden statue of Buddha Śākyamuni that was housed in the inner sanctum (*gtsang khang*) of the assembly hall.²¹⁰

The account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs continues with Ngor chen's first bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor upon an assembly of about three hundred monks at the summer teaching session. Though he does not give a specific year for this event, I am inclined to date it to 1429, the year of Ngor's founding.²¹¹ The fact that Ngor chen was already giving teachings at Ngor by 1429 is suggested by a passage found in the biography of Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507). According to that work, sNye mo Ru pa bKa' bzhi pa Rin chen bkra shis received teachings on Kālacakra from Ngor chen at Ngor in the year of its foundation.²¹² With that first bestowal of the *Lam 'bras*, Ngor chen instituted the tradition of teaching the *Lam 'bras* to a larger assembly of disciples. Though the division of the *Lam 'bras* into two traditions of transmission—the "explication for the disciples" (*slob bshad*) and the "explication for the assembly" (*tshogs bshad*)—has traditionally been ascribed to Mus chen, Ngor chen's chief disciple and successor on the abbatial throne of Ngor, it is clearly stated that the tradition of teaching the *Lam 'bras* to an assembly began from that time on, though the term *tshogs bshad* is not explicitly used in this context. I will clarify this division of the *Lam 'bras* in the chapter on the two *Lam 'bras* traditions of Ngor.²¹³

(p. 211.8–10) and *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (pp. 396.9–399.12). Note that the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 397.4) gives the assembly hall as thirty-seven pillared instead of thirty-pillared. On the mDzod nag (ma), see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 521.2 and 546.1) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rang rnam* (pp. 205.3–206.2). According to some accounts of senior monks (*bla rgan*) from Ngor, both the spot where the flower grew that was seen by mkhan chen Shākya bzang po during the winter of 1428 and 1429 and the site where Ngor chen established the *bla brang* correspond to the site where the dBang khang chen mo was built. The basis for this identification is the connection drawn between the spot where the flower grew and a *nāga* temple (*klu khang*) associated with a spring in the lower inner sanctum (*gtsang khang 'og ma*), which was located on the ground floor of the dBang khang chen mo. However, the initial outline of the dBang khang chen mo makes it impossible that the *bla brang* in question could have later been included in this structure (Phan bde mkhan Rin po che, gZhis ka rtse, 10 February and 08 December 2011).

²⁰⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 549.5–550.3). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 465.1–466.2), JACKSON 1996: 78, and JACKSON 2010a: 184.

²⁰⁹ Jackson 2010a: 179. See also JACKSON 1996: 77.

²¹⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 464.2–467.5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 548.3–553.1). On the auspicious events accompanying the commissioning and consecration of the golden statue of Buddha Śākyamuni, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 552.2–5). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 467.3–5). On the commissioning of the statue, see also the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 262.1–3). On the statue, see also the *dBus gtsang gi gnas rten rags rim gyi mtshan byang* (p. 211.10) and *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 397.8–9). The statue was commissioned to fulfil the last wishes of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 464.3), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 548.3–4), and Part Three, 6.1.2.

²¹¹ Cf. DAVIDSON 1992: 127, who dates the teaching to "probably in the early 1430s."

²¹² See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 43a1). On Ngor chen's disciple Rin chen bkra shis, see Part Four, n. 673. The fact that Ngor chen was residing at Ngor already by 1429 is also suggested by the the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 12.1) and *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 568.5–570.3).

²¹³ See Part Four, 13.2.

The monastery of Ngor was named and consecrated after Ngor chen's return from sTod (i.e., Western Tibet). In his discussion on the meaning of the term *e waṃ*, in both sutric and tantric contexts that he added to the presentation of Ngor chen's life, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs further specifies that the naming and consecration took place after Ngor chen had returned from his invitation to upper and lower mNga' ris (mNga' ris stod smad).²¹⁴ This could then either refer to Ngor chen's second (1436–1437) or third sojourn in Glo bo (1447–1449). We know that in 1434 Ngor chen had not yet named his new monastic seat, because in trying to persuade Mus chen to stay at Ngor and teach, he made an offer to Mus chen to allow him to choose the name of the monastery.²¹⁵ Regarding the name-giving, Ngor chen was again guided by a visionary dream involving the Sanskrit word *e waṃ*. The word was explained as symbolising the *dharmaskandha*, the set of 84.000 doctrines the Buddha taught, which emerged from the two syllables *e* and *waṃ*. This dream caused Ngor chen to proclaim: "Because *e waṃ* is the source of all the Dharma, my monastery shall be named E waṃ."²¹⁶ Moreover, the monastery received part of its name from its location in the upper Ngor valley (i.e., dPal Ngor E waṃ chos ldan), and subsequently the tradition that originated from Ngor chen's monastic seat also became known as the Ngor tradition (*ngor lugs*).²¹⁷ We should further note that, though the monastery became known as E waṃ chos ldan, in early sources it is only referred to as Ngor dGon gсар (the New Monastery of Ngor).²¹⁸ It is possible that the monastery became known by this rather descriptive name because it was not named immediately after its foundation.

When Ngor chen founded Ngor, his familial relations again played a highly significant role. The land of the Ngor valley belonged to the Chu mig estate, which was under the administration of the Chu mig branch of the bZhi thog bla brang. At that time, Grags pa blo gros, the second son of Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen and Ngor chen's half-brother, headed the Chu mig branch. It was he who offered the land to Ngor chen to be used at his free disposal. Nevertheless, the latter proceeded to Chu mig to request an official certificate, offering the equivalent value of the land in form of precious objects, such as a crystal bowl.

From Ngor-related sources emerges the picture that Ngor chen had made concrete plans for the future development of his monastery. He not only instituted strict monastic rules but also settled the abbatial succession prior to his passing. Statements in support of such an assessment are found, for example, in the writings of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. Before returning from his third sojourn in Glo bo (1447–1449), Ngor chen is said to have

²¹⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 568.4–6).

²¹⁵ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 606.5–6) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 219.2–3).

²¹⁶ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 568.5–6): *e waṃ 'di chos thams cad 'byung ba'i gnas yin pas nga'i dgon pa 'di la e waṃ thogs (...)*.

²¹⁷ According to an oral tradition, the name Ngor derived from the grunting (*ngur*) of two yaks (*g.yak*) that appeared while Ngor chen went to found his new monastic seat. For such an account, see PEDRON YESHI and RUSSELL 1991: 62. This oral tradition (*zhal rgyun*) was also mentioned by Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 08 February 2015), though he emphasised that the grunting sound is called *ngur* in Tibetan and that Ngor was the name of the area already prior to Ngor chen's monastic foundation.

²¹⁸ See, for instance, the *rGya bod chos 'byung* (p. 45.11), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 531.5), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 219.19, 230.16, and 248.2), *Deb ther dmar po gсар ma* (p. 99a5), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 216.6 and 241.5), *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 288.15 and 301.15), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 27a5, 27b2, 38a4–5, 43a1, 50b3, 58a7, and 65a6), and STEARNS 2007: 279 and 545, n. 754.

instructed 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (1396–1474), the third abbot of Ngor, in the following way:²¹⁹

For the time being, you should perform activities of the [Buddha's] doctrine here [at Thub bstan dar rgyas gling in Glo bo]. Later on, Slob dpon dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, Kha char mKhan po [bSod nams rgyal mtshan], and you, whoever is more long-lived, will become the head of the monastic seat of E waṃ. By that time, Kun dga' dbang phyug will be an appropriate [abbatial successor].

This passage provides the names of the first three abbots of Ngor that succeeded Ngor chen in chronological order: Mus chen, the second abbot of Ngor, to whom Ngor chen personally entrusted his monastic seat prior to his passing in 1456; 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, who was appointed by Mus chen; and Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor, who was also appointed by Mus chen. Since Kha char mKhan po bSod nams rgyal mtshan was never appointed an abbot of Ngor, we might deduce that he was already dead when Mus chen's successor died.

With regard to the appointment of Ngor's third abbot, further episodes attest to Ngor chen settling his abbatial succession. The first episode opens with the account of Shes rab rgya mtsho's appointment by Mus chen:²²⁰

rJe bZang po's directive prophecy to Lord Mus chen: "For the time being, you should teach the Dharma here [at Ngor]. By that time, mKhan chen Shes rab rgya mtsho will be an appropriate [abbatial successor]. I, teachers, and disciples have worked hard and have established this monastery relying on rGya ri turnips. (...)

A similar statement was given by Ngor chen directly to Shes rab rgya mtsho. It is contained within an episode that leads us to another important feature of Ngor Monastery, namely the introduction of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla (dPal mgon zhal bzhi pa) as its chief protector:²²¹

²¹⁹ *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 7.5): *khyed rang re zhiḡ 'dir bstan pa'i bya ba mdzod/ de nas e waṃ gyi gdan sa/ slob dpon dkon mchog rgyal mtshan/ kha char mkhan po nyid cag gsum sku tshe gang ring yin/ de mtshams kun dga' dbang phyug 'os yin (...)*. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 510.1): *'jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho ba dang/ rgyal tshab pa gdan sa pa gsum par lung bstan pa dang/*. For another statement by Ngor chen that Kun dga' dbang phyug would become an abbot of Ngor, see the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 520.5–521.4) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 622.3–623.1).

²²⁰ *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 8.1–3): (...) *rje bzang po'i zhabz kyi lung bstan rje mus chen la re zhiḡ nyid kyis 'dir chos gsungs/ de mtshams mkhan chen shes rab rgya mtsho 'os yin/ dgon pa 'di nged dpon slob rnam kyis [= kyis] rgya ri la phug la brten/ dka' las byas thebs pa yin zhiḡ/ nged la rjes bkod bzhag gnanng dus sku chos 'di yin zhiḡ/ nged kyis longgs ma spyad par da lan byin rlabs rten la gnanng gsungs zhiḡ gnanng/*. The exact meaning of the term *rgya ri la phug* needs further clarification. If we follow JÄSCHKE 1881: 106 (s.v. *rgya ri*), Ngor chen would have founded his monastery by relying on "a portion of meat" and radish (*la phug*). But such an understanding would contradict my previous remarks that Ngor chen was a strict vegetarian who also banned meat at Ngor. GOLDSTEIN 2001: 255 (s.v. *rgya ri la phug*), for instance, records the term *rgya ri la phug* for radish. JÄSCHKE 1881: 540 (s.v. *rgya ri la phug*) specifies this kind of radish as: "a red species, of an acidulous taste." Could we thus understand the whole phrase *rgya ri la phug* as referring to some kind of radish? This speculative claim is lexically not attested, however. Nevertheless, that *rgya ri* does not refer to some kind of meat is also supported by a similar passage as included in the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 162.6): *de dus 'jam pa'i dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho ba la khyed kyis dgon gnas 'di'i 'gram bting ba gnanng nas bka' dang len la phug gi rgya ri la brten nas gnanng zhiḡ/*. In this case, the term *rgya ri* is further specified by the element *la phug*.

²²¹ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 553.1–4): *khyad par e waṃ chos ldan gyi dgon pa'i gnyer gtad bstan srung ni chos skyong zhal bzhi pas byed pa yin la/ de'i rgyu mtshan gyis chos skyong 'di'i bka' gtad kyang rje'i bzhugs khri la bzhugs pa re la ma thob na e waṃ gyi khrir 'khod dag la 'khu ldog 'byung bar bshad/ de'ang rje'i gsung nas 'jam dbyangs shes rgyam pa la/ khyed ci dang mi 'dra dgon pa 'di rang re dpon slob rnam kyis lto rgya ri la phug la byas nas rgyab pa yin/ nged kyi*

In particular, as the [Buddha's] doctrine's protector, who was entrusted to take care of E waṃ chos ldan Monastery, functions Chos skyong Zhal bzhi pa. Due to that reason, it is explained that if the individual [abbots] who take a seat on the Lord's throne do not also obtain the entrustment (or empowerment) of this *dharmapāla*, those seated on the throne of E waṃ will incur [his] wrath. In fact, Lord [Ngor chen] having said to 'Jam dbyangs Sher rgyam pa [i.e., Shes rab rgya mtsho]: "You are unlike anybody else. This monastery has been built by me, teachers, and disciples taking rGya ri turnips as food. You will also have to stay here at my residence," [he] was bestowing [on him] the ritual permission (or initiation) of Zhal [bzhi pa]. At that time, Gu ge Paṇḍita also requested [it], but [Ngor chen], by saying "[It] is not appropriate for you," did not grant [it]. Since [the Paṇḍita] insisted, [Ngor chen] expressed: "It appears that this 'Indian yogi' (*a tsa ra*) will not leave [me] alone." [It] is said that just the transmission for [Zhal bzhi pa's] *mantra* recitation was then also heard by rJe Paṇḍita.

This episode illustrates the important role Four-faced Śrīmahākāla played at Ngor, in general, and of the special connection with the abbot, in particular.²²² Prior to his installation, each Ngor abbot had to have received the ritual permission (*rjes gñang*) for practicing Four-faced Śrīmahākāla. This is exemplified by an episode from the biography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, who was called back to Ngor from Khams in 1686 to become the new abbot. The day after his arrival at Ngor, he went to visit the incumbent abbot lHun grub dpal ldan (1624–1697). During their conversation, he requested teachings such as the ancillary ones of the *Lam 'bras*. With regard to the ritual permission of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, lHun grub dpal ldan told him that he would not bestow it, because it would create a lot of disturbance. But since Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had previously received it at Sa skya from Zhabs drung rGyal rtse ba—that is, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1598–1674), who would briefly serve as the twentieth abbot of Ngor—it would be sufficient. Apart from that, he was willing to grant whatever teachings would be suitable.²²³ However, it seems to have been an exception that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs

sdod sa 'dir khyed kyang bzhugs dgos pa 'ong gsungs nas zhal gyi rjes gñang gñang gin 'dulj de dus gu ge paṇḍi tas kyang zhus pas khyod la mi 'ong gsungs nas ma gñangl u tshugs byas pas a tsa ra 'dis so bsod du mi 'jug par snang gsungs nas snags kyi bzlas lung tsaṃ rje paṇḍi tas kyang gsaṃ zhes 'byungl.

²²² With regard to entrusting Ngor to Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, it is interesting to note that when Ngor chen visited Buddhshri in 1417, his sick master requested him to do the ritual propitiation of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, who, as he said, had been of great help on his spiritual path; see the *Buddhaśrī'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 428.1–4). Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (gZhis ka rtse, 08 December 2011) wondered whether this might have caused Ngor chen to perceive Four-faced Śrīmahākāla as a very special Dharma protector. Considering Ngor chen's monastic training, we know that he had received teachings on Four-faced Śrīmahākāla from Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 440.6–441.3), *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 494–6), and *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 212.5–214.1). During the ritual propitiation of Dharma protectors at Ngor, Phan bde mKhan Rin po che explained that Four-faced Śrīmahākāla always comes first, even before Vajrapañjara, who in case of the Sa skya tradition proper always takes the first place. He further mentioned that in a consecration ritual of Ngor dPon slob Ngag dbang legs grub (1811–1861) it is said that one should first perform the ritual propitiation of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla and then the one of Vajrapañjara and that there would be a special reason for doing so, which is not mentioned, however. It is also said that whenever a matter with a positive outcome occurred at Ngor, it was considered to be due to the aid of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla.

²²³ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 333.2–4), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 202.3–5), and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 138.3–5). Zhabs drung rGyal rtse ba had bestowed the ritual permission when Sangs rgyas phun tshogs passed through Sa skya when on his way from mNga' ris to Ngor in 1669; see the *Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 861.5–6), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 297.5), and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 174.1). For Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' spiritual experience of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla, see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 262.4–5). For a

did not receive the ritual permission from the incumbent abbot in this instance. In general, it was given as an “internal transmission” (*nang rgyud*), meaning that each future abbot had to receive it from the incumbent abbot.²²⁴

In addition, in the biography of Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po (1723–1779), the fortieth abbot of Ngor, we read that until the time of dKon mchog dpal ldan (1526–1590), the twelfth abbot, Ngor’s incumbent abbot, who had experienced direct visions of the protector, merely bestowed on his abbatial successor the entrustment (*bka’ gtad*). Since then, the biography continues, the custom existed that each incumbent abbot bestowed on his abbatial successor the protector’s ritual permission (*rjes gnang*). However, since dKon mchog grags pa (b. 1715), the thirty-ninth abbot, was unable to bestow it on his abbatial successor, Ngag dbangs chos skyong bzang po, the latter believed that this custom had been discontinued earlier, namely from the time of Byams pa Nam mkha’ bsam ’grub (1696–1755), the thirty-third abbot, who was unable to receive the ritual permission due to the sudden death of his predecessor, Tshul khriṃs lhun grub (1676–1730), the thirty-second abbot.²²⁵

Similarly, Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che recounted that in former times before a new abbot was installed at Ngor, his cushion was placed on Ngor chen’s throne to examine whether the candidate was approved by the monastery’s protector. If the cushion was still to be found on the throne the following day, the candidate was approved. If the cushion had been thrown off the throne, he was not. This custom was not practiced in later times, however. The protector also expected the incumbent abbot to reside at Ngor, which he honoured by granting his extensive activities. On the other hand, he disliked it when the abbot left Ngor for other places and would thus create obstacles in his life.²²⁶

The episode about Four-faced Śrīmahākāla from Ngor chen’s biography further illustrates that Ngor chen had envisaged Shes rab rgya mtsho as an abbatial successor of Ngor, thus preparing him for this task by bestowing on him the ritual permission for practicing Four-faced Śrīmahākāla. At the same time, we come to know that Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan was not predestined for that position, though he is said to have functioned as ritual assistant when Ngor chen committed his new monastic seat

description of the special role of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla as Ngor’s protector, see also the *mGon po chos ’byung* (pp. 262.5–263.6).

²²⁴ See the *mGon po chos ’byung* (p. 262.5–6): *khyad par e waṃ chos ldan gyi dgon pa’i gnyer dang bstan srung ni chos skyong zhal bzhi pas byed pa yin zhing/’di’i rjes gnang yang gdan sa pa nang rgyud du ma byung na chos skyong nyid mi mnyes pa’i tshul ston pa yin tel*; and *Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi rang rnam* (p. 861.5–6): *bya lo’i ston kho bo [i.e., Sans rgyas phun tshogs] cag gis rje ’di nyid dpal ldan sa skyar bzhugs pa dang mjal/gnas tshul zhib rgyas byung ngos/ zhing skyong stobs ’phrog dbang poj bsnyen dus kyi mgon po’i rjes gnang stsal/ de dus zhing skyong ’di ngor pa’i gdan sa nang brgyud dgos tshul gnang gin ’dug pa/ de dus ma shes kyang phyis bsam pas/ ngor gyi gdan sa pa’i ming btags de ’ong bar mkhyen ’dug pa dang/*. In particular, see the illustrative account on the installation of Sangs rgyas rin chen, the eighth abbot, as included in the *mGon po chos ’byung* (pp. 262.6–263.6) and *lHa mchog seng ge’i rnam thar* (pp. 147.3–148.3).

²²⁵ See the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po’i rnam thar* (p. 718.2–4): *mkhan chen dkon mchog dpal ldan yan la dpal mgon dangos su zhal zgigs mkhan rnying gis mkhan gsar la bka’ gtad dang/ de phyin yang zhal gyi rjes gnang re mdzad srol yod ’dug pa de bzhin zhus kyang gnang thabs med gsungs pa las rgyu mtshan mi ’dug kyang phyis su dgongs tshe mkhan chen tshul khriṃs lhun grub glo bur du gshegs pas thar rtse nam mkha’ bsam ’grub la gnang rgyu ma byung ba de nas rgyun chad pa yin ’dug/*

²²⁶ Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 May 2009). For mentions of signs that the Dharma protectors were displeased when Ngor masters gave the *Lam ’bras* outside of Ngor or stayed away from Ngor for too long, see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 91.3–4) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 513.4–514.2), respectively.

to the care of Four-faced Śrīmahākāla.²²⁷ The fact that Ngor chen had no plans of making Gu ge Paṇḍita a future abbot of Ngor is also confirmed by another account which introduces Ngor chen's nephew Kun dga' dbang phyug in that position. After his nephew had come to Ngor in 1438, Ngor chen revealed to Gu ge Paṇḍita that Kun dga' dbang phyug would become an abbot of Ngor. This statement prompted Gu ge Paṇḍita to ask whether he himself was also envisaged as a possible future abbot. Ngor chen, however, told him to keep quiet, rejecting such a possibility.²²⁸

With regard to Ngor chen's possible ideas for the future development of Ngor, Ronald Davidson has reached a similar conclusion:

Having discussed something of the administration and policies of Ñor with the Ñor Thar-rtse mKhan-po during my studies of the Sa-skyā-pa, I became convinced that Ñor-chen had, by the time of his death, put an enormous amount of thought and consideration into the development of Ñor. Some of the policies evidently developed in direct reaction to those found at Sa-skyā. High ecclesiastic officials in Sa-skyā were almost exclusively chosen from monks coming from the principality of Sa-skyā itself, clue to the close interrelation seen between the fortunes of the religious and political sectors within Sa-skyā. In Ñor the reverse was the case. Of the eight officials who were in charge of the daily activities of the monks, all were required to be drawn from the areas outside of dbUs-gTsañ [i.e., Tibets central provinces], while monks from such diverse areas as Ladhak [sic] and China were often given quite powerful positions. Consequently, Ñor came to have quite an international reputation and this was strengthened by Ñor-chen's frequent travels to outlying areas to establish monasteries and give instruction.²²⁹

By any standard Kun-dga'-bzañ-po appears as a towering figure in Tibetan intellectual and religious history, but I cannot help but feel that his most valuable contribution to Tibetan Buddhism as a whole was his willingness to attempt a modification of monastic policy, based on observation and brought about through careful planning. The success of his contribution is apparent when we review the quantity of stable Ñor-pa monasteries and the quality of the monastic experience found therein. We should recall that some of the leading monasteries of the 20th century, rDzoñ-gsar, Lhun-grub-steñ, and rTa-nag among them, belonged to the Ñor-pa tradition.²³⁰

Davidson further noted that the "mKhan-pos, the heads of the four major and one minor bLa-brañ, and the *mchod-dpons* were all, of course, chosen without regard to their areas of origin."²³¹ However, it is important to note that, although the early abbots of Ngor

²²⁷ See the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 162.5).

²²⁸ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 520.5–521.1) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 2 (p. 622.2–4).

²²⁹ DAVIDSON 1981: 87. See *Ibid.*: 95, n. 19: "The eight officials were the main chanting leader (*dbu mdzad chen mo*), the assistant chanting leader who recites the office at the time of the morning tea, etc. (*dus ja dbu mdzad*), the two officials in charge of discipline (*chos khrims pa*), their two helpers (*chos g'yog*), the chief conch player (*duñ pa*), and his assistant (*duñ g'yog*)." See also JACKSON 2001: 91, who states that "it is said that through much of the history of Ngor monastery, the 'central row' of the assembly was reserved" for Khams pas and that they "were almost inevitably appointed to the influential positions of *dpon-slob* ('ritual master'), disciplinarian (*chos khrims pa*), and chant-leader (*dbu mdzad*)." Note that rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal, founded by Go rams pa in 1473, was not actually a branch of Ngor.

²³⁰ DAVIDSON 1981: 93.

²³¹ DAVIDSON 1981: 95, n. 19.

were mainly chosen on the basis of their spiritual achievements, a large number of them originated from within the family line of Ngor chen's alleged father dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan, though they received major parts of their religious training at Ngor. Six of the first twelve abbots can be directly linked to that family, which suggests both that their members occupied a much higher position within Sa skya than that of ordinary valets (*gsol ja ba*) and that they maintained a special link with Ngor.²³²

By founding his new monastic seat, Ngor chen neither broke with his own tradition nor turned his back on Sa skya. On the contrary, in doing so he hoped to go back to the traditional Sa skya teachings and practice them in a more supportive environment. Ngor chen's new foundation was, as David Jackson has put it, "spiritually beholden but not administratively subordinated to his original mother monastery, Sakya."²³³ After having moved to Ngor, Ngor chen continued to maintain a close link with Sa skya, to which he paid visits from time to time and also bestowed teachings. Also, Sa skya continued to uphold the relationship with one of its most eminent masters of that time. This is illustrated, for instance, by an account from the biography of dPal ldan rdo rje, the fifth abbot of Ngor. When Ngor chen's younger brother gZhon nu seng ge travelled to Ngor in about 1429 to receive teachings from Ngor chen, he took dPal ldan rdo rje along as his attendant and was accompanied by both many minor military officers with the rank of *brgya dpon* of Sa skya and some other religious scholars.²³⁴ In the same way, we can surely assume that a group of Ngor chen's disciples from Sa skya shifted along with their master to Ngor, thereby forming part of Ngor's original monastic community, whereas other students from Sa skya visited and stayed only temporarily for receiving teachings and ordinations.²³⁵

5.3 Short Overview of the Historical Development of Ngor Monastery

With the steady influx of students, Ngor Monastery quickly developed into a substantial monastic complex.²³⁶ Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, its four main lama palaces (*bla brang*) were founded: (1) Thar rtse, (2) Klu lding or Klu sdings, (3) Khang gsar, Khang (g)sar phun tshogs gling, or Phun tshogs khang (g)sar, and (4) Phan bde or Phan khang.²³⁷ They were usually headed by monks who originated from religious-aristocratic

²³² For an enumeration of these six abbots, see Part Three, 3.

²³³ JACKSON 2010a: 177.

²³⁴ See the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 568.5–569.1). They seem to have paid their visit in 1429; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 12.1).

²³⁵ For instance, Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor, moved to Ngor at age fifteen in 1438 for his further religious training under Ngor chen; see the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 520.3–5) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 621.6–622.2).

²³⁶ For later descriptions of Ngor in the travelogues of 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892) and Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880–1923/25), see the *dBus gtsang gi gnas rten rags rim gyi mtshan byang* (p. 211.5–14) and *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (pp. 394–402.), respectively. On Tshong dpon Kha stag 'Dzam yag's stay at Ngor from 1952 to 1953, see the *gNas bskor bskyod pa'i nyin deb* (pp. 217.6–229.17). Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 08 February 2015) mentioned that during his abbatial tenure (1954–1957) about 400 or 500 monks were living at Ngor.

²³⁷ At the present stage of my research, the following picture emerges: (1) The monastic structure of Thar rtse was established, probably in the latter half of the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, as a residence and place of retreat for former abbots and was taken over by the Brang ti family in the latter part of the sixteenth century. It is first mentioned in the biography of dKon mchog 'phel, the seventh abbot, who resided there at the end of his life; see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 826.4–827.1), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 15.5), and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 147.2–3). (2) The Klu sdings bla brang was probably founded by Byams pa Kun

families of gTsang. Nevertheless, only the Klu sdings bla brang succeeded in maintaining an unbroken link with the Shar family up to the present day. Initially, the abbots of Ngor were chosen mainly on the basis of their spiritual achievements, leaving aside their familial or financial background. With the founding of the four main lama palaces, the situation changed insofar as a large number of abbots was now selected from those aristocratic families with which the individual palaces were linked. These monks were chosen in their youth as “candidates to the abbacy” (*zhabs drung*) and had to pass through a special curriculum.²³⁸ Around the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new system for abbatial appointments was established, whereby, at least in theory, the abbacy rotated through the four palaces, with each taking a three-year turn. As some of their old family lines were dying out, except for the Klu sdings bla brang, the other three *bla brangs* also introduced a reincarnation system in the nineteenth century by which important candidates for the abbacy were identified as rebirths of previous masters or abbots.²³⁹

However, the growth of Ngor's monastic community was accompanied by the degradation of the community's monastic discipline, and the foundation of the lama palaces and regional monk dormitories (*khang tshan*) also caused further tensions and conflicts.²⁴⁰ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, for instance, mentions internal conflicts at Ngor dating to the last years of the 1680s. In his autobiography, he even reports that killings

dga' bkra shis (1558–1615), the fourteenth abbot of Ngor. He was the first abbot from the Shar family and might have founded Klu sdings as his private residence in Ngor. A monastic structure called Klu sdings is first mentioned in his biography; see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 709.2–3 and 712.5–713.4) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (p. 74.2–10). (3) The Khang gсар bla brang seems to have been established in the middle of the seventeenth century, most likely by bSod nams rgya mtsho, the twenty-first abbot. 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po affiliates him with this *bla brang*; see the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 69.6). (4) dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot, is considered to be the founder of Phan bde (or Phan khang), which, according to JACKSON 2001: 90, he founded as “a sort of offshoot of the Klu-sdings.” SMITH 2001: 89 also recognises him as its founder. However, Ngor-related sources suggest that the monastic structure itself had been built prior to dPal ldan chos skyong's birth. For instance, lHun grub dpal ldan, the twenty-fourth abbot, and Tshul khriims dpal bzang, the twenty-eighth abbot, both resided in the Phan bde khang gсар or Phan khang; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 50.5), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 520.5), *bSod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 76.3 and 77.5–6), and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 139.4–6). dPal ldan chos skyong should thus rather be considered to be the lama who transformed that building into an independent *bla brang*, most likely upon returning to Ngor, in 1754, after having served as the court chaplain of the king of sDe dge. In his autobiography, he mentions that he moved into the Phan khang already earlier, in 1732, after returning from his sojourn in the sGa region of Khams, where he had been sent by the Klu sdings bla brang to collect offerings; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 564.6–565.5) and *dPal ldan chos skyong gyi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, pp. 101.4–154.2). The fifth, less influential *bla brang* was the Khang ser bla brang, and dKon mchog grags pa, the thirty-ninth abbot, is considered to be its founder; see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 49.19–50.7). Early mentions of that *bla brang* are found in the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 718.4–6 and 720.5–721.2) and *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 4, pp. 66.1–67.2). According to Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 12 May 2009), many *slob dpons* of Ngor originated from the Khang ser bla brang. On the history of Ngor's lama palaces, see also the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 43–50.7).

²³⁸ See the *Klu lding mkhan chen gyi rang rnam 2* (pp. 23.9–24.12) and STEARNS 2006: 660–661, n. 455.

²³⁹ See JACKSON 2001: 90–91.

²⁴⁰ This has also been expressed by Phan bde mkhan Rin po che; see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 44.1–8): *spyir ngor e wam chos ldan 'dir ngor chen nas kun mkhyen bsod nams seng ge'i bar bla brang khag so sor med cing bstan pa shin tu dar rgyas che yangl rim gyis bla brang khag chags pa nas dpal 'byor thad gtso bor bla khag so sos kha 'dzin mdzad pa'i rkyen gyis dge 'dun spyi'i gsol chas rje zhan du song nas bshad sgrub kyi bya ba la yang shugs rkyen thebs pas cung nyams rgud kyi rnam pa yang 'go tshugs pa yin snyam|. See also the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (pp. 401.18–402.3): *spyir da lta ngor pa'i bsgrigs cung nyams| khyad par grwa nyungl grwa rgyun rnams spyod pa rtsing bas phyogs kyi mi sde rnams mi dga'| bla brang rnams kyang kha mchu 'dras zing zing por snang ngol|. On Ngor's regional monk dormitories, see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 50.7–51.19) and JACKSON 1989a: 49–50, n. 2.**

occurred between members of different regional dormitories.²⁴¹ In his judgement, those conflicts were linked with the material wealth that Ngor Monastery had gained through its faithful supporters in mNga' ris and Khams. Many of Ngor's resident monks are said to have craved wealth, indulged in celebrations, and lusted for donations in those bad times.²⁴²

The degradation of the community's monastic discipline is also illustrated by an episode included in the biography of 'Jam dpal bzang po (1789–1864), the fifty-first abbot of Ngor. When he visited Sa skya in 1837, he was harangued by the Sa skya throne-holder 'Jam mgon Khri chen Rin po che Ngag dbang kun dga' bkra shis mthu stobs bstan 'dzin bzang po (1792–1853), alias Pad ma bdud 'dul dbang phyug, who complained about the miserable conditions at Ngor. He told him that previously, everybody had taken the Ngor pas as a measure for strict monastic rules, but that later on the rules had become more and more lenient. He took this as the reason why, by comparison with the old times, it appeared that in his days no discipline was kept at all. Even though Sa skya had advised successive Ngor abbots to tighten their monastic rules, they never presented any proof that such efforts had actually been undertaken. Thus he gave the strict order to restore all previous rules. Returning to Ngor, 'Jam dpal bzang po instituted, after consultation with his older brother, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin (1776–1862), the forty-seventh abbot of Ngor, and his younger brother, mDzod pa Nor ldan Shes rab bzang po, a new monastic code, which was mainly based on the one established by Mus chen, and which was supplemented with new regulations. However, the implementation of this new code faced the opposition of the Mi nyag khang tshan, whose monks temporarily left Ngor in protest, only to give in a little later.²⁴³

However, such later developments should also be viewed within the broader changes that occurred for Sa skya monasteries in dBus and gTsang after 1642, the year the dGa' ldan pho brang government, a dGe lugs theocracy, was established. The basic law code of the dGa' ldan pho brang called for suppression of the Karma bKa' brgyud and 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud schools.²⁴⁴ The new government was also responsible for suppressing the Jo nang tradition in central Tibet by forcefully converting their monasteries into dGe lugs institutions and sealing the printing-blocks of their masters' writings. Even the officially tolerated schools such as the Sa skya experienced, in the mid-seventeenth century in gTsang, a few unjustified conversions of their monasteries or colleges (*grwa tshang*)—such as Byams chen Chos sde in Rin spungs, Ngam ring Chos sde in La stod Byang, and Shel dkar Chos sde in La stod lHo—and the works of eminent scholars, such as Go rams pa and Shākya mchog ldan, who had questioned Tsong kha pa's views, were officially proscribed.²⁴⁵ For Nā lendra Monastery in dBus, too, the early to mid-nineteenth century

²⁴¹ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rang rnam* (pp. 204.5–206.2, 206.5–208.3, and 209.3–210.1). For even earlier tensions that occurred during the tenure of dPal ldan don grub (1563–1636), the sixteenth abbot of Ngor, see the *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 729.5–730.4 and 732.6–734.4). For later frictions at the time of both Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b. 1830s, d. 1890s), fifty-fifth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1859–1866), and Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho (1902–1963), the sixty-ninth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1933–1936), see JACKSON 1999a: 139, 143, and 151 and JACKSON 2001: 88 and 92–95, respectively.

²⁴² See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rang rnam* (pp. 209.5–210.1).

²⁴³ See the *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 424.6–428.3) and JACKSON 2001: 103, n. 19.

²⁴⁴ See the *Dwangs shel me long* (pp. 265.18–266.12 and 269.14–17).

²⁴⁵ On Byams chen Chos sde and its colleges (four Sa skya, two Bo dong, and one dGe lugs); see the *Baidūrya ser po* (p. 230, no. 14). In 1647, the monastery was converted into the dGe lugs monastery named dGa' ldan Byams pa gling; see the *Baidūrya ser po* (p. 401.5–10). On Ngam ring Chos sde and its colleges (fifteen Sa skya and ten dGe lugs), see the *Baidūrya ser po* (pp. 263–267, nos. 79–88). Under the Fifth Dalai Lama, it was converted into the dGe lugs monastery named (dPal) Ngam ring (Chos sde chen po) dGa' ldan (bshad sgrub 'phel rgyas)

was a low point of direct governance by a dGe lugs administrative abbot by the central government, another effective strategy of sectarian domination.²⁴⁶ In short, by the 1830s, the only place the Sa skya school could still thrive were in areas not administrated by the dGa' ldan pho brang such as sGa and sDe dge in Khams. From there, the majority of the monks who came to Ngor for ordination and annual teachings originated. That should be kept in mind when judging the sad situation in 1837, which was not purely a matter of inevitable internal decay.

byams pa gling; see the *Ngam ring rdzong gi dgon sde'i lo rgyus* (pp. 6.10–7.3 and 18.5–10). On Shel dkar Chos sde and its twenty-one colleges (seven Sa skya, seven Bo dong, and seven dGe lugs) and its 1645 transformation into the dGe lugs monastery named Shel dkar dGa' ldan legs bshad gling; see the *Baiḍūrya ser po* (pp. 401.23–402.16) and WANGDU and DIEMBERGER 1996: 4–5 and *passim*. On the banning of books in Tibet, see SMITH 2004. See also CABEZÓN and DARGYAY 2007: 31–32 and DREYFUS 1997: 35–36.

²⁴⁶ See JACKSON 1989: 29–30.

Chapter Six

Three Journeys to the Kingdom of Glo bo

When Ngor chen visited Glo bo in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, the borderland principality had become an important political centre in Lower Western Tibet (mNga' ris smad).²⁴⁷ Though members of the Glo bo royal line first came to prominence as generals or ministers at the end of the fourteenth century, Glo bo's political authority was now about to reach its climax, making its influence strongly felt in the neighbouring regions of Gu ge, Pu hrangs, and Dol po. The territory of Glo bo encompassed the upper Kali Gandaki valley, which was on an important north-south trade route in the central Himalaya. Traditionally, Glo bo was divided into the two major subdivisions of Upper Glo (Glo stod) and Lower Glo (Glo smad): the former including the area around the capital city of sMon thang and bordering upon Tibet on three sides in the north, west, and east, while the latter lay to the south and covered an area better known these days by its Nepalese name Bharagaon, including bKag (Kāgbeni) and the Muktināth valley.²⁴⁸

In addition to its political activities, the new ruling house of Glo bo distinguished itself also as a religious patron of Buddhism and Bon, promoting religion on a scale previously unseen in their domain. In response to repeated invitations from the rulers of Glo bo, Ngor chen embarked on a total of three journeys (1427–1428, 1436–1437, and 1447–1449) to the newly established kingdom; the first he undertook while he was still based at Sa skya and the two later times while coming from his recently established seat at Ngor.²⁴⁹ Due to the conjoined efforts of Ngor chen and those rulers, monastic Buddhism became established on a larger institutional basis in Glo bo and close ties were established with the Sa skya school, in general, and the Ngor sub-school, in particular.

A variety of Tibetan sources illuminate the nature and history of the ruler donor-preceptor donee relationship that existed between the royal house of Glo bo and masters of Ngor Monastery. The most detailed accounts of Ngor chen's three sojourns in Glo bo are found in two biographical sources. The first source is the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456–1532), which was written in about 1514.²⁵⁰ Glo bo mKhan chen opens his autobiography with an extensive account of events that took place during Ngor chen's three sojourns, which also includes a short genealogy of his own family line from the time of his grandfather A ma dpal (var. A me dpal; 1388–ca. 1456).²⁵¹ As Glo bo mKhan chen was a princely monk scholar and a close follower of Ngor

²⁴⁷ On the origin of different names such as Glo bo, Mustang, and sMon thang, see JACKSON 1984: 5–7 and RAMBLE 2008: 364, n. 8.

²⁴⁸ See JACKSON 1984: 3–5, RAMBLE 1996: 45, and RAMBLE 2008: 30–36. For two maps showing the location of Nepal's administrative Mustang district and the location of Upper and Lower Glo within that, see RAMBLE 2008: 24, Figure 1.1 and [25], Figure 1.2, respectively. For other maps, see also JACKSON 1984: 223, map B and PEISSEL 1992: [33], map, [77], map, and [95], map. Lower Glo was an island of Tibetan-speakers within the old kingdom of Se rib, an area that was also Tibetan Buddhist; see JACKSON 1978.

²⁴⁹ Cf. DOWMAN 1997: 189, who dates Ngor chen's three sojourns to 1415, 1424, and 1435.

²⁵⁰ For an edition and translation of Glo bo mKhan chen's autobiography, see KRAMER 2008. For different versions of this autobiography and a description of the manuscripts that Jowita Kramer consulted for her edition, see *Ibid.*: 53–56.

²⁵¹ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 113–124.11). This passage was copied and utilised by Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams for his own biography of Glo bo mKhan chen, his teacher; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 259.3–267.2). As the spelling A ma dpal is found in the writings of both Ngor chen and

chen's tradition, his presentation has to be considered one of the most authoritative. In Glo bo, he had received part of his religious training under the fourth abbot of Ngor, Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478), and Ngor chen's disciples Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan (d. 1476), Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486), and Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang (d. 1509). During his two sojourns in central Tibet (from 1489 to 1497 and 1506 to mid-1509), he also visited Ngor a few times, receiving teachings from dKon mchog 'phel (1445–1514), the seventh abbot of Ngor.²⁵² Glo bo mKhan chen himself became the teacher of future generations of Ngor masters such as lHa mchog seng ge (1468–1535), ninth abbot, and dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), tenth abbot.²⁵³

The second account of Ngor chen's journeys to Glo bo is found in the Ngor chen biography by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. Although it is not as extensive as the account by Glo bo mKhan chen, it provides additional information and features some chronological variations that will be discussed below.²⁵⁴ Supplementary information can also be found in biographies of Ngor chen's disciples such as Mus chen and Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan.

Regarding the general history of Glo bo, we possess other Tibetan textual sources that also refer to Ngor chen's sojourns. One rare text is an unpublished genealogy of the ruling house of Glo bo, the *Blo bo chos rgyal rim byon rgyal rabs mu thi li'i 'phreng mdzes* (64 fols.).²⁵⁵

Glo bo mKhan chen, I will follow this spelling here. On the dating of A ma dpal, see VITALI 1997: 1033 and VITALI 2012a: [127], n. 184. With regard to the unclear date of A ma dpal's death, we find the interesting remark in the *Bo dong pañ chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 540.3–5) that A ma dpal disappeared from public life and apparently faked his own death: *yang sngon dpon po a ma dpal shi rdzus byas pa zhig gi tshel thams cad kyi mi snang bar byas pa'i mod la/ ma 'das par 'jig rten gyi rgyu [= gya gyu?] mang po byas zhes thos la/ rjes su tshes 'das pa rang gi tshel rje btsun gyis mkhyen nas 'u'i yon bdag chen po kho na ning nas grongs zer kyang langgs byung/ da rang skyas [= skyes?] chen po cig thegs pa 'dra gsung/ zhu ba 'bul mi med kyang rjes su 'dzin par mdzad/.*

²⁵² On Glo bo mKhan chen's religious training under those masters in Glo bo, see Part Four, 6.10. For his first unsuccessful attempt to visit central Tibet and his later two sojourns, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 249.2–250.1, 266.6–270.3, and 272.6–291.7), respectively. For his sojourns, see also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 273.2–3, 281.4–283.4, and 283.5–285.1), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 137.4–139.9 and 140.3–6), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 236.6–237.4 and 237.5–238.4), *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 139.5–140.5 and 143.2–144.2), and KRAMER 2008: 69–72. When he reached Ngor for the first time in about 1490, Glo bo mKhan chen was accompanied by his nephew Chos rje Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the son of Glo bo mKhan chen's elder brother bKra shis mgon (d. 1489?); see the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 139.5–6). For his first stays at Ngor (1490, late 1494 or early 1495, late 1495 or early 1496, and 1497) and studies under dKon mchog 'phel, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 268.4–7), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 281.5–282.1), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 137.4–11), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 237.2–4), and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 139.5–6 and 143.2–144.2). At Ngor, he functioned on the twelfth day of the first half of the twelfth month of the female fire-hare year (*shing mo yos bu*; i.e., early January 1496) as ceremonial master in the novice-monk ordination of Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams; see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 466.1–3) and *Sa skya lo tsā ba'i rnam thar* (pp. 166.19–169.8). For his visits to Ngor during his second sojourn (two months between late 1506 and early 1507 and from around the fourth to fifth months of 1509) and meetings with dKon mchog 'phel, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 276.7–277.1 and 283.1–5) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 283.6 and 284.4–5). At Ngor, he also acted in the fifth month of 1509 as ceremonial master in the layman and novice-monk ordinations of dKon mchog lhun grub; see the *dKon mchog lhun grub gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 180.3–6) and *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 237.3–238.1). For teachings he received from dKon mchog 'phel during both journeys, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 503.5–504.3). On some confusion regarding the dates of Glo bo mKhan chen's sojourns, see JACKSON 1984: 141–142, n. 41. Note that A mes zhabs in his *bDe mchog chos 'byung* made a couple of mistakes in dating those and other events.

²⁵³ On lHa mchog seng ge's and dKon mchog lhun grub's studies under Glo bo mKhan chen and their Glo bo sojourns, see Part Four, 6.10.

²⁵⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 536.1–541.2). Surprisingly, Mus chen only provides a succinct account of little historical value; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 461.6–462.3).

²⁵⁵ David Jackson kindly granted me access to this manuscript in form of a Wylie-typed Word document. According to JACKSON 1984: 115, “the main part of the work (up to f. 48) was composed in the first half of the

Other local works from Glo bo known as *mol bas* provide further historical information. They consist of public discourses or speeches that were fixed in writing and recited, for instance, during religious gatherings. They were discussed by David Jackson in his book *Mollas of Mustang*.²⁵⁶ Other valuable documents, such as temple *dkar chags*, were reproduced by Ramesh K. Dhungel in his *The Kingdom of Lo (Mustang)*.²⁵⁷ Moreover, the late sMon thang mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin (1925–2004) wrote a modern history of Glo bo, the *Glo ljongs chos kyi zhing sar bstan pa 'phel rim gyi dkar chag dwangs shel me long*.²⁵⁸

However, these diverse sources often contain conflicting information that is difficult to disentangle. But as the accounts of Glo bo mKhan chen and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs are generally considered the most authoritative ones, I shall follow them in my presentation, supplementing variations and inconsistencies from those other mostly local sources from Glo bo.

Over the last sixty years, our knowledge of the history of Glo bo and its royal house has been enriched by the research of scholars such as Giuseppe Tucci, David Jackson, Charles Ramble, Roberto Vitali, Karl-Heinz Everding, Ramesh Dhungel, and Jowita Kramer.²⁵⁹ Thus I like to refer the reader to their publications for an investigation into Glo bo's eventful and complicated history. In this chapter, I shall especially focus on the preceptor donee–ruler donor relationship that existed between Ngor chen and the rulers of Glo bo. I will discuss the historical context of Ngor chen's invitation and investigate their joint efforts in promoting Buddhism through founding monastic communities and other religious projects. I will first present in translation the respective passages of each of Ngor chen's journeys from both the Ngor chen biography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen's autobiography and then discuss the events described therein. I will conclude this section with some remarks on the impact of Ngor chen's activities for the further development of Buddhism in Glo bo, outlining how the preceptor donee–ruler donor relationship was maintained by later Ngor masters and rulers of Glo bo.

seventeenth century, the time of king Bsam-grub-rdo-rje and his son Bsam-grub-rab-brtan. Part two, a later addendum, was written during the life of the king Dbang-rgyal-rdo-rje (fl. 1790) and this addition brought the account up to date at that time." For a description of the text, see *Ibid.*: 115–119. For an image of one folio of another version of the same work, recording the activities of A mgon bzang po, the son of A ma dpal, see DHUNGEL 2002: Photo Plates and Fascimiles, An annal of religious history of the Kingdom of Lo (Mustang), pages 16 & 17 from an incomplete old text.

²⁵⁶ See JACKSON 1984. For a description of the individual works, see *Ibid.*: 25–31.

²⁵⁷ See DHUNGEL 2002: [207]–289, Appendix III, Tibetan Documents.

²⁵⁸ This publication consists of a compilation of works written by mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin over different periods of time. Some of the information provided seems less reliable than others. Although the author lists the sources for some of his writings (*Glo bo'i dkar chag*, p. 58), he does not refer to them in the actual presentation of the history of Glo bo. His work is also partly based on oral accounts that constitute a valuable source for the common reception of Glo bo's history, but their historicity appears doubtful. Note that bKra shis bstan 'dzin dates most of the events one sixty-year cycle too early. Roberto Vitali records two further works by bKra shis bstan 'dzin, which were not accessible to me: (1) *'Phags bod mkhas grub gong mas bstan dgon khyab spel thugs kyi 'phrin las 'od stong 'phros pa'i bka' drin rjes bzhag dgon sde khag gi dkar chag dran bskul mun sgron* and (2) *sMon thang chos sde brag dkar theg gling gi dkar chag*; see VITALI 2012a: 225 and 229, respectively.

²⁵⁹ For instance, see TUCCI [1953] 1973, TUCCI 1956: 15–35, PEISSEL [1967] 1992, JACKSON 1976/77, JACKSON 1978, JACKSON 1980, JACKSON 1984, JACKSON 2010a: 150–156, RAMBLE and VINDING 1987, RAMBLE 1996, RAMBLE 2008: [23]–42, VITALI 1996, VITALI 1997, VITALI 1999, VITALI 2003, VITALI 2012a, EVERDING 2000, KRAMER 2008, and LO BUE 2010a. On the religious activities in Glo bo of the late bCo brygad Khri chen Rin po che Thub bstan legs bshad rgya mtsho (1919–2007), see JACKSON (in press).

6.1 First Invitation by the Glo bo Ruler A ma dpal

Prior to the actual presentation of Ngor chen's journeys to Glo bo, both Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen relate an account that describes the circumstances of Ngor chen's first invitation, which had been extended by A ma dpal, ruler of Glo bo.²⁶⁰

[Sangs rgyas phun tshogs's account:]²⁶¹

Moreover, when [he] had concentrated in that way [his activities] exclusively on teaching, numerous inviting parties appeared in front of this Lord from rGya hor [i.e., China and Mongolia?], mDo khams, Glo bo, and other [places]. [He], however, thought to teach, which constitutes the basis of the [Buddha's] doctrine, and not to travel elsewhere. But owing to insistent requests, [he] examined what would be better: [to visit] sMad mDo khams or sTod mNga' ris. As a result, sTod mNga' ris appeared in [his] meditative investigation (or divination) and [he] went [there]. Brag dkar Sems dpa' chen po bSod nams rin chen stated: "[Ngor chen] examined what would be better for them [i.e., the Buddha's doctrine and sentient beings?], [activities] such as one-pointed spiritual practice [or] teaching. As a result, [he] considered teaching [more] beneficial. Saying 'I will examine whether the extensive propagation of the flawless doctrine [of the Buddha] would be better for the trainees [of] sTod [or] sMad,' [he] perceived [the trainees] in the sTod region [as more] suitable and followed the invitation. [In sTod, he] spread the [Buddha's] teachings [and] spiritually ripened and liberated the trainees."²⁶²

In fact, if [one] presents [those events] in more detail, [Ngor chen] travelled three times to Glo bo, the first [time] from Sa skya and the two later [times] from E waṃ.

Now, as for how the prophecy of [Ngor chen's] journey to the sTod region occurred, [it is as follows]: Fearing, as previously mentioned, that [his] teaching activities would be interrupted, and particularly after Lo tsā ba Ngag dbang had reasoned that even if [he] would have gone to mNga' ris, no benefit would have had ensued, [Ngor chen] was convinced not to visit the sTod region. The night when [he] thought to send [his] reply into the direction [of] Glo bo, [he had] a dream that [he] recounted [as follows]: "[It] was said 'Go to mNga' ris,' and then there was a group of thirteen white umbrellas with loosely dangling ends right in front of [Sa skya's] Zi thang [bla brang]."²⁶³ [He] dreamed that all [umbrellas] with [their] golden top ornaments were walking without anybody holding [them]. After that, [he] made up his mind to travel up [to Glo bo]. This [dream] was also explained [to have been] a sign that thirteen throne-holders [with] umbrella carriers would emerge.

²⁶⁰ For a modern account mainly based on the presentations of both Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 67.6–70.2).

²⁶¹ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 1.2(a).

²⁶² I am unable to identify the source of this quotation. Its author was a disciple of Ngor chen affiliated with one of his monastic foundations in gTing skyes; see Part Four, 10.

²⁶³ On the Zi thang bla brang, the residence of Zang tsha bSod nam rgyal mtshan, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (p. 135.12–20), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 67b2–68a1 and 75a3), and SCHOENING 1990: 22, Map 2 (no. 1), 40, and 44.

[Glo bo mKhan chen's account:]²⁶⁴

Simply hearing others uttering the name of rJe btsun rDo rje 'chang Kun dga' bzang po, [A ma dpal] was moved by a wave of faith. By exerting [himself] very much in [his] trying to search for the Supreme Spiritual Mentor, [he] sent the first invitation at a time when the Lord resided in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum at the Great Monastic Seat, Glorious Sa skya [Monastery]. At that time, Lo tstsha ba Ngag dbang grags pa had returned to the Monastic Seat from mNga' ris and had a conversation with the Dharma Lord. [He] apparently reasoned that there would ensue no large benefit even if [Ngor chen] would travel to mNga' ris. Hence, [Ngor chen] completed [his] reply and so forth that for now [he] would not travel up [to Glo bo]. But since there occurred a very auspicious omen and so forth in a dream [he had] that night, [he] also changed [his] previously completed letter [, and wrote]:

Relying on a spiritual mentor who shows the unmistakable path,
 Training progressively in the perfectly pure discipline,
 Hearing the teachings of the Sugata; [these] three activities
 Are the three gates to initially entering into the Dharma.

Acting properly [in line with the law of] cause and result and [according to the principle of] what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected,
 Cultivating compassion for infinite living beings,
 Contemplating on the profound meaning of being free from elaborations;
 [these] three
 Are the three gates to intermediately developing the sacred Dharma.

Delighting the [Three] Jewels with vast offerings,
 Reading many flawless scriptures,
 Relying on a monastic community that possesses learning and contemplation;
 [these] three
 Are the three gates to finally enriching the teachings [of the Buddha].

Understanding in such a way, you of very good fortune,
 Should take on monastic ordination after having abandoned attachment for
 [Your] retinue, possessions, wife, and so forth.
 [It] will be beneficial for the teachings [of the Buddha] and living beings, oh
 [Great King].

[Ngor chen] clarified in detail [his] reasons [for changing his mind] to the religious masters and [his] friends [at Sa skya]. As a symbolic gift [to accompany his] letter, [he] then sent a small book urging [A ma dpal to practice] the Dharma and also [the following] message: "As an auspicious connection for the flourishing of both Sūtra and Mantra [of the Buddha's] teachings with you taking on monastic ordination, [I] have sent a yellow coloured prayer flag [consisting of] two joined square [measures]. [This] was sent on the twenty-fifth [day] of the tenth month of the horse year [i.e., 1426] from the Great Monastery of Glorious Sa skya. May [it] be highly virtuous!"

²⁶⁴ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 2.1(a). For another translation, cf. KRAMER 2008: 144–145.

These two presentations reveal that by the mid-1420s, Ngor chen had become one of the foremost and most highly sought masters at Sa skya. His excellent reputation as a teacher was not confined to gTsang, but had spread far beyond central Tibet. To follow Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, Ngor chen had received invitations from eastern Tibet (mDo khams) and even from as far as China and Mongolia. But since the persons behind those invitations are not further specified, it is impossible know their individual identities. At the same time, this enumeration may also have been in part a stylistic device of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs to introduce the episode about Ngor chen's journeys to Glo bo, stressing his status as an important and popular master of the Sa skya school to whom invitations were flowing from different Tibetan regions and even from foreign countries.

Initially, Ngor chen is portrayed as having no intention to accept the invitation to Glo bo, because he did not want to interrupt his teaching activities at Sa skya. He was further supported in that decision by Lo tsā ba Ngag dbang grags pa, a master who had just returned from a visit to mNga' ris and told Ngor chen that even if he went there, his endeavours would be in vain. From the biography of Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po (1371–1439), we learn that this Ngag dbang grags pa was one of the royal preceptors of Khri rgyal bSod nams lde (b. 1370, r. 1390?–1440), the king of Mang yul Gung thang. He was also a teacher of Chos dpal bzang po and had in about the mid-1420s sojourned in Glo bo along with a large entourage.²⁶⁵ Thus the reference to his return from a journey to mNga' ris most likely refers to his coming back from Glo bo. Obviously, his own experiences came up for discussion with Ngor chen and prompted him to give Ngor chen a very bleak assessment. Ngor chen thus drafted a reply to A ma dpal, declining his invitation. But owing to an auspicious dream, he changed his mind.²⁶⁶ Reformulating his answer, he sent it along with presents to A ma dpal. Once again visionary experiences played a special role in Ngor chen's decision making; at least according to his biographers.

Glo bo mKhan chen seems to have seen the original messages that were sent by Ngor chen to A ma dpal. They are partly preserved in quotations given by Glo bo mKhan chen in his autobiography. From that passage, we come to know that Ngor chen's reply was written at Sa skya and dated to the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of 1426. Thus we can conclude that A ma dpal had most likely extended his first invitation during the same year. Interestingly, neither form of the reply—neither the versified instructions, which consist of a highly condensed presentation of the Buddhist Mahāyāna path, nor the short personal message—actually mentions his having accepted A ma dpal's invitation, nor do they refer to any future plans to travel to Glo bo.

6.2 A ma dpal and the Royal Line of Glo bo

The genesis and advent to power of the royal line of Glo bo, the sMon (or sMos) thang pa, is an uncertain narrative in the history of Glo bo, mainly due to the dissenting opinions and variant views conveyed by the Tibetan source material. This difficult topic has been the focus of research conducted by such scholars as Giuseppe Tucci, David Jackson,

²⁶⁵ See the *Bla chen gyi rnam thar* (fols. 13a2, 23a6–b6 and 30a7), EVERDING 2000: 118–121, and EHRHARD (forthcoming). On Khri rgyal bSod nams lde, see EVERDING 2000: 496–508 and *passim*.

²⁶⁶ Note that according to the presentation of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, Ngor chen had not yet finished writing any letter when he experienced that dream.

Roberto Vitali, and Karl-Heinz Everding,²⁶⁷ the latter two holding different views and theories.²⁶⁸ In general, it is believed that A ma dpal was the great founder of the royal line of Glo bo, who succeeded in establishing its territory as an independent kingdom.²⁶⁹ But the Tibetan sources also present both A ma dpal's grandfather and father, Shes rab bla ma and Chos skyong 'bum, as two highly influential family members who secured a powerful position for their family, already acting as *de facto* rulers of Glo bo.²⁷⁰ Roberto Vitali presents in his recent study—*A Short History of Mustang (11th–15th century)*—a detailed investigation into this question by comparing a variety of related sources.²⁷¹ He thereby reaches the conclusion:²⁷²

In order to establish his kingdom as the paramount power of the region, A ma dpal put a twofold secular strategy into practice. On the one hand, he had to eliminate potential competition within the borders of Glo bo and crush the ambitions of other powerful noble families of the land. On the other, he had to defeat the other kingdoms of mNga' ris before he could lay claim to being the undisputed lord of a number of lands in the Western Himalaya. Given that he not only led Glo bo's surge to independent status but also secured for it absolute predominance over rival powers, A ma dpal should be considered as the ruler responsible for Mustang greatness rather than as the founder of the kingdom or its dynasty.

In the following pages, I shall not go into more details about this period of Glo bo's history, but will concentrate on a particular episode from the Ngor chen biography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, namely the episode in which he introduces the person of A ma dpal and his advent to power:²⁷³

Next, [I will discuss] the history of the inviting party, the Ruler of Glo bo, the Great Patron of the [Buddha's] teachings, dGe sbyong A me dpal, the father [and] sons. [It] is said that this Drung dGe sbyong ba [was prophesied in] the *Mañjuśrīmūlatantra* and occurs in a prediction of Slob dpon Padma[sambhava].²⁷⁴ He was a government official of mNga' ris rDzong kha. [His] clan was gNam ru Khyung, the same as that of previous *siddhas* such as rJe btsun Mi la.²⁷⁵ Since this

²⁶⁷ See Tucci 1956: 17–18, JACKSON 1976/77, JACKSON 1978, JACKSON 1980, JACKSON 1984, VITALI 1996, VITALI 1997, VITALI 2012a, and EVERDING 2000. For genealogical charts of the royal line of Glo bo, see DHUNGEL 2002: 77–78 and [120] and JACKSON 1984: 133–135. See also EVERDING 2000: Table 3 and VITALI 2012a: 125–126.

²⁶⁸ Compare, for example, VITALI 1996: 432–436, VITALI 1997, and VITALI 2012a with EVERDING 2000: 276–277, 360–363, 396–424, 462–481, 502–505, and 525–535. For a discussion of the different viewpoints, see KRAMER 2008: 17–19.

²⁶⁹ See EVERDING 2000: 525–528 and JACKSON 1984: 119. On the life and career of A ma dpal, see JACKSON 1984: 119–123, KRAMER 2008: 19–22, and VITALI 2012a: [127]–149.

²⁷⁰ See EVERDING 2000: 421, 454–458, and 502–505, JACKSON 1978: 214–217, JACKSON 1984: 113–115, 119, 146–147, and 153, n. 7, VITALI 1996: 480, n. 812, 483–485, and 488, and VITALI 2012a: [103]–131.

²⁷¹ Roberto Vitali does not refer to the critique expressed by EVERDING 2000. He also acknowledges neither Jowita Kramer's publication on the life of Glo bo mKhan chen (KRAMER 2008) nor the comments formulated by JACKSON 2010a: 152–153 regarding the initial layout of the Byams chen lha khang at Glo bo sMon thang.

²⁷² VITALI 2012a: 131.

²⁷³ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 1.2(b). For a partially translation, cf. JACKSON 1984: 111. For other translations, cf. also EVERDING 2000: 421 and 437, VITALI 1996: 502, n. 847, and VITALI 2012a: 128, n. 185.

²⁷⁴ For Padmasambhava's prophecy, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 113.12–114.6). See also JACKSON 1984: 146 and 153, n. 11 and KRAMER 2008: [143]–144. The original source of the prophecy has not been identified yet.

²⁷⁵ The Tibetan sources trace the lineage of Glo bo's ruling house back to different origins. According to Glo bo mKhan chen, who himself was a member of that house, it originates from the Sa gnam lineage of the Khyung

A me dpal was knowledgeable, 'Bum sde mgon, the Religious King of mNga' ris rDzong dkar of the stainless lineage of the Tibetan Religious Kings, appointed [him] as district officer of a [previously] built fort in Glo bo called gTsang rang Bya pho'i ze ba, which was explained as constituting one of the *glang gi las thabs bcu gsum*. Later on, he personally controlled Glo bo. [His] orders were even followed in [regions] such as Dol po, Pu hrangs, and Gu ge.²⁷⁶ At first, he invited Bo dong Pan chen [to Glo bo]. But not that much benefit ensued for the [Buddha's] doctrine. Hearing of the fame of this Vajradhara [i.e., Ngor chen], [A me dpal] invited with deeply believing trust and through great efforts [Ngor chen] again and again.

This passage briefly outlines the political career of A ma dpal and mentions important stepping stones in his rise to power as the ruler of Glo bo. A ma dpal is first presented as a government official who served at rDzong kha (or rDzong dkar), the capital of the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang, and was then promoted by its king 'Bum lde mgon (1253–1280) to the position of district governor (*rdzong dpon*) of the Bya pho'i ze ba fort ("cockscorn fort") at gTsang rang in Glo bo. Later on, he managed to gain control of the whole of Glo bo and also succeeded in extending his authority to the neighbouring areas of Gu ge, Pu hrangs, and Dol po. However, this presentation suffers from a major anachronism, because by the time of A ma dpal's birth in 1388, 'Bum lde mgon had already been dead for more than a century.²⁷⁷ So it must be that the wrong Gung thang king is named. Nevertheless, this passage provides important hints regarding the relation between Gung thang and Glo bo, as 'Bum lde mgon was a highly important figure, not only in the history of Gung thang but also for the whole of eastern mNga' ris.²⁷⁸ With the political backing and military help of Sa skya, he managed to re-establish Gung thang's former principality as a much larger kingdom, also incorporating in his domain Upper and Lower Glo bo (Glo stod smad) as well as Dol po. Since 1267, 'Bum lde mgon ruled these newly established dominions with the support of Sa skya and the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). He set up an administrative system based on the reorganisation of the territory into "Thirteen Groups of a Hundred" (*brgya tsho bcu gsum*). These regional units were connected through a network of newly built fortresses that served both administrative and military purposes.²⁷⁹ Three of these fortresses were

po clan; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 113.7–10): *bdag cag gi rigs rus la sogs pa ni/ bod kyi mi rigs khyung po'i rus tshan sa gnam zhes bya ba/ mnga' ris gung thang gi rje btsad rnams kyi las kha 'dzin pa'i rigs yin/ dang po snga mo dus su bon po'i drang srong 'ga' re dang/ rje btsun mi la la sogs pa grags che ba 'ga' zhi byung yang/*. For a discussion of the origin and nomadic provenance of the ruling house of Glo bo, see EVERDING 2000: 317, 360–363, 418–422, 502–505, and 525–528, JACKSON 1984: 96–114, VITALI 1996: 432–436, and VITALI 1997. For the most recent contribution, see VITALI 2012a: 14–20, [42]–61, 89–91, and [103]–126. On the gNam ru clan, see also the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 273.1–6) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 151.5–153.1).

²⁷⁶ The *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 257.3) reads: *phyis glo bo'i khong gis sger du tshong/ dol po pu hrangs/ gu ge sogs la'ang lung 'gro ba byung/*; whereas the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 4–6* (fol. 37b4) has *sger du chong* instead of *sger du tshong*. The two terms *sger du tshong* (or *chong*) and *lung 'gro ba* are lexically unattested. My translation is based on explanations by Tsering Lama (Lumbini, 23 July 2012) and Khang gсар rGan lags 'Jam dbyangs ye shes (Rajpur, 20 September 2012). According to Tsering Lama, *sger du chong* can be understood in the sense of *sger* (*du*) *bdag* (privately owning). My translation is further supported by the structure of the whole passage, which presents the advent to power of A ma dpal from a government official of rDzong kha to the ruler of Glo bo. Cf. VITALI 2012a: 128, n. 185, who translates this passage as: "(...) Subsequently [A ma dpal] set up his own trade marts in Glo bo, which he was able to extend to the lands of Dol po, Pu hrangs and Gu ge." For the conclusions Vitali draws from his translation, see Part Four, n. 286.

²⁷⁷ On this anachronism, see also VITALI 1997: 1032–1033 and VITALI 2012a: 127–128.

²⁷⁸ On 'Bum lde mgon and his reign, see EVERDING 2000: [391]–440.

²⁷⁹ On the *brgya tsho bcu gsum*, see EVERDING 2000: 398–409 and JACKSON 1978: 211. According to EVERDING 2000: 398, the system of the *brgya tsho bcu gsum* was modelled after the system of the *khri skor bcu gsum* by which

established in Glo bo: the Ni ri g.Ya' rdzong dkar po and the gTsang rang Bya pho'i ze ba in Upper Glo and the Mu khun Srin rdzong in Lower Glo.²⁸⁰ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs calls this network of fortifications by the name “Thirteen Acts of the Ox” (*glang gi las thabs bcu gsum*). However, the original use of this term goes back to songs (*glu*) that 'Bum lde mgon composed in praise of his own accomplishments, the “Acts of the Ox” (*glang gi las stabs*). The name of these songs became associated with the formation of Gung thang's administrative system of the Thirteen Groups of One Hundred (*brgya tsho bcu gsum*) and thus was used in reference to the fortresses built by 'Bum lde mgon.²⁸¹

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs portrays A ma dpal as an official who first served under Gung thang at rDzong kha before being appointed to the position of district governor (*rdzong dpon*) of Bya pho'i ze ba; both offices that had also been held by his forefathers.²⁸² The Bya pho'i ze ba fort seems to have constituted the traditional seat of Glo bo's ruling house prior to shifting further north to mKha' spyod, which served as A ma dpal's private seat, and to the capital city of sMon thang.²⁸³ However, in view of the powerful positions that his grandfather and father had occupied, A ma dpal probably did not begin his career as a mere official under the government of Gung thang and also probably did not serve as an ordinary district governor (*rdzong dpon*) of Bya pho'i ze ba.²⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs probably correctly described his official titles. Roberto Vitali explains:²⁸⁵

One of the most important points in A ma dpal's political strategy, and one which may have engendered this confusion, was that he renewed relations with Gung thang by refraining from disputing the latter's nominal control over the wider region of mNga' ris smad. He recognised the superior authority of the *bla zhang* [the ruling king and his heir apparent] of Gung thang for a part of his reign, but nevertheless ruled independently.

As correctly stated by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, A ma dpal became an independent ruler over the whole of Glo bo, crushing local rival powers and extending his sphere of authority as far as Dol po, Pu hrangs, and Gu ge.²⁸⁶

the Yuan-Sa skya alliance had ruled Tibet. Cf. VITALI 2012a: 53, who remarks that Gung thang became in 1267 a *khri skor* comprising Glo bo, Dol po, and Gung thang, “notably one year before the *khri skor bcu gsum* system was inaugurated in dBus gTsang by the Sa skya pa on behalf of the Yuan.” On this *khri skor*, see also JACKSON 1978: 216–217. On the network of fortresses, see EVERDING 2000: 409–423 and JACKSON 1976/77: 45.

²⁸⁰ On these three forts, see EVERDING 2000: 417–422. In contrast to the other two, Bya pho'i ze ba did not constitute the seat of a *brgya dpon*; see *Ibid.*: 421–422.

²⁸¹ On the *glang gi las stabs bcu gsum*, see EVERDING 2000: 423 and 435–438. 'Bum lde mgon refers to himself as an ox, a nickname that was bestowed upon him when he was as a child at Sa skya. For this story, see *Ibid.*: 436. For a slightly different understanding of the same story, cf. VITALI 1996: 391–392, n. 633 and VITALI 2012a: 43–44, n. 73. The latter translates *glang gi las stabs bcu gsum* as “thirteen districts established by the campaigns of the ox” (VITALI 1996: 391–392, n. 633 and VITALI 1997: 1028, n. 16) or as “thirteen feats of the ox” (VITALI 2012a: 43–44, n. 73).

²⁸² See EVERDING 2000: 421, 454–458, and 502–505, JACKSON 1978: 214–217, JACKSON 1984: 113–115, 119, 146–147, and 153, n. 7, VITALI 1996: 480, n. 812, 483–485, and 488, and VITALI 2012a: [103]–131.

²⁸³ For the location of Bya pho'i ze ba at gTsang rang, see JACKSON 1984: 223, Map B (Tsarang), PEISSEL 1992: [33], map (Tsarang) and [77], map (Tsarang), and RAMBLE 2008: [25], Figure 1.2 (Tsarang). Note that the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 66.13 and 219.12) employs the spelling Bya pho'i ze sgro instead of Bya pho'i ze ba.

²⁸⁴ See VITALI 2012a: 128.

²⁸⁵ VITALI 2012a: 128.

²⁸⁶ See JACKSON 1978: 216–217, JACKSON 1980: 133, JACKSON 1984: 146–147, VITALI 1996: 488, VITALI 1997: 1032–1033, and VITALI 2012a: [127]–149. Note that VITALI 2012a: 129–130 understands Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' statement on A ma dpal's seizing and expansion of power in a different way: “A ma dpal can be credited with

Along with, or perhaps due to, their aggressive political activities and many military campaigns (out of contrition), the early kings of Glo bo distinguished themselves also as religious patrons of both Buddhism and Bon.²⁸⁷ Prior to inviting Ngor chen, A ma dpal had invited to Glo bo the great scholar Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal, though his activities did not exert a similar impact on the religious history of Glo bo as Ngor chen's did.²⁸⁸ According to the Paṅ chen's own biography,²⁸⁹ A ma dpal did indeed invite him, and two episodes attest to his presence in Glo bo. However, since these episodes are not dated—and they are found in different parts of the biography arranged under topical rather than chronological aspects—it is difficult to tell whether Bo dong Paṅ chen visited once or twice.²⁹⁰

The first episode relates that while visiting Glo bo, Bo dong Paṅ chen was invited to the monastery of mKhar stengs, which was home to a large community of meditators staying in a one-year retreat (*lo sgrub*). At that monastery, he granted as a group teaching (*tshogs chos*) both the empowerment of Sarvavid Vairocana and the rite for generating *bodhicitta*, prompting the meditators to interrupt their retreat.²⁹¹

The second episode is more extensive and deals with the foundation of a fort (*rdzong*) and temple (*lha khang*), which probably can be identified as mKha' spyod, A ma dpal's

another fundamental contribution to the fortunes of Glo bo. He was able to secure unprecedented prosperity for his kingdom. He oversaw a lucrative trade with the neighbouring countries, setting up barter marts in Dol po, Gu ge and Pu hrang by means of taking control of the passes that led from the plateau to the lowlands." Prior to that, VITALI 1997: 1024 mentioned: "It is also significant that the NCnt [= *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2], during the zenith of the Glo sMos-thang dynasty, the most powerful ever to emerge from the nomadic clans of the area, does not speak of the conquests of A-ma-dpal, the kingdom's founder, but of the establishment of his trade marts (NCnt 537)." This point is further stressed by VITALI 1997: 1032 and VITALI 2012a: 128, 147, and 154. With regard to the political power of the Glo bo kings, VITALI 2012a: 131 points out that their military campaigns "were of modest proportions, never extending beyond the regional dimensions, although the Mustang royal family exalted warfare beyond regional boundaries in at least one case (...)"

²⁸⁷ Research conducted by Charles Ramble shows that A ma dpal and his son A mgon bzang po also patronised the commissioning of Bon scriptures. Charles Ramble presented some of his findings in the lecture "Recent Textual Discoveries in the Caves of Mustang, Nepal," August 19, 2010, 12th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS), August 15–21, 2010, Vancouver, Canada. Unfortunately, as pointed out by VITALI 2012a: 144–146 and 149–155, the Tibetan sources do not provide us with any information about Ngor chen's attitude towards the military campaigns waged by the rulers of Glo bo, which occurred during the intervals between his sojourns in Glo bo and even during one of his sojourns there.

²⁸⁸ Bo dong Paṅ chen's invitation is also mentioned in the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 16a) and *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (p. 39a2–6). In addition to Bo dong Paṅ chen, bKra shis bstan 'dzin records that prior to Ngor chen's invitation, A ma dpal had also invited masters of the rNying ma, bKa' brgyud, and 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud schools; see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 67.6–16).

²⁸⁹ For a short description of this biography by Yar 'brog pa dGe bsnyen 'Jigs med 'bangs (alias Nam mkha' bzang po) from the lineage of Sa skya dPon chen Ag len, see EVERDING 2000: 217–223. Among the collected works of Bo dong Paṅ chen, we find two letters addressed to a certain Nam mkha' bzang po, whose titles are specified as yar 'brog khri dpon and yar 'brog dmag dpon. He might be the same person as Bo dong Paṅ chen's biographer. For those two letters, see the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi gsung 'bum gsar rnyed* (vol. 4, pp. 341–362 and pp. 385.3–390), respectively. Together with his nephew, Yar 'brog Khri dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, that Nam mkha' bzang po was, according to EHRHARD 2002: 60, n. 28, "responsible for executing the writings of Bo-dong Chos-rje in sNa-dkar rtse as xylographic prints (...)." On that project, see also EHRHARD 2000a: 13. For an English summary of the biography of Bo dong Paṅ chen, see DIEMBERGER et al. 1997: 41–97. See also WANGDU and DIEMBERGER 1996: 15. Recently, another biography of Bo dong Paṅ chen by Mi bskyod rdo rje (alias Nam mkha' nyi ma) has become available; see the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi gsung 'bum gsar rnyed* (vol. 2, pp. 383–549) and *Lo rgyus rnam thar* 4 (vol. 116, pp. 261–429).

²⁹⁰ See EVERDING: 2000: 222, who interprets these two episodes as relating to two different visits.

²⁹¹ See the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi rnam thar* (pp. 401.3–402.5).

new seat in northern Upper Glo.²⁹² When dPon po Ama dpal decided to build a fort on a mountain called Ri, which was inhabited by malevolent spirits, he requested Bo dong Paṅ chen to perform the ritual for subjugating the ground (*sa 'dul*). The latter accepted and arrived along with a party of about hundred local and visiting monks. To appease the different classes of spirits and deities, Bo dong Paṅ chen performed the relevant *gtor ma* offerings (*chab gtor*, *klu gtor*, *'byung po'i gtor ma*, and *mchod gtor*) on a large scale, thereby making the place suitable for construction. At the same site, A ma dpal also planned to establish a temple for which he intended to use the timber from an abandoned temple in Dol po.²⁹³ However, so far nobody had been powerful enough to appease the local deities and spirits of that temple. Thus A ma dpal requested Bo dong Paṅ chen to draft a letter to the local deity that controlled that temple (*gzhi bdag*). Initially, Bo dong Paṅ chen was reluctant to follow the ruler's pleading, because he had given up the practice of issuing such letters. But due to the persistence of A ma dpal—who presented many arguments in his favour, pointing out, for instance, the difficulties that would be created for many villages (*mi sde*) if new timber had to be brought all the way up from the lowlands (*rong*)—Bo dong Paṅ chen finally gave in and wrote a letter, whose words are preserved in his biography.²⁹⁴ After a group of monks performed *gtor ma* offerings and read the letter out loud to the local place-owning deity in Dol po, A ma dpal finally succeeded in gaining the timber for his new temple.²⁹⁵ This episode helps us understand the chronology and foundational narrative of mKha' spyod, though Bo dong Paṅ chen's biography does not refer to that fort by its name. The only name given is that of the mountain where the fort and temple were built: Ri, a mountain named Mountain (*ri bya ba'i ri*).²⁹⁶

From the account by Glo bo mKhan chen, we learn that Ngor chen consecrated the Cakrasaṃvara Palace at the similarly named “Great Mountain” (Ri bo che) in 1436 during his second sojourn in Glo bo.²⁹⁷ Considering that the Cakrasaṃvara Palace was situated at Ri bo che and that, according to the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, the mKha' spyod Cakrasaṃvara Palace was established along with a temple (*gtsug lag khang*), it seems justified to identify the construction site mentioned in Bo dong Paṅ chen's biography as mKha' spyod.²⁹⁸

²⁹² On mKha' spyod, see JACKSON 1984: 146 and VITALI 2012a: 134–135. For a description of mKha' spyod, see PEISSEL 1992: 160–162. According to VITALI 1999: 3, the ruins of mKha' spyod “can still be seen today on the higher (i.e. eastern) of the two hills overlooking Glo sMos thang on the northern side of the Glo sMos thang river.” For a picture of that site, see HARRISON 2003: 60 and LO BUE 2010a: 16, fig. 1.6. With regard to the foundation of mKha' spyod, VITALI 2012a: 134–135, n. 204 refers to a versified episode contained in the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 51.15–53.5). However, in my understanding, this episode refers to the foundation of the capital city of sMon thang. See also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 72.16–75.8), where the same passage is given in prose.

²⁹³ This remark suggests that Dol po was under A ma dpal's control.

²⁹⁴ For a quotation of this letter, see the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi rnam thar* (pp. 481.6–482.4).

²⁹⁵ See the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi rnam thar* (pp. 480.1–483.1).

²⁹⁶ See the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 480.1–2): *blo bor phebs dus kyi ri bya ba'i ri gnyan po cig la dpon po a ma dpal rdzong bya bar 'dod nas*]. See also the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 480.5): *der khong gi zhu bas* da 'dir lha khang gcig bzhengs pa lags].

²⁹⁷ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 117.12–13): *de nas ri bo cher 'khor lo sdom pa'i pho brang chen po bzhengs pa la rab tu gnas pa rgyas par mdzad de*]. It remains unclear from this passage who founded the Cakrasaṃvara Palace. See also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 119.7–10): *de nas yang sa phyogs 'di nyid kyi ri bo cher phebs tel 'khor lo bde mchog gi pho brang blos slang ba bzhi du bsgrubs pa la*]. (...).

²⁹⁸ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 16b–17a): *mkha' spyod bde mchog gi pho brang gtsug lag khang dang bcas pa*]. (...) *sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la mdzad pa rgya cher mdzad pa ni mdo tsam smos kyi*]. See also the *rTsa drang*s kyi *bems chag* (p. 8): (...) *mkha' spyod pho brang gtsug lag khang dang bcas*]] *legs par bzhengs pas* (...). For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 42.4). See also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 219.18–220.1): *mkha' spyod ri rtse gtsug lag khang dang pho brang rdzong dang*]. In addition, see also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 93.14–17): *slar yang gu ge nas glo bo'i kha skyor ri bo'i rdzong nang pho brang du gdan zhus kyi zhabs gsol 'khod*]] *rje nyid kyi 'khor lo bde mchog gi pho brang blos blang bzhi lo hi ba'i lugs kyi dkyl 'khor bzhengs tel*]. The *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 94.14–15) also provides the reason for

Since, according to the Tibetan sources, the visit or visits of Bo dong Paṅ chen predated Ngor chen's first (1427–1428), we can propose that A ma dpal conceived of and began the work on his new seat prior to 1427. Nevertheless, if we consider the long period between the temple's initial planning until its consecration by Ngor chen in 1436, it is questionable whether Bo dong Paṅ chen's biography and Glo bo mKhan chen's autobiography refer to one and the same building. But the statement that A ma dpal established the Cakrasaṃvara Palace along with a temple might serve as a plausible explanation. Thus he would have first built his fort along with a temple and then, at a later point in time, established the Cakrasaṃvara Palace, which was consecrated by Ngor chen in 1436.²⁹⁹

In addition, Bo dong Paṅ chen possibly visited Glo bo after Ngor chen had sojourned there for the first time. This assumption is based on an episode from the Paṅ chen's biography that mentions a journey to Glo bo following the invitation of dPon po A mgon (i.e., A mgon bzang po), the son and heir of A ma dpal, though not much can be learned about his activities then. It is only mentioned that he gave teachings and met with mKhas grub chen po dPal ldan sangs rgyas (1391–1455) and his disciples.³⁰⁰ That Bo dong Paṅ chen continued his relation with the royal house of Glo bo is further attested by two "eulogies [in which each line ends in] po" (*po bstod*) he is said to have written about the Byams chen temple at Glo bo sMon thang. Unfortunately, they have not survived, but their existence is mentioned in the index to the fourth volume of a newly found collection of the Paṅ chen's writings.³⁰¹ Given the fact that the Byams chen was completed only in 1448 and Bo dong Paṅ chen passed away in 1451, it could be supposed that he wrote his verse of praise from afar.

6.3 Travel Ban for Sa skya Scholars

Ngor chen's first two journeys to Glo bo (1427–1428 and 1436–1437) coincided with the period of the Hevajra body *maṅḍala* controversy that had been stirred up by mKhas grub rJe in the early 1420s. As previously mentioned, Ngor chen was engaged in this debate and in 1426, he composed his refutations of mKhas grub rJe's polemic assault. The intensity of the controversy had inflamed passions to such an extent that Sa skya issued a decree prohibiting her own scholars from travelling. This also affected Ngor chen's travels to Glo bo. It is, however, difficult to establish a time frame for the travel ban, because the two sources that mention it are not consistent with one another. While Sangs

naming both the Cakrasaṃvara Palace and the fort mKha' spyod: *ri bo dbyibs legs ri dwags kyi snying 'dra ba'i rdzong bcas la mkha' spyod du mtshan gsol mdzadl*. Glo bo mKhan chen both practiced and taught at the Cakrasaṃvara Palace; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 252.4–7, 266.6–7, and 270.6–271.1). His biography also refers to the palace as (*ri bo che*) *'khor lo sdom pa'i pho brang mkha' spyod 'phrul spe dkar po*; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 252.4 and 270.6).

²⁹⁹ According to the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 72.16–73.4), A ma dpal was already residing at mKha' spyod after Ngor chen's first sojourn (1427–1428).

³⁰⁰ See the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 394.1–3): *de nas blo bor dpon po a mgon gyis spyang drangs nas phebs te/ dpal ldan 'dus pa'i chos kyi dga' ston chen pos tshim par mdzad cing/ der mkhas grub chen po dpal ldan sangs rgyas pa dang dpon slob mjal/ de'i nyin me tog gi char chen po bsam gyis mi khyab pa babs par gyur zhes thos sol*. This visit is also mentioned by DIEMBERGER et al. 1997: 77. dPal ldan sangs rgyas is also called Shel dkar ba sDe snod gsum pa dPal ldan sangs rgyas; see the *Bo dong paṅ chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 410.2–3). As mNgon dga' Chos sde mKhan po dPal ldan sangs rgyas, he is recorded as a disciple of Ngor chen; see Part Four, 10.

³⁰¹ See the *Bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyal gyi gsung 'bum gsar rnyed skor* (vol. 4, p. 6.3–4).

rgyas phun tshogs presents it as a prelude to Ngor chen's first visit, Glo bo mKhan chen mentions it within the context of Ngor chen's second journey.

[Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' account:]³⁰²

Hearing of the fame of this Vajradhara [i.e., Ngor chen], [A me dpal] invited with deeply believing trust and through great efforts [Ngor chen] again and again. But since previously the dispute had emerged that the view of the *Tantra Trilogy* [of *Hevajra*] along with the *Esoteric Instructions* [i.e., the *Lam 'bras*] of the Sa skya pa was "mind only" and that the Sa skya pa body *maṇḍala* [practice of *Hevajra*] was not taught from the *tantras* [and] treatises, the monastic rule was established that there was no place where Sa skya pa *dge bshes* could go. Thereupon [Ngor chen] got no opportunity to visit [Glo bo]. For the written reply [together with versified] instructions that [Ngor chen] sent at that time and on how [he] offered a book encouraging [A me dpal to practice] the Dharma, [one] should take a look at the [auto]biography of rJe mKhan chen [i.e., Glo bo mKhan chen]. As [A me dpal] invited [him] with great insistence even then, [Ngor chen] journeyed three times to Glo bo.

[Glo bo mKhan chen's account:]³⁰³

Later on, thinking to invite [Ngor chen] again for a second time, [A ma dpal] submitted a series of messages. As one of [Ngor chen's] early answers, [he] received a reply, saying: "This time, initially, [I] have planned to come. However, owing to the writing of a text by lCang ra bKa' bcu pa [i.e., mKhas grub rJe] stating that the *Hevajra* body *maṇḍala* is not an authentic teaching, all in residence at the Monastic Seat [i.e., Sa skya] got angry. A decree has been issued that [Sa skya pa] *dge bshes* not go anywhere until this [matter] has been resolved. This is why I, too, got no opportunity to come. If one master in Gu ge came [to Glo bo], would [your] intention be fulfilled? [Provided that this] would not fulfil [your intention], if I have to come by all means, [I] will try to come for a short while if [you] could kindly arrange that [I] will not have to visit other places and [my stay] will not take a long time. Thus, to make things easier in case an inviting party shows up from the neighbouring areas (lit. "right [and] left") there [in Glo bo], and for [seeking] the trust of those present here [at Sa skya], [I] request [you] to provide [me] with an official signed and sealed letter [of invitation]."

Glo bo mKhan chen's account appears to be more authoritative. Similar to Ngor chen's previous letter, he was also able to lay his hands on letters that Ngor chen had sent in reply to the second invitation by A ma dpal. The presentation of Glo bo mKhan chen along with the quotation from Ngor chen's letter indicates that the travel ban was enacted sometime between 1428 and 1436. Thus it would have been in force after both

³⁰² For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 1.2(b-d). One might be inclined to understand this passage as a general remark not related to any of those three journeys. But such a reading is not permitted by the structure of the whole passage, which, at least in my understanding, connects it to Ngor chen's first journey.

³⁰³ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 2.1(c). For other translations, cf. KRAMER 2008: 146-147 and VITALI 2012a: 139. Glo bo mKhan chen's account served as the basis for the presentation as found in the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 91.9-92.3).

the writing of Ngor chen's refutation in 1426 and his first Glo bo sojourn (1427–1428).³⁰⁴ The fact that Ngor chen could visit Glo bo in 1436 thus meant that the ban had been lifted. In the letter that he had sent to A ma dpal, as cited by Glo bo mKhan chen, he was apparently describing a prohibition made in the past that was still continuing at his time of writing, which is why he offered to send someone from Gu ge and, if that would not be sufficient, requested an official invitation with seal from A ma dpal to convince the people at Sa skya to let him go.³⁰⁵

By contrast, the account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs is difficult to interpret.³⁰⁶ According to him, the travel ban became effective prior to Ngor chen's first journey. To prove his point, he refers to Glo bo mKhan chen's biography (and not autobiography) for details such as the letter, the versified instructions, and the book that Ngor chen had sent in reply to A ma dpal. However, as translated above, these things were actually sent in reply to Ngor chen's first invitation and not to his second. Thus Sangs rgyas phun tshogs apparently confused the occasion of Ngor chen's invitations as well as the replies he sent. It is possible that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had no direct access to the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen and copied those parts from another work or just reported what he had heard. This would also account for other inconsistencies encountered in his presentation of Ngor chen's Glo bo sojourns.

6.4 First Glo bo Sojourn (1427–1428)

In the autumn of 1427, Ngor chen embarked on his first journey to Glo bo.³⁰⁷ He departed from Sa skya nearly a year after he had sent his letter and presents in reply to A ma dpal's invitation. Both Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen describe Ngor chen's religious activities during his first Glo bo sojourn.

[Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' account:]³⁰⁸

As [A me dpal] invited [him] with great insistence even then, [Ngor chen] journeyed three times to Glo bo. Regarding the first [time], thinking, based on [his] previous dream, that [from his visit] there would ensue a benefit for the teachings [of the Buddha], [he] travelled [to Glo bo]. In the autumn of the sheep year [i.e., 1427], [he] installed the Lord Mus chen as [his] representative in the Shāk bzang [sKu 'bum], who then taught the Dharma [during Ngor chen's absence]. rJe Rin po che [i.e., Ngor chen], the master, and [his] disciples made a round trip in six months. At first, there was no complete *bKa' 'gyur* available in that land. [Ngor chen] then entirely commissioned [one set, taking] the Tantra section from Sa skya and searching in all directions for original [manuscripts] of the other [sections]. For an extensive [presentation], [one] should take a look at

³⁰⁴ Cf. JACKSON 2007: 355, who, based on Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' account, states that the travel ban was lifted after Ngor chen had written his two replies.

³⁰⁵ Another possibility would be to understand Ngor chen's answer as describing a past problem with the travel ban, implying that he now can either send someone from Gu ge or come himself briefly to Glo bo. But the travel ban would then still have been enacted sometime between 1428 and 1436.

³⁰⁶ Confusingly, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs also refers to the controversy regarding the philosophical nature of the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*, in which Ngor chen had written his refutation already in 1406.

³⁰⁷ On Ngor chen's first Glo bo sojourn, see also TUCCI 1956: 18–19 and VITALI 2012a: 136–139.

³⁰⁸ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 1.2(d). For another translation of the part on sTeng chen, cf. VITALI 2012a: 136, nn. 208–209.

the *bKa' 'gyur* catalogue written by the Lord. In the dKyil khang, [Ngor chen] commissioned the *bKa' 'gyur lha khang* [and] as [its] murals such [paintings] as the twelve *maṅḍalas* of the *sByong rgyud* [i.e., the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*]. At the Vinaya seminary of sTeng chen, [he] established a monastic institution, constructed a temple, [and] established the continual livelihood for hundred (or hundreds) of monks. [He] made the exposition of the Vinaya and *bodhisattva piṭaka* the principal [focus of this institution]. [He] founded Brag dkar Monastery Theg chen dar rgyas gling and laid the foundation for [its] temple. By way of the common path, such as [the bestowal of] a large number of novice-monk and full-monk ordinations, [Ngor chen] established many trainees in the teachings of the Buddha. Also, A me dpal, the Patron of the [Buddha's] teachings, took monastic ordination [as novice monk] and was given the name *bZang po rgyal mtshan*. [His] son [from the time] before he had taken monastic ordination was the Dharma King A mgon bzang po. His sons [in turn] included Tshangs pa bKra shis mgon and Glo bo mKhan chen.

[Glo bo mKhan chen's account:]³⁰⁹

Then, when [Ngor chen] visited [Glo bo] for the first time, [he] established a large Vinaya seminary, [which constitutes] the basis of the [Buddha's] doctrine. At that time, hardly any communities meeting the [minimal amount of] four fully ordained monks existed in Glo bo, mNga' ris. Nevertheless, [Ngor chen] set in place the auspicious conditions for assembling many hundreds of monks. [He] instituted the continual practice of more than seventy-two *maṅḍalas*, which are taught in the flawless Tantra classes. [He] established the basic conditions for preparing the holy scriptures of the entire *bKa' 'gyur* and the entire *bsTan 'gyur*. The Lord also taught the common trainees many [teachings] such as the *Pha rol du phyin pa'i lam gyi rim pa* and the *rGyal sras byang chub sems dpa'i lam bzang*. To the suitable uncommon ones, [he] taught the complete teachings of the *Vajrāvalīnāma-maṅḍalopāyikā* and the *Shin tu spros pa med pa'i man ngag* [i.e., a special practice of Raktayamāri], and to a group of a few [students] headed by the Patron [i.e., A ma dpal], [he] apparently also taught the *Oral Instructions* [i.e., the *Lam 'bras*]. Even the Patron himself took monastic ordination [as novice monk] and was given the name *bZang po rgyal mtshan*.

From the account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, we learn that Ngor chen departed from Sa skya in the autumn of 1427 and that his journey lasted about six months. Prior to his departure, he installed his chief disciple, Mus chen, as his representative in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum, his residence at Sa skya. A look at the biography of Mus chen reveals, however, that though Ngor chen had sent messengers to Mus to invite Mus chen, his disciple came to Sa skya only in 1428, when Ngor chen had already left.³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 2.1(b). For another translation, cf. KRAMER 2008: 146.

³¹⁰ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 599.4–6): *de'i ston chos rje bzang po'i zhabs mnga' ris su dbon [= dpon] po a ma dpal gyis gdan drangs pa'i rjes su| gsang sngags dbon po gzhon nu bzang po sogs grogs mched bduñ| chos rje'i bka' zhal dang bcas te| rje 'di nyid gdan 'dren byung bas| zhe gcig pa spre'u'i lo [i.e., 1428] la sa skyar phebs| dbyar shāk bzang sku 'bum du bzhugs nas| kham gtsang gi grwa pa rnam la rang rang gi blo dang 'tshams pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bskor bar mdzad dol| de'i ston chos rje mnga' ris nas phebs ma thag tu| slar yang gsung ngag rin po che zla ba bdun gyi bar du nyams khrid du zhus|. See also the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 216.1–3): *phyi lo lug lo [i.e., 1427] la rje ngor pa glo bor byon| de bar rje 'di sa skyar byon la bzhugs gsungs nas 'bod mi byung| 'di nas dpon slob 'ga' zhig byon sku 'bum du bzhugs| chos**

On his way to Glo bo, Ngor chen is said to have paid his respects to the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po of sKyid grong and to have also visited mNga' ris rDzong dkar, the capital of the kingdom of Gung thang, on that occasion. At rDzong dkar, he bestowed teachings on the king Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan (1404–1464, r. 1419–1464), who had probably invited Ngor chen to his royal seat, and also met the court chaplain, Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po, who engaged him and his entourage in a discussion, asking many questions of a tantric nature.³¹¹

While in Glo bo, Ngor chen commissioned a number of monastic foundations and sponsored other religious projects under the patronage of A ma dpal. Ngor chen is said to have commissioned a bKa' 'gyur lha khang along with its murals of the twelve *maṇḍalas* of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* inside a building designated as “*Maṇḍala Temple*” (dKyil khang).³¹² In his modern history of Glo bo, mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin locates the dKyil khang at gTsang rang, which was the place where A ma dpal had his seat and where Ngor chen is said to have stayed during his first sojourn.³¹³

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs relates that Ngor chen established at the Vinaya seminary ('dul grwa) of sTeng chen a monastery (*chos sde*), built a temple (*gtsug lag khang*), and established the continual livelihood for a monastic community of a hundred (or even hundreds) of monks. By contrast, Glo bo mKhan chen simply mentions the foundation of a large Vinaya seminary ('dul grwa) without specifying any location. As with the case of the dKyil khang, the Vinaya seminary ('dul grwa) of sTeng chen is difficult to locate, but a few sources refer to it.³¹⁴ The original foundation of sTeng chen dates back to the eleventh century and can be linked with the famous Vinaya master and translator Zhang zhung ba rGyal ba shes rab (fl. 11th century), who stood in the Vinaya transmission of the Upper Vinaya or Highland Vinaya (*stod 'dul*), which had been introduced to mNga' ris by the East Indian *paṇḍita* Dharmapāla. In his biography of lHa Bla ma Ye shes 'od (947–1019/24),³¹⁵ Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan provides us with the miraculous account that it was not rGyal ba shes rab himself, but rather his wooden gong (*ganḍi*)—a traditional device to call monks to the assembly—that had established sTeng chen. This wooden gong went to sTeng chen in Glo bo and established a monastic seminary of the Upper Vinaya tradition (*stod 'dul gyi grwa sa*). The sTeng chen seminary was under the control of Nying ri mNga' bdag brTse lde, who provided the community of *vinayadharas* ('dul ba 'dzin pa) with material support. The wooden gong then took flight and reached

rje gyag pa'i phar tshad kyi 'chad nyan pa slob dpon sangs rgyas 'phel dang/ tshul bzang ba gnyis la gyag tik dang/ dpe chos rin spungs sogs gsan zhing grwa skor ba mang po'i grogs ldan [= dan] madzad doll (...) rje ngor pa zla ba drug nas mar phebs/ sprel lo'i [i.e., 1428] smad bya lo'i [i.e., 1429] stod kyi bar zla ba bdun du lam 'bras gsungs/.

³¹¹ On this invitation to rDzong kha, see Part Two, 3.4.

³¹² Cf. VITALI 2012a: 137, who states that Ngor chen's biography “has nothing to say about this.”

³¹³ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 69.18–70.11). Another modern history specifies that the dKyil khang was part of the castle (*mkhar*) of gTsang rang; see the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 25.4–5). bKra shis bstan 'dzin further states that Ngor chen left Sa skya with a retinue of about fifty people and accompanied by hundreds of servants and horses; see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 69.15–18).

³¹⁴ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 9.3) lists among the students of 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, who prior to his installation as third abbot of Ngor had served for about ten years as abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling in Glo bo, a certain sTeng chen mKhan po Nam mkha' dpal bzang. Among the disciples of Go rams pa, the sixth abbot of Ngor, sTeng chen mKhan po Drung dKon mchog chos skyabs is listed; see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 133.19–20), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 333.7–9), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 6 (p. 84.14–15), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (p. 258.20). On dKon mchog chos skyabs, see also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 457.1) and *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 91a3–5).

³¹⁵ For a discussion of Ye shes 'od's dates based on Gu ge Paṇḍita's biography of Ye shes 'od, see the *mChan 'grel ti se'i mgul rgyan* (pp. 67–71, nn. 32–35).

Brag gdong (at 'Dzim?), where it established a large monastic institution that adhered to the Upper Vinaya tradition and the teachings of the Yoga tantric system. As Gu ge Paṇḍita reports, during his time, the miraculous wooden gong was still in existence.³¹⁶ Nying ri mNga' bdag rTse lde, the donor of sTeng chen's monastic community, was the king of Gu ge, who in 1076 patronised the famous Tibetan Buddhist religious council (*chos 'khor*), in which also Zhang zhung ba rGyal ba shes rab is said to have taken part.³¹⁷ Against this background, we can interpret Ngor chen's foundation at sTeng chen as re-establishing and expanding the old Vinaya seminary, but with the major difference that he most likely instituted the Vinaya tradition he adhered to, that is, that of the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrī.

A short passage on sTeng chen is also found in the biography of Shākya mchog ldan by Kun dga' grol mchog, suggesting that also Bo dong Paṇ chen might have paid a visit to sTeng chen. This passage has been summarised by David Jackson:³¹⁸

(...) Shākya-mchog-l dan in 1506 when commissioning some Lam-'bras lineage statues related how in Glo-bo later sectarianism led to the washing off at Glo-bo sTeng-chen of the murals depicting the life story of Bo-dong Paṇ-chen. Some local people of Mustang had spread about the baseless rumor that Bo-dong Paṇ-chen had been a rebirth of Klu-dkar-rgyal. This act of sectarian vandalism was deeply regretted by Shākya-mchog-l dan.

The foundation of the Vinaya seminary is also recorded in the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, which ascribes it to A ma dpal.³¹⁹ As does the historical record (*bem chag*) of rTsa drangs (= gTsang rang) Thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling.³²⁰ The story becomes even more muddled if we look into the Glo bo history of mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin, who

³¹⁶ See the *lHa bla ma ye shes 'od kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 312.5–313.3): *khyad par zhang zhung ba rgyal ba shes rab kyi mnga' ris skor gsum du 'dul ba 'dzin pa du ma rjes su bzung| dbus gtsang kham s gsum nas snyen [= bsnyen] par rdzogs pa dang rab byung zhu ba dang| 'dul ba'i slob gnyer byed mkhan grangs med pa yong ngo| dus gcig gi tshel| rgyal ba shes rab kyi gaṅde [= gaṅdi] glo bo stengs chen du phebs| der bstod [= stod] 'dul gyi grwa sa rnam par dag pa btsugs| nying ri mnga' bdag brtse [= rtse] ldes bzung bas| 'dul 'dzin rnam la mchod pa'i bzhis [= gzhis] dang| rkyen mang du btsugs sol yang gaṅde [= gaṅdi] de nas nam mkha' la 'phur| 'dzim gyis [= gyi?] brag gdong du sleb [= slebs] de [= der?] yang stod 'dul dang| yo ga'i grwa sa chen po btsugs sol gaṅde [= gaṅdi] de da dung yang yod do| 'di rnam bstan pa phyi dar gyi dang po yin no|. On this passage, see also VITALI 2012a: 23 and 136. On remarks on this passage (i.e., on rGyal ba'i shes rab and the gaṅdi) by 'Dar tsha 'Khyung bdag, see the *mChan 'grel ti se'i mgul rgyan* (pp. 299–304, nn. 65–67). On the Vinaya lineage and translation activities of Zhang zhung ba rGyal ba shes rab, see the *Shes bya kun khyab* (pp. 222.28–223.7), *lHa bla ma ye shes 'od kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 309.3–313.3), and MARTIN 2013: 243–244, 252, and 255–259. For the Vinaya lineage of rGyal ba shes rab, see also the *mKhan brgyud kyi rnam thar* (fol. 1b2–3).*

³¹⁷ On this religious council, see SHASTRI 1997. On king rTse lde, see VITALI 1996: 317–333 and *passim*. VITALI 2012a: 26 introduces rTse lde as the joint ruler of Gu ge, Pu hrangs, and La dwags.

³¹⁸ JACKSON 1996: 137, n. 294. For the corresponding Tibetan passage, see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 98b1–3).

³¹⁹ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 15b–16b): *khyad par sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la mdzad pa brlabs po che brjod na| bshad pa'i sde thub bstan bar [= dar] rgyas gling gi chos sde btsugs tel| gtsug lag khang| ston pa gto 'khor gyi gser khang dang bcas pa bzhengs| (...) thams cad mkhyen pa phyogs las rnam rgyal spyen drangs| bstan pa'i gzhi ma yin pa'i phyir| stengs chen gyi 'dul dgra [= grwa] bstugs| thams cad mkhyen pa gnyis pa lta bu| kun mkhyen kun dga' bzang po spyen drangs nas| theg pa chen po'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsam gyis mi khyab par bskor bar mdzad cing| bsnyen bkur zhabs tog yangs brlabs che ba bsgrubs|. Cf. VITALI 2012a: 136, who, based on this passage, states: "The *rgyal rabs* provides further details of Ngor chen's activity at that time. He built the *gtsug lag khang* at sTeng[s] chen." Cf. also *ibid.*: 136, n. 208.*

³²⁰ See the *rTsa drangs kyi bems chag* (pp. 7–8): *sa skyong chen po a ma dpal zhes pas| (...) dar rgyas gling du bshad pa'i grwa btsugs| steng chen dgon par 'dul ba'i bstan pa btsugs|. For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 42.2–3). On different understandings of the term *bem chag*, see JACKSON 1984: 125, SCHUH 1995: 6, and RAMBLE and VINDING 1987. On variant spellings of gTsang rang (rTsa drangs, rTse 'grang, rTse drangs, rTse brang, rTse rang, or rTswa rang), see the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 116.1–19).*

identifies sTeng chen with the aforementioned monastery of Thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling. It is said to have been designed by A ma dpal, and Ngor chen established his Vinaya seminary at that very spot.³²¹ Two local sources, the *Tsarang Molla* and a monastic constitution (*bca' yig*) of Thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling,³²² both ascribe its

³²¹ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 70.11–71.1): *steng chen du gtsang rang dgon sde thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling spyi lo 1368 [= 1427] rab byung drug [= bdun] pa'i me mo lug lor [i.e., 1427] a ma dpal gyi gsung bkod ltar phyag ttab mdzad pa/ chos rje kun dga' bzang pos dge tshul slong bsgrub cha mang dag sgrub gnang mdzad nas/ steng chen bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling du 'du [= 'dul] grwa btsugs gnang ste/ dge tshul slong brgya phrag la rgyun gyi 'tsho ba 'dzugs pa a ma dpal nas 'tsho brten phul gnang ba/ rab gnas cho ga dang 'brel ba'i 'dul ba dang/ byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod kyi bshad pa gtso bo mdzad nas chos 'khor bskor gnang mdzad/* In a versified passage, the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 51.8–10) only states: *glo gtsang rang bya mo ze sgro'i sgang/ dpon a ma dpal gyis mkhar rdzong ste/ dgon thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling/ dge tshul slong stong ra chos sde gtsugs [= btsugs]/* For a similar remark, see also the *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 65, 1st col., line 14–22). Similarly, LO BUE 2010a: 17 states: “On the occasion of his first visit, in 1427, Künga Zangpo restored the monastic college of Tsarang, consecrating its main building and murals illustrating 12 mandalas of the yoga class.”

³²² This *bca' yig* was authored by Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan blo gros mi zad pa'i sgra dbyangs (b. 1830s, d. 1890s), the fifty-fifth abbot of Ngor, who in 1884 had been appointed as abbot of Thub bstan bshad grub dar rgyas gling by A ham dNgos grub dpal 'bar 'jigs bral phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i sde. Following the king's request, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan wrote in 1886 at rTsa drangs Chos sde a new *bca' yig* for that monastery. He refers to his work in the colophon as *bCa' yig yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal po*, whereas the outer title of the work reads as *Chos rgyal a ham dngos grub dpal 'bar nas thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling zer ba'i rtsa drangs chos sde la gnang ba'i bca' yig*. For the *bca' yig*, see DHUNGEL 2002: 266–278, Document No. 19 (MHR doc. No. 26, Tib.). In his *bca' yig*, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan makes the striking remarks that Ngor chen was invited to Glo bo a total of five times and that Glo bo mkhan chen served as the eighth abbot of Ngor. The latter comment is interesting insofar that Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan is said to have written an addendum to the abbatial history of Ngor (*gdan rabs*), which is presumed to be lost; see JACKSON 1999a: 138 and 149–150. On Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, see also Part Four, 6.10. The related text passages from the *bca' yig* read as follows:

rTsa drangs kyi bca' yig (p. 267.14–23): *o rgyan chen po'i lung zin chos kyi rgyal po a me dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan zhes yongs su grags pa yab sras kyi rgyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che la lhag pa'i bya ba mdzad cing/ khyad par rgyal ba thub pa'i dbang po'i lung bstan pa'i skyes bu chen po rdor [= ngor] chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po lan lngar spyen drangs/ rtsa drangs du thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling zhes pa'i chos grwa btabs/ (...) chos rgyal chen po a ngon bzang po'i rigs sras/ e waṃ pa'i gdan rabs brgyad pa/ glo bo mkhan chen mnyam med bsod nams lham grub legs pa'i 'byung gnas rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po nas rims par sku gdung zhabs drung rims byon rnams khrir 'phell.*

rTsa drangs kyi bca' yig (pp. 267.25–268.14): *sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa mar gribs su song te nyams gud ji cher byung skabs/ chos kyi rgyal po a ham dngos grub dpal 'bar 'jigs bral phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i sde yangs [= yongs] su grags pa'i thugs rje bka' drin gyi gzigs pas <khyabs te> [= khyab ste] glo bo chos sde pho dgon mo dgon spyi dang/ khyad par chos sde 'di nyid la dmigs su thugs rjes gzigs dang gzigs mus dang/ ma zad shing sbrel lor e waṃ pa'i gdan rabs nga bzhi pa/ bdag ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan blo gros mi zad pa'i sgra dbyangs su bod pas snyoms las kyi mthar thug pa/ rje gong ma'i chos khrir mnga' gsol mdzad/ (...) mi dbang chos kyi rgyal po e ham dbang rgyal rdo rje'i brtsal bas bca' yig dang/ bems chag gzhir bzahg te (...) sngon gyi bca' yig rim can dang/ da lta'i chos rgyal dka' [= bka'] drin mtshungs med nas sa stag lor bca' yig gsar gnang mdzad pa gzhir bzahg bstan don zhabs tog su dmigs nas bca' yig dang gtong theb phyogs sbrags lta bu'i yid chung mdor bsduṣ don mtshan bcu gsum gyis rnam grangs su bkod de phul ba la (...).*

rTsa drangs kyi bca' yig (p. 278.2–8): *ces go bar bya ba'i yi ge bca' yig yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal po zhes bya ba 'di ni/ yul nyang smad shri'i e waṃ chos kyi 'byung gnas kyi khri thog nga bzhi pa/ mkhan chen ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan blo gros ma'i [= mi] zad pa'i sgra dbyangs su 'bod pas/ bsam pa dag cing/ sbyor ba gus pas/ rgyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che la lhag pa'i bsam pa bzang po bskyed pa'i brgyud drangs nas/ rab byung bco lnga pa'i nang bses [= gses] me pho khyi yi lo/ dbyug pa zla ba'i dkar phyogs kyi dka' [= dga'] ba gsum pa la rtsa drangs chos sde'i gzims char gsang sngags smin grol pho brag du bris pa de zhin [= bzhin] du 'grub par gyur cig/ (...).*

Another incomplete text, the *rTsa drangs rdo rje gdan gyi bems chag gsal ba'i me long* (DHUNGEL 2002: [207]–211, Document No. 1, MHR doc. No. 1, Tib.), ends with a passage similar in wording to the beginning of the *rTsa drangs kyi bca' yig*. It refers, however, to the Glo bo king Chos kyi rgyal po A ham a ngon bstan 'dzin 'ja' [= 'jam] dpal dgra 'dul 'jigs bral phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i sde. On A ham bsTan 'dzin 'jam dpal dgra 'dul, see JACKSON 1984: 132.

According to the *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 64, 2nd col., line 5–18), there existed the tradition that the ruler of Glo bo installed one of his sons as abbot (*zhabs drung*) of Thub bstan bshad grub dar rgyas gling.

foundation to A ma dpal, but make no mention of sTeng chen or a Vinaya seminary.³²³ The recent writings of Ngag dbang 'jigs med, a monk born in Glo bo, might help to clarify this confusion. He states that sTeng chen had been the old name of the monastery located at gTsang rang, and that it was only in the seventeenth century when A ham bSam grub dpal 'bar built the present large temple (*gtsug lag khang*) that the monastery was newly named as Thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling.³²⁴ According to local tradition, the monastery at gTsang rang is considered to be one of the oldest in the whole of Glo bo and it was closely associated with (or even said to have been founded by) Ngor chen himself. It is further said that Ngor chen himself had bestowed teachings from its throne.³²⁵

During his first sojourn, Ngor chen also established the monastery of Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling and laid the foundation for its temple (*lha khang*).³²⁶ Although Glo bo mKhan chen does not refer to the foundation of that monastery, he records in agreement with Sangs rgyas phun tshogs that Brag dkar was consecrated by Ngor chen during his second sojourn. Glo bo mKhan chen's account does thus not rule out that Brag dkar was founded during Ngor chen's first sojourn and even supports such a claim, stating that Brag dkar had previously been planned by Ngor chen.³²⁷ By contrast, the *Tsarang Molla* claims that Brag dkar was established under the patronage of A mgon bzang po (1420–1482),³²⁸ the oldest son and main heir of A ma dpal. This would postdate the

³²³ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 9a–b): *khyad par du ngor chen rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po gdan drangs/ dbu yi mchod gnas su bkur/ zab pa dang rgya che ba'i chos gsar/ rtsang drangs thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling gi chos grwa btabs/ dge slong rnam par dag pa'i sdom ldan nyis stong rwa can gyi grangs ldan dge 'dun gyi sde btsugs/; and rTsa drangs kyi bca' yig* (p. 267.15–18): *khyad par rgyal ba thub pa'i dbang po'i lung bstan pa'i skyes bu chen po rdor [= ngor] chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po lan lngar spyen drangs/ rtsa drangs du thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling zhes pa'i chos grwa btabs/ dge 'dun stong ra ba can la bsnyen bkur mdzad/*. On the former passage, see JACKSON 1984: 42–43, n. 43, 147, and 154, n. 16, who considers that this ascription might have been a “fictitious claim.” Cf. VITALI 2012a: 137.

³²⁴ See the *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 65. 1st col., line 14 to 2nd col., line 5). See also Ngag dbang 'jigs med's earlier remarks in the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 105–106.4). On the foundation of the *gtsug lag khang*, see also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 222.7–11). On A ham bSam grub dpal 'bar, see DHUNGEL 2002: 105–109 and JACKSON 1984: 134 and 150.

³²⁵ Khang gsar rGan lags 'Jam dbyangs ye shes (Rajpur, 19 September 2012) and Lama Guru (Kathmandu, 14 December 2012). See also the *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 65. 1st col., line 14–22 and 2nd col., line 18–20) and *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 105.2–9). The *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 105.1–5) refers to the monastery as gTsang chos rDo rje gdan and states that it served as Ngor chen's second monastic seat (*gdan sa*). JACKSON (in press) also mentions that assumption while relating an account of bCo brgyad Khri chen Rin po che teaching the *Lam 'bras* from that throne at gTsang rang in 1977. This teaching was accompanied by the appearance of many natural signs, such as rainbows, that were considered by bCo brgyad Khri chen to be auspicious signs that Ngor chen was delighted with his teaching activities and he believed the rainbows to be manifestations of Ngor chen's blessings. JACKSON (in press) further mentions that gTsang rang constituted Ngor chen's main seat in Glo bo and was thus called gTsang rang rDo rje gdan. On that teaching and those signs, see also CHOGYE TRICHEN RINPOCHE 2003: 43–44.

³²⁶ See also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 71.1–5): *chos rje kun dga' bzang po brag dkar theg chen dar rgyas gling gi gtsug lag khang gi rmang gzhi rtsig 'gram spyi lo 1368 [= 1427] rab byung drug [= bdun] pa me mo lug lor [i.e., 1427] rmang btangs mdzad rjes brag dkar rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang rgyu tshad bzo dbyibs sogs ljags bkod kyang bstsal gnang mdzad pa de rnams gsung rnam las so/*. See also the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 17a): *brag dkar rdo rje 'chang khri gdan rgyab yol gtsug lag khang dang bcas pa/ (...) la sogs tel sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la mdzad pa rgya cher mdzad pa ni mdo tsam smos kyil*.

³²⁷ Cf. VITALI 2012a: 139, who perceives a contradiction in the accounts of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen.

³²⁸ On the dates of A mgon bzang po, see VITALI 2012a: 151, nn. 235–236. On his person and activities, see *Ibid.*: 149–173. Cf. the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 35.15–16), which dates the birth of A mgon bzang po to 1419.

foundation to about the time of Ngor chen's third sojourn (1447–1449).³²⁹ At some later time, Brag dkar fell into ruin, owing to natural disasters such as falling rocks, landslides, and earthquakes, and it was thus shifted to the gCong rong Monastery. But even at this new site the monastery did not persist as it was destroyed in a fire. Only its main image, a statue of Vajradhara, survived, which was moved by A ham 'Jam dpal dgra 'dul (d. 1837) to the sMon thang Chos sde Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling.³³⁰

Those accounts of Ngor chen's activities during his first sojourn indicate that he had aimed at creating the basic conditions for the flourishing of a strictly Vinaya-based monasticism. This is illustrated, for example, by the refoundation of the Vinaya seminar of sTeng chen and the large number of monastic ordinations he is said to have given; even A ma dpal, the king himself, took monastic ordination from Ngor chen.³³¹ In the same line stand his efforts to commission an entire set of the *bKa' 'gyur* canon to provide the newly founded monastic communities with the most basic Buddhist scriptures. I will discuss below in more detail his commissioning of manuscript copies of the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*. Along with these activities, according to Glo bo mKhan chen, Ngor chen met his responsibility as a great tantric teacher and established the continual practice (of *sgrub mchod* rituals?) of more than seventy-two *maṇḍalas* and bestowed important teaching cycles, such as of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Lam 'bras*.

6.5 Second Glo bo Sojourn (1436–1437)

In 1436, nearly ten years after his first visit, Ngor chen embarked on his second journey to Glo bo.³³² In the meantime, he had founded his new monastic seat at Ngor in 1429 and the controversy regarding the authenticity of the Hevajra body *maṇḍala* practice had led to the aforementioned travel ban for Sa skya scholars. The fact that Ngor chen could visit Glo bo in 1436 thus meant that the ban had been lifted. In the letter that he had sent to

³²⁹ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fols. 9b8–10a3): *chos rgyal chen po 'di la sras bzhi te/ chos rgyal a mgon bzang po ni/ (...)* *brag dkar theg chen gling bzhengs/*. On this passage, see also JACKSON 1984: 42–43, n. 6, and 147–148, who tends to reject that presentation. In addition, see also KRAMER 2008: 21, n. 62 and VITALI 2012a: 137–138.

³³⁰ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 25.10–26.14 and 43.18–44.1), *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 67, 1st col., line 4–19), and DHUNGEL 2002: 130. On A ham 'Jam dpal dgra 'dul, see DHUNGEL 2002: [120] and 130–131 and JACKSON 1984: 131–132, 135, and 151. According to oral history, the monastery was burned down by the local people when a corpse that had been placed in the *gtsug lag khang* according to a local custom came back to life and took control of the monks. The account of the destruction by fire explains why *bKra shis bstan 'dzin* refers to the Vajradhara image as *rDo rje 'chang me thub ma* (i.e., the statue of Vajradhara that cannot be destroyed by fire); see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 76.10–11): *brag dkar theg chen gling du/ rdo rje 'chang me thub ma bzhugs/*. On the *rDo rje 'chang me thub ma*, see also the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 26.11–17). For a picture of the ruins of Brag dkar, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (facing picture no. 33). According to TUCCI 1956: 18, n. 3, Brag dkar was located to the east of sMon thang.

³³¹ A ma dpal's monastic ordination (*rab tu byung ba: pravrajyā*) refers to his taking of novice-monk (*dge tshul: śrāmaṇera*) ordination. For other accounts that also mention his ordination, see, for instance, the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 18a): *zhes gsung mgur du byung ba ltar 'khor ba la snying po med par dgongs te snyigs dus kyi rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i drung du/ rang gi khyim nas khyim med par rab tu byung ste/ zab cing ches zab pa'i rnal 'byor thugs nyams su bzhes nas mkha' spyod bde mchog gi pho brang du sku tshe dang bsgrub pa snyom par zhal gyis bzhes te 'dag sbyar la bzhugs so/*; and *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 71.16–72.1): (...) *'khor ba la gzhan chags bral phyir rang sras a mgon bzang po la rgyal srid gnang nas/ rang nyid chos rje kun dga' bzang po las rab byung gi sdom pa mnos shing bzhes nas mtshan yang bzang po rgyal mtshan du gsol gnang mdzad/*. Cf. VITALI 2012a: 136, who states that “Ngor chen ordained A ma dpal under the *dge slong* vow.” It will become clear as we proceed that A ma dpal did not take full monastic ordination until Ngor chen's second Glo bo sojourn.

³³² On Ngor chen's second sojourn, see also TUCCI 1956: 19 and VITALI 2012a: 139–144. Cf. LO BUE 2010a: 18, who states that during his second visit, Ngor chen “laid the foundations of the monastic centre of Tupten Dargyeling at Tsarang.”

A ma dpal, as cited by Glo bo mKhan chen, he was apparently describing a prohibition made in the past that was still continuing at his time of writing, which is why he requested an official invitation with seal from A ma dpal to convince the people at Sa skya to let him go. Sa skya was also directly involved, seemingly hoping to regain some of its lost influence in Glo bo, as illustrated by the honorary titles it conferred via Ngor chen on members of Glo bo's ruling house.

The accounts by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen of Ngor chen's activities during his second sojourn differ a bit. Though not contradictory in general, they each present a variety of information that is not recorded in the other.³³³ This supports my assumption that, though Sangs rgyas phun tshogs refers to Glo bo mKhan chen's account, he had no direct access to it.

[Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' account:]³³⁴

The second (lit. "intermediate") time that [Ngor chen] travelled [to Glo bo] was the dragon year [i.e., 1436] and also at that time, [he] invited Mus chen to Ngor. [The latter] taught [during Ngor chen's absence] such [teachings] as the *Lam 'bras*. The Lord himself travelled to Glo bo. [He] turned many [times] the Wheel of Dharma [giving] such [teachings] as the empowerments for the *Vajrāvalī* and a few individual empowerments (*zur bka'*),³³⁵ the reading transmission for the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, and the exposition of the *sByong rgyud* [i.e., the *Sarvadurgatiparīśodhana-tantra*]. [He] bestowed full monastic ordination on many [monks], such as the Great Patron [i.e., A me dpal], and also taught to a couple of fortunate trainees uncommon [teachings] such as the instructions of the *Lam 'bras*. For the Great Patron, [he] composed an extraordinary Hevajra visualisation practice and offered [it to him],³³⁶ which is why [it] has not been included in [Ngor chen's] collected works. [He] also provided advice for commissioning the previously [begun] *bKa' 'gyur* [and] initiated [the making of] a *bKa' 'gyur* [written] with pure gold. [He] performed other [activities] such as restoring rNam rgyal Chos sde. Furthermore, the Great Monk [i.e., A me dpal] established the principal conditions for holding *sgrub mchod* [rituals] in the first month: [he provided] fields from [the site of] Sa dkar [encompassing] land for one hundred *khal* and set up the boundary markers. Bla ma rJe [i.e., Ngor chen] gave empowerments for about fifty-seven *maṅḍalas* that are taught from the different Tantra classes. [He] provided the monastic communities of the individual monasteries with a list [recording] all kinds of texts including *sādhana*s [and] *maṅḍala* rituals of those [empowerments], communicated [their] uncorrupted ritual procedures, such as of the required *homa* rites, and made a great proclamation which *sādhana*s, *maṅḍalas*, and the like should be performed. The well-known statement "At present, among the three [provinces] of mNga' ris skor gsum, dBus gtsang, and Khams, [it] has only been Glo

³³³ Ngor chen's second sojourn is also presented by bKra shis bstan 'dzin; see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 91.9–97.4). This presentation constitutes a combination of the accounts by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen, which is supplemented by further information and partly rearranged under a different chronology.

³³⁴ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 1.2(e). For a translation of the passage about Ngor chen's visit to Pu hrangs, cf. VITALI 2012a: 142–143, n. 230.

³³⁵ On the term *zur bka'*, see Part Three, n. 617.

³³⁶ On this work, see Part Five, 2.

bo [where] the pure and correct ritual practices of the *sgrub mchod* [rituals have been preserved]" appears to be true.

On this occasion of [Ngor chen's] second-time [visit], bZhi sde pa Drung rNam rtse held talks with Gu ge King Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po. As a result, Gu ge mKhan chen Chos nyid seng ge, the religious master, [and his] disciples were sent to invite [Ngor chen]. Chos rje Rin po che [i.e., Ngor chen], the religious master, [along with] about one hundred disciples were invited to Pu hrangs. [They] resided at rGyal de'u for three months. [Ngor chen] bestowed empowerments—such as of Kālacakra, Ḍākārṇava, [and] the condensed family of Vajrapañjara—on [masters] such as Bla ma sPrul sku and others from Gu ge, mKhan po Rin bsod from Pi ti, a few Mar yul pa *dge bshes*, [and] many monks along with [those from] Pu hrangs. At Nya rtse rig, [he] instituted the Kālacakra *sgrub mchod* [and] at bZhi sde, the *sgrub mchod* of Ḍākārṇava. [He] turned on a large scale the Wheel of Dharma [giving] expositions of such [works] as the *Dvikalpa* [i.e., the *Hevajratantra*], the *sByong rgyud* [i.e., the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*], [and] the *Dus 'khor 'grel chen* [i.e., Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā*]; [he], moreover, [granted] to many living beings the great generation of *bodhicitta* and [teachings on] mind training. The Gu ge King took monastic ordination [as novice monk], and [Ngor chen] established a new, great monastery. There also exists an outstanding chronology of the Buddhist doctrine that [Ngor chen] made at that time.³³⁷ Offering uncountable rows of butter lamps in front of the Kha char Jo bo, [he] prayed for the flourishing of the Buddha's doctrine. Likewise, [he] also did at sKyid grong.

[Glo bo mKhan chen's account:]³³⁸

Later on, thinking to invite [Ngor chen] again for a second time, [A ma dpal] submitted a series of messages. As one of [Ngor chen's] early answers, [he] received a reply, saying: "This time, initially, [I] have planned to come. However, owing to the writing of a text by lCang ra bKa' bcu pa [i.e., mKhas grub rJe] stating that the Hevajra body *maṇḍala* is not an authentic teaching, all in residence at the Monastic Seat [i.e., Sa skya] got angry. A decree has been issued that [Sa skya pa] *dge bshes* not go anywhere until this [matter] has been resolved. This is why I, too, got no opportunity to come. If one master in Gu ge came [to Glo bo], would [your] intention be fulfilled? [Provided that this] would not fulfil [your intention], if I have to come by all means, [I] will try to come for a short while if [you] could kindly arrange that [I] will not have to visit other places and [my stay] will not take a long time. Thus, to make things easier in case an inviting party shows up from the neighbouring areas (lit. "right [and] left") there [in Glo bo], and for [seeking] the trust of those present here [at Sa skya], [I] request [you] to provide [me] with an official signed and sealed letter [of invitation]."

Since [A ma dpal] then again extended [his] invitation, the Religious Master came [along with a group of his] disciples larger than before. [Ngor chen] performed the consecration of [both] the golden statue of the great Vajradhara of Brag dkar Theg chen gling and [its] upper and lower temples, which [he all] had

³³⁷ This religious chronology is cited in the account by Glo bo mKhan chen translated below.

³³⁸ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 2.1(c-d). For another translation, cf. KRAMER 2008: 146–150.

designed previously [during his first sojourn]. Laying out the large *maṇḍala* of the condensed family of *Ḍākinīvajrapañjara* in a proper arrangement [consisting of] a variety of precious substances matching the colours of a coloured sand *maṇḍala*, [one] says that [he] performed the consecration via that [*maṇḍala*] along with a comprehensive eye-opening ritual [of the golden Vajradhara statue]. That was also the first time that my master, the Great Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, heard by the Lord Vajradhara [i.e., Ngor chen] the bestowal of a ripening empowerment.

Afterwards, [Ngor chen] performed an elaborate consecration for the large Cakrasaṃvara Palace constructed at Ri bo che. On the occasion of festivities [held] at that time, the Religious King [i.e., A ma dpal or A mgon bzang po] was awarded the title *chen po* from [Sa skya's bZhi thog] Bla brang chen po and the General [i.e., A mo gha] was awarded the title *da ra kha che* from the Rin chen sgang bla brang. [These conferments] were apparently made owing to the orders given by the Lord [Ngor chen].

Then, once again, Drung rNam rtse formed a connection [between Gu ge King Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po and Ngor chen], which had persisted from the previous [visit], and the Dharma Lord travelled [to Kha char] to present offering lamps to the Three Jo bo Brothers of Pu hrangs. Concurring with that, also the Royal Divinity from Gu ge, the Venerable One, travelled [to Kha char] and took [both] monastic ordination [as novice monk] and full monastic ordination. [Ngor chen] filled the [king's] mind stream with the *bodhisattva* vow and numerous bestowals of empowerments and also beautified [him] with the ornament of the superior ascetic practice of a *vidyādhara*.

At that time, [Ngor chen] also composed a chronology of the Buddha's doctrine, explaining: "Up to the time of the calculation of the Dharma Lord, the great Sa skya Paṇḍita, 3,350 years had elapsed since the Buddha had passed away, which is similar [to my own calculation].³³⁹ Then, [when] fifty-nine years had passed, in the first spring month [of] the female fire-ox year [i.e., 1277], the Lama of the Three Spheres [of Existence], the Dharma King 'Phags pa Rin po che, turned at Chu mig dPal gyi bde chen on a large scale the Wheel of Dharma for seventy thousand saffron-clad monks. By calculating the time, 3,410 years had elapsed since the Buddha had passed away. Then, [when] forty-six years had passed, in the male water-dog year [i.e., 1322], the Great Lama Kun dga' blo gros took full monastic ordination.³⁴⁰ By calculating the time, 3,456 years had elapsed [since the Buddha had passed away]. Then, when fifty years had passed, in the male water-mouse year [i.e., in 1372], the Great Scholar of the Sciences of the Five Fields, bSod

³³⁹ On the calculation employed by Sa skya Paṇḍita, see SEYFORTH RUEGG 1992: 272: "Among the best known of the chronologies established in Tibet is the one adopted by the Sa skya pa order (among others). It is attested in the *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* by the Sa skya hierarch bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182). And at the time of the religious assembly (*chos 'khor*) convened at the death of the hierarch Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), Sa paṅ Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) also employed this reckoning. It places the Nirvāṇa just after a *me mo phag* year (corresponding to 2134 B. C.) at the start of a *sa pho byi ba* year (corresponding to c. 2133 B. C.), dating it 3300 years before the composition of the *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* in 1167 (*me mo phag*), and 3350 (!) years before the death of Grags pa rgyal mtshan in 1216 (*me mo byi ba*)."

³⁴⁰ Bla chen Kun dga' blo gros (rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po) (1299–1327) was one of the many sons of bDag nyid chen po bZang po dpal, the eleventh throne-holder of Sa skya. For his biographical sketch, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 302.4–307.5) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 39a2–40a2). For his full monastic ordination in 1322, see the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 304.2–305.2) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 39a6–b1). On him, see also PETECH 1990: 80–81 and 144, Part Three, n. 83, and Part Four, 6.8.

nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, turned at the great temple of Bo dong E chos 'byung the Wheel of Dharma for thirty thousand monks.³⁴¹ By that time, 3,506 years had elapsed since the Buddha had passed away. Then, [when] one sixty-year cycle from the ox [year] [i.e., 1373] until the ox [year] [i.e., 1433] and three [more] years passed, during the fourth [year], in the male fire-dragon year [i.e., late 1436 or early 1437], the Dharma King Khri Phun tshogs lde took monastic ordination. By calculating the time, 3,569 years had passed since the Teacher had passed away and this year of the present year falls on the [3,5]70th."

[Ngor chen] bestowed the empowerment of Kālacakra at Nya rtse rig, a monastery of Pu hrangs, bestowed the empowerment of bCom ldan 'das mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho at bZhi sde, [another] monastery [of Pu hrangs], instituted the [offering of] *rten gtor* at Chos 'khor Khwa char, and performed an innumerable mass of [novice-]monk and full-monk ordinations.

Then, [Ngor chen] travelled once again to Ri bo che of this very region [of Glo bo] and established the Cakrasaṃvara Palace just like [the deity's] three-dimensional *maṇḍala*. Arranging in coloured sand the *maṇḍala* [of Cakrasaṃvara] according to Lūhipāda's system, the Lord himself performed in secret once again [the palace's] consecration. Afterwards, he resided [at Ri bo che] teaching many most profound instructions such as of the *Five Stages of Cakrasaṃvara Ghaṅṭāpāda* and *rTsa dbu ma*. [He] again formulated initial plans for future [projects] such as establishing the Great Monastery [i.e., Thub bstan dar rgyas gling], building the Byams pa chen po [temple], and instituting regular scholastic examination rounds [by Glo bo monks] at the Great Monastic Seat [i.e., Sa skya]. Also, on the Great Monk himself [i.e., A ma dpal], [he] bestowed the *Four Unbroken Practices* of the Glorious Sa skya pa and numerous most profound spiritual practices.³⁴² In particular, [he] gave the profound instructions of rJe btsun ma Nāro Khecarī and based on that, ensured that [A ma dpal] would obtain in [his] next rebirth also a purified [physical] support of a higher realm. After that, [Ngor chen] travelled [back] to the Great Monastic Seat [i.e., Sa skya].

Thus we see that after repeated invitations from A ma dpal, in 1436, Ngor chen embarked on his second journey to Glo bo.³⁴³ Prior to his departure, he is said to have once again invited Mus chen to Ngor to bestow teachings during his absence. By contrast, Mus chen's biography states that Mus chen stayed in Mus in 1436 and 1437 and only visited Ngor in 1439.³⁴⁴ He did, however, substitute for Ngor chen once more, but during his

³⁴¹ On this teaching by Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, see the *Bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar* 1 (fols. 42b3–43b7) and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (p. 346.3–5).

³⁴² JACKSON 2003b: 538 specifies those *Four Unbroken Practices* (*chag med bzhi*) as: "(1) Hevarja (Kye rdor lam dus), (2) Vajrayoginī (Nā ro mkha' spyod ma), (3) Virūpa (Bir srung), and (4) Guru-yoga (Lam zab)."

³⁴³ bKra shis bstan 'dzin remarks that A ma dpal had sent about twenty people with horses and pack mules to Ngor to invite Ngor chen, who subsequently left for Glo bo with a retinue of one hundred persons; see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 92.3–7). According to the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 21a), both Ngor chen's second and third invitation had been extended by A mgon bzang po, the son and heir of A ma dpal. This passage is preserved in the folio (fol. 17a3–4) of the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* as reproduced by DHUNGEL 2002: Photo Plates and Fascimiles, An annal of religious history of the Kingdom of Lo (Mustang), pages 16 & 17 from an incomplete old text: [*chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ba 'di ni*] *kham s gum chos kyi rgyal po[r] do rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po[r] rim pa gnyis kyi bar spyang drangs nas*].

³⁴⁴ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 607.4–608.2).

master's third Glo bo sojourn.³⁴⁵ Thus Sangs rgyas phun tshogs seemingly confused the occasion of Ngor chen's second and third journey.

Among the first activities while in Glo bo, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs refers to Ngor chen's bestowal of different teachings and ordinations. Now, A ma dpal, who had been ordained as a novice monk during Ngor chen's first visit, also took full monastic ordination. If we follow that account, Ngor chen focussed his further activities on facilitating the local monastic communities with an authentic system of tantric ritual and practice by instituting a high number of *sgrub mchod* rituals. For this purpose, he bestowed initiations into more than fifty *maṇḍalas* and determined on which textual basis the related *sādhana*s and *maṇḍala* rituals had to be performed.³⁴⁶ In these efforts, he was patronised by A ma dpal who secured the material support for holding the regular *sgrub mchod* rituals, supplying the monastic communities with land from his personal holdings at Sa dkar.³⁴⁷ Besides that, Ngor chen restored the old rNam rgyal Chos sde in Upper Glo. As this project is dealt with in more detail by Glo bo mKhan chen's account of Ngor chen's third visit, I will return to that topic in the next section.

Unlike Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, Glo bo mKhan chen begins his report with the consecration of monastic establishments and temples that Ngor chen performed. According to him, Ngor chen consecrated the upper and lower temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling along with its golden statue of Vajradhara. He also consecrated the Cakrasaṃvara Palace at mKha' spyod, and that he even did twice. As Brag dkar had been founded during Ngor chen's first sojourn, this account suggests that by the time of Ngor chen's second visit, the monastery had already been completed.³⁴⁸ In a similar line, we can deduce that A ma dpal's building activities at mKha' spyod had come to an end by about 1436.

According to later local sources, a group of four monasteries known as Gling bzhir dgon sde emerged about the same period of time. They were located in the four directions around the Cakrasaṃvara Palace of mKha' spyod, which constituted the centre: Ri zhing sDom ldan gling (or Ri/Re shid sDom gsum gling) in the east, Brag dkar Theg chen gling in the south, Byams pa bShad grub gling in the west, and Phu phag bSam gtan gling in the north. In his history of Glo bo, mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin attributes the foundation of all four monasteries to A ma dpal and specifies in his history of Brag dkar that Ngor chen ordained thousands of monks in those monasteries.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 608.5–6) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 219.1–2).

³⁴⁶ According to Glo bo mKhan chen, Ngor chen had already instituted the continual practice of more than seventy-two *maṇḍalas* during his first sojourn.

³⁴⁷ bKra shis bstan 'dzin gives Brag dkar as an alternative name for Sa dkar; see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 95.17).

³⁴⁸ Although bKra shis bstan 'dzin records the completion and consecration of Brag dkar within the presentation of Ngor chen's second sojourn, he confusingly provides the following dating (*Glo bo'i dkar chag*, p. 92.10–16): *sngar gyi ljags bkod gnang ba'i brag dkar theg chen gling gi rten gts'o gser sku rdo rje 'chang sku tshad 'dom gang tsam dang/ gtsug lag khang steng 'og rnam spyi lo chig stong sum brgyal rab byung bdun pa'i sa pho 'brug lor* [i.e., 1388] *legs bsgrubs kyis/ rab gnas kyang* (...). Even considering that bKra shis bstan 'dzin dates most of the events one sixty-year cycle too early, we would still reach the wrong dating of 1448. Moreover, he mistakenly converts the Tibetan date to 1300.

³⁴⁹ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 51.8–14): *glo gtsang rang bya mo ze sgro'i sganj|| dpon a ma dpal gyis mkhar rdzong stel|| dgon thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling|| dge tshul slong stong ra chos sde gtsugs [= btsugs]|| rdzong mkha' spyod phyag btap dbus su bzhugs|| shar ri zhing sdom ldan gling zhes btap|| lhor brag dkar theg chen gling zhes bzhengs|| nub byams pa bshad sgrub gling zhes bskrun|| byang phu phag bsam gtan gling zhes 'debs|| dgon sde rnam sa skya'i chos rgyud 'dzin||. See also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 41.17 and 93.17–94.9). In addition, see also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 97.10–11): *mkha' spyod pho brang gtsug lag gling bzhi|| legs par bzhengs nas* (...).*

Within the first consecration ceremony of the Cakrasaṃvara Palace, Ngor chen is said to have conferred the rank of *chen po* on the Dharma King (i.e., A ma dpal or A mgon bzang po) and *da ra kha che* on dMag dpon A mo gha, A ma dpal's second eldest son and head of Glo bo's army.³⁵⁰ In accord with Ngor chen's recommendation, the former rank had been granted by the bZhi thog bla brang chen po, which, as discussed above, might refer to the abbot of Sa skya or the bZhi thog bla brang, and the latter by the Rin chen sgang bla brang.³⁵¹ Although these ranks did not carry the same weight and importance as during the period of the Sa skya-Yuan alliance, and were by then largely ceremonial, Sa skya clearly supported the forming of close bonds with the new ruling house of Glo bo, hoping to regain some of the influence they once wielded there during the Yuan dynasty.³⁵²

While in Glo bo, Ngor chen received an invitation from the king of Gu ge Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po Phun tshogs lde (b. 1409) to come to Pu hrangs.³⁵³ This episode constitutes the only event that both Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen report, though their focus varies somewhat.³⁵⁴ Both record that the king took *pravrajyā* monastic ordination from Ngor chen (i.e., *śrāmaṇera* novice-monk ordination). Glo bo mKhan chen adds that the king also took full monastic ordination and that the ceremony

See the *sMon thang chos sde brag dkar theg chen gling gi dkar chag* as quoted by VITALI 2012a: 138, n. 213: *slar yang rje btsun kun dga' bzang po gdan 'dren gnyis pa gsol btob sryan drangs nas| gtsug lag rten gsum rnam la rab gnas ston zhugs dang 'brel mtshan gsol mdzad pa| dbus su bde mchog gnas ri mkha' spyod dang| shar du ri zhing sdom ldan gling| lho ru brag dkar theg chen gling| nub du byams pa bshad sgrub gling| byang du phu pag bsam gtan gling ste dgon chen bzhir| rje btsun kun dga' bzang po'i mkhan po mdzad nas bcu tshogs kyi sgo nas| sku tshe smad la sde pa a ma dpal sogs bsgrub cha [= bya] stong phrag mang po so byang sngags gsum gyi sdom pa 'bog||* Cf. VITALI 2012a: 138, n. 213 for a different understanding of this passage.

Cf. the *Namgyal Molla* (pp. 14.16–15.7), where these monasteries are associated with A mgon bzang po: *yang rang re glo bo'i 'jongs [= ljongs] 'dir 'ang [= yang]|| bka' drin pa chos rgyal chen po a mgon bzang po yab sras rnam kyi sku drin la rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang gnyis pa| ngor chen kun dga' bzang po sryan drangs| thub chen rdo rje 'chang| byam [= byams] chen gsum gyis [= gyi] gtsug lag khang zhengs [= bzhengs]|| bstan pa dar rgyas su mdzad| de dus gling bzhir dgon sder grags pa| phu phag bsam bstan [= gtan] gling| re shid sdom gsum gling| byam [= byams] pa bshad sgrub gling| brag dkar theg chen gling| gling zhir [= bzhir] grags pa mdo sngags kyi bstan pa cher dar bar gyur||* On the Gling bzhir dgon sde, see also VITALI 2012a: 138. Further research is needed to determine whether Byams pa bShad grub gling might be the same monastery as dPal ldan Chos 'khor Byams pa gling. On the latter monastery, see Part Four, 6.10.

³⁵⁰ As the regnal years of A ma dpal are not precisely known, it is difficult to say who the *chos rgyal* was by that time; see VITALI 2012a: 149. According to a modern Glo bo history, dMag dpon A mo gha was born in 1421; see the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 35.16–17).

³⁵¹ For the year 1438, the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 19a–b) records another conferment of titles to A mgon bzang po and A mo gha by Sa skya with the recognition of Gung thang: *[chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ba ni] bcu dgu pa la| bod gang can gyi bdag po dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung bryud| bla brang shar pas che bar btom| sku mched gnyis la| chen po dang da ra kha che'i lag btags [= rtags?] gnang| gung thang khah pas de la rab gnas mdzad| lung gnang| 'ja' sa sgrags| las tshan bcu gsum gyi rnam bzhag sgrigs sogs gnang nas| rgyal srid dang chos srid kyi mdzad pa bskyangs nas||* One could speculate whether this actually refers to the same appointment as mentioned by Glo bo mKhan chen. Since the masters of the Bla brang Shar did not belong to Sa skya's 'Khor lineage, the reference to such a master is confusing. Or could this be a reference to Ngor chen?

³⁵² See also VITALI 2012a: 140.

³⁵³ On Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po Phun tshogs lde, see VITALI 1996: 391 and 508–511. For a genealogical chart of Gu ge's ruling house, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (p. 25). A king of Gu ge (*lha rigs byang chub sems dpa' gu ge chos kyi rgyal po*) initially requested from Ngor chen the composition of the *dPal kun rig gzhan phan mtha' yas*, which was compiled at Ngor in 1442; see CATALOGUE (no. 126). This king of Gu ge was most probably Nam mkha'i dbang po.

³⁵⁴ For what appears to be a combination of both accounts by mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 93.5–14).

took place at Kha char Monastery.³⁵⁵ Ngor chen in his religious chronology (*bstan rtsis*) only states that the king took *pravrajyā* monastic ordination (i.e., *śrāmaṇera* novice-monk ordination), but consistently dates the ordination to his second Glo bo sojourn, namely to the male fire-dragon year (*me pho 'brug*) of 1436/37.

The circumstances of Ngor chen's invitation to and his activities in Pu hrangs are presented in much more detail by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. According to him, bZhi sde pa Drung Nam mkha' rtse mo discussed Ngor chen's invitation with the king of Gu ge and they dispatched a certain Gu ge mKhan chen Chos nyid seng ge to extend their invitation to Ngor chen.³⁵⁶ In Pu hrangs, Ngor chen stayed for three months at rGyal de'u (or rGyal ti), one of the former capitals of Pu hrangs and the castle of their kings,³⁵⁷ bestowing teachings on Bla ma sPrul sku ba and others from Gu ge,³⁵⁸ mKhan po Rin bsod (Rin chen bsod nams) from Spiti (Pi ti), some *dge bshes* from La dwags (Mar yul), and local monks from Pu hrangs. Again, both accounts mention Ngor chen's bestowal of teachings at the monasteries of Nya rtse rig and bZhi sde, as well as his offering of butter lamps to the Three Jo bo Brothers (Jo bo sku mched gsum) at Kha char.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ According to VITALI 1996: 258–265 and VITALI 2003: 58–59, the monastery of Kha char was founded in around 996 and its foundation patronised by Kho re (r. 988–996), the king of Gu ge and Pu hrangs and brother of lHa Bla ma Ye shes 'od. For the building phases until the first half of the fourteenth century, see VITALI 1996: 264. For an investigation into the foundation history of Kha char, see also the *'Khor chags dgon gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 9.12–33). On the history of Kha char and a description of its religious objects, see the *'Khor chags dgon gyi lo rgyus*. See also the *'Khor chags gtsug lag khang gi byung ba brjod pa* (pp. 333–349), *mNga' ris khul gyi gnas yig* (pp. 5–9), *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (pp. 119–127), *sTod mnga' ris kyi dgon sde'i lo rgyus* (pp. 50–75), *sTod mnga' ris kyi lo rgyus* (pp. 256–266), and VITALI 1996: 258–265. The *'Khor chags dgon gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 25.6–27.10) presents eight different orthographic variations of that monastery's name along with their respective explanations: mKho chags, Kho chags, Kha char, Khwo char, 'Khor chags, Khwa char, Kho char, and Khur chags. Gu ge Tshes ring rgyal po also lists a couple of variant spellings; see the *'Khor chags gtsug lag khang gi byung ba brjod pa* (pp. 333.15–334.11). The monastery is also known by its Nepali name Khojarnath. For the location of Kha char, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (map, no. 63) and GYALPO et al. 2012: Map 2: Purang (Khorchag). For pictures of Kha char and its religious objects, see the *'Khor chags dgon gyi lo rgyus* (picture section) and *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (picture section). For a detailed study of the monastery, see now also GYALPO et al. 2012.

³⁵⁶ According to the biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita, it was Drung Nam mkha' rtse mo who was sent to Glo bo to invite Ngor chen and not Chos nyid seng ge. For this slightly different account of Ngor chen's invitation, see Part Two, 3.1. The presence of Nam mkha' rtse mo in Glo bo is also confirmed by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 529.5).

³⁵⁷ See VITALI 1996: 390–391 and 510.

³⁵⁸ The Bla ma sPrul sku ba in question might be identified as Chos rje Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, who had been a teacher of the young Gu ge Paṇḍita. We find him referred to as sPrul sku Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan or Chos rje sPrul sku in the Paṇḍita's biography; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fols. 2b6 and 3b3), respectively. It was also he who requested for Ngor chen to take care of the young Gu ge Paṇḍita and accept him as his attendant; see Part Two, 3.1.

³⁵⁹ The monastery of bZhi (or gZhi) sde developed into a Ngor pa branch, and it is recorded in the *mNga' ris khul gyi gnas yig* (pp. 44–45) and *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (pp. 141–148) under the name Zhi sde lha sde dgon. According to the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (pp. 141.28–142.6), a small temple already existed at that site by the eleventh century, though its original foundation dates to the fifteenth century. Some of its mural paintings, such as a lineage of the Sa skya 'Khon family and of the *Lam 'bras* masters, have survived. Some of the murals were designed by Gu ge Paṇḍita; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 13a4–b1): *bstan pa'i bya ba bde bar gshegs pa'i sku gzugs gyi [= kyi] bkod pa tshad la sogs pa ni* (...) *bzhi sder 'khor lo bde mchog* | *dpal phyag bzhi pa bla ma rgyud pa dang bcas pa shin du legs pa dang* (...) *rten mchod bsam gyi [= gyis] mi khyab pa'i phyag rjes ni brjod gyi [= gyis] mi lang ngol* |. For pictures of both Zhi sde lha sde and its old murals, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (picture section). VITALI 1996: 391–392 mentions bZhi sde as an important castle of Pu hrangs: “Zhi sde was in Pu.hrang.smad south of sTag.la.mkhar, where remains of a massive castle are still extent. Zhi sde, a place held by the Tshal.pa-s in the third quarter of the 13th century, and by the Ngor.pa-s from the mid 15th century, goes back to antiquity, as traces dating to the period of the Yar.lung dynasty are found in its area.” For the location of Zhi sde lha sde dgon, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (map, no. 60) and GYALPO et al. 2012: Map 2: Purang (Zhide). At Ngor, the bZhi sde regional dormitory (*khang tshan*) was established that housed monks originating from the

Further details about Ngor chen's Pu hrangs sojourn can be learned from the biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, who was part of the inviting party sent to Glo bo. According to his biography, his party was already present in Glo bo when Ngor chen performed the consecration of Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling. Within the scope of this consecration, Gu ge Paṇḍita met for the first time with his future teacher, Ngor chen, and received from him his very first empowerment of the Sa skya tradition; this is also attested by Glo bo mKhan chen's account. During the winter of 1436 and 1437, Gu ge Paṇḍita also received the *Lam 'bras*, and afterwards he and the rest of the inviting party travelled back to Pu hrangs. Ngor chen is said to have followed a little later. At Kha char, he bestowed *pravrajyā* monastic ordination (i.e., *śrāmaṇera* novice-monk ordination) on the king of Gu ge and gave many teachings in Pu hrangs.³⁶⁰

While in Pu hrangs, as Sangs rgyas phun tshogs reports, Ngor chen also founded a great monastic institution (*chos sde chen po*), though its name is not specified. This monastery can probably be identified as rGyal byed tshal, which is mentioned by Shākya mchog ldan as having been founded by Ngor chen in Pu hrangs.³⁶¹

After his Pu hrangs sojourn, the accounts by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen do not agree about where Ngor chen headed next. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' presentation suggests that Ngor chen returned to gTsang, because he refers to his butter lamp offering to the Jo bo at sKyid grong.³⁶² By contrast, Glo bo mKhan chen claims that Ngor chen came back to Glo bo, where he secretly consecrated the Cakrasaṃvara Palace for a second time, bestowed teachings, and planned future projects, before eventually

regions of mNga' ris and La dwags; see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 51. 15–16) and JACKSON 1989: 49–50, n. 2.

On

the Jo bo sku mched gsum of Kha char, see EHRHARD 2004: 251 and 357–358, n. 71, KRAMER 2008: 148, n. 26, GYALPO et al. 2012: [92]–98, and VITALI 1996: 262–264 and 402–403, n. 658. See also the *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum sngon byung gi gtam brjod* by Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, the fifty-fifth abbot of Ngor. On this work, see also EHRHARD 2004a: 251 and 357–358, n. 71 and JACKSON 1999: 149. On Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan's relation with Kha char, see also the *'Khor chags dgon gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 86.12–91.6). Ngor chen paid his respects not only to the Jo bo sku mched gsum of Kha char, but also to the Jo bo of lHa sa, sKyid grong, and Zar Byang phug, each time performing an enormous butter lamp offering; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 551.1). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 466.3).

³⁶⁰ On the ordination of Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po, cf. the discussions by VITALI 1996: 508–511, VITALI 2012a: 163, and VITALI 2012c: 134–136, who also mentions that according to the mNga' ris history of Gu ge mKhan chen Ngag dbang grags pa, the king was ordained by a different person more than ten years later in 1449. VITALI 2012a: 142–143 holds the hypothesis that Ngor chen's visit to Pu hrangs may have had “some diplomatic undertones,” which he says he will pick up in a forthcoming publication. Similarly, *Ibid.*: 163 states that Ngor chen's visit to Kha char “needs to be scrutinised also for the secular implications. As said above (...), the 1436 visit led Kho char's entrance into the orbit of Mustang.” According to the *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum sngon byung gi gtam brjod* as referred to by *Ibid.*: 163, A mgon bzung po “was responsible for the restoration of religious images and had a new embankment constructed to prevent the rise of the rMa bya khabs from damaging the temples.” But *Ibid.*: 163 also points out that Pu hrangs was not under Glo bo at the time of Ngor chen's visit and “it was only sometime after 1450 that Pu hrang again passed under the jurisdiction of Mustang.” In addition, see also VITALI 1996: 520–23 and 533–537 and VITALI 2012a: 205. Cf. *Ibid.*: 163, who, with reference to other sources, also records that “A mgon bzung po donated Kha char to Ngor chen.” On that, cf. also PETECH 1980: 109. The point of view that the ruling house of Glo bo offered Kha char to Ngor chen is also expressed in recent Tibetan sources. Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po, for instance, mentions that in the fifteenth century, after some border regions of Pu hrangs had fallen under the control of the kings of Glo bo, the 'Bri gung affiliation of Kha char was lost and the monastery was transformed into a Ngor pa branch, owing to the Glo bo kings' strong support of the Ngor pas; see the *'Khor chags gtsug lag khang gi byung ba brjod pa* (p. 342.1–22) and *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (pp. 123.18–124.3). See also the *'Khor chags dgon gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 85.1–86.1).

³⁶¹ See the *Chos 'khor rnam gzhag* (p. 470.7).

³⁶² According to the *Bla chen gyi rnam thar* (fols. 27b6–28a4), Ngor chen had made a butter lamp offering to the Jo bo at sKyid grong already in 1427 on his way to Glo bo; see Part Two, 3.4.

returning to gTsang. Though I cannot resolve this contradiction, I found another reference from the biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita that supports the account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. According to that source, when Ngor chen had finished his teaching activities in Pu hrangs and was about to travel eastwards (*shar phyogs*), he was requested by Gu ge Paṇḍita's teacher, Chos rje (or sPrul sku) Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, to take care of Gu ge Paṇḍita and accept him as his attendant.³⁶³ The reference to Ngor chen's travelling to the east points to his return to gTsang, rather than going back south to Glo bo.

The Tibetan sources do not specify the duration of Ngor chen's second sojourn, only saying that he departed from Ngor in 1436. Nevertheless, the few references found in the biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita and the account by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs—which states that Ngor chen travelled to Pu hrangs in the winter of 1436 and stayed in rGyal de'u for three months—suggests that Ngor chen's sojourn lasted until 1437.³⁶⁴

6.6 Third Glo bo Sojourn (1447–1449)

In 1447, at the advanced age of sixty-six, Ngor chen embarked on the last of his three journeys to Glo bo, returning to Ngor no earlier than the second half of 1449.³⁶⁵ This time the invitation had been extended, not by A ma dpal, but by the latter's eldest son, A mgon bzang po, who had by then succeeded his father as the new ruler of Glo bo.³⁶⁶ On Ngor chen's activities during his third sojourn, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen provide the following details:³⁶⁷

[Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' account:]³⁶⁸

Later on, A mgon bzang po, the Great Patron of the [Buddha's] Doctrine, invited [Ngor chen] in the hare year [i.e., 1447], the last of three times [that Ngor chen journeyed to Glo bo]. [Ngor chen] gave advice for entirely preparing [sets of] the *bKa' 'gyur* [and] *bsTan 'gyur* and provided such advice as for finishing the remaining parts of the golden *bKa' 'gyur*. [He] eliminated redundant parts [and] added incomplete ones. [He] then also composed [its] catalogue. [He] consecrated numerous receptacles of the awakened body, speech, and mind [in the Byams chen temple] such as the golden, large Maitreya, [statues of the masters of] the *Lam 'bras* lineage, and the “celestial mansion” (*gzhal yas khang*) of Sarvavid.³⁶⁹ [He] gave

³⁶³ See Part Two, 3.1.

³⁶⁴ According to bKra shis bstan 'dzin, Ngor chen's sojourn lasted six months and he returned back to Sa skya accompanied by an entourage of about two hundred persons; see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 97.1–4).

³⁶⁵ On Ngor chen's third sojourn, see also TUCCI 1956: 19 and VITALI 2012a: 166–171. Note that according to TUCCI 1956: 17, a monastic constitution (*bca' yig*) preserved at dGe lung Chos sde records Ngor chen's presence in Glo bo already by the year 1446.

³⁶⁶ On A mgon bzang po and his political career, see VITALI 2012a: 149–173.

³⁶⁷ For a modern presentation of Ngor chen's third sojourn as compiled by bKra shis bstan 'dzin, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 100.5–109.7).

³⁶⁸ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 1.2(f). For the translation of the last part of this passage, cf. VITALI 2012a: 171, n. 268.

³⁶⁹ The structure and original iconographic scheme of the temple is recorded in the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 20a–21a): *byams pa chen po gtso 'khor khri rgyab dang bcas gzhan las khyab [= khyad] par du 'phags pa| rdo rje 'chang khri rgyab dang bcas pa| ldem gnyis sogs zangs ser [= gser] las grub pa| bde bgye [= dgyes] gsang gsum gyi bla brgyud zangs gser las grub pa| bzo khyad phul du phyin pa gsang sngags bla med kyi logs ris yongs su rdzogs pa dang bcas pa'i gtsug lag khang| kun rig gi blos slang [= bslangs] rgya shin tu che ba| rin po che gser gyi ga ra su grub pa| logs ris la rnal 'byor rgyud kyi dkyil 'khor bzo khyad sogs gzhan gyi blo yul las 'das pa'i gtsug lag khang| byams chen zhal ras lha khang*

instructions to establish at the monastery of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling a monastic community [whose members] reach one thousand [in number] and enthroned Chos dpon 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho [as abbot]. Furthermore, [he] performed many [religious activities] such as [bestowing] novice-monk and full-monk ordinations, [granting] the generation of *bodhicitta*, [imparting] empowerments—such as of Yo ga rdo rje rtse mo [i.e., Vajraśekhara], Trailokavijaya, Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara, [and] Yon tan kun 'byung—[and giving] expositions of the *tantras* and development and completion [stages]. Turning on a large scale the sutric and tantric Dharma Wheel, [Ngor chen] established innumerable trainees on the path of ripening and liberation. The [donor] brothers—such as the Great Patron [i.e., A mgon bzang po] [and] Dar ra kha che [i.e., A mo gha]—made countless offerings [to Ngor chen] such as five hundred *srang* measures of gold, among which five reliquary boxes of gold were the foremost.

[Glo bo mKhan chen's account:]³⁷⁰

Drung dGe sbyong [i.e., A ma dpal] had four sons: the eldest son, Drung chen A mgon bzang po; his younger brother, General A mo gha; the latter's younger brother, the Noble Monk Kun dga' rgyal mtshan; and the latter's younger brother, the Noble Monk Rin chen bzang po. Later on, the two elder brothers, the Drung chen [i.e., A mgon bzang po] [and A mo gha], having discussed among themselves [whether to invite Ngor chen] once again, [they] strongly beseeched [him, saying]: “Lord, though [you] had reached an old age, [you] once again achieved in this region [of Glo bo] extensive deeds for the teachings [of the Buddha]. Considering [us] patrons and the precious [Buddha's] teachings, [we] still want [you] by all means to set foot [in Glo bo once again].” Thus, led by immeasurable compassion, [Ngor chen] came here [for a third time].

At the great monastery of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, [Ngor chen] appointed 'Jam pa'i dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho as abbot and established at the Great Monastery the supporting conditions for the winter teaching session for hundred days and for the summer teaching session for forty-five days for a community calculated [to comprise] one thousand monks. [He] made a great declaration that

na logs ris rnal 'byor rgyud dkyil 'khor yongs su rdzogs pa/dbu rtse'i na gsung ngag rin po che bla ma brgyud pa'i 'bur du 'dod [= dod] pa/ logs ris la rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud sde'i bskor ba/ chos skyong gi sku 'bur du dod pa dang bcas pa bzhugs te/ mgor na gzhi'i gtsug lag khang gi logs ris la mdo'i lha/ bskor khang la bya spyod kyi lha/ zhal ras lha khang la rnal 'byor rgyud/ dbu rtse na bla med/ rdo rje 'chang/ gzhal yas khang na rnal 'byor rgyud bla med del mdo dang rgyud sde'i lha tshogs mams go rim dang mthun par bzhugs/. For parts of this passage from an extant folio (fols. 16b4?–17a1?) of the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, see DHUNGEL 2002: Photo Plates and Facsimiles, An annal of religious history of the Kingdom of Lo (Mustang), pages 16 & 17 from an incomplete old text. For inscriptions of the temple's murals, see *Ibid.*: 239–244, Document No. 13 (MHR doc. no. 17, Tib.). Without mentioning them as such, a compilation of those inscriptions is also found in the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 42.14–44.8). For different interpretations and ideas on the structure and scheme of the Byams chen temple, see JACKSON 2010a: 152–155, VITALI 1999: 6–11 and 16–22, and VITALI 2012a: 167–170 and 205–207. On the murals of the Byams chen, see also ASLOP 2004: 131–136 and LO BUE 2010b: 76–89. On the restoration of its murals, see FIENI 2010a and FIENI 2012. For pictures of the Byams chen, its murals, and layout, see HAR, “Mustang: Champa Lhakhang (SRG Archive),” www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setid=2588 (accessed 21.02.2017); and LIEBERMAN and LIEBERMAN, “Jampa Gompa,” <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/BuddhistTempleArt/JampaGompa.html> (accessed 21.02.2017).

³⁷⁰ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 2.1(e). For another translation, cf. KRAMER 2008: 150–154.

[laid down points] such as the disciplinary rules of the Great Monastery and the stages of [its] curriculum, namely that the exposition of Prajñāpāramitā and Pramāṇa is given through the exegesis of either g.Yag [ston Sangs rgyas dpal] or Rong [ston Shes bya kun rig], that [Sa paṇ's] *Rigs gter* is explained via [his] *Auto-commentary*, and that Madhyamaka is only explained in line with the exegesis of the Venerable Supreme [Sa skya pa] Masters. The Lord himself and the donor brothers have also affixed [that declaration] with a seal.³⁷¹ The manner of how [the monastery] was furnished with the principal conditions [of material support] and so forth is evident in a separately written historical record. In summary, [it] is known that the sDe pa sMon thang pa [i.e., A mgon bzang po] provided half of his own estates of Upper and Lower Glo bo to the Great Monastery.

Here, the first abbot of our monastery was 'Jam pa'i dbyangs [Shes rab rgya mtsho] himself. However, some say that [it] was mKhan chen Ratna shrī, which is an incorrect statement: Ratna shrī had left from [his position as] teacher of gSang phu and resided at rGyang 'Bum mo che.³⁷² Facing some difficulties at that time, [he] sent many complains [to Ngor chen] when the Precious Dharma Lord was residing at the Monastic Seat [i.e., Ngor or Sa skya]:

To the Sublime One, the Sun, Kun bzang,
From [my] small shack that is like a blossoming lotus,
Devoid of the honey nectar [of] resources,

³⁷¹ During his twelve-year tenure (1477–1488?) at Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, Glo bo mKhan chen is said to have taught according to that same syllabus (*Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1, p. 456.3–5): *de nas bzung ste mkhan po lo bcu gnyis mdzad pa la/ chos sde'i grigs [= sgrigs] dang 'thun [= mthun] par/ tshogs pa stong phrag lhag pa la/ phar tshad kyi bshad pa/ g.yag rong gi sgros dang 'thun [= mthun] pa dang/ rigs gter rang 'grel dang 'thun [= mthun] par mdzad nas/ bshad sgra [= grwa] chen po gtsugs [= btsugs] shing/*. During his three-year sojourn in Glo bo (1472–1475), also Shākya mchog ldan taught at Thub bstan dar rgyas gling. However, though he is also said to have taught according to the syllabus instituted by Ngor chen, the presentation varies to a certain extent (*Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2, fol. 53a1–5): *de mtshams rnam rgyal chos sder spyen drangs shing/ (...)* *der snga phyi'i gtong chos dus gnyis su mdzad pa'i re re la yang phar tshad rnam rgyal chos sde'i sgrigs yig chos rje rdo rje 'chang gi phyag rtags 'byar ba'i stengs nas mdzad pa'i dbang las/ rong 'tik rang gi steng nas mngon pa/ mdzod kyang rong 'tik dang/ rigs gter g.yag mi pham chos kyi bla mas mdzad pa'i sbyor 'tik gi stengs dang/ sdom gsum rje rdo rje 'chang gi gcung po gzhon nu seng ge ba'i 'ti ka'i steng nas gnang dgos pa ltar mdzad cing/*. On this passage, see also CAUMANN 2012: 161 and CAUMANN 2015: 184–185. As we proceed, it will become clear that the aforementioned rNam rgyal Chos sde is Thub bstan dar rgyas gling. JACKSON 1983b: 15 also mentions that Ngor chen wrote a monastic constitution (*bca' yig*) for rNam rgyal. According to that code, he recommended the *sDom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba* commentary by Las chen gZhon nu seng ge, his younger brother, to be studied by monks of that monastery. See also JACKSON 2010a: 226, n. 358.

³⁷² The connection of Ratna shrī with gSang phu is confirmed by the *Don yod dpal gyi rnam thar* (p. 56.2–3): *rang lo so gsum pa la rje gong ma'i phyag phyir snye phu shug gseb na bzhugs pa'i tshel/ gsang phu gling smad bgros rnying pas/ mkhas pa ratna shrī'i gdan sar spyen drangs/ sa mo bya'i lo [i.e., 1429] nas chu mo phag [i.e., 1443] gi bar la/ lo bco lgar gsang phur 'chad nyan mdzad/*. See also the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 1 (p. 337.4–5): (...) *sa pho rta'i lo [i.e., 1438] dpal ldan gsang phur phebs/ mkhas grub don yod dpal ba sgros rnying pa'i mkhas pa ratna shrī'i gdan seng ge'i khri la gdan chags pa de'i zhabs la gtugs tel*. The first passage suggests that Ratna shrī left gSang phu at the end of the 1420s. We find him further recorded as a disciple of Rong ston Shes bya kun rig; see the *Rong ston gyi rnam thar* (p. 335.7) and JACKSON 1988a: vi. See also the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 203.16). Moreover, we find a bKa' bcu pa Ratna shrī listet among the disciples of Bo dong Paṇ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 210.18). In Ngor chen's collected works, we find one letter that Ngor chen had sent to Ratna shrī from Ngor, the *Ratna shrī la springs pa*, see CATALOGUE (no. 165).

According to STEARNS 2007: 49, 51, and 117–118, Thang stong rgyal po assisted the Sa skya master bDag chen bSod nams bkra shis (1352–1407) in the construction of the huge 'Bum mo che stūpa of rGyang near lHa rtse at the beginning of the fifteenth century. For a detailed description of the stūpa, see TUCCI 1999: 179–185. For pictures of the stūpa and its murals, see TUCCI 1973: pls. 78–79 and 182–189, respectively. For another picture, see also STEARNS 2007: 117, fig. 33. On bDag chen bSod nams bkra shis from Sa skya's lHa khang bla brag, see *ibid.*: 498, n. 357.

The Bee (lit. "Six-Legged One"), Ratna shrī, reports this matter;

and [also expressed] that [he] would like to go to mNga' ris. Also, the Lord, considering that he was a learned person [originating from] the body of disciples of mKhan chen g.Yag pa [i.e., g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal] and that he even was a disciple of the Dharma Lord [i.e., Ngor chen] himself, issued to Drung dGe sbyong [i.e., A ma dpal] here [in Glo bo] a decree [as] a means of authorisation (*sri thabs kyi phyag dam*).³⁷³ At that time, the old rNam rgyal Chos sde belonged to the Zhang pas and so he [i.e., the Zhang pa ruler] had more power [in deciding]. But relying on the Lord's decree, dGe sbyong reported [that matter] to the Zhang pa. After that, [I] wonder whether [Ratna shrī] stayed for about one winter as abbot of the old [rNam rgyal] Chos sde. Then, [he] went to Pu hrangs and passed away due to an earthquake. Therefore, by that time, the new monastery had not been given its name [Thub bstan dar rgyas gling].³⁷⁴

After [he] had established the monastery of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, the Precious Lord also resided during this last time [visit] for three years at Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling. Meanwhile, [he] gave the instructions of the *Path with the Fruit*, the *Precious Oral Instructions*; the instructions of the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*, the *Vajrayoga of the Profound Path*; taught the stages of such meditational practices as the *Shin tu spros med pa* [i.e., a special practice of Raktayamāri]; taught a group of the Tantra section such as the *Tattvasaṃgrahatantra*, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*, and the *rTsa ba'i rgyud brTag pa gnyis pa* [i.e., the *Hevajratantra* also known as *Dvikalpa*]; and gave here in its entirety all independent teachings (*zur bka'*) that have *sgrub mchod* [rituals]: the large *maṅdalas* of the Yoga tantric system such as *Tattvasaṃgraha*, *Vajraśekhara*, and *dPal mchog* (i.e., *Śrīparamādyā*); the twelve *sByong maṅdalas* [i.e., the *maṅdalas* of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra*]; and also [the *maṅdalas*] of the Niruttara tantric system. Even five or six years before now, there were [still] some elderly *dge bshes* in the old monasteries of this [region] who had received empowerments from the Lord himself at that time.

Then, the brothers presented offerings to the Lord such as five hundred *srang* measures of gold, among which the foremost were five golden reliquary boxes. The introduction of regular scholastic examination rounds [of monks from Glo bo] at the Great Monastic Seat [i.e., Sa skya], the custom of sending a steady stream of monks to the individual Sa skya pa *grwa tshangs* of dBus [and] gTsang in accord with the Lord's wishes, and the virtuous stream [of offerings] for individual temples and monastic sites, all these traditions have been [conjointly] established at that time. In particular, for the flourishing of the teachings of the venerable Sa skya pa here in this region of mNga' ris, [Ngor chen] commissioned at the top floor of the Byams pa chen po [temple] a statue of Śrī Pañjaraṇātha along with uncommon sacred objects as filling and instituted the [practice of its] *rten gtor*

³⁷³ The term *sri thabs* is lexically unattested. Note that SNELGROVE 2011: vol 2, 344 records a similar term, *sri btab*, which he gives as "commission" or "duty." See also VITALI 1996: 510, n. 863 and VITALI 2012a: 140–141, n. 216, who translates the entire phrase *sri thabs kyi phyag dam* as "edict of appointment."

³⁷⁴ For the translation of this passage, cf. VITALI 1996: 509–510, n. 863 and VITALI 2012a: 140–141, n. 216. As pointed out by KRAMER 2008: 44, n. 41, Roberto Vitali's translation of some parts of this passage is questionable. He refers to Ratna shrī as 'Gig mkhan po,' a mistaken understanding of the abbreviation 'gig (= 'ga' zhig), and identifies him as "a true 'Jam pa'i dbyangs." Cf. JACKSON 1978: 216, n. 76, who also refers to Ratna shrī as "'Gig mkhan-po."

[ritual offering] for as long as the teachings [of the Buddha] would endure.³⁷⁵ The Lord also bestowed the uncommon ritual permission (or initiation) of Śrī Vajramahākāla Pañjaranātha along with [his] consort and retinue on [a group of] five [comprising] the uncles, [i.e.,] the brothers, and [their] nephew, namely on the four brothers together with the [then still] young great ruler, bKra shis mgon. As [Ngor chen] had commanded [Pañjaranātha and those members of the ruling family to act in accord with the Dharma] and bound [them] under oath, [he] said: “In this region of Glo bo, [you] should [all] abide within the commitment without violating it. If all, the donee and the donors, are able to adhere [to that commitment], all religious and worldly affairs will improve. If [it] is not like that, [I] do not know into what [it] will turn. The powerful commitment of the lineage masters with the Dharma protectors is known from the true teachings of the Buddha.”³⁷⁶ The person who had served as ritual assistant at that time was the Great Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan.

Mus chen’s biographies reveal that when Ngor chen embarked on his third sojourn in Glo bo in 1447, he once again called up on his chief disciple to come to Ngor and teach during his absence. However, Mus chen’s biographies date Ngor chen’s departure not to 1447 but to one year later, in 1448.³⁷⁷

According to Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, Ngor chen consecrated the chief religious objects housed in the Byams chen temple and also parts of the temple itself, which had recently been built in the centre of the new capital of Glo bo, sMon thang. The Byams chen temple was thus erected sometime between the ten-year period of Ngor chen’s second and third visit. That Ngor chen had indeed made such plans was already mentioned by Glo bo mKhan chen in his account on Ngor chen’s second sojourn.³⁷⁸ As confirmed by the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* and the *Tsarang Molla*, the main patron of this undertaking was A mgon bzang po, the then new ruler of Glo bo.³⁷⁹ However, a later work

³⁷⁵ A modern history of Glo bo mentions that a total of two statues were commissioned; see the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 41.4–8). The same source further states that one of them, the dBu rtse mgon po, is preserved in the protector chapel (*mgon khang*) of the dGe lugs Chos sde and the other in the sMon chos mgon khang; see the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 41.20–42.1).

³⁷⁶ For a similar account, see also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 248.3–249.1).

³⁷⁷ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 608.5–6): *re gcig pa* [i.e., 1448] *la chos rje bzang po’i zhabs mnga’ ris su thegs pa’i rjes sul phyag rtags dang bka’ zhal la brten nas/ e waṃ chos ldan du gsung ngag la sogs pa’i zab chos du mas der bzhugs pa’i dge ’dun rnam tshim par mdzad nas/ lo cgig bzhugs/*; and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 219.1–2): *rje ’di re gcig pa ’brug lo* [i.e., 1448] *la rje ngor pa mnga’ ris su byon/ rje ’di pa ngor du sdod gsungs pa/ lam ’bras las sogs gsungs nas thog cig bzhugs/*. According to bKra shis bstan ’dzin, the royal family had sent an inviting party of about three hundred men with horses and donkeys to Ngor. Ngor chen is said to have reached Glo bo sMon thang in a male water-monkey year (*chu pho spral lo*; i.e. 1368/1428/1488), which is obviously a wrong date even if we consider the fact that bKra shis bstan ’dzin generally dates many events one sixty-year cycle too early; see the *Glo bo’i dkar chag* (p. 100.5–16).

³⁷⁸ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 119.10–12): *slar yang chos sde chen po ’dzugs pa dang/ byams pa chen po bzhengs pa dang/ gdan sa chen por/ grwa bskor gyi rgyun ’dzugs pa la sogs pa ma ’ongs pa’i bkod pa tsam zhig mdzad/*.

³⁷⁹ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 20a): [*chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ’di ni/*] *thub bstan dar rgyas gling gi chos sder/ khri zhabs kyi bu gnyis gsum yod pa nas/ re re bsdus nas/ byams dkrug [= phrug?] gi sde btsugs/ byams pa chen po gtso ’khor khri rgyab dang bcas gzhan las khyab [= khyad] par du ’phags pa/*; and *Tsarang Molla* (fols. 9b–10a): *chos rgyal a mgon bzang po ni/ (...)* *byams chen dang (...)* *bzhengs/*. See also the *rTsa drangs kyi bems chag* (p. 8): *a mgon bzang pos chos sde chen po rull/ byams phrug sde btsugs byams chen lha khang bzhengs/*. For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo’i dkar chag* (p. 42.7–8).

on a renovation project of the Byams chen temple dates its original foundation to 1448.³⁸⁰ This work was composed by Shākya dGe slong Ngag dbang phun tshogs after the renovation of the Byams chen, which had been begun in 1663 by the Glo bo king A ham bSam grub dpal 'bar, was completed.³⁸¹ The foundation date of 1448 it gives seems doubtful and probably refers to the temple's completion rather than its foundation. In his modern history of Glo bo, mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin states that the construction of the Byams chen was begun in 1437 and completed in 1448 under the patronage of A mgon bzang po.³⁸² While Glo bo mKhan chen has nothing to say about the consecration of the Byams chen, it is evident from his account that the temple was already standing during Ngor chen's third sojourn, because he reports the commissioning of a statue of Pañjarañātha on its top floor (*dbu rtse*).

Basing his account mainly on that of Ngag dbang phun tshogs, Roberto Vitali dates the foundation of the Byams chen to 1448: "A spurt of religious activities ensued upon his [Ngor chen's] arrival, the most significant being the construction of the lofty Byams pa lha khang (...)." ³⁸³ For his argumentation, Vitali also refers to the account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. He states, confusingly, that according to that account, Ngor chen both built and consecrated the Byams chen during his third sojourn and cites the relevant passage. However, the cited quotation does not correspond to the original reading, which does not refer to Ngor chen as the founder of the Byams chen. If we compare the quotation by Vitali with the original edition of Ngor chen's biography, it is obvious that in his transcription he mistakenly reads *bzhengs* instead of *sogs*.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁰ For this text, see DHUNGEL 2002: 251–260, Document No. 16 (MHR doc. no. 20, Tib.) and NGMCP (Reel no. L 143/2). For the inscriptions of the wall paintings of the Byams chen, see DHUNGEL 2002: 239–244, Document No. 13 (MHR doc. no. 17, Tib.) and TUCCI 1956: 22–25.

³⁸¹ See the *Byams mgon gtso 'khor gsum gyi dkar chag* (pp. 252.30–253.16): *gsang ba'i bdag po'i rnam 'phrul a ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan ltams nas nyi brgya don drug* [i.e., 1388] *chos kyi rgyal po chen po a mgon bzang po ltams nas nyis brgya zhe bzhi* [i.e., 1420] *rgyal khab chen po smon thang btab nas lo nyi brgya nyer gsum* [i.e., 1441] *dpal byams chen gyi gtsug lag khang 'di nyid btab nas nyi brgya bcu drug 'das pa* [i.e., 1448] *rgya gar 'phags pa'i yul na sho bha nal 'jigs byed kyi lo rgya nag khong non chu mo yos kyi lo* [i.e., 1663] *chos kyi rgyal po a mgon bzang po nas rim par byon pa'i gdung rabs brgyad pa dad pa dang blo gros dang bsod nams kyi mngon par mtho ba mi'i dbang phyug a ham bsam grub dpal 'bar* (...) *dpal byams chen gyi gtsug lag zhig gso rtsa ba nas bzhengs pa'i dgongs pa mdzad del*. On this passage, see also VITALI 2012a: 127, n. 184, 167, n. 261, and 206–208, n. 323. On A ham bSam grub dpal 'bar, see DHUNGEL 2002: 105–109 and JACKSON 1984: 134 and 150.

³⁸² See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 99.5–104.4): *de rjes a mgon bzang po mchog nas gza' skar 'phrod sbyor nyin byams chen gtsug lag khang chen rmang gzhi rtsig 'gram spyi lo chig stong sum brgya bdun cu don bdun/ rab byung drug pa'i me mo sprul lor* [i.e., 1377] *nas bzo ba shing bzo rdo bzo gyang brdung sogs las mi bcu phrag mang tsam nyin ltar lo ngo bcu phrag tsam gyi bar la* (...) *mdor na byams chen gtsug lag khang rten bcas phyi nang legs grub lo bcu nang du bzhengs pa'i sbyin bdag a mgon bzang po sku mched rnams dang* (...) *spyi lo chig stong sum brgya brgyad bcu rgya bdun lor/ rab byung bdun pa'i me mo yos* [i.e., 1387] *byams chen phyi nang legs bsgrubs zin pa/ rgyas pa dkar chag las mkhyen gnang mdzad dgos* (...) *rdo rje 'chang mchog nas gsung bskul du sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dar rgyas yun gnas ched du* (...) *byams chen bcas bzhengs bskrun sgrub pa'i thugs bskul bka' lung thog mar brtsal pa la* (...) *de nas chos rgyal a mgon mchog gis gtsug lag rten gsum rnams la rab tu gnas pa gsol ba btab par brten/ <rde rja> [= rdo rje] 'chang mchog gis zhag bdun bar la rab gnas rten bzhugs zab nan gyis sbyin bdag mnga' gsol gyi dga' ston rten 'brel gyi nyin bkra shis pa'i dge mtshan du ma byung ba*. Note that both the year of the foundation and completion of the Byams chen are dated one sixty-year cycle too early and have to be corrected to 1437 and 1447, respectively. According to VITALI 2012a: 170, bKra shis bstan 'dzin specifies in another work that the Byams chen was built from 1444 to 1448. The *Glo bo dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 70, 1st col., line 1–21) gives the dates with 1445 to 1447.

³⁸³ VITALI 2012a: 166. Cf. also VITALI 1999: 3 and 17–18, where he states that the Byams chen lha khang was built and consecrated between 1447 and 1448. Cf. also DOWMAN 1997: 189, who dates the Byams chen lha khang to between 1424 and 1435.

³⁸⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 540.1–2): *gser gyi byams pa chen po/ lam 'bras brgyud pa/ kun rig gi gzhal yas khang sogs/ sku gsung thugs kyi rten du ma rab gnas mdzad*. Cf. VITALI 2012a: 167–168, n. 262: "gSer gyi Byams pa chen po/ Lam 'bras brgyud pa/ Kun rig zhal yas khang bzhengs/ sku gsung thugs kyi rten du ma rab gnas

During his third visit, Ngor chen focussed part of his activities on the great monastic centre of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, which he had founded. He issued its disciplinary rules, defined its monastic syllabus, and installed 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (1396–1474) as its first abbot.³⁸⁵ Shes rab rgya mtsho was a prominent disciple of Ngor chen, who had evidently accompanied his master on his last sojourn in Glo bo. When the demand was voiced that one of his best disciples should follow Ngor chen on the abbatial throne, he instructed Shes rab rgya mtsho on his plan to install him as abbot, and subsequently both bestowed teachings on a large scale in Glo bo. When Ngor chen was about to return to gTsang in the sixth month of 1449, he appointed Shes rab rgya mtsho as abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, and he is said to have served in that function for eleven years (1449–1457/59). After his return to gTsang, he was installed in 1462 as third abbot of Ngor.³⁸⁶ In his undertakings at Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, Ngor chen was patronised by A mgon bzang po, who provided half of its own estates in Upper and Lower Glo (Glo stod smad) as material support to secure a monastic community intended to comprise about one thousand monks.

On those activities, we are informed by both Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen, though the latter's account is much more extensive. Glo bo mKhan chen also clarifies a confusion regarding the old rNam rgyal Chos sde and the newly established monastery of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, namely that both monasteries refer to one and the same institution with the difference that rNam rgyal constituted the old monastic centre prior to its restoration initiated by Ngor chen and Thub bstan dar rgyas gling to the renovated monastery. Though Sangs rgyas phun tshogs records that Ngor chen had already restored the old rNam rgyal Chos sde over the course of his second visit, we should probably interpret this account in the sense that the restoration work

mdzad//'; [Ngor chen had] a great [statue of] Byams pa made in gold along with [images of the *bla ma*-s] of the *Lam 'bras* lineage and the Kun rig zhal yas khang. He performed the consecration of many receptacles of body, speech and mind'. By comparison, all the various editions of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' Ngor chen biography available to me unanimously read *sogs* and not *bzhengs*.

³⁸⁵ Cf. LO BUE 2010a: 18, who states that Ngor chen "was appointed by the king [i.e., A mgon bzang po] as first abbot of Tupten Dargyeling."

³⁸⁶ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 7.3–6): *rdo rje 'chang dgung lo nga gnyis pa* [i.e., 1447] *mnga' ris su gdan 'drangs/ rje'i slob ma drag shos cig thub bstan dar rgyas gling du rje'i bzhugs khri la 'jog dgos tshul byung ba la/ rje 'di la bslab ston gnang ste/ (...)* *yab sras gnyis kyis chos 'khor rgya chen po bskor/ sa mo sbrul lo* [i.e., 1449] *zla ba drug pa la rdo rje 'chang chen po e waṃ la 'byon khar/ khyed rang re zhig 'dir bstan pa'i bya ba mdzod/ (...)* *rje 'di mnga' ris su rdo rje 'chang chen po dang tshul mtshungs 'gro don mdzad de/ thub bstan dar rgyas gling du lo bcu gcig bzhugs/ slar me glang* [i.e., 1457] *la rje'i sku gdung mjal ba sogs la e waṃ du byon/*. In this passage, we face the anachronistic problem that 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho acted as abbot for eleven years (tenure: 1449–1459?), but at the same time is said to have returned to Ngor already in 1457. For that same year, we have references that confirm his presence in Glo bo, because Glo bo mKhan chen received his first teachings from him at age two (i.e., 1457) at Thub bstan dar rgyas gling; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 422.4–423.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 225.3–6), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 125.4–9), and KRAMER 2008: 60. Shes rab rgya mtsho's installation is also mentioned in the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 21a): [*chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ba ni*] *chos sde chen por mkhas pa'i dbang po 'jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho mkhan por spyen drangs/ sde snod gsum gyi 'chad nyan 'khor yug du mdzad pas/ sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa nyi ma'i 'od ltar gsal par [= bar] mdzad do/*. For a biographical sketch of Shes rab rgya mtsho, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 6.1–9.6). His original biography composed by his student Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang is presumed to be lost; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 9.6). Among the students of Shes rab rgya mtsho, the following abbots of monasteries in Glo bo are listed: Byams chen mKhan po Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis, Thub bstan dar rgyas gling mKhan po Yon tan chos rgyal, Byams gling mKhan po Yon tan tshul khriims rgyal mtshan, and sTeng chen mKhan po Nam mkha' dpal bzang; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 9.2–3). While in Glo bo, Shes rab rgya mtsho composed at Thub bstan dar rgyas gling a eulogy of Ngor chen, the *rBa brlabs ma*, which is one of three famous eulogies of Ngor chen; see the *rBa brlabs ma* (p. 155.8–11). On the three eulogies, see Part Four, n. 635.

was begun during Ngor chen's second visit and completed by his third.³⁸⁷ This refoundation caused people to confuse the old and new monasteries and some considered another of Ngor chen's disciples, mKhan chen Ratna shrī, as the first abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, though he had served as the abbot of the old rNam rgyal Chos sde only for a short period. The causing factor for this confusion was that the rebuilt monastery was not immediately named Thub bstan dar rgyas gling.³⁸⁸ But this new name did obviously not gain a wider acceptance, because the new monastery was still referred to by its old name in the biographies of Glo bo mKhan chen and Shākya mchog ldan and the autobiography of Kun dga' grol mchog.³⁸⁹

Interestingly enough, Glo bo mKhan chen says nothing about the actual restoration of the rNam rgyal Chos sde. But among the projects that were planned by Ngor chen at the conclusion of his second visit, he mentions the construction of the Great Monastery (*chos sde chen po*) and continues to employ this name when discussing the history of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling.³⁹⁰ One could thus be tempted to interpret these lines as referring to the envisaged restoration of the old rNam rgyal Chos sde. Otherwise, one could imagine that Glo bo mKhan chen, who himself served as the abbot of Thub bstan dar

³⁸⁷ VITALI 2012a: 140–141, n. 216 states that, according to another work by bKra shis bstan 'dzin, “the restoration launched by A ma dpal lasted for three years, according to its *dkar chag*.”

³⁸⁸ On these developments, see also JACKSON 1984: 42–43, n. 6, KRAMER 2008: 22, n. 66 and 150, n. 37, and VITALI 2012a: 140–142. According to the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 94.18–95.12, 100.5–6, and 104.4–14), the rNnam rgyal Chos sde was restored by A ma dpal who in doing so followed the request made by Ngor chen during his second sojourn. Within the scope of his third visit, Ngor chen was invited by both A mgon bzang po and the Zhang pa to rNam rgyal, where he performed the consecration of the refounded monastery, bestowing the name Thub bstan dar rgyas gling. The *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 163.8–10) also states that after its completion the complex included a castle, a monastery, and a village. LO BUE 2010a: 18 locates the old rNam rgyal Chos sde about three kilometres northwest of sMon thang. For the location of rNam rgyal, see also PEISSEL 1992: [95], map (Namgyal). The rNam rgyal Chos sde was located on “a massive rock mountain” on the way to the village of “Trenkar” (i.e., sTengs mkhar?); see *Ibid.*: 132. For the location of Trenkar, see *Ibid.*: [77] map (Trenkar) and [95] map (Trenkar). *Ibid.*: 160 also describes the surroundings: “We left our horses at the foot of Namgyal monastery, in a hollow between the great peak topped by Ketcher Dzong [i.e., mKha' spyod rdzong] and two smaller hills—one with the monastery on its summit, and the other with a lesser fort known as the Duke's Fort.” For a picture of rNam rgyal, see *Ibid.*: facing 208. For a description of rNam rgyal, see *Ibid.*: 132–136, 167, and 255. Interestingly, *Ibid.*: [95], map records to the east of rNam rgyal a separate monastery named Thubten Darjeeling (i.e., Thub bstan dar rgyas gling) that is marked as “monastery ruins.”

³⁸⁹ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 455.4–5 and 523.3), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fols. 28a3, 53a2–3, and 53b3), and *Zhen pa rang grol* (pp. 359.5, 362.3, 364.1–2, 380.4–5, 382.3–4, 454.4, and 465.2). However, Shākya mchog ldan himself employed the name Thub bstan dar rgyas gling when referring to the place of composition of those works that he had composed there; see CAUMANN'S 2006: 164, 168, 172, 177, 213, 216, 247, 258, 266, 268, and 278, CAUMANN'S 2012: 160, n. 84, and CAUMANN'S 2015: 394–397. The monastery also appears by this name in the *Kun dga' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 198.1–2, 216.6, and 259.5) and *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 246.1).

³⁹⁰ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 119.10–11): *slar yang chos sde chen po 'dzugs pa dangl*; *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 120.5): *thub bstan dar rgyas gling gi chos sde chen porl*; *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 120.6): *chos sde chen po la (...)*; *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 120.7): *chos sde chen po'i sgrig dang (...)*; and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 120.11–12): *mdor na sde pa smon thang pa rang gi glo bo stod smad kyi sa gzhis phyedl chos sde chen po la sbyar bar gragsl*. He further contrasts the old rNam rgyal Monastery (*rnam rgyal chos sde rmying pa*) with the new monastery of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling (*chos sde gsar pa*); see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 121.12 and 122.3), respectively. He records the actual foundation of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling only once, though he does so while moving on to another topic; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 122.4–5): *thub bstan dar rgyas gling gi chos sde btsugs nas rje rin po ches kyang lan rjes ma 'di la lo gsum gyi bar du yangl brag dkar theg chen dar rgyas gling du bzhugs nasl*. Also, the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 21a) contains a passage that supports my interpretation: *chos sde chen por mkhas pa'i dbang po 'jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho mkhan por spyan drangsl*.

rgyas gling for twelve years (1477–1488?),³⁹¹ would have taken these details for granted and thus focused only on clarifying the name confusion.

At least three other local sources from Glo bo also have nothing to say about a restoration of the rNam rgyal Chos sde, only referring to the foundation of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling. The first work is the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, which states that Thub bstan dar rgyas gling was founded by A ma dpal, who had invited Ratna shrī to serve as its abbot.³⁹² The *Tsarang Molla* records the foundation of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling at rNam rgyal, but identifies the patron of the project as bKra shis mgon (d. 1489?), A mgon bzang po's eldest son and heir.³⁹³ The *Namgyal Molla* ascribes the monastery's foundation to Ngor chen, alleging that he thereby combined three of the aforementioned Gling bzhi monasteries—Phu phag bSam gtan gling, Re shid sDom gsum gling, and Byams pa bShad sgrub gling—into one.³⁹⁴

The account of Glo bo mKhan chen about the old rNam rgyal Chos sde includes important historical information regarding the local power rule in Glo bo at that time, namely that the area of the old rNam rgyal Chos sde was still under the control of the Zhang pa. Thus when Ngor chen sent mKhan chen Ratna shrī to Glo bo to install him as

³⁹¹ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 455.3–456.3 and 523.3–4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 132.7–10), *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 36a–37a), JACKSON 1984: 148 and 155, n. 28, and KRAMER 2008: 66 and 162, n. 95. Cf. the *Tsarang Molla* (fols. 10b–11a).

³⁹² See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 15b–16a): [a ma dpal ni] khyad par sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la mdzad pa brlabs po che brjod nal bshad pa'i sde thub bstan bar [= dar] rgyas gling gi chos sde btsugs tel gtsug lag khang/ston pa gtso 'khor gyi gser khang dang bcas pa bzhengs/ zhang pas mnga' bsgyur dus yin/ mkhan por gsang [phu] ne'u tog [= thog] gi mkhas pa chen por [= po] ratna spyen drangs/ thog [= theg] pa gsum gyi 'chad rtsod rtsom gsum gyi sgo nas/ sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa nyin mor ltar mdzad/. As mentioned by VITALI 2012a: 142, n. 219, the reference to Ratna shrī suggests that the author of the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* had access to the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen.

³⁹³ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 10a–b): a ham tshangs chen bkra shis mgon ni/ (...) rnam rgyal du thub bstan dar rgyas gling zhes pa'i dge 'dun gyi sde btsugs/. On bKra shis mgon and his activities, see VITALI 2012a: 173–203. On his year of death, see the discussion by *Ibid.*: 200–203.

³⁹⁴ See the *Namgyal Molla* (p. 15.7–10): de rjes ngor pa rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos phu phag bsam bstan [= gtan] gling/ re shid sdom gsum gling/ byam [= byams] pa bshad sgrub gling/ gsum sdus [= bsdus] nas thugs dam dar rgyas gling bstab [= btat]. Although the *Namgyal Molla* refers to the monastery as Thugs dam dar rgyas gling, it is evident from the context that the work actually talks about Thub bstan dar rgyas gling. On the *Namgyal Molla*, written at the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century, see JACKSON 1984: 27–28, 36–39, 186–189, and 204–212. For that account, see also the *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 68, 2nd col., line 19 to p. 69, 1st col., line 2): (...) dus rabs bco lnga'i nang rang byung gnod 'tshes sa yom dang chu log byung rkyen gyis zhiig ral du song ba dang/ chu yur dben pas dge 'dun rnam gnas dka' ba'i dus tshigs ma rungs pa byung bas brag dkar theg chen dar rgyas gling phud pa'i dgon sde gsum rnam rgyal chos sder gnas spos/ rigs sngags pa dang/ rdza 'phrul ba/ phu phag pa/ thub bstan dar rgyas gling bcas grwa tshang bzhir bgos/. In addition, see also VITALI 2012a: 141–142, who states that the passage should be “interpreted in the sense that Ngor chen called upon the monks of those three monasteries to populate the refounded rNam rgyal Chos sde, as in the case of several monasteries in Khams that were established by summoning the monastic communities of preexisting ones.” However, that this account still needs to be verified by an older, more authoritative source is evident from the autobiography of Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566), whose presentation suggests that at least two of those three monasteries were still in existence in the sixteenth century. He records, for instance, that at a young age he visited the monastic sites of Phu phag dgon pa and Phu phag bsKyed tshal and was later on installed by his uncle Drung pa Chos rje Kun dga' mchog grub (1454–1526) as his abbatial successor of Phu phag; see the *Zhen pa rang grol* (pp. 292.1–2, 302.4, 345.3–4, and 347.5–348.4). For further mentions of Phu phag, see the *Zhen pa rang grol* (pp. 382.5 and 456.2–3). He also mentions that he visited Ri shid (= Re shid) after his installation as abbot of Phu phag; see the *Zhen pa rang grol* (p. 345.4). Also, his nephew Kun dga' dpal bzang po (1513–1593) started to manage Re shid sDom gsum gling in about 1541; see the *Kun dga' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 193.2). In Kun dga' grol mchog's autobiography, we also find regular references to Byams (pa) gling, which might be the same monastery as Byams pa bShad sgrub gling. On Byams pa gling, see Part Four, 6.10. Based on those references from Kun dga' grol mchog's autobiography, also JACKSON 1984: 42–43, n. 6 considers that account to be “probably incorrect.”

abbot, he issued a letter that A ma dpal forwarded to the Zhang pa, requesting his approval to appoint Ratna shrī.³⁹⁵ The Zhang pa was the head of a local ruling house in Upper Glo that was based in its own fort (Nyi ri rdzong or Ni ri g.Ya' rdzong dkar po) in Tsho nub. Prior to Glo bo's takeover by the Gung thang Sa skya alliance, this family had ruled the whole of Glo bo. Their loss of power was accompanied by the gradual ascent of A ma dpal's forefathers until the Zhang pa were nothing more than the nominal rulers of Upper Glo and were finally eclipsed by A mgon bzang po in 1441.³⁹⁶ Glo bo mKhan chen's account about the installation of mKhan chen Ratna shrī confirms that the Zhang pa still exercised some control over Upper Glo by the 1430s, which was in the period when Ngor chen sent his letter, prior to his second visit in 1436.³⁹⁷

From Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, Ngor chen moved on to Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling, where he resided for most of this three-year sojourn, giving a large number of ordinations and tantric teachings. During that period, as previously mentioned, Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, Ngor chen's attendant and biographer, received full monastic ordination, and Ngor chen tried to obtain the special teaching on Donkey-Faced Cakrasaṃvara (bDe mchog bong zhal can) from the tantric adept Bla ma bSam gtan 'od zer.³⁹⁸

To deepen the connection between the Sa skya school and its newly established branch monasteries in Glo bo, Ngor chen instituted together with his royal patrons the tradition that local monks from Glo bo would travel for their public scholastic examination (*grwa skor*) to Sa skya and would for further studies also be sent to other Sa skya establishments in dBus and gTsang.³⁹⁹ This can be illustrated by an account given by Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1596) in his famous religious chronology. He states that the Glo bo master 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos bzang (1433–1503) was among a group of about three hundred monks that the Glo bo bDag po (i.e., A mgon bzang po) sent, in 1450, to Sa skya for their scholastic examination and to dBus and gTsang for further studies. Having reached Sa skya, Kun dga' chos bzang performed his first public exposition of a text in front of a learned assembly (*bshad gsar*) and continued in 1451 to

³⁹⁵ On that account, see also JACKSON 1978: 215–216 and 216, n. 77, JACKSON 1984: 42–43, n. 6 and 153, n. 7, VITALI 1996: 509–510, n. 863, and VITALI 2012a: 140–142.

³⁹⁶ On the Zhang pa, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 163.6–164.7), EVERDING 2000: 403–404, 417–422, 460, n. 1142, 462–477, 489, 496, 502–503, and 525–528, JACKSON 1978: 215–216, JACKSON 1984: 153, n. 7, KRAMER 2008: 17–19, VITALI 1997, and VITALI 2012a: 54–61, [103]–126, 155–157, and *passim*. Note that Roberto Vitali identifies the Zhang pa as the sNa tshags pa sub-group of the Men Zhang nomadic clan, whereas Karl-Heinz Everding disagrees with this identification.

³⁹⁷ It is not clear to what extent the restoration of the old rNam rgyal Chos sde was undertaken with the consent of the Zhang pa or under the pressure of A ma dpal. Cf. VITALI 2012a: 142, who interprets Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' remark on the restoration of rNam rgyal as follows: "Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* assigns the end of the nominal supremacy of the Zhang pa of Glo bo over the kingdom to the same year (1436) as Ngor chen's second visit to Mustang. The new state of affairs seems to have been marked by the passage of rNam rgyal and its *chos sde*, the old stronghold of the Zhang sNa tshags pa, from their control to that of the Sa gnam family." See *Ibid.*: 155–156, where this statement is relativised and the crushing of the Zhang pa dated to 1441.

³⁹⁸ For both accounts, see Part Two, 3.1.

³⁹⁹ bKra shis bstan 'dzin specifies that for studies pertaining to the *sūtras* monks from Glo bo travelled to the monasteries of rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal, gSer mdog can, 'Bras yul sKyes mos tshal, and Nā lendra. From these institutions they could obtain the *bka' bcu pa* title, but for the *rab 'byams pa* examination they had to go to Sa skya. See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 106.1–4).

Ngor, where he took *pravrajyā* monastic ordination (i.e., *śrāmaṇera* novice-monk ordination) from Ngor chen as presiding abbot.⁴⁰⁰

Before his departure from Glo bo, Ngor chen received from the royal family headed by the ruler A mgon bzang po and A mo gha (who was A mgon bzang po's brother and the general of his army) countless presents and donations such as a hundred *srang* of gold, including five golden reliquary boxes that stood out as the most exceptional offering.⁴⁰¹ When Ngor chen embarked at the age of sixty-eight in 1449 on his return journey, A mgon bzang po accompanied him until 'Jag gur to see him off. Ngor chen reached back at Ngor on the third day of the ninth month of the same year. On the fourteenth day of the same month, the anniversary of Sa skya Paṇḍita's passing, Ngor chen performed an extensive offering ceremony at Ngor and also offered tea and food (*mang skol*), presents (*'bul ba*), and donations (*gral 'gyed*) to Ngor's monastic community. After two months of teaching, he left Ngor on the tenth day of the twelve month and travelled to Sa skya, where he performed in the first month of 1450 an extensive butter lamp offering, using about three hundred *srang* of the gold that had been offered to him by the Glo bo rulers. For a total of twelve days and nights about four hundred butter lamps were kept continuously burning in the major temples and lama palaces (*bla brang*) of Sa skya. While at Sa skya, Ngor chen also bestowed novice-monk and full monastic ordinations on more than five hundred followers, presented them with tea and food (*mang skol*), presents (*'bul ba*), and donations (*gral 'gyed*), and is said to have engaged in such further activities as performing extensive prayer sessions for the flourishing of the Buddha's doctrine. After one month, he travelled back to Ngor, which he reached on the twenty-fourth day of the second month of 1450.⁴⁰²

6.7 Further Activities Attributed to Ngor chen

Some Tibetan sources dealing with the history of Glo bo credit Ngor chen with still more activities in that domain. But since these accounts are either mistaken or highly doubtful, I shall introduce them here separately.

For instance, the foundation of the Thub chen lha khang, the second great fifteenth-century temple built in the city of sMon thang, is attributed by one source to the joint efforts of A mgon bzang po and Ngor chen. According to the historical record of that

⁴⁰⁰ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 237.3–9). See also the *Ngor chos 'byung* (p. 356.4–5). On the term *bshad gsar*, see also JACKSON 1987: 106.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. VITALI 2012a: 170–171, who mentions “five golden *ga'u*, the main one being made with 500 *srang* of gold.”

⁴⁰² See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 433.1–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 542.1–543.2). Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 551.1–2), where Sangs rgyas phun tshogs states that the offering began on the eighth and lasted until the twenty-fifth day. For prophecies that Ngor chen gave to A mgon bzang po when bidding farewell as recounted by Kun dga' dbang phyug to Glo bo mkhan chen, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 432.4–434.5). With regard to Ngor chen's return to Ngor, VITALI 2012a: 171 comes to the conclusion: “After his return to Ngor from Mustang, Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po embarked upon a new building phase at his monastery which amounted to a veritable second foundation, given the scope of his enterprise, and also made bountiful gifts to Sa skya (...). He was able to afford such huge expenditures owing to the munificence of his Glo pa sponsors. Hence one should not underestimate the contribution that Mustang provided to making Ngor one of the famed monasteries of all times in Tibet, and where Newar artists worked on its religious cycles.” Since we are not supplied with dates for the early building phase at Ngor, which had already been founded in 1429, Vitali's reference to a new building phase and a second foundation of Ngor should be questioned. But I do agree with Vitali insofar that the Glo bo rulers constituted one of Ngor chen's main patrons.

temple, the Thub chen was founded by A mgon bzang po and consecrated by Ngor chen.⁴⁰³ Similarly, the *Namgyal Molla* ascribes the foundation to A mgon bzang po and the structure of that presentation suggests Ngor chen's involvement in it.⁴⁰⁴ By contrast, according to the *Tsarang Molla*, the building was constructed under the patronage of bKra shis mgon, the eldest son and heir of A mgon bzang po.⁴⁰⁵ This is also confirmed by the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, which supplies important information about the structure and iconographic programme of the temple.⁴⁰⁶ From the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen and the biography of Shākya mchog ldan, we learn that the Thub chen had been completed by 1472. Glo bo mKhan chen reports that for three days in the sixth month of 1472, he performed a public exposition in the Thub chen rnam par rgyal ba'i gtsug lag khang.⁴⁰⁷ In the seventh or eighth month of the same year, Shākya mchog ldan reached Glo bo on the occasion of bKra shis mgon's invitation and paid his first visit to the same

⁴⁰³ See the *Thub chen gyi dkar chag* (p. 246.2–9): *mi yi gzugs sprul a mgon bzang po yi|| (...) thub chen gtsug lag thub dbang spyang ras gzigs|| 'jam dbyang rgyal chen la sogs gser zang [= zangs] bur|| sangs rgyas rgyal <sa rnye bsras> [= ba rnye sras] sogs|| sku bō 'gos cang grangs med bris sa bzhings [= bzhengs]|| e waṃ gnas nas rdo 'chang> [= rdor 'chang] <an nad> [= ā nanda] <bha bra'i> [= bha dra'i] mtshan gyi mgon gsum me tog thor ba rdzogs ldan nyi ma blo gros brjod la shar||.*

⁴⁰⁴ See the *Namgyal Molla* (pp. 14.16–15.4): *yang rang re glo bo'i 'jongs [= ljongs] 'dir 'ang [= yang] bka' drin pa chos rgyal chen po a mgon bzang po yab sras rnam kyī sku drin la rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang gnyis pa| ngor chen kun dga' bzang po spyang drangs| thub chen rdo rje 'chang| byam [= byams] chen gsum gyis gtsug lag khang zhengs [= bzhengs]|| bstan pa dar rgyas su mdzad|. Though the text refers to A mgon bzang po and his sons, the subsequent section on his son bKra shis mgon has nothing to say about the foundation of the Thub chen; see the *Namgyal Molla* (pp. 15.12–16.1).*

⁴⁰⁵ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 10a–b): *'di la sras bzhi ste| a haṃ tshangs chen brka shis mgon ni| (...) thub chen rgyal ba'i pho brang rten dang brten par bcas pa dang|. On this passage, see also JACKSON 1984: 148.*

⁴⁰⁶ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 30b–31b): *[a haṃ bkra shis mgon dpal bzang po ni] thub chen rgyal ba'i pho brang gtso 'khor khri rgyab yol dang bcas pa gzhan las ches khyad par du 'phags pa| logs ris gser las byas pa'i rang bzhing [= bzhin] blta bas mchog mi shes pa| zhal ras lha khang na rgyud sde bzhi yi lha tshogs| bkod pa phul du phyin pa| blo yi yul las 'das pa| sgo khang stong [= steng] 'og la| sgril ma ral pa gyen brdzes dang| 'jam dpal rtsa rgyud nas bzhad [= bshad] pa'i bris sku phan yon can| de bzhin gshegs pa'i tshogs| 'jig rten skyong pa bzhi dang bcas pa| stengs g.yab la| rgyal ba thub dbang| bar ba mtshan nyid med pa'i chos 'khor bskor ba'i bkod pa dang bcas pa| 'jam dbyang phyag mtshan ri mor| ri bo gru 'dzin na| 'phags pa 'jig rten dbang phyug bzhugs pa'i bkod pa| ka gnyis nang na thub pa gnas brtan bcu drug gi bkod pa rgya na| lugs| rje btsun sku mche [= mched]|| byang chub sems dpa' gnyis| lha mo gnyis dang bcas pa dang| steng shod kyī shing rtses phul du phyin pa| shing rtsi sogs rin chen gser kyī [= gyi] rang bzhin| phyi nang gi bkod pa ya mtshan che ba ni| 'jig rten gyi mes po'i yid kyī ri mo ltar khyad par 'phags pa dang| dbu thog na gser 'bru chen po| rgyu bzo khyad sogs shin tu ngo mtshar che ba rnam bzhengs pa yin cing|. See also the *rTsa drangs kyī bems chag* (p. 9): *bkra shis mgon gyi [= gyis] thub chen lha khang dang|| bkra shis sgo mang la sogs mang du bzhengs||. For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 42.17–18). In the biography of Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, we find a passage describing his involvement in the design of murals, other decorative elements, and inscriptions that apparently relates to the Thub chen; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 13a4–5): *bstan pa'i bya ba bde bar gshegs pa'i sku gzugs gyi [= kyī] bkod pa tshad la sogs pa ni| mkhas [= mkha'] spyod u ḍi ya na'i logs bris| kun rig gi gzhal yas khang tshad dang dpeṣ mtshon par mi nus pa| rnal 'byor rgyud kyī dal du ma'i logs bris| e waṃ gyi ston pa'i gtso bo logs bris| ka ba'i zum(?)chings| lan tshtal gnas gtaḍ gyi [= kyī] yi ge| blo bor thub pa chen po'i ldem g.yas g.yon| khri rgyab|. For inscriptions of the Thub chen's murals, see DHUNDEL 2002: 248–250, Document No. 15 (MHR doc. no. 19, Tib.) and TUCCI 1956: 20–22. On the structure and iconographical scheme of the temple, see JACKSON 2010a: 153–156, VITALI 1999: 11–16, and VITALI 2012a: 179–180. On its murals, see also ASLOP 2004: 136–139 and LO BUE 2010b: 76–89. On the restoration of its murals, see FIENI 2010b and FIENI 2012. For pictures of the Thub chen, its murals, and layout, see LIEBERMAN and LIEBERMAN, “Thubchen Gompa,” <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/BuddhistTempleArt/ThubchenGompa.html> (accessed 21.02. 2017).***

⁴⁰⁷ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 129.10–14): *de nas 'brug lo hor zla drug pa'i tshes bzhi nas brtsams te| zhag grangs gsum gyi bar du| thub chen rnam par rgyal ba'i gtsug lag khang du| mkhan chen yon tan chos rgyal gyis gtso mdzad dge 'dun 'dus pa dgu brgya lhaḡ cig byung ba'i sar| phar phyin| rnam 'grel| sdom gsum| dbu ma bshes pa'i spring yig ste po ti bzhi la rang lugs kyī sgras dang mthun pa'i bshad pa yang phyogs tsam grub par byas pa lags|. On that passage, see also KRAMER 2008: 62 and 159. Cf. VITALI 1999: 4 and VITALI 2012a: 180.*

temple.⁴⁰⁸ His visit is further confirmed by one of his writings, the *Glo bo thub chen gyi gtsug lag khang dang/ bkra shis sgo mangs sogs kyi dkar chag*, which he composed after his return from Glo bo when residing at gSer mdog can.⁴⁰⁹ In this versified text, he offers a short praise on the activities of bKra shis mgon, the Thub chen temple, and its wall paintings,⁴¹⁰ before continuing with a descriptive praise of the bKra shis sgo mangs stūpa that had been built by bKra shis mgon in the direct vicinity of the Thub chen.⁴¹¹

The only source that provides a precise date for the construction of the Thub chen is the modern Glo bo history of mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin. According to him, bKra shis mgon began constructing the Thub chen in 1467 and completed it in 1472. To perform the temple's consecration, he invited Shākya mchog ldan to Glo bo, who is said to have subsequently performed the consecration of the Thub chen and its contents for seven days.⁴¹² Considering that Ngor chen had left Glo bo in 1449 and passed away in

⁴⁰⁸ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 130.1–2): *de nas lo de nyid kyi zla ba bdun pa dang brgyad pa tsam gyi dus nar/ chos rje 'jam dbyangs chen po dpon slob rnam kyang phebs byung/*; and *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 53a1): *der glo bo'i thub chen rnam par rgyal ba'i gtsug lag khang du thog mar phebs/*. See also the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 51a3–6), CAUMANN 2012: 159, and CAUMANN 2015: 183–184.

⁴⁰⁹ For this work, see the *Shāk mchog gi gsung 'bum* (vol. 17, pp. 277–282).

⁴¹⁰ Cf. VITALI 2012a: 180, who by referring to the same work states: “Another clue is the fact that the ornate verses accompanying the murals in the temple as inscriptions on the walls were composed by gSer mdog pan chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) and are found in a brief work contained in his *gSung 'bum*, entitled *Glo bo Thub chen gyi gtsug lag khang dang bkra shis sgo mangs sogs kyi dkar chags bzhugs*.” Cf. also VITALI 1999: 4.

⁴¹¹ The *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 32a–34a) presents the following description of the structure and iconographical programme of the stūpa: *thugs kyi rten yab nyid kyi rten la/ bkra shis sgo mangs kyi phyi rten chen po/ char khebs tog dang bcas pa/ zangs gser las grub pa/ rgyal ba'i mchod rten bdun/ khyam [= khyams] ra dang bcas pa/ bkod pa phul du phyin pa/ chos 'khor tog dang bcas pa/ zangs gser las grub pa/ mdo dang rgyud kyi lha tshogs thob thang gi go rims kyi bzhugs shing/ rin po che gser gyi rang bzhin dang bcas pa/ mchod rten re re la'ang/ sku gsung thugs tshang ba bzhugs/ yang bka [= bkra] shis sgo mangs kyi mchod rten rgyu rin po che gser zangs brdungs las grub pa la bkod pa phul du phyin pa/ mchod gnas kyi yid kyi ri mo bris pa lta bu/ rin po che sna tshogs pa'i phya [= phra] mangs ni/ brjod kyi mi lang mod/ rangs pa tsam brjod na/ rin po che margad/ pug shell/ sging la'i nor bu/ ma na hi dkar dmar/ nal/ padma ra ka/ rtsang/ rdo'i snying po/ hi ra ma ni/ mu tig/ dbyig/ byi ru/ mu men/ inda ni la/ g.yu la sogs tel' dzam bu gling dang/ gling gzan gyi rin po che sna tshogs pas/ chos sku'i rten ngo bo dang gtso bo rnam par snang mdzad nas/ 'jig rten skyong ba yan chad yi lha tshogs rnam la/ rgyan gyi bye brag sna tshogs pas mdzes pa kho na yin no/ lha rnam kyang/ khang bzangs la rgyal po chen po bzhil/ phyogs skyong bcu/ gur mgon lcam sring/ dmar po skor gsum/ nor rgyun ma rnam bzhugs/ re re bzhin yang phra bdun brgya bdun bcu don gnyis gnyis yod do/ bang rim bzhi pa la/ rnal 'byor rgyud/ rtsa ba'i rgyud/ de nyid 'dus pa du bzhi'i dam bu/ dang po rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor la/ rgyud lugs dang 'brel pa lugs gnyis yod pa las/ 'dir rgyud lugs kyi rtsa ba'i dkyil 'khor kyi [= gyi] lha tshogs/ sbyongs rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa'i 'jig rten pa dang/ 'jig rten las 'das pa'i dkyil 'khor la/ rnam snang rsa [= rtsa] ba'i dkyil 'khor/ shak thub sku yi dkiil 'khor/ tshe dpag med gsung gi dkyil 'khor/ rdo rje sems dpa'i thugs kyi dal/ 'khor lo bsgyur ba yon tan gyi dkyil 'khor/ me ltar 'bar ba 'phrin las kyi dkyil 'khor rnam kyi gtso 'khor lga lga/ khro bo kham gsum rnam rgyal/ 'dod pa'i lha rnam rgyal/ sgrol ma/ gzungs grwa lga/ 'od zer can/ rnam 'joms/ gdugs dkar can/ tshe sgrub kyi bstod pa sangs rgyas/ tshe dpag med/ sha wa ri ba/ mi g.yo ba/ gza' yum/ sgrol dkar/ dug sel ma rnam bzhugs/ bum par rnam snang gtso bo la yum bzhil/ phyag mtshan dang bcas pa bzhugs/ bre la lam 'bras kyi bla ma brgyud pa nyi shu rtsa cig bzhugs shing/ de dag thams cad kyang rin po che'i phra mangs rnam par brgyan gyi bkod pas bkra ba/ gzan las phul du byung ba/ bod gangs can na 'gran zla dang bral ba/ phyi'i gtsug lag khang rgyu rin po che gser gyi rang bzhin thog phubs kyi shing brtsegs logs ris sogs bkod pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa de nyid legs par bsgrubs/. On this passage, see also VITALI 2012a: 183–185. Shortly before his death, Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan was also involved in the planning of a bKra shis sgo mangs stūpa at sMon thang; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 14b7–8): *nyer bdun gyi nyin smon thang du phebs/ bkra shis sgo mangs gyi [= kyi] zhal bkod rnam rags rims rgyun du gsung ba yang/ de nyin shi tu zhib par bla ma blo gros bzang po dang/ dpon klu pa gnyis la gnang/*.*

⁴¹² See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 110.8–111.18): *a ham tshangs chen bkra shis mgon mchog ni/ (...)* thub bstan rgyal ba'i gtsug lag khang spyi lo <chig stong bzhi brgya bdun lo> [= chig ston bzhi brgya re bdun lo] dang/ rab byung bdun pa'i me mo phag lor [i.e., 1467] rnam 'gram gting nas/ spyi lo <chig stong bzhi brgya bcu gnyis> [= chig ston bzhi brgya don gnyis] la grub/ rab byung bdun pa'i chu pho 'brug lor [i.e., 1472] thub chen phyi nang legs bsgrubs zin pa/ (...). Although bKra shis bstan 'dzin correctly specifies the Tibetan date this time, his conversion into the Western dating is wrong. On that passage, see also JACKSON 2010a: 153 and 224, n. 303.

1456, it is impossible to attribute the consecration of the Thub chen to him. Moreover, neither Sangs rgyas phun tshogs nor Glo bo mkhan chen have anything to say about the foundation or consecration of the Thub chen, not to mention Ngor chen's personal involvement in it.

According to mkhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin, Ngor chen also played a role in the foundation of the walled city of sMon thang, the capital of Glo bo. Among other factors, it was partially due to his instructions that A ma dpal shifted his residence from the fortified hill at mkha spyod to the open sMon thang plateau near the base of that hill. To determine the exact location for his new seat, A ma dpal sent out from mkha' spyod a white goat or ewe laden with gold, instructing her to lay down at the site that was destined by his *karma*. At this very site then, A ma dpal established in 1427 his palace (*dgung mkhar rgyal khang*) in accord with Ngor chen's architectonic design.⁴¹³ The *Tsarang Molla* also attributes this foundation to A ma dpal, though without specifying any date, whereas the history of the Byams chen temple dates it to more than ten years later, in 1441.⁴¹⁴ Based on the chronology of the building activity jointly initiated by Ngor chen and the kings of Glo bo, and the fact that the influence of the Zhang pa in Upper Glo bo was finally eclipsed by A mgon bzang po only in 1441, the latter dating should be considered more reliable.⁴¹⁵

mkhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin further reports that after his second sojourn in Glo bo, Ngor chen was approached via a letter by A mgon bzang po and his brothers, requesting his service in determining the proper location and size for establishing temples at sMon thang. In reply, as bKra shis bstan 'dzin continues, Ngor chen sent a message explaining that he would do so by throwing grains of barley from his present location in gTsang on the festival of the fifteenth day of the fourth month—the holiest day of Sa ga zla ba month, which celebrates the birth, awakening, and passing away of Buddha Śākyamuni. He said that at the spots where the barley grains would fall down in sMon thang, the royal brothers should build the temples. Subsequently, in accord with Ngor chen's statements, grains of barley fell from the sky on the fifteenth day of the fourth month, and at these spots the city's new temples, such as the Byams chen and

⁴¹³ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 72.16–75.8): *lnga pa chab srid mnga' thang dang rnam dkar 'god tshul ni| de rjes a ma dpal bzang po mkha' spyod du nyin cig sngon gyi legs smon dang| rje btsun kun dga' bzang po'i bka' lung thugs smon dang dkar mchog lha yi thugs rgyud bskul bar brten dgongs pa bstan dgon chab srid gzhi sdod gsar rgyag bya yul gyi bstan pa'i sa gzhi dang| gnas pa'i yul mkhar zhig| las skal gang du yod pa'i sa der sdod cig gsung pas yid smon mdzad nas| klu ra dkar mo zhig la gser lu ba gang bkal nas btang pas| klu ra de thur rgyug lam chen brgyud chu rgal rgyan mgo'i la thon thang chen de ru nyal bsdad 'dug pa las skal der yod par dgongs nas| rgyal blon dpon 'bangs yid mos mthun gros kyis gnas gzhi yid smon thang chen de ru| spyi lo 1367 [= 1427] rab byung drug [= bdun] pa'i me mo lug lor [i.e., 1427] der gza' skar legs 'dzoms nyin sa chog sa blang| thig tshad dang ldan pa'i dbus su dgung mkhar rgyal khang la| thog tshad lnga yod pa| mgu lha ab gzig mdung dmar bcas mgul lha bcu gsum bzhugs khang lcog bcu gsum| dgung mkhar bzo dbyibs la zur dgu yod pa ngor chen kun dga' bzang po'i ljags bkod du grags| (...). See also the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 51.15–52.3). Cf. VITALI 2012a: 134–135, n. 205, who interprets that passage as referring to the foundation of mkha' spyod. According to CHOGYE TRICHEN RINPOCHE 2003: 33, bCo brgyad Khri chen Rin po che also “often said that the architectural design of the palace of the Mustang kings was created by Ngor chen Kunga Zangpo.”*

⁴¹⁴ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 8a): [a me dpal ni] mkha spyod steng du rdzong bzung| yid smon thang du mkhar btab|. For the citation from the *Byams mgon gts'o 'khor gsum gyi dkar chag* (pp. 252.30–253.16), see Part Four, n. 381. See also the modern account in the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 29.2–17).

⁴¹⁵ On the foundation of the walled city of sMon thang, see VITALI 1999: [3]–6 and VITALI 2012a: 118–122 and 134–136. He considers the settlement of sMon thang as having originally been established by dKon mchog rgyal mtshan at the end of the fourteenth century and to have been transformed later on by A mgon bzang po into the capital of Glo bo, to whom he also attributes the foundation of its royal castle. On dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, see also EVERDING 2000: 463–468 and 525–528.

Thub chen, were built.⁴¹⁶ Both accounts of Ngor chen's involvement in the foundation of sMon thang and its temples are only found in the Glo bo history of mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin. Both are based on local oral traditions and may thus tell more about the common perceptions and traditional recollections of sMon thang's history than about actual history.

Shākya mchog ldan's biography by Kun dga' grol mchog contains scattered remarks that Ngor chen allegedly embarked on another journey to Glo bo from 1452 to 1454. The author mentions, for instance, the presence of a delegation from Glo bo at Ngor in 1452, Ngor chen's plan to visit Glo bo for three years, Ngor chen's presence in Glo bo at Brag dkar in 1453, and the news that Ngor chen had returned to gTsang in about 1454.⁴¹⁷ As we shall see below, Ngor chen actually resided in the early 1450s at Ngor and thus those remarks about another Glo bo sojourn are surely mistaken. Kun dga' grol mchog might refer to Ngor chen's third Glo bo sojourn and simply was wrong in dating that event. As I was informed by Volker Caumanns, many other such anachronisms are found in Kun dga' grol mchog's life of Shākya mchog ldan.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 97.17–99.3): *a mgon mchog nas sku mched rnams la 'di phyis gnyis phan gyi skyabs rten dgos pa thugs mthun byung bas/ sku mched rnams nas rdo rje 'chang la re 'dun zhu yig gsham gsal/ rdzong nang gtsug lag rten gsum 'dzugs bskrun bgyi 'dod kyī re ba mchis pas/ rgya khyon che chung sa phyogs 'os bab sogs kyī thugs smon dang phyag nas bstsal gnang mdzad pa'i skyabs rten bcas phul ba'i lan du/ kho bas 'di ba nas sa zla'i dus chen nyin phyag nas gtor ba yin pas gar babs sar rten gsum gtsug lag btab dgos pa/ phyag nas dus tshod gang babs la nan sgug gis lta rtog byed dgos pa'i bka' rgya'i dgongs don bzhin/ sa zla'i tshes bco lnga nyin sa phyogs rnams phyag dar legs par bgyis te/ mnga' zhabs kyī rgyal blon 'bangs 'khor gtso drag rnams kyī phyag nas byon pa'i bsu phreng spos dud sogs mchod sprin dpag med gsol 'debs kyī skabs/ bar snang nam mkha'i dbyings nas phyag nas khra 'thib 'thib babs byung bas/ byams chen/ rdo rje 'chang/ thub chen/ bde gshegs mchod rten cha gsum sogs gar bzhugs kyī sa gnas la babs 'byung ba/ (...).*

⁴¹⁷ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 28b6–7): *rdo rje 'chang gis/ srad/ seng ge rtse/ dpal ldan sa skya'i bar du/ bla ma sde dpon so so la 'bul sdud kyī bka' shog 'thems pa stsal zhing/ da drung nas slob dpon pa rnams sngon la 'byon/ nged kyang glo bo nas 'bod mi 'dug pas/ rjes la sleb yong bas nged gang 'dug tu byon mdzod/ ces pa'i bka' lung bzhin sngon la phyin/.* On this passage, see also CAUMANNs 2012: 101 and CAUMANNs 2015: 114–116.

See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 29b1–3): *der rdo rje 'chang gi bka' lung la/ da res gsang phu'i dus mchod gtong ba sogs la byon/ glo bo nas kyang dus mchod rang gi stengs su mi 'byor ba 'dug kyang/ dgun chos stengs su mang ja 'gyed bcas kyī skul 'debs byed/ nged mnga' ris su lo ngo gsum tsam las mi thogs pas slar ngor tshor sleb pa gsan skabs byon/ chos 'phro sogs yong ba bgyid sogs kyī bslab ston dang/ mar phyogs kyī sde pa so sor yang 'bul sdud la phan pa'i bka' shog lam yig stsal zhes/ 'di dag chu 'dus pa dbang phyug gi ngag las dngos kyis thos so/.* On this passage, see also CAUMANNs 2012: 102 and CAUMANNs 2015: 114–116.

See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 28a3–6): *chu mo bya'i lo [i.e., 1453] bsnyen rdzogs zhu ba'i yul mkhan por gyur pa chos rje rdo rje 'chang chen po dang/ grib tshod pa rje kun dbang pa gnyis glo bo brag dkar na bzhugs/ dus sgo [= go] ba 'jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho glo bo rnam rgyal chos sde'i mkhan po dang/ (...) ngor dgon par gsang ston rje mus chen gcig po las mi bzhugs pa dang/.* On this passage, see also CAUMANNs 2012: 99 and CAUMANNs 2015: 112.

See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 35a3): *gtsang phyogs nas 'gron po yongs pa'i skad cha la/ chos rje rdo rje 'chang chen po mnga' ris glo bo 'khor nas ngor tshor phebs yod 'dug pas (...).* On this passage, see also CAUMANNs 2012: 109–110 and CAUMANNs 2015: 130–131.

⁴¹⁸ Volker Caumanns (Lumbini, 02 November 2012). Kun dga' grol mchog also mentions that Kun dga' dbang phyug was present in Glo bo in 1453, though only two later visits are confirmed by his biographies; see Part Four, 6.10. Moreover, Kun dga' grol mchog states that 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho functioned in Shākya mchog ldan's full monastic ordination in Ngor in 1452 and bestowed teachings on him at Chu 'dus also in 1452, though the former served as abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling in Glo bo at that time; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 7.3–6), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 27a7–b2 and 29a2–5), and Part Four, 11.

6.8 Commissioning of Manuscript Copies of the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*

While in Glo bo, Ngor chen focussed part of his activities on commissioning and supervising the preparation of manuscript copies of both the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*, which were enormous and costly projects that were only realisable thanks to the patronage of Glo bo's ruling house. The number of copies of the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur* that emerged as a result of those joint efforts are difficult to determine, but the Tibetan sources, especially the catalogues written by Ngor chen, provide information about the background of those commissions.

Reviewing the account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs on Ngor chen's Glo bo sojourns, we learn of the preparation of the following sets:

- (1) At the time of his first sojourn, no complete *bKa' 'gyur* was available in Glo bo, and thus Ngor chen commissioned one copy under the patronage of A ma dpal. For this undertaking, the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) was organised from Sa skya and the manuscripts that served as the master copy for the other sections were collected from all locations (*phyogs mtha' dag nas*). This copy was not completed until Ngor chen's second sojourn, when he provided instructions on how to proceed with the work. Moreover, Ngor chen is said to have written a catalogue for this set.
- (2) During his second visit, Ngor chen commissioned a *bKa' 'gyur* written in golden letters under the patronage of A ma dpal. When he came up to Glo bo for his third visit, the work on this *bKa' 'gyur* was not yet finished, as he offered his guidance on the remaining work, executed necessary corrections, and also wrote a catalogue.
- (3) During his third sojourn, Ngor chen gave instructions on the commissioning of a *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur* under the patronage of A mgon bzang po.

By comparison, Glo bo mKhan chen, in his account of Ngor chen's visits, provides no details about those commissions, except that Ngor chen established the basic conditions (*gzhi rkyen*) for preparing copies of the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur* during his first sojourn. To find further references to text production, we have to check local histories of Glo bo. Unfortunately, those works recount the preparation of manuscripts only from the perspective of its commissioning patrons, the rulers of Glo bo, and do not refer to Ngor chen's role in those projects.

Surprisingly, the *Tsarang Molla* says nothing about a commissioning by A ma dpal, but attributes the patronage of golden manuscript copies of the *bKa' 'gyur*, *bsTan 'gyur*, *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, and Ngor chen's collected works to his son A mgon bzang po.⁴¹⁹ On the contrary, the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* credits A ma dpal with commissioning two *bKa' 'gyur* copies written on white paper (with black ink?), one *bKa' 'gyur* copy written on dark blue paper (with golden ink?), and one *bsTan 'gyur* copy.⁴²⁰ The same work attributes to A mgon bzang po the patronage of copies of both *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*, the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po and his two sons, bSod nams rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal

⁴¹⁹ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fols. 9b–10a): *chos rgyal a mgon bzang po ni (...) bka' 'gyur| bstan 'gyur| sa skya gong ma lnga| ngor chen rdo rje 'chang sogs kyi bka' 'bum gser du| sha stag gis bzhangs|*. On this passage, see also JACKSON 1984: 147.

⁴²⁰ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 17a): *[a ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan ni] bka' 'gyur dkar po gnyis| sngon po gcig| bstan 'gyur gcig la sogs te| sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la mdzad pa rgya cher mdzad pa ni mdo tsam smos kyi|*

mtshan, and Ngor chen's collected works.⁴²¹ In line with the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, the historical record (*bem chag*) of rTsa drangs (= gTsang rang) credits A ma dpal with commissioning copies of three *bKa'* 'gyur sets and one *bsTan* 'gyur, but attributes to A mgon bzang po only the commissioning of many *bKa'* 'gyur sets.⁴²² One of those commissions in gold was brought to Ngor, where it was later shown to Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880–1923/25), who stated that Ngor housed a golden *bKa'* 'gyur copy that had been presented to Ngor chen by the king of Glo bo.⁴²³ Moreover, the research of Charles Ramble revealed that both A ma dpal and A mgon bzang po also patronised the copying of Bon scriptures.⁴²⁴

In his history of Glo bo, mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin seems to connect some of the aforementioned information with Ngor chen's commissions. For instance, he mentions that in 1427 the work on a *bKa'* 'gyur was begun according to Ngor chen's instructions and under the patronage of A ma dpal.⁴²⁵ He further remarks that copies of the *bKa'* 'gyur written in gold, and also in alternating lines of gold and silver, were already on the verge of completion during Ngor chen's second Glo bo sojourn.⁴²⁶ Within his presentation of Ngor chen's third visit, he reports the preparation of *bKa'* 'gyur copies on dark blue paper, out of which two were written with gold and two in alternating lines of gold and silver.⁴²⁷ Oddly enough, he then attributes a total of four *bKa'* 'gyur sets to the joint efforts of Ngor chen and the kings of Glo bo. He concludes that from these four sets, one is still preserved at gTsang rang, one at sMon thang, and individual volumes of a third set were also at

⁴²¹ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 21b–22a): [chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ba 'di ni] sgrub sde la byams pa gling gi sde btsugs nas lo sgrub sogs kyi bsgrub ba'i cha rkyen bcas yig tu theb pa ltar mdzad cingl gtsug lag khang gser khangl mgon khang dang bcas pa bzhengs nas mkhan por chos kyi rje mdo sngags kyi bdag po tshul khirms rgyal mtshan mtshan yongs su grags pa/sku skye ba snga ma'i mtshan dpal ldan pa zhes bya ba bzhugs nas/spyi dang bye brag gi sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa 'chad rtsod brtsom [= rtsom] gsum gyi sgo nas rgyas par mdzad pa sogs/ rgyal ba'i bstan pa rnam par dag pa nyin mor ltar gsal par mdzad nas/ bstan pa'i sbyin bdag chen por zhal gyis zhes [= bzhes] pa yin tel bka' 'gyur ro cog rgyu rin po che las grub pa/ de'i dgongs 'grel bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog grub pa'i dbang phyug dpal ldan sa skya pa yab sras khu dbon rnam kyi bka' 'bum/ rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po'i gsung 'bum la sogs tel dam pa'i chos glegs bam brjod kyis mi lang ba bsgrub pa rnam dangl.

⁴²² See the rTsa drangs kyi bems chag (pp. 7–8): sa skyong chen po a ma dpal zhes pas/ (...) rgyal ba'i bka' 'gyur tshar gsum bstan 'gyur gcig/ gzhän yang gsung rabs [= rab] bgrangs [= grangs] las 'das pa bzhengs/ (...) a mgon bzang pos (...) / bka' 'gyur mang bzhengs (...). For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 42.1).

⁴²³ See the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 399.7–8): phyi khams ngos su ngor chen la blo bo rgyal pos phul ba'i gser gyi bka' 'gyur/ In the total of sets of both the *bKa'* 'gyur and *bsTan* 'gyur that were housed at Ngor at the time of Chos kyi rgya mtsho's visit, see the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (pp. 394.13–402.3). According to the *Khang gsar bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (p. 64.4–5), Ngor had only one *bKa'* 'gyur set in the seventeenth century and thus bSod nams rgya mtsho (1617–1667), the twenty-first abbot of Ngor, commissioned a second manuscript set on white paper with black script (*skya chos*). From 1601 to 1603, Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis (1558–1615), the fourteenth abbot of Ngor, had commissioned a *bKa'* 'gyur set at Ngor, which might be the aforementioned set; see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 679.3–682.1).

⁴²⁴ See Part Four, n. 287.

⁴²⁵ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 72.10–16): chos rje kun dga' bzang po'i bka' slob dgongs don gzhi bzung gis/ mi rje a ma dpal gyis kyang bka' 'gyur 'dir yod gzhän btsal ma dpe 'du 'grub kyis btsal 'byor thub nas/ snyug 'dzin gyi paṇḍi ta rang yod gzhän 'tshol phyogs mtha' nas 'du bkong zhabs zhush/ gser kyang gi bka' 'gyur dang gser dngul spel phreng sogs yig bris mkhas pa du mas spyi lo 1367 [= 1427] lor/ rab byung drug [= bdun] pa'i lug lor [i.e., 1427] thog ma'i dbu btsugs 'bri gñang mdzad pa dangl.

⁴²⁶ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 94.15–18): a ma dpal bzang po mchog nas kyang/ sngar gyi zhal lta gser rkyang bka' bsung [= 'gyur] dang gser dngul spel ma bcas cha 'ga' bris nas 'grub la 'khad pa yod zhus pas thugs dgyes tshor chen pos gsung gling [= gleng] mzdadl.

⁴²⁷ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 100.16–101.6): rdo rje 'chang mchog nas gsung bskul du sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dar rgyas yun gnas ched du/ chos rgyal gyi bka' 'gyur dang byams mgon bcas bzhengs bskrun sgrub pa'i thugs bskul bka' lung thog mar brtsal pa la/ chos phyogs nas kyang bla ma'i thugs bzhed dang pha ma'i dran gso dang bstan pa yun gnas ched/ rang gi mnga' zhabs kyi bzo rig yi ge 'du byed lag bris chad ldan gang yod rnamsl bka' shog khyab bsgrags kyis 'dus nas shog bu mthing shog ngos la gser rkyang bka' 'gyur gnyis dang/ gser dngul sel [= spel?] ma cha gnyis bcas dangl.

sMon thang. Moreover, he states that manuscript sets of the *bKa' 'gyur*, *bsTan 'gyur*, and *Sa skya bka' 'bum* written in alternating lines of gold and silver are housed at the sMon rtse ka drug.⁴²⁸

As a short digression, bKra shis bstan 'dzin describes the outer features of a marvellous *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* cover and its first pages and enumerates the characteristics of a (corresponding?) *bKa' 'gyur* set.⁴²⁹ Fortunately, he reproduces the inscription on the silver plate of the inner face of the wooden book cover of that volume, allowing us to link it with two published pictures of the same book cover housed in the personal chapel of the present-day Mustang raja.⁴³⁰ Based on its inscription and the information provided on the last page, Amy Heller dated and identified the sculptors of this volume:⁴³¹

The book was made in 1511, the work of the Shakya-bhikshu Rup Tej and his son Abhaya Jyoti, both of Mimmanani Bahal in Kathmandu, during the reign of Ratna Malla. These Shakya-bhikshus also belonged to Manjushri Naka Mahavihara. In addition to the manuscript, silver utensils, tangkas, and other requirements for the temple of Jampa at Montang were supplied by the Shakya-bhikshu father and son.

The dating of the volume to 1511 makes the attribution of the commissioning of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* to the joint efforts of Ngor chen and either A ma dpal or A mgon bzang po impossible.

From the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, we learn that also after the time of A ma dpal and A mgon bzang po their descendants continued to engage in similar projects. For instance, bKra shis mgon, the son and heir of A mgon bzang po, patronised the preparation of a *bKa' 'gyur* copy made out of gold and other precious substances.⁴³² His successor and younger

⁴²⁸ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 103.9–15): *sngon dus bka' 'gyur bzhi las da cha gtsang rang du gcig bzhugs|smon thang du gcig thor ro gcig bcas gsum tsam bzhugs|smon rtse ka drug bka' 'gyur bstan 'gyur sa skya bka' 'bum gser dngul spel ma ngor chen bka' 'bum| ma ñi bka' 'bum| rje btsun mi la ras pa'i gsung 'bum| bla ma bsod nams blo gros kyi gsung rnam bcas bris ma yin| rin chen gter mdzod spar mal rnar [= snar] thang bstan 'gyur bcas bzhugs|*. Interestingly, bKra shis bstan 'dzin has nothing to say about a *bsTan 'gyur* commissioned by Ngor chen. See also MATHES 1997: 128, who states that bKra shis bstan 'dzin did not know anything about a *bsTan 'gyur* commissioned by Ngor chen.

⁴²⁹ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 101.7–103.9).

⁴³⁰ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (pp. 101.17–102.1): *om swa sti siddhi|mtshan dpes rab mdzes rgyal ba'i skull|gser 'od 'bar ba'i yig 'bru'i zgugs| ru pa te dzo pha bu sog|| bal yul mkhas pas su rjes lags| 'dra shu bshus pa| dang po'o|*. For pictures of that book cover, see HELLER 2010: 94, pl. 7.4 and MATTHIESSEN 1995: 136–137. Note that the inscription reproduced by bKra shis bstan 'dzin features a slightly different reading than both the one given by HELLER 2010: 94, pl. 7.4 and the one distinguishable from the picture in MATTHIESSEN 1995: 136–137. For another picture of a wood cover with silver plate, which PEISSEL 1992: 245–255 identified as belonging to a *bKa' 'gyur* copy commissioned by Ngor chen, see PEISSEL 1992: lower picture facing p. 240. This volume was kept by the Glo bo King dGra 'dul at his residence in Trenkar (sTeng mkhar?). The other volumes were, according to *Ibid.*: 246, “kept in what had been the palace of the King's eldest son, the building now occupied as the ‘check-post’, but that due to undetermined and regrettable circumstances the heavy gold lettering of the first pages had been recently torn off. To Western scholars such a work of art would be worth literally a fortune, far more than the weight of the gold letters taken from the first pages.”

⁴³¹ HELLER 2010: 94. A second similar silver cover from the *bKa' 'gyur* survives in a private collection. According to *Ibid.*: 93, it was also crafted in 1511 by the chief sculptor Abhaya Jyoti and the scribe of the volume was “Sanggyèpel of Tingkhyu” village in northern Dol po.

⁴³² See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 31b–32a): *[a ham bkra shis mgon dpal bzang po ni] slar yang| rje btsun rdo rje 'chang kun dga' dbang phyug spyang drangs| rgyud sde bzhi zab cing rgya che ba'i chos kyi 'khor lo 'khor| rang bzhan gyi tshogs gnyis rdzogs pa'i phyir du 'bul ba rnam bzahag sogs dpag tu med mod| gser zho'i grangs kyi tshad kyang brjod par ga la nus| gsung gi rten bka' 'gyur ro cog phyi nang rin po che gser las grub pa| bkod pa phun sum tshogs pa na bza' sku 'chings sogs gzhan blo'i yul las 'das pa 'di 'dra ba|* bKra shis mgon also sponsored three manuscript copies of the

brother, A seng rDo rje brtan pa (d. ca. 1496), commissioned five sets of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* in golden script and one copy of the *brGyad tog gser gsum*. Intending to prepare an entire copy of the *bKa' gyur*, he patronised the preparation of sixty-eight volumes written with gold on dark blue paper and two volumes of the *tantras (rgyud)* on white paper, as well as four volumes of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* on white paper. All these manuscripts he offered to his younger brother Glo bo mKhan chen. For his deceased mother, he also commissioned thirty volumes of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*.⁴³³ Among the collected works of Glo bo mKhan chen, we find versified descriptions of some of those scriptures commissioned by his elder brother, such as of the *brGyad tog gser gsum* and golden manuscripts of a *mDo mangs* collection.⁴³⁴ Besides, we find compositions on manuscript copies of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*,⁴³⁵ the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*,⁴³⁶ and

Legs bshad gser gyi thur ma of Shākya mchog ldan and patronised later on also a block-print edition; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 66b3): *der glo bo nas chos rgyal bkra shis mgon pas thog mar rin po che'i khu bas gser rkyang du tshar gsum bris shing|slar par du rkos pa'i sbyin gnas kyang gnang ngo|*. See also CAUMANN 2012: 195 and CAUMANN 2015: 228. In addition, see also KRAMER 2008: 88, who mentions among the writings of Glo bo mKhan chen “lists of contents of a set of seventy-two tantras (...) and of the wooden book covers of the tantric corpus commissioned by the Glo-bo ruler bKra shis mgon.”

⁴³³ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 35b): [*a seng rdo rje brtan pa ni| gzhan yang sku gsung thugs kyi rten bzhengs tshul zur tsam ni| gser rkyangs [= rkyang] las grub pa'i brgyad stong pa lngal yang brgyad tog gser gsum gcig| bka' gyur gcig| grub na bsam gser chos po ti brgyad bcu gya drug| rgyud dkar po po ti gnyis| yang sa skya bka' 'bum po ti bzhi rnam skya ma sgrub nas mkhan chen bsod nams lhun grub kyid drung du phull yang yum rin mo che'i dgongs pa rdzogs phyir| sa skya bka' 'bum po ti sum bcu so gcig|*]. The four volumes of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* are specified as *skya ma*, which I suggest should be understood in the sense of *skya chos*. The latter term has been explained by CÜPPERS 2010: [115] as referring to simple copies in “black and white.” Cf. VITALI 2012a: 204–205 for a different understanding of that passage. On A seng rDo rje brtan pa, see JACKSON 1984: 120 and 124 and VITALI 2012a: 203–205.

⁴³⁴ For the description of the *brGyad tog gser gsum*, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum 1* (vol. 3, fols. 340a–342b2) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum 2* (vol. 3, pp. 343–347). In the former it occurs under the title *brGyad tog gser gsum gyi dkar chag bzhugs| nang so dpal srungs kyid|* and in the latter as *brGya [= brGyad] tog gser gsum nang so dpal bsrungs kyid bzhengs pa'i dkar chag*. The *brGyad tog gser gsum* collection comprises the *brGyad stong pa* (i.e., the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*), the *'Phags pa chen po rin po che tog gi gzungs (Mahāsanipātaratnaketuḍhārāṇi)*, and the *gSer 'od dam pa* (i.e., the *Suvarṇaprabhāṣottamasūtra*). Glo bo mKhan chen clarifies that it was not his older brother who actually commissioned the texts, but Nang gnyer dPal srungs; see the *brGyad tog gser gsum gyi dkar chag* (fols. 2b1–3b2): *mi dbang ā seng rdo rje brtan pa ni| mched dang brtsun mor bcas pa sa yi dpal| de tshē dpal 'byor sa gzhi rab brtan cing| rnam mang 'byor pa'i chu bo kun nas 'bab| phas rgol 'joms pa'i me chen 'bar ba dang| snyan grags rlung ltar kun tu khyab par gyur| rgyal ba'i sku gzugs gser gyi lhun po dang| de gsung rin chen glegs bam bye ba dang| ngur smrig 'dzin pa'i chos grwa 'bum phrag gis| sdzogs [= rdzogs] ldan bzhin du sa 'di dge bar byas| dus der chos kyid rgyal po'i nang gnyer chell 'bris lo chen po'i rgyud 'dzin dpal srungs kyid| mi dbang thugs kyid bzhed pa skong ba dang| dri [= drin] can pha ma'i drin lan ldon pa dang| rang gi sdig sgrib ma lus sbyang ba'i phyir dang| mthar thug rnam mkhyen go 'phang thob phyir dull dam chos kun gyi snying por gyur pa yid| brgyad tog gser gsum rin po che las bsgrubs| mtho ris lus mchog thob nas 'byor pa yid| mchog tu gyur pas rgyal ba'i gsung rab rnam| dad dang gus pa chen po'i rin chen gyid| rgyu las bsgrubs pa shin tu ngo mtshar lags| mthing shog mkha' ltar dag pa'i rang bzhin lal| gser yig nyi zla'i phreng ltar 'god mkhas pa| lha rigs bzo bo'i rnam 'phrul tshē rgyal sogs| sha ri mkhas pa'i dpon chen bcu phrag gcig| dag byed sdom brtson rim gnyis snang ba can| snyags 'chang dam pa dpal 'byor brtan pa sogs| gsar rnying brda don rig pa'i mkhas rnam kyid| legs par dpyad de sgra dang mthun par byas| glegs bu'i rkos rnam bzo rig nyi ma 'dod| sna tshogs ri mo'i rnam 'phrul du ma rnam| legs sbyangs lha yi bzo bo skyangs ster ball| tshē dbang dpal ldan sor mo'i rol rtsed yid| (...) ces brgyad tog gser gsum gyi glegs bam nang gnyer chen po dpal srungs kyid rin po che las bzhengs pa'i mtshon byed 'di yang| dge slong bsod nams lhun grub legs pa'i 'byung gnas rgyal mtshan dpal bzang pos sbyar ba'o||* For a description of this work, see also KRAMER 2008: 88 and 253, no. 309. For the description of the *mDo mangs* collection, the *mDo mangs gser gyi glegs bam bum phrag gi| mtshon byed rin chen ngag gi lde mig can| shing brjod sgo kra ldan pa'i snyan tshig gis| mkhas mang yid kyid shing rta dga' ba*, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum 1* (vol. 3, fols. 277a–289b) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum 2* (vol. 3, pp. 225–247). For a description of this work, see KRAMER 2008: 88 and 243, no. 283. For another catalogue of a *mDo mangs* collection, the *'Tsho byed sangs rgyas skyabs pa'i mdo mangs kyid dkar chag*, see KRAMER 2008: 88 and 252–253, no. 308.

⁴³⁵ See KRAMER 2008: 88, 243–244, no. 285, 245, no. 288, 249–250, no. 298, and 250, no. 300.

⁴³⁶ See KRAMER 2008: 88 and 251–252, no. 305.

other scriptures that need to be further investigated in order to establish possible links with commissioning projects of Glo bo's rulers.⁴³⁷

The royal library at sMon thang preserves a catalogue that records the main religious objects kept at sMon thang and the surrounding monasteries in the mid-seventeenth century.⁴³⁸ According to Klaus-Dieter Mathes, this catalogue was "handed over to the Mustang raja A ham bsam grub dpal 'bar in a water-snake year (1713?)."⁴³⁹ Since the catalogue mentions the Glo bo visit, in 1652, of the rNying ma master mNga' bdag Phun tshogs rig 'dzin (1592–1656), it appears most likely to date the female water-snake year (*chu mo sbrul*) one sexagenary cycle earlier to 1653.⁴⁴⁰ The occasion for presenting the catalogue was apparently the installation of A ham bSam 'grub dpal 'bar as Glo bo's ruler on the thirteenth day of the tenth month of that year.⁴⁴¹

Regarding the *bKa'* 'gyur copies extant in Glo bo at that time, Mathes remarks:⁴⁴²

From this roll we know that, at the time, the royal library had a *Satasahasrikaprajnaparamita* edition and 85 volumes of the Kanjur in golden script on its shelves. In the Namgyal Gompa close by there were 68 volumes of the Kanjur, also in golden script (...). In the *bSam grub dge 'phel gyi pho brang* (the castle of Tsarang), as stated in the same document, were kept a *Satasahasrika-prajnaparamita* edition and 121 volumes of the Kanjur in golden script (...).

While on an expedition of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP), Mathes was able to confirm the existence of one *bKa'* 'gyur set at Glo sMon thang and one set at gTsang rang. According to him, the *bKa'* 'gyur at Glo sMon thang is in the possession

⁴³⁷ See KRAMER 2008: 88.

⁴³⁸ For this work, see NGMCP (Reel no. L 755/44). See also MATHES 1997: 128, n. 4.

⁴³⁹ MATHES 1997: 128. On A ham bSam grub dpal 'bar, see DHUNDEL 2002: 105–109 and JACKSON 1984: 134 and 150.

⁴⁴⁰ See the *sKu gsung dang mchod rdzas bcas kyi dkar chag* (Exposures 3.31–44 and 4.15–39). On Phun tshogs rig 'dzin and his visit to Glo bo, see also the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 12a), EHRHARD 2005, and JACKSON 1984: 150 and 155, n. 33.

⁴⁴¹ See the *sKu gsung dang mchod rdzas bcas kyi dkar chag* (Exposure 6.14–31): 'phags pa'i yul na rnams [= rnam] rgyal zhes pa chu mo sbrul gyi lo! dpa' bo hor lugs kyi zla ba bcu pa'i| gza' skar sbyor byed dge ba'i tshes bcu gsum gyi nyin| mi'i dbang po sa skyong a ham <gsam 'brub> [= bsam 'grub] dpal 'bar| a mchog stan [= brtan] pa rdo rje| brtses(?) ma dpal 'dzin dbang mol yab yum gsum la mnga' thang khri thog phul ba la| a ma dpal zhes phyag rdor sprul pa yis| (...) a ham <gsam 'brub> [= bsam 'grub] dpal 'bar sku phyed [= mched] dang| bskal rgyar [= brgyar] sprun [= skrui?] pa'i dge legs lang mtsho ma| rigs bzang yid 'phrog zlos dkar tho ldan pa'i| lha sras dpal 'dzin dbang mo yab yum la bkra shis mchod pa'i brten mang tho phul ba|.

⁴⁴² MATHES 1997: 128–129. See the *sKu gsung dang mchod rdzas bcas kyi dkar chag* (Exposures 6.31–8.41): thog mar smon thang gi zims [= gzims] mkhang [= khang] nal (...) gsung gi brten [= rten] rgyal ba'i bka' rgya [= brgya] bstong [= stong] pa| rgya gar skad du gser ljangs bdung [= brdungs] la [= las] sgrub [= grub] pa| de'i gzhi dngul ljangs bdung [= brdungs] la gsang rgyas gsum bcu so lngal| byang sems nye ba'i sras brgyad| g.yas g.yon gnyis na thub pa dang yum chen mol 'bur du dod la gzo [= bzo] khyad 'phul du phyin zhing| gzhan gyi glo [= blo] yul las 'das zhing| khyad du 'phags pa kleg [= glegs] shing 'de ba 'da' tu las sgrub [= grub] pa| de'i byas pa'i gser 'ba' zhig la [= las] sgrub [= grub] pa'i bka' 'gyur spu ti brgya [= brgya] bcu rgya lngal (...) rnam rgyal rtse nal (...) bka' 'gyur gser skyangs [= rkyang?] las sgrub [= grub] pa'i spod sti drug bcu re brgyad| <gsam 'brub> [= bsam grub] dge phel gyi pho brang gyi| lha mkhangs [= khang] gi nang nal (...) gsung gi brten [= rten] glo(?) do(?) drug bcu la zhengs [= bzhengs] pa'i rgya [= brgya] stong pa chen po ser(?) dkar mar grags pa'i sbyin blabs [= brlabs] bka' drin tu che ba| de yi [= yis] btson [= mtshon] pa'i gser kyang [= rkyang] las sgrub [= grub] pa'i bka' 'gyur spu ti brgya dang nyi shu rtsa gci| mdos [= mdo?] sde skya ma spod sti gsum bcu| nyi 'khri [= khri] ba spod sti bzhi| (...). The catalogue records many other interesting objects such as the sets of statues of the Lam 'bras lineage masters housed in the castle of gTsang rang (i.e., the bSam grub dge 'phel gyi phro brang); see the *sKu gsung dang mchod rdzas bcas kyi dkar chag* (Exposure 8.21–31): rdo rje chang [= 'chang] gi gser sku mda' tshad gcig gi [= gis] btson [= mtshon] pa'i| lams [= lam] 'bras rgyud [= brgyud] pa'i gser sku nyi shu rtsa gsum| yang rdo rje chang [= 'chang] gi gser sku mda' tshad gcig gi [= gis] btsos [= gtsos] pa'i| lams [= lam] 'bras brgyud pa'i gser sku bcu| (...) sa chen skun [= kun] dga' snying po'i sku sogs lam 'bras brgyud pa'i sku bzhi|.

of the “Mustang raja Jigme Palbar Bista,” and the one at gTsang rang belongs to his son “Jigme Bista.”⁴⁴³ This is further specified by him:

An incomplete [*bKa' gyur*] copy in golden and silver script—alternately one line in golden and one line in silver (*ra ma lug*)—on black shiny paper is kept in the king’s palace. In the castle of Tsarang, half a day’s ride south of Lo Manthang, a copy has survived that is entirely in golden script. Quite a few volumes are double, and in a few cases even a third or fourth copy of the same volume was found.⁴⁴⁴

According to mKhan po bKra shis bstan ’dzin, the copy in Tsarang is the closest to the original. A comparison with the Ngor chen catalogue contained in the collected works of the Sakya-pas (*Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*) shows, by contrast, that both Kanjur collections in Mustang must be later copies of the original.⁴⁴⁵

Up to now, this discussion has shown that the Tibetan sources provide conflicting information about the joint scriptural commissions of Ngor chen and the rulers of Glo bo. Though mKhan po bKra shis bstan ’dzin considers the extant volumes of three *bKa' gyur* sets to have been commissioned by Ngor chen, this is unsure. Even after Ngor chen’s sojourns in Glo bo, later members of Glo bo’s ruling house continued to patronise new manuscript copies of the *bKa' gyur* and other sacred collections. Thus, as long as we cannot conclusively identify original volumes of texts that were actually commissioned by Ngor chen, the attribution of the extant ones seems very shaky.

For identifying original volumes, we possess catalogues of sets of both *bKa' gyur* and *bsTan gyur* that Ngor chen wrote about his Glo bo commissions.⁴⁴⁶ They allow us to verify his involvement in the commissioning of at least one manuscript copy of the *bKa' gyur* and *bsTan gyur*. Those catalogues are contained in the fourth volume of his collected works in a section that reproduces a total of five catalogues. Among them, we find one *bKa' gyur* and two *bsTan gyur* catalogues. The first is the *bKa' gyur ro cog gi dkar chag bstan pa gsal ba'i sgron me*, which explains the following about the set’s commission:⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ MATHES 1997: 127.

⁴⁴⁴ MATHES 1997: 128. For a description of the 102 volumes of the golden *bKa' gyur* at gTsang rang, see *Ibid.*: 130. According to *Ibid.*: 127, the first ten volumes constituting the Tantra section have been filmed and “it is planned to publish the Golden Kanjur of Tsarang under the joint collaboration of the National Archives, the Lumbini International Research Institute and the NGMPP.”

⁴⁴⁵ MATHES 1997: 129.

⁴⁴⁶ These catalogues have been employed by Helmut Eimer in his research on the Glo bo editions of both *bKa' gyur* and *bsTan gyur*; see EIMER 1994, EIMER 1999, EIMER 2002a, and EIMER 2002b. On the Glo bo *bKa' gyur* and its descendants, see now also TAUSCHER and LAINÉ 2015. Note that their speculative claims about Ngor chen’s *bKa' gyur* commissions are rather problematic. Moreover, their remarks contain references to Tibetan sources that were wrongly extracted from the secondary literature.

⁴⁴⁷ *bKa' gyur ro cog gi dkar chag* (p. 518.2–5): *dpon po a ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan zhes rnam par grags pa'i sbyin bdag (...)* *des/ rgyal ba'i bstan pa sgo thams cad nas rgyas par bya ba dang/ khyad par mnga' ris kyi sa phyogs su bstan pa phyi dar gyi dus nas brtsams te yun ring mo'i bar la bstan pa rin po che rma med par gnas su zin kyang/ dus ha cang ring du gyur pa'i dbang gis glegs bam 'ga' zhig 'thor nas deng sang rgyal ba'i bka' gyur ro cog gi glegs bam tshang ba phyogs gcig mi bzhugs pa'i mun pas khyab pa'i skabs 'dir/ bka' gyur ro cog gi nyi ma 'od zer/ mnga' ris kyi sa'i cha thams cad du shar bar bya'o snyam pa'i dgongs pa zab mo thugs la shar ba ltar phyag len du btab nas bris pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs la/* Cf. EIMER 1994: 230, EIMER 1998: 13, EIMER 1999: 11 and 18, and EIMER 2002a: 76 for a slightly different understanding of parts of this passage. On the transmission of the *bKa' gyur* in mNga' ris, *Ibid.*: 76 concludes: “From the preface given to the *Early Mustang Kanjur Catalogue* we understand that in Mustang itself the canonical transmission was almost extinct in the middle of the fifteenth century. The reference to Mnga' ris, which is situated west of Glo bo, that is Mustang, indicates that one had to rely on canonical texts extant in Western Tibet, because the manuscript material accessible in Mustang was not sufficient to prepare a Kanjur on its basis. Therefore, we conclude that the Kanjur transmission in Mustang is connected with that in Western

The patron known as dPon po A ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan [thought] “[I] should spread the Conqueror’s teachings in every way.” In the region of mNga’ ris, beginning with the Later Spread of the [Buddha’s] doctrine, the precious teachings had already persisted without blemish for a long time. But since a very long time had lapsed, some volumes had become scattered and thus these days the entire volumes of the *Complete Translation of the Word of the Buddha* [i.e., the *bKa’ ’gyur*] are not available in one place. At this point, when [mNga’ ris] was pervaded by [such kind of] darkness, [A ma dpal] developed in particular the profound thought: “The sun rays of an entire *bKa’ ’gyur* shall arise in every place of mNga’ ris,” and accordingly implemented [its production]. (...)

This passage suggests that the catalogue was written for the first *bKa’ ’gyur*, the preparation of which was begun during Ngor chen’s first sojourn in Glo bo, and it clearly attributes the project to the patronage of A ma dpal. This is supported by the account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. His remark that for a more extensive presentation of Ngor chen’s first *bKa’ ’gyur* commission, one should take a look at the catalogue he wrote indicates that he knew of it and might have even utilised it for his own account. I thus tend to identify Ngor chen’s *bKa’ ’gyur* catalogue as being for his first *bKa’ ’gyur* commission and not as the catalogue for the golden *bKa’ ’gyur*, whose preparation was initiated during Ngor chen’s second sojourn.⁴⁴⁸

However, that *bKa’ ’gyur* catalogue is incomplete; or, at least, Ngor chen only wrote its first part. This becomes evident from the fact that though the enumeration of works is divided into the teachings of the Vajrayāna and Pāramitāyāna, only the teachings pertaining to the Vajrayāna are actually listed, totalling thirty volumes (*rgyud ’bum*: twenty-one volumes, *gzungs ’dus*: three volumes, and *gzungs ’bum*: six volumes).⁴⁴⁹ But the research of Helmut Eimer has uncovered the existence of a manuscript comprising the complete catalogue for this *bKa’ ’gyur*. That catalogue, entitled the *mDo sngags bKa’ ’gyur dkar chag*, was filmed in the Myu gu district of western Nepal by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP). It comprises both Ngor chen’s *bKa’ ’gyur* catalogue as well as the missing sections about the scriptures belonging to the Pāramitāyāna.⁴⁵⁰ The differences in structure between Ngor chen’s Vajrayāna catalogue and the remaining Pāramitāyāna sections, prompted Helmut Eimer to suspect that the catalogue of the latter sections “was compiled by an author other than Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzañ po.”⁴⁵¹ A possible explanation could be that during his sojourn in Glo bo Ngor

Tibet.” Regarding this statement, we need to consider the important remark by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs that for the first *bKa’ ’gyur* commissioned by Ngor chen the Tantra collection (*rgyud ’bum*) was taken from Sa skya. In 2015, Christian Luczanits documented a forty-two-volume manuscript *bKa’ ’gyur* from the fourteenth century now housed at rNam rgyal Monastery. Further research of these volumes, which contain only the Prajñāpāramitā and Sūtra sections, will hopefully further improve our understanding of the *bKa’ ’gyur* transmission in Glo bo.

⁴⁴⁸ Though Sangs rgyas phun tshogs mentions that Ngor chen also wrote a catalogue for the golden *bKa’ ’gyur*, he does not refer his readers to this catalogue for a more extensive presentation. Thus it seems that he himself had not seen that golden *bKa’ ’gyur* catalogue. Cf. EIMER 1999: 12, who, based on a remark by Michel Peissel, understands the passage as pointing “to the ‘Golden Kanjur’ having been prepared for the royal family of Mustang.” Cf. also EIMER 1994: 230, EIMER 1998: 13–14, and PEISSEL 1992: 245–246.

⁴⁴⁹ See the *bKa’ ’gyur ro cog gi dkar chag* (pp. 518.5–537.5):

⁴⁵⁰ For this text, see NGMCP (Reel no. E 2301/21). On this text, see also EIMER 1994: 230–231, EIMER 1999: 7–20, and EIMER 2002a: 73. For the structure and special characteristics of Ngor chen’s catalogue and the *bKa’ ’gyur* commissioned at that time, see EIMER 1994: 231–233 and EIMER 1999: 11–20. For a “Structured Edition” of this *bKa’ ’gyur* based on its catalogues, see *Ibid.*: 25–130.

⁴⁵¹ EIMER 1999: 14. See also *Ibid.*: 18.

chen wrote only the catalogue for those parts of the *bKa' gyur* whose texts had already been completed. According to Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*), which mainly constitutes Ngor chen's catalogue, was taken from Sa skya and the master copies for the works of the other sections were collected from many locations. Thus we could speculate whether Ngor chen only wrote the catalogue for the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*), which was readily available.

The first of two catalogues of a Glo bo *bsTan gyur*, the *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag*, was written by Ngor chen in the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling Monastery and its commission was patronised by A ma dpal, who is referred to by his ordination name bZang po rgyal mtshan.⁴⁵² The preface of the catalogue contains the following information:⁴⁵³

The *Entire Translation of the Word of the Conqueror* [i.e., the *bKa' gyur*] was made as an object of worship for the Great Monk A ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan and the progressive writing of the *Entire Translation of the Treatises* [i.e., the *bsTan gyur*] was begun.

As I understand it, this passage suggests that the work on the *bsTan gyur* was begun after the completion of the aforementioned *bKa' gyur*, and that the project was executed only in stages.⁴⁵⁴

As indicated by its title, *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (or *bsTan gyur sngags phyogs dkar chag*),⁴⁵⁵ the catalogue lists only texts pertaining to the Vajrayāna in forty-five volumes.⁴⁵⁶ This is highly interesting if we consider Ngor chen's second *bsTan gyur* catalogue, the *bsTan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag thub bstan rgyas pa'i nyi 'od*. As hinted at by its colophon title, *Theg pa chen po mdo'i phyogs kyi bstan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag*,⁴⁵⁷ it enumerates the remaining non-tantric sections of the *bsTan gyur* missing from the first *bsTan gyur* catalogue. According to Helmut Eimer, "we find first the *bstod tshogs* section, thereafter follow the other sections, that is all the texts relating to the categories Prajñāpāramitā, Sūtra, Yogācāra, Madhyamaka, Abhidharma, Vinaya

⁴⁵² See the *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (pp. 570.4–571.2): *de ltar rdo rje theg pa'i dgongs 'grel mchogll 'phags yul mkhas pa'i tshogs kyi gsal mādaz pa|| gangs can 'gro ba'i dpal du byon pa rnamsl glegs bam rin chen phung por bsgrubs pa 'dil dad pa'i phul gyi skyabs gsum gtsug gis mchodll snying rje'i stobs kyi 'khor 'bangs byams pas bskyangsl sbyin bdag chen po bzang po rgyal mtshan gyisl lhag bsam rnam par dag pa'i bsam pas bsgrubsl 'dir 'bang dge bas sbyin pa'i bdag po dangll nam mkha'i mthas gtugs gyur pa'i sems can rnamsl srid dang zhi ba'i mtha' la mi gnas pa'i|| rdo rje 'chang chen go 'phang thob par shogll gnas skabs kun du sbyin bdag yab sras rnamsl tse ring nad med bsam pa chos bzhin 'grubll mi mthun phyogs kyi gnod pa kun zhi nasll dpal 'byor yar ngo'i zla ltar rgyas par shogll sangs rgyas bkra shis sku bzhi'i dpal gyi rtse nal|| dam chos bkra shis lung rtogs yon tan brnyesll dge 'dun bkra shis rim gnyis rtogs pas 'byorll bkra shis dam pas sbyin bdag bkra shis shogll ces pa glo bo brag dkar gyi gtsug lag khang du bris pa 'dis sbyin bdag gis thog drangs sems can thams cad bkra shis par gyur cigll.*

⁴⁵³ *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (pp. 540.5–6): (...) *dge sbyong chen po la ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan gyi thugs dam du rgyal ba'i bka' gyur ro cog bzhengs shingl btsan bcos gyur ro 'tshal rim gyis 'bri bar brtsams pa (...).*

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. EIMER 2002a: 83, who states that the "introduction to the *Rdo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* informs us that King A ma dpal started compiling the Tanjur when the copy of the Kanjur was written."

⁴⁵⁵ Under the title *bsTan gyur sngags phyogs dkar chag*, the catalogue was included in the manuscript from Nepal's Myu gu district that also contains the aforementioned *bKa' gyur* catalogue; see EIMER 2002a: [73]–74 and 83.

⁴⁵⁶ See the *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (p. 540. 6): *thog mar 'bras bu rdo rje theg pa'i gzhung la|*. See also EIMER 2002a: 82.

⁴⁵⁷ See the *bsTan bcos gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (p. 607.2–3).

and the 'secular' arts."⁴⁵⁸ He further pointed out that "taken as a unit" these two catalogues "comprise almost all the sections found in a common Tanjur."⁴⁵⁹

In his introduction to the catalogue of the non-tantric sections, Ngor chen remarks that one hundred volumes had been prepared at sMon thang by 1447.⁴⁶⁰ He further clarifies in the colophon that he wrote the catalogue to this part of the *bsTan 'gyur* on the fifteenth day of the first half of the eleventh month of 1447 in the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling. He identifies A mgon bzang po as the chief patron of the project and relates that the non-tantric sections had already been consecrated by the time of his writing.⁴⁶¹

Based on those three catalogues, we could develop the following provisional hypothesis. At first, Ngor chen commissioned a *bKa' 'gyur* under the patronage of A ma dpal, and after its completion the gradual work on a *bsTan 'gyur* was begun. If we take the two *bsTan 'gyur* catalogues as referring to one and the same manuscript set, the writing of the tantric parts in forty-five volumes was patronised by A ma dpal and the non-tantric ones in one hundred volumes were executed under the patronage of A mgon bzang po. Ngor chen wrote both *bsTan 'gyur* catalogues at Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling, which he had founded during his first Glo bo sojourn, consecrated during his second, and served as his main residence during his third. Thus both tantric and non-tantric sections of the *bsTan 'gyur* must have been completed until or within the scope of Ngor chen's third and last sojourn. In his catalogue of the non-tantric sections, he is even more specific and records that one hundred volumes had been written by 1447 at sMon

⁴⁵⁸ EIMER 2002a: 83.

⁴⁵⁹ EIMER 2002a: 82. For the structure of both catalogues, see *Ibid.*: 82–86. For the "Structured Diplomatic Transcript" of the *bsTan 'gyur sngags phyogs dkar chag*, see EIMER 2002b: [89]–128.

⁴⁶⁰ See the *bsTan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (p. 572.3–6): 'dir rgyal ba'i bstan pa la gces spras su mdzad pa'i rgyal po dang| sbyin bdag ni| chos smra ba'i gang zag la bsti stang phul du phyin pa mdzad nas| sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa bshad sgrub gnyis kyi sgo nas rgyas par mdzad pa yin la| de dag gi bshad sgrub gang la bya ba'i chos kyang| sde snod gsum dang rgyud sde bzhir bsdus pa'i gsung rab dri ma med pa rnam nas 'byung ba bzhin byed dgos la| de'i ched du gsung ra b dgongs 'grel dang bcas pa'i glegs bam rnam 'bri ba dang| dag par bya ba dang| mi nub par bya ba ni chos ldan gyi rgyal po'i bya ba'i las yin nol| don gyi dbang 'di gzigs nas dge legs kyi gnas| glo bo'i sa'i cha smos thang bkra shis lhun gyis grub pa'i gling du| rab byung gi lo bod kyi me mo yos kyi lor grags pa la| bstan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi glegs bam brgya phrag gcig bzhengs pa'i thog mar|. Cf. EIMER 2002a: 82, who understands sMos thang bKra shis lhun gyis grub pa'i gling as a name of a monastery.

⁴⁶¹ See the *bsTan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (pp. 606.2–607.4): de ltar bde bar gshegs pa'i gsung rab mdo'i phyogs kyi dgongs 'grel| 'phags pa'i yul nas gangs can gyi khrod du snga phyi ji snyed gcig 'gyur ba de snyed thams cad phyogs gcig tu glegs bam tu bsdebs pa bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog 'di| dad pa dang shes rab dang bsod nams kyi dpal gyis mngon par mtho zhing| gcig tu dge ba la thugs gzhol ba rgyal ba'i sras kyi rnam thar lhur len pa| drung chen a mgon bzang pos sbyin pa rnam bzhi rdzogs par yongs su tshang ba'i tshul gyis legs par bsgrubs shing| rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga rnam par dag pas mthar phyin par grub pa'o|| (...) gnas skabs kun tu bstan pa'i dpal gyur pa|| grags dang bsod nams dge bas mngon mtho ba|| sbyin bdag sku mched sras dang btsun mor bcas|| slad nas 'byon 'gyur zhal ngo thams cad kun|| sku tshe lhun po lta bur cher brtan zhing|| dpal 'byor rgya mtsho bzhin du ngang gis 'du|| snyan grags nyi zla lta bur cher gsal bar|| rgyal srid 'dzin ma'i khyon ltar rgyas gyur cig|| mthun pa'i grogs byed rnam dang zhal ta ba|| zhus dag mkhan dang yi ge pa la sogs|| dge ba'i phyogs 'dir zhugs pa ji snyed pa|| de snyed thams cad sangs rgyas sar 'gro shog|| sangs rgyas bkra shis sku gsum dpal gyis mthong|| dam chos bkra shis bden gnyis yon tan ldan|| dge 'dun bkra shis bsblab gsum yon tan 'byor|| skyabs gsum dam pas bkra shis deng 'dir shog|| theg pa chen po mdo'i phyogs kyi bstan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag 'di ni| shākya'i dge slong kun dga' bzang pos rab byung gi lo smal po zla ba'i tshe yar tshes bco lnga la| glo bo'i sa yi cha dpal brag dkar theg chen gling gi gtsug lag khang chen por bris pa'o||. Cf. EIMER 2002a: 84, who states with regard to the dating given in the colophon: "A second date is given in the final colophon of the same text, but it appears in a mutilated form: (...). This date consists of the month and the day only; the year has most probably been lost during the transmission of the text within the collected works of Ngor chen." However, since Ngor chen provides us with the full date in the introduction of his work, he uses a shorter form in the colophon, only specifying the proper name of that year, namely *rab byung*. This name refers to a female fire-hare year (*me mo yos*) and thus the colophon is perfectly datable to the end of 1447.

thang and states that he wrote the catalogue at the end of 1447. This agrees with Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, who mentions only one *bsTan 'gyur* commission for which Ngor chen is said to have given instructions during his third sojourn. Ngor chen's remark that the making of the *bsTan 'gyur* happened in stages could hint at the possibility that at first A ma dpal patronised the writing of the tantric sections, followed by his son patronising the preparation of the non-tantric ones. Thus the work on the tantric sections could have commenced at an earlier time. This hypothesis and other open questions such as the chronology of the other *bKa' 'gyur* sets mentioned by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, or whether Ngor chen's *bsTan 'gyur* catalogues do indeed refer to one and the same set, will only be solved when individual volumes of the original manuscripts become available.

One such volume might have been located by Christian Luczanits in the palace of gTsang rang. The volume in question contains as its first text the *Hevajratantra* written in golden letters on dark blue paper along with its wooden book cover, which marks it as the first volume (*ka*) of the Tantra section (*rgyud*).⁴⁶² On the inner face of the lower book cover, we find the following fragmentary four-line inscription:⁴⁶³

*om swa sti| kun dga'i rdo rje 'chang dbang bzang po'i x x x 'i thugs x 'khor lo bsgyur||
chos kyi rgyal po a mgon bzang po yi|| thugs dam [bka' 'gyur gser x x x x x
gsung rab bdud rtsi rgyud 'bum mx x xn|| dbu pod gleg shing kye rdor rigs lnga 'tshags(?)|| rkos
mkhan mkhas pa dpon chen gtsug gtor(?) ste|| lha mangs bkod legs lnga rig pañḍi ta|| he he he||*

The inscription suggests that the volume was commissioned by Ngor chen as an object of worship or religious practice (*thugs dam*) for A mgon bzang po. I tend to identify the lnga rig pañḍita, who designed the deities on the outer face of the upper book cover, as Ngor chen's disciple and biographer Gu ge Pañḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, who was active in Glo bo and who is known to have designed temples, murals, and objects of religious art.⁴⁶⁴ As the outer face of the book cover displays five engraved Hevajra deities, both text and cover can be considered as belonging together.

Among the other catalogues contained in the fourth volume of Ngor chen's collected works, we find a short catalogue of another *bsTan 'gyur* that is simply entitled *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag*. This work was investigated by Helmut Eimer in his article "Notes on the Mustang Tanjur," though he was unable to identify which copy of the *bsTan 'gyur* Ngor chen was describing. The short catalogue itself provides us with the relevant information in its opening section.⁴⁶⁵ We learn that Ti shrī Kun dga' blo gros (1299–1327)

⁴⁶² This is in line with Ngor chen's *bKa' 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag* (pp. 518.6–519.4): *re zhiḡ dang por rdo rje theḡ pa'i rgyud sde rin po che thams cad phyogs gcig tu bsgriḡs pa'i glegs bam rnams la| rgyud 'bum zhes rnam par grags pa la po ti nyi shu bzhugs pa'i| ka pa la| dpal kye rdo rje'i rtsa rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa grub chen ga ya dha ra dang rje btsun 'brog mi'i 'gyur| (...).*

⁴⁶³ I would like to thank Christian Luczanits for sharing this information and for providing me with pictures of both the volume and book cover. Each x stands for one illegible syllable (estimated).

⁴⁶⁴ On Gu ge Pañḍita, see Part Two, 3.1. He signed himself as gNas lnga rig pa'i Pañḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po; see Part Two, n. 125.

⁴⁶⁵ See the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 1 (p. 537.6–538.4): *sa phyogs gang na sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa tshang bar bzhugs pa de na bka' 'gyur ro cog dang| bstan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi glegs bam tshang bar bzhugs dgos| 'di gnyis tshang bar mi bzhugs na| sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa yongs su rdzogs par mi bzhugs pas bstan pa tshang bar mi bzhugs| bka' 'gyur dang bstan 'gyur gyi glegs bam dang| de 'chad byed kyi gang zag la rag las pa lags| de la bka' 'gyur gyi dgongs pa rang stobs kyis 'chad mi shes pas| tshul bzhiḡ du 'chad pa la bstan 'gyur gal che bar gzigs nas| 'gro ba'i bla ma ti shrī kun dga' blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po pas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa skyong ba'i dus su| dge ba'i bshes gnyen rgyang ro byang chub 'bum la sogs pa mkhas pa du ma la bka' gnang nas phyogs gcig tu bsdus shing zhu dag dang do dam bgyis nas| mgon po 'jam dbyangs kyi rnam par 'phrul pa bla ma dam pa bdaḡ nyid chen po'i thugs dam du bzhengs pa'i bstan 'gyur khyad par*

commissioned and supervised the preparation of an extraordinary *bsTan 'gyur* as an object of worship (*thugs dam*) for his father bDag nyid chen po bZang po dpal (1262–1324), the eleventh throne-holder of Sa skya. For the implementation of his project, Kun dga' blo gros called on many scholars such as the famous rGyang ro Byang chub 'bum, who had also been involved in compiling a catalogue for the sNar thang *bsTan 'gyur*.⁴⁶⁶ As pointed out by Kurtis Schaeffer and Leonard van der Kuijp, the project of Kun dga' blo gros was also mentioned by A mes zhabs in his Sa skya genealogy.⁴⁶⁷ According to A mes zhabs, Kun dga' blo gros commissioned copies of both the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur* at Sa skya between the years 1322 to 1324 when he had returned from the Mongolian court to obtain full monastic ordination from his father.⁴⁶⁸ Thus we can conclude that the short catalogue written by Ngor chen describes very briefly, in not much more than one folio, the manuscript copy of the *bsTan 'gyur* that had been commissioned by Kun dga' blo gros, which Ngor chen must have seen at Sa skya. He considered this *bsTan 'gyur* recension the best and most correct version available in the whole of central Tibet (dBus and gTsang).⁴⁶⁹

The last catalogue by Ngor chen is a catalogue of the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po and his two sons, bSod nams rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan, the *rJe btsun sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag*. This catalogue has been linked by Leonard van der Kuijp to the commissioning of those works by a king of Glo bo.⁴⁷⁰ Such a reference is found in the catalogue to the sDe dge recension of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* ascribed to bKra shis lhun grub (1672–1739), the thirty-first abbot of Ngor, the *dPal sa skya pa'i rje btsun gong ma lnga'i gsung rab rin po che'i par gyi sgo 'phar 'byed pa'i dkar chag 'phrul gyi lde mig*.⁴⁷¹ Among the sources utilised for establishing the proper order of texts, this work refers to an older catalogue written by Ngor chen, which is further specified as the catalogue to the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons that had been commissioned by a king of Glo bo sMon thang.⁴⁷² This remark can be directly linked with the account of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs about Ngor chen's second sojourn in Glo bo, during which he bestowed the reading transmission for the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*.⁴⁷³ As previously mentioned, A mgon bzang po is credited by the local Tibetan sources from Glo bo with commissioning a manuscript set of those works in golden ink. However, a closer look at the catalogue written by Ngor chen does not agree. According to that text, in 1426, a certain Bla ma Kun dga' gzhon nu

can 'di nal. Cf. EIMER 2002: 76, who refers to those three persons mentioned, but does not draw any connection with the commissioning project in question.

⁴⁶⁶ See SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 10. See also EIMER 1992: 176.

⁴⁶⁷ See SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 30.

⁴⁶⁸ See the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 304.2–305.6). See also SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 30. According to the *Re'u mig* (p. 157), Kun dga' blo gros acted from 1315 to 1325 as imperial preceptor of Rin tsong (Buyantu Khan, r. 1311–1320), dByin tsong (Gegeen Khan, r. 1320–1323), and The ting ti (Yesün Temür Khan, r. 1323–1328). Cf. the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fols. 61a3 and 61a6–b1), which specifies his term in office as being sixteen years and adds that he also served at the beginning of the reign of 'Ja' ya du (Jayaatu Khan, r. 1328–1332). On Kun dga' blo gros, see also Part Three, n. 83 and Part Four, n. 340.

⁴⁶⁹ See the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 1 (p. 539.5–6): (...) *glegs bam rnam la bstan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal zhes yongs su rdzogs par grags pa 'di lags| ding sang bod dbus gtsang gi sa la bstan 'gyur 'ga' re yod kyang| 'di bas legs pa bzang ba dag pa gzhan na med par mngon sum gyis grub pa de yin|*.

⁴⁷⁰ See VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 41–42.

⁴⁷¹ For the catalogue, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 1 (vol. 15, pp. 819–949). Cf. JACKSON 1987: 504, who showed that the catalogue was falsely ascribed to bKra shis lhun grub and attributes it to his disciple Zhu chen Tshul khri rin chen (1697–1774). On this issue, see also Part Five, n. 9.

⁴⁷² See the *Gong ma lnga'i gsung rab kyi dkar chag* (p. 926.5): *'di dag gi go rims bsgrigs pa'i gzhi ni ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gi gsan yig rgya mtsho dang| glo bo smon thang gi rgyal pos gong ma yab sras gsum gyi bka' 'bum bzhengs pa'i dkar chag rdo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa dang|*. See also VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 40–41.

⁴⁷³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 538.4).

sent his nephew, gZhon nu bzang po, well-resourced with offerings and material wealth from the temple (*gtsug lag khang*) of Lab lHa khang steng to Sa skya, where the nephew accomplished in a period of five months the copying and proofreading of the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons.⁴⁷⁴ At the behest of both of them, Ngor chen then wrote the catalogue for that manuscript collection.⁴⁷⁵

The identification of the chief patron, Bla ma Kun dga' gzhon nu of Lab, presents many difficulties. One possible candidate could be mDo khams stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu, who repeatedly functions in the colophons of Ngor chen's writings. For instance, he requested many teachings,⁴⁷⁶ provided Ngor chen with the necessary paper and ink,⁴⁷⁷ and served as his scribe.⁴⁷⁸ He also seems to have been the addressee of a letter contained in Ngor chen's collected works, the *Nyag re gsang sngags la springs pa*.⁴⁷⁹ His home monastery of Lab lHa khang steng may be identified as Lab dgon in the sGa district of northern Khams, whose location fits well with Kun dga' gzhon nu's title, mDo khams stod pa, because sGa could be called mDo khams stod.⁴⁸⁰

Though I cannot definitely identify Kun dga' gzhon nu of Lab, Ngor chen's catalogue to my understanding cannot be directly linked with the one that he is said to have written according to the catalogue of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* recension from sDe dge. Two possible scenarios may explain that. First, Ngor chen may have written a separate catalogue for the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons that had been commissioned by one of the kings of Glo bo. This catalogue had been preserved in sDe dge and used for the block-print edition of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, but had not been

⁴⁷⁴ See the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum dkar chag* (pp. 609.3–610.1): (...) *bla ma kun dga' gzhon nus dad pa chen pos kun nas bslangs tel bstan pa rin po che rgyas par bya ba'i ched du| lab lha khang steng gi gtsug lag khang nas 'bul ba dang zang zing gi longs spyod gya nom pa dang bcas tel rang gi tsha bo dad pa dang tshul 'khrims dang ldan pa'i bshes gnyen gzhon nu bzang po zhes bya ba dam pa'i chos ky'i ched du dpal ldan sa skya'i chos grwa chen por brdzangs tel rtsa ba'i bla ma dang slob dpon du gyur pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen rnams la longs spyod ky'i mchod pa rab tu mang po phul zhing| bye brag tu gsung rab rin po che 'di mams me pho rta'i lo [i.e., 1426] la 'phags pa'i yul na zil gnong gyi lo zhes grags pa'i dbyar zla gsum dang| ston zla gong ma gnyis la legs par bsgrubs shing zhus dag byas pa yin no|. For a different understanding of this passage, cf. VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 41–42. Without any mention of Kun dga' gzhon nu, van der Kuijp identifies gZhon nu bzang po as the nephew of Ngor chen. He also mistakenly dates the bestowal of the reading transmission for the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons to Ngor chen's first sojourn in Glo bo. This seems to have let him to mistakenly assume that the “manuscripts thus collected were again copied in Ngor Evam-chos-ldan, insofar as they were ultimately intended for king A-me [var.: ma]-dpal of Smon-thang in Glo, the present-day Mustang of Nepal.” Even if Ngor chen had given that reading transmission during his first sojourn in Glo bo, those works could not have been copied at Ngor, because Ngor chen founded Ngor only in 1429 after his first Glo bo sojourn.*

⁴⁷⁵ See the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum dkar chag* (p. 617.2–3): *phun tshogs dge ba'i rtsa ba rgya chen 'di| mkhas kun dga' ba'i blo gros bzang po can|| rgyal sras gzhon nu'i spyod pa rjes bsgrubs pa|| gsang sngags 'dzin pa de yis bskul ba yin|| bstan pa rgyas dang gsung rab spel phyir dang|| rab 'byams tshogs gnyis rnam par rgyas phyir du|| dad can blo ldan gzhon nu bzang pos kyang|| dge ba'i bsam pas legs par bskul ba yin||.*

⁴⁷⁶ See CATALOGUE (nos. 80–85) and MANUSCRIPT VOLUME (no. 4).

⁴⁷⁷ See CATALOGUE (no. 81).

⁴⁷⁸ See CATALOGUE (nos. 80 and 83–85) and MANUSCRIPT VOLUME (no. 4). Among the collection of manuscripts from Ngor housed at the National Library of Bhutan, there is one text, the *Sa dpyad rin po che'i gter*, mentioning mDo stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu in a gloss at its very end, stating that he presented his teacher, Bla ma Rin po che (who might be Ngor chen), with this eight-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *Sa dpyad rin po che'i gter* (fol. 8a5–6) as a parting gift: {*bla ma rin po che'i drung du| mdo stod pa kun dga' gzhon nus phyi phyag tu phul ba dge|| man ngag zab||*}.

⁴⁷⁹ On that letter, see CATALOGUE (no. 166).

⁴⁸⁰ Lab dgon is said to have changed its religious affiliation a couple of times: from originally Bon to rNying ma and then converted by sGa A gnyan dam pa (1230–1303) to Sa skya, before it was newly established as a dGe lugs institution by lDan ma mkhan chen Yon tan dpal, a disciple of Tsong kha pa, in 1419; see the *Lab chos 'byung* (pp. 1.6–2.8). On Lab dgon, see also GRUSCHKE 2004: 71–76 and JACKSON 2003: 680, n. 1440.

included within Ngor chen's collected works. Second, Ngor chen's catalogue may have been mistakenly identified by the editors of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* of sDe dge as the catalogue to a Glo bo edition of the collected works of Sa chen and his two sons.

6.9 Ngor chen's Impact on the Further Development of Buddhism in Glo bo

The preceptor donee-ruler donor relationship that existed between Ngor chen and the rulers of Glo bo had an enormous impact on the future development of Buddhism in that region. In his Ngor chen biography, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs provides his own appraisal of Ngor chen's religious activities:⁴⁸¹

From the region of Glo bo, mNga' ris, A me dpal, the Great Patron of the [Buddha's] Teachings, the father [and his] sons, had in that way invited [Ngor chen] up to three times. Thinking that an immense benefit would ensue for [both] the [Buddha's] teachings and sentient beings, [Ngor chen] travelled to the region [of] mNga' ris and turned for a long time the profound and vast Wheel of Dharma. In fact, when at first even communities that met [the necessary quorum of] four [fully ordained monks maintaining] the complete prescriptions of monastics were rare in Glo bo, [Ngor chen] established outstanding monastic communities: At present, assemblies of *vinayadharas* reaching [the number of] one thousand—[whose members engage in activities] such as teaching, studying (lit. "hearing"), meditating, and realising the Sūtra and Mantra and so forth—resemble [those of] dBu [and] gTsang. [Ngor chen] clarified the teachings [of the Buddha], in general, and the teachings of the Sa skya pa, in particular. [He] ordered the preparation of [both] many marvellous [religious objects of] the three receptacles of the *sugatas*, which were made from precious substances, gold, and so forth, and of numerous, infinitely vast scriptures such as many *bKa' 'gyur* [sets], which were made from precious substances, gold, black ink, and so forth. After [all these religious objects] had been properly produced, [Ngor chen] performed [their] consecration. Owing to such excellent activities, [the region of] mNga' ris skor gsum became like the Land of Nobles [i.e., India] at the time when the Buddha was living. [This development] is due to the kindness of the Lord [Ngor chen] himself.

This description conveys the impression that only thanks to Ngor chen's ministry did Buddhism become firmly introduced in the whole region of mNga' ris. Such an estimation was surely exaggerated, even with regard to Glo bo. We know that when Ngor chen visited that domain in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, both Buddhism and Bon had already been long established. Since we are equipped with findings on the early religious history of Glo bo from the research conducted by scholars such as David Jackson and Roberto Vitali, I will not reproduce their results here, but shall only make some general remarks. Prior to Ngor chen's visits, rNying ma masters had discovered the earliest *gter mas* in Glo bo already in the tenth century, and Bon communities seemingly formed in the eleventh century. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the *bKa' brgyud* schools of 'Bri gung and Tshal also extended their influence in the region and the latter are said to have established two monasteries there. The Sa skya school itself seemingly had links with Glo bo via two disciples of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po: Rong sGom pa and

⁴⁸¹ For the Tibetan text of this passage, see Appendix Two, 1.2(g).

Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan. Both are said to have resided at the monastery of bSam grub gling. The same site was also the seat of the illustrious translator Glo bo Lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen (fl. mid-13th century), a disciple of Sa skya Paṇḍita and teacher of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa, who had begun his career as a commercial translator before becoming a translator of Buddhist texts.⁴⁸² All those communities seem to have never developed into larger important monastic centres, however.

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' appraisal contains an interesting hint regarding the state of Buddhism and its institutions at the time of Ngor chen's first visit and continues to enumerate the major elements of Ngor chen's contribution to the flourishing of Buddhism in Glo bo. In line with Glo bo mKhan chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs states that hardly any monastic communities existed in Glo bo that comprised four fully ordained monks, which would constitute a proper quorum of *saṃgha* according to the Vinaya. If we consider this remark in light of Ngor chen's refounding of monastic institutions at sTeng chen and rNam rgyal along with the statement that no complete manuscript copy of the *bKa' 'gyur* was available at the time of his first sojourn, we see that for some time Buddhism had been on the decline in Glo bo and only small local Buddhist communities with few monks had survived. With the consolidation of Glo bo as an independent kingdom under A ma dpal, Buddhism began to flourish on a larger scale due to the promotion received from the wealthy ruling house of Glo bo. Under the patronage of A ma dpal and his son and heir, A mgon bzang po, Ngor chen was responsible for founding major monastic establishments that he also furnished with a monastic code, syllabus, and tantric ritual system. Moreover, he bestowed monastic ordinations on a large number of individuals, including king A ma dpal himself. Thus, as when founding Ngor, Ngor chen achieved his objective of establishing a strongly Vinaya-based system of monasticism and religious practice that relied on the teachings of the illustrious early Sa skya masters within the framework of large monastic institutions. By these and other activities—including his introduction of the custom that local monks from Glo bo came to Sa skya for their scholastic examination (*grwa skor*) and visited Sa skya monasteries in dBus and gTsang for further studies—Ngor chen established a strong link between Glo bo and the Sa skya school, in general, and the Ngor sub-school, in particular. This special relation was also indirectly acknowledged by Paṇ chen bSod nams grags pa in his *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma*. However, as a staunch defender of the dGa' ldan pa, he perceived the dominance of the Sa skya pa in Glo bo, and that of the Ngor pa, in particular, as a result of forced monastic conversions undertaken during the time of A ma dpal, who he says

⁴⁸² See JACKSON 1976/77: 40–46 and VITALI 2012a: [22]–41 and [74]–87. For a short summary of Glo bo's religious history, see also KRAMER 2008: [13]–16. In addition, see also EVERDING 2000: 338 and 347, JACKSON 1978: 200–207, and VITALI 1996: 397–398. On bSam grub gling, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 4.5–13), *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 64, 1st col., line 3–10), and KITAMURA 2010. The site of bSam grub gling is located about five kilometres to the west of sMon thang; see *Ibid.*: 150. In Glo bo, Byang sems Zla ba rgyal mtshan is also said to have established another monastery; see VITALI 2012a: 28. For a biographical sketch of Glo bo Lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen, see the *gShin rje gshed kyi chos 'byung* (pp. 134.5–135.5). According to LO BUE 2010a: 18, another Sa skya master, bTan pa'i rgyal mtshan, was active in Glo bo after Ngor chen's first sojourn. He remarks that bTan pa'i rgyal mtshan founded in 1429 in Glo smad “a fort-like monastery at the strategic site of Kak.” With some reservations, this foundation is also mentioned by the *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (p. 73, no. 1): *bkag chos sde thub bstan bsam 'phel gling ni/ dpal sa skya'i mkhas grub chen po bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyis phyi lo 1429 lor bzhengs zhes grags la/ kha cig gis kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po go bo rab 'byams pa bsod nams seng ge'i dgongs bzhed ltar bkag rdzong gi dpon 'bangs rnams kyis bzhengs/ gtsang rta nag thub bstan rnam rgyal gling gi mkhan rabs chos rnam rgyal gyis rab gnas mdzad par grags/ 'on kyang kun mkhyen chen po dus rabs bco lnga pa'i nang byon pa dang/ mkhan chen mchog a ham bsam grub rab brtan gyis spyen drangs zhes gsungs pa ltar na dus rabs bcu bdun nang yin dgos pas thun mong du khas len na'ang lo rgyus gung sgrig na mi mthun par mngon/.*

was slightly averse to the dGa' ldan pa.⁴⁸³ That lasting aversion resulted in part from mKhas grub rje's polemical attacks, which directly impeded A ma dpal's activities as patron.

During his three sojourns in Glo bo, Ngor chen's actual sphere of activity was seemingly confined to the region of Upper Glo, because we only find references to his visiting and founding temples in that region. This might be directly linked to Glo bo's ruling house being mainly based in Upper Glo. Only Giuseppe Tucci provides us with a reference to Ngor chen's activities in central Glo bo, at dGe lung Chos sde:⁴⁸⁴

According to the bca' yig, preserved in the monastery of Ghiling (called dGe luñ c'os sde) dated me stag, 1446, Kun dga' bzañ po came personally to these places from sMar t'añ, bKra šis lhun gyi sgrub gliñ, and prescribed stricter discipline for the monasteries.

In his previous publication *Journey to Mustang 1952*, Tucci refers to two Ngor pa monasteries at Ghiling, both allegedly founded by Ngor chen:⁴⁸⁵

The construction of the two monasteries also dates back to him. This is history, not legend, documented by the foundation certificate written by the lama himself on a silk scroll which the custodian proudly unrolls for me.

Along with his contacts with members of Glo bo's ruling house and the king of Gu ge Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po Phun tshogs lde, Ngor chen also maintained relations with a king (*rgyal po*) of Ya tshe named Hastirāja. This king has been identified by Ram Niwas Pandey as Bālirāja (r. 1404–1445), who after the collapse of the Khaśa kingdom of the Western Mallas ruled over Jumla from the ancient capital at Semjā or Señjā (Ya rtse/tshe). He was appointed as king due to his matrimonial relation with the daughter of the Jumla king Medinivarmā, who had no male scion, and became the founder of the Kalyāla or Kallala dynasty, ruling over the twenty-two Khasas of the region.⁴⁸⁶ As pointed out by Tucci, we come to know of Ngor chen's relation with that king from a letter included in the fourth volume of his collected works, the *Ya tshe rgyal po ha sti rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa*.⁴⁸⁷ This interesting letter is addressed to king Hastirāja, his eldest son (A hrū rā dza), and his queen (Dza gad smal) and was sent by Ngor chen in response to presents (foodstuff, a mat or rug, a back curtain, and robes) that he had received through a

⁴⁸³ For the Tibetan passage, see Part Four, n. 152.

⁴⁸⁴ TUCCI 1956: 17. For the location of dGe lung, see JACKSON 1984: 223, map B. (Gelung), PEISSEL 1992: [95], map (Geling), and RAMBLE 2008: [25], Figure 1.2 (Gelung). sMar [= sMan] thang bKra shis lhun gyi [= gyis] sgrub [= grub] gling seemingly refers to the new capital of sMon thang. We also encounter this name in the colophon of one of Ngor chen's *bsTan 'gyur* catalogues; see Part Four, n. 460. As previously stated, the mention of Ngor chen's presence in Glo bo in 1446 contradicts the data for Ngor chen's third Glo bo sojourn (1447–1449), as found in both accounts of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and Glo bo mKhan chen.

⁴⁸⁵ TUCCI 1977: 57. For a short history of dGe lung Sa ngor bKra shis chos gling, see the *Glo bo'i dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (pp. 71–72, no. 12). Note that here the foundation is ascribed to Glo bo mKhan chen.

⁴⁸⁶ See PANDEY 1997: [189]–192. Note that *Ibid.*: 191 did not identify Ngor chen, referring to him as “King Kun-dga'-bzang-po of Tibet.” Cf. PETECH 1997: 242, who refers to Bālirāja as the first Hindu chief after the disintegration of the kingdom under Abhayamalla (r. 1376–1391) and dates his reign from 1398 to 1406. Cf. also TUCCI 1956: 121–122 and 130, who also does not identify Bālirāja as Hastirāja. On the kingdom of Ya tshe, whose rulers once controlled a territory comprising both the western parts of Nepal and the Tibetan regions of Gu ge and Pu hrangs, see, for instance, EVERDING 2000: 365–385 and *passim*, JACKSON 1978: 42–48, PETECH 1980, PETECH 1997: 239–242 and 250–251, and TUCCI 1956: 109–130. On the history of the Kallala Dynasty, see PANDEY 1970, PANDEY 1971, and PANDEY 1997: [189]–216. See also SCHUH 1994: 77.

⁴⁸⁷ On this letter, see CATALOGUE (no. 174). For a description, see also TUCCI 1956: 114–115.

messenger.⁴⁸⁸ In his answer, Ngor chen strongly advised the king, who was obviously a non-Buddhist, to reject such religious traditions as those of the followers of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva and urged him to abandon in his domain the practice of sacrificing animals to the gods. He instructed him to convert to Buddhism and spread the Buddha's teachings among his people. Ngor chen also reminded the king of the offerings that had been made to Sa skya by previous Ya tshe kings, such as a golden roof (*thog phub*) above a religious throne at Sa skya. As it had become old and was falling apart, he requested the king to revive the old relationship and restore that roof.⁴⁸⁹ This offering had originally been made by Prthivīmalla (r. 1349–1358), who was, according to Luciano Petech, “a generous patron of Buddhism in general and of the Sa-skya school in particular. In 1350 he sent an embassy to Sa-skya and Lhasa, carrying the means for a sumptuous redecoration of the Jo-khang.”⁴⁹⁰ Along with other instructions of Buddhist nature, Ngor chen sent to Hastirāja as enclosure (*rten*) of his letter three consecrated protective amulets (*srung 'khor*) and protective silk knots (*dar mdud*) empowered with *mantras*.

Another short letter, the *Ya tshe blon po la gdams pa*, is also indicative of Ngor chen's relations with Jumla.⁴⁹¹ This message was sent along with a protective string amulet (*srung mdud*) to a minister (*blon po*) of Ya tshe by the name of A ya dBang phyug bkra shis in reply to presents (a large copper vessel and some herbs for *klu gtor*) that Ngor chen had received. The letter contains basic Buddhist advice and asks A ya dBang phyug bkra shis to become a Buddhist.

Unfortunately, neither letter provides information about when or where Ngor chen received those offerings and sent his replies. Nevertheless, I would suggest that Ngor chen's contact with the members of Jumla's ruling house and one minister was the outcome of his activities in Glo bo. Given the relative proximity of Jumla and Glo bo, Ngor chen's visits could have easily reached the ears of Jumla's ruler. It is, however, very striking that a non-Buddhist and non-Tibetan ruler would send presents to a Tibetan Buddhist master.

⁴⁸⁸ See the *Ya tshe rgyal po ha sti rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa* (p. 718.3–4): *chos kyi rgyal po ha sti rā dza dang|| de sras thu bo a ya hru rā dza dpal|| btsun mo dam pa dza ga smal rnams lal|| dge ba'i sems kyis chos kyi skyes 'di gleng|| khyed kyis lhag bsam dag pas bskur ba yis|| sna tshogs g.yos su sbyar ba'i zhal zas dang|| gdan dang rgyab yol chos gos rgyu la sogs|| rings nas 'ongs pa'i pho nyas legs par 'phrod||.*

⁴⁸⁹ See the *Ya tshe rgyal po ha sti rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa* (pp. 718.6–719.6): *bstan pa nyon mongs dri ma skyed byed pal|| tshangs dang khyab 'jug dbang phyug la sogs dang|| mu stegs byed dang kla klo'i chos lugs rnams|| rnam pa kun du dug bzhin spong bar mdzod|| khyad par khyed kyis bskyangs pa'i rgyal khams nal|| lha rnams mchod phyir bya dang ra lug sogs|| sog [= srog] gi mchod sbyin byed pa yod ces thos|| 'di dag chos rgyal khyod kyis dgag par mdzod|| (...) de ltar mkhyen nas mi dbang khyed nyid kyis|| srog gi mchod sbyin rang gis byed pa dang|| byed du 'jug dang gzhan gyis byed pa sogs|| thams cad rnam pa kun du spong bar mdzod|| skyabs gnas mthar thug dkon mchog rin po che|| sangs rgyas chos dang 'phags pa'i dge 'dun lal|| skyabs su song na sdug bsnal kun zhi zhing|| dge legs thob par nges pas skyabs 'gro mdzod|| grong dang tshong dus 'gro mang 'tshog [= tshogs] dbus su|| ston pa bla med shākya'i rgyal po dang|| rin chen dkon mchog rnam pa gsum gyi mtshan|| skye bo kun gyis thos slad bsgrags par mdzod|| sngon gyi ya tsha'i [= tshe'i] chos rgyal che rnams kyis|| bod yul bstan pa'i 'byung khungs mkhas pa'i gling|| dpal ldan sa skya'i chos grwa chen po der|| theg chen chos sgra srog gnas chos khri'i steng|| rin chen gser gyi thog phub rgya che bal|| gser bzang tog gis brgyan pa phul ba yang|| dus ring dbang gis rnying zhing zhiq par gyur|| 'di dag sngon bzhin gsos na cis mi legs||.*

⁴⁹⁰ PETECH 1997: 242. See also JACKSON 1976: 48, who along with the donation of the golden roof mentions also the ordination of one Ya tshe king at Sa skya. For the corresponding Tibetan reference, see the *Deb ther dmar po* (p. 44.5–9): *'dzi dar smal gyi bu a byid smal gyis (...)| rgyal sa ma thob gong du sa skyar lha bstun byas| de'i bu ya tser skyes pa| pri ti smal dang| blon po dpal ldan grags pas| sa skya'i chos khri dang| lha sa'i bcu gcig zhal gyi steng du gser thog byas so|.* See also the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 70a1–3), PETECH 1980: 97–98, PETECH 1990: 109, n. 97, and SØRENSEN 1994: 464.

⁴⁹¹ On this letter, see CATALOGUE (no. 175). It was also mentioned by TUCCI 1956: 115.

Finally, I would like to summarise what I could learn about the famous triad of the “Three [persons named] bZang po” (*bzang po rnam gsum*), who are generally associated with the flourishing of the Buddhist doctrine in Glo bo. The earliest reference to this triad is given by Michel Peissel in his *Mustang travelogue* from 1967. He enumerates them as Angun Zampo (A mgon bzang po), Ngorchen Kunga Zampo (Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po), and Kalun Zampo (bKa' blon bZang po).⁴⁹² As pointed out by David Jackson, in the local speech-making texts from Glo bo, they are listed as A ma dpal bzang po, Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po and either the minister Zla ba bzang po or Tshe dbang bzang po.⁴⁹³ By comparison, in his modern history of Glo bo, mKhan po bKra shis bstan 'dzin enumerates them as either A ma dpal bzang po or A mgon bzang po, Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po, and Tshe dbang bzang po.⁴⁹⁴ Similarly, another modern history by Ngag dbang 'jigs med lists them as Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po, A mgon bzang po, and Tshe dbang bzang po.⁴⁹⁵

The earliest and most authoritative source to clarify the identity of the minister in the “three bZang pos” is the biography of Kun dga' dpal bzang po (1513–1595), who originated within that same family of Glo bo ministers and who served in Glo bo as abbot of Phun tshogs bsam gtan gling and Thub bstan dar rgyas gling and later on also of Jo nang (tenure: 1567–1588) in Tibet.⁴⁹⁶ The opening of his biography contains a short genealogy of his family, which included both eminent ministers of Glo bo's royal house and Buddhist masters.⁴⁹⁷ According to that short genealogy, its first member, a further unnamed son (*zhal ngo*), reached Glo bo at the time when A ma dpal was emerging as the new dominant power. A ma dpal then became the new ruler and he his minister (*dpon blon*). We are told that he privately controlled a large piece of land, was involved in inviting Ngor chen to Glo bo, and managed, among others, the latter's teaching activities, the construction of the Thub chen rnam par rgyal ba'i gtsug lag khang,⁴⁹⁸ and the establishment of monastic communities. He fathered two sons: the elder being dPon drung Tshe dbang bzang po, our minister in question, and the younger the Buddhist master Kun dga' mchog grub (1454–1526).⁴⁹⁹ Tshe dbang bzang po acted as minister (*bka'i blon po*) of bKra shis mgon and his brothers. He was skilled in both secular and religious affairs and is said to have crushed Glo bo's enemies, but governed his own domain with

⁴⁹² See PEISSEL 1992: 84, 86, 125, and 225. *Ibid.*: 225 mentions a local manuscript (“the *Molla*”) telling the history of the kings of Glo bo that was illustrated with depictions of those three figures on its first page.

⁴⁹³ For the former triad, see JACKSON 1984: 30; and for the latter, see the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 9) and JACKSON 1984: 35, n. 45 and 147.

⁴⁹⁴ See the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 109.8–15).

⁴⁹⁵ See the *Glo bo dang gtsang chos rdo rje gdan gyi lo rgyus* (p. 46.18–21).

⁴⁹⁶ For a biographical sketch of Kun dga' dpal bzang po, see STEARNS 2008, “Kunga Pelzang,” www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Kunga-Pelzang-/13064 (accessed 21.02.2017).

⁴⁹⁷ See the *Kun dga' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 182.3–185.1).

⁴⁹⁸ As the Thub chen was built about twenty years after Ngor chen's last Glo bo sojourn (1447–1449), this reference appears to be mistaken and he might thus have been involved in the construction of another monastery or temple, such as the Byams chen. On the Thub chen, see Part Four, 6.7.

⁴⁹⁹ On Kun dga' mchog grub, see also Part Four, n. 542. According to his biography, the name of his father, and thus of the unnamed son (*zhal ngo*) mentioned above, was dPon po mKha' 'gro; the name of his mother was dPon mo Chos rgyal; see the *Kun dga' mchog grub kyi rnam thar* (fol. 3b5–6). In the form of a gloss, his biography contains some details about the origin of his family line that supplements the presentation given above; see the *Kun dga' mchog grub kyi rnam thar* (fol. 3b2–3): *rje 'di'i yab mes rnam thog mar mnga' ris gung thang sa char byon zhing de nas rim gyis glo bor phebs nas/ teb lar mkhar btab nas yun rings bzhugs/ de dus dkon mchog gling pa dang yon mchod du [one syllable illegible] nas dge rgyun gyi bya ba du ma'i gzhi btsugs/ gsung rab rin po che du ma ni gser las gzhengs [= bzhengs] de nang chen dkon mchog gi ring la khri rgyal ba bsad nams lde glo bor byon pa la zhus nas mkhar nag gi lce(?) ba phu phag gi yul 'dir bzhugs skad//*

loving kindness.⁵⁰⁰ Together with bKra shis mgon, he invited Shākya mchog ldan to Glo bo and materially supported his teaching activities during the latter's three-year sojourn.⁵⁰¹ He also patronised the commissioning of Buddhist art as illustrated by an incomplete set of statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters now housed at rNam rgyal.⁵⁰² Together with members of the royal house of Glo bo, he also contributed to the renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya executed by gTsang smyon He ru ka in 1504.⁵⁰³ Tshe dbang bzang po married two wives, fathering with his first the minister dPon drung Tshe dar skyabs and a sibling (or siblings) and with the second wife he fathered the well-known Buddhist master Kun dga' grol mchog. Tshe dar skyabs was, like his father, a capable politician who was also knowledgeable in Buddhism and its arts. He went on pilgrimage to central Tibet (dBus and gTsang), receiving teachings, for example, from Shākya mchog ldan at gSer mdog can.⁵⁰⁴ He in turn was the father of Kun dga' dpal bzang po, in whose biography this short genealogy is found.

As I could not find any other references to a minister by the name of Zla ba bzang po, I suggest that we should identify the later Tshe dbang bzang po as the minister belonging to the triad of the "Three [persons named] bZang po" (*bzang po rnam gsum*). This is infelicitous because he could not have been active at the same time as Ngor chen and A ma dpal. From Kun dga' grol mchog's autobiography, we learn that his father was fifty-eight years old when he was born in 1507, which means that Tshe dbang bzang po was born in 1450, one year after Ngor chen's third and last journey to Glo bo.⁵⁰⁵ The famous triad would thus be a retrospective creation, establishing a common identity and a memory of past greatness spanning more than one generation.

⁵⁰⁰ On conflicts between Glo bo and its neighbours in the 1460s, 1470s, and 1480s, see CAUMANN 2012: 163–164, CAUMANN 2015: 186–188, and VITALI 2012a: 177–178, 182, and 191–197.

⁵⁰¹ Shākya mchog ldan had been invited to Glo bo in 1469 and sojourned there from 1472 to 1475; see CAUMANN 2012: 151–152 and 159–173 and CAUMANN 2015: 175–176 and 181–201.

⁵⁰² The last statue of the set depicts Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor, who had visited Glo bo twice (1466 and 1477–1478) and passed away there during his second visit. On his visits, see Part Four, 6.10. Christian Luczanits kindly provided me with pictures of two statues portraying Buddhaśrī and Kun dga' dbang phyug, which contain identical inscriptions, except for the name of the lama portrayed. The inscription on the statue portraying Kun dga' dbang phyug reads: *chos rje kun dga' dbang phyug pa'i zhabs kyi padmo dri ma med pa la/ bdag tshe dbang bzang po phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su mchi'o/| dge ba 'dis sems can thams cad sangs rgyas kyi go 'phang thob par gyur cig/| manga lam/|*. The biographies of Kun dga' dbang phyug mention that after his death a set of statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters was produced in Glo bo; see the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 1 (p. 555.4) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 2 (p. 638.6). Cf. the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 243.4–5 and 308.4), where instead of statues the commissioning of a painting set is mentioned. The *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 35b) records the commissioning of two sets of statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters by A seng rDo rje brtan pa, who had invited Kun dga' dbang phyug to Glo bo the second time: *lam 'bras bla rgyud [= brgyud] pa sku nyi shu rtsa drug/| sgrol ma'i sku mda' tshad gnyis rnams zangs gser las legs par bsgrub/| yang lam 'bras bla brgyud gser sku nyi shu rtsa gcig bzhengs pa/*. On another set of *Lam 'bras* statues that he donated to Go rams pa, see Part Four, 6.10.

⁵⁰³ See the *gTsang smyon he ru ka'i rnam thar* (pp. 221.7–222.2).

⁵⁰⁴ It might be that Tshe dar skyabs passed away on this pilgrimage due to a smallpox epidemic at gSer mdog can. Kun dga' grol mchog reports in his autobiography that among the twenty-two members of his group that went on pilgrimage to central Tibet, nineteen passed away, including his elder brother (*a jo*); see the *Zhen pa rang grol* (pp. 317.5–319.2). The pilgrimage lasted from 1519 to 1523 and, based on its chronology, Tshe dar skyabs would have passed away in about 1520, provided that he was the elder brother in question, because Tshe dar skyabs had also other siblings.

⁵⁰⁵ See the *Zhen pa rang grol* (p. 290.3–5). This date is in line with the date for the birth of Kun dga' mchog grub (the younger brother of Tshe dbang bzang po), namely 1554. On Kun dga' mchog grub, see Part Four, n. 542.

6.10 Subsequent Relations between Glo bo and Ngor

The close bond that had been formed between Glo bo's royal house and Ngor chen was continued by later generations of rulers and eminent Ngor masters. As a result, Glo bo became one of the Ngor traditions early strongholds and at Ngor itself the Glo bo regional dormitory, the Glo bo khang tshan, was founded to accommodate visiting monks from Glo bo.⁵⁰⁶ As previously mentioned, Ngor also received visits from princely monk scholars of Glo bo such as Glo bo mKhan chen and his nephew Chos rje Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the eldest son of bKra shis mgon.⁵⁰⁷ When briefly reflecting on the newly gained influence of Glo bo's ruling house and the concomitant economic and cultural developments, Glo bo mKhan chen himself underlines the dominant position the Ngor pas enjoyed in Glo bo in the early-sixteenth century:⁵⁰⁸

Happiness for sentient beings originates from the Buddha's teachings. In fact, [it] does not originate from mistaken conduct, but originates from unmistakable conduct. As Chos rje Sa skya Paṇḍita said: "[The one who] acts according to the words of the Buddha is a teacher. [The one who] practices according to the words of that [teacher] is a disciple. The one who provides conducive conditions for them is a patron. [You] should know that wherever such [conditions] prevail, there exist the Buddha's teachings." All points [of Sa skya Paṇḍita's teaching] were completely given until the time when the activities of Chos rje Kun dga' bzang po, [spiritual] father and [his spiritual] sons, were prevailing [here in Glo bo] without degeneration. Up to that point, there was not even a single person who dared to utter from [his] mouth the words: "Though it stands in opposition to the words of Chos rje Kun dga' bzang po, [it] is permissible." Thus there were no such [issues] like the present-day sectarian divisions between the systems of tenet.

Though the Ngor pas achieved a dominant position in Glo bo during that period, we should not forget that Glo bo's ruling house also patronised other religious traditions. We know, for instance, that they sponsored the production of Bon scriptures,⁵⁰⁹ patronised the local rNying ma master 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan (b. 1446),⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁶ JACKSON 1989a: 49–50, n. 2 states that, according to Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che, along with the regional dormitory of Mi nyag, Rong po, Gling pa, and lDan ma, the Glo bo khang tshan had been one of Ngor's biggest dormitories in recent times.

⁵⁰⁷ See the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 139.5–6). On Chos rje Blo gros rgyal mtshan, see also JACKSON 1984: 120 and 126–127.

⁵⁰⁸ *Glo bo mKhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 124.4–11): 'gro ba'i bde skyid sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa las 'byung zhiṅl de yang phyin ci log tu spyod pa las mi 'byung gi/ phyin ci ma log par spyad pa las 'byung stel/ chos rje sa skya paṇḍi tas sangs rgyas kyi gsung bzhiṅ du mdzad na bla ma de'i gsung bzhiṅ du sgrub na slob ma de dag gi mthun rkyen sbyor ba de sbyin bdaḡl de lta bu gang na yod pa de na sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa yod par shes par bya'oḡl zhes gsungs pa'i don thams cad/ chos rje kun dga' bzang po yab sras kyis [= kyi] mdzad pa ma nyams par yod pa'i dus de yan chad la tshang bar yod pa lags shingl de yan la/ chos rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung dang mi mthun kyang chog zer ba'i tshig kha nas 'don phod pa tsam yang med pas da lta'i grub mtha' phyogs su chad pa la sogs pa gang yang med doḡl. For the translation of this passage, see also KRAMER 2008: 154–155. On the identification of the quotation from Sa skya Paṇḍita's sKyes bu dam pa rnam la springs ba'i yi ge, see *Ibid.*: 154, n. 57. On Glo bo's economic, cultural, and intellectual efflorescence, see also the *Glo bo mKhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 123.12–124.4), *Glo bo mKhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 234.1–236.3), *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 26b–30b), and VITALI 2012: 185–189.

⁵⁰⁹ See Part Four, n. 287.

⁵¹⁰ For the biography of 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan, see the '*Dus pa mdo dbang gi bla brgyud rnam thar* (pp. 272.1–304.5). Among his seven sons, the most influential were mNga' ris Paṅ chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542) and Rig 'dzin Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje (1500–1577), who, like their father, trained themselves also in teaching traditions of other schools, such as Sa skya and bKa' 'brgyud, and sojourned central Tibet. For their biographies, see the '*Dus pa mdo dbang gi bla brgyud rnam thar* (pp. 304.5–335.2 and 335.2–376.5),

hosted gTsang smyon He ru ka during his three visits,⁵¹¹ and sent presents and a letter to dBus smyon Kun dga' bzang po (1458–1532).⁵¹²

For the first hundred years after Ngor chen's visits, we can record regular visits by Ngor masters to Glo bo. To illustrate the continuity of this relation, I shall briefly summarise a few such visits.

As mentioned above, prior to his return to gTsang in 1449, Ngor chen installed as first abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling his disciple 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (1396–1474), who had evidently accompanied his master on his last visit of Glo bo. He served in that position from 1449 until 1457 or 1459.⁵¹³ According to the *Tsarang Molla*, Shes rab rgya mtsho was the chief religious preceptor (*bla mchod*) of A mgon bzang po and is said by the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* to have bestowed a novice-monk ordination on dMag dpon A mo gha, the brother of A mgon bzang po.⁵¹⁴ At age two (i.e., in 1457), Glo bo mKhan chen took the vow of refuge from Shes rab rgya mtsho and received his first teachings from him.⁵¹⁵

Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan (d. 1476), according to his biography by Glo bo mKhan chen, was a long-time disciple of Ngor chen, whom the latter instructed prior to his death to focus his future activities on Glo bo. Probably during his third and last Glo bo sojourn, Ngor chen had asked the Drung chen (i.e., A mgon bzang po?) to establish a monastery. In 1456, by the time Ngor chen spoke to Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan, that monastery was under construction and he had chosen his disciple to head it. Afterwards, in accord with the words of his master, Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan travelled to Glo bo and stayed until the beginning of 1461 mainly in retreat, granting teachings to just a handful of students on a few occasions: He conferred the *Lam 'bras* at Brag dkar Theg chen (dar rgyas) gling and gave the exposition of the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* at the Cakrasaṃvara Palace at Ri bo che. In line with the orders of the “great patron of the teachings” (*bstan pa'i sbyin bdag chen po*; i.e., A mgon bzang po?), beginning with the eighth day of the second month of 1461, he established a monastic community at the newly constructed monastery of dPal ldan Chos 'khor Byams pa gling.⁵¹⁶ While in Glo bo, he also commissioned a set of what

respectively. For instance, Padma dbang rgyal received in Glo bo teachings, such as the *Lam 'bras*, from lHa mchog seng ge, the ninth abbot of Ngor, and later on also paid a visit to Ngor; see the *Dus pa mdo dbang gi bla bryud rnam thar* (pp. 319.4–5 and 325.2), respectively.

⁵¹¹ See KRAMER 2008: 25, LARSSON 2012: 165–166, 176–177, 322, and 325, SMITH 2001: 65–66, and VITALI 1996: 532–537.

⁵¹² See EHRHARD 2010: 241.

⁵¹³ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 7.3–6) and Part Four, 6.6.

⁵¹⁴ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 9b): *chos rgyal a mgon bzang po ni* (...) *e waṃ pa'i gdan rabs gsum pa 'jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho dbu yi bla mchod du bkurl*. On this passage, see also JACKSON 1980: 134 and JACKSON 1984: 147. See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 23b–24a): *gcung gnyis gzhon nu nyid la mya ngan las 'das cingl dmag dpon chen po da ra kha che yangl 'khor ba la snying po med bar dgongs nasl 'jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho'i drung du| dbu skra bzharl dge tshul gyi sdom pa nos nas sku dar la babs pa dang gshegs pa yin la*. See also the *rTsa drangs kyi bems chag* (p. 8): (...) *dmag dpon a mdo [= mo] gha zhes samll don yod rdo rje zhes bya'i chos rgyal desll (...) sku tshé'i 'jug [= mjug] tu shes rab rgya mtsho'i drungll bstan pa'i sgor zhugs bstan 'dzin srid zhus brtenll*. For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 42.11–14). On the patrons of Shes rab rgya mtsho, see also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 9.4).

⁵¹⁵ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 422.4–423.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 225.3–6), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 268.6–269.1), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 125.4–9), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 235.3), and KRAMER 2008: 60, 75, and 155.

⁵¹⁶ See the *Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 24a1–7 and 25b6–7). By comparison, the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 21b–22a) specifies A mgon bzang po as the founder of Byams pa gling, who also installed Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan as its abbot: [*chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ba 'di ni*] *sgrub sde la byams pa gling gi sde btsugs nas lo sgrub sogs kyi bsgrub ba'i cha rkyen bcas yig tu theb pa ltar mdzad cingl gtsug lag khang gser khangl mgon khang dang bcas pa bzhangs nas mkhan por chos kyi rje mdo sngags kyi bdag po tshul khrims rgyal mtshan mtshan yongs su grags pal sku skye ba snga ma'i mtshan dpal ldan pa zhes bya ba bzhugs nasl spyi dang bye brag gi sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa 'chad*

most likely were statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters down to Ngor chen along with statues of protectors (*bka' srung*), such scriptures as the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po and his sons (bSod nams rtse mo and Grags pa rgyal mtshan), the works of Sa skya Paṇḍita, the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) of the *bKa' gyur*, and a large bKra shis sgo mangs *stūpa*.⁵¹⁷ He also served as one of the main teachers of Glo bo mKhan chen, who in turn wrote his biography based on an earlier biography and his record of teachings received (*gsan yig*).⁵¹⁸

Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478), Ngor chen's nephew and fourth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1465–1478), visited Glo bo twice during his abbatial tenure: at first in 1466 and later on again from 1477 until 1478, when he also passed away in his residence at dPal ldan Byams pa gling in Upper Glo.⁵¹⁹ According to the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, his first invitation was extended by A mgon bzang po, who handed over political affairs to his son bKra shis mgon and took *pravrajyā* monastic ordination (i.e., *śrāmaṇera* novice-monk ordination) from Kun dga' dbang phyug.⁵²⁰ By contrast, the *Tsarang Molla* records that it was bKra shis

rtsod brtsom [= rtsom] gsum gyi sgo nas rgyas par mdzad pa sogs/ rgyal ba'i bstan pa rnam par dag pa nyin mor ltar gsal par mdzad nas/. See also the *rTsa drangs kyi bems chag* (p. 8): *a mgon bzang pos (...)// byams pa gling du bsgrub [= sgrub] sde legs par stabs [= btab]//*. For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 42.8–9). According to the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 238.4), the monastery was prophesied by Ngor chen and specially founded by the Great Dharma King (i.e., A mgon bzang po?): *dgon gnas 'di rje btsun rdo rje 'chang chen pos lung bstan/ chos rgyal chen pos ched gnyer gyis btah pa yin pas (...)*. Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan designed parts of the murals of Byams pa gling; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fol. 13a4–b1): *bstan pa'i bya ba bde bar gshegs pa'i sku gzugs gyi [= kyi] bkod pa tshad la sogs pa ni/ (...)* byams pa gling gi gtsug lag khang gi ri mo/ dus gsum gyis [= gyi] sangs rgyas rnam/ thos sras kyi khang pa/ sgrol ma nyer gci/ sgrub pa'i thabs bsdu/ pa dang/ rgya mtshor gsungs pa'i lhas skor [= bskor] ba'i lha khang dang/ bde bar gshegs pa'i mchod rten rnam skyes pa'i rabs kyi/ yongs su skor [= bskor] ba'i gtsug lag khang bkod pa shin du legs pa/ lha bzo ba rnam kyang yid 'phrog pa dang/. See also the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 35b), which mentions an invitation that A seng rDo rje brtan pa had extended to a certain Rin po che Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan: *[a seng rdo rje brtan pa zhes mtshan yongs su grags pa de nyid kyi/ kyang] gzhan yang paṇḍi ta grags pa rgyal mtshan/ rin po che tshul khriims rgyal mtshan/ chos rje legs po shes rab sogs gdan drangs te rdo rje theg pa'i chos 'khor bskor tshul/ 'bul ba'i rnam bzhag/ dgongs rdzogs bsgrubs tshul sogs yi ge mangs kyi/ dogs nas ma bris/*. The monastery was later on successively headed by Paṇ chen Byams pa gling pa dPal ldan tshul khriims (d. 1528) and for three years by his disciple Kun dga' grol mchog; see the *Zhen pa rang grol* (pp. 383.3–384.2 and *passim*). Byams pa gling might be the same monastery as Byams pa bShad sgrub gling, which is enumerated as one of the Gling bzhir dgon sde said to have been founded by A ma dpal; see Part Four, 6.5. On Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan's relation with both Ngor chen and Glo bo, see also Part Four, n. 664.

⁵¹⁷ See the *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 25a6–b2). Cf. the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 21b–22a), which mentions different commissions and attributes them to A mgon bzang po. For the citation of the Tibetan passage, see Part Four, n. 421.

⁵¹⁸ See the *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 27a6–b2). On Glo bo mKhan chen's studies under Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 440.4–441.1), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 233.6–234.1 and 238.3–239.4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 271.6–272.1), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 129.4–11, 132.2–6, and 133.12–134.2), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 235.5–6), and KRAMER 2008: 57, 62, 75, 159, 161, and 163. On the biography of Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan, see *Ibid.*: 85 and 179–180, no. 90. On praises Glo bo mKhan chen wrote of his master, see *Ibid.*: 87 and 268, nos. 33–35. For his commissions after the passing of his master, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 537.3–538.3).

⁵¹⁹ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 545.6–546.4 and 547.1–556.1), *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2* (pp. 629.4–630.2 and 630.5–639.4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 424.5–435.3 and 441.1–456.3), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 229.2–231.6 and 239.4–244.5), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 269.5–271.1 and 272.4–273.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 126.9–128.3 and 132.7–12), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 11.2–3), JACKSON 1984: 154, n. 23, and KRAMER 2008: 24, 38, 57, 59, 61, 63–66, 75–76, 156–157, and 162.

⁵²⁰ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 23b–24a): *[chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ba di ni/ rgyal srid sras la gtad nas/ rgyal tshab dam pa grub pa'i dbang phyug chen po rdo rje 'chang kun dga' dbang phyug spyen drangs nas/ de nyid kyi spyen mngar [= sngar] sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa'i sgor bzhugs tel/ gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i nyams len gyi rim pa gnyis kyi ting nge 'dzin la g.yel ba med par/ zab mo'i de kho na nyid kyi don thugs su chud par mdzad cing/*. See also the *rTsa drangs kyi bems chag* (p. 8): *a mgon bzang pos (...)// sku tshe'i 'jug [= mjug] tu rgyal tshab dam pa'i drung/ rab tu byung zhing rim gnyis thugs su chud/*. For a similar passage, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 42.10–11).

mgon who had actually invited Kun dga' dbang phyug and honoured him as his religious preceptor (*mchod gnas*).⁵²¹ The *Blo bo rgyal rabs* attributes the second invitation to A seng rDo rje brtan pa, the younger brother and successor of bKra shis mgon.⁵²² During both sojourns, Kun dga' dbang phyug bestowed such teachings as the *Lam 'bras* and gave, each time, different types of monastic ordinations to about one thousand individuals. During his second stay, he is said to have bestowed the *Lam 'bras* on a gathering of more than nine hundred students.⁵²³ Kun dga' dbang phyug became one of the main teachers of Glo bo mKhan chen on whom he also bestowed novice-monk and full-monk ordinations.⁵²⁴ Furthermore, he appointed him in 1477 as abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling (tenure: 1477–ca. 1488).⁵²⁵ Glo bo mKhan chen in turn composed the biography of his master Kun dga' dbang phyug (in 1490?) at Brag dkar Theg chen (dar rgyas) gling.⁵²⁶

Ngor chen's disciple and biographer **Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486)** was active in Glo bo, where he taught and translated and also designed temples and murals.⁵²⁷

In 1469, **Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507)**, another famous disciple of Ngor chen, was invited to Glo bo by bKra shis mgon and visited there from 1472 to 1475.⁵²⁸

Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), the sixth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1483–1486), was invited to Glo bo during his abbatial tenure by A seng rDo rje brtan pa. However, he did not get the chance to travel to Glo bo. Thus rDo rje brtan pa

⁵²¹ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 10a–b): *a haṃ tshangs chen bkra shis mgon ni* (...) *e waṃ pa'i gdan rabs bzhi pa rgyal tshab dam pa kun dga' dbang phyug dang* | *gser mdog can mkhas pa chen po shākya mchog ldan dri med legs pa'i blo gros la sogs pa'i mkhas grub mang po dbu yi mchod gnas su bkur* |. On this passage, see also JACKSON 1980: 134 and JACKSON 1984: 148.

⁵²² See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 35a): [*a seng rdo rje brtan pa ni*] *sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la shabs [= zhabs] tog mdzad tshul zur tsaṃ ni* | *rgyal ba rdo rje 'chang gnyis pa kun dga' dbang phyug pa'i zhal mnga' [= snga] nas spyān drangs te mkhan chen bsod nams lhun grub bsnyen par mdzad* | *zab cing rgya che ba'i chos kyi 'khor lo bskor* |. Cf. VITALI 2012a: 203 and 203, n. 319, who understands this passage as referring to the ordination of A seng rDo rje brtan pa rather than to that of Glo bo mKhan chen. The passage continues with a list of offerings made by A seng rDo rje brtan pa. Among them, also offerings destined for Ngor are listed; see the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 35a–b): *de skabs sul 'bul ba'i rnam bzhaṅ ni* | *gser ga gcig dbus su bcug pa'i gser zho sum bcu so drug kyi maṅḍal* | *btso zanggs bdun bcu* | *skad gcig ma sum bcu* | *ka dan yug nyis brgya rnam phul* | *e waṃ du dus mchod kyi rgyu la zanggs ras rta khal lṅa bcu* | *dkar me la gser blo zho brgya rnam phul* |.

⁵²³ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 545.6–546.4 and 547.1–548.4) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2* (pp. 629.4–630.2 and 630.5–632.1). Some of Kun dga' dbang phyug's activities while in Glo bo can also be learned from works on Glo bo mKhan chen's life; see Part Four, n. 524.

⁵²⁴ For Glo bo mKhan chen's studies under Kun dga' dbang phyug and his ordinations, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 424.5–435.3 and 441.1–456.3), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 229.2–231.6 and 239.4–244.5), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 269.5–271.1 and 272.4–273.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 126.9–128.3 and 132.7–12), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 235.4 and 235.6–236.3), and KRAMER 2008: 24, 38, 57, 59, 61, 63–66, 75–76, 156–157, and 162. On his *gsan yig*, which also contains a section on his studies under Kun dga' dbang phyug, see *ibid.*: 52–53.

⁵²⁵ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 455.3–456.3), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 241.2–4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (p. 132.9–11), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 235.6–236.2), and KRAMER 2008: 66 and 162, n. 95.

⁵²⁶ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1* (p. 557.2–3) and KRAMER 2008: 177–178, no. 88. The biography by Glo bo mKhan chen served as the model for a later summary of Kun dga' dbang phyug's life by A mes zhabs; see the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2* (p. 640.1–2). Along with both these biographies, the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 11.4) lists a third biography of Kun dga' dbang phyug by Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang, which has yet to be retrieved. On praises that Glo bo mKhan chen wrote of Kun dga' dbang phyug, see KRAMER 2008: 87 and 268, nos. 16–21. For his commissionings after the passing of his master, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 535.5–536.2) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 243.3–244.5 and 308.4)

⁵²⁷ See Part Two, 3.1.

⁵²⁸ On, Shākya mchog ldan's Glo bo sojourn; see CAUMANN 2012: 151–152 and 159–173, CAUMANN 2015: 175–176 and 181–201, and Part Four, 6.7.

commissioned twenty-four golden statues of the *Lam 'bras* lineage masters, which were then brought to Go rams pa's monastery of rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal.⁵²⁹ Go rams pa was also in contact with other members of Glo bo's ruling house such as bKra shis mgon and Glo bo mKhan chen, to whom he is said to have written letters (*thugs dam*).⁵³⁰

With regard to the close relationship that existed between Ngor and Glo bo, an interesting remark is found in two of Go rams pa's numerous biographies. Both works relate that, when approached to become the next abbot of Ngor, Go rams pa requested that someone should be despatched to Glo bo to discuss his appointment or ask for approving his appointment, because Glo bo was Ngor's foremost patron.⁵³¹

Ngor chen's disciple **Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang po (d. 1509)** was active in Glo bo, where Kun dga' dbang phyug selected him as Glo bo mKhan chen's tutor in 1466.⁵³²

dKon mchog 'phel (1445–1514), the seventh abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1486–1513), was one of the chief students of Kun dga' dbang phyug and accompanied his master as attendant during both of his stays in Glo bo (i.e., in 1466 and from 1477 to 1478).⁵³³ He also performed the funeral services after his uncle's passing in Glo bo.⁵³⁴ His biographies do not refer to any other of his activities while in Glo bo, but record among the list of his disciples an interesting enumeration, specifying the monastic institutions with which his most prominent disciples from Glo bo were affiliated, namely Brag and bSam, which constituted the two largest monasteries of Glo bo (*glo bo'i dgon chen*)—that is, Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling and probably Phu phag bSam gtan gling—and the other main monasteries being sTeng chen 'Dul grwa, (Ri/Re shid) sDom gsum gling and Byams pa

⁵²⁹ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 345.7–8), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 4 (p. 370.6–15), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (p. 242.9–11). Go rams pa's collected works contain a short work which deals with the donation of these statues, the *sDe pa a seng pas gsung ngag brgyud pa'i gser sku phul dus kyi phyag rtags*; see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 13, pp. 667.1–670.1). From this work, we come to know that the entire set consisted of twenty-four statues from Vajradhara down to Go rams pa and included an additional statue of the protector Vajra dāka. A passage from the work suggests also that the statues were not sent to Thub bstan rnam rgyal, but instead to Ngor; see the *Phyag rtags* (p. 668.5–6): *brjod pa kun gyi rgyur gyur a yig dangll ri dwaags kun gyi dbang po seng ge dangll don mtshon brda yi mchog gyur rdo rje ltarll khirms gnyis brtan pa mi yi dbang po desll smon thang dpal 'byor rgyas pa'i pho brang nasll e waṃ chos kyis mtho ba'i khang bzang dull mang thos don bzhin smra ba'i dge slong lall rnam dkar dad dang brtson pa'i stobs kyis phullll*. On two other *Lam 'bras* sets commissioned by A seng rDo rje brtan pa, see Part Four, n. 502.

⁵³⁰ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (p. 243.13–21). Such letters are also mentioned by Glo bo mKhan chen in his autobiography when discussing his rather difficult relationship with his teacher Shākya mchog ldan while at the same time defending the latter's rival Go rams pa against accusations made by his older brother, the ruler of Glo bo, bKra shis mgon; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 130.13–136.2) and KRAMER 2008: 67 and 160–165. Though Go rams pa and Glo bo mKhan chen never met personally, Glo bo mKhan chen is said to have sent him one of his *Tshad ma rigs gter* commentaries, receiving much praise from the latter; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 458.3–5) and KRAMER 2008: 67, n. 83. Glo bo mKhan chen wrote also a biography of Go rams pa while he was in Ngor in a dragon year ('brug lo; i.e., 1496 or 1508); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 7 (p. 159.10–16) and KRAMER 2008: 71–72 and 178–179, no. 89.

⁵³¹ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 326.1–2) and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (p. 232.17–18).

⁵³² See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 431.5–432.4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 231.4–6 and 232.6–233.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 270.3–271.1), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 127.4–128.3), and KRAMER 2008: 61 and 157. On the life of Yon tan dpal bzang po, see also Part Four, n. 667. On Glo bo mKhan chen's studies under him, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 435.5–436.4, 441.1–442.4, and 504.3–505.4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 240.5–241.1 and 272.6–273.6), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 271.2–4, 271.5–6, and 276.3–4), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 128.8–13 and 132.2–6), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 235.4–236.2), and KRAMER 2008: 57, 61, 63, 75, 157, and 161. On praises Glo bo mKhan chen wrote of his master, see *Ibid.*: 268, nos. 31–32.

⁵³³ See the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 819.5–6) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 15.4).

⁵³⁴ See the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 782.3–5) and *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 819.6–820.1).

gling.⁵³⁵ Unfortunately, the students are not listed by name and only referred to as the *mkhan chens* and *rin po ches* of those institutions. Apart from this, the best-known disciple of dKon mchog 'phel while at Ngor was Glo bo mKhan chen, who had studied under dKon mchog 'phel while at Ngor during his two journeys to central Tibet (1489–1497 and 1506–mid-1509).⁵³⁶

lHa mchog seng ge (1468–1535), the ninth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1516–1534), visited Glo bo twice: first in 1515 prior to his installation in 1516 and as incumbent abbot from 1523 to 1524.⁵³⁷ According to his biography, his objectives in visiting Glo bo were to distribute relics made out of the remains of dKon mchog 'phel and to continue his studies under Glo bo mKhan chen, which he had begun during the latter's visits to Ngor.⁵³⁸ Along with Glo bo mKhan chen as ordaining preceptor, he also functioned as ceremonial master in ordinations granted to members of the royal family.⁵³⁹ During his second sojourn, he taught in the Thub chen rnam par rgyal ba'i gtsug lag khang at sMon thang the *Lam 'bras* to a large gathering that also included members of the royal family and bestowed monastic ordinations on a huge number of disciples.⁵⁴⁰ Together with Glo bo mKhan chen, he also visited and taught at bSam grub gling and Chos sdings and after having returned to sMon thang, both continued to jointly grant ordinations as ordaining preceptor and ceremonial master on disciples from Glo bo and the surrounding areas as well as members of the royal house.⁵⁴¹ In the tenth month of 1524, when they came to know of the death of Sangs rgyas rin chen, the eighth abbot of Ngor, who had passed away one month earlier, they performed various offerings on his behalf, and afterwards lHa mchog seng ge departed with his entourage for Ngor at the end of the tenth month of 1524.⁵⁴² In 1532, he intended to visit Glo bo a third time, but the news of the recent

⁵³⁵ See the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 798.5–799.2): *gzhan yang bzhi sde chos rje 'jam dbyangs nam mkha' brtan pa dangl gnas lnga rig pa rnam rgyal dpal bzang po la sogs pa mnga' ris stod du byon pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen du ma dangl glo bo'i dgon chen brag bsam gnyis| steng chen 'dul grwa[] sdom gsum gling| byams pa gling rnam kyī mkhan chen rin po che rnam dangl dol po bya tshang mol lcam chos zom| byang dgon gsum dang bcas pa'i mkhan po rnam dangl nam gling chos rje pañ chen kun dga' blo gros pa la sogs pa mnga' ris stod smad kyī chos grwa so so'i mkhan po rje nyid dang dus mtshungs su byon pa chos lugs 'di pa'i rjes su slob pa mtha' dag dngos kyī slob mar mdzad yingl.*

⁵³⁶ See the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 797.1–3). On Glo bo mKhan chen's two journeys to central Tibet and his studies under dKon mchog 'phel, see Part Four, 6.

⁵³⁷ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 297.6–300.2, 315.5–325.4, and 349.5), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 18.5 and 19.2–3), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 240.1–3), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 117.1), *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 149.6–150.4 and 157.5–158.6), JACKSON 1984: 60 and 72, n. 13, and KRAMER 2008: 73. Note that according to the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyī rnam thar 2* (pp. 244.6–245.3), lHa mchog seng ge visited Glo bo only in 1524.

⁵³⁸ See the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 139.5–6 and 143.2–144.2). On praises Glo bo mKhan chen wrote of lHa mchog seng ge, see KRAMER 2008: 268, no. 42 and 273, no. 190. Confusingly, A mes zhabs remarks that after the passing of dKon mchog 'phel, Glo bo mKhan chen paid another visit to Ngor; see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 238.5–6). However, since this visit is not recorded in any other source dealing with Glo bo mKhan chen's life, and since A mes zhabs also provides wrong dates for Glo bo mKhan chen's sojourns in central Tibet, his remark is highly questionable.

⁵³⁹ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 299.2–3) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 150.3–4).

⁵⁴⁰ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 315.6–317.1) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 158.1–4).

⁵⁴¹ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 317.1–318.4). See also the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 240.1–2).

⁵⁴² See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 324.4–325.3) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 158.4–6). Before departing for central Tibet, lHa mchog seng ge received an enormous amount of offerings, whose details are said to have been recorded by Glo bo mKhan chen in form of a list (*'bul yig*); see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 324.6–325.2). Glo bo mKhan chen also composed a praise for the arrival of lHa mchog seng ge, an incomplete manuscript of which has been preserved, the *Shrī e wam chos ldan nas chos rje lha mchog seng ge phebs dus kyī 'bul ba'i mchod rjod*; see NGMCP (Reel no. L 103/23) and KRAMER 2008: 273, no. 190. A prominent disciple of lHa mchog seng ge from Glo bo was Kun dga' grol mchog, who had studied under him at Ngor during

passing of Glo bo mKhan chen disrupted his plans.⁵⁴³ According to the *Tsarang Molla*, lHa mchog seng ge had been invited to Glo bo by A haṃ Grags pa mtha' yas, the son of bKra shis mgon, who made him one of his chief spiritual preceptors (*mchod gnas*).⁵⁴⁴ This is confirmed by the *Blo bo rgyal rabs*, which specifies that Grags pa mtha' yas had invited lHa mchog seng ge a total of three times.⁵⁴⁵ Glo bo mKhan chen, however, states that Chos rgyal Kun dga' blo gros, the son of Grags pa mtha' yas, along with rGya hor dpal bzang and the latter's brother (i.e., bKra shis 'od 'bar?) were responsible for the second invitation.⁵⁴⁶ It was also lHa mchog seng ge who requested Blo gros dpal mgon to compose a biography of his teacher Glo bo mKhan chen.⁵⁴⁷

From 1525 to 1526, **dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557)**, the tenth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1534–1557), visited Glo bo to request from Glo bo mKhan chen the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra* in the lineage of Sa skya Paṇḍita. While in Glo bo, he stayed with Glo bo mKhan chen at the monasteries of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling, sDom gsum gling, and

his first sojourn in central Tibet (1519–1523) and afterwards accompanied him as attendant to Glo bo. In Glo bo, he continued to serve as his attendant and also obtained teachings. He also received full monastic ordination from Glo bo mKhan chen as ordaining preceptor, lHa mchog seng ge as ceremonial master, and Drung pa Chos rje Kun dga' mchog grub as instructor in private. On these events, see the *Zhen pa rang grol* (pp. 318.4–354.5) and also the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 158.1–3). Kun dga' mchog grub (1454–1526), the uncle and teacher of Kun dga' grol mchog, was another master from Glo bo who had visited Ngor during his two sojourns in dBus and gTsang, receiving teachings from prominent Ngor abbots such as 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, the third abbot, Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot, dPal ldan rdo rje, the fifth abbot, Go rams pa, the sixth abbot, and dKon mchog 'phel, the seventh abbot. Kun dga' grol mchog also enumerates many other important Sa skya masters under whom his uncle had studied during his sojourns, such as Don yod dpal (1398–1484), Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507), bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1444–1495), Glang thang sPyan snga Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1432–1488), mKhyen rab Chos rje Rin chen mchog grub dpal bzang (1436–1497), and Chu 'dus mKhas btsun Yon tan rgya mtsho, to name just a few; see the *Kun dga' mchog grub kyi rnam thar* (fols. 7b2–10a7). At Ngor, Kun dga' mchog grub took during his first sojourn both the vows of a layman and novice monk from Kun dga' dbang phyug as ordaining preceptor and later on the full monk's vows from Go rams pa as ordaining preceptor; see the *Kun dga' mchog grub kyi rnam thar* (fol. 6b1–5). The dates provided for his ordinations are rather problematic, however. He is said to have taken the former at age twenty-four and the latter at age twenty-nine, which correspond—provided that the date of his birth is given correctly—to 1477 (i.e., *me mo bya*) and 1482 (i.e., *chu pho stag*), respectively. But the year for the former ordinations is specified as a horse year (*rta'i lo*) and for the latter as the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month of the male earth-tiger year (*sa pho stag*), which would correspond to 1474 (i.e., *shing po rta*) and 1458, respectively. The latter date should thus most likely be emended to 1479 (i.e., *sa mo phag*). His first sojourn is said to have lasted for eight years and the second for five; see the *Kun dga' mchog grub kyi rnam thar* (fol. 7a3). In Glo bo he continued his studies under such masters as Ngor chen's disciples Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan, Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan, Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang and other important figures such as Glo bo mKhan chen and lHa mchog seng ge; see the *Kun dga' mchog grub kyi rnam thar* (fols. 10a7–11b1). On his family relation, see Part Four, 6.7.

⁵⁴³ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 19.6) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 163.5–164.1).

⁵⁴⁴ See the *Tsarang Molla* (fol. 11a): *a haṃ grags pa mtha' yas ni' (...) khyad par e waṃ pa'i gdan rabs dgu pa rgyal ba lha mchog seng ge dangl gdan rabs bcu pa thams cad mkhyen pa dkon mchog lhun grub gnyis gdan drangs shingl dbu yi mchod gnas su bkurl*. On this passage, see also JACKSON 1980: 134 and JACKSON 1984: 149. On Grags pa mtha' yas, see *Ibid.*: 120 and 125–127.

⁵⁴⁵ See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 41a–b): *grags pa mtha' yas de nyid kyis kyangl 'phags pa mchod cing bstan 'dzin bskur ba'i zur tsaṃ ni' e waṃ nas srid pa gsum gyi 'dren mchog lha mchog seng ge rim pa gsum gyi bar du spyān drangs/ ngor chen dkon mchog lhun grub spyān drangs pa sogs sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dang bstan 'dzin la zhabs tog phul du phyin pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa mdzad pa yin laj*.

⁵⁴⁶ See the *mChod rjod* (fol. 1b3–4). On Kun dga' blo gros, see the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 41b) and JACKSON 1984: 120, 127, and 134. On rGya hor dpal bzang and bKra shis 'od 'bar, see the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 42a), *Tsarang Molla* (11b), and JACKSON 1984: 102, 105, 106, 121, 127–128, 134, and 149.

⁵⁴⁷ See the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 572.1–4), JACKSON 1991b: 30–32, and KRAMER 2008: 48–50 and 73. For an outline of that biography, see KRAMER 2008: 48–50. Its author, Blo gros dpal mgon, was a disciple and attendant of Glo bo mKhan chen; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 572.4–5) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 339.6–7).

bSam grub gling, receiving a variety of teachings, though Glo bo mKhan chen did not grant to him the *Six-fold Yoga of Kālacakra*.⁵⁴⁸ Both the *Tsarang Molla* and the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* record his invitation by Grags pa mtha' yas, who made him after lHa mchog seng ge's visit his new spiritual preceptor (*mchod gnas*).⁵⁴⁹ Prior to his Glo bo sojourn, he had met Glo bo mKhan chen at Ngor at age thirteen (i.e., in 1509), when the latter took part in his lay-follower and novice-monk ordinations. As dKon mchog 'phel and Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub acted respectively as presiding abbot and ceremonial master, the two elements of his ordination name, "dkon mchog" and "lhun grub," were given in reference to those two masters.⁵⁵⁰

Sangs rgyas seng ge (1504–1569), the eleventh abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1557–1569), visited Glo bo in 1532 following Glo bo mKhan chen's last will that either dKon mchog lhun grub or Sangs rgyas seng ge should come up to Glo bo after his death to preside over his cremation ceremony. But Glo bo mKhan chen's instructions were not carried out due to the slight incapacity (*thugs cung zad mi zin pa*) of the Glo bo ruler and the interference of an evil minded faction (*mi ngan gyi byed pa*). Thus, while Sangs rgyas seng ge was on his way to Glo bo, he came to know that the cremation had already been performed and continued only reluctantly. According to his biography, he nevertheless stayed in Glo bo for over fifteen years, until 1550. We do not know much about his activities during that time. He is said to have mainly engaged in his own spiritual practice and studies. At times, he bestowed such teachings as the *Lam 'bras* on a small group of disciples that also included Glo bo mKhan chen's nephew, Chos rje Blo gros rgyal mtshan. According to Glo bo mKhan chen's will, he also sent certain religious objects to Ngor.⁵⁵¹ Later on, in 1561, he was again invited to Glo bo to mediate in a conflict. For that, the Glo bo ruler had dispatched Kun dga' dpal bzang po, a local Buddhist master from an important family at the court, to central Tibet in 1560 to invite both the latter's uncle Kun dga' grol mchog from Jo nang and Sangs rgyas seng ge from Ngor. Sangs rgyas seng ge agreed to travel to Glo bo if Kun dga' grol mchog also went. But as the latter finally decided not to go, the entire mission failed.⁵⁵²

Until the mid-sixteenth century, we find quite a few such references to invitations extended by members of Glo bo's ruling house and the successive visits of eminent Ngor masters to Glo bo. After this time, however, such references become less frequently.⁵⁵³ I can think of two reasons for this. The first is political in nature and relates to internal power conflicts in Glo bo that went along with the general decline of Glo bo's powerful position during the sixteenth century when Jumla and La dwags began to exercise great influence in the Kali Gandaki region. According to David Jackson, it was in the late

⁵⁴⁸ See the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 245.6–247.1) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 325.5–327.2). See also the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 240.4), JACKSON 1984: 60 and 72, n. 13, and KRAMER 2008: 26 and 73.

⁵⁴⁹ See Part Four, nn. 544 and 545.

⁵⁵⁰ See the *dKon mchog lhun grub gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 180.3–6), *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 237.3–238.1), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 20.6–21.1).

⁵⁵¹ See the *Sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 339.3–341.2). See also the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 248.3–4) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 22.5–6). In addition, see also the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 343.3–5), which, however, makes no mention of the issue regarding Glo bo mKhan chen's cremation.

⁵⁵² See the *Kun dga' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 200.6–203.3). On Kun dga' dpal bzang po, see also Part Four, 6.7.

⁵⁵³ This statement has to be qualified insofar as I did not check all the extant biographies of successive Ngor abbots. However, references to further invitations and visits are also less frequently found in the four abbatial histories of Ngor, the *Blo rgyal rabs*, and the *Tsarang Molla*.

sixteenth century that “Jumla was poised to completely overpower Lo.”⁵⁵⁴ Those developments are also summarised by Charles Ramble:

Lo's fortunes declined with the ascendancy of Jumla, which came to be the most powerful kingdom of what is now western Nepal. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Lo was brought under the direct rule of Jumla, with an obligation to pay a substantial annual tribute and to provide military assistance in times of need (...). Jumla reduced the potential threat of political opposition from its vassal by exploiting regional tensions and fragmenting the kingdom.⁵⁵⁵

The suzerainty of Jumla appears not to have generated much of a sense of loyalty among its vassals. When the Gorkha forces passed through Lo on their way to make war with Jumla in 1789, they were offered no resistance. In recognition of this cooperative attitude, the Gorkhas permitted the rulers of Upper and Lower Lo to retain their customary power, and the tribute previously levied by Jumla was now simply paid to the new sovereign power (...).⁵⁵⁶

Owing to these conflicts and shifts in Glo bo's power relations, Glo bo's ruling house was preoccupied with its own fight for survival and was in no position to uphold a continuous relation with Ngor. The conflicts in Glo bo could also have discouraged Ngor masters from embarking on a dangerous journey to their branch monasteries in Glo bo. The second reason for fewer notable visits was Ngor's stronger and growing connections with Khams. From the sixteenth century, it was also to this region that Ngor masters travelled to collect offerings (*'bul sdud*) and where in the seventeenth century the Ngor tradition would come to enjoy the royal patronage of the ruling house of sDe dge.⁵⁵⁷

Nevertheless, the relation between Glo bo's royal family and Ngor was continued over the centuries, as illustrated by a few references to visits paid by Ngor masters in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the eighteenth century Glo bo called upon its old religious preceptors to once again come and act as mediators in the conflicts with Jumla. We learn that **Byams pa bSod nams bzang po (1689–1749)**, the thirtieth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1713–1722), travelled to Glo bo in 1727 to mediate in a conflict between Glo bo and Jumla (*mon pa* or *'dzum lang*), following both the order of Sa skya and the request of Glo bo's ruler. He resided in Glo bo until the autumn of 1729, bestowing such teachings as the empowerments of the *Vajrāvalī*.⁵⁵⁸ A few years later, intense fighting broke out anew and a messenger was dispatched to Ngor once again to request Byams pa bSod nams bzang po's help in settling the dispute. At that time, he also received the order from gZhung sa sDe srid Mi'i dbang po—that is, Mi dbang Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyas (1689–1747, r. 1728–1747)—to mediate in the conflict. Thus he embarked in 1734 on his second journey to Glo bo, where he is said to have succeeded in reconciling the two

⁵⁵⁴ See JACKSON 1978: 219.

⁵⁵⁵ RAMBLE 2008: 26. See also DHUNDEL 2002: 98–116, JACKSON 1978: 218–224, and SCHUH 1994: 68–85.

⁵⁵⁶ RAMBLE 2008: 27. See also DHUNDEL 2002: 119–145.

⁵⁵⁷ See Part Two, 2 and Part Five, 1. Already prior to the sixteenth century, Ngor had connections with Khams, but by then they were not as strong as they would become later on. For instance, some of Ngor chen's disciples originated from Khams (e.g., sMar khams pa Grags pa bzang po, Go rams pa, and a group from lDan ma, including sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes); see Part Four, 10. As another interesting example, there is a letter by Go rams pa for collecting offerings in mDo khams, the *mDo khams la 'bul sdud rdzong dus kyi yi ge*, which he issued only a couple of months after he had begun his tenure as Ngor abbot in 1483; see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 13, pp. 651.6–656.6). For its translation, see HEIMBEL (forthcoming 2).

⁵⁵⁸ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 530.4–5 and 569.1–3), *Zhu chen gyi rang rnam 1* (pp. 399.6–400.3), and *bSod nams lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 653.1–4).

warring parties. Visiting Nepal, sKyid rong (i.e., sKyid grong), and Mt. Kailash, he gradually returned to central Tibet. He proceeded via Sa skya and Ngor to lHa sa, where he reported back about the latest developments in the conflict between Glo bo and Jumla ('dzum).⁵⁵⁹

During that period, fights repeatedly broke out between Glo bo and invading Jumla troops, though the only documented clash dates to the year 1723 when bKra shis rnam rgyal (d. ca. 1729) was the acting ruler of Glo bo. Glo bo emerged victorious from this conflict, but the triumph would be only temporarily, because Glo bo was recaptured shortly after the death of bKra shis rnam rgyal. Subsequently, Nor 'dzin bde legs dbang mo, the Ladakhi wife of the recently passed ruler, acted as regent until their common son A mgon bSod nams bstan 'dzin dbang rgyal (b. ca. 1719) took over rule.⁵⁶⁰

Even before Pho lha nas gave his orders to Byams pa bSod nams bzang po, the dGa' ldan pho brang government stood in contact with the rulers of Glo bo. For instance, bKra shis rnam rgyal is recorded to have been received by the Seventh Dalai Lama bsKal bzang rgya mtsho (1708–1757) in lHa sa, and one year after the fighting in 1723, the dGa' ldan pho brang regime issued in 1724 an official order to establish cordial relations between Jumla and Glo bo.⁵⁶¹

Similarly, dKon mchog grags pa (b. 1716), the thirty-ninth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1751–1765), was sent in the 1750s by the Seventh Dalai Lama to mediate new clashes between Glo bo and Jumla ('dzum legs).⁵⁶²

In the 1880s, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b. 1830s, d. 1890s at age fifty-nine), the fifty-fifth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1859–1866), visited Glo bo. He was a well-travelled religious scholar who journeyed after the end of his tenure at Ngor through Khams, Nepal, and mNga' ris.⁵⁶³ The Glo bo ruler A ham dNgos grub dpal 'bar 'jigs bral phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i sde made him his tantric *guru* (*rigs bdag*) and appointed him in 1884 as abbot of Thub bstan bshad grub dar rgyas gling at rTsa drangs (i.e., gTsang rang).⁵⁶⁴ Following the king's request, in 1886, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan wrote a new monastic constitution (*bca' yig*) for the monastery.⁵⁶⁵ While in Glo bo, he also composed another work, "a series of brief verses of reverential petition to the

⁵⁵⁹ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 531.1–532.5).

⁵⁶⁰ See DHUNGEL 2002: 112–116, JACKSON 1978: 222–224, JACKSON 1984: 130, and PETECH 1977: 89–90.

⁵⁶¹ See DHUNGEL 2002: 111 and 113, JACKSON 1984: 130, and PETECH 1977: 90, n. 3. For the official letter, the 'Dzum lang dang glo gyi bar la mthun 'brel yong yag gi ched du pho brang po ta las nas skor gsum ru bzhi sgang drug gi yul dpon dang chos dpon rnam la gnang ba'i yi ge, see DHUNGEL 2002: 227–228, Document No. 5 (MHR doc. no. 6, Tib.).

⁵⁶² See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 592.4–593.3). See also the *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 3, pp. 255.3–5, 261.5–6, 288.1–2, 385.4–5, 401.5–6, and 488.2–3).

⁵⁶³ For a biographical sketch of Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 627.6–633.3). On his life, see also JACKSON 1988b: 29–32 and JACKSON 1999a. His biography by gTsong lag smra ba 'Jam dbyangs chos 'phel is presumed to be lost; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 633.3).

⁵⁶⁴ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 632.4–5): *glo bo rgyal pos rtsa ba'i rigs bdag tu bkur yang ring por ma bzhugs/; and rTsa drangs kyi bca' yig* (pp. 267.25–268.1): *sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa mar gribs su song te nyams gud ji cher byung skabs/ chos kyi rgyal po a ham dngos grub dpal 'bar 'jigs bral phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i sde yangs [= yongs] su grags pa'i thugs rje bka' drin gyi gziqs pas <khyabs te> [= khyab ste] glo bo chos sde pho dgon mo dgon spyi dang/ khyad par chos sde 'di nyid la dmigs su thugs rjes gziqs dang gziqs mus dang/ ma zad shing sbrel lor [i.e., 1884] e wam pa'i gdan rabs nga bzhi pa/ bdag ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan blo gros mi zad pa'i sgra dbyangs su bod pas snyoms las kyi mthar thug pa/ rje gong ma'i chos khrir mnga' gsol mdzad/*. On A ham dNgos grub dpal 'bar, see JACKSON 1984: 105–106 and 132.

⁵⁶⁵ On this *bca' yig*, see Part 4, n. 322.

noble monks (*zabs druñ*) who were born in the ruling family of Lo Mustang.⁵⁶⁶ Prior to his sojourn in Glo bo, he had also visited Kha char Monastery in Pu hrangs, where he seems to have composed in 1880 the history of the Three Silver Jo bo Brothers (Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum) housed in that monastery.⁵⁶⁷

In the now available corpus of Tibetan texts, the sojourn in Glo bo of Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan constitutes the last known reference to a Ngor master visiting Glo bo prior to 1959.⁵⁶⁸ Thus I like to conclude this account with the observation that the Ngor tradition maintained their dominant position in Glo bo until the twentieth century and most of Glo bo's monasteries are still branches of it.⁵⁶⁹ When Giuseppe Tucci visited Glo bo in 1952, he remarked that "many of the temples and dgon pas of Mustang side still belong to the Ngor pas, (...).⁵⁷⁰ By that time, however, they were already in a poor state of preservation, as illustrated by his remarks:

There is nothing left of Namgyal, a fortified monastery to the west of Mustang, but a few chapels which are miraculously still standing: (...). Namgyal, encircled by an overhanging turreted spur, was one of the key positions in the valley's defence, which is why it was so ruthlessly destroyed.⁵⁷¹

The castle within Mustang subsided two years ago and now the king has gone to live an hour's walk away in the domain of Tenhar.⁵⁷²

The great temple of *Thugchen* (T'ugs rje c'en po) is on the verge of collapsing.⁵⁷³

The other temple is dedicated to *Chamba*, Maitreya. It used to be two storeys high, but the upper storey is completely ruined and ominous cracks are splitting the walls of the big lower chapel too. (...) The paintings are so blackened, in some parts erased by the water dripping from the ceiling, that it is not possible to take photographs of them. So these two notable monuments of the best period of Mustang are also fated to disappear. It is very lucky that I arrived in time to collect the memories of them which still remain.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁶⁶ JACKSON 1999a: 149. For this work, the *Shrī mi yi dbang phyug ma hā dharmā rāja a haṃ kyī gdung las zhabs drung mkhas shing grub brnyes rim par byon pa rnam la gsol ba 'debs byin rlabs chu rgyun*, see JACKSON 1984: 198–199. See also JACKSON 1999a: 137 and 149.

⁵⁶⁷ On this work, see Part 4, n. 359.

⁵⁶⁸ According to JACKSON 1984: xii, n. 1 and JACKSON 1989a: 93, a later Ngor master who visited Glo bo in about 1924 was Byams pa Nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1907–1940), the seventy-first abbot of Ngor. While in Glo bo, he wrote the last supplement to a lost family history (*gdung rabs*) of the kings of Glo bo. On his life, see also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 485.2–486.4), which does not mention his journey to Glo bo, however. On him, see also JACKSON 2003b: 109–110.

⁵⁶⁹ See CHOGYE TRICHEN RINPOCHE 2003: 33 and JACKSON (in press). *Ibid.* also states that most other monasteries in Glo bo belonged to other Sa skya sub-schools. The sMon thang Chos sde was a branch of Sa skya and the three monasteries in Bharagaon of southern Glo bo—'Dzar Chos sde Rig grol phun tshogs gling, rDzong Chos sde bShad sgrub chos 'phel gling, and bKag Chos sde Thub bstan bsam 'phel gling— were branches of rTa nag Thub bstan rnam rgyal, the seat of Go rams pa, though their monks could also go to Ngor. On these three monasteries, see the *Glo bo dgon pa'i ngo sprod* (pp. 73–74). Though the foundation of 'Dzar Chos sde and bKag Chos sde are ascribed to Go rams pa, he never visited Glo bo, though, as mentioned above, he had been invited by A seng rDo rje brtan pa.

⁵⁷⁰ TUCCI 1956: 15.

⁵⁷¹ TUCCI: 1977: 61. On the recent restoration of rNam rgyal, see the *Glo bo'i dkar chag* (p. 165.1–7). For a picture of the restored rNam rgyal Monastery, see LO BUE 2010a: 21, pl. 1.11.

⁵⁷² TUCCI: 1977: 61.

⁵⁷³ TUCCI: 1977: 62.

⁵⁷⁴ TUCCI: 1977: 62. For similar remarks, see also TUCCI 1956: 15.

Fortunately, Giuseppe Tucci proved to be wrong and both temples with their marvellous fifteenth century *bal ris* style murals still survive, owing to restoration work that was carried out since 1999 under the sponsorship of the American Himalayan Foundation.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁵ See LO BUE 2010a: Preface. For critical notes on the conservation and restoration approach, see LUCZANITS 2013: 165–166, LUCZANITS 2013: 194–195 and 198, LUCZANITS 2014, and SANDAY 2012.

Chapter Seven

Second Journey to dBus: An Invitation to the Phag mo gru pa Court

While residing at Ngor in between his second and third sojourn in Glo bo (from 1437 to 1447), in 1441, Ngor chen received an invitation from Gong ma Grags pa 'byung gnas (1414–1445), the sixth sovereign of the Phag mo gru pa regime (r. 1432–1445), to visit Yar klungs.⁵⁷⁶ He thus embarked on his second journey to dBus, staying for seven months at the Phag mo gru pa court at sNe'u gdong.⁵⁷⁷

When Ngor chen had first visited the sKyid shod area during the years 1414 to 1417, he was not nearly as well-known in dBus' monastic circles as he would later become. But by the 1430s, he was considered to be one of the greatest religious teachers of gTsang. This is evident, for instance, from the biography of Byams pa gling pa bSod nams rnam rgyal (1400–1475), who when he intended in 1435 to travel to gTsang to study under the most eminent and famous teachers then living, enumerated Ngor chen as one of them.⁵⁷⁸ After the passing of Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis in 1425, Ngor chen became almost peerless in the Sa skya school.

Ngor chen's expertise as a tantric master might have been brought to the attention of Gong ma Grags pa 'byung gnas already in 1438. At that time, Byams pa gling pa was looking for a qualified Vajrayāna teacher and came to hear of Ngor chen's disciple dMar khams pa'i bKa' bcu ba rGyal mtshan 'od zer, an expert in tantric teaching who had received numerous rare empowerments. Approaching Grags pa 'byung gnas with the idea of inviting rGyal mtshan 'od zer, Byams pa gling pa obtained the Phag mo gru pa ruler's consent and invited rGyal mtshan 'od zer to Byams pa gling pa. However, when the ruler came to know of that master's arrival, he insisted that Byams pa gling pa and his guest proceed on to Yar klungs to see him. Under the ruler's full patronage, the party travelled to Yar klungs where rGyal mtshan 'od zer bestowed at bTsan thang on a large scale tantric teachings on numerous famous masters of the day such as 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481), Zhal snga Kun rgyal (i.e., Glang thang sPyan snga Kun dga' rgyal mtshan?), dPal chos kyi grags pa, and bKa' bcu pa dPal ldan bzang po.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁶ For a biographical sketch of Grags pa 'byung gnas, see the *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 1 (vol. 2, pp. 226–232). On internal disputes and power struggles among the Phag mo gru pa that accompanied the appointment of Grags pa 'byung gnas and heralded the regime's gradual decline, see the *Bod kyi lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 228.6–231.16), CzAJA 2013: 217–224, EHRHARD 2004b: 249–250 and 257–259, JACKSON 1989b: 7, JACKSON (under preparation), and SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: 355.

⁵⁷⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi nam thar* 2 (p. 545.1–2). See also the *Ngor chen gyi nam thar* 1 (p. 462.3–4).

⁵⁷⁸ See the *Byams pa gling pa'i nam thar* (fol. 23a3–b1). From his biography, we learn that Byams pa gling pa was annoyed by the occurrences in dBus at that time and thus wished to continue his studies in gTsang. These events might be taken as a reference to the internal powerplay at the Phag mo gru pa court and the ensuing warfare of 1434 when an army from rGyal rtse invaded dBus. However, his uncle Nang so chen po Drung chen bZhi 'dzom (1374–1447), alias I nag bZhi 'dzom, who took care of his nephew's education after his father had passed away when he was still young, did not allow Byams pa gling pa to journey to gTsang. Instead, he instructed him to go to the Yar rgyab area and visit such monasteries as Byams pa gling and study under Sems dpa' chen po Kun dga' bzang po (1366–1444). On the rise of bZhi 'dzom as an important Yar rgyab official, see FERMER 2010: 52–54. On Byams pa gling pa, see *Ibid.*: 49–52. On Kun dga' bzang po, see SHEN 2002: 149, n. 92. See also *Ibid.*: 80, 93, 151–152, and 297.

⁵⁷⁹ See the *Byams pa gling pa'i nam thar* (fols. 25a3–26b6). The *Ngor chen gyi nam thar* 2 (p. 532.5) lists rGyal mtshan 'od zer among the disciples of Ngor chen, but with the title dMar ston pa instead of dMar khams pa. Among the students who received teachings from rGyal mtshan 'od zer at that time, the young Khriims khang

While residing at sNe'u gdong three years later, Ngor chen bestowed teachings on many scholars from dBus, among whom special mention is made of the ruler Grags pa 'byung gnas and Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal (1398–1458). The teachings Ngor chen gave were manifold. For instance, he granted the generation of *bodhicitta*, bestowed numerous empowerments of all four tantric systems, gave the exposition of the *Dvikalpa* (i.e., the *Hevajratantra*) in conjunction with that of its uncommon explanatory *tantra*, the *Vajrapañjaratantra*, and the reading transmission for the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*.⁵⁸⁰ Ngor chen also commissioned a statue of 'Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (1110–1170) and large golden statues of the chief deities of the *Vajrāvali*—such as of Kālacakra, Hevajra, and Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara—along with golden statues of that cycle's other deities in smaller size. These commissions were completed prior to Ngor chen's departure, because he is said to have consecrated them up to three times, together with an entire set of *maṇḍala* paintings of the *Vajrāvali* and sets of both the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*.⁵⁸¹ Assisted by Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan as ritual master (*mchod dpon*) and Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal and Chos rje dGe ba rgyal mtshan (1387–1462) as attendants, Ngor chen further performed at sNe'u gdong rtse the sacrificial-cake offering rite of Vajrabhairava, the 'jigs byed drug cu pa, to avert bad influences, as a supportive ceremony (*sku rim*) for Grags pa 'byung gnas.⁵⁸² Ngor chen's two attendants at that time, Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal and Chos rje dGe ba rgyal mtshan, were among the most important disciples of Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449) and would successively act as second and third abbot of Nā lendra Monastery, which their master had founded in 'Phan yul to the north-west of lHa sa in 1436.⁵⁸³

Lo tsā ba bSod nams rgya mtsho (1424–1482) is also recorded; see the *bSod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (fol. 8b1–2) and EHRHARD 2002: 37. rGyal mtshan 'od zer's teaching at bTsan thang is also mentioned in the biography of 'Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal; see *Ibid.*: 37, n. 4.

⁵⁸⁰ The *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 273.2–5) contains the following list of teachings that bKra shis rnam rgyal received from Ngor chen: *rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po'i zhabz pad nye bar bsten nas/ bde dgyes 'jigs gsang/ dus 'khor/ 'khor lo sdom chen la sogs pa dbang bskur ba mang po dang/ gur zhal gyi skor la sogs pa las rab 'byam [= 'byams] bsrub pa'i thabs mang po dang/ rje nyid kyi bka' 'bum yongs su rdzogs pa ste/ dpal ldan sa skya pa'i chos lugs bzhugs so 'tshal dang/ ras chung sryan rgyud kyi skor dbang lung man ngag dang bcas pa yongs su tshang ba dang/ brgyud pa gzhan las byung ba'i gdams pa'ang mang du gsan/* bKra shis rnam rgyal might have also paid a visit to Ngor; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (pp. 288.6–289.1): *e waṃ du rnal 'byor yan lag drug pa'i ting nge 'dzin la bzhugs dus/ ston gzugs thams cad ā li kāli'i gzugs 'ba' zhiḡ tu gzigs pa dang/* Another master who attended Ngor chen's teachings was Brag nag pa Rin chen rgyal mtshan; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 24b1–3): *dgun chos grol rjes gsang phu brag nag tu brag nag pa rin chen rgyal mtshan par grags pa/ brag nag pa chos rje ngag gi dbang phyug pa'i phyag tshar ngor chen kun dga' bzang po ba dbus gong mas gdan drangs dus/ thog mar phyag len kyi dpang por byon pa la physis dad pa thob nas yo ga'i dbang mang du nos/ lam 'bras kyang gsan/*

⁵⁸¹ Could this set of the *Vajrāvali* be the one that had been commissioned by rDzong ji rGyal mtshan bzang po of the Phag mo gru pa court in honour of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan? On this set, see Part Three, n. 714.

⁵⁸² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 545.2–4). On the history of the 'jigs byed drug bcu pa'i gtor blzog at Ngor, see the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 161.1–163.5). It seems that this description served as the model for the account given by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs in his Ngor chen biography.

⁵⁸³ The *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 545.2) presents bKra shis rnam rgyal as the *chos sgo ba* of gDan sa mthil and *gdan sa pa* of both rTse thang and gSang phu Brag nag. On his connection with gDan sa mthil, see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (pp. 313.6–317.1). On the office of the *chos sgo ba*, see VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 16–17, n. 53. According to his biography, bKra shis rnam rgyal bestowed teachings on the monastic community of rTse thang from the red throne of the sPu gu do grwa tshang many times; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 309.5–6). He also provided the basic supporting conditions (*bdag rkyen*) for that *grwa tshang*, which is also known as sPu gu do pa'i rgya mtsho; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 325.4–5). He had studied at the mThong smon grwa tshang of the Gling stod section of gSang phu, where he was appointed as 'chad nyan pa in 1415; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (pp. 307.2–3 and 324.3–6). In 1419, he appointed bKa' bzhi pa 'dzin pa dGe' dun grub pa (1391–1475) as 'chad nyan slob chung of gSang phu and left for Tsa ri to engage in

A later connection between Ngor chen and bKra shis rnam rgyal is attested in the biography of Khrims khang Lo tsā ba bSod nams rgya mtsho (1424–1482). According to that work, bKra shis rnam rgyal had commissioned as an “inner sacred object” (*nang rten*) for his deceased master Rong ston a huge statue of Buddha Śākyamuni at 'U shang rdo, the temple built by Khri Ral pa can on the bank of the sKyid chu south-west of lHa sa. That project was executed by the famous master artist Sle'u chung ba. But owing to sectarian disputes, the artisan broke off his work, which in turn prompted bKra shis rnam rgyal to place a curse (*mthu skad*) on him. After this incident, the casting of the statue had come to a halt and had not yet been started when bSod nams rgya mtsho came to visit his teacher bKra shis rnam rgyal about one year later, in 1453.⁵⁸⁴ bSod nams rgya mtsho frankly voiced how unhelpful his master's behaviour was for the completion of the statue and also how inappropriate for a scholar in his position. Realising his mistake, bKra shis rnam rgyal asked bSod nams rgya mtsho for help. His disciple then appealed to the conscience of the master sculptor, who agreed to continue the project only on the condition that bSod nams rgya mtsho personally supervised it. Thus bSod nams rgya mtsho assumed responsibility and spent the winter at 'U shang rdo. This incident had also reached the ears of Ngor chen, who is said to have ridiculed bKra shis rnam rgyal, saying: “Invoking the faith of everyone, Bla ma Dwags po collected wealth. Without erecting the receptacle, [he] is constantly drinking tea, day and night.”⁵⁸⁵ Worried by this criticism of his former teacher, bSod nams rgya mtsho came again to the aid of bKra shis rnam rgyal. He guided him into sending a letter to Ngor chen that, along with a eulogy, recorded the donations, expenses, and measurements of the statue. When bKra shis rnam rgyal further requested Ngor chen to come and perform the statue's consecration, Ngor chen's criticism was reportedly silenced. Ngor chen is said to have known that this skilful move was the work of bSod nams rgya mtsho and not of bKra shis rnam rgyal.⁵⁸⁶

meditation; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 309.4–5). Later on, he also taught at gSang phu many times; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 309.4–5). On a first structure of gSang phu that had been built at Brag nag, see VAN DER KUIJP 1987b: 107. For biographical sketches of bKra shis rnam rgyal and dGe ba rgyal mtshan, see JACKSON 1989b: 9–10 and 10–11, respectively. See also JACKSON (under preparation). On the history of Nā lendra, see JACKSON 1989b and JACKSON (under preparation). Prior to his appointment as abbot of Nā lendra in 1442, bKra shis rnam rgyal had served as religious preceptor of the Phag mo gru pa ruler Grags pa 'byung gnas, who in turn would later on patronise his activities during his tenure at Nā lendra; see JACKSON 1989b: 9–10 and JACKSON (under preparation). See also EHRHARD 2004b: 258. bKra shis rnam rgyal himself had also received teaching from Grags pa 'byung gnas; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 275.1–2).

⁵⁸⁴ One year earlier, in 1452, bSod nams rgya mtsho met bKra shis rnam rgyal at Nā lendra and was asked to accompany his teacher to the northern regions to gather donations for commissioning that statue. See the *bSod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (fol. 21b3–4) and EHRHARD 2002: 45.

⁵⁸⁵ *bSod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (fol. 24b1): *bla ma dags [= dwags] pos mi thams cad la dad pa bskul te nor bsdus/rten mi bzhegs par/ nyin mtshan med par ja 'thung gi yod 'dug ces (...)*.

⁵⁸⁶ See the *bSod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (fol. 24a1–b4) and also EHRHARD 2002: 47. A more detailed account of the casting of that statue is found in the biography of bKra shis rnam rgyal; see the *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (pp. 339.1–341.5). According to that account, bKra shis rnam rgyal went in the eighth month of 1453 to 'U shang rdo, which he had chosen as the site for his project due to the easy availability of such materials as charcoal (*sol ba*). He hired twenty-five artists along with their helpers: seventeen gold sculptors (*gser sku ba*)—headed by the two master sculptor brothers Rog byed pa Sle'u chung nas sPrul sku bSod rgyal and bKras tshul—four blacksmiths (*mgar ba*), two painters (*lha bris pa*), and two coppersmiths (*zangs mkhar ba*). When they had finished the foundry work, the statue was dismantled and transported on litters to Nā lendra, where it was completed by the eleventh month of 1454. bKra shis rnam rgyal's biography also makes mention of the delay in completing the statue. However, according to that account, though the delay was due to other reasons, it was utilised to spread rumours that the artists, who were in favour of the dGe ldan tradition, did not get along with bKra shis rnam rgyal and his students. Interestingly, nothing at all is said about Ngor chen's alleged mockery. On Sle'u chung ba, his works, and his family's workshop, see the *Ri mo'i slob deb* (pp. 8.18–9.6), LO BUE

After seven months at the court of sNe'u gdong, Ngor chen embarked in the second half of 1441 or the first half of 1442 on his return journey to Ngor and stopped on the way at such important centres of political power as Gong dkar and Rin spungs, where he is said to have stayed for about four months. However, Ngor chen's biographies make no mention of his activities at these places or the people he met. This is unfortunate, given Ngor chen's relation with the rising noble house of Rin spungs, which, as will be shown below, was one of his important patrons.

1991: 22, JACKSON 1996: 96, 101, n. 237 and 205, SHEN 2002: 111, 233, n. 381, 239, n. 400, SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: 178–179, n. 426, and VON SCHROEDER 2001: 681, 685–686, 695, 700–702, 712–714, 972, 996–997, and 1245.

Chapter Eight

Monastic Foundations

Ngor chen's most important and best known monastic foundation was surely his personal seat at Ngor E waṃ chos ldan. Nevertheless, throughout his lifetime, he established numerous other monastic institutions in gTsang and mNga' ris (including Glo bo) which are less well known. In this section, I will briefly survey these other foundations. Some of them, such as Ngor chen's foundations in Glo bo that were already discussed in previous chapters, will not be dwelled upon again.

In his *Chos 'khor rnam gzhaq*, Shākya mchog ldan gives a short overview of Ngor chen's monastic foundations when discussing the spread of the Pramāṇa tradition of g.Yag ston Sangs rgyas dpal. Along with Ngor, Shākya mchog ldan mentions five other monasteries that were established by Ngor chen and where g.Yag ston's teaching tradition was maintained. According to him, Ngor chen personally founded in Glo bo the monastery of Thub bstan rnam rgyal (i.e., the restored rNam rgyal Chos sde), rGyal byed tshal in Pu hrangs, and Chos 'khor Nor bu gling in Chu 'dus. Under his instructions, the monasteries of brGya gling thang in Gu ge and dGa' ldan rtse mo in rTing khebs were also founded.⁵⁸⁷

Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho in his Buddhist chronology estimates the size of Ngor chen's foundations in those places, though not designating the monasteries by name. According to him, one foundation in Glo bo was home to one thousand monks, one in Chu 'dus to five hundred, one in sTeng khebs to two hundred, and one in Gu ge to one hundred.⁵⁸⁸

In his biography of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs reports on Ngor chen's foundations in gTing khebs (also spelled rTing/sTengs khebs or gTing skyes), an area to the south of Sa skya in the larger region of 'Bring mtshams.⁵⁸⁹ He states that Ngor chen established two monasteries in gTing khebs. One of them was Brag dkar dgon, which housed a monastic community of about two hundred monks and where also a Vinaya seminary was established. This seminary was headed by A co Byang chub sems dpa', though more research will be needed to determine whether this A co was the same

⁵⁸⁷ See the *Chos 'khor rnam gzhaq* (pp. 470.6–471.1): *dang pos rang lo zhe brgyad pa sa mo bya la e waṃ chos ldan gyi dgon pa btab/ mdo sngags gnyis ka dang khyad par rnam 'grel g.yag tik dang rigs gter 'chad pa'i grwa khang dang chos gzhi btsugs/ de nas mched pa la glo bo thub bstan rnam rgyal dang/ pu rangs chos sde rgyal byed tshal/ chu 'dus chos sde chos 'khor nor bu gling rnam sku dngos kyis btsugs/ gu ge brgya gling thang dang/ rting khebs kyi chos 'khor dga' ldan rtse mo yang rje nyid kyi zhal ltas khyab nas btsugs pa'o/*. On this passage, see also JACKSON 1987: vol. 1, 135–136. Note that Jackson mistakenly refers to rGyal byed tshal as dGa' byed tshal.

⁵⁸⁸ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 215.16–20): *dge 'dun gyi sde gsar btsugs kyang/ glo bor dge 'dun stong phrag 'du ba'i chos sde/ chu 'dus su lnga brgya 'du ba/ steng khebs su nyis brgya 'du ba/ gu ger brgya phrag sogs dang/ e waṃ chos ldan du gsung ngag pa stong phrag 'du ba sogs su bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa dar rgyas mdzad/*. This passage was copied by A mes zhabs; see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (pp. 229.6–230.1). On the latter passage, see also VITALI 1996: 392, n. 635.

⁵⁸⁹ VITALI 2004: 18, map ('Bring mtshams) locates the region of 'Bring mtshams to the south-east of Sa skya, north of Sikkim, and east of Bhutan. Sa skya related sources associate the area of gTing skyes (or gTing khebs) with the larger region of 'Bring mtshams; see, for instance, the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.6): *'bring mtshams su ting [= gting] skyes brag dkar dgon par byang sems bsod nams rin chen pa dang/*; and *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 124.3–4): *'bring mtshams phyogs su gting skyes pa chen po brag dkar ba sogs du ma (...)*. On gTing skyes county and its location, see GYURME DORJE 2009: 357–358 and Map 2 (C1, Tingkye). See also MAP 1 (gTing skyes) and MAP 2 (2887, D, Tingkye County and 2888, C, Tingkye County). In addition, see also EVERDING and DZONGPHUGPA 2006: Kartographische Skizze des Fürstentums La stod lHo (gTiñ skyes).

person as Ngor chen's disciple Brag dkar Sems dpa' chen po bSod nams rin chen.⁵⁹⁰ Later on, Brag dkar dgon was converted (into a dGe lugs monastery?) and renamed bKra shis chos 'phel.⁵⁹¹

As can be inferred from the aforementioned account by Shākya mchog ldan, the second monastery founded in gTing khebs was dGa' ldan rtse mo.⁵⁹² Its foundation is recounted in the genealogy of a branch of the ruling house of rGyal rtse. An early noble of this house settled in the region of 'Bring mtshams, and his descendants maintained relations with Ngor chen and his abbatial successors at Ngor for at least three generations. Their family line originated with 'Phags pa Dar po (b. 1326), alias Ma sang sTag Dar po, who was the younger brother of the rGyal rtse nobles Nang chen 'Phags pa dPal bzang po (1318–1370), the founder of rGyal rtse, and 'Phags pa dPal ldan rin chen (1320–1376).⁵⁹³ After the passing of sTag Dar po, his former seat at rGyal grong was taken over by his eldest brother. Thus his son A chen bZang po dpal, who was a follower of both Bon and Buddhism, shifted temporarily to mDo chen, before becoming permanently established in 'Bring mtshams. At first, he founded at dKar la khyung mgo the eponymous palace (*pho brag*), which was similar in form to the fort of rGyal mkhar rtse. Thereafter, he built a second palace (*pho brag*) at Co(g?) ro 'Bring mtshams and established a temple (*gtsug lag khang*) at Klu 'bur lchang dkar in gTing skyes.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁰ On Brag dkar Sems dpa' chen po bSod nams rin chen, see Part Four, 10.

⁵⁹¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 541.2–5). A letter addressed to a certain bSam grub rgyal mtshan was written by Ngor chen at Brag dkar dgon pa; see CATALOGUE (no. 162). For the location of a monastery by the name of bKra shis chos 'phel on the northern shore of gTing skyes mtsho in gTing skyes county, see MAP 2 (2888, C, Tashichapel). Cf. the *Baidūrya ser po* (p. 271, no. 110), which also records for gTing skyes a monastery by the name of Kra shis chos 'phel, but specifies that it was originally a bKa' brgyud establishment founded by 'Grig (= 'Bring) mtshams pa Sangs rgyas and later on converted to a dGe lugs institution by Bla ma lHa pa, who renamed it bKra shis chos 'phel.

⁵⁹² Along with dGa' ldan rtse mo and Brag dkar, a third monastery in gTing skyes mentioned in the sources was gSer gling; see, for instance, Kun dga' grol mchog's *rNam thar yang rgyan nor bu'i phra bkod* (p. 592.1).

⁵⁹³ See the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 56.6–57.1). According to this passage, those three brothers were known as the Three Noble Brothers (*'phags pa spun sum*) and later on also as the Three Buddha Brothers (*sangs rgyas spun gsum*). In a later reference, the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (p. 72.6) refers to 'Phags pa Dar po as Ma sang sTag Dar po. Cf. the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (p. 176.8–11), where his name is given as Ma zangs Dar po and it is related that only his two elder brothers obtained the name element 'Phags pa. Cf. also the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 376.10), where his name is given as Ma sangs Dar po. In the genealogy found in the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (p. 5.18–19), his name is given as Drung sTag Dang [= Dar] po and his year of birth is given as 1326 (*me pho stag*). Except for this mention, however, the history of 'Phags pa Dar po's life and that of his descendants is missing from the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar*. A very short genealogy of that rGyal rtse branch can be found in the *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (p. 385.1–3). On the house of rGyal rtse, see also Tucci 1999: 662 and Table X – Gyantse.

⁵⁹⁴ See the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 62.6–66.1). No name is given for the second palace at Co(g?) ro 'Bring mtshams, but later in the work it is referred to as mkhar chen; see the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (p. 66.2–6). A mkhar chen or mkhar chen rtse is also mentioned in the *Kun dga' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 224.2, 248.3, and 254.3–4) and *rNam thar spel rgyan nor bu'i do shal* (p. 699.4). The foundation account of the second palace along with the *gtsug lag khang* includes a detailed description of the natural condition of the site, suggesting that the name gTing skyes originates from this foundation; see the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 64.5–66.1): *yang de nas phebs pas ri dmar sang ba gcig 'dug pa de byon nas gzigs pas lung pa kun gzigs pas ming yang byar gsal du brtags| de nas gam par phev rdzong ri dang sa dpyad la gzigs tog [= rtog] mdzad pas| sngon chad so khang zhig 'dug pa la bzhugs khang khor pa gtsug dang| byams pa bzhugs sa bzhugs lag khang khor pa gcig bzhugs pa'i skabs| 'bring 'tshams mthil la pho brag gi sa dpyad du phyin pas| dkar la khyung mgo zhes par pho brag brgya [= rgyal] mkhar rtse'i dbyibs 'dra ba gcig dang| co [= cog?] ro 'bring 'tshams gung gi char rgyab ri mtho la rgyud bzang ba g.yas ri g.yon ri gnyis kyi ri lag pa rkyang nas spang du bu 'tsho ba lta bu| sa'i mthil phebs pas 'byung bzhi'i bcud thams cad nang du 'bab pa <lta lta> [= lta] bu'i lto ba gting du zug pa lta bu'i dbus na sra zhing 'thas pa'i brag gting nas skyes pa 'dra ba 'bur du dod pa 'dug pa la| pho brag gi gzhi gcig bting| pho brag gnyis 'gram snyam [= myam] du gtings pa'i thog mar pho lha bzhugs pa'i rten spe'u dmar po re btab nas| mgo yul stod gsum gyi bzo rigs las mi dang bcas pa bkug nas pho brag gi bkod pa yang dkar la khyung mgo*

After the death of A chen bZang po dpal, his son bDag po rGyal mtshan dpal established the family's first contact with Ngor chen when visiting Sa skya to observe a religious service on behalf of his late father. Thereupon, he invited Ngor chen to a place called dGe grong gar phu, where with his material support Ngor chen apparently stayed in retreat. Once when rGyal mtshan dpal came to visit, Ngor chen was performing a *gtor sgrub* ritual, but since he had no silver vessel (*dnagul skyems*), he used a substitute made out of dough and butter. As rGyal mtshan dpal considered that substitute to be unsuitable for a ritual implement (*spyang gzigs*), he presented Ngor chen with a silver vessel. This offering prompted Ngor chen in turn to prophesy that his patron would obtain much silver in the future and commission a statue of a *yi dam* deity. Later on, in line with Ngor chen's prediction, rGyal mtshan dpal did indeed obtain much silver and thus commissioned a statue of Raktayamāri. While this statue was crafted, Ngor chen dreamed of a nearly full moon, which he interpreted as a sign that rGyal mtshan dpal would possibly experience some ups and downs, but otherwise enjoy a good life. For the benefit of his patron, Ngor chen also composed texts on Raktayamāri and instructed him that they should be utilised by his sons (*zhal ngo*) as their *pha chos* (ancestral teaching).⁵⁹⁵ These texts can be identified as two works on Raktayamāri that are contained in Ngor chen's collected works. In their colophons, rGyal mtshan dpal is mentioned as the great patron (*sbyin bdag chen po*) who requested the composition of both texts.⁵⁹⁶ Along with his wife and son (or sons), rGyal mtshan dpal was also the recipient of a short letter that Ngor chen wrote on basic Buddhist advice, the *dPon po rgyal mtshan dpal yum sras bcas la gdams pa*.⁵⁹⁷ Though Ngor chen does not provide any dates for all those compositions, the fact that he authored them at Sa skya suggests that his connection with the family of rGyal mtshan dpal was established prior to his move to Ngor in 1429.

Apparently, rGyal mtshan dpal wanted to distance himself from the Bon practices of his father and get rid of all related religious items. He thus thought to burn the *mDo kham chen*, the Bon version of the extensive *Prajñāpāramitā* (i.e., the *Yum rgyas pa*), but Ngor chen advised him to offer the scriptures instead to a Bon po. rGyal mtshan dpal, however, melted down a statue of sNang gShen rab (i.e., gShen rab mi bo?) and reused the metal for making his late father's "inner sacred object" (*nang rten*), a statue of Buddha Śākyamuni. He also commissioned two special copies of the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) of the *bKa' gyur* and had all of them consecrated by Ngor chen.⁵⁹⁸

The son of rGyal mtshan dpal, Ma sang (or Chos rgyal) bSod nams rgyal mtshan, established both the Khyung rtse rdzong and the Khyung rtse Chos sde. As the main image of the new monastery, he installed a statue of Buddha Śākyamuni from rGyang

rnam par rgyal ba'i khang bzang lta bu'i gsum gyi bar du yan lag brgyad ldan lta bu'i sa'i rdzang dang bcas pa btab pa dangl gting skyes su 'byor ldan klu'i pho brang lta bur klu 'bur lchang dkar gzer [= zer?] sgro 'dra ba la dbus kyi lte bar gtsug lag khang dang bcas bkod pa'i skabs. More research is needed to determine whether the second palace might be the gTing skyes rdzong mentioned in the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad (p. 18.7–12): *de nas lho nub kyi phyogs su skying dkar la zer ba'i la chen po yod pa de brgal ba nal gting skyes zer ba'i sa cha yod pa der mtsho zhig gi dbus su chags pa'i dgon gnas zhig dangl gting skyes rdzong du grags pa'i btsan rdzong yod pa de nas (...)*.

⁵⁹⁵ See the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 66.6–67.6). The fact that the Tibetan term *zhal ngo* can also refer to sons of aristocratic families was already noted by JÄSCHKE 1881: 473 (s.v. *zhal ngo*): "noble sons" or "princes."

⁵⁹⁶ On these two works, see CATALOGUE (nos. 115 and 117).

⁵⁹⁷ On this letter, see CATALOGUE (no. 173). According to the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (p. 68.2–4), rGyal mtshan dpal married three wives: dPon mo lHa mo bzang nga from lHa sa, an unnamed dPon mo of bKras rtse, and dPon mo lHa ba from 'Brong rtse. With his first wife he had a son, Ma sang bSod nams rgyal mtshan, with his second wife he had another son, bDag chen sKu blo ba, and with his third wife he had Chos rgyal bKra shis dpal, who was also known as sBa ku la, and also two daughters.

⁵⁹⁸ See the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 67.6–68.2).

sKu 'bum and appointed gNyag dbon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan as its first abbot.⁵⁹⁹ When his younger half-brother, Chos rgyal bKra shis dpal (alias sDe pa sBa ku la), passed away, bSod nams rgyal mtshan commissioned in the assembly hall ('du khang) a clay statue of Buddha Śākyamuni surrounded by the sixteen *sthaviras* as his "inner sacred object" (*nang rten*) and sent a messenger to Ngor to request Ngor chen to perform its consecration. Ngor chen, however, disapproved of the clay statue and instead offered eighty *khal* of copper along with gold to have a new image made. This statue was casted by sPrul sku rTag (or sTag) rtse pa and a conch horn (*chos dung*) of Śākyaśrī was affixed in the area of its heart. The statue was then consecrated by mKhas grub gZhon nu seng ge.⁶⁰⁰

Later on, when the son of bSod nams rgyal mtshan, Chos rgyal bSod nams lha mo, was eleven years old, Ngor chen was once again invited and revealed that the young boy would be of great service for the Buddha's teachings by establishing a monastic philosophic school (*mtshan nyid kyi grwa tshang*). At age fourteen, bSod nams lha mo experienced a vision of Padmasambhava and in line with the prophecy (of both Ngor chen and Padmasambhava?), he began at age eighteen, in the ox year (i.e., in 1457?), to establish that *grwa tshang*. The first monks were ordained by Ngor chen's student Brag dkar Sems dpa' chen po bSod nams rin chen and as both *slob dpon* and 'chad nyan functioned a certain dKon mchog rgyal mtshan.⁶⁰¹ Some years later in 1466, bSod nams lha mo laid the foundation for dGa' ldan rtse mo. The monastery's chief image, a statue of Buddha Śākyamuni, was crafted by Newari artisans and consecrated by Kun dga' dbang phyug, Ngor chen's nephew and fourth abbot of Ngor.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ See the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 68.2–70.5). This passage includes an episode attesting to an internal conflict between the branches of the house of rGyal rtse. According to that, the rGyal rtse ruler Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags demanded from bSod nams rgyal mtshan a "monk tax" (*grwa khral*) from gTing skyes for his new monastic foundation of dPal 'khor Chos sde. However, bSod nam rgyal mtshan rejected this demand, referring to his own plan in establishing a monastery. This dispute then triggered an armed conflict between the family members. The *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (p. 69.2–4) provides a dating for this conflict that appears to be anachronistic, however. The genealogy records the foundation of Khyung rtse rdzong for the year 1442 (*chu pho khyi*) and after recounting an event for the following year, continues with the statement that "at that time" (*de skabs*) Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags founded dPal 'khor Chos sde and demanded the monk tax. The work on dPal 'khor Chos sde was, however, already begun in 1418. Cf. the *dPyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (p. 176.21–22), where the foundation of Khyung rtse rdzong is ascribed to Nang chen 'Phags pa dPal bzang po (1318–1370). For the location of Khyung rtse township in gTing skyes county, see MAP 2 (2888, C, Khyungtse).

⁶⁰⁰ See the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 70.5–71.3). The casting of the statue is also mentioned by bsTan pa rab brtan (b. 1941) in his *Ri mo'i slob deb* (p. 9.9–11), where he states, however, that it was sponsored by rGyal mtshan dpal and not by his son bSod nams rgyal mtshan. sPrul sku rTag rtse pa also worked in rGyal rtse under the patronage of Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags and at dGa' ldan Monastery; see the *Ri mo'i slob deb* (p. 9.11–15). mKhas grub gZhon nu seng ge also performed the ground ritual (*sa chog*) prior to the foundation of the Khyung rtse rdzong; see the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (p. 69.2). More research is needed to establish whether mKhas grub gZhon nu seng ge might have been Ngor chen's half-brother gZhon nu seng ge. On the latter, see Part Three, 3.

⁶⁰¹ dKon mchog rgyal mtshan could probably be identified as the same person who was honoured by Shākya mchog ldan with a eulogy, the *rTing khebs chos sde'i slob dpon dkon mchog rgyal mtshan la bstod pa*; see the *Shāk mchog gi gsung 'bum* (vol. 16, pp. 275.4–276.2) and CAUMANN'S 2012: 362, no. 60.27.

⁶⁰² See the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 71.3–72.5). Later on, during the time of Chos rgyal Kun dga' 'chi med dbang po'i sde (b. 1505), the grandson of bSod nams lha mo, dGa' ldan rtse mo Monastery adhered to the doctrinal system of Shākya mchog ldan; see the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (p. 77.2). This link with Shākya mchog ldan was established one generation earlier by the sons of bSod nams lha mo, known as the Three Dharma Lord Brothers from gTing skyes (*gting skyes chos rje sku mched rnam gsum*). They were students of both Don yod dpal and Shākya mchog ldan and had been instrumental in commissioning an edition of the latter's collected works shortly after his passing away in 1507; see CAUMANN'S 2012: 31, n. 80, 201–203, 238, [326]–327, and 415, and CAUMANN'S 2015: 30, n. 34, 233–235, 278, 336, 372, and [379]–384. CAUMANN'S 2012: 202 and CAUMANN'S 2015: 233–234 identify the Three Dharma Lord Brothers as Kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, who was appointed abbot of gSer mdog can after Shākya mchog ldan's death, sDe bdun Rab 'byams pa dBang phyug rgyal mtshan, and

In general, the Tibetan sources do not provide much information about Ngor chen's visits to gTing khebs, and matters are further complicated by the fact that the name gTing khebs can also refer to an area to the south of Sa skya, a rDzong with its settlement, and a monastery. As mentioned above, Ngor chen's biographies say that he taught at certain times at gTing khebs prior to his founding of Ngor in 1429.⁶⁰³ From the context of these passages, it is obvious that the gTing khebs in question refers to a particular monastery and not to the region. One might identify this monastery with Brag dkar dgon, which would then be the earliest of Ngor chen's monastic foundations. This is pure speculation, however. Given the proximity of Sa skya to the region of gTing khebs, we can surely assume that other Sa skya establishments had already been founded there prior to Ngor chen's visits.⁶⁰⁴ Whatever the case, it is surely possible that Ngor chen consecrated the commissions of bDag po rGyal mtshan dpal during one of his visits to that region. His meeting with the future ruler bSod nams lha mo is not recorded in his biographies, but considering the chronology presented in the genealogy of the house of rGyal rtse, it should have taken place in the 1440s or 1450s. As this genealogy makes no mention of Brag dkar dgon, it seems that this monastery was not linked with the 'Bring mtshams branch of the house of rGyal rtse.

As with gTing khebs, the Tibetan sources do not contain much information about Ngor chen's activities in Chu 'dus, except for specifying that he taught there.⁶⁰⁵ Also, Chu 'dus refers both to an area to the south-west of Sa skya and east of Shel dkar and to a

rje Kun dga' bkra shis. At least two of them, the first and third, can be recognised among the eleven children (eight boys and three girls) that bSod nams lha mo fathered with his wife Byang sems U rgyan dge ma from lHa ri rtse. The *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (pp. 73.4–75.6) lists his male offspring: (1) Byang sems Kun dga' mchog ldan, (2) rje chen mo Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, (3) rGyal tshab bSod nams rgyal mtshan, (4) dGon gSer gling pa 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bkra shis, (5) 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' legs grub, (6) Ma sang sPrin po ral can, (7) sDe pa Kun dga' dpal ba, (8) and sDe pa 'Brug pa alias rTogs ldan. My reading suggests that instead of dBang phyug rgyal mtshan one should identify rGyal tshab bSod nams rgyal mtshan as the third brother in question. bSod nams rgyal mtshan appears to have been Shākya mchog ldan's disciple rje Brag dkar ba bSod nams rgyal mtshan who, like Ngor chen's disciple Brag dkar Sems dpa' chen po bSod nams rin chen, was related to Brag dkar Monastery. On him, see also CAUMANN'S 2012: 239 and 254 and CAUMANN'S 2015: 279, 287, 304–305, and 315. My identification is further supported by the fact that Shākya mchog ldan composed eulogies of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, bSod nams rgyal mtshan, and Kun dga' bkra shis; see the *Shāk mchog gi gsung 'bum* (vol. 16, pp. 276.2–277.2, 277.2–7, and 278.1–6) and CAUMANN'S 2012: 362, no. 60.28–30, respectively. At Ngor, a prominent master from gTing khebs was rje Kun dga' mchog ldan (alias Bya btang ba), who was a teacher of lHa mchog seng ge, the ninth abbot of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 18.1–5) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 140.6–141.3, 142.6–143.2, 148.6–149.1, 149.4–5, and 151.3). He might be the same person as the above-mentioned (1) Byang sems Kun dga' mchog ldan. Later, Ngor abbots also visited 'Bring mtshams. For instance, Sangs rgyas seng ge, the eleventh abbot, was invited to gCan (or gCen) lung rDzong dkar by one branch of the rGyal rtse family; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 24.1–2): *yang rgyal rtse chos rgyal yum sras gyis gced [= gcan or gcen] lung rdzong dkar du spyan drangs 'bring mtshams su 'gro don chen po 'byungl*. dKon mchog dpal ldan, the twelfth abbot, was also invited to gCen lung rDzong dkar by his patron, rje dbon Kun dga' bzang po; see the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 429.3–5) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 26.3–4).

⁶⁰³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 515.4, 517.1–4, and 526.6). It is also important to recall that Ngor chen had visited gTing khebs from 1405 to 1406 when accompanying his master Shar chen to Bar 'brog and also visited Zar Byang phug; see the *Shar chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 251.1–256.16). At the latter site, Ngor chen is also said to have performed a butter lamp offering to the Jo bo of Byang phug; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 551.1).

⁶⁰⁴ For the fourteenth century, the *Shar kha pa'i gdung rabs* (p. 66.2) refers to thirteen monasteries in 'Bring mtshams from which Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302–1364) forcefully removed *shing shu* (timber?). The Sa skya Lam 'bras master Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa (1316–1358) was active at different monasteries in 'Bring mtshams; see the *Ri khrod pa'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 376.2–4 and 381.5–6). On the erstwhile Sa skya monastery of mKha' spyod and Ngor chen's teaching at Ri bo sgang, which are also both located in 'Bring mtshams, see Part Four, n. 34.

⁶⁰⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 517.1–4).

monastery located there.⁶⁰⁶ According to his biography, Ngor chen founded in Chu 'dus a great monastery (*chos sde chen po*), which was home to about five hundred monks, and he gave instructions there on how to make copies of both *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*, a large golden statue of Buddha Śākyamuni, and a temple (*lha khang*). Later he consecrated all of them. To purify the obscurations of his patron, the lord of Chu 'dus, Drung chen sGrol ma (alias Chu 'dus sDe pa sGrol smyon), he established the *Dri med 'bum ther cho ga* and also instituted regular ritual practices for that monastery.⁶⁰⁷ Based on the aforementioned account of Shākya mchog ldan, we can identify that monastery as Chos 'khor Nor bu gling.⁶⁰⁸ It remains, however, unclear when it was founded and whether Chu 'dus, the site where Ngor chen is said to have taught already prior to 1429, refers to Chos 'khor Nor bu gling or some other Sa skya institution in that region.

The Tibetan sources that are discussed in this and the previous chapters allow us to recognise a total of seven monasteries that were directly established by Ngor chen and two that were established indirectly, following his instructions at a distance. Arranged geographically, these are:

gTsang:

- (1) Ngor E vaṃ chos ldan (1429)
- (2) Brag dkar in gTing khebs
- (3) following on Ngor chen's instructions: dGa' ldan rtse mo in gTing khebs (1466)
- (4) Chos 'khor Nor bu gling in Chu 'dus

⁶⁰⁶ Along with Gram mtsho, Nyi shar, mTsho sgo, and mKhar rta, the area of Chu 'dus formed the eastern extension of the principality of La stod lHo; see EVERDING and DZONGPHUGPA 2006: 49 and map, Kartographische Skizze des Fürstentums Lha stod lHo. According to *Ibid.*: 40, the region of Chu 'dus "wurde von dem Śel dkar-Fürsten sGrol ma skyabs, der in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts geherrscht zu haben scheint, seinem älteren Sohn dKon mchog skyabs vermutlich als Lehen übereignet. Fortan lag diese Region unter der Bezeichnung Chu 'dus stoṅ skor in den Händen seiner Nachkommenschaft, bis sie – vermutlich im Zuge der Neuordnung des Großraums unter dem 5. Dalai Lama – zu einem Teil des Territoriums Sa skya's wurde."

⁶⁰⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 541.5–6 and 535.5). Drung chen sGrol ma (alias Chu 'dus sDe pa sGrol smyon) was apparently the same person as the Shel dkar ruler sGrol ma skyabs mentioned in the previous note. On sGrol ma skyabs, see EVERDING and DZONGPHUGPA 2006: 18–19, 40, 105, 107–111, and Stammtafel des Hauses Śes phrug. According to the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 41.3–4) and *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 722.3–4), the Chu 'dus sDe pa originated from the family of Sa skya dPon chen 'Od zer seng ge. On the latter, see the *rGya bod yig tshang* (p. 194.4–5), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 3a* (fol. 64a1–2), and PETECH 1990: 78, 84, and 92–93. As a religious patron, Mi dbang Chu 'dus Drung chen sGrol ma sponsored the carving onto woodblocks of the collected work of Thogs med bzang po (1295–1369) in 1446; see the *rGyal sras rin po che'i bka' 'bum thor bu* (p. 433.2–4). I would like to thank Gloria (I-ling) Chien for drawing my attention to this printing project. On the history of Chu 'dus Monastery, EVERDING and DZONGPHUGPA 2006: 40 remark: "Das Kloster Chu 'dus dgon pa, das damals noch etwa 70–80 Mönche beherbergte, und ein Zweig von Nor E vaṃ chos ldan war, bildete der mündlichen Tradition zufolge, wie auch die umfangreichen Ruinen und die große Statue eines *Thub pa gSuñ byon ma* aus Kräuter-Lehm nahelegen, ein ehemals bedeutendes Kloster der Sa skya pa-Schule." One of Ngor chen's disciples from Chu 'dus was Chos rje mKhas btsun pa; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 533.6). Listed under his full name Chu 'dus mKhas btsun Yon tan rgya mtsho, he is also mentioned as a disciple of 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, the third abbot of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 9.2). On Yon tan rgya mtsho, see also the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 29a6–b1), CAUMANN'S 2012: 101–102 and 121–122, n. 75, and CAUMANN'S 2015: 115 and 148, n. 85. At Ngor itself, the Chu 'dus khang tshan was established, which housed monks from Sa skya and environs; see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 51.14–15) and JACKSON 1989: 49–50, n. 2.

⁶⁰⁸ Later on, for instance, dKon mchog 'phel, the seventh abbot of Ngor, gave teachings at Nor bu gling; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 17.4) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 131.5). dKon mchog dPal ldan, the twelfth abbot, gave teachings at another monastery in Chu 'dus called dPal ldan rtse; see the *dKon mchog dPal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 429.6–430.2 and 440.1–3). Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis, the fourteenth abbot, was also invited to dPal ldan rtse by a further unnamed Chu 'dus sDe pa; see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (p. 684.5).

Glo bo:

- (5) refounding the sTeng chen 'Dul grwa (1427–1428); later known as Thub bstan bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling
- (6) Brag dkar Theg chen dar rgyas gling (1427–1428)
- (7) restoration of the old rNam rgyal Chos sde leading to the foundation of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling (1436–1437)

Pu hrangs:

- (8) rGyal byed tshal (1436–1437)⁶⁰⁹

Gu ge:

- (9) following Ngor chen's instructions: brGya (or rGya) gling thang⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁹ VITALI 1996: 392, n. 635 speculates whether rGyal byed tshal—which he, probably based on JACKSON 1987: vol. 1, 135–136, mistakenly refers to as dGa' byed tshal—might have been located at bZhi sde. On another Ngor pa monastery at bZhi sde, the Zhi sde lha sde dgon, see Part Four, n. 359. Among the students of 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, the third abbot of Ngor, Shes rab 'bum is recorded as an early abbot of rGyal byed tshal (*chos 'khor rgyal byed tshal gyi mkhan po*); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 9.3–4). Other masters connected with that monastery were sNar thang bKa' bzhi pa Grags pa shes rab tshul khriims and Sems dpa' chen po Legs pa'i shes rab, who both functioned as religious leaders (*chos dpon*), that is, abbots; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 14a2 and 28a4), respectively.

⁶¹⁰ According to Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po (lHa sa, 14 October 2011), brGya (or rGya) gling thang is the same monastery as Phyi (or Phi) dbang dgon. On its history, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (pp. 225–229). On its foundation and relocation, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (p. 226.19–23). For the location of Phyi dbang dgon in Dung dkar township of rTsa mda' county, see the *mNga' ris chos 'byung* (map, no. 11: Phyi dbang dgon). That brGya gling thang was a Sa skya institution is also confirmed by an annotation in the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (p. 39.6–39a1). On its Sa skya connection, see also the *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog* (p. 45.3–9) and VITALI 1996: 269, n. 406. On the locality of Pi wang or Phyi wang, where already in the tenth or eleventh century the dKar sag lha khang and dKar sag Chos sde were established, see *Ibid.*: 110, 114, 258, 269–272, [505], and 512. According to *Ibid.*: 269, “conspicuous ruins of monasteries and an extensive cave complex are found” at that site.

Chapter Nine

Major Patrons

In the course of his monastic career, Ngor chen's religious activities attracted the pious patronage of a variety of noble donors from different Tibetan localities and of different levels of power and authority, ranging from minor local functionaries to the most powerful rulers of local principalities in his day, such as A ma dpal and his sons of Glo bo. As we saw above, they even included the ruler of Tibet, the Phag mo gru pa ruler Gong ma Grags pa 'byung gnas. In his biography of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs enumerates a list of nine "powerful patrons that benefitted the [Buddha's] doctrine," here omitting A ma dpal and his sons:⁶¹¹

- (1) Gu ge Chos kyi rgyal po
- (2) mNga' ris rDzong ka'i [= kha'i] rgyal po
- (3) Hor Se chen gyi brgyud pa Legs rin
- (4) dBus kyi Gong ma chen po Grags pa 'byung gnas
- (5) Khams Go 'jo'i bDag po
- (6) Gling dPon chen
- (7) Rin spungs pa
- (8) Shar [kha pa] rGyal mkhar rtse'i bDag po
- (9) Chu 'dus sDe pa sGrol smyon

Some of these patrons played a role in Ngor chen's biography, and we know them from previous discussions. For instance, the first in the list, the Dharma King of Gu ge, Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po Phun tshogs lde, had invited Ngor chen to Pu hrangs during his second sojourn in Glo bo.⁶¹² The fourth, the Phag mo gru pa ruler Gong ma Grags pa 'byung gnas, had called upon Ngor chen in 1441 to visit his court at sNe'u gdong. Regarding the ninth, Chu 'dus sDe pa sGrol smyon, we saw that Ngor chen established the monastery of Nor bu gling in his domain.⁶¹³

The identification of number two, the king of mNga' ris rDzong kha (or rDzong dkar), presents more difficulties. It has been pointed out that Ngor chen paid his respects to the 'Phags pa Wa ti bzang po of sKyid grong on his way to Glo bo in 1427. On that occasion, he also visited mNga' ris rDzong kha, the capital of the kingdom of Gung thang, and bestowed teachings on king Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan, who had probably invited him to his royal seat, and was offered service by him. At rDzong kha, Ngor chen also met the

⁶¹¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 535.3–5): *bstan pa la phan pa'i sbyin bdag stobs ldan byung ba nil* (...) *gu ge chos kyi rgyal po dang/ gzhan yang mnga' ris rdzong ka'i [= kha'i] rgyal po/ hor se chen gyi brgyud pa legs rin/ dbus kyi gong ma chen po grags pa 'byung gnas/ khams go 'jo'i bdag po/ gling dpon chen[/] rin spungs pa/ shar rgyal mkhar rtse'i bdag po/ chu 'dus sde pa srol snyon [= smyon] du grags pa sogs mang du byung zhing/*. On the ordinations and teachings that Ngor chen bestowed on these patrons, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 535.3–4). On Ngor chen's patrons, see also JACKSON 2010a: 179. Based on the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 41.3–4) and *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 722.3–4), the name of the Chu 'dus lord has to be emended from sGrol snyon to sGrol smyon.

⁶¹² See Part Four, 6.5.

⁶¹³ See Part Four, 8. The ruler donor-preceptor donee relationship that existed between the Chu 'dus lords and Ngor was also maintained later on; see Part Four, n. 608. This is further illustrated by dKon mchog 'phel, the seventh abbot of Ngor, performing the last rites of a further unnamed Chu 'dus sDe pa; see the *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 131.3–4). Moreover, dPal ldan don grub, the sixteenth abbot of Ngor, was born in the family of Nam mkha' grags, a *zur bu* or *zur sras* (a son born out of wedlock) of Ngor chen's patron Chu 'dus sGrol smyon; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 41.3–4) and *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 722.3–4).

court chaplain Bla chen Chos dpal bzang po, who engaged him and his entourage in a discussion, asking many questions of a tantric nature.⁶¹⁴ On the other hand, given that the Glo bo ruler A ma dpal and his son A mgon bzang po, who surely were one of Ngor chen's most important patrons, are omitted from that list, it is odd that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs names instead the king of mNga' ris rDzong kha, where, according to his Ngor chen biography, A ma dpal's political career began as a local official (*drung skor*).⁶¹⁵

With respect to number three, Legs rin from the family line of Kublai Khan (1215–1294, r. 1260–1294), no identification is possible for the moment.

Numbers five and six are two prominent patrons who originated from Khams in eastern Tibet, one being a ruler of Go 'jo and the other the dPon chen of Gling tshang.⁶¹⁶ In neither case do we know their personal names. A connection between Ngor chen and Go 'jo district in Chab mdo can be established more easily than with Gling tshang, because this area was ruled by Sa skya officials and, for instance, one of Ngor chen's teachers, bDag po Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, had previously followed an invitation from an unspecified Go 'jo dPon chen and taught in his domain.⁶¹⁷ The Gling dPon chen, who ruled in ca. the 1420s to 1450s, can not be identified, but the abbatial histories of Ngor show that the relationship between Ngor abbots and Gling lords was very close in later centuries.⁶¹⁸

Two other patrons in the list (numbers seven and eight) were found relatively nearby in gTsang, namely the rivaling powers of Rin spungs and rGyal (mkhar) rtse. Ngor chen's biography does not tell much about his relation with the aspiring house of Rin spungs, except for the one visit he is recorded to have paid to Rin spungs while on his return journey from the Phag mo gru pa court in 1441 or 1442.⁶¹⁹ Nevertheless, the existence of this relationship is confirmed by one of the biographies of Mus chen, Ngor chen's chief disciple. According to that work, Nor bu bzang po and his brother dPal bzang rin chen invited Ngor chen to Rin spungs in 1446 while he was bestowing the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor. He thus discontinued his teaching, installed Mus chen as his representative, and left for Rin spungs.⁶²⁰ As with Ngor chen, the Rin spungs pa lords also extended their support to

⁶¹⁴ On Ngor chen's visit to rDzong kha and Khri lHa dbang rgyal mtshan, see Part Two, 3.4.

⁶¹⁵ One could argue that the absence of Glo bo's ruling house from that list is due to the extensive presentation of Ngor chen's sojourns in Glo bo that immediately follows the passage on his patrons. On the other hand, Gong ma Grags pa 'byung gnas is listed in that passage, though he only figures later on in Ngor chen's biography.

⁶¹⁶ On the history of Gling tshang, a former dependency of Sa skya, see PETECH 1991, SHEN 2007, and TSERING 1992. On the monk officials of Gling tshang and Go 'jo, see SPERLING 1990.

⁶¹⁷ See Part Three, 6.6.

⁶¹⁸ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 532.5–6, 535.2, and 570.2–571.2) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 601.6, 629.5, and 634.2). See also the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 691.2–693.3, 698.1–3, 700.4–702.1, 710.4–6, 763.5–6, and 768.1–769.1) and *bSod nams lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 656.3–663.3, 664.2–3, and 667.3). The most important monastery affiliated with Ngor's Khang gsar bla brang was in Gling tshang, Gling mGo zi Monastery; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 601.1–2 and *passim*), *Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 422.3), and *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 606.4–5).

⁶¹⁹ See Part Four, 7. The *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.1) also records a religious leader (*chos dpon*)—that is, abbot—of Rin spungs among Ngor chen's disciples.

⁶²⁰ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 608.2–4). This invitation must have been highly important and urgent if Ngor chen discontinued his bestowal of the *Lam 'bras*. Interestingly, it occurred in 1446, the same year which is given as one date for Nor bu bzang po's takeover of the district-fort (*rdzong*) of bSam 'grub rtse; see Part Three, n. 153. Cf. the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 218.2–4), which states that Ngor chen travelled to sNubs Chos lung. But this does not contradict the former statement, because that monastery of the Chos lung tshogs pa was located in the Rong valley, which formed part of the domain of the Rin spungs pa lords.

Mus chen, who, for instance, was invited to bSam 'grub rtse in 1458 to bestow teachings on Nor bu bzang po.⁶²¹

A rGyal rtse lord is listed as number eight in the list of main patrons. But he is difficult to identify and seems *not* to have been one of the main members of the Shar kha pa family then settled at rGyal rtse. No direct link between Ngor chen and such prominent lords as Kun dga' 'phags pa (1357–1412) or his son Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags (1389–1442) can be established. Yet some kind of relationship was maintained between Ngor and rGyal rtse, the rTse shar pa. For instance, the rGyal rtse lords are known to have hosted on at least two occasions religious services at Ngor. After the death of Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags in 1442, his half-brother bKra shis 'phags pa (b. 1395) held the offering of the sixth month death anniversary at sNar thang and Ngor dGon gsar, providing the monastic communities with food and other offerings.⁶²² Likewise, after the passing of bKra shis rab brtan dpal bzang po (1427–1462), the offerings of the second month death anniversary on the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the eighth month were also held at Ngor dGon gsar.⁶²³ Moreover, a religious leader (*chos dpon*)—that is, abbot—of rGya (or rGyal) mkhar rtse is listed among Ngor chen's disciples.⁶²⁴ However, there is no proof that Ngor chen commissioned “the painting of sets of maṇḍalas on the walls of the Gyantse Kumbum (...).”⁶²⁵

We also know that Ngor chen had contacts with members of the two other branches of the house of rGyal rtse, namely the rTse nub pa and that at 'Bring mtshams. As pointed out above, rTse nub pa Ta'i si tu bSod nams dpal (b. 1367) ruled over an area in western gTsang—Shab Seng ge rtse, 'Jad (or bZhad), and Bo dong—and controlled the western citadel (*rtse nub*) of rTse chen. He and his relatives maintained relations with Ngor chen's father, Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen, the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya, and it was he who, in 1389, sponsored Ngor chen's first public scriptural exposition (*rnam gzhag*). A third branch of that family became permanently established in the area of 'Bring mtshams, as discussed in the previous chapter.

In addition to the “powerful patrons” recorded in Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, we should mention the Chu mig bDag chen Grags pa blo gros, the younger of Ngor chen's two half-brothers from the Chu mig branch of the bZhi thog bla brang, because he provided Ngor chen with the land for his monastic foundation in the upper Ngor valley. Likewise, we should recall that Ngor chen made a stop at Gong dkar on his return journey from the Phag mo gru pa court in 1441 or 1442. It is not recorded, however, with whom he met at this powerful seat. This was about the time of Drung chen bZhi 'dzom pa's tenure as district governor (*rdzong dpon*) of Gong dkar.⁶²⁶ His grandson Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa (1432–1496) would have been a young layman of just nine or ten years old.

⁶²¹ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 221.3–5). See also the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 232.4) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 615.5–6). We find Nor bu bzang po also recorded among Mus chen's patrons; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 241.5). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 5.5–6).

⁶²² See the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (pp. 288.14–15 and 290.15–18).

⁶²³ See the *Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar* (p. 301.14–15).

⁶²⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 533.1). On a possible further link with rGyal rtse, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 12.2–3) and *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 569.3–570.3). Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 May 2009) informed me that the monks of the Gur pa grwa tshang of dPal 'khor Chos sde, which was the largest among the Sa skya colleges, came to Ngor to receive teachings. See also FERRARI 1958: 141, n. 413.

⁶²⁵ DOWMAN 1997: 189.

⁶²⁶ On Drung chen bZhi 'dzom (1374–1447), alias I nag bZhi 'dzom, see FERMER 2010: 30, 52–55, 354–355, and *passim*.

Chapter Ten

Major Disciples

In the course of his long career as a religious teacher, Ngor chen attracted students from nearly every corner of the Tibetan plateau. From the large group of his disciples emerged many influential Sa skya masters, such as the first five abbots that followed Ngor chen on the throne of Ngor, and the two illustrious and controversial scholars gSer mdog Pañ chen Shākya mchog ldan and Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge, the sixth abbot.

Ngor chen began teaching at age fifteen in 1396 at Sa skya by teaching ritual practices (*lag len*) to a few monks from Khams.⁶²⁷ In the following years, until the time when he founded Ngor Monastery in 1429, he taught mainly at Sa skya, at times at Sa bzang, and also at a few other monastic establishments in gTsang such as Chu 'dus, gTing khebs, Ri bo sgang, Khro phu, and Thar pa gling. Moreover, he bestowed teachings during his first visits to dBus and Glo bo. His early teaching activities illustrate that prior to founding his new monastic seat, Ngor chen had already established himself as a well-known and highly respected tantric master. Among his students of that time, we find, for instance, sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes and Mus chen, both of whom studied under Ngor chen at Sa skya. After the founding of Ngor, many old and new disciples arrived from different regions of Tibet to receive empowerments and tantric instructions. Some of his students settled permanently at Ngor, thus forming its resident monastic community, whereas others stayed only for certain periods, coming to take part in such teachings as Ngor chen's annual bestowal of the *Lam' bras*. The number of Ngor chen's students further increased with his second and third sojourns in Glo bo and his second journey to dBus. The zealotry of Ngor chen's teaching activities is best illustrated by the total number of times he gave the *Lam' bras* and the empowerments of the *Vajrāvālī* along with those of the *Kriyāsamuccaya*. He bestowed the former for about eighty-three times and the latter more than sixty times.⁶²⁸

However, Ngor chen was not only esteemed for his tantric expertise, but also for his spiritual authority as a Vinaya purist, for which he enjoyed almost unparalleled esteem as an ordination abbot. His biographies record that he bestowed an enormous number of monastic ordinations. According to the accounts of his disciples—Bla ma Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, Ngor chen's nephew Slob dpon Legs rin, rDo rje rgyal mtshan, and Grub thob Nam mkha' dpal bzang—he is credited with having bestowed full monastic ordination as ordaining preceptor on more than ten thousand monks, not counting the ordinations he led for layperson or novice-monk vows.⁶²⁹ The later biographical sketch by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs even specifies that Ngor chen granted full ordination in the lineage of the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrī to twelve thousand monks.⁶³⁰

However, Ngor chen was not at first always free in granting monastic ordination; early in his career he preferred to only bestow it on a few disciples that he was firmly convinced would be capable of observing their vows. But after an incident at Chu 'dus, a dream caused him to reconsider his strict practice. At that time, he was approached by a

⁶²⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 452.2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 510.3–4).

⁶²⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 520.2–3 and 512.5), respectively. See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 460.4 and 453.1), respectively.

⁶²⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 511.3–5). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 452.3–4).

⁶³⁰ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 341.7).

monk who had violated his vows. This monk had received his vows from Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and requested Ngor chen to restore them. But Ngor chen did not comply for a long time. Then, one night he dreamt that he was sitting along with his two teachers Shar chen and Buddhaśrī in the 'Og smin (temple?) of the Bla brang Shar. Buddhaśrī remarked that if Ngor chen would grant monastic ordinations on whoever approached him, all those aspirants would come in contact with the Buddha's teachings. However, as he was extremely strict, Ngor chen would not do so. Then in the dream Shar chen, who held the same opinion, said he agreed with Buddhaśrī and glanced at Ngor chen, who then woke up.⁶³¹

From that time on, Ngor chen is said to have bestowed monastic ordinations on whoever requested it. In doing so, his lineage of full monastic ordination—the lineage originating with Śākyaśrī and passing down through the abbots of the Tsha mig tshogs pa—developed within a few generations into the dominant lineage within monastic circles of the Sa skya school, threatening with extinction the second ordination lineage preserved by that school, the one Śākyaśrī had directly transmitted to his disciple Sa skya Paṇḍita.⁶³²

Moreover, the full monastic ordination of Shākya mchog ldan shows that when Ngor chen bestowed full ordination, the aspirants were required to also retake their lower two vows, receiving them anew in one session. According to the early Shākya mchog ldan biography of Shākya rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (fl. 15th century), Ngor chen's nephew Kun dga' dbang phyug on this occasion advised Shākya mchog ldan to comply with the ritual practices of Ngor, and retake his ordinations, beginning with his *pravrajyā* ordination. But as Shākya mchog ldan had received both *pravrajyā* and *śrāmaṇera* ordinations from Rong ston Shes bya kun rig, and was proud of that attainment, he refused to do so and only took full ordination.⁶³³ This episode is also found in the life of Shākya mchog ldan compiled by Kun dga' grol mchog. He relates that the other two aspirants that obtained full ordination along with Shākya mchog ldan retook both layman and novice ordinations, but that Shākya mchog ldan did not do so out of respect for Rong ston. This behaviour prompted Kun dga' dbang phyug to explain to Shākya mchog ldan that it was Ngor's ritual tradition to also retake his previous ordinations. But Shākya mchog ldan respectfully declined and later followed and highly revered Rong ston's tradition.⁶³⁴

In his biography of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs lists the main disciples of Ngor chen and, for a few of them, also provides short biographical sketches or relates

⁶³¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 510.5–511.3). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 452.3–4). For a discussion of the phrase *rab byung bsnyen rdzogs kyi sdom pa*, see Part Four, n. 29.

⁶³² See JACKSON 2010b. See also HEIMBEL 2013: 218–219.

⁶³³ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 349.3–350.1): *de dus ngor pa'i phyag len ltar rab tu byung nas skyor ba mdzad na legs shes/ chos rje kun dbang pas dgong [= dgongs] pa blangs pa'i bka' lung phebs kyang/ nged rang gis/ rje rong chen pa'i drung du rab byung dge tshul gnyis ka bsam sbyor rnam par dag pa'i ngos nas thob pa yin/ thob pa bzang po yin pas yus pa yod dol/ da lan skyor ba ye mi byed ces nan gyi zhus pas dgong [= dgongs] par ldan tsam byung/ zhes gsung zhing/ rjes su rje'i drung du/ rab byung sgrub mkhan rnam la rong chen pa'i phyag len ltar mdzad cing 'di la thugs rtsis shin tu che bar mdzad dol/*. On the first ordinations of Shākya mchog ldan, see CAUMANN 2012: 49–51 and 62–63 and CAUMANN 2015: 54–56 and 64–67.

⁶³⁴ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 27b2–7): *ngor dgon gsar bla ma'i gdan sa de nyid du bsnyen par rdzogs shing/ de dus bsrub bya rogs gnyis 'dug pa dge bsnyen dge tshul nas skyor gyin snang/ nged kyis rje rong ston drung du sems tshim par thob pas ma bskyar bar bsdad pas/ chos rje kun dga' dbang phyug pas rje'i dgongs pa blangs pa'i 'di'i phyag len yang yin zhing/ bskyor ba 'thad gsung ba'i bka' lung byung ba la/ rang res rab 'byung dge tshul rje rong ston drung du thob/ thob sa bzang po yin pa'i yus yod pas mi skyor zhus rjes/ (...)*. On this passage, see also CAUMANN 2012: 99 and CAUMANN 2015: 110.

brief episodes that illuminate their relationship with Ngor chen. But before I shall present this list, I like to shortly relate the episode on Rong ston, the founder of Nā lendra Monastery in 'Phan yul to the north of lHa sa, because it acknowledges in Rong ston's own words the exceptional position of Ngor chen as one of the foremost tantric experts of the Sa skya school. Rong ston, who never got the opportunity to exchange teachings with Ngor chen except for a short meeting at the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum in Sa skya, proclaimed that at his monastic foundation of Nā lendra the philosophical traditions should be cultivated. By contrast, students who aimed at engaging in tantric studies should go to Ngor dGon gсар, because Bla ma Sa bzang pa Kun dga' bzang po, the embodiment of Vajradhara, was residing there in person. Rong ston said that in their single personal public meeting, when he and Ngor chen engaged in a religious discourse, he gained a vaster understanding than he had when receiving the *Lam 'bras* from Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis.⁶³⁵

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs enumerates the following students of Ngor chen:⁶³⁶

STUDENTS FROM THE 'KHON FAMILY OF SA SKYA⁶³⁷

1. Sa skya bDag chen Chu mig pa Grags pa blo gros (1367–1437/1446); Ngor chen's half-brother
2. bZhi thog pa Blo gros dbang phyug (1402–1481); second son of Grags pa blo gros and Ngor chen's paternal nephew⁶³⁸

⁶³⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 531.4–6): *rong ston shes bya kun rig dang shāk bzang sku 'bum du mjal tsaṃ las bka' chos phan tshun gsaṃ pa ni ma byung la| 'on kyang thugs yid gcig tu 'dres pa yin tel rong ston thams cad mkhyen pa shākya rgyal mtshan gyi zhal snga nas| nga'i dgon pa nā lendra 'dir lung rigs kyi bshad pa 'ur chem chem pa gyis| sngags phyogs don du gnyer na ngor dgon gсар du song| bla ma sa bzang pa kun dga' bzang po rdo rje 'chang dngos su 'dug| nges theg chen chos kyi rgyal po'i drung du lam 'bras nyan chos zhus pa bas| bla ma kun dga' bzang pos shāk bzang sku 'bum du ja gral la bos pa'i sar 'bel gtaṃ byas pa go rgya che bar byung gsung zhing (...). This episode is also found in the the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 42a3–5): *sngon rje rong ston chen po'i bka' lung la| nged kyi sa skyar theg chen pa'i drung du lam 'bras zhu ba la phyin dus| sa skya'i shāk bzang bla brang na sa bzang pa kun dga' bzang po ba bzhugs 'dug pa'i rtsar ja mgon la phyin| sngags chos kyi gleng slong byung bas bla ma'i drung du nyan chos zhus pa las lhag pa'i blo bskyed sha stag byung| ding sang sngags kyi tshul la rdo rje 'chang mngon sum du bzhugs snang bas 'dir sngags slob zer mi kun kyang ngor tshor brdzangs shing|. In about 1475, Rong ston's statement was reiterated by sPyan snga Kun dga' rdo rje (1424–1477/88), the fifth abbot of Nā lendra, who had studied under both Rong ston and Ngor chen. Emphasising the importance of the flourishing and continuity of the Sa skya teachings at Ngor and Nā lendra, he stated that the system of the sutric path (*mtshan nyid theg pa'i rnam gzhag*) should be taught according to the discourses (*gsung 'gros*) of Rong ston and that the mantric system (*sngags*), in general, and the *Lam 'bras*, in particular, should be taught according to Ngor chen's discourses (*gsung bgros*); see the *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 419.1–3).**

Later on, according to a work by Kun dga' grol mchog, Rong ston wanted to request teachings on Cakrasaṃvara from Ngor chen, but this never materialised due to Rong ston's advanced age and his occupation with the foundation of Nā lendra; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 531.6–532.1). In 1438, Rong ston composed his famous eulogy of Ngor chen, the *Rab dkar ma*; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 531.6) and *Sa skya pa'i zhal don phyogs bsrigis* (pp. 93–94). JACKSON 1984: 44, n. 24 mentions three great eulogies of Ngor chen: the *Rab dkar ma* by Rong ston, the *sDe snod ma* by Mus chen, and the *rBa brlabs ma* by 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho. For Mus chen's and Shes rab rgya mtsho's eulogies, see the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 10, pp. 150–152 and 153–155), respectively. All three eulogies were apparently recited as part of the enthronement ceremony of a new abbot of Ngor, as illustrated by the account that dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot, gives for his own enthronement; see the *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, p. 162.1–2).

⁶³⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 530.6–534.4). On Ngor chen's teaching style and a list of teachings he bestowed on his disciples, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 515.6–517.6 and 528.6–530.4).

⁶³⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 530.6–531.1): (...) *sogs| 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi rnam 'phrul dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung brgyud rnam dang|*

⁶³⁸ Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.3), where he is more correctly given as bDag chen Chu mig pa Blo gros dbang phyug.

3. bZhi thog pa Kun dga' blo gros; third son of Grags pa blo gros and Ngor chen's paternal nephew
4. Chu mig pa Kun dga' dbang phyug (1418–1462); nineteenth throne-holder of Sa skya and Ngor chen's paternal nephew⁶³⁹
5. bDag chen mThu stobs dbang phyug bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1408–1450);⁶⁴⁰ son of Ngor chen's teacher Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1344–1418) of the Rin chen sngang bla brang

STUDENTS FROM THE SHAR FAMILY⁶⁴¹

6. Shar chen Ye shes dbang phug; he was the middle son of Chos rgyal bkra shis, who in turn was the younger brother of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406)⁶⁴²

STUDENTS WHO WERE INFLUENTIAL SCHOLAR-ADEPTS⁶⁴³

7. Sems dpa' chen po gZhon nu rgyal mchog (fl. 15th century)⁶⁴⁴
8. rGyal ba Mus pa chen po dKon mchog rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1388–1469); second abbot of Ngor⁶⁴⁵
9. mKhyen rab dbang phyug sMar khams pa Grags pa bzang po⁶⁴⁶

⁶³⁹ Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.3–4), where he is more correctly given as bDag chen bZhi thog pa Kun dga' dbang phyug.

⁶⁴⁰ The reading of the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 531.1) is misleading: *bdag chen mthu stobs dbang phyug/ bsod nams rgyal mtshan sogs/*. One could be inclined to read this passage as referring to two different persons, namely bDag chen mThu stobs dbang phyug and bSod nams rgyal mtshan. Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.3) for the correct version: *bdag chen mthu stobs dbang phyug bsod nams rgyal mtshan dang/*. This reading is also confirmed by the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (362.5–6), where we find the bDag chen recorded as follows: (...) *bdag chen zha lu bar grags pa mthu stobs kyi dbang phyug bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po* (...).

⁶⁴¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 531.1).

⁶⁴² Ye shes dbang phug was also a student of Mus chen and 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho; see the *Shar pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 648.1–6).

⁶⁴³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 531.1–532.3): *gzhan yang mdo sngags kyi don la mkhas shing lag len dang nyams len gyi rim pa thams cad 'khrul pa med par thugs su chud nas bstan pa'i rgyun gnas pa dang/ nyams len gyi sgo nas sgrub pa'i rgyal mtshan 'dzugs pa'i bshes gnyen/* (...).

⁶⁴⁴ gZhon nu rgyal mchog visited Sa skya in 1420 and might have met Ngor chen at that time; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (p. 346.5–6). For sketches of his life, see the *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (pp. 607.13–609.3), *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum 4* (vol. 104, pp. 3–5), *Tsong kha pa'i rnam thar 2* (pp. 400.20–401.19), JINPA 2006: 13, SERNESI 2016: 168–174, and SHEN 2002: 161, n. 137. In collaboration with Mus chen, he is known for his efforts in compiling the *Blo sbyong brgya rtsa*, a collection of teachings on mind training; see JACKSON 2010a: 171 and JINPA 2006: 13–15. See also the *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (pp. 13.20–14.2), *Tsong kha pa'i rnam thar 2* (p. 401.7–8), and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 143.6–144.1). For that collection, see, for instance, TBRC (W1KG4285), *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 17), and *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 9). For a translation of one edition, see JINPA 2006. gZhon nu rgyal mchog bestowed many mind training teachings on Mus chen, empowering him as the owner or keeper (*bdag po*) of those teachings; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 609.6–610.1) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 236.2–3). He was involved in the foundation of Rong Byams chen Chos sde in Rin spungs and acted as its first abbot; see the *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (p. 608.10–13), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 250.5–9), JACKSON 2007: 351–352, and SHEN 2002: 70 and 161, n. 137. He was also involved in building the Byams chen 'Dzam gling rgyan gtsug lag khang as part of Ngam ring Chos sde and its Maitreya statue; see the *bKa' gdams chos 'byung* (p. 608.16–21), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 249.21–250.5), *Baidūrya ser po* (p. 264.4–6), *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 227.3–4), and *Tsong kha pa'i rnam thar 2* (pp. 400.20–401.7). Recently, some of his writings have been published in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum 4* (vols. 104–106).

⁶⁴⁵ On Mus chen's studies under Ngor chen, see Part Two, 1.

⁶⁴⁶ The biography of Grags pa bzang po by the First Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662) mentions a meeting with Ngor chen at Sa skya (*Grags pa bzang po'i rnam thar*, p. 695.4–6): *khyad par sa skya na rje ngor pa kun dga' bzang po bzhugs pa mjal/ tshur yang phyag lan sogs mthong zos chen po mdzad/ bdag nyid chen po 'di yang thugs mos cher 'khrungs/ gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa dang/ gur zhal gyi rjes gnang/ sgrub*

10. Chos rje gZhon nu seng ge⁶⁴⁷
11. mKhas pa Ratna shrī bha dra⁶⁴⁸
12. Rong ston Shes rab dpal⁶⁴⁹
13. mKhan chen 'Jam pa'i dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (1396–1474); third abbot of Ngor⁶⁵⁰
14. Byang chubs sems dpa' Kha char mKhan po bSod nams rgyal mtshan⁶⁵¹
15. Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449), alias Rong ston Thams cad mkhyen pa Shākya rgyal mtshan; founder and first abbot of Nā lendra
16. Nā lendra'i gDan sa pa bDag [= Dwags] po Paṅ chen bKra shis rnam rgyal (1398–1458); second abbot of Nā lendra⁶⁵²
17. mKhas pa dGe ba rgyal mtshan (1387–1462); third abbot of Nā lendra⁶⁵³
18. sPyan snga Kun dga' rdo rje (1424–1477/78); fifth abbot of Nā lendra⁶⁵⁴
19. Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475); sixth abbot of Nā lendra⁶⁵⁵

thabs brgya rtsa sogs zab chos mang du zhus. Grags pa bzang po was also a student of Rong ston; see Part Four, n. 649. One of Grags pa bzang po's writings, the *rNal 'byor spyod pa bzhi brgya pa'i de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa rin po che'i sgron me*, was published recently: (1) *rNal 'byor spyod pa bzhi brgya pa'i de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa rin po che'i sgron me*, in *sNgon byon sa skya pa'i mkhas pa rnam kyī gzhung 'grel skor*, Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2007, vol. 8, pp. 1–226; (2) *rNal 'byor spyod pa bzhi brgya pa'i de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa rin po che'i sgron me*, [s.l.]: Sa skya'i dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang, [s.d.]. According to the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 69.9–10), he also wrote the *Kun rig gzhāl yas khang gi rnam bzhag*.

⁶⁴⁷ On Ngor chen's half-brother gZhon nu seng ge, see Part Three, 3.

⁶⁴⁸ mKhas pa Ratna shrī bha dra can probably be identified as mKhan chen Ratna shrī, who was sent by Ngor chen to Glo bo as the abbot of the old rNam rgyal Chos sde; see Part Four, 6.6.

⁶⁴⁹ Along with sMar khams pa Grags pa bzang po, dGe ba rgyal mtshan, and Gung ru rGyal mtshan bzang po, Shes rab dpal is recorded as one of four Khams pas who were students of Rong ston; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 203.13–15), *Rong ston gyi rnam thar* (p. 335.5–6), and JACKSON 1988a: vi. The *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 203.13–15) refers to him as Rong chung Shes rab dpal, and the *Rong ston gyi rnam thar* (p. 335.5–6) states that he was renowned as Rong chung. He is also recorded as gSang phu Rong chung Shes rab dpal among the students of Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 210.17–18). Shes rab dpal is also given as a teacher of Byams chen Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas 'phel; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 226. 8).

⁶⁵⁰ On Shes rab rgya mtsho's studies under Ngor chen, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 6.5 and 7.2).

⁶⁵¹ On bSod nams rgyal mtshan, see also Part Four, 5.2.

⁶⁵² On bKra shis rnam rgyal's relation with Ngor chen, see Part Four, 7.

⁶⁵³ On dGe ba rgyal mtshan's relation with Ngor chen, see Part Four, 7.

⁶⁵⁴ On Kun dga' rdo rje's studies under Ngor chen at Ngor, see the *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 405.3–406.2, 410.7–411.7, and 412.3–5). On Kun dga' rdo rje, see also JACKSON 1989b: 11–15 and JACKSON (under preparation). Kun dga' rdo rje's younger brother, Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1432–1488), studied shortly under Ngor chen at Ngor as well; see the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 429.4–430.1). On Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the seventh abbot of Nā lendra, see also JACKSON 1989b: 16–18 and JACKSON (under preparation). On both brothers' meetings with Ngor chen at Ngor, see also Part Four, 11.

⁶⁵⁵ On Shes rab bzang po, see JACKSON 1989b: 13–16 and JACKSON (under preparation). On his biography of Mus chen, see Part Two, n. 1. He completed Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* history; see CATALOGUE (no. 36). For his continuation, see the *Lam 'bras kyī byung tshul* (pp. 474.3–508.3). He completed it according to Ngor chen's discourses (*gsung sgros bzhin*) or teachings (*gsung bzhin*); see the *Lam 'bras kyī byung tshul* (pp. 507.2–3 and 508.1). On his presumptions about why Ngor chen did not finish the work, see the *Lam 'bras kyī byung tshul* (p. 506.2–3). Another supplement was written by Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge; see, for instance, the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 2.3–6) and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 110.9–10). For his continuation, see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 12, pp. 31–177). On that work, see also MARTIN 1997: 67, no. 111. Cf. JACKSON 1984: 154, n. 19, who states that 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, the third abbot of Ngor, completed that work. However, on the basis of the colophon, the text can be attributed to Go rams pa. Moreover, we learn that the master copy utilized in the block-print edition of that work consisted of a manuscript that had been written at Ngor for lHa mchog seng ge, the ninth abbot of Ngor, by a scribe named Shes rab rgya mtsho. For that colophon, see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 12, p. 177.1–4). On some other writings of Shes rab bzang po, see Part Five, 2. For a two-volume *dbu med* manuscript of his writings, see TBRC (W4PD920). For a list of thirty-eight works contained in a one-volume

20. Chos rje rGyal tshab dam pa Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478), nephew of Ngor chen and a manifestation of Virūpa; fourth abbot of Ngor⁶⁵⁶
21. 'Dren mchog dKon mchog 'phel (1445–1514); seventh abbot of Ngor⁶⁵⁷

ADDITIONAL STUDENTS⁶⁵⁸

22. Pañ chen 'Bum phrag gsum pa Byams pa Chos don grub (1433–1504), founder of the *grwa tshang* of Bo dong Bya rgod gshongs⁶⁵⁹
23. Gu ge Pañḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486)⁶⁶⁰
24. bZhi sde Chos sde Drung rNam rtse⁶⁶¹
25. mKhyen rab dbang phyug Nam mkha' 'od zer; unidentified
26. Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po⁶⁶²
27. lHa rigs Gu ge lHa btsun⁶⁶³
28. Glo bo pa Thugs sras Bla ma dPal ldan (d. 1476)⁶⁶⁴

dbu med manuscript of his writings housed in the Potala, see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnam kyī dkar chag* (pp. 20–23, no. 1810).

⁶⁵⁶ For Kun dga' dbang phyug's studies under Ngor chen, see the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 519.4–6, 520.3–526.1, and 527.5–541.6) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2* (pp. 621.2–3 and 621.6–626.1). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 15.1–2).

⁶⁵⁷ On dKon mchog 'phel's relation with Ngor chen, see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 739.3–5 and 741.3–6) and *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 812.2–813.2). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 10.1–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 532.2–3).

⁶⁵⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 532.3–533.4): *gzhang yang* (...).

⁶⁵⁹ The studies of Pañ chen 'Bum phrag gsum pa under Ngor chen are also mentioned in his versified biography by dPal Mang du thos pa'i bTsun pa Klu'i ming can (i.e., Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho); see the *'Bum phrag gsum pa'i rnam thar* (p. 358.2–4): *e wañ chos ldan gta'* [= *rta* or *stag*] *mo gling kha sogsl* (...) *kun dga'i mtshan dang sems dpa' chen po'i drungl sa skya ngor lugs gsang sngags rgya mtsho'i sroll* {*bde skyes* [= *kye*] *gsang gsum sogsl kyi rgyud man ngagl*} *ma lus thugs su chud par mzaad la 'dudl*. Mang thos also mentions those studies in his religious chronology; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 236.6–7): *rje 'di nyid kyis mdo sngags kyi chos gsan pa'i tshul yang rje ngor chen yab sras la sa skya ngor lugs*. In 1489, 'Bum phrag gsum pa established gNyan (or mNyan) yod Bya rgod gshongs; see the *'Bum phrag gsum pa'i rnam thar* (pp. 361.4–362.4), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 235.14–16), and *gsang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 74.5). For a list of 'Bum phrag gsum pa's writings, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 70.10–14). On three Tibetan lamas nicknamed 'Bum phrag gsum pa, see VAN DER KUIJP: 1995: 925–927, n. 20.

⁶⁶⁰ On Ngor chen's biographer Gu ge Pañḍita and his writings, see Part Two, 3.1.

⁶⁶¹ On Drung rNam rtse's relationship with Ngor chen, see Part Two, 3.1.

⁶⁶² On Ngor chen's biographer Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po and his writings, see Part Two, 3.4. For some of his writings, see also Part Five, 2.

⁶⁶³ lHa rigs Gu ge lHa btsun could probably be identified as the Gu ge king Khri Nam mkha' i dbang po Phun tshogs lde, who had invited Ngor chen to Pu hrangs and taken monastic ordination at Kha char; see Part Four, 6.5.

⁶⁶⁴ Bla ma dPal ldan can be identified as Ngor chen's disciple Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan. From his biography, we come to know that he was the rebirth of a certain dPal ldan bzang po, who had studied under twenty-seven masters, including Hor bKa' bzhi pa chen po Seng ge rgyal mtshan, dKon mchog grags, 'Gro mgon dPal ldan ye shes, and Chos rje rGya ma pa Yon tan 'od; see the *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 4a3–5b6). Confusingly, he is also addressed by the name of his previous birth. For instance, we find him in the *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 23a1) as Drung Bla ma dPal ldan pa and in the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 440.4) as Chos rje dPal ldan bzang po. He himself also signed as dPal ldan pa; see the *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 23a6). That he was considered the rebirth of dPal ldan bzang po is also recorded in the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fols. 21b–22a): (...) *chos kyi rje mdo sngags kyi bdag po tshul khriims rgyal mtshan mtshan yongs su grags pa/sku skye ba snga ma'i mtshan dPal ldan pa zhes bya ba* (...). He studied under Ngor chen for fifteen years; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 554.2–3) and *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 8a7–b1). For the teachings he received from Ngor chen, see the *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 10a3–17b5). He also took the triple set of moral codes, the three vows (*sdom pa gsum: trisaṃvara*), including all monastic ordinations from Ngor chen and, following the example of his master, gave up the consumption of meat; see the *Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 8b6–9b5). Some of his other teachers were Rong ston Shes bya kun rig,

29. bDe legs rgyal mtshan; unidentified⁶⁶⁵
30. Bla ma dPal ldan rgyal po⁶⁶⁶
31. bSam rtse Chos rje; unidentified
32. Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang po (d. 1509)⁶⁶⁷
33. Go bo Rab 'byams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489); sixth abbot of Ngor⁶⁶⁸

Mus chen, 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, Kha char mKhan po bSod nams rgyal mtshan, Kun dga' dbang phyug, dMar khams pa Grags pa bzang po, Kun mkhyen Nam mkha' bsod nams, dGe 'dun 'phel of bZang ldan Monastery, and Shes rab grags pa; see the *Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 7b3–8a2). For his studies under Mus chen, Rong ston, Shes rab rgya mtsho, and Kun dga' dbang phyug, see the *Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 17b7–20a2, 20a2–3, 20a3–5, 20a5–6), respectively. Prior to his own passing away in 1456, Ngor chen sent Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan to Glo bo to head the newly constructed monastery of dPal ldan Chos 'khor Byams pa gling; see Part Four, 6.10. During Ngor chen's third sojourn in Glo bo, he was one of three disciples that Ngor chen sent to request the empowerment of Donkey-Faced Cakrasamvara from the tantric adept Bla ma bSam gtan 'od zer. Within that account, he is already addressed as Byams gling Chos rje dPal ldan, though the monastery was founded only later on; see Part Two, 3.1. At the time of Ngor chen's death, he was also present at Ngor; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 558.6–559.1 and 561.1). The non-extant Ngor chen biography by Gu ge Paṇḍita was partly based on oral accounts (*gsung sgros*) of Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 554.2–3) and Part Two, 3.1. While in Glo bo, he was one of Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub's teachers, and the latter wrote a biography of his master; see Part Four, 6.10.

⁶⁶⁵ Among the first teachers of Glo bo mKhan chen, the rNying ma master bDe legs rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po is mentioned; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 225.7–226.2), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 125.14–126.5), and KRAMER 2008: 25, 60, 75, and 87.

⁶⁶⁶ dPal ldan rgyal po appears to be the eponymous scholar from Mus, who was a teacher of both bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan and Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen, the eighth abbot of Ngor. For the bDag chen's studies under dPal ldan rgyal po, see the *bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 81.4–6). For Sangs rgyas rin chen's studies under him, see the *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 11.5–12.1). dPal ldan rgyal po also functioned as ceremonial master in the full monastic ordination of Sangs rgyas rin chen; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 16.1–2), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 4.5–5.2), and *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 56.2–5).

⁶⁶⁷ Yon tan dpal bzang po was also a disciple of 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho and Kun dga' dbang phyug and wrote biographies of both of his teachers; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 9.6 and 11.4), respectively. He belonged to the family line of Rwa Lo tsā wa rDo rje grags; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 436.3–4) and *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 231.4–5). He is known to have written a reply to Shākya mchog ldan's questions on the *sDom gsum rab dbye* of Sa skya Paṇḍita; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 56b1–2), CAUMANN 2012: 172, CAUMANN 2015: 195–196, and JACKSON 1983b: 17. On his role as Glo bo mKhan chen's tutor, see Part Four, 6.10. According to the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 291.3–292.5), he passed away in Glo bo sMon thang on the twenty-first day of the sixth month of the year when Glo bo mKhan chen was fifty-two years old (i.e., 1507); see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 291.3–3). However, within a short religious chronology as part of the colophon, the same source dates his passing to the year 1509 (*sa mo sbrul*); see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 349.4). This later date seems to be the correct one, as it is in line with the account on Glo bo mKhan chen's return from his second sojourn in dBus and gTsang (1506–mid-1509). It was on his way back in 1509 that he came to know of the passing away of his master; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 291.3–7). The date that A mes zhabs provides for his passing away, 1497, can be ignored, because many of the dates he provides for events related to the life of Glo bo mKhan chen are mistaken; see the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 238.4).

⁶⁶⁸ From 1453 until 1456, Go rams pa studied under Ngor chen at Ngor; see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 92.17–94.13), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 2* (p. 4.6–13), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 3* (pp. 311.1–312.16), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 4* (pp. 358.17–359.6), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 5* (pp. 386.17–18, 387.2–3, and 389.11–390.9), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (pp. 37.17–39.1), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 7* (p. 141.7–19), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 8* (pp. 178.6–180.20). See also CABEŽON and DARGYAY 2007: 34–35, HEIMBEL (forthcoming 2), JORDEN 2003: 48–49, VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 120, and SOBISCH 2002b: 27. In 1454 (or according to some biographers in 1455), Ngor chen also presided over Go rams pa's full monastic ordination; see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 94.14–19), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 2* (p. 4.13–17), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 3* (p. 311.7–17), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 4* (p. 359.14–15), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 5* (p. 386.9–16), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (p. 39.1–5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 7* (pp. 141.19–142.3), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 8* (pp. 185.21–188.2). See also CABEŽON and DARGYAY 2006: 34, HEIMBEL (forthcoming 2), JORDEN 2003: 50, VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 120, and SOBISCH 2002b: 27. On Go rams pa's tenure as abbot of Ngor, see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (pp. 114.19–117.10 and 122.20–125.6), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 2* (pp. 15.9–16.16), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 3* (pp.

34. dMar ston rGyal mtshan 'od zer⁶⁶⁹
35. bZang [= bZod] chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal⁶⁷⁰
36. Kun mkhyen dGa' gdong pa Chos rgyal dpal bzang, known as Chos lung bKa' bcu pa⁶⁷¹
37. Shāk bzang nas mKhas grub dPal ldan rdo rje (1411–1482); fifth abbot of Ngor⁶⁷²
38. sNye mo Ru pa bKa' bzhi pa⁶⁷³

325.16–333.5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 4* (pp. 369.3–374.4), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 5* (pp. 397.8–399.15), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (pp. 65.11–69.18), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 7* (pp. 149.18–151.8 and 155.7–14), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 8* (pp. 231.5–239.20, 242.20–21, and 243.9–13), and *Go rams pa's 'Bul sdud rdzong dus kyi yi ge* (pp. 652.4–656.1). See also CABEŽON and DARGYAY 2006: 36, HEIMBEL (forthcoming 2), JORDEN 2003: 55–57, VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 120, and SOBISCH 2002b: 27–28. On Go rams pa's studies under Ngor chen, see also Part Four, 11.

⁶⁶⁹ For an episode when rGyal mtshan 'od zer was invited by Byams pa gling pa bSod nams rnam rgyal to give tantric teachings, see Part Four, 7. In the *Byams pa gling pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 25a4), he is addressed as dMar khams pa'i bKa' bcu ba rGyal mtshan 'od zer. The *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 69.9) gives his title as dMar ston. On his writings, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 69.9–10).

⁶⁷⁰ The collected works of Ngor chen contain a praise that Ngor chen wrote in honour of bZod chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal; see CATALOGUE (no. 177). According to this praise, Phyogs las rnam rgyal was a disciple of Rong ston and had already passed away at the time when Ngor chen wrote his praise. In Rong ston's biography, we find Phyogs las rnam rgyal listed among Rong ston's disciples from dBus; see the *Rong ston gyi rnam thar* (p. 336.6–7) and JACKSON 1988a: vii.

⁶⁷¹ Chos rgyal dpal bzang was also a student of Rong ston and sPos khang pa 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rgyal mtshan; see the *mKhan bryud kyi rnam thar* (fol. 18b3), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 203.15–16), *Rong ston gyi rnam thar* (p. 335.6–7), and JACKSON 1988a: vi. Like his teacher sPos khang pa, Chos rgyal dpal bzang wrote important works on Sa skya Paṇḍita's sDom gsum rab dbye; see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 40.1–3), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 246.6–7), *Pod chen drug gi 'bel gtam* (pp. 257.6–258.3), and JACKSON 1983b: 14–15. One of his works, the *sDom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba zhes bya ba'i ũ ka sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dar zhing rgyas par byed pa'i thabs rten 'brel bzang po*, was published recently. In its colophon, the author refers to himself as Chos lung dKa' bcu pa and mentions as his teachers Rin chen rgyal mtshan, Rong ston, and Ngor chen. He wrote his work in 1458 at dGa' ba sdong [= gdong]; see the *sDom gsum ũ ka* (vol. 2, p. 339.5–16).

⁶⁷² On dPal ldan rdo rje's studies under Ngor chen, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 11.6–12.4) and *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 566.5–6, 568.2–570.5, 571.5–588.4, and 590.2–3). Ngor chen also presided over his full monastic ordination at Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 12.3) and *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 570.5–571.5). On his tenure as Ngor abbot, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 13.1–6) and *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 600.6–605.1).

⁶⁷³ sNye mo Ru pa bKa' bzhi pa can be identified as Rin chen bkra shis, who is known by various titles such as sTag lung Ka bzhi pa from Ru mtshams, Dus 'khor ba chen po, Dus zhabs pa, or Rwa sgreng Ka bzhi pa. Rin chen bkra shis was an expert in the Kālacakra system, which he had studied under Ngor chen at Ngor. He was also a teacher of Shākya mchog ldan and the two Glang thang sPyan sngas, Kun dga' rdo rje and Blo gros rgyal mtshan. Shākya mchog ldan advised the two brothers to invite Rin chen bkra shis to Glang thang, where the latter taught from 1457 to 1459. On Shākya mchog ldan's studies under him, see CAUMANN 2012: 123–133 and CAUMANN 2015: 152–157. See also the *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 413.4–414.4): *yang gtsang nas lan gnyis pa phyir phebs pa'i skabs der/ ru mtshams nas/ stag lung ka bzhi par grags pa de glang ri thang du spanyan drangs/ bla ma de ni sngon ne'u thog dang/ bde ba can/ skyor lung sogs su ka chen bzhi la sbyangs pa mthar phyin/ e waṃ chos ldan dgon pa 'debs pa'i thog ma nyid nas chos mang du gsan/ zha lu'i bla ma so so la bu lugs kyi chos skor mtha' dag gsan/ ru mtsho kha'i sku zhang chos rje dang/ shangs pa kun mkhyen sogs las dbang bskur mang po gsan pa dang/ dus kyi 'khor lo'i rgyud rtsa' grel la sbyangs pa phul du phyin pa zhiṅ yin/ bla ma des bu lugs dang/ rje bla ma dam pa'i sgrub dkyil so so'i steng nas/ dus kyi 'khor lo'i dbang lan gnyis su mdzad pa de gsan/ bla ma 'dis rdo rje 'chang la 'dus kyi 'khor lo'i rdul tshon gyi dbang rdzogs ba mkhan chen phyogs las pa'i sgrub dkyil dang/ rje bla ma dam pa'i lugs gnyis ka gsan par 'dug (...). On him, see also the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 431.6–432.1) and *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 42b7–43a4): *der spanyan snga sku mched drung gis gts'o mdzad nged dang bcas pa'i dbang cha gcig la/ chos rje bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan pa'i mngon dkyil stengs nas dus 'khor gyi dbang ngor dgon sar btob lo rang rje rdo rje 'chang gis gnang ba'i phyag len/ ji ltar dbang gi sgo 'byed thog mar stsal/ 'di skabs rje rdo rje 'chang gi gsung sgron/ sngon 'jam dbyangs grags pas byang shamha lar drang srong bye ba phrag phyed dang bzhi chos rgyal zla ba bzang pos bzhengs pa'i blos bslangs drung du dbang bskur sgrub byed du bzhaṅ/ ding sang dus 'khor ba kun/ dbang gi brten bya'i dkyil 'khor blos bslangs dang/ dbang mi grangs med byed pa zhiṅ 'dug kyang/ sa skya paṇḍi tas/ 'phags pa rnam kyis gang zag rab/ sprul pa yi ni dkyil 'khor du/ dbang bskur mdzad ces gsungs pa ni/ sngon gyi cho ga 'phags pa'i yin/ zhes gsungs pa ltar sngon chog yin nges pas/ dir rgyud 'grel nyid las/ dbang bskur ba bdun po 'di dag ni rdul tshon gyi dkyil 'khor du bcug nas sbyin/**

39. Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507), the Master from gSang mda' and founder of Chos grwa gSer mdog can⁶⁷⁴
40. gSang phu gDan sa pa Paṅḍita Shes rab dpal ldan⁶⁷⁵
41. Zha lu mKhyen rab rJe [Rin chen mchog grub dpal bzang] (1436–1497); eighth abbot of Nā lendra⁶⁷⁶
42. The religious leaders (*chos dpon*)—that is, abbots—of such great monasteries (*chos sde chen po*) as Jo nang
43. Ngam ring
44. Rin spungs
45. rGya mkhar rtse [i.e., rGyal mkhar rtse]
46. ['Bras yul sKyed mos tshal, namely] Byams chen Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas 'phel (1411–1485)⁶⁷⁷
47. 'Jam dbyangs pa [Kun dga' chos bzang] (1433–1503), the monastic head (*gdan sa pa*) of that monastery; second abbot of 'Bras yul sKyed mos tshal⁶⁷⁸
48. Se ra⁶⁷⁹
49. Nyag re'i dGe bshes Grub thob Don grub, also called Grub chen dMar ri ba⁶⁸⁰
50. Grags pa rin chen⁶⁸¹

zhes gsungs pas grub bo sogs kyi gsung sgros phyag bzhes gcig pus spyan snga rin po che sku mched thugs tshim nas|rang re la yang gros ston de legs shes dges pa yang dag thugs la btags|.

⁶⁷⁴ On Shākya mchog ldan's studies under Ngor chen, see CAUMANN 2012: 97–102, 109–112, and 116–121 and CAUMANN 2015: 109–116 and 129–148. Ngor chen also presided over Shākya mchog ldan's full monastic ordination; see CAUMANN 2012: 98–100 and CAUMANN 2015: 109–112. On Shākya mchog ldan's studies under Ngor chen, see also Part Four, 11.

⁶⁷⁵ Shes rab dpal ldan was the twenty-eighth abbot of the Gling smad section of gSang phu Ne'u thog and also the founder of the Sa skya monastery of Rwa ba smad, located in sKyid shongs of Gong dkar county; see SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: 687 and 688, n. 11. On Shes rab dpal ldan and Rwa ba smad, see also FERMER 2010: 132.

⁶⁷⁶ Prior to his twenty-second year, he studied the *Lam 'bras* under Ngor chen at Ngor; see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (p. 180.5): *ngor e waṃ du rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po la lam 'bras sogs gsan|*. For his biographical sketch, see the *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 176.5–190.1), JACKSON 1989b: 27–28, and JACKSON (under preparation).

⁶⁷⁷ Under Ngor chen at Ngor, Sangs rgyas 'phel studied the *Lam 'bras* and other tantric teachings, such as on Guhyasamāja, Cakrasaṃvara, and Hevajra, and also took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as presiding abbot; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 226.9–12). For his studies under Ngor chen, see also the *Sangs rgyas 'phel gyi rnam thar* (pp. 81.1–85.1 and 98.4–5). For his biographical sketch, see also the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 225.15–228.1). On his writings, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 57.12–58.1).

⁶⁷⁸ Kun dga' chos bzang was among a group of three hundred monks that the Glo bo bDag po (i.e., A ma dpal or A mgon bzang po) sent in 1450 to dBus gtsang for monastic training. For his biographical sketch, see the *Ngor chos 'byung* (p. 356.4–6) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 237.1–21). On his studies under Ngor chen, see also Part Four, 11. For his biography of Byams chen Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas 'phel, see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 2* (vol. 56, pp. 73–212). On his other writings, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 58.1–7). Some of his works—the *sDom gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba las gnas gsum gsal byed*, *sDom gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i spyi don sdom gsum gnad kyi gsal byed*, and *sDom gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i ṅi ka bstan pa'i sgron me las so thar sdom pa'i rnam bshad*—have been published; see the *sNgon byon sa skya pa'i mkhas pa rnam kyis gzhung 'grel skor* (vol. 9, pp. 1–40, 41–254, 255–423), Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2007, respectively. For his collected works in five volumes, see now also *Sa skya'i dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang* (ed.), *sKyed tshal ba 'jam dbyangs kun dga' chos bzang gi gsung 'bum*, Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2015. For a two-volume collection of his works, see now also TBRC (W2PD17517) and the other publications found at TBRC (P1038).

⁶⁷⁹ When he was middle-aged (*dar yol*), Gung ru rGyal mtshan bzang po (1383–1450), the third abbot of Se ra, is said to have received his tantric training under Ngor chen; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 334.21–336.3).

⁶⁸⁰ On Nyag re dGe bshes Grub thob Don grub's relation with Ngor chen, see Part Four, 5.

⁶⁸¹ Grags pa rin chen seems to be the author of the *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i phyag len gyi zin bris*, a nine-folio manuscript of which is preserved at 'Bras spungs Monastery; the author is given as Grags pa rin chen, a disciple of Ngor chen Kun bzang; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 527, no. 5678). As the disciples that precede and also succeed him in the list presented above all bear the epithet Nyag re, he might be the Nyag ri

51. [Nyag re] dPal gyi rgyal mtshan⁶⁸²
52. Guṇaprabha [i.e., Nyag bre Yon tan 'od zer], the preceptor (*slob dpon*) of Ngor chen's nephew, rGyal tshab dam pa Kun dga' dbang phyug⁶⁸³
53. Saṃghamati [i.e., dGe 'dun blo gros]; unidentified

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54. Drung Chos kyi rJe Kun dga' rin chen known as Dam pa Kun spangs pa⁶⁸⁵
55. the one known as Ka drug pa Drung Rin po che; that is, sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes (1397–1470)⁶⁸⁶
56. bSod nams dpal ldan, known as lDan ma bKa' bcu pa; unidentified
57. Chen po Sangs rgyas blo gros; unidentified
58. mDo stod rTsa mdo pa Gyong po Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan⁶⁸⁷
59. Sradd pa Grub chen Kun [dga'] blo [gros] (b. 1433)⁶⁸⁸
60. mKhas grub Zla ba bzang po and his brother; unidentified

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61. Byang sems bSod nams rin chen at gTing skyes Brag dkar dgon pa⁶⁹⁰

Grag pa rin chen recored by the same catalogue as author of the *bDag med lha mo bco lnga'i bsgrub thabs kyi zin bris*; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 367, no. 3732). We find more entries for authors named Grags pa rin chen whose works are housed at 'Bras spungs, but based only on them it is impossible to tell whether or not they all refer to the same person. In the colophon of two of Ngor chen's works, we encounter a Grags pa rin chen who had requested their composition; see CATALOGUE (nos. 92 and 93). A Grags pa rin chen is also listed among the students of 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 9.2).

⁶⁸² On a meeting between dPal gyi rgyal mtshan and Ngor chen, see Part Three, 6.7.5. On some of his writings, see Part 5, 2.

⁶⁸³ Yon tan 'od zer was also a student of 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho and a teacher of Kun dga' dbang phyug; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 9.2 and 10.6), respectively. On his writings, see Part Five, 2.

⁶⁸⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.4–6): *ldan gyi phyogs su* (...).

⁶⁸⁵ Kun dga' rin chen can be identified as an early teacher of sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes. In the latter's biography, he appears under the name Drung Chos rje Kun dga' rin chen. In 1404, he trained Kun dga' ye shes in grammar and poetics; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (p. 326.5–8). In 1412, Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis travelled through the sGa region while on his way to the Ming court. When he had set up his camp near the White Stūpa of sGa (*sGa mchod rten dkar po*), he was visited by Kun dga' rin chen and Kun dga' ye shes. At that time, Kun dga' ye shes received, at age sixteen, novice-monk ordination from Theg chen Chos rje as ordaining preceptor and Kun dga' rin chen as ceremonial master. On this ordination, see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 327.18–328.9).

⁶⁸⁶ The identification of Ka drug pa Rin po che as Kun dga' ye shes is based on an episode from the latter's biography. While staying at Sa skya from 1417 to 1421, Ngor chen's younger half-brother, gZhon nu seng ge, accommodated Kun dga' ye shes in the Ka drug Tshoms dmar of the bZhi thog bla brang. Thus he became known as Ka drug Tshoms dmar Drung Rin po che; see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (p. 346.2–5). Kun dga' ye shes studied under Ngor chen at different times. First, during Ngor chen's first sojourn in dBus (1414–1417). Second, while staying at Sa skya from 1417 to 1421, when he also took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as ordaining preceptor. Third, while visiting Ngor in 1450. On these episodes, see the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 336.13–337.2, 338.17–343.9, and 359.14–360.3), respectively. See also Part Four, 1. Moreover, Kun dga' ye shes is most likely the same person as lDan ma Drung Rin po che, who commissioned with Ngor chen's support a copy of the *bsTan 'gyur*. On this project, see Part Four, 12.

⁶⁸⁷ On Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan, see Part Two, 3.2.

⁶⁸⁸ On Ngor chen's biographer Kun dga' blo gros, see Part Three, 3.3. On his writings, see Part Five, 2.

⁶⁸⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.6): *'bring mtshams su* (...).

⁶⁹⁰ Two writings of bSod nams rin chen are presently available, one published and the other unpublished. The former are his annotations to a work on the eleven commentaries that Sa chen Kun dga' snying po had written on the *rDo rje tshig rkang*; see LIST (no. 2.1). The latter is his very interesting compilation of biographical sketches of lineage masters transmitting teachings on ritual fasting associated with Avalokiteśvara within the Sa skya school, the *sMyung gnas bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* (67 fols.), which also includes his autobiographical

STUDENTS FROM CHU 'DUS⁶⁹¹

62. Chos rje mKhas btsun pa [Yon tan rgya mtsho]⁶⁹²

STUDENTS WHO GAINED *SIDDHIS* IN THIS LIFETIME⁶⁹³

63. Tsha ba rong pa Shākya rgyal mtshan; unidentified
64. Tsha mo rong pa bSod nams bzang po; unidentified

STUDENTS WHO WERE *YOGINS* OBSERVING AN ASCETIC DISCIPLINE⁶⁹⁴

65. brTson 'grus bzang po (1361?–1485), also known as Thang stong rgyal po, Lung stong smyon pa, and Grub thob lCags zam pa⁶⁹⁵

In his later biographical sketch of Ngor chen, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs enumerates two additional students that he did not list in his full-length biography, namely Grub mchog dKon mchog blo gros (1428–1507/08) and mNgon dga' Chos sde mKhan po dPal ldan sangs rgyas (1391–1455).⁶⁹⁶

remarks on teachings he received from his own masters. A final gloss confirms the identity of Byangs sems bSod nams rin chen with dGe slong bSod nams rin chen, who was one of two persons who had asked Ngor chen to write the biography of Sa bzang 'Phags pa and who is mentioned as Ngor chen's scribe in many colophons (see CATALOGUE, nos. 34, 89, 90, 92, 98, 111, 115, 117, 118, 130, 131, 133, and 142); see the *sMyung gnas bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 67a6): {*byang sems bsod nams rin chen ni 'bring 'tshams sa [= pa?] yin cing 'jam dbyangs sngon po'i sprul par grags' rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i thugs sras dge slong bsod nams rin chen zhes pa de lags' bla ma 'di gting skyes brag dkar gyis [= gyi] dgon par byung ba yin!*}. bSod nams rin chen compiled the work at Brag dkar Monastery; see the *sMyung gnas bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 67a4): (...) *bsod rin gyis' brag dkar dgon pa rnam g.yeng khrod nas bkod!*. On a verse that Ngor chen sent to bSod nams rin chen, see CATALOGUE (no. 169). For a praise of bSod nams rin chen by Shākya mchog ldan, see the *Shāk mchog gi gsung 'bum* (vol. 16, pp. 274.3–275.3) and CAUMANN 2012: 362, no. 60.25.

⁶⁹¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.6): *chu 'dus su* (...).

⁶⁹² On Yon tan rgya mtsho, see Part Four, n. 607.

⁶⁹³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 533.6–534.3): *tshe 'di la grub pa brnyes pa ni!* (...).

⁶⁹⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 534.3–4): *rnal 'byor pa brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa mdzad pa yang* (...).

⁶⁹⁵ Regarding a meeting between Thang stong rgyal po and Ngor chen, STEARNS 2007: 279–280 translates from the *Thang stong rgyal po'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 189.5–14) by Lo chen 'Gyur med bde chen (1540–1615): “The great adept then traveled to Ngor Gonsar and met the Dharma lord Kunga Sangpo. A tsen demon lived in a grove of yew trees down below the monastery. He was a malevolent demon that entered into the mindstreams of monks who had little merit, took the lives of horses, mules, and donkeys that arrived at the monastery, and was very unhappy about the growth of the monastery. (...) When Ngorchen asked the great adept to liberate the demon, he shot an arrow from the pinnacle of the master's residence and much blood poured from the bunch of trees. Because the minds of the Sangha members were in harmony and their moral discipline was pure from then on, the monastery vastly expanded. He received much Dharma from Ngorchen, such as the Hevajra initiation. Their minds blended together as one and they met many times.” According to another biography of Thang stong rgyal po by his disciple Shes rab dPal ldan, Ngor chen also bestowed other teachings on him, such as the *Lam 'bras*; see the *Thang stong rgyal po'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 101.5–102.2) and STEARNS 2007: 545, n. 755. For another presentation of the meeting between Thang stong rgyal po and Ngor chen, see the *Thang stong rgyal po'i rnam thar* 2 (p. 334.3–5) and STEARNS 2007: 486, n. 226. In 1446, Thang stong rgyal po visited sDe dge where he founded, under the patronage of Bo thar Blo gros stobs ldan, alias bKra shis seng ge, the monastery of lHun sgrub steng. The fact that Thang stong rgyal po had received teachings from Ngor chen was considered to be an auspicious connection with respect to lHun sgrub steng becoming a Ngor pa monastery. For references, see Part Two, n. 76.

⁶⁹⁶ See the *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 343.4–6). For a biographical sketch of dKon mchog blo gros, see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 329–337). He was born at (rTa or sTag mo) Gling skya in Mus, the same site or household from which famous masters such as his uncle Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, the second abbot of Ngor, Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen, the eighth abbot of Ngor, 'Dren mchog dKon mchog rgya mtsho, and Mus chen Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan emerged; see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (p. 330.2–5), *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 131.2–3), and EVERDING 2006: 22, n. 30. Probably at Ngor, he received from Ngor chen the following teachings (*gNyags ston pa'i gdan rabs dang gdung rabs*, p. 330.10–14): *rdo rje 'chang*

Among all those students, it was Mus chen and 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho who completely received all the teachings that Ngor chen himself had obtained from his own masters.⁶⁹⁷ The majority of the other disciples are all introduced as experts in their own right, capable of elucidating both sutric and tantric teachings. Even the most minor disciples were at least able to uphold, preserve, and spread individual teaching cycles such as those of Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, or Kālacakra.⁶⁹⁸

An earlier enumeration of Ngor chen's disciples was included by Mus chen in the presentation of his master's life. There he listed:⁶⁹⁹

STUDENTS WHO WERE IMPORTANT SCHOLARS WHO HAD AN IMPACT ON THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS⁷⁰⁰

1. Sems dpa' chen po gZhon nu rgyal mchog (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 7)
2. mKhyen rab dbang phyug Grags pa bzang po (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 9)
3. Chos rje gZhon nu seng ge (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 10)

STUDENTS FROM SA SKYA'S 'KHON FAMILY WHO WERE INFLUENTIAL SCHOLAR-ADEPTS⁷⁰¹

4. bDag chen Chu mig pa Grags pa blo gros (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 1)
5. bDag chen mThu stobs dbang phyug bSod nams rgyal mtshan (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 5)
6. bDag chen bZhi thog pa Kun dga' dbang phyug (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 4)
7. bDag chen Chu mig pa Blo gros dbang phyug (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 2)

kun dga' bzang po'i drung du/ rdo rje phreng ba/ bde mchog nag po lugs/ dges rdor/ bdag med ma rnams kyi dbang/ de dag gi skyed rdzogs kyi man ngag/ lam 'bras tshar gnyis/ rgyud 'bum gyi lung gis thog drangs chos kyi rnam grangs du ma gsan nol. At age thirty-seven, he is said to have taken full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as presiding abbot at Ngor; see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (p. 331.11–14). However, the dating of his ordination to his thirty-seventh year (i.e., 1464) is rather problematic, because Ngor chen had already passed away in 1456. He served as abbot of the Gle lung Chos sde from 1474 to 1497; see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 330.14–333.1). In 1464 at bDe ldan ri khrod in Mus, he functioned as instructor in private in the full monastic ordination of bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan and also bestowed teachings on the bDag chen; see the *bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 75.5–76.3, 81.2–4, and 122.6). In 1480, he presided as ordaining preceptor over the full monastic ordination of Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 16.1–2). A biography of dKon mchog blo gros, the *Grub chen dkon mchog blo gros pa'i rnam thar bstod pa 'grel pa dang bcas pa*, is recorded among a list of works by Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen; see SOBISCH 2008: 194, no. 30. On Ngor chen's second disciple, dPal ldan sangs rgyas, see EHRHARD 2000b: 203.

⁶⁹⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 534.5). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 5.2 and 7.2). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 10.5), where Kun dga' dbang phyug is also said to have received all of Ngor chen's teachings.

⁶⁹⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 534.5–6).

⁶⁹⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.1–4). In the following enumeration of Ngor chen's disciples, obvious misspellings have been emended without further notice. On Ngor chen's teaching style and a list of teachings he bestowed on his disciples, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 453.1–454.2 and 459.6–461.1).

⁷⁰⁰ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.1–2): (...) *la sogs pa bstan pa la bya ba byas pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po du ma dangl.*

⁷⁰¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 461.2–4): *khyad par rgyud sde chen po bzhi'i don la bshad pa dangl lag len dang nyams len gyi rim pa thams cad 'khrul pa med par thugs su chud nas bshad nyan gyi sgo nas bstan pa'i rgyud gnas pa dangl nyams len gyi sgo nas bsgrub pa'i rgyal mtshan btsugs pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi rnam 'phrul dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung brgyud (...).* By comparison, it is apparent that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs divided this category into two, namely the students that were influential scholar-adepts and students from the 'Khon family.

Mus chen's list is obviously much shorter than the enumeration by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs. This might be for many reasons, but one that comes to my mind is that because Mus chen wrote a contemporaneous account of Ngor chen's life, many of Ngor chen's disciples were still relatively unknown figures who stood at the beginning of their monastic careers.

Another enumeration of Ngor chen's disciples is given by Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho in his religious chronology. He prefaces that list by emphasising Ngor chen's stature as a tantric expert, on the one hand, and the influence his teaching activities had, on the other, noting that no other Tibetan Buddhist master had more students who spread the tantric teachings than Bu ston Rin chen grub and Ngor chen.⁷⁰² Among Ngor chen's disciples, Mang thos extracts a group of prominent Sa skya masters to whom he refers as the "Ten Great Persons that Uphold the [Buddha's] Teachings," though he actually lists only nine:⁷⁰³

1. Sems dpa' chen po gZhon nu rgyal mchog (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 7)
2. sMar khams pa Grags pa bzang po (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 9)
3. Chos rje gZhon nu seng ge (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 10)
4. Byams chen Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas 'phel (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 46)
5. Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 39)
6. Kun mkhyen Go rab 'byams pa bSod nams seng ge (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 33)
7. Paṅ chen 'Bum phrag gsum pa (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 22)
8. 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos bzang (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 47)
9. Sems dpa' chen po dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, the chief among Ngor chen's spiritual sons (*thugs sras kyi gtso bo*) (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 8)

As further disciples, Mang thos lists:⁷⁰⁴

10. Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 19)
11. Nyag bre rGyun bsgul [= bskul?] ba Paṅ chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan⁷⁰⁵ (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 23)
12. dPal gyi rgyal mtshan (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 51)
13. Kun mkhyen dGa' gdong pa (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 36)
14. dMar ston rGyal mtshan 'od zer (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 34)
15. bZod chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 35)

We find a similar list in the writings of A mes zhabs who copied Mang thos' enumeration, correcting some of its shortcomings. A mes zhabs also begins his list with the "Ten Great Persons that Uphold the [Buddha's] Teachings:"⁷⁰⁶

1. Sems dpa' chen po gZhon nu rgyal mchog (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 7)
2. Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 8)

⁷⁰² See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 216.2–3).

⁷⁰³ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 216.3–10): *bstan 'dzin gyi skyes bu chen po bcu nil* (...).

⁷⁰⁴ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 216.11–14): *gzhan yang* (...).

⁷⁰⁵ In general, Gu ge Paṅḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan is not referred to by the name element Nyag bre. This element should either be affixed to the following disciple, dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, or might indicate that a name of a further disciple—such as Nyag bre Yon tan 'od zer, who is enumerated in the list by A mes zhabs presented below—went missing while editing the text.

⁷⁰⁶ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 230.2–5): (... *bstan 'dzin gyi skyes bu chen po bcu stel* (...)).

3. sMa [= sMar] khams pa Grags pa bzang po (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 9)
4. Chos rje gZhon nu seng ge (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 10)
5. Byams chen Rab 'byams pa (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 46)
6. Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 39)
7. Kun mkhyen bSod nams seng ge (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 33)
8. Paṅ chen 'Bum phrag gsum pa (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 22)
9. 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos bzang (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 47)
10. rGyal tshab Kun dga' dbang phyug (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 20)

As further disciples, A mes zhabs lists:⁷⁰⁷

11. Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 19)
12. rGyud [= rGyun?] bskul Paṅ chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 23)
13. dPal gyi rgyal mtshan (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 51)
14. Nyag bre Yon tan 'od zer (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 52)
15. Kun mkhyen dGa' gdong pa (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 36)
16. dMar ston rGyal mtshan 'od zer (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 34)
17. bZod chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (Sangs rgyas phun tshogs' list, no. 35)

⁷⁰⁷ See the *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 230.5–6).

Chapter Eleven

Last Years (1449–1455):

Ngor Monastery as the Nucleus of Sa skya Tantric Training

For Ngor chen's last years before his death, from the time of his return from his third and last journey to Glo bo in 1449 to the end of 1455, the information provided by his biographies is rather scarce. Nevertheless, from the biographies of his more prominent disciples, such as Shākya mchog ldan and Go rams pa, we learn that he resided most of the time, if not exclusively, at his monastic seat of Ngor, bestowing teachings and ordinations on his constantly increasing group of disciples. By then, Ngor Monastery had become an exceptional stronghold of Sa skya tantric training and practice, where during Ngor chen's final years a group of his long-time disciples gathered and young aspiring students from all over the Tibetan plateau arrived year-round to request teachings from the aged Ngor chen and join his annual bestowal of the *Lam 'bras*. Ngor thus became the nucleus for a whole new generation of Sa skya scholars.

Based on the accounts extracted from the biographies of a few of Ngor chen's disciples, I will give in this chapter a glimpse of Ngor chen's activities during those years, as seen by some of the eminent students, who were actually studying under him at Ngor.

To begin with, in 1450, after the death of Rong ston Shes bya kun rig, Don yod dpal (1398–1484) left Nā lendra and journeyed, at age fifty-three, and with an entourage of about thirty monks, to Ngor.⁷⁰⁸ Although he was advised by Ngor chen to act as a teacher (*'chad nyan*) of Sa skya dGa' ldan, he remained at Ngor, pursuing studies and also giving scholastic teachings. While at Ngor, he received the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen three times, along with about fifty different empowerments, and about one hundred fifty ritual permissions (*rjes gnang*), such as those for the *sGrub thab brgya rtsa* (**Sādhanasataka*). Moreover, he obtained explanations on the correct and incorrect practices of the generation stage of Guhyasamāja, Hevajra, Cakrasaṃvara, Yamāntaka, and of the *Sarvadurgatiparisodhanatantra*.⁷⁰⁹ Don yod dpal stayed at Ngor until probably about 1452, when he is said to have either founded the scriptural seminary (*bshad grwa*) of Zi lung at Pan Khyung tshang to the east of gZhis ka rtse or to have become a teacher at Brag dmar Monastery.⁷¹⁰ However, as will be mentioned below, he returned to Ngor at least once, in about 1454.

Similarly, when Ngor chen's old student sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes heard of Rong ston's demise, he embarked on a second journey to dBus to fulfil the last wishes of his late teacher. After stopping at Nā lendra, lHa sa, and gSang phu, Kun dga' ye shes travelled on to gTsang, visiting Ngor and Sa skya. At Ngor, he paid his respects to Ngor chen, offering tea and cloth (*ja ras*). He also sponsored a communal tea serving for the

⁷⁰⁸ On a possible reason why Don yod dpal left Nā lendra after the death of his master Rong ston, see CAUMANN 2012: 413, n. 22 and CAUMANN 2015: 370, n. 18. It was already noted by JACKSON 1989b: 10 that “soon after Rong-ston's death, many of the latter's eminent Sa-skya-pa students seem to have left Nā-lendra to study elsewhere (...).”

⁷⁰⁹ See the *Don yod dpal gyi rnam thar* (pp. 47.4–6 and 56.3–5). See also CAUMANN 2012: 413 and CAUMANN 2015: 369–370. Ngor chen's collected works contain a letter that Ngor chen wrote to Don yod dpal, the *A mo bha'i [= gha'i] dris lan*. In this letter, Ngor chen replied to three questions Don yod dpal had put forward regarding certain visualisations during meditation. On this letter, see CATALOGUE (no. 159).

⁷¹⁰ See CAUMANN 2013: 66–68. Later on, Zi lung was reestablished by Don yod dpal's disciple Shākya mchog ldan under the name Thub bstan gSer mdog can.

monastic assembly (*mang ja*) and distributed donations to the local monks (*mang 'gyed*). En passant (*zhar du*), Kun dga' ye shes received from Ngor chen the *rTsa rgyud* (i.e., the *Hevajratantra*), which was taught as a “side teaching” (*zur chos*) and was given only to him or a small group of disciples, along with many initiations and instructions.⁷¹¹

Also in 1450, the Glo bo bDag po, who could either be A ma dpal or his son and heir A mgon bzang po, sent a group of three hundred monks to central Tibet to perform their scholastic examination (*grwa bskor*) at Sa skya and pursue further studies at other Sa skya establishments in dBus and gTsang. Among this group was 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos 'bzang—who would later serve as second abbot of 'Bras yul sKyed mos tshal—who performed in 1450 his first public exposition (*bshad gsar*) in front of a learned audience at Sa skya. In 1451, he travelled to Ngor where he met Ngor chen for the first time and took *pravrajyā* monastic ordination (i.e., *śrāmaṇera* novice-monk ordination) from him as presiding abbot.⁷¹²

The following year, in 1451, Shākya mchog ldan came to Ngor for the first time and joined Ngor chen's annual bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* (*dus chos kyi lam 'bras*). Along with that, he also received from Ngor chen individual teachings that were not given annually at any specific time (*zur bka'*), including empowerments for Guhyasamāja Akṣobhya, the Fifteen-Deity [*Maṇḍala* of] Nairātmyā, and Cakrasaṃvara according to the system of Lūhipāda, and a few ancillary *Lam 'bras* teachings (*lam 'bras kyi cha lag*).⁷¹³ Subsequently, during the new year of 1452, Shākya mchog ldan took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as presiding abbot and other prominent disciples of Ngor chen that were all present at Ngor at that time: Khwa char Byang chub sems dpā' bSod nams rgyal mtshan as ceremonial master, Mus chen as instructor in private, 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho as timekeeper or announcer of the time of ordination, Kun dga' dbang phyug as assistant (*grogs ldan*), and Sems dpā' chen po Legs pa'i shes rab, mNga' ris pa dKon mchog 'od zer, Bla ma Nam mkha' dpal bzang, and Dol bu rGyal ba 'phel, who constituted part of the supplementary members of Ngor's monastic community that formed the necessary quorum (*kha skong gi dge 'dun*).⁷¹⁴

⁷¹¹ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 359.14–360.21). Kun dga' ye shes had first studied under Ngor chen in dBus sometime between 1414 and 1417 and then at Sa skya between 1417 and 1421. While at Sa skya, he also took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen. On Kun dga' ye shes' earlier studies under Ngor chen, see Part Four, 1 and Part Four, n. 686.

⁷¹² See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 237.3–9). See also the *Ngor chos 'byung* (p. 356.4–5).

⁷¹³ Some of these ancillary *Lam 'bras* teachings (*lam 'bras kyi cha lag*) are listed (*Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2, fol. 27a6–7): *sa skya pa'i mchog sgrub pa'i dmar mo skor gsum* | *thun mong sgrub pa'i dmar po skor gsum* | *lam zab bir srungs sogs lam 'bras kyi cha lag thor tsam thob* (...). The first cycle refers to the Trilogy of Khecarī (*dmar mo skor gsum* or *mkha' spyod skor gsum*), consisting of teachings on Nāro Khecarī, Indra Khecarī, and Maitrī Khecarī. The second cycle refers to the Trilogy of the Red Ones (*dmar po skor gsum*), comprising teachings on Kurukullā, Gaṇapati, and Ṭakkirāja. Both cycles form part of the Thirteen Golden Dharmas (*gser chos bcu gsum*) of the Sa skya tradition; see the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (pp. 114.4–116.2) and STEARNS 2006: 656, n. 390. The passage *lam zab bir srungs* seemingly refers to two different teachings, namely the *Lam zab bla ma'i rnal 'byor* and *Bir srung*, which form part of a group of four teachings not given outside of Sa skya or the Sa skya tradition; see the *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 172.6–173.4): *birwa pas sa chen la dngos su gnang ba* | (...) *lcags ri las mi 'da' ba'i zab chos bzhir grags pa ste* | *lam zab* | *lam sbas bshad* | *bir srung* | *rnam 'joms bir lugs so* | (...). Cyrus Stearns (email, 11 March 2014) informed me that, according to his memory from asking sDe gzhung Rin po che Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma (1906–1987), the phrase *lcags ri las mi 'da' ba* refers to those four teachings as not being given outside the walls of Sa skya. Originally, the phrase meant that they were not even given outside of the 'Khon family. According to the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (pp. 114.4), the Thirteen Golden Dharmas were also not given to outsiders: *lcags ri'i khongs las mi 'da' ba'i snyan brgyud gser chos bcu gsum zhes grags pa la* (...). On Shākya mchog ldan's stay at Ngor, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 11.

⁷¹⁴ In this passage, we face a chronological problem, namely that the timekeeper, Shes rab rgya mtsho, acted in 1452 as abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling in Glo bo; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 7.3–6) and Part

After Shākya mchog ldan had taken his full monk's vows, Ngor chen taught the remaining parts of the *Lam 'bras* and gave to a small group of qualified disciples that included Shākya mchog ldan the instructions of the *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i rtsa dbu ma*.⁷¹⁵ On the occasion of his ordination, Shākya mchog ldan also received teachings from Khwa char Byang chub sems dpa' and Mus chen.⁷¹⁶

When these teaching activities ended, Ngor chen invested Shākya mchog ldan and his fellow monks with an official authorisation (*bka' shog*) to collect offerings (*'bul sdud*), which were assigned for a further unspecified anniversary (*dus mchod*) at gSang phu, from the lamas and local leaders (*sde pa*) of Srad, Seng ge rtse, and Sa skya.⁷¹⁷ Ngor chen also instructed them to depart without him because an invitation party from Glo bo had reached Ngor. But he also said that he would follow later and that Shākya mchog ldan's group should then come to the location where he would reside. After they had collected offerings for about a month, Shākya mchog ldan's party came to hear that Ngor chen had travelled to Chu 'dus and thus they went to meet him there. Ngor chen is said to have resided at Chu 'dus for about half a month accompanied by disciples such as Khwa char Byang chub sems dpa' bSod nams rgyal mtshan as attendant and 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho. During that time, Shākya mchog ldan and his fellow monks requested that the instructions of the *Zhen pa bzhi bral* be taught to their group. Ngor chen's local patron, Drung chen sGrol ma (alias Chu 'dus sDe pa sGrol smyon), was also present at that time and received teachings from 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho.⁷¹⁸

While at Chu 'dus, Ngor chen offered numerous presents to Shākya mchog ldan's group for the aforementioned anniversary and advised them to return to gSang phu.

Four, 6.6. This confusion seems to also be reflected in the statement that though Kun dga' dbang phyug is first said to have acted as an assistant (*grogs ldan* [= *dan*]) in the ordination ceremony, he is later on also specified in the same function as Shes rab rgya mtsho, namely as timekeeper; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 27b1 and 28b4), respectively. For other anachronistic statements contained in the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2*, see Part Four, 6.7.

⁷¹⁵ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 27a5–28b1), CAUMANNs 2012: 98–100, and CAUMANNs 2015: 109–113. However, the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 347.3–4 and 348.4–350.3) by Shākya mchog ldan's disciple Shākya rgyal mtshan presents another chronology. According to this work, Shākya mchog ldan met Ngor chen for the first time at Ngor in 1452 (*chu pho spre'u*) and received many empowerments. Only two years later in 1454, he took full monastic ordination. Nevertheless, based on Shākya mchog ldan's remark that he took full monastic ordination in his twenty-fifth year, his first stay at Ngor can surely be dated from 1451 to 1452; see the *rNam thar bstod pa* (p. 452.2): *nyer lnga'i dus su kun dga'i zhabs pad las|| bsnyen par rdzogs nas zab mo'i chos mang gsan||*. For a discussion by Kun dga' grol mchog about the differing dates of Shākya mchog ldan's full monastic ordination, see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 28a2–b1), CAUMANNs 2012: 98–100, and CAUMANNs 2015: 109–112. Kun dga' grol mchog also “corrects” the statement of an older biography according to which Shākya mchog ldan had taken his full monk's vows in the lineage of the Chos lung tshogs pa, asserting that it was instead the lineage of the Bye rdzing tshogs pa; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 27b7–28a2), CAUMANNs 2012: 99–100, and CAUMANNs 2015: 111. However, Kun dga' grol mchog, though listing the correct lineage masters, wrongly identified the community in the Vinaya tradition of Śākyasri through which the lineage of *prātimokṣa* precepts was passed down. This lineage was that of the Tsha mig tshogs pa and not of the Bye rdzing tshogs pa. On the monastic communities in Śākyasri's tradition, see HEIMBEL 2013.

⁷¹⁶ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 28b3–6), CAUMANNs 2012: 100, and CAUMANNs 2015: 113–114.

⁷¹⁷ On this religious service, see CAUMANNs 2012: 97–98 and 101–104 and CAUMANNs 2015: 108 and 114–118.

⁷¹⁸ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 28b6–29a4), CAUMANNs 2012: 101, and CAUMANNs 2015: 114–115. Cf. the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 1* (p. 347.4), which specifies the areas for collection offerings as Chu 'dus and the sTod region (*stod phyogs*). Srad was located to the south of Ngor; see CASSINELLI and EKVAL 1969: [31], Map 1 (Srad), MAP 2 (2888, B, Se), and SØRENSEN and HAZOD 2007: [299], Map A (Srad). “The fort of Seng ge rtse stood,” according to JACKSON (under preparation), “about 45 kilometers southwest of Shigatse in a western valley of Shab (north of Srad), on one of the main routes between Ngor and Sa skya.” For the location of Seng ge rtse to the east of the Shab river, see also MAP 2 (2988, D, Senggetsä). On the Seng ge rtse lords, see CZAJA 2013: 487, n. 188. On the Shab district and the Shab river, see Part Three, n. 43.

However, as a delegation from Glo bo would not arrive until that anniversary commenced during the summer, he proclaimed that he would make requests that a delegation went during the monastic winter term to sponsor a communal tea offering (*mang ja*) and make donations (*'gyed*) to the monks of gSang phu. He allegedly proclaimed that he would travel to Glo bo and stay for three years. He also instructed Shākya mchog ldan to come back to Ngor as soon as he would hear news of his return to complete his monastic training under him. Moreover, he issued an official travel document (*bka' shog lam yig*) to collect donations from the local rulers on their way back to dBus.⁷¹⁹

A closer look at the last two paragraphs reveals a chronological problem, namely that Ngor chen announced in 1452 that he would embark on another journey to Glo bo. This sojourn was not only announced, but, following the Shākya mchog ldan biography by Kun dga' grol mchog, Ngor chen did in fact travel to Glo bo, where Kun dga' grol mchog mentions him residing in 1453. However, as nothing is known about Ngor chen visiting Glo bo once again in the early 1450s, Kun dga' grol mchog's remarks must be a mistake.⁷²⁰ Moreover, his account also suffers from the anachronistic claim that 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho was allegedly present in Chu 'dus in 1452, though he functioned as abbot of Thub bstan dar rgyas gling in Glo bo at that time.⁷²¹

As promised by Ngor chen, Kun dga' grol mchog continues to report, a delegation from Glo bo headed by Nang chen dPal drung bstan arrived in gSang phu during the winter term of 1452 and hosted a communal tea offering (*mang ja*) for many days, presented local specialities from Glo bo (*stod rdzas*), and paid their respects to the abbots and preceptors (*mkhan slob*) of gSang phu by offering exquisite presents.⁷²²

In the cold winter of 1454, Shākya mchog ldan once again came to Ngor with a small group of monks to request further teachings from Ngor chen. For this purpose, he came all the way from Glang ri 'Od ldan (i.e., Glang thang) in 'Phan yul, where the two Glang thang sPyan sngas Kun dga' rdo rje and Blo gros rgyal mtshan had furnished him with a letter of petition along with a flower-patterned cloak as presents for Ngor chen, as well as with lots of tea and silk cloth as gifts for requesting teachings. According to Kun dga' grol mchog, those two brothers had informed Shākya mchog ldan of Ngor chen's alleged return from Glo bo and advised him to travel to Ngor to continue his studies. While on their way, Shākya mchog ldan's group made a first stopover at Pan Khyung tshang to meet with Shākya mchog ldan's teacher Don yod dpal, who had visited Ngor a couple of days earlier. Don yod dpal informed Shākya mchog ldan of his meeting with Ngor chen and told him that it was urgent that he request teachings from him as soon as possible, because Ngor chen's eyesight had deteriorated and he had become old.⁷²³ When they had

⁷¹⁹ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 29a4–b3), CAUMANNNS 2012: 101–102, and CAUMANNNS 2015: 115–116.

⁷²⁰ On this misapprehension, see Part Four, 6.7. According to the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 29b3), Kun dga' grol mchog had not taken the account on Ngor chen's planned Glo bo journey from older Shākya mchog ldan biographies, which otherwise served as the main textual sources for his work, but states that it was related to him by a certain Chu 'dus pa dBang phyug.

⁷²¹ See Part Four, 6.6 and Part Four, n. 418. Nevertheless, we find a Chu 'dus bDag po also listed among the patrons of Shes rab rgya mtsho; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 9.4). On the occasion of Ngor chen's stay in Chu 'dus, Shes rab rgya mtsho allegedly bestowed teachings on Shākya mchog ldan and the Chu 'dus sDe dpa; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 29a2–4), CAUMANNNS 2012: 101, and CAUMANNNS 2015: 114–115.

⁷²² See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 31b2–32a1), CAUMANNNS 2012: 105, and CAUMANNNS 2015: 121.

⁷²³ Don yod dpal illustrates his remarks with the proverb (*Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2*, fol. 35a7): *nyi ma gangsthog tu phebs zer ba'i dper gda'o gsuñg*. I am inclined to understand this proverb in the sense that Ngor chen's death was approaching. A similar example is included in the same work with regard to the advanced age of Byang bdag rNam rgyal grags bzang (1395–1475); see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 57a3): *da nged kyang lo brygad bcu gya gnyis stengs su slebl nyi ma gangsthog tu 'khyol ba yin pas physis mjal ba'i spros pa med*.

finished parching and then grounding a supply of barley for the monastic winter term, Shākya mchog ldan's group proceeded to Ngor, where Ngor chen's annual bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* had already commenced. Nevertheless, they arrived just in time for the last section of the Three Appearances (*snang ba gsum*), the Pure Appearances of a Buddha (*dag pa'i snang ba*).⁷²⁴ The explanation of the Three Appearances, as Cyrus Stearns clarifies, constitutes "the Mahayana basis of the Path with the Result" and "contains all the preliminary topics of meditation necessary for beginning the Vajrayana path."⁷²⁵ Beginning with this section of the *Lam 'bras*, Shākya mchog ldan gradually obtained the generation of *bodhicitta*, the tantric sections (*sngags lam*), and those ancillary teachings (*cha lag*) that he had not received earlier. Moreover, he obtained the *sGrub thabs brgya rtsa* (**Sādhanasāataka*).⁷²⁶

While at Ngor, Shākya mchog ldan was urged by some of his fellow monks to proceed to Sa skya to perform his public scholastic examinations (*grwa skor*). But as that would have prevented him from receiving more teachings from Ngor chen, he had no interest in doing so. However, when Ngor chen was informed about this, he insisted that Shākya mchog ldan should go for that important examination, explaining that the exposition of the Buddha's teachings at Sa skya was the traditional way of becoming a Sa skya *dge bshes*, and given Shākya mchog ldan's exceptional insight, his examination would serve as a useful example for future generations.⁷²⁷ Moreover, Ngor chen said that though he himself had wished to perform such an examination, it never materialised, because owing to his strong interest in the tantric teachings, he had only obtained a partial training in non-tantric scholastic subjects. Hence, he said Shākya mchog ldan should view his own scholastic examination as performing it in Ngor chen's stead.⁷²⁸ He then presented Shākya mchog ldan with an entire set of his own monk's attire, including a hat and shoes. When Ngor chen heard that Shākya mchog ldan did not dare to wear those robes, he gave him a set of new ones. Afterwards, Ngor chen advised him to go into retreat and prepare himself by studying the relevant texts, but Shākya mchog ldan did not see any need to prepare. He wanted instead to continue with his studies under Ngor chen, who refused, however, and sent him into a strict retreat. Again Shākya mchog ldan did not follow his master's directions and spent his time in retreat propitiating a *yi dam* deity.⁷²⁹

When the time for Shākya mchog ldan's examination had come, Ngor chen issued a letter during the summer session of 1455 to inform the officials in charge of examinations (*gzhung las pa*) in Sa skya, headed by Las chen Yon tan rgya mtsho, that he had called upon Shākya mchog ldan and his fellow monks to perform their scholastic examination and further stated in which subjects Shākya mchog ldan intended to be

⁷²⁴ On the three sections of the Three Appearances, see Part Three, n. 451.

⁷²⁵ STEARNS 2006: 5.

⁷²⁶ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 35a2–b3), CAUMANNs 2012: 109–110, and CAUMANNs 2015: 130–132. For the generation of *bodhicitta* within the context of the *Tshogs bshad* tradition of the *Lam 'bras*, see DAVIDSON 1992: 183, n. 69 and Part Four, 1.

⁷²⁷ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 35b3–6), CAUMANNs 2012: 110–111, and CAUMANNs 2015: 132–133. On this episode, see also the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 350.3–351.1), according to which Ngor chen reportedly said that the scholastic examination constituted the "consecration" (*rab gnas*) of a *dge bshes*, in general, and of a Sa skya *dge bshes*, in particular, and that Shākya mchog ldan should by all means perform an exposition of the Buddha's doctrine at either Byang Ngam ring, Sa skya, or rTse thang. On this episode, see also CAUMANNs 2012: [108] and CAUMANNs 2015: 132–133, n. 17.

⁷²⁸ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 35b5–7), CAUMANNs 2012: 109–110, and CAUMANNs 2015: 133.

⁷²⁹ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 35b7–36a6), CAUMANNs 2012: 111, and CAUMANNs 2015: 133–134. For this account, see also the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 1* (pp. 350.3–352.2).

examined in. Then, together with some fellow monks, Shākya mchog ldan departed from Ngor during the first half of the fifth month of 1455 and began his exposition at Sa skya on the traditional day reserved for this occasion, the summer solstice.⁷³⁰

After his successful examination, Shākya mchog ldan returned to Ngor, where his presence is recorded for the fourth day of the first half of the seventh month of 1455.⁷³¹ He was welcomed by an overjoyed Ngor chen, who honoured him with an elevated seat in the monastic assembly of Ngor.⁷³² On the occasion of the auspicious tea serving celebrating the successful scholastic examination (*grwa skor gyi legs ja*), Ngor chen also gave presents to Shākya mchog ldan, including an Indian bronze statue of Buddha Śākyamuni that the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrī had once given to Sa skya Paṇḍita, the *rnām sbyar* upper garment as well as a Mongolian cloak of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa, and a begging bowl that had been offered to Ngor chen by the Phag mo gru pa ruler Gong ma Grags pa 'byung gnas.⁷³³

In the dBang khang, which might be the assembly hall of Ngor known as dBang khang chen mo, Ngor chen thereupon bestowed solely on Shākya mchog ldan empowerments for the cycles of Cakrasaṃvara and Vajrayoginī and teachings on Chos skyong (i.e., Mahākāla), instructing Shākya mchog ldan to make them the essence of his spiritual practice. He also bestowed on him expositions of the three *tantras* that had been translated by Sa skya Paṇḍita, such as the *Vajrahrdayālamkāra* and *Guhyamañitilaka*, and furthermore the instructions of the *Five Stages of Guhyasamāja*, and the reading transmission for the scroll-painting based *maṇḍala* ritual of Guhyasamāja known as *Zung 'jug gsal ba* (i.e., the *Yuganaddhaprakāśa*). He also instructed Shākya mchog ldan to compose an exposition on Guhyasamāja that distinguished between the different exegetical systems, which the latter accordingly did much later at gSer mdog can in 1504.⁷³⁴

As Ngor chen's eyesight was already failing, he told Shākya mchog ldan to go to Chu mig to request from Chu mig bDag chen Blo gros dbang phyug the reading transmission for the *Sa skya' bka' 'bum* and for the teaching cycles of Chos skyong (i.e., Mahākāla). He

⁷³⁰ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 1 (p. 352.2–5), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fols. 36a6–b2 and 37a7), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 127.2–128.1), CAUMANNs 2012: 111–112, and CAUMANNs 2015: 134–135 and 140. On Yon tan rgya mtsho, see also the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 38a2–3). For the presentation of Shākya mchog ldan's actual examination, see CAUMANNs 2012: 113–115 and CAUMANNs 2015: 137–139.

⁷³¹ On that day Shākya mchog ldan wrote a eulogy of Ngor chen; see the *rDo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po la bstod pa* (p. 242.1–4), CAUMANNs 2012: 112, and CAUMANNs 2015: 140.

⁷³² When Shākya mchog ldan reached Ngor, he was carried on some kind of litter (*kan rtsa*) into the monastic ground and was welcomed in the same way during a later visit after Ngor chen's death; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fols. 38a5–7 and 50b2–3), respectively.

⁷³³ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 38a4–b2), CAUMANNs 2012: 116, and CAUMANNs 2015: 140–141. The *rnām sbyar* upper garment is said to have been worn by Chos rgyal 'Phags pa for twenty-five years and was thus enriched with the blessing of all the consecrations, empowerments, and full monastic ordinations he had given during that time. The Mongolian cloak contained 'Phags pa's "dirt" or "grime" (*sku dreg*). Both garments are also said to have emitted the scent of his pure discipline. Ngor chen also made presents to Shākya mchog ldan's attendants who had done their own examinations while at Sa skya; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 38b2–3). On their examination, see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 355.3–356.1), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 38a1–2), CAUMANNs 2012: 111, n. 20, and CAUMANNs 2015: 139.

⁷³⁴ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fols. 38b6–39a2), CAUMANNs 2012: 116, CAUMANNs 2015: 141–142. According to the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fols. 38b7–39a1), the *Zung 'jug gsal ba* was composed by Slob dpon sGra gcan 'dzin dpal bshes gnyen (Rāhulaśrīkalyāṇamitra) and conjointly translated by Śākyaśrī and Sa skya Paṇḍita. For an episode when a printing of Shākya mchog ldan's Guhyasamāja exposition was later offered to a statue of Ngor chen housed in his living quarters at Ngor, see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 39a2–4), CAUMANNs 2012: 116–117, and CAUMANNs 2012: 142. On Ngor chen's Guhyasamāja practice, see the *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.2–3).

also told him that he would then give him the actual means of instruction (*dn̄gos kyi bkri thabs*). Thus, in late summer, Shākya mchog ldan travelled to Chu mig and obtained from Blo gros dbang phyug the reading transmission for the *Sa skya' bka' 'bum* and also the ritual permission (*rjes gnang*) and *sādhana* cycles of Chos skyong lcam dral (i.e., Mahākāla with consort). Returning to Ngor in autumn, he acted, following Ngor chen's instructions, as the ceremonial master for many monks that took full monastic ordination. He also received from Ngor chen an instruction on *rTsa dbu ma* and other teachings that he had wished to receive, such as the *guruyoga* known as *Lam zab phyi nang*.⁷³⁵

During his several stays at Ngor, Shākya mchog ldan probably encountered the two Glang thang sPyan snga brothers, Kun dga' rdo rje and Blo gros rgyal mtshan, who both studied in the first half of the 1450s at different times under Ngor chen at Ngor. The biographies of those two brothers, which Shākya mchog ldan wrote, report a few details about their respective stays at Ngor. Kun dga' rdo rje resided at Ngor from about 1451 to 1453 and visited again in 1455, staying until Ngor chen's passing away in 1456. He began his studies in 1451 by taking the two higher vows (*sdom pa gong ma gnyis*)—that is, the *bodhisattva* and *mantra* vows—through the respective rites of generating *bodhicitta* according to the Madhyamaka tradition (*dbu ma lugs kyi sems bskyed kyi cho ga*) and the initiation rite of Hevajra according to its “commentarial tradition” (*dges pa rdo rje 'grel pa lugs kyi dbang gi cho ga*). During his first stay, Kun dga' rdo rje received from Ngor chen a huge amount of tantric teachings, including about twenty-five empowerments and the *Lam 'bras* up to the commentaries by Sa chen Kun dga' snying po on the *rDo rje tshig rkang* of Virūpa (*gzhung bshad*). When Kun dga' rdo rje was about to depart from Ngor, he was presented by Ngor chen with numerous gifts such as a *nam sbyar* upper garment that Ngor chen himself had worn for a long time, a set of *vajra* and *ghaṇṭa*, and a volume of a *tantra*. He was also directed by Ngor chen to take responsibility for the spread of the Buddha's doctrine in dBus, in general, and of the *Sa skya* teachings, in particular.⁷³⁶

As promised, Kun dga' rdo rje returned to Ngor in the first month of 1455 along with four religious scholars (*dge bshes*) from Khams as his attendants, who were not familiar with those central Tibetan regions. While at Ngor, Kun dga' rdo rje received from Ngor chen an extensive bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* along with minor ancillary teachings (*cha lag phran*) that he had previously not obtained. Moreover, he was able to clarify the meaning of many profound teachings and resolve a few superimpositions (*sgro 'dogs*) through questions and answers (*zhus lan gyi tshul*).⁷³⁷

In the seventh month of 1455, Kun dga' rdo rje's younger brother, Blo gros rgyal mtshan, arrived at Ngor together with a group of monks. By then, about more than half of the annual bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* had been completed, however. Thus Blo gros rgyal

⁷³⁵ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 39a.4–7), CAUMANN 2012: 117–118, and CAUMANN 2015: 142–143. On the teachings that Shākya mchog ldan received from Ngor chen, see also the gloss in the *bShes gnyen dam pa bcu phrag bzhi'i bstod pa* (p. 6.2): *ngor pa rdo rje 'chang gi drung du/bsnyen par rdzogs shing gsung ngag rin po che cha lag phal cher rdzogs pa dang/ bla med kyi dbang byin rlabs mi 'dra ba bcu drug tsaṃ dang/ sgrub thabs brgya rtsa dang/ rjes gnang zur pa nyi shu tsaṃ dang/ gsang 'dus 'phags skor gyi gzhung gsum gyi bshad pa dang/ de'i bskyed rdzogs gnyis ka'i bshad pa rgyas pa dang/ rtsa dbu ma'i khrid dang/ zhen pa bzhi bral gyi khrid zhus/*. A study of the *gsan yig* of Kun dga' grol mchog, the *Dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig bstan pa'i nor rdzas*, will surely cast more light on the teachings that Ngor chen transmitted to Shākya mchog ldan. On Ngor chen's compilation of Mahākāla teachings, the *gSer pod*, see Part Five, n. 122.

⁷³⁶ See the *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 410.7–411.7). On the term *gzhung bshad*, see STEARNS 2001: 17–18, who mentions that this was one term to describe Sa chen's commentaries and that, according to Gung ru Shes rab bzang po, the “‘explication of the treatise’ (*gzhung bshad*) must be understood to mean ‘a commentary on the *Rdo rje tshig rkang*’ (...).”

⁷³⁷ See the *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 412.3–5).

mtshan told Ngor chen that he would stay and wait until next year's bestowal and in the meantime pursue other studies under him.⁷³⁸

But Ngor chen, obviously expecting his own speedy demise, was not satisfied with this suggestion and began to impart the *Lam 'bras* on the group of Blo gros rgyal mtshan later on in the same year. By the tenth month, he had finished giving the teachings on Sa chen's commentaries on the *rDo rje tshig rkang* (*gzhung bshad*). At that time, since Ngor chen's eyesight had become too weak to teach, and since he secluded himself in a strict retreat, he advised Blo gros rgyal mtshan and his monks to pay a visit to Sa skya first and then continue with their studies under Mus chen in Mus, which they accordingly did.⁷³⁹

In comparison with the accounts on Ngor chen's final years from the aforementioned biographies, the life of Go rams pa is, by far, less rich in detail. Nevertheless, it confirms that Ngor chen resided most of the time at Ngor, bestowing teachings and ordinations. Initially, Go rams pa intended to do an examination or debating round (*grwa skor*) in dBus and gTsang, but an illness interfered with his plan. Thus, in light of the advanced age of both Ngor chen and Mus chen, he decided to study the profound teachings of the Vajrayāna under these masters and engage afterwards in spiritual practice. Kong ston dBang phyug grub pa mentions in the biography he wrote of his master that Go rams pa travelled to Ngor during the winter of 1453 and studied under Ngor chen until the fourth month of 1456, the month of Ngor chen's passing away. During that period of time, he received, for instance, two times the *Lam 'bras* and also the exposition of the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra* and related empowerments such as of Vajradhātu from the *Samputatantra*.⁷⁴⁰ In 1454, he took full monastic ordination from Ngor chen as presiding abbot, Mus chen as ceremonial master, Khwa char Byang chub Sems dpa' bSod nams rgyal mtshan as instructor in private, and sDom brtson dam pa Sangs rgyas dpal grub as time keeper.⁷⁴¹ In that same year, Mus chen had just returned to Ngor, where he bestowed on the non-residential monks, including Go rams pa, numerous empowerments and reading transmissions such as for the Tantra collection (*rgyud 'bum*) of the *bKa' 'gyur*.⁷⁴² Some other prominent disciples of Ngor chen that were residing at Ngor during that period were Khwa char Byang chub Sems dpa' bSod nams rgyal mtshan and Gung ru Shes rab bzang po, who would later serve as the sixth abbot of Nā lendra. From both of them, Go rams pa obtained teachings as well.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁸ See the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 429.4–6). Blo gros rgyal mtshan's arrival in Ngor is also mentioned in the *Kun dga' rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 412.4–5).

⁷³⁹ See the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 429.6–430.2).

⁷⁴⁰ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 92.17–94.13).

⁷⁴¹ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 94.14–19), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 2 (p. 4.13–17), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 311.7–17), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 4 (p. 359.14–15), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 5 (p. 386.9–16), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 6 (p. 39.1–5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 7 (pp. 141.19–142.3), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (pp. 185.21–188.2). Note that some of these biographies (wrongly?) date Go rams pa's full monastic ordination to 1455. Some also give different roles for the masters involved in it. On Go rams pa's ordination, see also CABEŽON and DARGYAY 2006: 34, JORDEN 2003: 50, VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 120, and SOBISCH 2002b: 27.

⁷⁴² See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 94.19–20) and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 608.6). As Mus chen did not reside at Ngor for longer periods of time during those years, no information on Ngor chen's activities can be gained from his biographies. However, they contain details on his last meeting with Ngor chen shortly before his master's passing away in 1456, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

⁷⁴³ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (pp. 94.21–95.3). On Go rams pa's studies at Ngor, see also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 2 (pp. 4.6–7.1), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (pp. 311.1–315.13), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 4 (pp. 358.17–359.6), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 5 (pp. 386.17–18, 387.2–3, and 389.11–391.16), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 6 (pp. 37.17–42.5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 7 (pp. 141.7–142.14), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (pp. 178.6–190.4). In addition, see also CABEŽON and DARGYAY 2006: 34–35, JORDEN 2003: 48–49, VAN DER KUIJP 1983: 120, and SOBISCH 2002b: 27. On Gung ru Shes rab zang po, see JACKSON 1989b: 15–16 and JACKSON (under preparation).

Chapter Twelve

Passing Away

In contrast to the lack of information about Ngor chen's last years, his two extant biographies provide us with a detailed description of the events during the last months leading up to his passing away on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth month of 1456. Given Ngor chen's influence as one of the most important tantric Sa skya masters of his generation, his death is also mentioned, in greater or less detail, in the biographies and writings of his disciples, such as Mus chen and Go rams pa. The following account of Ngor chen's final months is mainly based on his own biographies, supplemented by those other sources.⁷⁴⁴

Ngor chen's biographies open the section on his final months with a description of his general state of health. According to that, his physical condition is said to have been always extremely weak (*sku lus shin tu nyam chung*) since he began at age nine to observe the ascetic discipline of *gdan gcig rdor dkar*, restricting his daily food to a single meatless meal at or prior to noon.⁷⁴⁵ In general, this kind of diet, or a vegetarian diet in general, often weakened the physical condition of many Tibetan lamas. Life stories of later Ngor abbots relate that some, as the result of that practice, or from a vegetarian diet (*gsol ba rdor dkar*), reportedly became physically weak (*sku shed chung*) or emaciated (*sku rid pa*).⁷⁴⁶ Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, for instance, reports that though he himself adopted a vegetarian diet (*rdor dkar*) at age fifteen, due to his many obligations his body could not be sustained on such a diet alone. Thus he later had to break his pledge to eat vegetarian at about age thirty.⁷⁴⁷

With regard to his restricted diet, Ngor chen is said to have not found time to have even that single vegetarian meal while, in 1406, attending on his sick teacher Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and thereafter while taking care of his master's final rites.⁷⁴⁸ Consequently, his stomach appears to have shrunk, and from then on, he was always tormented by a lack of appetite. Later on, he would sometimes develop a slight sensation of hunger, but never ate the kind of food that would have strengthened his physical condition. The only food he consumed each day was a small amount of roasted barley flour and a few vegetables, such as radish.⁷⁴⁹ Additionally, he sometimes must have added yoghurt to his diet. This is evident from the biography of his nephew Kun dga' dbang

⁷⁴⁴ For the presentation in Ngor chen's own biographies, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 468.2–473.5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 554.5–564.6).

⁷⁴⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 468.2–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 554.5). On the ascetic discipline of *gdan gcig rdor dkar*, see Part Three, 5.2 and Part Three, 5.3.

⁷⁴⁶ See, for instance, the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 33.3–4) and *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 817.4–5). See also Part Four, n. 187.

⁷⁴⁷ See the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rang rnam* (p. 192.5–6). Similar difficulties are also mentioned in the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 716.2–6 and 724.5).

⁷⁴⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 468.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 554.5–6).

⁷⁴⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 468.3–5): *lto ba rubs pa bzhin song ba yin pa 'dra/ dang ga yang mi bde ba rang cig byung gsungs/ phyis gsol dang cung zad bder song ba yin gsungs na'angl sku gzugs shed la phan pa'i gsol ni mi bzhes par 'dug cing/ zhib spol nyung zad re dang/ la phug bzhin cung zad re ma gtogs bzhes pa mi 'ong ba cig 'dug/*; and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 554.4–555.1): (...) *lto rub bzhin song ba yin pa 'dra/ dong ga ye mi bde ba rang cig byung gsungs/ phyis gsol cung bder song ba yin na'angl sku gzugs shed la phan pa'i gsol ni mi bzhed par 'dug cing/ zhib spol cung zad re dang/ la phug bzhin cung zad re ma gtogs bzhes pa mi 'ongs cig 'dug/*.

phyug, who when he first came to Ngor as a boy was entrusted to look after the *mdzo mo*, a female yak-cow hybrid, that was kept to produce milk for Ngor chen's yoghurt.⁷⁵⁰

However, even though for decades Ngor chen's physical condition was thus rather weak (*sku lus la shed med pa*), he was not concerned about his own health. On the contrary, he always stayed true to the Dharma, devoting his life to the benefit of his disciples and the Buddha's doctrine. His compassionate self-sacrifice in the name of Buddhism is illustrated by episodes from his life that also show his carelessness regarding his own physical health. For instance, even in the depths of winter when everybody was freezing despite being wrapped in many layers of robes, Ngor chen gave empowerments and distributed the related empowering substances (*dbang rdzas*) wearing only a combination of his inner and outer upper robe (*gzan chos sbrags ma'i thang rkyang re*); a practice his biographers consider to have greatly threatened his physical wellbeing. Later on, even in old age, he regularly bestowed on hundreds of monks the causal empowerment (*rgyu dus kyi dbang*) of the *Lam 'bras*—that is, the first set of empowerments marking the beginning of the tantric path (*sngags lam*) and the main practices of the *Lam 'bras*—giving it to monks in groups of twenty-five day after day for a whole month.⁷⁵¹ In doing so, he was never careless about handling the prescribed ritual practices. For instance, as his weak condition did not allow him, while walking around during the preparation rituals, to quickly tie the strings on the upper arms (*sta gon gyi dpung skud*) of the disciples to be initiated, for many years, he had to painstakingly tie each one by sitting down in front of each student.⁷⁵²

When his physical condition further deteriorated, Ngor chen announced on the first day of the monastic winter session of 1455, which commenced on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month, that this would be his last teaching and that he would seclude himself in retreat afterwards. However, his senior disciples such as bDag chen po—who seems to be Chu mig bDag chen Blo gros dbang phyug—beseeched him to first go into retreat in early winter and, if he felt better, to bestow teachings next spring.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵⁰ See the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 520.3–5) and *Kun dga' dbang phyug gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 621.6–622.2). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (10.3–4).

⁷⁵¹ DAVIDSON 1992: 127–128 has pointed out that “the ‘causal consecration’, like other Hevajra consecrations given at Ngor, was given out in a special dBang-khang, a small room housed in the same building as the main temple (gTug-lag khang), but separated from it. There was a tradition at Ngor that no more than twenty-five students could receive the various *abhiṣekas* at any one time. According to Thar-rtse Rin-po-che, the Ngor-pa tradition ties this to Ngor-chen himself, who was said to be able to only visualize the complete internal and external *maṇḍalas* of twenty-five students at any one time and therefore felt compelled to limit the students to that number. Following this tradition, the mKhan-po was forced to bestow the *abhiṣeka* on several groups in succession, and this could take some time, especially if, as was the case in 1952 during Thar-rtse Rin-po-che's second year as mKhan-po, more than three hundred students registered for the Tshogs-bshad.” Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 12 May 2009), however, was not familiar with this explanation and mentioned that restricting the amount of initiates to twenty-five was already mentioned in the *tantras*. Furthermore, he remarked that when empowerments were given in previous times, they contained a detailed explanation of each and every point. As they were given at night and had to be finished by dawn, it would have been impossible to finish in one session if more than twenty-five students had attended. For a discussion of the number of adepts admitted to empowerments, see also SOBISCH 2009. According to the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 29.10–13) and *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 400.11 and 15–16), those empowerments were given in the four-pillared Nub mGon khang of the gZims khang ka drug ma: *ka drug ma'i rgyab ngos su shar mgon khang ka ba gnyis| nub ngos su nub mgon khang ka bzhi ma 'dir mkhan rabs rim byon gyis dge 'dun nyi shu rtsa lnga re la kye rdor bsgrig dbang gnang sa yin zhing (...)*. On the gZims khang ka drug ma, see Part Four, 5.

⁷⁵² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 468.5–469.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 555.1–6).

⁷⁵³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 555.6–556.2).

Thus Ngor chen complied with the wishes of his disciples and began his retreat later that same day. What his disciples did not know was that the hoped-for spring teachings would never materialise, because Ngor chen did not emerge from retreat prior to his death. Nevertheless, the retreat was not strict and apart from not bestowing teachings on Ngor's monastic assembly, he continued in his frail condition to give previously unfinished *Lam 'bras* teachings to individual disciples in his private living quarters. He gave, for instance, empowerments (*byin rlabs*), instructions on removing impediments (*gegs sel*), oral instructions (*gdams ngag*), and the prediction of practice (*lung sbyin*). That whole time, Ngor chen never exhibited any signs of sickness.⁷⁵⁴

Suddenly, however, he was struck by the relapse of an older illness called *skya rbab*, a case of dropsey or edema (*chu nad*), which when becoming chronic develops into dropsy characterised by more swelling (*'or nad*). In turn, chronic *'or nad* can further develop into a kind of advanced dropsy called *dmu chu* (after the evil dMu spirit that causes it). The common symptoms of these three diseases are swelling of the body (*lus g.yo (krangs)*), shortness of breath (*dbugs 'tshangs*), decreased urine output (*dri chu nyung*), and difficulty walking uphill (*gyen 'gro lhod*). Additionally, in the case of dropsy (*skya rbab*), the eyes and face become swollen. The name of this disorder is related to the pale skin (*skya*) and swelling (*rbab*) the illness exhibits. It belongs to the phlegm (*bad kan*) category, which along with wind (*rlung*) and bile (*mkhris pa*) forms the three faults or humours (*nyes pa gsum*), the three fundamental physiological principles of traditional Tibetan medicine.⁷⁵⁵

However, a remark found in Ngor chen's biographies suggests that his disease was no relapse, but rather that his suffering from dropsy (*skya rbab*) had become chronic and had further developed into more acute dropsy (*'or nad*). Previously, while concluding their section on Ngor chen's compassionate self-sacrifice in the name of Buddhism, his biographers remarked that until he fell sick with acute dropsy (*'or*), Ngor chen was unable to bear the thought of spending even a moment not teaching the Dharma or giving empowerments.⁷⁵⁶ This more acute dropsy (*'or*) is characterised by slightly more swelling than mild dropsy (*skya rbab*) and involves the accumulation of water in the side of the body on which the sick person sleeps or lies.⁷⁵⁷ Thus when Ngor chen came down with more advanced dropsy (*'or nad*), he was forced to end his usual teaching activities.

During Ngor chen's illness, religious services for his recovery (*sku rim*) were performed and a special medicine was produced, as well. Unfortunately, no form of treatment led to any improvement. At this point, Ngor chen's biographers pause their narrative to relativise both the consequences of that illness and a remark of Ngor chen that his sojourn in Yar lungs (1441–1442) had made a slightly adverse impact on his lifespan. His biographers emphasise that Ngor chen's physical condition was only due to his absence of strength (*shed med*), because a healthy body would have otherwise been able to cope with such an illness, on the one hand, and the negative impact of that journey, on the other. They further reinforce this point by quoting another of Ngor chen's remarks, saying that during all the time he was in retreat, he only felt weak (*shed*

⁷⁵⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 556.2–3). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 469.2–3). On the prediction of practice, see Part Three, n. 496.

⁷⁵⁵ On the causes and conditions (*rgyu rkyen*) of *skya rbab*, its symptoms (*nad rtags*), and its method of treatment (*gso thabs*), see the *gSo rig zin tig gces bsdu*s (pp. 35–37). On *skya rbab*, see also the *Phan bde'i bsil zer* (pp. 67–69) and *gSo rig tshig mdzod* (p. 34, s.v. *skya rbab*). On *'or nad*, see the *Phan bde'i bsil zer* (pp. 70–71), *gSo rig tshig mdzod* (pp. 799–800, s.v. *'or nad*), and *gSo rig zin tig gces bsdu*s (pp. 35–38). On *dmu chu*, see the *Phan bde'i bsil zer* (pp. 72–84), *gSo rig tshig mdzod* (p. 650, s.v. *dmu chu*), and *gSo rig zin tig gces bsdu*s (pp. 38–42).

⁷⁵⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 469.2–3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 555.6–556.1).

⁷⁵⁷ See the *gSo rig zin tig gces bsdu*s (pp. 36.6 and 37.19–38.1).

med), but never suffered from any kind of pain.⁷⁵⁸ Thus these accounts suggest that Ngor chen was too physically weak to overcome his chronic dropsy and when it turned into more acute dropsy ('or nad), he finally succumbed to it.

Although Ngor chen reportedly felt no pain while in retreat, some people began to quarrel with the monk attendants serving him, probably insisting that more efforts were needed for his medical treatment and thus a message was sent to the Drung chen in Glo bo, A ma dpal.⁷⁵⁹

When Ngor chen heard about this, he said: "Call a physician from sTod. He will figure out [what is wrong with me]."⁷⁶⁰

Within a month, an expert physician arrived at Ngor. After examining Ngor chen's pulse, he diagnosed that he was not seriously ill.⁷⁶¹

Ngor chen told the doctor that he would not be of any benefit for his recovery and also revealed that he had only called him to fulfil the wishes of A ma dpal, who had once requested that Ngor chen, in case he were struck by a severe illness, should by all means call an expert physician from Glo bo. Hence, the physician just gave Ngor chen some medicine to stimulate his appetite (*gsol dang 'byed pa'i sman*). But as he could not diagnose a concrete illness, he did not perform any other treatments.⁷⁶²

The physician's inability to diagnose Ngor chen, and the description of Ngor chen having fallen sick with dropsy (*skya rbab*) and then acute dropsy ('or nad) are difficult to reconcile. For some reason even one of the best physicians from Western Tibet was baffled by Ngor chen's condition, or else he deliberately concealed Ngor chen's true condition from him.

On the twenty fourth day of the third month, Ngor chen announced: "At present, [it appears] difficult that I could [ever] expound the Dharma [again]. Hence, prepare mud bricks at an unpolluted site. It will be necessary to build a *stūpa*."⁷⁶³

During that month, Ngor chen also repeatedly prepared sacrificial *gtor mas* (*mchod gtor*) and offered them about three times daily. Saying: "[Go and] invite Slob dpon dKon rgyal [i.e., Mus chen]! Be sure to [both] come back [here] in a month's time!"⁷⁶⁴ he sent someone to invite Mus chen, who was then residing in his native Mus. Until the latter arrived, Ngor chen met individually with his closest students then present at Ngor, such as bDag chen Chu mig pa Blo gros dbang phyug, and offered them his guidance, gave them presents, and completed teachings that he had not finished earlier. He also sent gifts to masters from the bZhi thog bla brang and Bla brang Shar of Sa skya and to Glo bo.⁷⁶⁵

Seemingly anticipating his own rapidly approaching demise, Ngor chen instructed his close disciples in detail on how to prepare his dead body, how to perform his cremation, and how to carry out the related post-death offerings and religious services to create merit on his behalf. He also directed them to build his "inner and outer sacred objects" (*nang rten dang phyi rten*) and the Eight Sugata *Stūpas* (*bde gshegs mchod rten brgyad*) and also specified details for their construction. Furthermore, he instructed

⁷⁵⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 469.2–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 556.3–6).

⁷⁵⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 556.6).

⁷⁶⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 556.6): *stod nas lha rje cig bos| des don go ba yin (...)*.

⁷⁶¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 556.6–557.1).

⁷⁶² See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 557.1–2).

⁷⁶³ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 557.2): *da ngas chos 'chad nyan 'ong ba dka' bas| sa gtsang ma la sa phag thob| mchod rten byed dgos pa yin gsungs|*.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 557.3): *slob dpon dkon rgyal gdan drongs| zla ba gcig la 'khor ba gyis (...)*.

⁷⁶⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 557.2–4).

them on how to carefully prepare *sātstsha* images out of his remaining bones and cremation ash. He did not give these instructions as a direct command, but expressed his wishes by drawing on histories of past lives of saints and through engaging his disciples in informal conversations touching on a variety of topics.⁷⁶⁶

In his biographies, additional instructions by Ngor chen are quoted in direct speech, though they are of an enigmatic and baffling nature. Nevertheless, he was mainly saying that as he himself had never given anything, not even one square of cloth, on the occasion of the death of somebody else, no efforts should be made to collect donations when he had passed away. At present, through the kindness of Ngor's patrons and the efforts of its monastic community, enough donations had been accumulated and they should be used for his final rites. Moreover, his disciples should not exhibit any appearance of mourning, as this would contrast sharply with the Dharma.⁷⁶⁷

During all that time, various rainbows reportedly appeared again and again. Especially on the fourteenth and fifteenth day of the fourth month, a variety of miraculous signs—including rainbows of different colours and shapes, rumbling mountains, a shower of flowers,⁷⁶⁸ a bright light that went up the Ngor valley, and fragrant scent pervading the whole monastic area—were seen, which caused people to assume that Ngor chen had passed away on one of those two days.⁷⁶⁹ Ngor chen, however, was still alive, though he had already prepared himself in his spiritual practice to pass away on the tenth day of that month, the same day his master Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan had departed from this world. But as Mus chen had not yet arrived in Ngor, he was forced to “postpone” his passing. He repeatedly said: “The Dharma Lord Shar pa passed away on the tenth day. It's taking Slob dpon Kon rgyal ba [such] a long time [to come]!”⁷⁷⁰

At that time, Mus chen was teaching in his native Mus. When Ngor chen's messenger arrived, he had completed bestowing teachings on Cakrasaṃvara and the instructions of the Three Appearances (*snang ba gsum*) of the *Lam 'bras*.⁷⁷¹ Mus chen then interrupted his

⁷⁶⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 471.3–4) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 557.4–5).

⁷⁶⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 471.5–6): *gzhan la rkyen sdug byung tsa na/ zong btang ba la sogs pa yong gin 'dug ste/ rang res de 'dra'i phyogs su ras kha gang yang gtong ma myong ba dang/ yon bdag grwa pa dang bcas pa'i dkar po yang sngar gyi tshos chog pa yod pas/ da mchod spong dang zong cha len pa la sogs pa yang ma byed rab tu byung ba 'das pa'i rjes su mya ngan gyi cha lugs byed pa la sogs pa chos dang shin tu mi mthun pas/ de lta bu'i rigs gcig kyang ma byed gsungs pa la sogs pa'i zhal ta rab tu zhib pa mtha' chod par gnang 'dugll. Cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 557.5–558.1): *gzhan la skyid sdug byung tsa na/ zong gtong ba la sogs pa 'ong gin 'dug ste rang res de 'dra'i phyogs su ras kha gang yang gtong ma myong ba dang/ yon bdag grwa pa dang bcas pa'i skor yang sngar gyi tshos chog pa yod pas/ da mchod spong dang bzung [= zong] cha len pa la sogs pa yang ma byed ces dang/ dkar me'i rgyu la dngul dam lnga la sogs pa so sor dmigs mdzad cing/ rab tu byung ba 'das pa'i rjes su mya ngan gyi cha lugs byed pa la sogs pa chos dang shin tu mi mthun pas/ de lta bu'i rigs gcig kyang ma byed gsungs pa la sogs pa'i zhal da [= ta] rab tu zhib pa mtha' chod par gnang 'dugll.**

⁷⁶⁸ According to Tsering Lama (Lumbini, 21 April 2013) the “shower of flowers” (*me tog gi char*) should not be taken literally. Instead, the flowers would refer to snow whose flakes are patterned like flowers.

⁷⁶⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 469.5–6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 558.1–3). Note that the former account only mentions the appearance of rainbows, whereas the latter one presents the much longer list of natural occurrences given above. At about that time, similar signs were perceived by rDo ring pa Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1449–1524); see the *rDo ring pa'i rnam thar* (p. 167.1–3).

⁷⁷⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 558.3–4): (... *chos rje shar pa tshes bcu la bde bar gshegs pa yin/ slob dpon dkon rgyal ba yun ring zhes yang yang gsungs/*. In the following passage, Ngor chen's biographies present a discussion of the various visions Ngor chen experienced while in retreat; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 469.6–471.3) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 558.4–561.2).

⁷⁷¹ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 613.3–4). Among Mus chen's students of those teachings, Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the younger of the two Glang thang sPyang sngas, and his group of monks who, following Ngor chen's instructions, had travelled to Mus to pursue their studies under Mus chen, are also listed. According to

teaching and departed on the tenth day of the fourth month, reaching Ngor on the twenty-third.⁷⁷² Mus chen however, did not want to go to see his master immediately on that very same day.⁷⁷³

When Ngor chen heard of Mus chen's arrival, he sent for him, saying: "[His] coming won't cause any illness. [I] waited a long time. [He] should come now."⁷⁷⁴ The moment Mus chen entered the room, Ngor chen exclaimed: "I have thought [I] could pass on the tenth day. But you did not show up. So [it is your] responsibility [that I am still alive]."⁷⁷⁵ Presenting Mus chen with a realistic painting of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, a set of an Indian or Chinese *vajra* and *ghaṇṭa*, and a thin *bla gos* upper garment of his own monk's robes,⁷⁷⁶ he gave Mus chen concrete instructions on how to proceed with the monastic affairs of Ngor after his passing away:

It is good that you have come. Though I have been sick, except for being physically weak, [I] have no pain at all. Due to that [illness], [I] have become short of breath. Other than that, the signs of sleep and signs of the colour and circulation of the wind have not become in the wrong order. Nevertheless, I will die. Subsequently, from the first day of the next month, [you] should give the *Lam 'bras*. Make sure that [your] exposition of the Dharma will not be interrupted. For attaining awakening, it is necessary to realise the view of the absence of a self. Though that [view] can be swiftly accomplished based on the profound completion stages, it is difficult to apply in practice. Besides, if you explain [the Dharma] to others, [you] will gain a better understanding [of the Buddha's doctrine] and it will be much more beneficial than engaging [yourself] for years in spiritual practice.⁷⁷⁷

Don't be afraid(?) of [my] final rites. [I] have [already] given detailed instructions to him (a close attendant?). Take my bedroom as [your] living quarters, and make sure that every day the *sgrub mchod* rituals of Vajranairātmyā are performed continuously.⁷⁷⁸

Blo gros rgyal mtshan's biography, they had received teachings on Cakramvara, Hevajra, and Guhyasamāja at bDe ba can and were engaged in meditation when Mus chen was invited to Ngor; see the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 430.1–3).

⁷⁷² See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 613.4). Mus chen was accompanied by Blo gros rgyal mtshan's group; see the *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 430.2–3).

⁷⁷³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 471.6) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 561.2).

⁷⁷⁴ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 561.2): 'grul sna cig byung dogs med/sgug yun rings da lta shog gyis gsungs/. The remark that Mus chen did not want to go and meet his master immediately after his arrival appears to be directly linked to the superstitious belief (*rnam rtog*) that his visit could have caused an illness ('grul sna) and thus he originally intended to see Ngor chen only on the next day. Cf. the *Mus chen kyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 221.1), where only one meeting is mentioned that took place on the twenty-fourth day.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 561.2–3): nga tshes bcu la 'gro bsam pa yin te/ khyod ma byon pas lan gsung zhing/.

⁷⁷⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 472.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 561.3). A *yin thang* designates a lifelike portrayal of a master in form of a thangka. Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub wrote a description of another *yin thang* of Sa chen, the *rJe btsun sa skya pa'i yin thang dngos la zhib tu gzigs tshul*; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum* 1 (vol. 1, fols. 105a–106b and vol. 4, fols. 498a–500b).

⁷⁷⁷ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 561.3–6): khyed slebs pa legs/ nga na byas kyang shed chung ba las zug ci yang med/ de'i stobs kyi rnam pa rgod bag can cig 'dug/ gzhan mnal ltas dang rlung gi mdog dang rgyu tshul gyi ltas log pa ci yang med/ de lta na yang nged 'das nas zla ba tshes 'phral man lam 'bras tshugs/ chos 'chad pa ma chag par gyis/ sangs rgya ba la bdag med kyi lta ba rtogs dgos shing/ de rdzogs rim zab mo rnam la brten nas myur du 'grub kyang lag tu longs pa dka'/ gzhan rang gis sgom lo byas pa bas kyang gzhan la bshad na gdar sha chod cing bogs che ba yin gsung/. For a shorter version of this account, cf. the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 472.1–2).

⁷⁷⁸ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 561.5–6): rjes kyi bya ba rnam khyed la 'cher [= 'tsher] mi dgos/ khong 'di pa la kha da [= ta] zhib tu byas yod/ bzhugs sa nged nyal sar mdzod la rdo rje bdag med ma'i sgrub mchod re ma chag pa gyis

Clearly, Ngor chen then appointed Mus chen as his successor to the abbatial throne of Ngor.⁷⁷⁹ Prior to Mus chen's arrival, he had already made arrangements regarding his final rites, and now it was time to settle his own monastic succession. This explains why Ngor chen had to "postpone" his passing away, because he otherwise could not have personally entrusted his monastic seat into the hands of his chief disciple. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs similarly explains:⁷⁸⁰

In fact, the Dharma Lord intended to depart on around the tenth day and repeatedly said: "Have a look to see whether Bya bral ba [i.e., Mus chen] has shown up," and also rainbows and a light [appeared] and a rain of flowers showered down. Surely [his] firm perseverance until the twenty-fifth was for the sake of entrusting the [Buddha's] doctrine to this Lord [Mus chen].

Generally speaking, Mus chen avoided taking on monastic responsibilities for a large monastery in favour of his own spiritual practice nearer home. Probably anticipating a negative response, Ngor chen thus emphasised to him the benefits that teaching the Dharma entailed. But Mus chen was very reluctant to take on this heavy responsibility, pointing out that he was not capable of leading the monastery. Nevertheless, in case Ngor chen did pass away, he agreed to head Ngor for the next two or three years in accord with his master's instructions. Then the two of them adjourned, planning to have a more detailed discussion the following day.⁷⁸¹ The account then describes the events of the following day.⁷⁸²

Then, [on] the day of the twenty-fourth, [Ngor chen] gave instructions, saying: "Though [I] thought to edit this *bsTan 'gyur* for lDan ma Drung Rin po che and assist [in its production], [I am unable to do so]. Now send the books to the personal attendant and give directions on [the process of] writing. You should return to [your native] land. [In the future, you or lDan ma Drung Rin po che] might shortly come [back to Ngor]."

This difficult passage was translated assuming that lDan ma Drung Rin po che is the same person as Ka drug pa Drung Rin po che, who is listed among Ngor chen's disciples from lDan ma.⁷⁸³ Also, Ka drug pa Drung Rin po che was most likely Ngor chen's old student

gsungs pa (...). The emendation of 'cher to 'tsher is based on the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 4–6 (fol. 52a2) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 7 (p. 275.3). A reading such as 'chad instead of 'cher ("It is not necessary to inform you about [my] final rites") would be more convenient, however.

⁷⁷⁹ From then on, the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 561.6 and 563.4) refers to Mus chen as monastic head (*gdan sa pa*). On Mus chen's installation as Ngor chen's "regent" (*rgyal tshab*), see also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 5.2–3): *rje sku gshegs pa'i tshes rgyal tshab du dbang bskur*; *Ngor chos 'byung* 1 (p. 351.1–2): *rdo rje 'chang sku gshegs kar rgyal tshab tu mnga' gsol*; and *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 614.1): *dam pa'i chos kyi rgyal tshab chen por dbang bskur ba mdzad doll*.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 562.1–2): *de yang chos rje'i dgongs pa la tshes bcu tsam la phebs snyam nas bya bral ba e byung ltos zhes yang yang gsung zhing* 'ja' 'od me tog gi char yang 'bab/ nyer lnga'i bar brtan par bzhuqs pa ni/ rje 'di nyid la bstan pa gtad pa'i ched du yin par nges sol. For a similar passage, see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 613.4–6).

⁷⁸¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 561.6–562.1). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 472.2).

⁷⁸² *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 562.2–3): *de nas nyi shu bzhi'i nyin ldan ma drung rin po che la bstan 'gyur 'di'i zhu dag dang grogs ldan [= dan] byed bsam na' angl da nye gnas pa la dpe cha springs la 'bri ba'i zhal da [= ta] mdzod la khyed rang yul du byon dang/ phebs tsam cig 'ong gsung ba'i zhal da [= ta] mdzad doll*.

⁷⁸³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 533.4–5). The autobiography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs contains a gloss that confirms the production of a *bsTan 'gyur* set at Ngor by a certain Drung Rin chen, who is most likely the same person as Drung Rin po che (*Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa*, p. 190.5): *bstan 'gyur 'di drung rin chen zhes grags pa des ngor sogs dbus gtsang du bzhegs 'dul*. The set in question was originally housed in (b)SKal

sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes, the founder of Thar lam Monastery in the sGa region of Khams.⁷⁸⁴ That is indicated by a short passage in the biography of Kun dga' ye shes. While staying at Sa skya between 1417 to 1421, gZhon nu seng ge, Ngor chen's younger half-brother, accommodated Kun dga' ye shes in the Ka drug Tshoms dmar of the bZhi thog bla brang, which is why he received the nickname Ka drug Tshoms dmar Drung Rin po che.⁷⁸⁵ He must have made plans to have a copy of the *bsTan 'gyur* commissioned at Ngor, and possibly sent a trusted monk to oversee it.⁷⁸⁶ Though Ngor chen originally intended to help with its commissioning, advanced age and sickness permitted him from doing so. Thus he instructed the acquaintance or representative of Kun dga' ye shes on how to proceed and sent him back to Khams.⁷⁸⁷

On the twenty-fourth, Mus chen approached Ngor chen making formal offerings and requests for his master's longevity. In doing so, he presented Ngor chen with a large drop-shaped nugget of gold weighing eighteen *zho* along with more than thirty *zho* of gold as individual smaller nuggets.⁷⁸⁸

The next morning, on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth month, Ngor chen asked: "Isn't today the twenty-fifth?"⁷⁸⁹ Being assured in his assumption, he further stated: "Right now, I feel very well. Cook some tasty tea!"⁷⁹⁰ Having finished breakfast, he rested for a short while.⁷⁹¹ During that time, Ngor chen was looked after by two physicians. To get rid of them, he said: "Please go to the lavatory! [Then,] you should drink [some] tea upstairs! Please [only] come now if you are called!"⁷⁹² After they went upstairs, Ngor chen directed the disciples in his presence to take off his heavy garments, help him to adjust

bzang dgon, the abode (*bsti gnas*) of sGa A gnyan dam pa, but Sangs rgyas phun tshogs had it brought for his personal studies to gDong sprad bSam gtan gling, his main residence while in Khams for collecting offerings for the Thar rtse bla brang; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 190.4–6).

⁷⁸⁴ On sGa Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes, see Part Four, 1 and Part Four, n. 686.

⁷⁸⁵ See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (p. 346.2–5).

⁷⁸⁶ That such commissions were executed at Ngor is suggested by another account contained in a letter that Ngor chen sent from Ngor in 1434 or 1446 to a certain dPon rgan Thar pa ye shes; see the *Thar pa ye shes la springs pa* (p. 721.3–4): 'dir bla ma kun dga' rgyal mtshan pa| rje btsun gong ma rdo rje 'chang dang dbyer ma mchis pa rnams kyi gsung rab rnams grub nas zhu dag dang| rab gnas sogs legs par mthar phyin nas| de phyogs su spyen drangs nas byon yod pas thugs dga' spro chen po mdzad par zhu| nyams len gyi rim pa'i chos shig dgos zer ba| mdor bsdu te brjod na|. On this letter, see also CATALOGUE (no. 176).

⁷⁸⁷ At that time, Kun dga' ye shes himself was apparently not present at Ngor. According to his biography, he had visited Ngor a couple of years earlier in 1450 during his second sojourn in central Tibet (1450–1451), but did not return afterwards. See the *Kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam thar* (pp. 359.14–360.3).

⁷⁸⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 562.3). Cf. the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 613.6–614.1), where it is also mentioned that Mus chen made this gold offering on the twenty-fourth. But it is also stated that it was on this occasion that Mus chen received Ngor chen's monk's robes (*sku chos*), the set of *vajra* and *ghanṭa* (*rdo rje dril bu*), and the realistic painting of Sa chen (*rje sa chen gyi yin thang*) and short instructions on how to perform Ngor chen's final rites (*rjes kyi bya ba*). Instructing him to continuously perform activities for the Buddha's doctrine while travelling between Ngor and Mus, Ngor chen is then said to have installed Mus chen as his abbatial successor. Cf. also the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 221.1). Mus chen himself only mentions that he reached Ngor on the twenty-third day, but does not specify the date of his conversation with Ngor chen. However, after remarking that the two of them intended to adjourn and resume with a more detailed discussion on the following day, he continues with Ngor chen's passing away on the twenty-fifth day. See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 471.6–472.3).

⁷⁸⁹ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 562.4): *de ring nyer lnga yin a gsungs|*.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 562.4): *da lta khams shin tu bde| ja zhim po cig bskol [= skol?] gsungs|*.

⁷⁹¹ The *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 562.4–5) specifies Ngor chen's time of rest as: (...) *ja sun gnyis seng ba|*.

⁷⁹² *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 562.5): *lha rje gnyis po la chab thong| khyed rang steng du ja gsol| da lta gdan 'dren byung na byon gsungs|*.

his body into the correct meditation posture, and to cover him with his *rnam sbyar* upper monk's robe. He then sent everybody out.⁷⁹³

Seated alone, Ngor chen placed his mind in the state of meditative absorption of consciousness-transference and exhaled his last purifying breath via his nose. At that very instant, a bright, whitish light appeared through the skylight opening of his living quarters in the *gZims khang ka drug ma*; this light was seen from upstairs by the physician from *Glo bo*, who immediately went down to check on Ngor chen, but could only report that he had already passed away. Based on the appearance of the light, it was determined that Ngor chen must have performed the transference of consciousness of the "globe of light" associated with the *Lam 'bras* practice of the vase initiation (*bum dbang gi 'od kyi gong bu'i 'da' ka ma*).⁷⁹⁴ As another sign of his successful consciousness-transference, Ngor chen's biography reports the outflow of a lot of *bodhicitta* fluid from his left nostril. The deeper meaning of this sign is explained by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs by referring to a passage from a treatise on *Cakrasaṃvara*. According to it, the recognition of the *dharmakāya* at the moment of death entails the attainment of the *siddhi* of the highest *mahāmudrā*. This in turn facilitates the consciousness in leaving the body via the crown of the head, the spot that is considered best for the consciousness to depart from, as it will be directly transferred into the *sambhogakāya* field. A sign for such a kind of transference was, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs explains, the outflow of drops of fluid from the left nostril.⁷⁹⁵

On the twenty-sixth day, the first day after Ngor chen's passing, as his attendants were preparing his holy remains and attempted to inspect his genitals, they came to know that they were no longer visible; a further sign of Ngor chen's very high spiritual practice.⁷⁹⁶

After Ngor chen's passing, Mus chen began to bestow teachings at Ngor following Ngor chen's instructions, and probably beginning on the first day of the fifth month to give the *Lam 'bras*. Announcing Ngor chen's order that no donations should be collected, Mus chen took on the responsibility of performing the memorial religious services for fulfilling Ngor chen's last wishes, making use only of his master's current possessions. Moreover, he organised a communal tea offering (*mang ja*), including a distribution of donations (*'gyed*) at *Sa skya*, *gSang phu*, and *Nā lendra*.⁷⁹⁷

At Ngor itself, Mus chen began the work of making sacred objects in Ngor chen's memory. As "inner sacred objects" (*nang rten*), he had cast both a large golden statue of

⁷⁹³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 562.5–6).

⁷⁹⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 562.6–563.1). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 472.3–4). On the "globe of light transference" (*'od kyi gong bu'i 'pho ba*), see STEARNS 2001: 221, n. 64. The same technique was also used by Gayadhara who, as translated by *Ibid.*: 55 and 97, "performed the globe of light transference. A light about the size of a pellet ejected from the crown of his head, went as far as everyone could see into the sky, and he passed away."

⁷⁹⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 563.2–3). Ngor chen's passing away on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth month of 1456 is also mentioned in the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 95.3–4) and *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 41b2–4). His demise in the fourth month is mentioned in the *Kun dga' blo gros kyi rnam thar* (p. 412.5) and *Blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 430.2–3). On a discussion of the date of letters that Shākya mchog ldan sent to Ngor chen's disciples after having heard of his master's death, see CAUMANN 2012: 121 and CAUMANN 2015: 147–148.

⁷⁹⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 563.3). It is related to one of the thirty-two marks of a Great Being (*skyes bu chen po'i mtshan sum cu rtsa gnyis: dvātrīṣaṃmahāpuruṣalakṣaṇāni*), namely that the male organ is retracted in a sheath (*'doms kyi sba ba sbubs su nub pa: kośopagatavastiguhyah*); see the *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* (p. 23, no. 258).

⁷⁹⁷ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 563.3–5). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 472.4–5).

Buddha Śākyamuni (with the size of thirteen *rgyar* [= *rgyab*] *mtho*) and a golden life-size statue of Ngor chen. At the lower boundary of Ngor's monastic complex, as "outer sacred objects" (*phyi rten*), he had erected the Eight Sugata *Stūpas* (*bde gshegs mchod rten brgyad*) with parasols and top ornaments made out of gilt and copper. Under Mus chen's supervision, these projects were accomplished within one year.⁷⁹⁸

After Ngor chen's sacred remains had been prepared on the day after his passing, they were set up in one of Ngor's temples for the next eleven months until their cremation. During that time, they were honoured with a vast number of offerings and in their presence the *sgrub mchod* ritual of Bhagavat Hevajra was continuously performed.⁷⁹⁹

On the morning of the twenty-fourth day of the third month of 1457, Ngor chen's remains were offered to the cremation fire at which time rainbows appeared in the sky and a rain of flowers descended. When, some days later, on the first day of the fourth month, the "crematorium" (*gdung khang*)—that is, the *stūpa* in which Ngor chen's body had been cremated and which was bricked up afterwards—was opened, his disciples discovered numerous *ring bsrel* relics of various colours, such as white and yellow, had formed on Ngor chen's remaining bones. In particular, countless *ring bsrel* relics had appeared on one knuckle joint and on the roots of the teeth of his underjaw. They were placed in some fine silk cloth and along with fragrant aromatic substances were placed into both the golden statue of Ngor chen and Buddha Śākyamuni. The remaining bones, along with the cremation ashes, were used to prepare more than seventy thousand *gdung tsha* images. Out of these, thirty-five thousand smaller images were embellished with the symbol of two crossed *vajras* at the base and covered with a layer of gold. These images were offered to Ngor chen's disciples as portable relics containing their master's blessing. The remaining *gdung tsha* images were placed into the gSer 'bum *stūpa* that was built in the inner sanctum or inner chapel (*gtsang khang*) of the dBang khang chen mo.⁸⁰⁰ Moreover, *ring bsrel* relics are said to have appeared even on a few *gdung tsha* images that had been distributed among the monks.⁸⁰¹

The account of Ngor chen's last rites that Go rams pa included in his biography of Mus chen varies somewhat and provides additional information. Go rams pa was himself in Ngor at the time of Ngor chen's death and spent the following years as Mus chen's attendant in Ngor and Mus.⁸⁰² With regard to Mus chen's commissions of religious objects as receptacles of body, speech, and mind, Go rams pa specifies, for instance, that both a life-size statue of Ngor chen and Thub pa chos 'chad pa—that is, a statue of Buddha Śākyamuni with the hands held in the *mūdra* of explaining the Dharma (*chos kyi 'khor lo'i phyag rgya: dharmacakra mudrā*)—were manufactured out of gilt copper; copies of the collected writings of the five great founders of Sa skya and of Ngor chen were prepared;

⁷⁹⁸ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 563.5–6). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 472.5–6). Over time, more *stūpas* were added. For instance, dKon mchog dpal ldan, the twelfth abbot of Ngor, added the first two (i.e., one *Antaryāna Stūpa* and one *Vijaya Stūpa*) to fulfil the last wishes of dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot, and Sangs rgyas seng ge, the eleventh abbot; see the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 468.6–469.1). For another addition, see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 95.4–96.1). For the beginning of the twentieth century, Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho records the existence of sixteen *stūpas*; see the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 401.9–13).

⁷⁹⁹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 563.6). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 472.6).

⁸⁰⁰ Though the dBang khang chen mo was destroyed, many *gdung tsha* images from the gSer 'bum have been preserved; see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 28.2–5): (...) *gtsang khang bar skabs su gtor zhig tu btang yang/gser 'bum nang gi gdung tshwa mang che ba sa ro'i nang lus yod pa rnam da lta yang nyar tshags zhu thub pa byung yod do||*.

⁸⁰¹ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 564.1–4). See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 473.1–4).

⁸⁰² See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 1 (p. 95.3–8).

and a large, gilt covered *stūpa* containing Ngor chen's *gdung tsha* images was erected in the inner sanctum of the dBang khang chen mo and the Eight Sugata *Stūpas* (*bde gshegs mchod rten brgyad*), each adorned with a golden parasol and top ornament, were built. Moreover, Mus chen was responsible for securing food and service for the artisans and paying their wages, and for leading the filling of statues and *stūpas* with relics and sacred objects, sealing them, and performing their consecrations. The *ring bsrel* relics that emerged during Ngor chen's cremation were placed at the heart *cakra* of the statues of Ngor chen and Buddha Śākyamuni. From the remaining relics and the cremation ashes, seventy thousand *sātstsha* images were moulded. Half were placed within the Eight Sugata *Stūpas* (*bde gshegs mchod rten brgyad*) and the *stūpa* in the inner sanctum. The other half were covered with gold and distributed in all directions as "support of faith" (*dad pa'i rten*). According to Go rams pa, those projects took more than one year.⁸⁰³

Sangs rgyas phun tshogs closes his account of Ngor chen's final rites by remarking that at Ngor each year, in compliance with Ngor chen's death anniversary, the *sgrub mchod* rituals of the five sand *maṇḍalas* of the Ngor tradition (*ngor lugs dkyil 'khor lnga'i sgrub mchod rdul tshon ma*) were observed for seven days and that monthly, on the twenty-fifth, a memorial tea (*dus ja*) was also served to the monks.⁸⁰⁴ Though he did not say when these practices were first introduced, a remark by Go rams pa suggests that they were instituted in 1457, the year of Ngor chen's cremation. According to him, Mus chen established the tradition that on the occasion of celebrating yearly death anniversaries (*lo dus kyi dus chen*), *sgrub mchod* rituals were to be performed that entailed the ritual making of large *maṇḍalas* of the Niruttarayoga tantric system. Besides, he instituted the practice that on the occasion of the monthly death anniversaries (*zla ba byung ngo cog gi dus mchod*), respectful service offerings (*bsnyen bkur*), such as tea offerings, were to be given to the monastic community of Ngor.⁸⁰⁵

Intermezzo

Given the importance the preparation of those *maṇḍalas* occupied in the ritual calendar of Ngor and its branch monasteries, I would like add a few remarks about those *sgrub mchod* rituals. The rituals commenced around the twenty-second day of the fourth month and lasted for about seven or more days during which five *maṇḍalas* were made: three Hevajra *maṇḍalas* based on the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*—that is, the *Hevajratantra*, the *Ḍākinīvajrapañjara*, and the *Samputatantra*—and one each of Cakrasaṃvara and Guhyasamāja. However, since every other year a different tradition of Cakrasaṃvara and Guhyasamāja was performed—Cakrasaṃvara according to Lūhipāda or Kṛṣṇācārin and Guhyasamāja according to Akṣobhya or Mañjuvajra—those rituals became also known as the *sgrub mchod* rituals of the seven *maṇḍalas* of the Ngor tradition (*ngor lugs dkyil 'khor bdun gyi sgrub mchod*).⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰³ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 614.1–615.3).

⁸⁰⁴ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 564.5–6).

⁸⁰⁵ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 614.4–5). Especially, see the 'Bul *sdud rdzong dus kyi yi ge* (p. 653.5–6), which Go rams pa wrote in 1483 in his position as sixth Ngor abbot, stating explicitly: *zla ba byung ngo cog gi nyer lnga la zla mchod dangl dus chen la bde dgyes gsang gsum la sogs pa'i dkyil 'khor chen po lnga'i sgrub mchod zhag grangs mang po sbrel ba btsugs pa 'di ni* (...). See also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 329.15–16).

⁸⁰⁶ Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 12 May 2009). See the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam* 2 (pp. 23.16–19): *bod zla 4 (...)* *tshes 23 nas tshes 30 bar ngor lugs kyi dkyil 'khor bdun gyi rdul tshon la brten pa'i sgrub mchod tshogs gnang mdzad par*; *Ngor dgon rgyun tshogs* (p. 1.5–9): *bod zla bzhi pa tshes 21 nyin snga gro [=*

With the foundation of the four major lama palaces of Ngor (*ngor gyi bla brang khag bzhi*), the performance of the individual *sgrub mchod* rituals was divided between those palaces, whereby Phan bde was responsible for Vajrapañjara, Khang gсар for Samputa, Thar rtse for Cakrasaṃvara (alternating between the traditions of Lūhipāda and Kṛṣṇācārin), and Klu sdings for Guhyasamāja (alternating between Akṣobhya and Mañjuvajra). The *bla brang gzhung*, the central office of Ngor headed by the abbot, performed the *sgrub mchod* of Hevajra according to the “tradition of practical instructions” (*kye rdor man ngag lugs*), that is, the Hevajra meditative tradition of the *Lam ’bras*.⁸⁰⁷

dro] bla mchod dangl phyi gro [= dro] dkyil 'khor lnga sgrub mchod sta gon| zla ba bzhi tshes 22 dngos gzhi nas tshe 29 bar ngor lugs dkyil 'khor 'dun [= bdun] gyi nang tshan| kye rdo [= rdor] gurl| sambu ṭal| gsang 'dus| bde mchog| nyin dgu ring sgrub mchod tshogs| gsang 'dus mi skyod [= bskyod] pa dang| 'jam rdo [= rdor] bde mchog nag po pa dang| lu [= lū] hi pa gnyis lo red [= rer] <ri mu> [= re mos] byed gyi [= kyi] red; sDe dge'i rgyal rabs (pp. 26.6–27.1): dges pa rdo rje gur dang sambu ṭal| bde mchog gsang ba 'dus sogs ngor lugs kyi|| dkyil 'khor lngar grags (...); Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar (p. 605.4–5): khyad par sa ga zla ba'i nyi shu gnyis nas bzung gnam gang bar rgyal bar do rje 'chang gi dgongs rdzogs ngor lugs dkyil 'khor lnga'i sgrub mchod 'dzugs pa sogs kyi dus mchod (...); and gSang sngags gсар rnying gi gdan rabs (pp. 118.6–119.3): sa ngor tshar gsum gyi ring lugs 'dzin pa'i dgon sde rnam su'angl (...) bla med pha rgyud gsang 'dus mi bskyod pa| 'jam rdor| ma rgyud bde mchog lū nag gnyis| gnyis med rgyud kye rdor man ngag lugs| gur| sambu ṭa ste ngor lugs dkyil 'khor bdun du grags pa dangl (...) sogs kyi sgrub mchod dangl. Ngor dPon slob Ngag dbang legs grub (1811–1861) is said to have authored a ritual compilation titled *Ngor lugs dkyil 'khor bdun gyi chog bsgrig* or *Ngor lugs dkyil 'khor bdun gyi dkyil chog kha 'bab rnam bzhi*; see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 161.11–12) and *Ngag dbang legs grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 3.16–17), respectively. A collection of many of his writings contains, under the heading *Ngor dkyil bdun gyi skor*, seven works that most likely made up this compilation: *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa 'jam pa'i rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga sitā'i klung chen 'jigs bral seng ge'i kha 'babs*, *dPal kyai rdo rje dang kun rig sbyin bsregs bcas kyi dkyil 'khor tshon 'gros yig gsal me long*, *Gur rigs bsdu kyi thig gi lag len*, *dPal kye rdo sambuṭa'i skya thig gi lag len*, *gSang 'dus 'phags lugs kyi skya thig gdab tshul*, *bDe mchog lū hi pa'i skya thig*, and *bDe mchog nag po pa'i skya thig*; see *mKhan po Phur bu lhun grub* (ed.), *Yul mdo kham stod kyi mkhas grub rnam pa'i gsung bcud bdud rtsi'i thigs phreng*, 25 vols., Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2012, vol. 16 (*dPal ldan sa skya pa'i chos skor*), pp. 354–477. For his collected works, see now also *Si khron bod yig dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang* (ed.), *dPon slob ngag dbang legs grub kyi gsung 'bum*, 8 vols., Gangs can rig bcud, vols. 78–85, Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2015. In addition, for some of his works, see also TBRC (P809).

⁸⁰⁷ See the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (p. 396.10–13): zla ba bzhi par bla brang nas kyai rdor man ngag lugs| phan bdes gur| khang sar tshang nas sambu ṭal thar rtse bde mchog lū nag res mos| klu lding nas gsang 'dus| mi bskyod pa dang| 'jam rdor res mos|. See also the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (p. 74.6–16): gsum pa| sgrub mchod sogs kyi phyag len ji ltar yod tshul ni| spyir gdan sa 'di'i dus mchod gtsō bo ni| ngor chen gyi 'das mchod bod zla bzhi pa'i tshes nyer lnga nyin yin zhi ng| de yang zla ba de'i tshes nyi shu gsum nas nyin bdun ring ngor lugs dkyil 'khor bdun gyi sgrub mchod chen mo yin zhing| bla brang so so'i zur bzhi slob dpon tshud pa'i dge 'dun brgyad grwa re tshogs nas phan bde bla brang gis rdo rje gur| khang gсар gyis sam bu ṭal thar rtse bde mchog lū nag gnyis lo rer res mos dang| klu lding gis gsang 'dus mi bskyod pa dang| 'jam rdor gnyis res mos mdzad doll| de byings dge 'dun yongs rdzogs bla brang gzhung gi kye rdor man ngag lugs tshogs dgos par gsungs|. DAVIDSON 1992: 130 and 184, n. 77, specifies that the Khang gсар bla brang made the *Vajradhātumaṅḍala* of the *Sampūṭatantra* and the Phan bde bla brang the *Kulasaṃharaṅḍala* of the *Vajrapañjaratantra*.

Chapter Thirteen

The Religious Tradition Established at Ngor

Under Ngor chen and his abbatial successors, Ngor Monastery quickly developed into one of the most influential and active centres for tantric study and practice within the Sa skya school, attracting many of Sa skya's brightest young monks. At his monastic seat, Ngor chen and his successors established one of the most prominent subdivisions of the Sa skya school, the Ngor tradition (*ngor lugs*). Together with the Sa skya tradition proper, the Tshar pa, the rDzong pa, and the Gong dkar ba, this tradition came to be considered one of Sa skya's main sub-schools.⁸⁰⁸

The religious influence of Ngor and its abbots extended to parts of Western Tibet (mNga' ris), including Glo bo and Dol po.⁸⁰⁹ As described in great detail above, Ngor chen travelled on three occasions to the kingdom of Glo bo, establishing a strong link by founding a number of monastic communities. During the following centuries, the influence of Ngor also extended eastwards to Khams, where the tradition became very influential in sDe dge, Gling tshang, and sGa pa. From the seventeenth century onward, the Ngor pas enjoyed the patronage of the ruling house of sDe dge, in whose domain they became the dominant Buddhist tradition. Matthew Kapstein—who considers the Ngor tradition the “most successful” among the emerging Sa skya sub-schools of the fifteenth century—states that the Ngor pas “enjoyed an extensive following, above all in far eastern Tibet, where it became effectively the state religion of the important principalities of Dergé and Nangchen.”⁸¹⁰ The dominance of the Ngor pas in Khams was also acknowledged by Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma in the Sa skya pa chapter of his famous survey of tenets. He somewhat misleadingly claimed that, despite the high number of Sa skya scholars and monasteries that once flourished in Mongolia, China, and Eastern Tibet (mDo khams stod smad), only a few monasteries in sDe dge, such as lHun grub steng, were still in existence during his time. The remaining monasteries were overseen by successive Ngor abbots. Apart from that, he claims that no monks of the Sa skya school were to be seen in those other regions.⁸¹¹

⁸⁰⁸ Another tradition was established by Shākya mchog ldan at gSer mdog can in gTsang; it was rather short-lived, however. On the life of Shākya mchog ldan and the monastery of gSer mdog can, see CAUMANN 2012, CAUMANN 2013, and CAUMANN 2015.

⁸⁰⁹ With regard to Dol po, the abbots of three monasteries in that region are enumerated among the disciples of dKon mchog 'phel, the seventh abbot of Ngor: Bya tshang mo, lCam chos zom, and Byang dgon; see the *dKon mchog' phel gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 798.6–799.1). Among the students of Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge, the sixth abbot of Ngor, the Bya tshang mkhan po Rab 'byams pa mGon po bzang po from Dol po is listed; see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 133.20), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 3* (p. 333.7–9), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (p. 84.14–15), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 8* (pp. 258.21–259.1). For the biographies of four Dol po masters that studied under Ngor abbots in central Tibet, see SNELGROVE 1967.

⁸¹⁰ KAPSTEIN 2006: 234.

⁸¹¹ See the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 214.3–4): *sngon gyi dus su hor dang rgya'i yul dang mdo khams stod smad rnams su sa skya ba'i bstan 'dzin dam pa dang dge 'dun 'dus pa'i chos kyi sde mang du byung laj deng sang sde dger lhun grub steng sogs dgon sde 'ga' zhiig yod cingl ngor gyi mkhan po rim byon gyis skyong bar byed pa lasl phyogs gzhan du sa skya'i chos bryud 'dzin pa'i grwa sgrub mi snang ngo!* For a slightly different understanding of this passage, cf. THUKEN LOSANG CHÖKYI NYIMA 2009: 181. The late Sa skya master gDong thog Rin po che criticised this downplaying of the Sa skya pa's influence in eastern Tibet; see the *Dus kyi sbrang char* (pp. 128.18–130.5) and *Dus kyi me lce* (pp. 36.16–40.14). For the response to his criticism by the dGe lugs master Yon tan rgya mtsho, see the *Kun khyab 'brug sgra* (pp. 40.4–41.10) and *Lung rigs thog mda'* (pp. 11.16–13.15).

Within the Sa skya school, the influential position of the Ngor tradition in later generations was summed up by an eighteenth-century throne-holder of Sa skya. Sa chen Kun dga' blo gros (1729–1783), the thirty-first throne-holder (tenure: 1741–1783), said that the Ngor pas were like a wall or fence protecting the teachings of the Sa skya school.⁸¹²

Within Sa skya pa monastic circles, Ngor immediately became a prominent new centre for studying the *Lam 'bras*. At his monastic seat, Ngor chen began to impart this mainly tantric, Hevajra-based system on larger assemblies of monks and not, as traditionally done, on just a few disciples. With the division of the *Lam 'bras* into a common transmission for larger assemblies (*tshogs bshad*) and a highly esoteric and sophisticated transmission for only a few elect disciples (*slob bshad*), Ngor developed further into the main institution for the bestowal of the *Tshogs bshad*, and the *Slob bshad* was not formally introduced until the nineteenth century.

Given the vital role the *Lam 'bras* played as the central teaching cycle within the Sa skya school, and Ngor chen's position as one of the greatest *Lam 'bras* masters, I shall discuss some characteristics of the *Lam 'bras* tradition of Ngor. In doing so, I will highlight one defining element of the religious tradition Ngor chen had founded, without, however, focusing on the content, structure, and ritual or meditative practices of that system, which I do not know. Instead, I will give a historical survey that compares the *Lam 'bras* lineage of Ngor chen with the transmission lines of other Sa skya sub-schools. Moreover, the further development of the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor will be traced mainly by focussing on the division of the “explication for the assembly” (*tshogs bshad*) and the “explication for the disciples” (*slobs bshad*). As Cyrus Stearns has already provided well-summarised histories of the *Lam 'bras* in India and its further transmission to and in Tibet, I need not recount its early history.⁸¹³

13.1 The *Lam 'bras* Tradition of Ngor

Since the *Lam 'bras* had reached Tibet via the transmission that was passed down from the Indian master Gayadhara (d. 1103) to his Tibetan disciple 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Shākya ye shes (993-1077?), “a large number of lineages developed and spread throughout Tibet.”⁸¹⁴ In general, eighteen early lineages of the *Lam 'bras* were known, though this number was sometimes condensed to twelve or expanded to twenty-four.⁸¹⁵ All these lineages “eventually died out or were absorbed into the Sa skya lineage, which is now the only tradition of the *Lam 'bras*.”⁸¹⁶ In the fourteenth century, the Sa skya *Lam 'bras* lineage split into a number of different sub-lineages that were characterised by different

⁸¹² See the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi nram thar* (p. 62.1–2): ‘jam pa'i dbyangs kun dga' blo gros pas kyang spyir ris su ma chad pa'i bstan pa der 'dzin dang bcas pa thams cad la dag snang phyogs med du gzigs pa dangl lhag par snying nas chos byed pa rnams la thugs brtse ba'i sgo 'phar yangs por phye bar mdzad pa zhid yin na'angl de'i nang nas ngor pa 'di dpal ldan sa skya pa'i bstan pa'i lcags ri lta bu yin gsungs nasl.

⁸¹³ See STEARNS 2001 and STEARNS 2006.

⁸¹⁴ STEARNS 2001: 55. For the dates of 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba, see STEARNS 2001: 6. Cf. JACKSON 2010a: 184, who gives them as 992? to 1072?.

⁸¹⁵ See STEARNS 2001: 55. Later on, Gayadhara also taught the *Lam 'bras* to Gyi jo Zla ba'i 'od zer, but, according to *Ibid.*: 55, this tradition “never spread widely, although it did survive for several hundred years.” On Gyi jo Zla ba'i 'od zer, see *Ibid.*: 7, 54, and 219, n. 60. For references to lists of the different *Lam 'bras* lineages, see *Ibid.*: 192, n. 251. For the different lineages, see also the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung 2* (pp. 152.5–155.6).

⁸¹⁶ See STEARNS 2001: 6.

systems of exposition and ritual practice.⁸¹⁷ These sub-lineages originated from disciples of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan. Among his many disciples, Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho introduces a group of the “eight spiritual sons that uphold the *Oral Instructions*” (*gsung ngag 'dzin pa'i thugs sras brgyad*) and discusses the *Lam 'bras* lineages that originated from each of those eight disciples:⁸¹⁸

- The lineage that passed down from sNgags 'chang gZungs kyi dpal (1306–1389) of the rDzong chung bla brang of Sa skya through his two disciples bZang po rgyal mtshan and mKhas pa dGe bzang. This tradition of the *Lam 'bras* became known as the rDzong lugs.⁸¹⁹
- The lineage that passed down from dPal ldan tshul khriims (1333–1399) through Buddhaśrī (1339–1420). This *Lam 'bras* system became known as the Ngor lugs.⁸²⁰
- The lineage that passed down from Sa skya Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1344–1418).⁸²¹
- The lineage that passed down from Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal (1285–1379).⁸²²
- The lineage that passed down from Jo nang mKhan chen Byang chub seng ge.⁸²³

These last three lineages were unified by bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1444–1495), the twenty-first throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1473–1495), and successively passed down to Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1596) through rDo ring pa Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1449–1524) and Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–1566).⁸²⁴

⁸¹⁷ See the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 309.3–4): *de ltar lugs gnyis [i.e., ngor rdzong] kyi mkhas pa de dag don dam lta ba'i gnad la bzhed tshul mi 'dra ba'i khyad par cung zad kyang med modl 'on kyang kun rdzob cho ga'i rnam gzhag sogs la phyag len mi mthun pa 'ga' re byung ba'i dbang gis dgag sgrub kyi rnam par gzhag pa'ang ci rigs pa snang tel.*

⁸¹⁸ On the disciples of Bla ma dam pa, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 187.16–189.10).

⁸¹⁹ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 188.4–6): *de dag las sngags 'chang gzungs pa las bzang po rgyal mtshan dangl mkhas pa dge bzang gnyis kyi sgo nas gsung ngag rdzong lugs zhes grags pa'i brgyud pa'i gtso bo yin la*. On gZungs kyi dpal, see also the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 185.11–14) and STEARNS 2001: 39. On the rDzong chung bla brang, see the *Sa skya'i dkar chag* (pp. 192–194), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3a (fol. 75b2–3), and SCHOENING 1990: 18, 28, Map 6 (no. 40), 40, and 45

⁸²⁰ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 188.6–8): *gnyis pa chos rje dpal ldan tshul khriims nasl grub chen budha [= buddha] shri la brgyud de gsung ngag ngor lugs zhes grags pa'i brgyud pa'i gtso bo mdzad pa yin nol*. dPal ldan tshul khriims became the chief disciple of Bla ma dam pa for transmitting his master's *Lam 'bras* manual, the *Pod nag ma*; see the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 202.1–2). On the *Pod nag ma*, see DAVIDSON 1992: 112–113 and STEARNS 2001: 36–38. In his own daily meditation practice (*mngon rtogs: abhisamaya*) of Hevajra, Ngor chen followed Bla ma dam pa's system; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 89a4–b1), CAUMANN 2012: 245, CAUMANN 2015: 291, and DAVIDSON 1992: 112–113. On Ngor chen's “slightly problematic” relationship with the *Pod nag ma*, see *Ibid.*: 113.

⁸²¹ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 188.11–12): *chos rje bla ma| bla chen kun rgyal| 'jam dbyangs nam mkha' rgyal mtshan| bdag chen blo gros pa zhes dangl*. On Sa skya Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, see Part Three, 6.6.

⁸²² See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 188.12–14): *chos rje bla ma| nya dbon kun dga' dpal| rtse chen pa kun blo| 'jam dbyangs dkon mchog bzang po| bdag chen blo gros pa zhes dangl*. For the biography of Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal, see the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i rnam thar* (pp. 597.5–602.7). On him, see also STEARNS 2010: 114–115. From Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292–1361), Kun dga' dpal also received the *Lam 'bras* according to the traditions of both Sa skya and Zha ma (*lam 'bras sa lugs zha lugs*); see the *Kun mkhyen chen po yab sras bco lnga'i rnam thar* (p. 599.5) and STEARNS 2010: 115.

⁸²³ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 188.14–16): *chos rje bla ma| mkhan chen byang sengl theg chen chos rjel| 'jam dbyangs nam mkha' rgyal mtshan| bdag chen blo gros pa zhes brgyud pa yin la*.

⁸²⁴ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 188.9–18): *de nas brgyud pa gsum pa bzhi pa lnga pa gsum ni| kho bo cag gi brgyud pa'i gtso bo bdag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan la yang bzhugs pa yin tel (...)* *de nyid las rdo ring kun spangs pa| yongs 'dzin blo gsal rgya mtsho| kho bo cag gi 'dren pa dam pa de nyid la bka' babs pas sol*. However, as will be shown

- The lineage that passed down from Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo (1303/15–1379/80). He bestowed the *Lam 'bras* on his nephew Lo chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1352–1405), who in turn transmitted it to his nephew Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451). This transmission line became the chief *Lam 'bras* lineage in the Bo dong tradition.⁸²⁵
- The lineage that passed down from Lo chen sKyabs mchog dpal bzang (ca. 1340–1415) through Shangs Chos 'khor sgang pa Shes rin (i.e., sTag tshang Lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen, 1405–1477).⁸²⁶
- The lineage that passed down from sPyan snga Grags pa byang chub (1356–1386) through Tsong kha pa (1357–1419).⁸²⁷

With regard to the first two *Lam 'bras* traditions of rDzong and Ngor, a more detailed discussion is given by A mes zhabs in a treatise devoted to the subject. According to him, the rDzong lineage of the *Lam 'bras* was passed down from gZungs kyi dpal to Chos rje bZang po rgyal mtshan, who in turn imparted it on mNga' ris pa rGyal mtshan dkon mchog (b. 1388) and dGe ba rgyal mtshan (1387–1462).⁸²⁸ Among these two, rGyal mtshan dkon mchog conferred it to Mus srad pa (alias gTsang Byams pa) rDo rje rgyal mtshan (1424–1498).⁸²⁹ The masters standing in this line of transmission are designated by A mes zhabs as the “early rDzong masters” (*rdzong pa snga rabs pa*). He also enumerates a second group, called the “later rDzong masters” (*rdzong pa phyi rabs pa*), whose lineage originated from Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis (1349–1425), a nephew and disciple of Bla ma dam pa.⁸³⁰ Theg chen Chos rje imparted the *Lam 'bras* on Nyi lde ba

in the next chapter, Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho does not mention that Blo gros rgyal mtshan also received the major transmission line of the *Lam 'bras* in Ngor chen's lineage from Mus chen.

⁸²⁵ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 188.19–20): *drug pa lo chen byang rtse las/ lo chen grags pa/ des paṅ chen phyogs las rnam rgyal zhes bo dong pa dag gi rgyud [= brgyud] pa'i gtso bo mdzad pa yin nol*. On Byang chub rtse mo, see Part Three, n. 281. On Lo chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan, see DIEMBERGER et al. 1997: 24–25. Grags pa rgyal mtshan wrote a biography of his uncle Byang chub rtse mo; see Part Three, n. 281.

⁸²⁶ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 188.21–189.1): *brgyud pa bdun pa ni lo chen skyabs mchog nas/ shangs chos 'khor sgang pa shes rin sogs las rgyud [= brgyud] pa yin la/*.

⁸²⁷ See the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 189.1–2): *brgyad pa ni spyan snga pa nas rje tsong kha pa sogs pa'o/*. On Grags pa byang chub, the abbot of gDan sa mthil and later ruler of sNe'u gdong rtse, see CZAJA 2013: 198, n. 284, 200–202, and *passim*. Tsong kha pa wrote a biography of Grags pa byang chub; see VAN DER KUIJP 1991: 289, n. 14. In his *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 201.6–207.1), A mes zhabs presents a similar list of Bla ma dam pa's *Lam 'bras* students: *gsung gi rgyud 'dzin ni/ chos rje dpal ldan tshul khrims/ chos rje gzungs pa/ chos rje nya dbon chen po/ bla chon [= chen] kun dga' rgyal mtshan/ jo nang mkhan chen byang chub seng gel/ lo chen byang chub rtse mo sogs bsam gyis mi khyab pa byon la/*.

⁸²⁸ On Chos rje bZang po rgyal mtshan, see EHRHARD 2000b: 204–203 and EHRHARD (forthcoming). On dGe ba rgyal mtshan, see Part Four, 7 and Part Four, 10.

⁸²⁹ For biographical sketches of rDo rje rgyal mtshan, see the *Ngor chos 'byung 1* (p. 352.4–6) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 222.2–225.14). For his *Lam 'bras* studies under rGyal mtshan dkon mchog, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 223.1–5). On him, see also STEARNS 2001: 17–18, 20–25, and 39 and STEARNS 2006: 663–664, n. 493.

⁸³⁰ Theg chen Chos rje is counted among a group of disciples of Bla ma dam pa known as the ten or eleven polymaths (*yongs grags kyi mkhas pa*); see the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 308.5) and *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 189.5–10), respectively. Two full-length biographies of Theg chen Chos rje are presently available: a twenty-nine-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *Theg chen chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rnam par rol pa* (or *dPal ldan bla ma 'jam pa'i dbyangs chos rje'i rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rnam par rol pa*) and an eighteen-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *Theg chen chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar rgyas pa bzhugs soll/ bstod pa tshigs bcad ma dang sgo bstun na legs 'dug* (or *Theg chen chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam par thar pa kun tu bzang po'i rnam 'phrul nye bar mtshon byed ngo mtshar rgya mtsho'i gter*). For the former work, see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 2* (vol. 55, pp. 163–220). For the latter, see TBRC (W1CZ1881) and also its retyped form as published in the *Sa skya pa'i bla ma kha shas kyi rnam thar* (vol. ka, pp. 199–240). The former work was written by Glang thang sPyan snga Kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, a personal disciple of Theg chen Chos rje; see the *Lo rgyus rnam thar 2* (vol. 55, p.

(alias rDzong pa) Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1382–1436) and Brag thog pa bSod nams bzang po, who in turn gave it to Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432–1496).⁸³¹ However, as pointed out by Mathias Fermer, those later rDzong masters cannot directly be linked with the *Lam 'bras* lineage of gZungs kyi dpal, because Theg chen Chos rje stood in a different line of transmission. Theg chen Chos rje had not received the *Lam 'bras* from Bla ma dam pa, but first from Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1294–1376) at Sa bzang and, as doubts arose as to whether Ma ti Paṅ chen performed the daily Hevajra method of accomplishment (*lam dus*) continuously, he also obtained it from Bu ston dBang phyug dar (alias dBang phyug rgyal po or Zur khang Bu ston) of the Zur khang bla brang of Sa skya.⁸³² Theg chen Chos rje's system of the *Lam 'bras* became known as Theg chen lugs and was, for instance, maintained at Glang thang in 'Phan yul in the first half of the fifteenth century.⁸³³ Moreover, it was propagated by Kun dga' rnam rgyal and his

220.2–5). This biography appears to be the reproduction of the same-titled manuscript recorded in the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1555, no. 17559). The author of the second biography also identifies himself as a personal disciple of Theg chen Chos rje named Kun dga' (Kun dga'i ming can), and refers to a Glang thang sPyan snga as one of those persons requesting him to write that biography; see the *Sa skya pa'i bla ma kha shas kyi rnam thar* (vol. ka, pp. 239.1–240.2). Two manuscripts related to this second biography are housed at 'Bras spungs Monastery: a seven-folio manuscript in *dbu can* of the *Theg chen chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho* and a twenty-eight-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *Theg chen chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar rgyas pa*; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 333, no. 3340 and p. 1550, no. 17493), respectively. The name of the first work's author is given as 'Jam dbyangs grags pa'i dpal and of the second as Kun dga'i ming can. Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho lists a Kun dga' rgyal mtshan 'Jam dbyangs grags pa'i dpal as the best student of Theg chen Chos rje; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 199.8–9). This Kun dga' rgyal mtshan can be identified as rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan alias 'Jam dbyangs grags pa'i dpal; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 216.15–217.1). This finding suggests that the first biography mentioned above was written by Glang thang sPyan snga Kun dga' rgyal mtshan and the second by rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan. It further suggests that the above-mentioned petitioner of the latter might have been the former. As I was informed by Mathias Fermer (email, 13 April 2017), the *Gong dkar rdo rje gdan gyi chos spyod* collection (Dehradun: Gongkar Choede Monastery, 2009, pp. 53–57) contains a praise titled *Theg chen chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*, which appears to be the same work as the above-mentioned seven-folio manuscript housed at 'Bras spungs. rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan thus wrote both a praise and full-length biography of Theg chen Chos rje. For biographical sketches of Theg chen Chos rje, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 197.14–199.7), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 1 (pp. 404.3–433.3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 2 (fols. 27b6–28a7), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* 3 (fols. 44a2–46b2), FERMER 2010: 177–179, and JACKSON 2016: 29–33. On his biographies, cf. VAN DER KUIJP 1993c: 155, n. 12, SCHAEFFER and VAN DER KUIJP 2009: 31, n. 66, and JACKSON 2016: 33. On Glang thang sPyan snga Kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, see JACKSON 1989b: 11–12 and VAN DER KUIJP 1993c: 154–159.

⁸³¹ For the biography of rDzong pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan by dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po, see the *Sa skya pa'i bla ma kha shas kyi rnam thar* (vol. kha, pp. 165–253). For his biographical sketch, see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 216–218). On Brag thog pa bSod nams bzang po, see FERMER 2010: 106–111. On the *Lam 'bras* lineage of Kun dga' rnam rgyal, see the *Kun dga' rnam rgyal dpal bzang po'i gsan yig* (pp. 6.14–8.14), FERMER 2010: 106–108 and 179, FERMER 2016: 113–115, and JACKSON 2016: 26–27.

⁸³² See the *Kun dga' rnam rgyal dpal bzang po'i gsan yig* (p. 8.4–14), *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 198.4–7), *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (pp. 490.3–4 and 492.3–4), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 147.3–4), FERMER 2010: 177–178, JACKSON 2016: 29–30, and STEARNS 2006: 242. According to Kun dga' grol mchog, Theg chen Chos rje is also said to have received the *Lam 'bras* a third time from Jo nang mKhan chen Byang chub seng ge, a disciple of Bla ma dam pa. However, this opinion was rejected by Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 188.14–16 and 198.8–14) and JACKSON 2016: 29–30. According to the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 198.8–9) and *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 204.3–4), Bu ston dBang phyug dar, who is called Sa skya Bu ston in both works, had received the *Lam 'bras* from Brag phug pa dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, a disciple of Na bza' Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal. On Sa skya's Zur khang bla brang, see Part Three, n. 362.

⁸³³ See FERMER 2010: 179–181. See also the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 495.2–5), *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 42a.1–2), CAUMANN 2012: 59, and CAUMANN 2015: 60, n. 81. For instance, prior to receiving the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen, Shākya mchog ldan had obtained it according to the Theg chen lugs from sPyan lung pa gZhon nu blo gros (1372–1475), a direct disciple of Theg chen Chos rje; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fols. 26b7–27a1), CAUMANN 2012: 97, CAUMANN 2015: 108, and JACKSON 2016: 29. For a biographical sketch of gZhon nu blo gros, see CAUMANN 2012: [416]–421 and CAUMANN 2015: 372–377. However, Shākya mchog ldan himself taught

successors at Gong dkar Chos sde in dBus, where it was further developed into the Gong dkar lugs. It was only over a longer period of time that the Theg chen lugs and rDzong lugs became combined at that monastery. This development seemingly prompted A mes zhabs to classify Kun dga' rnam rgyal and his successors as “later rDzong masters” (*rdzong pa phyi rabs pa*).⁸³⁴ Discussing the rDzong and Ngor traditions, Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma follows A mes zhabs in classifying the rDzong pa into earlier and later traditions. In addition, Thu'u bkwan provides alternative designations for the adherents of both traditions, also referring to the earlier rDzong masters as “Mus srad pa” and the later as “Gong dkar pa.” The former designation originates from Mus srad pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan, who, as noted by Cyrus Stearns, “was one of the most outstanding masters of the Rdzong tradition.”⁸³⁵ The latter name seems to indicate Thu'u bkwan's desire to emphasise clearly the difference between the earlier and later rDzong pas.⁸³⁶

When presenting the Ngor lugs, A mes zhabs singles out Ngor chen as the most influential figure who was responsible for the flourishing of dPal ldan tshul khrim's lineage. He explains that this lineage was passed down from dPal ldan tshul khrim's through Buddhaśrī to Ngor chen, who propagated the *Lam 'bras* on a large scale by imparting it about eighty-three times and composing many vital texts for that system, such as his manual *gSung ngag 'chad thabs kyi man ngag gsang ba'i sgo byed*.⁸³⁷ The name of

the *Lam 'bras* primarily according to Ngor chen's tradition, which he also instituted at his monastic seat of gSer mdog can. For two exceptions when he did bestow it according to the Theg chen lugs, see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fols. 78a3–4 and 89a4–89b4), CAUMANN'S 2012: 244–245 and 245, n. 155, CAUMANN'S 2015: 290–292, and JACKSON 2016: 29. Between 1434 and 1447, also Shākya mchog ldan's teacher Don yod dpal received many teachings according to the Theg chen lugs from Glang thang sPyan snga Kun dga' rgyal mtshan. But, as mentioned above, he obtained the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen at Ngor in 1451; see the *Don yod dpal gyi rnam thar* (p. 47.2–6), CAUMANN'S 2012: 59, n. 105 and 413, and CAUMANN'S 2015: 369–370.

⁸³⁴ For a discussion of the overlappings between the rDzong lugs and Theg chen lugs, the links between the rDzong lugs and Gong dkar lugs, and whether Kun dga' rnam rgyal could be called a rDzong pa, see FERMER 2010: 165–189. See now also JACKSON 2016: 26–28.

⁸³⁵ STEARNS 2001: 17.

⁸³⁶ See the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 212.1–6).

⁸³⁷ See the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 307.2–308.6): *zab mo rdo rje theg pa gtso bor gyur pa la ngor rdzong rnam gnyis zhes yongs su grags pa'i ngor rdzong gnyis ni dpal ldan bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi slob ma dag nas gyes pa yin tel de'ang chos rje de la spyir slob ma'i mchog sngags kyi rgyal tshab gnyis|gsung ngag 'dzin pa'i thugs kyi sras mchog brgyad| bstan 'dzin gyi skeyes bu chen po bzhi|yongs su grags pa'i mkhas mchog bcu la sogs pa mang du byon pa'i gsung ngag bstan 'dzin pa brgyad kyi nang tshan rdzong chung pa sngags 'chang gzungs kyi dpal ba dang| ngor lugs kyi brgyud pa'i rtsa ba bla ma dpal ldan tshul khrim's pa gnyis las gsung ngag gi bka' 'dzin pa'i brgyud pa so sor 'phel tel dang po las chos rje bzang po rgyal mtshan| de las rgyal mtshan dkon mchog dang| dge ba rgyal mtshan sogs| rgyal mtshan dkon mchog las mkhas grub chen po gtsang gi rigs su 'khrungs pa mus srad pa rdo rje rgyal mtshan la sogs pa mang du 'phel| de rnams las brgyud de dar ba'i lam 'bras la rdzong lugs dang| bla ma dpal ldan tshul khrim's pa las| grub chen buddha shrī| de las rgyal bas lung bstan pa'i skeyes bu chen po thams cad mkhyen pa kun dga' 'bzang po sogs 'phel tel| ngor chen 'dis gsung ngag rin po che tshar brgyad cu gya gsum tsam gnang zhing| gsung ngag 'chad thabs kyi man ngag gsang ba'i sgo 'byed sogs lugs 'di la mkho ba'i yig cha mang du mdzad de gdams pa 'di nyid sgo du ma'i sgo nas ches cher dar rgyas su spel zhing| de nas brgyud pa la gsung ngag ngor lugs zhes grags pa 'di byung ba yin no|| gzhan yang chos rje bla ma'i slob ma yongs grags mkhas pa bcu'i nang tshan theg chen chos rje kun dga' bkra shis las nyi lde ba kun dga' rgyal mtshan dang| brag thog pa bsod nams bzang po sogs mang du 'phel ba'i| brag thog pa'i thugs sras rdo rje gdan pa chen po kun dga' rnam rgyal tel de ltar mang du byon pa'i mkhas mchog rdo rje rgyal mtshan sogs la rdzong pa snga rabs pa dang| rdo rje gdan pa sogs la rdzong pa phyi rabs pa zhes kyang grags so|| On Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* manual, see CATALOGUE (no. 37). On Ngor chen's understanding of teaching the *Lam 'bras*, see also the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (pp. 496.6–501.3). On how, for instance, Tshul khrim's rgyal mtshan had received the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen, the eight remaining cycles of the path (*lam skor brgyad*), and its ancillary instructions (*zhar byung*), see the *Tshul khrim's rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 16b1–17b5). For different commentaries that Ngor chen utilised in expounding the *rDo rje tshig rkang*, see also the *Tshul khrim's rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 16b2–4). On the rDzong lugs, Ngor lugs, and Gong dkar lugs, see also the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 202.2–3, 202.3–203.3, and 204.3–*

the newly developing Ngor tradition was given retrospectively by referring to Ngor chen's monastic seat. This system of the *Lam 'bras* became the most dominant within Sa skya pa monastic circles.⁸³⁸ By contrast, the lineage of the old rDzong tradition later died out or was absorbed into other lineages.⁸³⁹ Nevertheless, certain features of the rDzong lugs were combined with the Gong dkar lugs at Gong dkar Chos sde, where mainly Kun dga' rnam rgyal's modifications of the Theg chen lugs were taught, but some minor traditions of the old rDzong lugs were also maintained.⁸⁴⁰

The main *Lam 'bras* lineage as received by Ngor chen was transmitted by these teachers:⁸⁴¹

- (1) Vajradhara (rDo rje 'chang)
- (2) Nairātmyā (bDag med ma)
- (3) Virūpa (Birwa pa or mThu stobs dbang phyug)
- (4) Kāṇha (brTul shugs or Shar phyogs Nag po pa)⁸⁴²
- (5) Ḍāmarupa (Ḍā ma ru pa)
- (6) Avadhūtīpa (A wa dhū tī pa)
- (7) Gayadhara (Ga ya dha ra; d. 1103)
- (8) 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Shākya ye shes (993–1077?)
- (9) Se ston Kun rig (1025–1122)
- (10) Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053–1135)
- (11) Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158)
- (12) Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182)
- (13) rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216)
- (14) Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1181–1251)
- (15) 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280)
- (16) Zhang ston dKon mchog dpal⁸⁴³
- (17) Na bza' Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277–1350)
- (18) Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375)
- (19) dPal ldan tshul khriims (1333–1399)

205.1), respectively. For a discussion of the different *Lam 'bras* traditions and a chart showing their respective lines of transmission, see FERMER 2010: 163–189 and 380, respectively.

⁸³⁸ See, for instance, also the description of Ngor chen's role in the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (202.3–5).

⁸³⁹ See STEARNS 2001: 39. According to the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 202.2–3), the rDzong lugs was still maintained in the seventeenth century at such monasteries as sNgags dgon Lu [= Lo?] phu and dGe bcu in the mDog region of La stod. On Lo phu Monastery, see Part Three, n. 501.

⁸⁴⁰ See FERMER 2010: 187–189.

⁸⁴¹ See the *Lam 'bras bla brygud kyi gsol 'debs* (p. 7.1–4): *khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang dbang bdag med ma||mthu stobs dbang phyug grub chen nag po pa||ḍa ma ru pa a wa dhū ti pa||ga ya dha ra rnams la gsol ba 'debs||bla chen 'brog mi se ston kun rig dang||zhang ston chos 'bar dpal ldan sa skya pa||rje btsun sku mched chos rje paṇḍi ta||chos rgyal 'phags pa rnams la gsol ba 'debs||dkon mchog dpal dang chos rje bsod nams dpal||bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal ldan tshul khriims zhab||bka' drin mnyam med grub chen buddha shrī||dpal ldan bla ma rnams la gsol ba 'debs||. See also the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 271.1–6) and JACKSON 1990a: 133–134. On the early Indian and Tibetan masters of the *Lam 'bras*, see STEARNS 2001 and STEARNS 2007: 127–251.*

⁸⁴² See STEARNS 2006: 640, n. 135.

⁸⁴³ For the biography of dKon mchog dpal, which is based on the accounts (*gsung*) of his disciple Na bza' Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal, see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 1, pp. 362.3–367.4). dKon mchog dpal died at age sixty-eight; see the *dKon mchog dpal gyi rnam thar* (p. 366.6). According to the *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* (pp. 2287–2288, s.vv. *lcags byi* and *lcags khyi*), he was born in either 1240 or 1250. For his studies under 'Phags pa, see the *dKon mchog dpal gyi rnam thar* (pp. 362.6–364.6). For his relationship with Na bza' Brag phug pa, see the *dKon mchog dpal gyi rnam thar* (pp. 365.2–366.5) and *Na bza' brag phug pa'i rnam thar* (p. 368.1–4). Later on, Na bza' Brag phug pa also received the *Lam 'bras* from Nyan chen bSod nams brtan pa; see the *Na bza' brag phug pa'i rnam thar* (p. 369.3–5).

(20) Grub chen Buddhaśrī (1339–1420)

(21) Ngor chen

However, from Ngor chen's presentation in his *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, it is also evident that certain *Lam 'bras* teachings he received had not been passed down by Bla ma dam pa. They were given by Chos rje Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa (1316–1358) or dKar po Brag pa Rin chen seng ge to dPal ldan tshul khrim. Then by way of Buddhaśrī did Ngor chen obtain those teachings.⁸⁴⁴

As mentioned above, Ngor chen first taught the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor during a summer teaching session, most probably in the year of Ngor's founding in 1429. He gave the *Lam 'bras* to an assembly of about three hundred monks and, in doing so, he established the tradition of bestowing the *Lam 'bras* on larger monastic gatherings instead of only on a few hand-picked disciples.⁸⁴⁵ This new way of imparting the *Lam 'bras* immediately became institutionalised at Ngor, where it was already given on a yearly basis (*lo dus kyi gsung ngag* or *dus chos kyi lam 'bras*) during Ngor chen's time, and can surely be considered another reason for Ngor quickly developing into a new centre for Sa skya tantric study and practice. Along with that annual teaching, Ngor chen continued to also grant the *Lam 'bras* to students that reached Ngor at other times. In total, he is recorded to have given the entire *Lam 'bras* an impressive eighty-three times, including those eight times he gave it in secret in the Shāk bzang sKu 'bum at Sa skya and the few times that he gave it twice the same year.⁸⁴⁶ Though he at first taught it at Ngor at different times throughout the monastic year, it became customary at some point to give the *Lam 'bras* during the winter teaching session.⁸⁴⁷ According to that schedule, the annual teaching commenced on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month and was completed about the eighteenth day of the first month of the following year.⁸⁴⁸

The interpretation of certain features of teaching and practicing Hevajra, the *Lam 'bras*, and also other tantric rituals differed slightly between followers of the Ngor tradition and the rDzong and Gong dkar traditions. Disagreeing about certain points of Ngor chen's system, senior masters of the latter traditions wrote refutations that gave

⁸⁴⁴ See the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 271.1–280.1).

⁸⁴⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 527.3): *dbyar chos la dge 'dun sum brgya tsam tshogs pa rnams la lam 'bras gnang bas/ lam 'bras tshogs pa la gsungs pa'ang 'di nas 'go zug pa yin no/*

⁸⁴⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 520.2–3): *gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa yongs su rdzogs ba [= pa] tshar brgyad cu gya gsum tsam song/ de'ang phyi la gsang se mdzad nas shāk bzang sku 'bum du tshar brgyad/ de min yongs grags dang lo 'ga' yar tshar gnyis gnyis sogs bldab pa tshun brtsis pas so/* See also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 460.4).

⁸⁴⁷ See the *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 803.5–6): *mkhan thog tu phebs lo'i dbyar chos la/ ngor lugs bdun gyi dbang rnams gnang ba nas bzung/ e waṃ gyi bsgrigs rim bzhin dgun chos la gsung ngag lam 'bras nges pa can gnang dgos kyi da snga yan la'ang lam 'bras tshar bcu dgu/*

⁸⁴⁸ See the *dBus gtsang gnas yig* (pp. 396.18–397.3): *bla brang gzhung du/ zla ba bcu pa'i tshes nyer lnga la lam 'bras dgun chos dbu tshugs/ zla ba bcu gcig pa'i nyi shu bzhi lnga nas sa skya'i mdos chen la ltad mo btang bas chos mtshams/ de nas zla ba dang po'i tshes [= tshes] bco brgyad tsam la 'grol ba yin/* See also the *Klu lding mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* 2 (pp. 31.1–2 and 33.11–34.13). "In modern times," according to DAVIDSON 1992: 127–129, "the course of instruction would usually proceed through the new year to be completed by the twentieth day of the first lunar month. It was necessary for the Tshogs-bshad to be completed by this time as the monastic calendar called for ordinations (...) to commence on the twenty-fifth of that month." See also JACKSON 2003b: 157 and 626, n. 606. That ordinations were generally given at Ngor during spring is also confirmed by the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (p. 219.4–5) and *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 803.4–6). On the origin and history of the mDos chen at Sa skya, see the *gDan sa chen po dPal ldan sa skya'i dus mdos chen mo byung tshul gyi lo rgyus bla ma dang bstan srung dges pa'i mchod rdzas ngo mtshar phreng ba* (*A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, pp. 304–337). See also the description *Chu sprul dus mdos chen mo zhag bdun du spar ba'i cho ga'i sgrig rim sogs kyi tho* (*A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum*, vol. 27, pp. 451.4–456.3).

rise to polemical exchanges and the emergence of differences between members of both groups. Thanks to two works by A mes zhabs that clarify those differences, we can better understand those polemical exchanges.

In the first work, which dates to 1629, A mes zhabs chronologically introduces the main players that were through their writings involved in the polemical exchanges, reproducing at length their responses and rebuttals or even their entire works. In other words, it compiles the most important works in that debate.⁸⁴⁹ By comparison, his second work from 1638 is an in-depth study of the individual points the traditions were arguing about. A mes zhabs organised his scholarly discussion of each point in the following way: (1) introducing the critique voiced against Ngor chen's system by quoting from the original works, followed by quotes from the responses, and in turn from the rebuttals; (2) summarising the main arguments of each person, and (3) offering his personal understanding, thereby trying to show that mostly both positions were actually valid forms of ritual practice.⁸⁵⁰

As we learn from A mes zhabs' presentation, an early major critic of the Ngor pa was gTsang Byams pa (alias Mus srad pa) rDo rje rgyal mtshan, who composed many polemical works such as the *Four Streams (Chu rgyun bzhi)* and *Four Proofs [of the Previous Masters'] Teachings (bKa' bsgrub bzhi)*.⁸⁵¹ The former group consists of four individual works that, according to A mes zhabs, are concerned with the following points:⁸⁵²

- *First Stream (Chu rgyun dang po)*: A repudiation of the critique directed against the teachings of the foremost Sa skya masters by scholars from other traditions such as Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal
- *Second Stream (Chu rgyun gnyis pa)*: A thorough analysis of such points as name, translation, and transmission lineage of the *Hevajratantra* that are in disagreement with the Ngor tradition
- *Third Stream (Chu rgyun gsum pa)*: An objection to the critique voiced against the *Hevajra sādhana* and *maṅḍala* in the tradition of Ḍombi Heruka of Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis⁸⁵³
- *Fourth Stream (Chu rgyun bzhi pa)*: A critique of the Ngor tradition regarding some ritual practices of the *Lam 'bras* and other tantric rituals

All four works are available and it is possible to date three of them based on their colophons. The *First Stream* is by far the most extensive work in six large sections (*skabs*)

⁸⁴⁹ For this work, the *dPal ldan sa skya pa'i sngags phyogs kyi bstan 'dzin ngor rdzong rnam gnyis kyi kyai rdo rje man ngag lugs kyi phyag len gyi rim pa gtso bor gyur pa'i zab mo'i gnad 'ga' zhiḡ la bzhed tshul mi 'dra ba'i rnam gzhag mdo tsam bshad pa la lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed*, see the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 24, pp. 1–302). On this work, see also SOBISCH 2007: 439–440, no. 5.

⁸⁵⁰ For this work, the *dPal ldan sa skya pa'i bstan 'dzin ngor rdzong rnam gnyis gsung ngag rin po che'i phyag len gyi rim pa 'ga' zhiḡ las brtsams te so so'i bzhed srol rnams legs par bshad pa lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed*, see the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 24, pp. 303–527). On this work, see also SOBISCH 2007: 354–355, no. 8.

⁸⁵¹ See the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 309.4–5). For a short list of his writings, see also the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 223.19–224.1).

⁸⁵² See the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 309.5–310.2).

⁸⁵³ gTsang Byams pa wrote this work in response to Ngor chen's *'Phrin yig dbang po'i rdo rje*, in which the latter had criticised Theg chen Chos rje's works about the *Hevajra sādhana* and *maṅḍala* in the tradition of Ḍombi Heruka; see the *Chu rgyun gsum pa* (pp. 670.3–671.1). On the *'Phrin yig dbang po'i rdo rje*, see CATALOGUE (no. 58).

and was completed in 1467. The shorter second and third stream were both written in 1479.⁸⁵⁴

In the *Four Proofs* (*bsGrub pa bzhi*), which were written as one work in four chapters (*le'u*), gTsang Byams pa is said to have established four points.⁸⁵⁵

- *First Proof* (*bsGrub pa dang po*): The teachings of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, bSod nams rtse mo, Grags pa rgyal mtshan, and Sa skya Paṇḍita
- *Second Proof* (*bsGrub pa gnyis pa*): The teachings of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa
- *Third Proof* (*bsGrub pa gsum pa*): The teachings of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan
- *Fourth Proof* (*bsGrub pa bzhi pa*): Ritual practices

A mes zhabs informs us that the last three works of the *Four Streams* and all four parts of the *Four Proofs* consist of a peculiar critique of the Ngor tradition. We are further informed that many Ngor scholars wrote responses to the *Fourth Stream* as well as the *First Proof*, but that A mes zhabs did not see any responses to those other works and parts.⁸⁵⁶

In the *Fourth Stream*, gTsang Byams pa's discussion revolves around a critique of eight points, which also provided the main structure for the responses by Ngor masters and A mes zhabs' discussions.⁸⁵⁷ Though space does not permit me to discuss the polemical exchange on all eight points in detail, I shall merely give a chronological overview of the literary exchange.

gTsang Byams pa brought forward his eight-point critique in 1479 in the *rNam par bshad pa'i chu rgyun bzhi pa*, which sparked the following responses:⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁴ For the six sections of the *First Stream*, see the *sNgags skor* (vol. 2, pp. 371–636, 637–855, vol. 3, pp. 1–80, 81–184, 185–400, and 401–606). For the subsequent three of the *Four Streams*, see the *sNgags skor* (vol. 3, pp. 607–668, 669–698, and 699–716).

⁸⁵⁵ See the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 244.2–3) and *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 310.2–3). On the outline of the *Four Proofs*, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 244.2–3): *m khas pa'i dbang po mtshungs med rdo rje rgyal mtshan gyis mdzad pa'i bsgrub pa rnam bzhi zhes bya ba la bka' bsgrub kyi le'u | 'phags pa bsgrub pa'i le'u | bla ma dam pa bsgrub pa'i le'u | phyag len bsgrub pa'i le'u dang bzhi yod pa las*; and *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 510.2–3): *rje mus srad pa chen pos gong ma'i bka' bsgrub pa | 'phags pa bsgrub pa | bla ma dam pa bsgrub pa | phyag len bsgrub pa ste bzhi po la le'u re re mdzad nas bsgrub pa rnam bzhi'i bstan bcos zhes mtshan du grags pa'i*.

⁸⁵⁶ See the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 319.3–4).

⁸⁵⁷ See the *Chu rgyun bzhi pa* (pp. 700.2–701.1): *sems bskyed brgyud pa med pa dang || rjes 'dzin grangs nges med pa dang || sta gon 'brel pa med pa dang || slob dpon grangs nges med pa dang || lus dkyil 'byung khungs med pa dang || dbang rdzas yongs dag med pa dang || rgyas gdab rigs mtshon med pa dang || bza' ba'i dam tshig med pa yis || 'di na thabs mchog thabs min byed || smin byed byas kyang smin min la || grol byed bsgom kyang grol min pas || de phyir 'di dag dgag par byal ||*. For A mes zhabs' discussion of these eight points, see the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 311.6–324.6, 324.6–402.5, 402.5–427.4, 427.4–437.4, 437.4–448.5, 448.5–461.2, 461.2–472.2, and 472.2–510.2), respectively. In addition, he discusses as a ninth point a topic from the *First Proof* about the *gDan gyi dag pa*; see the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 510.2–524.5). For a recent discussion of those eight points, see the *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 25.18–39.10).

⁸⁵⁸ For Shākya mchog ldan's work, see the *Shāk mchog gyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 13, pp. 640.7–670.7). For the first of dKon mchog lhun grub's writings, see the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 18, pp. 12–72). His summary in verse and also Tshar chen's work are only available as quotations within A mes zhabs' works. For the entire quotation of both works, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 132.1–149.3 and 149.3–160.5), respectively. 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po mentions that besides dKon mchog lhun grub, Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje (b. 1584) also wrote rebuttals to the critique expressed by the rDzong pas; see the *gSang sngags gsar nying gi gdan rabs* (p. 120.4–5). On Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje, who served as the fifteenth abbot of Thub bstan rnam rgyal, see the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (pp. 18.21–19.16). See also the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 718.6–719.5) and *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 743.2–5). He wrote biographies of such Ngor abbots as dKon mchog lhun grub, Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis, and dPal ldan don grub; see the *Lam 'bras 3* (vol.

- Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507)
 - ❖ *Grang mo che pa'i brgal lan/ rnam par thar pa'i sgo bryad pa*
- dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot of Ngor
 - ❖ *bShes gnyen chen po mus srads pas brgal zhing brtag pa'i lan rnam par nges pa tshangs pa'i rig sngags* (written in 1529)
 - ❖ *brGal lan tshangs pa'i rig sngags kyi don bsodus don bryad pa* (written in 1530)
- Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–1566)
 - ❖ *gSung ngag rin po che'i skabs bryad la 'khrul pa spong ba rdo rje'i 'khrul 'khor gyi zags ma*

In reply to dKon mchog lhun grub, two rebuttals were written by rDzong masters.⁸⁵⁹

- Ngam ring mKhan chen Chos rje bZang po bkra shis (1495–1564)
 - ❖ *sNyan bryud 'khrul sel*
- sGyi (or sGye) chu ba Buddhaśrī
 - ❖ *Nor bu'i phreng ba* (written in 1545)

Unfortunately, only the *First Proof* is presently available as quoted by A mes zhabs.⁸⁶⁰ From his presentation we see that it provoked a response by Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456–1532), the *Tshig don mun sel*.⁸⁶¹ Already prior to that, Glo bo mKhan chen had discussed certain points in a reply to questions by a certain Rab 'byams pa Blo gros rab gsal.⁸⁶²

In his discussion of the eight-point critique, A mes zhabs occasionally cites other works by masters that had criticised individual features of Ngor chen's system that did

28, pp. 233–285, 631–719, and 721–743), respectively. Only a few of his other writings are presently available: *mKha' lding gser mig 'khyil pa'i rjes gnang bya tshul gser gyi phra mig* (W1CZ1281), *'Jam dbyangs nag po'i rjes gnang bya tshul gyi yi ge* (W1CZ1288), *rje btsun sgröl ma 'jigs pa kun sel gyi sgrub thabs dang rjes gnang byas tshul* (sGrub thabs kun btus, vol. 3, pp. 557–654), and his *Lam 'bras* manual, the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag gi gzhung shing rgyas pa gzhung ji lta ba bzhiñ bkri ba'i khrid yig gzhān phrin las rgyas byed* (*Lam 'bras* 2, vol. 41, pp. 201–561). A seven-folio *dbu med* manuscript of his *Bar do'i chos bshad bya tshul 'jigs pa myur sel* remains unpublished. Unavailable at present is his biography of Kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub, the fifteenth abbot of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 41.3). For a list of some of his writings that were compiled in ten volumes, see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 113.15–114.8). Another set of his collected works comprised twelve volumes; see the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (p. 19.15–19.16). He was still alive in 1653 when he compiled his biography of dKon mchog lhun grub; see the *dKon mchog lhun grub gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 284.3–6).

⁸⁵⁹ Both works are presently only available as quotations within A mes zhabs' studies. For entire quotations of both works, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 160.6–179.5 and 179.5–211.4), respectively. sGyi chu ba Buddhaśrī was apparently connected to the tantric monastery (*sngags dgon*) called sGyi chu, which was founded, in 1502, by Byams pa dKon mchog dpal (b. 1449) and adhered to the rDzong tradition; see the *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 249.10–13). Another rDzong master connected to Ngam ring, dPal ldan chos skyong bzang po, wrote a refutation of Ngor chen's monumental study of Hevajra literature (i.e., the *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer*). On this refutation, see Part Four, 4.1.

⁸⁶⁰ See the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 244.2–257.1).

⁸⁶¹ For Glo bo mKhan chen's work, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum* 1 (vol. 2, pp. 113–137). For its quotation by A mes zhabs, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 257.1–278.2). For A mes zhabs' discussion, see the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 512.5–522.5).

⁸⁶² For Glo bo mKhan chen's work, the *Rab byams pa blo gros rab gsal gyis dris pa'i lan*, see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum* 1 (vol. 3, pp. 369–394). For its quotation by A mes zhabs, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 278.2–300.1). On this work, see also KRAMER 2008: 204–205, no. 218.

not originate within the argument on gTsang Byams pa's eight-point critique. From them we learn that another strong opponent was the aforementioned Kun dga' rnam rgyal, the founder of Gong dkar Monastery, who in a couple of his writings had strongly criticised features of Ngor chen's understanding of tantric practice and ritual.⁸⁶³ His critique can be found in the following works:⁸⁶⁴

- *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs legs par bshad pa| las dang po pa la phan pa sgrub pa nyin mor byed pa'i snang ba* (written in 1467)
- *Pha thams cad mkhyen pa rdo rje gdan pa chen po'i zhal snga nas lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i skabs su sngon 'gro'i byed dgos dang| rgyud lugs rim gsal dge'o*
- *Kun rig gzhan 'phan 'od zer gyi ngag 'don gzhan phan snang ba* (written in 1478)
- *Tshogs kyi 'khor lo'i rnam par gzhang pa grub pa'i dga' ston* (written in 1483)⁸⁶⁵
- *rje btsun rnam la zhu ba'i 'phrin yig* (written after 1464)

The last work is a highly interesting presentation in verse, styled as a petition to the five Sa skya founding fathers. In his work, Kun dga' rnam rgyal summarised all his critiques against Ngor chen, attacking him vigorously.⁸⁶⁶

In reply to Kun dga' rnam rgyal's exposition of the tantric feast offering (*tshogs 'khor: gaṇacakra*), a refutation was written (in 1554?) by a certain bSod nams rab brtan according to the words of his teacher (Thub bstan mKhan chen?) Byams pa rab brtan.⁸⁶⁷

An important disciple and biographer of Kun dga' rnam rgyal, rGya ston Byang chub dbang rgyal (b. 1470), wrote in 1539 a response to questions voiced by dKon mchog lhun

⁸⁶³ Kun dga' rnam rgyal's critique is also mentioned in the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 992.14–18).

⁸⁶⁴ For the first work, see the *Sam bho ta'i dbon bryud dpe tshogs* (vol. 5, pp. 81–440) and TBRC (WIKG1083). On this work, see also FERMER 2010: 207–208, no. 10 and 260–264, no. 10. For the second work, see the *Kun dga' rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig* (pp. 473–479). On this work, see also FERMER 2010: 211–212, no. 20. For a scan of the third work, see TBRC (W2PD17535, pp. 3–126 of the PDF document). On this work, see also FERMER 2010: 221–222, no. 44 and 267–270, no. 44. For a scan of the fourth work, see TBRC (W2PD17535, pp. 289–332 of the PDF document). On this work, see also the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (p. 493.1–5) and FERMER 2010: 209, no. 14. For the fifth work, see the *Kun dga' rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig* (pp. 444–472) and TBRC (W2PD17535, pp. 151–177 of the PDF document). On this work, see also FERMER 2010: 206, no. 9 and 257–259, no. 9. On the disputes between the Gong dkar and Ngor traditions, see also *Ibid.*: 172–174 and FERMER 2016: 111–112.

⁸⁶⁵ This work was written as a critique of two works that Ngor chen had written about *gaṇacakra*, the *Tshogs 'khor gsang ba kun rgyan* (CATALOGUE, no. 92) and *Tshogs 'khor kun bzang rnam rol* (CATALOGUE, no. 93).

⁸⁶⁶ Along with his critique voiced in those other works, Kun dga' rnam rgyal also objected, for instance, to certain statements that Ngor chen had made in two works on sacred tantric dances (*gar*) as taught in the *Vajrapañjaratantra*; see the *rje btsun rnam la zhu ba'i 'phrin yig* (pp. 448.18–451.19). On Ngor chen's works, see CATALOGUE (nos. 70 and 71). Ngor chen's works on sacred tantric dances were also mentioned by ELLINGSON 1979: 166, though I disagree with the reason he gives for the alleged break of the Ngor pas with the Sa skya pas: "Later, when the Ngorpa movement split with the Sasyapas to form a partially autonomous religious current, the main issue was whether it was appropriate to perform the Phur pa dance at all. The mainstream Sasyapas held, along with the "old" Nyingmapas, that the Phur pa 'chams was a part of authentic Buddhist tradition received from Padmasambhava, while the Ngorpas sided with the other "New Tantra" schools, the Kargyudpas and Kadampas, in questioning the authenticity of the claimed Indian Buddhist origin of the Phur pa traditions. The founder of the Ngorpas, Ngor chen Kun dga' Bzang po (1382–1444), wrote treatises which analyzed the dances and explained the dance movements of rituals associated with the Rdo rje Gur, a Tantra of the special form of Mahākāla (Gur gyi Mgon po) favored by the Sasyapa tradition; and the Mahākāla dances replaced those of the Phur pa in the Ngor pa tradition." On the difference between *gar* and 'cham, see SCHREMPF 1999: 201.

⁸⁶⁷ For this refutation, the *rje btsun sa skya pa'i tshogs kyi 'khor lo'i dgag lan log rtoq brag ri 'joms pa'i rdo rje*, as quoted by A mes zhabs, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 211.5–243.6). For A mes zhabs' discussion, see the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 493.5–510.2). See also FERMER 2010: 173.

grub.⁸⁶⁸ Along with his 1529 response to gTangs Byams pa's initial critique, dKon mchog lhung grub that same year had also written a short work in which he questioned the *Lam 'bras* practice of bestowing the causal empowerment (*rgyu dus kyi dbang*) prior to the Three Appearances (*snang gsum*) and not, as done by the Ngor pas, prior to the Three Continua (*rgyud gsum*).⁸⁶⁹ Byang chub dbang rgyal perceived this writing as ridiculing (co 'dri ba) the Gong dkar ba's practice and wrote his work in direct reply.⁸⁷⁰ Prior to both of them, Shākya mchog ldan had already refuted the initial critique of the Ngor pa's practice that his teacher, Ngor chen, had mixed up the proper order of the *Lam 'bras*, bestowing the causal empowerment only prior to the Three Continua.⁸⁷¹ Shākya mchog ldan may have written his work in response to the critique originally voiced by Kun dga' rnam rgyal in his petition to the founding fathers of Sa skya.

Like Ngor chen and his followers, Kun dga' rnam rgyal and his followers strongly believed themselves to be the true followers of the teachings as expounded by the Sa skya founding fathers, though, as previously outlined, they followed different lines of transmission. Kun dga' rnam rgyal (rhetorically?) differentiates between the *Lam 'bras dbus lugs* of Bla ma dam pa's system, which he and his followers held in the highest esteem, and the *Lam 'bras gtsang lugs*, a reference to Ngor chen's system.⁸⁷² As he considers the former as being consistent with the teachings of the Sa skya founding fathers, he postulates it as ultimately being the *Lam 'bras Sa skya* system (*lam 'bras sa lugs*).⁸⁷³ Similarly, in his reply to dKon mchog lhun grub, Byang chub dbang rgyal styles the followers of his own tradition as adherents of the old Sa skya system (*sa skya rnying ma'i srol 'dzin*), implying that Ngor chen's system and its followers adhered to a more recent deviation.⁸⁷⁴

⁸⁶⁸ For this work, the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i skabs kyi dri lan rmongs pa'i mun sel*, see the *Kun dga' rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig* (pp. 495–506). For its quotation by A mes zhabs, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 10.2–23.2). On this work, see also FERMER 2010: 245, no. 111 and 278–279, no. 111. On Byang chub dbang rgyal, see *Ibid.*: 81–83.

⁸⁶⁹ For this work, the *gZhung ji lta ba bzhin du bkri ba'i gzhung shing las 'phros pa'i dri ba*, see the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 18, pp. 73–75) and TBRC (W2CZ7912, fols. 12b2–13a8). For this work as quoted by A mes zhabs, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 7.5–10.2). dKon mchog lhun grub wrote another work on that topic, the *gSung ngag bshad kyi man ngag gsang ba sgo 'byed las 'phros pa'i dris lan zab don snying po*, which is presently only available as quotes within A mes zhabs' works. As suggested by its title, the text was written in reply to a critique of Ngor chen's method of teaching the *Lam 'bras*, the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyi man ngag gsang ba'i sgo 'byed* (CATALOGUE, no. 37). For the entire quotation of dKon mchog lhun grub's work, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 23.2–33.2). On this work, see also the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 388.2–389.5 and 522.5–523.4).

⁸⁷⁰ See the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i dri lan* (pp. 505.11–506.1). For the discussion by A mes zhabs, who alternately cites the questions by dKon mchog lhun grub and the replies by Byang chub dbang rgyal, see the *Lugs gnyis zab don gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 373.3–388.2).

⁸⁷¹ See the *gSung ngag rtsod spong* (p. 294.2–3): *kho bo cag gi rje bla mas|| lam 'bras dbu zhabs dkrugs shes zer||*. For this work, see the *Shāk mchog gi gsung 'bum* (vol. 13, pp. 294.2–296.4). For this work as quoted by A mes zhabs, see the *Lugs gnyis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 4.2–7.5). Such an early critique was, for instance, voiced by Kun dga' rnam rgyal; see the *rje btsun rnams la zhu ba'i 'phrin yig* (pp. 464.4–468.7).

⁸⁷² The predominant position of Bla ma dam pa for the exegetical tradition of Gong dkar found also iconographic expression. As pointed out by Matthias Fermer, Bla ma dam pa was usually depicted as the third red-robed Sa skya master, next to the common pair of Sa skya Paṇḍita and Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (*dmad po rnam gnyis*); see FERMER 2016: 111–112. For such a depiction of Bla ma dam pa as a *Lam 'bras* lineage master of Kun dga' rnam rgyal as found on a mural in Gong dkar Monastery, see the *Gong dkar chos sde'i gnas yig* (pp. 76–77) and FERMER 2016: 111, fig. 4.54 and 112, fig. 4.56.

⁸⁷³ See the *rje btsun rnams la zhu ba'i 'phrin yig* (p. 464.4–9). See also the *rje btsun rnams la zhu ba'i 'phrin yig* (pp. 467.2–4 and 470.15–19) and FERMER 2016: 111–112.

⁸⁷⁴ See the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i dri lan* (p. 505.11–14). See also FERMER 2010: 172–173.

13.2 The Division of the *Lam 'bras*: The Two Systems of *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad*

In the fifteenth century, two different systems of the *Lam 'bras* emerged, the *Tshogs bshad*, the “explication for the assembly,” and the *Slob bshad*, the “explication for the disciples.” Ngor became the stronghold of the *Tshogs bshad* and it was bestowed there on an annual basis.⁸⁷⁵ To receive that teaching from the incumbent abbot, large numbers of disciples journeyed to Ngor from as far as Khams.⁸⁷⁶ The *Slob bshad*, on the other hand, became associated with the Tshar tradition, the system prominently transmitted by Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho and his disciples 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug and Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho. Although the *Slob bshad* shared much with the *Tshogs bshad*, its system was more elaborate and esoteric in nature and differed in technique for imparting the *Lam 'bras*.⁸⁷⁷ The division of the *Lam 'bras* was associated with Ngor chen and his disciple lineage, and the lineages of both systems were also traced through him. However, because Tibetan sources do not agree on who was responsible for that division, this chapter begins by introducing the different viewpoints encountered in them.

The earliest written reference to both systems is found in Tshar chen's biography of bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. In 1464, Blo gros rgyal mtshan travelled in secret to Ye ma bDe ldan Chos rdzong gi ri khrod (i.e., bDe ldan ri khrod) in Mus to request full monastic ordination and teachings from Mus chen.⁸⁷⁸ As pointed out by Cyrus Stearns, Blo gros rgyal mtshan received from Mus chen a special transmission of the *Lam 'bras*. First, he received it up to the Three Appearances (*snang gsum*) together with a large assembly. Beginning with the tantric path (*sngags lam*), Mus chen gave the *Lam 'bras* only to a few disciples and masters. He did this in the common way according to the system of instructions of the profound *Tshogs bshad* for a period of six months. While having tea in the afternoon or evening, Mus chen taught the uncommon *Slob bshad*—which existed as an oral lineage (*snyan brgyud*)—in a unique transmission (*chig brgyud*) only to Blo gros rgyal mtshan.⁸⁷⁹

However, the division of the *Lam 'bras* can already be associated with Ngor chen. According to Mus chen's biography by Gung ru Shes rab bzang po, Ngor chen bestowed a special transmission of the *Lam 'bras* on Mus chen, which he gave in that particular way to nobody else. This special teaching was given by Ngor chen when he returned to Sa skya from his first Glo bo sojourn in 1428 and conferred the *Lam 'bras* for seven months from the second half of 1428 until the first half of 1429. At first, about seventy disciples obtained the *Lam 'bras*, but in the end, the group was reduced to only fourteen. These

⁸⁷⁵ See the *Lam 'bras tshogs slob kyi brgyud yig* (p. 494.3–4).

⁸⁷⁶ See JACKSON 2003b: 157. Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 08 February 2015) mentioned that during his abbatial tenure (1954–1957) his annual *Lam 'bras* teaching was attended by about 300 non-ribden monks, who had travelled to Ngor to receive that teaching.

⁸⁷⁷ See DAVIDSON 1981: 89, DAVIDSON 1992: 108 and 124–126, and STEARNS 2001: 44.

⁸⁷⁸ See the *bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 74.2–80.1). Cf. STEARNS 2001: 40, who states that Blo gros rgyal mtshan travelled to Ngor and not to Mus.

⁸⁷⁹ See the *bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 78.6–79.2): (...) *gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i man ngag gi bka' drin gsan par mdzad del de yang thog mar snang ba gsum gyi khrid kyi bar dge ba'i bshes gnyen ches rags pa mang po sogs tshogs pa shin tu che ba dang lhan cig tu gsan| sngags lam dbu btsugs nas dpon slob nyung shas la zla ba drug gi bar du tshogs bshad zab mo khrid kyi lugs su thun mong du gnan| dgongs ja'am srod ja gang ris kyi thog tu thun mong ma yin pa'i slob bshad snyan brgyud du bzhugs pa rnams rje 'di kho na la chig brgyud gnan|*. For a translation of this passage, see STEARNS 2001: 40. For another presentation of Blo gros rgyal mtshan's *Lam 'bras* studies under Mus chen, see the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong* (p. 157.2–4). For a translation of the latter passage, see STEARNS 2006: 254–255.

fourteen disciples had accomplished the first teaching and now also received from Ngor chen its experiential instructions (*nyams khrid*). As he gave a very extensive teaching, Ngor chen advised Mus chen that he should not put it down in writing. Nevertheless, Mus chen took some notes among which he also outlined the structure of Ngor chen's method of teaching. This outline revealed that Mus chen had received a special transmission of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen gave to nobody else in the same way.⁸⁸⁰ This description of Ngor chen's way of teaching appears quite similar to the aforementioned way that Mus chen transmitted the *Lam 'bras* to Blo gros rgyal mtshan, though in the latter case the terms *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* are not utilised. The last remark that it was only Mus chen who received the *Lam 'bras* from Ngor chen in that special way suggests that a similar three-part division might have been employed.

That Ngor chen gave a special transmission to Mus chen is also confirmed by 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug in his summarising notes on the history of the *Lam 'bras*. According to him, Ngor chen gave in a unique transmission (*chig brgyud*) a systematic presentation of the *Lam 'bras* to Mus chen, thereby effectively dividing it into the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad*. Prior to that, this classification was non-existent. Mus chen, too, separated the *Lam 'bras* and gave it in that way only to bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan.⁸⁸¹ Also, mKhan chen bSam gtan blo gros (1868–1931) in his biography of Blo gter dbang po (1847–1914) states that Ngor chen taught the essence of the instructions (*gdams pa'i bcud*) of the *Lam 'bras* to Mus chen, while giving explanations (*ljags bshad*) that clarified the entire *sūtras* and *tantras* to the rest of the assembly. Owing to this special way of teaching, the transmission lines for both the assembly and the disciples separated.⁸⁸²

With regard to Ngor chen as a possible originator of that classification, we should briefly return to his first bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor. At that time, he imparted the *Lam 'bras* to an assembly of about three hundred monks, thereby instituting the custom of teaching the *Lam 'bras* to the assembly.⁸⁸³ This description, as it stands in Sangs rgyas

⁸⁸⁰ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 216.3–5): *rje ngor pa zla ba drug nas mar phebs|sprel lo'i smad bya lo'i stod kyi bar zla ba bdun du lam 'bras gsungs| dang po mi bdun cu tsam byung yang| mthar rje 'di pa sogs mi bcu bzhis mthar phyin par nyams khrid du gsan| lam 'bras shin tu rgyas par gnang bas yi ger bris na mang du yod kyang ma bris gsungs soff 'on kyang de dus rje 'dis lam 'bras kyi zin bris mdzad pa 'di'i nang gi bshad thabs kyi chings bzang po de 'dra ni| dus physis rje ngor pas ma gnang bas na| rje 'di la gnang ba bzhin gzhan su la'ang ma gnang bar nges sol. An ancillary *Lam 'bras* teaching (*lam 'bras kyi cha lag*), the *Bla ma rig lnga sgrub pa'i man ngag*, that Ngor chen is said to have only bestowed on Mus chen is mentioned by A mes zhabs; see the *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 231.1–233.4).*

⁸⁸¹ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 151.3–6): *mdor na tshogs bshad dang slob bshad ces so sor phye ba'i rnam gzhang mi snang la| de lta bu'i rnam gzhang kyang rdo rje 'chang gis sems dpa' chen po la chig brgyud du gsungs| sems dpa' chen pos kyang so sor phye nas gnang ba ni bDag chen rdo rje 'chang chen po gcig pu yin la| rje sangs rgyas dpal bzang pa sogs rgyun bzhugs kyi slob ma rnams kyi| rjes sems dpa' chen po zhal mdangs dmar por 'gyur| phyag se gol mdzad cing| de tsam du ma song na zhes gsung nam byung tsa na slob bshad du dgongs pas gsung sgras ched du 'dzin pa de lta bu'i tshul gyis thor bu gsan pa yin la| (...). For a translation of this passage, see STEARNS 2006: 246–247. Similarly, Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma in his chapter on the Sa skya school remarks that Ngor chen taught the key points (*gnad*) of the *Lam 'bras* as a secret teaching (*lkog chos*) only to Mus chen. It was from that time on that the tradition of dividing the *Lam 'bras* into the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* emerged. See the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (p. 211.5–6): *slob ma yang (...)* *sogs mang ba las gtso bo ni| mus chen sems dpa' chen po dkon mchog rgyal mtshan tel 'di la slob ma gzhan la ma gsungs pa'i lam 'bras kyi gnad rnams lkog chos su gnang bas| de nas bzung lam 'bras la tshogs bshad dang slob bshad kyi rnam bzhag byed pa'i srol byung|**

⁸⁸² See the *Blo gter dbang po'i rnam thar* (p. 311.3–4): *de nas (...)* *ngor chen thams cad mkhyen pas rgyal ba mus pa chen po la gdams pa'i bcud rnams stsall| tshogs pa byings la mdo rgyud ma lus pa gsal bar byed pa'i ljags bshad mdzad pa la brten nas tshogs slob kyi brgyud pa so sor gyes tel.*

⁸⁸³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 527.3). See also DAVIDSON 1992: 127, who also interprets this teaching as constituting the *Tshogs bshad*.

phun tshogs' biography of Ngor chen, suggests that Ngor chen was already de facto conferring the *Tshogs bshad*, *avant la lettre*.

In his history of the *Lam 'bras*, A mes zhabs points out that the tradition that became known as the *Slob bshad*—"a few [instructions that were] the profound quintessence of the *Lam 'bras*" (*lam 'bras kyi zab mo'i nying khu 'ga' zhid*)—was not openly referred to by name even at the time of Mus chen. There also did not exist any written references identifying the *Slob bshad* teachings as such, because it existed prior to that only as an oral transmission (*snyan brgyud*). It was only with Mus chen's greatest disciple bDag chen rDo rje 'chang (i.e., Blo gros rgyal mtshan) that there openly appear mentions such as "in accordance with the *Slob bshad*, it is this" (*slob bshad ltar na 'di'o*). Subsequently, as A mes zhabs explains, the *Slob bshad* was further developed by rDo ring pa Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma, Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho, and Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho.⁸⁸⁴

Cyrus Stearns observed that the *Slob bshad* "had always existed in the tradition of the *Lam 'bras*, but had been kept extremely secret,"⁸⁸⁵ and, referring to the aforementioned remarks of A mes zhabs, explained:⁸⁸⁶

What is significant now is the terminological distinction of *Tshogs bshad* (...) and *Slob bshad* (...). These terms had not been used before the time of Bdag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan, and many would later object to such a classification. For several more generations the *Slob bshad* instructions remained essentially oral and were completely unknown outside of a very small circle of great teachers and their students. Only a few significant texts were composed by Blo gros rgyal mtshan and his disciple Kun spangs Rdo ring pa (...).

Although the terminology was new, evidence of a special transmission of unwritten key instructions could be found in the writings of several earlier masters, such as Grags pa rgyal mtshan and Sa skya Paṇḍi ta. (...) Both of these statements are often quoted within the tradition to demonstrate the existence of an oral transmission of the *Slob bshad* from the earliest period of the *Lam 'bras* in Sa skya.

In his supplement to the summarising notes of mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug, Kun dga' dpal ldan (fl. 19th century) considers bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan to be the one who was responsible for classifying the *Lam 'bras* into the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad*, though

⁸⁸⁴ See the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 294.4–6): *gsung ngag slob bshad du grags pa 'di ni lam 'bras kyi zab mo'i nying khu 'ga' zhid mus chen sems dpa' chen po yan la gsung ngag slob bshad 'di'o zhes mngon gyur du mi gsungs pas/ gsung ngag slob bshad ltar na 'di'o zhes yig cha sogs su ma thebs pa snyan brgyud 'ba' zhid tu bzhugs pa la/ mus chen gyi slob ma'i mchog bdag chen rdo rje 'chang la/ slob bshad ltar na 'di'o zhes ma sbas par snang [= gngang?] ba yin la/ de nas rje rdo ring pa kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma/ tshar chen blo gsal rgya mtsho/ rje klu sgrub rgya mtsho sogs las 'phel bar grags pa yin la/ zhib tu khong rang tsho'i yig cha las rtogs par bya'o//. See also the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung 2* (p. 169.1–5), which is based on the former work. Cf. the *Slob bshad dang tshogs bshad kyi dbye ba* (p. 218.5–6): *bzhi pa rtsod pa spong ba la/ tha snyad la rtsod pa spong ba dang/ don la rtsod pa spong ba gnyis las/ dang po la kha cig lam 'bras la tshogs bshad dang slob bshad kyi tha snyad byed pa mi 'thead de/ de 'dra'i tha snyad khyed rang gi bdag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan man chad la grags kyi/ de 'dra sangs rgyas rdo rje 'chang nas mus chen yan chad la ma grags pa'i phyir zhe na/.**

⁸⁸⁵ STEARNS 2001: 40.

⁸⁸⁶ STEARNS 2001: 40–41. On the *Slob bshad*, see also DAVIDSON 1992: 125–126. For those and other statements by Grags pa rgyal mtshan and Sa skya Paṇḍita, see also the *Slob bshad dang tshogs bshad kyi dbye ba* (pp. 217.5–218.3). An early reference to the division of some *Lam 'bras* teachings regarding their bestowal to a single student (or small group) and the assembly is found in the biography of dPal ldan tshul khriims by his disciple Buddhaśrī when relating his master's *Lam 'bras* studies under Ri khrod pa Blo gros brtan pa (dPal ldan tshul khriims kyi rnam thar 2, p. 47.3–5): *shin tu myes te gags sel la sogs pa'i gdam ngag thun mong ma yin pa rnam dang/ gzhung bshad yang tshogs pa la gngang ba dang/ slob ma la gngang pa [= ba] gnyis mdzad pa la de nas slob ma la gngang pa [= ba] rnam zhib par snang/.*

he acknowledges that Blo gros rgyal mtshan did so in line with Mus chen's teaching practice. Kun dga' dpal ldan explains that though until the time of Ngor chen both systems actually existed, they had not been termed so by then. Following Mus chen's practice, it was Blo gros rgyal mtshan who separated the common and uncommon esoteric instructions and bestowed them individually. Since then, these instructions were known as *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad*, and Blo gros rgyal mtshan became the source of the latter system.⁸⁸⁷

On the other hand, Blo gter dbang po, in his teaching manual of the *Slob bshad*, highlights Mus chen's role in separating the *Lam 'bras*. In his opening historical survey, he states that Mus chen separated the common and uncommon teachings and bestowed them on bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. Due to the efforts of rDo ring pa Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma and Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho, who emphasised the uncommon aspects, this system became known as the "*Slob bshad*, [i.e.,] the uncommon Ngor tradition" (*ngor lugs thun mong ma yin pa slob bshad*).⁸⁸⁸ Later on, he further specifies that Ngor chen gave both the profound (*zab pa*) and vast (*rgya che ba*) *Lam 'bras* to Mus chen, who in turn separated the profound and vast aspects and bestowed them on bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan.⁸⁸⁹

So far, we have seen that Tibetan authors inconsistently ascribe the classification in *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* to Ngor chen, Mus chen, or bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan.⁸⁹⁰ The sources suggest that neither the term *Tshogs bshad* nor the term *Slob bshad*

⁸⁸⁷ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong* (pp. 156.1–157.4): *de'ang ngor chen rdo rje 'chang yan la don gyi tshogs slob gnyis ka yod kyang so so'i mtshan 'dogs ma mdzad mod| bDag chen rdo rje 'chang gis rje sems dpa' chen po'i phyag len bzhin thun mong dang thun mong ma yin pa'i man ngag so sor phyee ste gnang ba nas bzung lam 'bras tshogs slob tu grags pa byung zhing da lta'i bar du de gnyis ka'i rgyun nyams med du bzhugs shing| slar yang bzhugs par 'gyur ba 'di yin la| de ltar tshogs slob gnyis su phyee ba'i slob bshad bstan pa'i chu mgo bDag chen rdo rje 'chang chen po 'di nyid (...). For a translation of this passage, see STEARNS 2006: [253]–254. On Kun dga' dpal ldan, see *Ibid.*: 662, n. 472. That supplement of Kun dga' dpal ldan was completed by Blo gter dbang po; see the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong* (p. 195.3–5) and STEARNS 2006: 283–284.*

⁸⁸⁸ See the *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (pp. 481.5–482.1): *de nas rim bzhin rgyal bas lung gis bsnags pa'i skyes bu chen po ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gi phyag tu gzhung man ngag rgyud bshad dang bcas pa babs| des sems dpa' chen po dkon mchog rgyal mtshan la bum pa gang byo'i tshul du stsal| de nyid kiyis bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan la thun mong dang| thun mong ma yin pa so sor phyee ste gnang ba las| thun mong ma yin pa'i rgyun rdo ring pa dang| tshar chen rin po che sogs kiyis rtsal du bton pas ngor lugs thun mong ma yin pa slob bshad du grags|. For similar statements, see also the *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (p. 499.1–3). To designate the *Slob bshad* as the uncommon Ngor tradition (*ngor lugs thun mong ma yin pa slob bshad*) is somehow misleading, because this system of the *Lam 'bras* is primarily based on the exegesis of Tshar chen and his disciples. Blo gter dbang po utilised this terminology also in other of his writings. For instance, in his lineage record of both *Lam 'bras* systems, he refers to them as "*Slob bshad*, [i.e.,] the uncommon Ngor tradition" and the "*Tshogs bshad*, [i.e.,] the common [Ngor tradition];" see the *Lam 'bras tshogs slob kyi bryud yig* (p. 417.1): *gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa ngor lugs thun min slob bshad dang| thun mong tshogs bshad (...)*. An even longer designation is already found in the biography of Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, the forty-fourth abbot of Ngor, where the *Slob bshad* is described as the "*Slob bshad* [system of the] *Precious Teachings*, [i.e.,] the uncommon Ngor tradition" (*ngor lugs thun mong ma yin pa gsung ngag rin po che slob bshad*); see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 49.6). In earlier works, such as A mes zhab's edition of notes on Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho's classification of the *Lam 'bras*, only terms like the "*Tshogs bshad*, the Common One" and "*Slob bshad*, the Uncommon One" are employed; see the *Slob bshad dang tshogs bshad kyi dbye ba* (p. 212.3): (... *gsung ngag 'di la thun mong ba tshogs bshad dang| thun mong ma yin pa slob bshad gnyis yod*).*

⁸⁸⁹ See the *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (pp. 609.6–610.1): *khyad par du'ang ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gis mus chen sems dpa' chen po la gsung ngag rin po che zab pa dang rgya che ba tshang phrugs su gnang ba las| de nyid kiyis bDag chen rin po cher zab rgyas so sor phyee nas stsal ba' rgyun la (...)*.

⁸⁹⁰ Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 12 May 2009) explained to me that the separation into *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* originated with bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. Cf. DAVIDSON 1981: 89, who mentions that according to the tradition received by 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1933–1987), the seventy-fourth abbot of Ngor, Mus chen was responsible for that division.

was used before the fifteenth century, and that Mus chen was considered the first person to openly refer to both systems when teaching the *Lam 'bras* to bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. Nevertheless, the individual elements of the *Lam 'bras*, classified in common and uncommon instructions, existed already before that. The *Lam 'bras* practices that were developed into the *Slob bshad* were said to be transmitted as a purely oral transmission (*snyan brgyud*) and were kept secret from the large groups of monks. The later *Tshogs bshad* contained the basic parts that had previously constituted the mainstream tradition of the *Lam 'bras*.

With the division of the *Lam 'bras*, new lines of transmission emerged. The main lineage of the *Tshogs bshad* passed down from Mus chen through the abbots of Ngor, whereas the lineage of the *Slob bshad* from bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan via rDo ring pa Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma to Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho.⁸⁹¹ Those newly developing systems were not mutually exclusive, however. For instance, the majority of early masters in bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan's lineage also received the *Tshogs bshad*.⁸⁹² Likewise, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the *Slob bshad* was introduced at Ngor by Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, the forty-fourth abbot of Ngor. During one of his many stays at Sa skya in between 1778 and 1782, he received both the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* from bDag chen Ngag dbang kun dga' blo gros, the thirty-first throne-holder of Sa skya. Subsequently, he became the chief lineage holder of the *Slob bshad* (at least in gTsang and outside of dBus. The Tshar masters of Nā lendra had their own lineage, which could be considered the chief lineage, since the *Slob bshad* was a Tshar pa speciality).⁸⁹³ It was also from his time on that the *Slob bshad* was practiced and taught by numerous eminent Ngor masters, though on a much smaller scale than the venerable and still dominant *Tshogs bshad*. Nevertheless, the *Slob bshad* was introduced and taught at Ngor, a fact which is attested by their biographies and their mention in both the *Slob bshad* histories printed in sDe dge and lineage prayers, which honour, for instance, the following Ngor abbots:⁸⁹⁴

⁸⁹¹ For the Ngor lineage of the *Tshogs bshad*, see the *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 1 (pp. 324.1–325.1), *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 2 (pp. 135–138.18), and *Sa skya khri 'dzin gyi thob yig* (vol. 2, pp. 585.6–586.4). For the Tshar lineage of the *Slob bshad*, see the *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 1 (p. 325.4–6), *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 2 (pp. 139.15–140), *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 3, and *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 4. On both lineages, see also DAVIDSON 1992: 125–126. On the further development of the *Slob bshad* after bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan, see the *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (pp. 481.6–483.6) and STEARNS 2001: 41–45. For the *Tshogs bshad* lineage of Sa skya, see the *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 1 (p. 325.1–4), *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 2 (pp. 138.20–139.14), and *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 5. See also the *Sa skya khri 'dzin gyi thob yig* (vol. 2, pp. 578.5–582.4), which appears to be the major *Tshogs bshad* lineage of Sa skya.

⁸⁹² See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong* (pp. 156.1–165.6) and STEARNS 2006: 255–261.

⁸⁹³ See the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 32.4–33.1, 45.4–54.5, and 63.5–64.1). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 605.4–5), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong* (p. 184.2–3), and STEARNS 2006: 275–276. Prior to Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, other Ngor masters had received the *Slob bshad* as well. For instance, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs obtained the *Slob bshad* from Grub mchog Kun dga' rin chen when in mKham in about 1686; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 325.3–5) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 195.5). On the *Lam 'bras Slob bshad* lineage of Nā lendra, see JACKSON (in press, Appendix D).

⁸⁹⁴ See the *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 3 (pp. 232.6–233.3) and *Lam 'bras brgyud 'debs* 4 (p. 249.1–2). See also the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong* (pp. 183.5–195.2) and STEARNS 2006: 275–283. In addition, see also the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 678.1–3) and *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (pp. 613.4–615.4). Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, for instance, bestowed in about 1806/07 both *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* on his nephew, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, and 'Jam dpal bzang po, the fifty-second abbot of Ngor; see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 113.5–114.1 and 122.5–6). Following the request of 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po and Ngor dPon slob Ngag dbang legs grub, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin gave the *Slob bshad* in 1843; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (p. 271.1–3). As requested by

- ❖ Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med (1765–1820), the forty-fourth abbot
- ❖ Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin (1776–1862), the forty-seventh abbot
- ❖ Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870), the fifty-fourth abbot
- ❖ Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b. 1830s, d. 1890s), the fifty-fifth abbot
- ❖ Ngag dbang blo gros snying po (d. ca. 1905/06?), the fifty-ninth abbot

The *Slob bshad* was introduced rather late at Ngor, firstly, because Ngor was the main centre for the *Tshogs bshad*. Secondly, initially, the *Slob bshad*, as shaped by Tshar chen and his disciples, faced a general opposition within monastic circles of the Sa skya school in gTsang at Sa skya and Ngor. As Cyrus Stearns explains:⁸⁹⁵

The main controversy that arose when the *Slob bshad* first became widely known concerned certain special yoga practices. The practice of the *Slob bshad* in the Tshar pa tradition is largely the same as the traditional practices according to the mainstream Sa skya and Ngor pa, which became known as the *Tshogs bshad*, but with some crucial differences of both technique and content. (...) In regard to content, the instruction manual of Mang thos klu sgrub contains specific teachings about the intermediate state between lives (*bar do*), dream yoga, and the illusory body that were not found in earlier writings on the Lam 'bras. (...) The validity of these practices was hotly contested by Sa skya followers who were not involved in the practice of the *Slob bshad*. (...) Specifically, it was the practice of the dream yoga that attracted criticism. Opponents of the *Slob bshad* within the Sa skya tradition charged that such techniques had been taken from the Bka' brgyud traditions of the "Six Doctrines" (*chos drug*) of Nāropa or Niguma, and were not part of the Lam 'bras. (...) More than 150 years after the death of Mang thos klu sgrub these issues were still such a problem that Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, the fifth Tā la'i bla ma, felt it was necessary to strongly defend the *Slob bshad* teachings, and to refute criticism of the special practices of the tradition. But as the years passed the controversies gradually subsided, and the *Slob bshad* became accepted throughout the Sa skya tradition as the definitive version of the Lam 'bras.

Hence, it is possible that the conservative Ngor pas only began to practice and teach the *Slob bshad* when those controversies had subsided. However, we should not forget that the main *Slob bshad* transmitters in dBu had their own lineage and own histories.

After the division of the *Lam 'bras*, the adherents of both systems formulated their own texts and teaching manuals. For the Ngor pas, it was predominantly dKon mchog

the Thar rtse Zhabs drung 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, he conferred it also in 1846 and once again in about 1852; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 272.5–6 and 274.3–5), respectively. Requested by the future Ngor abbot Khang gsar Zhabs drung Ngag dbang bSod nams rgyal mtshan, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan bestowed the *Slob bshad* on a group of twenty-seven disciples in 1859; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 601.3–5). He gave it again in 1860 and 1867; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 608.5 and 616.2–3), respectively. In 1868, he imparted the *Slob bshad* on a small group consisting of dPal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan (1840–1900), the fifty-seventh abbot of Ngor and his retinue; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 616.4–5). In addition, he also bestowed it on 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (d. 1873?), the fifty-sixth abbot of Ngor, and 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rdo rje (1837–1901), the fifty-eighth abbot of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (pp. 634.1 and 641.5–6), *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyī zhal skong* (pp. 192.5–195.2), and STEARNS 2006: 282. On his important role as a teacher of the *Slob bshad*, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (pp. 625.4–626.3).

⁸⁹⁵ STEARNS 2001: 44–45. According to the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 120.5–6), critique against the *Slob bshad* was also voiced by adherents of the Jo nang tradition.

lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor, who wrote the standard and most detailed instruction manuals for the *Tshogs bshad*.⁸⁹⁶ In addition, he composed meditation manuals for the daily practice of Hevajra that not only became the basic manuals among the Ngor pas but were also utilised by the wider Sa skya tradition.⁸⁹⁷ Later on, the briefer teaching manuals of such eminent Sa skya masters as Ngag dbang chos grags (1572–1641) and Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje (b. 1584) were also employed at Ngor, often in combination with dKon mchog lhun grub's.⁸⁹⁸ For the *Slob bshad*, the chief instruction manuals were written by Tshar chen's disciples Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug and Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, who fixed their master's *Lam 'bras* exegesis in writing.⁸⁹⁹ Cyrus Stearns has pointed out that those texts "were kept strictly secret and passed down only as handwritten manuscripts for more than three hundred years."⁹⁰⁰ Only at the beginning of the twentieth century did Blo gter dbang po compile the majority of them into a xylographed edition in seventeen volumes.⁹⁰¹ When it came to his attention that complete sets of the *Slob bshad* texts were hardly anywhere to be found, he had the scarce texts collected and prepared a xylographed edition at sDe dge, defying an opposing faction that aimed at keeping the teachings secret.⁹⁰² For the *Tshogs bshad*, with the exception of the lineage masters' lives, it seems that no similar compendium

⁸⁹⁶ For instance, see dKon mchog lhun grub's works on the Three Appearances (*snang gsum*) and the Three Continua (*rgyud gsum*). For the former, the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag gi gzhung shing rgyas pa gzhung ji lta ba bzhin bkri ba'i lam gyi sngon 'gro'i khrid yig snang gsum mdzes par byed pa'i rgyan*, see the *Lam 'bras tshogs bshad* (vol. 4, pp. 75–269) and DESHUNG RINPOCHE 1995. For the latter, the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag gi gzhung shing rgyas pa gzhung ji lta ba bzhin bkri ba'i lam gyi dngos gzhi'i khrid yig rgyud gsum mdzes par byed pa'i rgyan*, see the *Lam 'bras tshogs bshad* (vol. 4, pp. 271–493).

⁸⁹⁷ See DAVIDSON 1981: 90–91 and DAVIDSON 1992: 113–114. According to *Ibid.*: 113, Kon mchog lhun grub's works displaced those of Mus chen. For instance, Mus chen's *dPal kye rdo rje man ngag lugs kyi mmgon par rtogs pa 'bring du bya ba yan lag drug pa bya bral ma* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*, vol. 13, pp. 471–516.3) was replaced by dKon mchog lhun grub's *dPal kye rdo rje'i mmgon par rtogs pa 'bring du bya ba yan lag drug pa'i mdzes rgyan* (*rGyud sde kun btus*, vol. 18, pp. 1–31). Even prior to that, Mus chen's work had already been used during Ngor chen's time; see the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar 2* (fol. 89a4–b1), CAUMANN 2012: 245, and CAUMANN 2015: 291.

⁸⁹⁸ See DAVIDSON 1992: 129. For the contents of the *Lam 'bras* (*Tshogs bshad*) as bestowed by dPal mchog rgyal mtshan (1599–1673), the twenty-second abbot of Ngor, on Sangs rgyas phun tshogs at Ngor in 1670 and 1671, see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (pp. 304.2–305.3) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 176.1–177.1). For *Tshogs bshad* works studied by Ngor abbots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 45.4–49.5), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 565.5–566.2), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 182.3–184.5), and *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 371.4–374.1).

⁸⁹⁹ See STEARNS 2001: 41–43 and STEARNS 2006: 3. For instance, for *Slob bshad* works that were studied by Ngor abbots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 49.6–54.5), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 563.1–564.1?), *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 184.5–187.5), and *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 374.1–376.5). See also the *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (pp. 613.3–615.1). For a list of teachings of the *Slob bshad* as received by Ngag dbang chos grags and in turn by A mes zhabs, see the *Ngag dbang chos grags kyi rjes su bzang ba'i tshul* (pp. 401.1–408.6).

⁹⁰⁰ STEARNS 2006: 3.

⁹⁰¹ I was informed by David Jackson (email, 18.02.16) that this was a sort of Ngor pa *Slob bshad*; the Tshar pas of dBus had many of the same texts as manuscripts but different later histories or lineage lama biographies, some of which the Fifth Dalai Lama had published by block-printing.

⁹⁰² See the *Blo gter dbang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 312.3–313.1 and 316.2–3) and STEARNS 2006: 3. For the catalogue of a *Slob bshad* edition from sDe dge in twenty-three volumes, see the *Lam 'bras dkar chag*. For an extended reproduction of Blo gter dbang po's edition, see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vols. 1–21). On the history of the *Lam 'bras Slob bshad* as recounted by Blo gter dbang po, see the *Blo gter dbang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 310.6–312.2).

had been compiled in pre-1959 Tibet.⁹⁰³ Since the 1980s, however, modern collections of the *Tshogs bshad* have appeared in India, China, and Nepal.⁹⁰⁴

Based on all those works, further research might explore the differences between the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* in transmitting and practicing the *Lam 'bras*, eventually even comparing the *Slob bshad* in dBu.⁹⁰⁵ In this regard, some basic studies have been made by Ronald Davidson and Cyrus Stearns, who both emphasise the variation in style and content in imparting the two systems.⁹⁰⁶ The main difference in technique is, according to Stearns, that “during the teaching of the *Slob bshad* an experiential instruction (*nyams khrid*) on certain key points is given, and these points are meditated upon. In contrast, during the *Tshogs bshad* these same points are merely explained by means of a reading transmission (*lung*).”⁹⁰⁷ These key points included, for instance, explanations of the commentaries by Sa chen Kun dga' snying po on the *rDo rje tshig rkang* of Virūpa (*gzhung bshad*) and the *Tantra Trilogy of Hevajra*.⁹⁰⁸ Apparently, the bestowal of the highly esoteric instructions followed by the meditative application was only suitable for a few elect disciples, but not for larger gatherings. This distinction in transmitting the *Lam 'bras* found its expression in the terminology *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad*.⁹⁰⁹ However, in his teaching manual of the *Slob bshad*, Blo gter dbang po argued against such a simplistic understanding. According to him, although the limit of participants that could join an

⁹⁰³ On the different compilations of the lives of the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* lineage masters, see Part Two, n. 92. DAVIDSON 1992: 129 remarks that “the number and titles of the texts ritually imparted during the *Tshogs bshad* were never precisely established, so that any one mKhan-po would be given the latitude to determine just which of the works he would draw from the larger field of textual possibilities.” *Ibid.*: 129 perceives this freedom of choice as one reason that the *Tshogs bshad* was not compiled into a xylographed edition.

⁹⁰⁴ See the *Lam 'bras tshogs bshad* (vols. 1–6), *Lam 'bras 2* (vols. 34–39), and *Lam 'bras 3* (vols. 27–38), respectively.

⁹⁰⁵ For that purpose, such works as A mes zhabs' edition of notes to Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho's classification of the *Slob bshad* and *Tshogs bshad* should be studied. This work provides a discussion of the meaning of the terms *tshogs bshad* and *slob bshad* in the context of the *tantras*, esoteric instructions, and *Lam 'bras*; see the *Slob bshad dang tshogs bshad kyi dbye ba*. For a similar discussion of both the general meaning of the terms *tshogs bshad* and *slob bshad* and their particular meaning and difference in the context of the *Lam 'bras*, see also the *gNas mchog sa skya* (pp. 39.11–49.5).

⁹⁰⁶ On the daily meditation (*mngon rtogs: abhisamaya*) of Hevajra, general differences between the *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad*, and an overview of the successive stages in transmitting the *Lam 'bras*, see DAVIDSON 1992. On “Unveiling the *Slob bshad*,” see STEARNS 2001: 39–45. For the basic stages of the *Lam 'bras Tshogs bshad* as given by Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, the forty-seventh abbot of Ngor, see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (p. 219.1–4).

⁹⁰⁷ STEARNS 2001: 44.

⁹⁰⁸ See DAVIDSON 1992: 125. See also the *Lam 'bras tshogs slob kyi brgyud yig* (p. 422.3–4): *tshogs bshad kyi lugs gzhir bzhaq pa'i khar man ngag gyi zab gnad dangl gzhung dangl rgyud kyi bshad bka' sogs bsnan nas 'chad pa la slob bshad ces grags shingl*; and *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (p. 610.1–3): (...) *ngor lugs thun mong ma yin pa slob bshad ces grags pa'i gsum ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i smin byed kyi dbang dang byin rlabsl grol byed khrid kyi rim pa zab mol rgyab rten lung gi skor spyi dangl bye brag snyan brgyud yid bzhin gyi nor bu lta bu'i bstan bcos rdo rje'i tshig rkang gi gzhung bshadl gdams ngag zab mo de nyid kyi 'byung khungs saml 'phro gzhi dpal kye rdo rje rtsa ba'i rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa'i tshul bzhi'i 'grel bshad dang bcas pa stel*. In addition, see also the *Slob bshad dang tshogs bshad kyi dbye ba* (p. 219.4–6): *bskyed rim spyi'i chos rnam ston par byed pa'i kyai rdor gyi rgyud tshigl yi ge'i don gyi man ngagl tshig don gyi man ngag dang gsum gyis 'chad pa ni tshogs bshad yin la de'i steng du sbas don dang mthar thug gi chos rnam ston par byed pa'i kyai rdor rgyud tshig man ngag de gsum gyis 'chad pa ni slob bshad yin no zhes gsal bar bshad pa'i phyir*l.

⁹⁰⁹ See DAVIDSON 1992: 108 and STEARNS 2001: 40. For instance, Tshar chen bestowed the entire *Slob bshad* on eighteen disciples, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan on a group of twenty-seven, Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros on a group of around thirty, and Blo gter dbang po on more than twenty as well as more than thirty; see STEARNS 2001: 43, *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 601.3–5), *Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros kyi rnam thar* (p. 840.5–6), and *Blo gter dbang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 313.2–5 and 310.3–5), respectively.

initiation was correctly taught to be no more than twenty-five, the difference between *Tshogs bshad* and *Slob bshad* should not be understood as having been established based on the number of participants. Except at the time of giving initiations, he said, it did not matter if more disciples participated during the giving of instructions.⁹¹⁰

The *Slob bshad* lineage of Ngor is currently not taught; when H.H. the Sakya Trizin gives it, he bestows it through the Tshar tradition of Nā lendra. But when he gives the *Lam 'bras Tshogs bshad*, that is in the tradition of Ngor.⁹¹¹

⁹¹⁰ See the *gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad* (p. 485.2–3): *gang la 'chad pa'i slob ma ni|ji skad bshad pa'i mtshan nyid kun dang ldan pa| bla ma dang chos brgyud la gus pa| snying nas rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas 'thob par 'dod pa'i skal ba bzang po dang ldan pa| grangs nyer lnga man chad du gsungs kyang| slob ma mang nyung gi sgo nas tshogs slob tu mi 'jog pas| dbang dus ma gtogs khrid skabs de las mang yang skyon med| kha yar ba zhig ni nges par dgos|.*

⁹¹¹ David Jackson (email, 18.02.16).

Part Five

Ngor chen's Writings

The vast majority of Ngor chen's writings was compiled and transmitted as a four-volume set, probably already during his lifetime or shortly after his death. Since the only available edition of his collected works (which consists predominantly of tantric writings) is the revised sDe dge woodblock recension from 1894, hardly anything is known about the early history of its compilation. In the present part, by first investigating the sDe dge printing project, I will explore the compilation history of Ngor chen's writings, to prepare the way for the descriptive catalogue to his extant works that I will then present.

Chapter One

Xylographic Editions of Ngor chen's Collected Works from sDe dge

The block-print recension of Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge has four volumes that are numbered *ka* (vol. 1), *kha* (vol. 2), *ga* (vol. 3), and *a* (vol. 4), and each folio bears on the back side the short title *E waṃ bka' 'bum* situated in the margin. The “Ewaṃ Collected Works” that it mentions was apparently a collection comprising the works of important Ngor abbots, such as Ngor chen and dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot.¹ The available sDe dge recension of Ngor chen's collected works contains two printing colophons (*par byang*), which allow us to sketch the historical context in which Ngor chen's collected works were first cut onto woodblocks and printed in about the early 1770s and then later published as a revised edition more than one century later in 1894.

From its first printing colophon, we learn that the original project was executed under the patronage of Sa skyong sDe dge Blo gros rgya mtsho (1723–1774) at lHun grub steng Monastery. Following the request of the chief editor or supervisor (*par dpon*) and the proofreader (*zhus dag pa*), the printing colophon and dedication of merit (*dge bsngo*) were written by Ngag dbang dge legs lhun grub, a nephew of the chief editor of the sDe dge *bsTan 'gyur*, Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774). Since Ngag dbang dge legs lhun grub states in the colophon that the request was made when his uncle was about to die, we can imagine that the great Zhu chen (who was famed for his elegant verses) was envisaged for composing those closing sections, but that his failing health prevented it.²

¹ Several of dKon mchog lhun grub's writings were reproduced as the two-volume *Ngor chen dkon mchog lhun grub kyi gsung 'bum* in the series *dPyad gzhi'i yig cha phyogs bsgrigs* (nos. 24–25). Its first volume contains the xylograph edition of the first volume (*ka*) of the sDe dge recension of his collected works, featuring the marginal title *E waṃ bka' 'bum*; see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 91–305). For a title list of his four-volume collected works from sDe dge; see the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 81.15–85.14). Cf. the *sDe dge par khang gi dkar chag 1* (pp. 372–395), which divides his works into his one-volume *bka' 'bum* and two-volume *Thor bu*. The former is called *E waṃ bka' 'bum* and contains a total of fifteen works. The latter contains in the first volume his expositions of both the *sNang gsum* and *rGyud gsum* and in the second the *bsTan pa spyi'i chos 'byung* (i.e., the *Ngor chos 'byung*). Also, the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 337.1) and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 218.6) specify the amount of volumes of dKon mchog lhun grub's collected works with only three. For an earlier title list of his collected works from the *gsan yig* of Kun dga' don grub, a teacher of A mes zhabs (1597–1659), see the *sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (pp. 125.1–131.5) and SOBISCH 2008: 202–207. For another title list of twenty works from the sDe dge printing house, see the *sDe dge par khang gi par shing dkar chag* (pp. 227–229). Cf. also KOLMAŠ 1996: 38 (4.2.1.11), who remarks that “the group of titles named *E waṃ bka' 'bum* sogs are the works of Go-ram Bsod-nams-seng-ge (Part I) and those of his teacher, Ngor-chen Kun-dga'-bzang-po (Part II) (...).” See also *Ibid*: 24 and 486–488, where he specifies the number of volumes of that collection that are housed in the Prague Collection of Tibetan Prints from Derge as eighteen, consisting of ninety-three works. In 2010, the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang edited twenty books under the title *E waṃ bka' 'bum*, which contain the collected works of six Ngor abbots: Ngor chen, Mus chen, the second abbot, 'Jam dbyang Shes rab rgya mtsho, the third abbot, dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot, dKon mchog dpal ldan, the eleventh abbot, and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, the twenty-fifth abbot. In 2013, a five-volume supplement was published, the *E waṃ bka' 'bum kha skong*, adding further works by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs and also of dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot.

² See the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 4, pp. 766.6–767.4): *de ltar rgyal ba nyid kiyis dri med lung gis bsngags pa ngor chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po zhes yongs su grags pa gong de'i gsung rab rin po che'i glegs bam gyi tshogs rnam stobs kyi dbang phyug 7 sa skyong sde dge blo gros rgya mtshos lhun grub steng gi rgyal khab tu par du bskrun pa'i par byang dge bsngo nyung zad 'di ni| 7 rje zhu chen lnga rig paṅ grub rin po che zhing khams brje nye ba'i skabs par dpon zhus dag pa sogs nas 'di bzhin gyis shig ces bskul ba'i ngor| gong gi rigs dbon ngag dbang legs lhun grub ces bya bas bris*

It seems, however, that the project was accomplished before both Blo gros rgya mtsho and Zhu chen passed away in 1774.

The patron of the project, Blo gros rgya mtsho, was the third and youngest son of the great king of sDe dge, bsTan pa tshe ring (1678–1738, r. 1714–1738), and functioned both as ruler of sDe dge and abbot of the royal monastery of lHun grub steng.³ In sponsoring the printing of Ngor chen's collected works, he followed in the footsteps of his father and brother—Bla chen Phun tshogs bstan pa (d. 1751, r. 1738–1751) alias Kun dga' phrin las rgya mtsho—who were both important patrons of block-printing projects at the royal court. In particular, his father had (in 1729?) established the famous printing house of sDe dge, the Par khang Chos mdzod chen mo bkra shis sgo mang, sponsoring the first xylographic editions of such major collections as the *bKa' 'gyur* (1729–1733), *Sa skya bka' 'bum* (1734–1736), and *bsTan 'gyur* (1737–1744) at sDe dge.⁴ However, though the

pa dge legs rgya chen po 'phel bar gyur cigll. After Zhu chen's death, Ngag dbang dge legs lhun grub (alias Phyi nang gtsug lag sde snod smra ba mkhas pa'i nyi gzhon) completed both his uncle's autobiography and versified autobiography, the latter of which was written in connection with a thangka depicting events of Zhu chen's life; see the *Zhu chen gi rang rnam* 1 (p. 638.4–6) and *Zhu chen gyi rang rnam* 2 (p. 277.6), respectively.

³ For a biographical sketch of Blo gros rgya mtsho, see the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (pp. 929.14–930.11), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (pp. 321.7–324.6), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 63.1–64.1 and 67.5–73.6), and *'Bel gtam* (pp. 528.6–529.2). For modern sketches, see also the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 44.13–45.4 and 50.5–54.5), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 41.4–46.9), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 61.18–65.6), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 48.17–51.11). In addition, see also KOLMAŠ 1968: 40–41 and 52. According to the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 68.4–5), Blo gros rgya mtsho became abbot of lHun grub steng after the death of his second eldest brother, Phun tshogs bstan pa, and took charge of both religious and political affairs. See also the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 51.9–15), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 42.10–11), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (p. 63.1–3), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (p. 49.9–10). For biographical sketches of bsTan pa tshe ring, see the *bKa' 'gyur dkar chag* (pp. 399.3–403.2), *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (pp. 927.9–929.5), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (pp. 306.10–316.20), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 34.12–44.12), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 27.5–32.3), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 44.5–63.1), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 51.4–57.7), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 44.20–47.3 and 181–185), *'Bel gtam* (pp. 527.6–528.5), KOLMAŠ 1968: 36–40, and RONIS 2013a. Blo gros rgya mtsho had two older brothers and one younger sister: Mi dbang bSod nams mgon po (d. 1762), Bla chen Phun tshogs bstan pa (d. 1751), and rJe btsun dByangs can sgrol ma (d. 1786); see the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 44.13–45.4), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 63.1–2), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (p. 57.10–11), and *'Bel gtam* (pp. 528.5–529.3). On bSod nams mgon po, see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (pp. 316.21–321.7), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 45.4–46.8), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 32.5–33.5), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 64.1–65.1), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 57.11–58.16), and KOLMAŠ 1968: 70, n. 57. On Phun tshogs bstan pa (alias Kun dga' phrin las rgya mtsho), see the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 929.6–14), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (pp. 324.7ff.), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 46.8–50.4), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 33.5–41.3), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 65.1–67.4), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 58.17–61.17), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 47.4–48.16), KOLMAŠ 1968: 40, and Appendix One, n. 45. The *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 47.4–48.16) gives his dates with 1714 to 1751. On dByangs can sgrol ma (alias rJe btsun Ngag dbang bstan pa'i sgron me), see the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 930.12–20), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 54.3–14), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 46.10–47.10), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 73.6–75.1), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 65.6–66.8), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 51.12–52.6), and KOLMAŠ 1968: 41 and 71, n. 62. The *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 51.12–52.6) gives her dates with 1727 to 1786.

⁴ On the printing projects of bsTan pa tshe ring and an investigation into their economic aspects, see CHAIX 2010. See now also CHAIX 2016: 51–54 for some critical remarks on “the common assertion that the printing house was built in 1729.” *Ibid.*: 51 also points out that prior to the official launching of the *bKa' 'gyur* printing project in mid-1729, “several thousand wood blocks for the *Kanjur* (at least eight thousand, representing a quarter of the total amount) or other texts had already been carved and stored in the Dergé Roayl Monastery (Lhündrup Teng).” In his *bsTan 'gyur* catalogue, Zhu chen reveals interesting details on the number of entire sets that were printed of those collections under the patronage of bsTan pa tshe ring and his sons, from the time of completing carving the woodblocks until the time of him completing his *bsTan 'gyur* catalogue in 1744: one thousand five hundred copies of the *bKa' 'gyur* (108 vols.) were printed between 1733 and 1744, three hundred copies of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* (15 vols.) between 1737 and 1744, and twenty-one copies of the *bsTan 'gyur* in 1744; see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (pp. 447.7–449.10). On bsTan pa tshe ring's printing projects, see also the *bKa' 'gyur dkar chag* (pp. 400.6–401.1), *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (pp. 928.24–929.4), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (pp. 307.19–21 and 315.18–21), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 42.14–43.13), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 31.3–9), *sDe dge par khang ji ltar brtsams pa'i gleng ba* (pp. 39.34–40.20), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 58.6–59.4), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 1 (pp. 55.20–21 and 56.15–57.2), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus* 2 (pp. 46.19–47.2), CHAIX 2013: 28–29, KOLMAŠ 1968: 37 and 39–40,

biographical sketches of Blo gros rgya mtsho list his commissions of manuscript copies of a *bKa' gyur* written with golden ink and the carving onto woodblocks of about fifty volumes, no specific mention is made of Ngor chen's collected works.⁵

Nevertheless, in light of the dominant position that the Ngor lamas occupied as chaplains (*dbu bla*) at the royal court of sDe dge, it is hardly surprising that Blo gros rgya mtsho would sponsor a xylographic edition of the writings of the Ngor tradition's founder.⁶ Previously, his forefathers had engaged in similar projects in collaboration with retired Ngor abbots who resided as chaplains at the royal court. In the first years of the eighteenth century, for instance, prior to the building of the sDe dge printing house, the abbot and ruler Khri chen Sangs rgyas bstan pa (d. 1710, r. 1675–1710) and his chaplain Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, the twenty-fifth abbot of Ngor, were responsible for what was apparently sDe dge's very first xylographic editions of such works as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the chaplain's biography of Ngor chen, and his completion of the *Ngor chos 'byung*.⁷ Two generations later, bsTan pa tshe ring ordered the carving onto woodblocks of the *bKa' gyur*, and his new chaplain bKra shis lhun grub (1672–1739), the thirty-first abbot of Ngor, supervised that project, though the king made Si tu Paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700–1774) its editor in chief and entrusted him with the recension of the corresponding catalogue.⁸ bKra shis lhun grub also both encouraged and

SCHAEFFER 2009: [90]–119 and [159]–[160], SCHEIER-DOLBERG 2005: 87–96, and VERHAGEN 2010: 469–471. bsTan pa tshe ring also commissioned manuscript sets of the *bKa' gyur*, *bsTan gyur*, and *Sa skya bka' bum*; see the *bKa' gyur dkar chag* (pp. 400.6–401.1), *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 928.21–22), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 545.1–2), *bsTan gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 315.4–9), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 42.3–9), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 30.16–31.3), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 55.1), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 56.10–11), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 46.18–19). On the projects of Phun tshogs bstan pa, see the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 929.10–14), *bsTan gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 447.7–451.11), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 48.6–9 and 48.14–49.4), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 35.8–36.4), *sDe dge par khang ji ltar brtsams pa'i gleng ba* (p. 40.24–42), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 66.2–3), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (pp. 60.19–61.3), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 48.11–15).

⁵ See the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (pp. 929.25–930.4) and *sDe dge par khang ji ltar brtsams pa'i gleng ba* (pp. 40.43–41.4). See also the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 53.3–4), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 44.3–6), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 69.5), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 64.12–18), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 50.2–9), KOLMAŠ 1968: 41, VERHAGEN 2004: 218–219, and VERHAGEN 2010: 473. According to Zhu chen, Blo gros rgya mtsho's sponsoring of block-prints was much more extensive, including sets of the *bKa' gyur* and *Sa skya bka' bum*; see the *bsTan gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 323.9–12).

⁶ However, the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (pp. 930.24–931.20), *sDe dge par khang ji ltar brtsams pa'i gleng ba* (p. 41.5–7), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 69.11–14), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 54.7–9) ascribe a xylograph edition of Ngor chen's collected works, along with the one of dKon mchog lhun grub's, to Tshe dbang lha mo (d. 1812/13), the wife of Blo gros rgya mtsho's son, Kun 'grub bde dga' bzang po (1768–1790). Cf. the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 82.6–83.2), which does not list that project among the commissions of Tshe dbang lha mo. On her life and political career as ruler of sDe dge after the death of her husband, see RONIS 2011. For a biographical sketch of Kun 'grub bde dga' bzang po (alias Sa dbang bZang po), see the *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 72.4–73.6 and 74.6–82.2) and KOLMAŠ 1968: 41–42.

⁷ See Part Two, 2.

⁸ See, for instance, the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 546.3), CHAIX 2010: 91–93, and CHAIX 2013: 29. *Ibid.*: 29 has also shown that “though the block print edition project was officially launched in the seventh month of 1729, it was in 1718 that Bstan pa tshe ring had ordered the realization of woodblocks of several *sūtras* (different versions of the Sher phyin [Prajñāpāramitā] and the Phal po che [Avatamsaka]) of the future Bka' gyur xylographic edition (*par ma*). This work was under the supervision of his Ngor pa chaplain, Bkra shis dbang phyug. After the latter's passing away, he was succeeded in his chaplain's role by Bkra shis lhun grub (...) who naturally became the supervisor of the project.” Following the invitation of bsTan pa tshe ring, bKra shis lhun grub embarked on his journey to sDe dge in 1728 and remained in that kingdom until his passing in 1739; see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 532.6–630.3), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 544.3–547.1), and *Zhu chen gi rang rnam 1* (p. 400.3–5). The king's decision to entrust Si tu Paṅ chen with the composition of the *bKa' gyur* catalogue seemingly upset bKra shis lhun grub, who, according to CHAIX 2013: 29, “decided, as he was still the supervisor, to edit only five of the eight chapters of the table of contents Si tu paṅ chen had composed.” On this issue, see

supervised the work on the block-printing edition of the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, for which he allegedly wrote the catalogue as well.⁹ Moreover, he encouraged the printing of the *bsTan 'gyur*, a project launched by bsTan pa tshering and completed under his son Phun tshogs bstan pa.¹⁰

Like his brothers, Blo gros rgya mtsho had visited Ngor during his travels to dBus and gTsang, obtaining from Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan (1717–1780), the thirty-seventh abbot of Ngor, full monastic ordination and such teachings as the *Lam 'bras*.¹¹ In 1760, after the death of the Ngor chaplain dPal ldan chos skyong (1702–1760), the thirty-fourth abbot of Ngor and successor of bKra shis lhun grub, Blo gros rgya mtsho invited Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan to be the new Ngor chaplain of sDe dge.¹²

also the *Rang tshul drangs por brjod pa* (p. 153.1–3), CHAIX 2010: 108, VERHAGEN 2004: 208–212, and VERHAGEN 2010: 469–470.

⁹ See the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi nram thar* (pp. 570.5–571.1), *Gong ma lnga'i gsung rab kyi dkar chag* (pp. 936.3–946.5), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 545.2–3), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 59.2), *Zhu chen gyi rang rnam 1* (pp. 472.2–476.4), JACKSON 1987: 232–236, and SCHAEFFER 2009: 97–99. On the project and its economic aspects, see CHAIX 2010: 93–94. Among the editorial staff was also the young Zhu chen; see the *Gong ma lnga'i gsung rab kyi dkar chag* (p. 942.6), *Zhu chen gyi rang rnam 1* (pp. 473.6–474.3), JACKSON 1987: 233, and SCHAEFFER 2009: 97–98. For the catalogue of the *Sa skya' bka' 'bum*, the *dPal sa skya'i rje btsun gong ma lnga'i gsung rab rin po che'i par gyi sgo 'phar 'byed pa'i dkar chag 'phrul gyi lde mig* (i.e., the *Gong ma lnga'i gsung rab kyi dkar chag*), see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 15, pp. 819–949). Based on the *Zhu chen gyi rang rnam 1* (pp. 476.4–478.1), JACKSON 1987: 236 has pointed out that the compiler and author of the catalogue was actually Zhu chen himself and not bKra shis lhun grub. See also the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi nram thar* (p. 595.3), which only acknowledges that bKra shis lhun grub wrote the printing colophon for the *Sa skya' bka' 'bum*: 'jam dbyangs gong ma nram lnga'i bka' 'bum gyi par byangs sogs glegs bam gnyis tsam rtsom pa (...). On the catalogue, see also VAN DER KUIJP 1984: 39–44.

¹⁰ See, for instance, the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi nram thar* (pp. 590.6–591.3 and 610.3–4), *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 929.10–11), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 285.10–286.4 and 288.18–289.20), and *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 66.2). On the project and its economic aspects, see CHAIX 2010: 94–97. Moreover, bKra shis lhun grub ordered a xylographic edition of the *dPal dges pa rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi 'grel pa zla zer*; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 546.2–3).

¹¹ See the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 51.5–9), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (p. 42.6–10), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (pp. 67.6–68.3), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 62.14–19). According to the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 535.5–6), Blo gros rgya mtsho reached Ngor along with his sister on the twenty-fifth day of the eleventh month of 1748, and Byams pa bSod nams bzang po (1689–1749), the thirtieth abbot of Ngor, bestowed on him and his entourage the long-life empowerment (*tshé dbang*) called *Grub rgyal ma*. As his sister was seemingly not permitted to attend the empowerment—as women were forbidden to stay or even enter the monastery—, she received a long-life empowerment on a field belonging to the sPo 'bor khang tshan (*spo 'bor ba'i zhing thog tu*). For the visit of bSod nams mgon po in 1742, see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 320.11–321.7), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 46.1–5), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 32.12–33.2), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 64.3–5), and *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 58.7–12). For the visit of Phun tshogs bstan pa from 1738–1739, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 533.1–2), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 345.2–398.15), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 47.9–48.3), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 33.10–35.2), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 65.2–5), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 59.12–19), *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, pp. 251.1–269.2), and Appendix One, n. 45. Their father, bsTan pa tshering, had established the Gling pa khang tshan (Gling khang or Gling pa spyi khang) at Ngor, which housed the monks from sDe dge; see the *bKa' 'gyur dkar chag* (p. 400.5), *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 928.12–13), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 314.16), *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 40.15–16), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 29.18–30.1), *sDe dge'i rgyal rabs* (p. 54.2), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 55.17–18), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 2* (p. 46.8–9), and *'Bel gtam* (p. 528.3).

¹² See the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi nram thar* (fols. 22a–69a1). See also the *sDe dge dgon chen gyi lo rgyus* (p. 51.12–15), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 42.13–18, 171.4–6, and 181.8–12), *sDe dge'i lo rgyus 1* (p. 63.3–4), and *'Bel gtam* (p. 528.6–529.1). Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan remained in sDe dge until 1776. On his way back to Ngor, he met Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po (1723–1779), the fortieth abbot of Ngor, along with his entourage, who was on his way to sDe dge to serve as the new Ngor chaplain; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i nram thar* (p. 759.4–6) and *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi nram thar* (fols. 69a1–77a1). On dPal ldan chos skyong as chaplain at the sDe dge court, see, for instance, the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 566.2–6), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (pp. 601.6–602.1), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 345.2ff.), *sDe dge chos 'byung* (pp. 37.1–40.15 and 178–180), *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, pp. 251.1ff.), and Appendix One, n. 45.

Thus Blo gros rgya mtsho's project of carving a xylographic edition of Ngor chen's collected works has to be understood within the context of the special ruler donor-preceptor donee bond that existed between the royal house of sDe dge and retired Ngor abbots who came to the court to serve as chaplains. At the same time, however, we should note that this relationship was not an exclusive one since the royal family also supported other Buddhist traditions, such as the rNying ma pa and Karma bKa' brgyud pa, and committed themselves to other chaplains as well, one of the most important surely being Si tu Pañ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas.¹³

From the second printing colophon, we learn that the woodblocks of Ngor chen's collected works that were cut under the patronage of Blo gros rgya mtsho contained many superfluous additions and omissions (*lhag chad*), as well as spelling mistakes ('*bru nor*) due to the fact that the original texts (*ma dpe*) that they used as models were not correct (*ma dag pa*).¹⁴ This might have been one reason that, under the supervision of lHa rigs Bla ma Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin, a revised xylographic edition was completed in 1894.¹⁵ He had assigned the revision of the old recension to qualified scholar-adepts, such as a certain 'Jam mgon Bla ma, and the benedictory verses of the printing colophon (*spar byang shis brjod*) were written by Bande 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rab according to the wishes of lHa sras Bla ma mchog.¹⁶ 'Jam mgon Bla ma was presumably a very learned and highly respected master in sDe dge in those days (such as 'Jam mgon Blo gter dbang po, 1847–1914), someone so well known that his full name here was superfluous.

¹³ On Si tu Pañ chen's relationship with the house of sDe dge, see CHAIX 2013 and RONIS 2013b: 65–66.

¹⁴ Interestingly, the second printing colophon refers to Sa skyong sDe dge Blo gros rgya mtsho as Sa dbang Blo gros rgyal mtshan; see the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 4, p. 768.2). Based on other sources that also refer to Blo gros rgya mtsho as Blo gros rgyal mtshan, it can surely be established that both names refer to the very same person; see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 561.5–6 and 599.6) and *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fols. 22a3–4 and 27a4–5). Moreover, the folio with the colophon of the first xylographic edition of Ngor chen's collected works contains on the right margin a depiction of the patron, whose name is given as Sa dbang Blo gros rgyal mtshan; see the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 4, p. 768.2). Thus on one and the same folio, the patron is referred to by the colophon as Sa skyong sDe dge Blo gros rgya mtsho and by the caption under his depiction as Sa dbang Blo gros rgyal mtshan. On both names, see also VERHAGEN 2004: 220–221 and VERHAGEN 2010: 474, who made a similar suggestion. Since his name Blo gros rgyal mtshan is frequently used, one should consider whether that might have been his ordination name. As mentioned earlier, he had obtained full monastic ordination from Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan at Ngor and thus the name element "rgyal mtshan" might have been given in partly reference to his ordination abbot's name.

¹⁵ lHa rigs Bla ma Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin appears to have been a member of sDe dge's ruling family, though I am unable to identify him in the family's genealogy; see KOLMAŠ 1988. An indication that members of that family were addressed by the title of lHa rigs Bla ma is found in the colophon of an untitled versified poem in praise of the Si tu sPrul sku of dPal spungs written by 'Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899); see the *Kong sprul gyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 263.4–5): *ces pa'ang sde bzhi'i rgyal thabs la dge bcu'i 'khor los sgyur ba lha rigs bla ma rin po ches bka' bskul gnang ba ltar| karma ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtshos dpal spungs kyi gdan sar bris pa (...)*.

¹⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 4, pp. 768.1–769.5): *rgyal bas lung bstan pa'i skyes bu dam pa gyur pa rje btsun e waṃ pa chen po rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po zhes mtshan gyi grags pa srid gsum khyab pa de nyid gyi [= kyi] zhal snga nas mdzad pa'i gsung rab rin po che glegs bam bzhi'i grangs can 'di| sngon sa dbang blo gros rgyal mtshan sku dus spar sko [= rko] ba'i bdag rkyen mdzad kyang| ma dpe ma dag pa'i dbang gis lhag chad dang 'bru nor mang du mchis pa la| slar rab byung bco lnga pa'i shing pho rta'i lor| dam pa de nyid kyi bstan pa rin po che la byi dor bla na med pa mdzad pa'i thugs skyed can lha rigs bla ma ngag dbang bstan 'dzin gyis| 'jam mgon bla ma sogs mkhas grub chos spyan ldan pa rnam la zhu dag gi bka' drin zhus te spar rnam dag tu grub pa bgyis pa'i dge bas| dam pa rnam kyi thugs dgongs rdzogs pa dang skye ngu rnam bde skyid la spyod pa'i rgyur gyur cig gu| slar smras pa| (...) ces spar byang shis brjod bkra shis pa'i grangs ldan 'di lha sras bla ma mchog gi bka' ltar bande 'jam dbyangs mkhyen rab kyi bris pa dge legs 'phell| (...)*. The author of the printing colophon's benedictory verses appears to have been Shar Bla ma 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rab mtha' yas, who was also involved as *yon sbyor ba po* (sponsor?) and revisor in the project of preparing a xylographic edition of a work by Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge, the *rGyal ba thams cad kyi thugs kyi dgongs pa zab mo dbu ma'i de khor na nyid spyi'i ngag gis ston pa nges don rab gsal*; see CABEZÓN 2001: 244–245.

Prior to that revised edition, another xylographic recension of Ngor chen's collected works might have been prepared somewhere else in Khams. This is suggested by the biography of Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870), the fifty-fourth abbot of Ngor. His biography, which was written by Ngor dPon slob Khu na 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (d. ca. 1893/94), mentions his contribution of one *rdo tshad* measure of silver (i.e., fifty *srang*) to support the making of a set of Ngor chen's collected works. Interestingly, that passage also mentions that the old block-print edition was slightly incorrect.¹⁷ Another possibility might thus be that Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan's donation in 1871 was intended to support the revised edition mentioned above, but that the project was delayed until 1894.

For the moment, it remains unclear whether the xylographic recension sponsored by the sDe dge king Blo gros rgya mtsho was the very first edition of Ngor chen's collected works ever cut onto woodblocks, or whether other editions had been prepared prior to it.¹⁸ Nor is anything said about which original texts served as the master copies for the 1894 edition. However, since the first sDe dge edition was known to contain many mistakes (or textual corruptions), we could expect that it was prepared by comparing the best available manuscripts of Ngor chen's individual writings or even a highly regarded manuscript set of his collected works, rather than relying on the xylographic prints. If this edition was like other Ngor pa related works produced at sDe dge, those manuscripts would have been brought from Ngor by one of the retired Ngor abbots that had come to sDe dge as royal chaplain.

¹⁷ See the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 618.4–5): *kham phyogs su spar gсар brko mdzad rgyu'i rten du (...)* *ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gi bka' 'bum gyi spar rnying cung zad dag min skor la gсар 'dzugs byed rgyu'i rten du rdo tshad gcig bcas bskur gnang mdzad pa sogs gsung rten shin tu mang ba dangl.*

¹⁸ JACKSON 1989c: 222, no. 1502-3 (B. no. 584) in his handlist of Tibetan texts in the Bihar Research Society, Patna, catalogued a xylographic edition of a text by Ngor chen that was “sponsored by Dpal Chu-mig bla-brang (an early Gtsang edition?).” This text, the *sPring yig slob ma la phan pa*, comprises eighteen folios in seven lines and was contained in volume six (*cha*) of a further unspecified collection. Given the close familiar relationship between Ngor chen and the members of the Chu mig branch of Sa skya's bZhi thog bla brang, it is not surprising that they sponsored the printing of Ngor chen's writings. However, it appears unlikely that the text formed part of a set of Ngor chen's collected works, which is otherwise not known to have comprised more than four volumes. Although Ngor Monastery was home to a small printery, I am unable to tell when it was established and whether Ngor chen's collected works might have been printed there. The survey of printing blocks housed in central Tibetan printeries ordered by sTag brag Paṅḍita Ngag dbang gsung rab mthu stobs (1874–1952, r. 1941–1950) records only three works by Ngor chen housed at Ngor: the *rDo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i sgrub thabs dngos grub snye ma* (19 fols.), *rDo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dbang gi snye ma* (42 fols.), and *gSang 'dus la brten pa'i rab gnas bkra shis rgya mtsho* (27 fols.); see the *sPar tho* (p. 218.2–3 and 5–6). On these three works, see also CATALOGUE (nos. 81, 84, and 110), respectively.

Chapter Two

Early Editions of Ngor chen's Collected Works

The biographies of early Ngor abbots who were born during Ngor chen's lifetime refer to the bestowal of the reading transmission for Ngor chen's collected works (*bka' 'bum* or *gsung 'bum*), though they specify no total number of volumes.¹⁹ This suggests to me that Ngor chen's writings were compiled into one set already during his lifetime or shortly after his death. This can be confirmed from the biography that Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), the sixth abbot of Ngor, wrote of Ngor chen's chief disciple Mus chen. Among the many religious objects that Mus chen commissioned after the demise of his master, Go rams pa, who was himself at Ngor at that time, also lists, along with the collected works of the five founding fathers of Sa skya, the works of Ngor chen.²⁰ Go rams pa himself is also credited to have commissioned the production of Ngor chen's collected works.²¹ Another early reference comes from Glo bo, where king A mgon bzang po (1420–1482) is said to have sponsored the preparation of Ngor chen's collected works.²² Further references from the biographies of Ngor chen's disciples, such as Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) and dKon mchog 'phel (1445–1514), the seventh abbot of Ngor, suggest that those early commissions already comprised four volumes.²³ However, nothing is said about whether these editions were manuscript copies or block-prints. Ngor chen's collected works became known as the *Pod bzhi ma* (the “Four-Volume One”), which

¹⁹ See (in chronological order of their term as abbot) the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar* 1 (p. 540.1), *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 588.3), *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 753.5), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 9.6), and *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (p. 55.4). Biographies of non-Ngor abbots, such as those of Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486) and Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal (1398–1458), mention that their subjects received the reading transmission for Ngor chen's collected works (*bka' 'bum*) from Ngor chen himself; see the *Gu ge paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (fols. 4b7–5a1) and *bKra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam thar* (p. 273.2–5), respectively. bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1444–1495) received the reading transmission from Mus chen and Grub chen dKon mchog blo gros; see the *bDag chen blo gros rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 80.3–4 and 81.2–3), respectively.

²⁰ See the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 614.5–6).

²¹ See the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 345.6–7) and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (p. 242.8–9).

²² See the *Blo bo rgyal rabs* (fol. 21b–22a): [*chos rgyal a mgon bzang po zhes bya ba 'di ni*] *bstan pa'i sbyin bdag chen por zhal gyis zhes [= bzhes] pa yin tel bka' 'gyur ro cog rgyu rin po che las grub pa/ de'i dgongs 'grel bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog grub pa'i dbang phyug dpal ldan sa skya pa yab sras khu dbon rnams kyi bka' 'bum/ rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po'i gsung 'bum la sogs tel dam pa'i chos glegs bam brjod kyi mi lang ba bsgrub pa rnams dang/*; and Tsarang Molla (fols. 9b–10a): *chos rgyal a mgon bzang po ni (...) bka' 'gyur/ bstan 'gyur/ sa skya gong ma lngal ngor chen rdo rje 'chang sogs kyi bka' 'bum gser du/ sha stag gis bzhengs/*. On the latter passage, see also JACKSON 1984: 147. A four-volume set of Ngor chen's collected works written in gold was preserved in the sMon thang gi gzims khang (the residence of the kings of Glo bo?) in the mid-seventeenth century; see the *sku gsung dang mchod rdzas bcas kyi dkar chag* (Exposure 7.31): *gser skyangs [= rkyang?] las sgrub [= grub] pa'i rdo rje 'chang skun [= kun] dga' bzang po'i bka' 'bum spod [= pod] bzhi ma/*.

²³ See the *Shāk mchog gi rnam thar* 2 (fol. 61a1–2): *rje rdo rje 'chang gi bka' 'bum gyi lung zhiq sgrog gsung/ nyug pa'i phyag dpe'i stengs nas pod bzhi ma'i lung zhag re la po ti phyed phyed zhag brgyad la rdzogs par gnang zhing/*; *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 753.4–5): *rje btsun sa skya pa gong ma rnams dang/ bla ma rdo rje 'chang chen po'i bka' 'bum rags rim 'ga/ (...) lung la sogs pa'i dam pa'i chos kyi bka' drin mang du mnos shing/*; and *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 817.2): *sa skya bka' 'bum thar thor 'dra/ pod bzhi ma'i po ti gnyis/ (...) la sogs lung kha yar/*. Comparing both biographies of dKon mchog 'phel, it becomes clear that the *Pod bzhi ma* refers to Ngor chen's collected works in four volumes. The fact that those early commissions comprised four volumes is also suggested by a reference in the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 547.6): *deng sang lung rgyun yod pa pod bzhi mar grags pa'i glegs bam bzhi'i (...)*.

constituted the standard collection of his writings, as is also evident from later Tibetan sources that unanimously refer to his collected works as a four-volume set.²⁴

However, many of Ngor chen's writings were not included in the *Pod bzhi ma*, as we are informed by his biographer, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.²⁵ Luckily, we are able to trace some references to them and even to a few actually surviving works. For instance, thanks to the endeavours of the Sa skya pa bibliophile A mes zhabs (1597–1659), we can learn more about two of them. The first, a Hevajra *sādhana* entitled *Kye rdor gyi mngon rtogs*, was written by Ngor chen during his second Glo bo sojourn (1436–1437) and presented to A ma dpal (1388–ca. 1456).²⁶ Two different versions of that work have survived. One is preserved as the first text among a group of five Hevajra practices originally collected by Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566), which were then proofread and compiled by A mes zhabs based on different textual witnesses and which were also included in his collected works.²⁷ Another version survives as a single *dbu med* manuscript in twenty-three folios with the title *rGyud sde'i snying po rim gnyis rnal 'byor las|| mthar thug sangs rgyas gnas su bsgrod pa'i lam|| grub brnyes bye ba'i zhal bum las 'ongs pa'i|| yid ches lung gis brgyan pa'i nges gsang*.²⁸ Though it is very difficult to know what parts of both textual witnesses originate with Ngor chen, it seems that Kun dga' grol mchog reworked one version, adding some verses at the beginning as well as verses and prose at the end.²⁹ He also probably added the many annotations found in both witnesses.³⁰

²⁴ See, for instance, the *Ngag gi dbang phyug gi rtogs brjod* (p. 320.6), *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 61.3), *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs 1* (p. 508.5–6), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 337.1), and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 218.5).

²⁵ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 547.6–548.1): *deng sang lung rgyun yod pa pod bzhi mar grags pa'i glegs bam bzhi'i dkar chag tu shes par bya zhing| der ma 'dus pa'ang dpag tu med pa shes par bya'o||*. Note that though Ngor chen's biographer Mus chen gives an overview of his subject's writings, he makes no mention of any compilation of his master's works; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 463.1–5).

²⁶ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 538.5). While on his second Glo bo sojourn, Ngor chen wrote a religious chronology (*bstan rtsis*) that is also missing from his collected works; see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 539.5–6). But it was included by Glo bo mKhan chen (1456–1532) in his autobiography; see the *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rang rnam* (pp. 118.6–119.3) and Part Four, 6.5.

²⁷ The collection is called: *dPal kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs lam dus sogs sgrub thabs kyi tshogs 'jam mgon grub pa'i dbang phyug dpal ldan kun dga' grol mchog zhabs kyi mdzad pa'i nyer mkho ngo mtshar can 'di rnam la bar skabs su yi ge'i lhag chad cung zad byung ba'i dpe 'ga' zhig snang ba las| sa skya pa shākya'i dge bsnyen theg pa mchog gi rnal 'byor pa sngags 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams kyi dang 'dod yid ches kyi dad pa chen po'i sgo nas zhus dag byis pa dpyod ldan gzur gnas rnam kyi yid 'phrog*; see the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 26, pp. 459–499) and SOBISCH 2007: 406–407, no. 14 and 447–448, no. 13. For the work in question, which is untitled, see the *Kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs lam dus sogs sgrub thabs* (pp. 460.1–490.1). The other four works are titled: *Kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs nyung gsal gnad bsodus*, *Lam zab chag med gnas bsodus*, *Bir bsrung chag med gnas bsodus*, and *rNal 'byor ma chag med bsodus pa*; see the *Kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs lam dus sogs sgrub thabs* (pp. 490.1–495.6, 495.6–496.6, 496.6–497.4, 497.4–498.4), respectively.

²⁸ I would like to thank Cyrus Stearns for providing me with a photocopy of that manuscript.

²⁹ See the *Nges gsang* (fol. 21b3–5): *ces pa 'di yang rje btsun rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po de nyid kyiis glo bo dge sbyong a ma'i dpal la smar khrid 'dzub tshugs su ghang ba'i tshig rigs ma nyams pa ji lta ba bzhin du yi ger bkod pa la yid gnyis dang the tshom gyi kun rtog gi rnyog ma gang gis kyang nam yang reg par mi bya zhing| gnad bsodus kyi snying po 'di'i dpe tsam yang 'khyar ba gzan la ci nas kyang gsang zhing sba bar bya'o||*. This passage is followed by a versified colophon, before the text ends as follows (*gSang nges*, fol. 23a4–b1): *ces dam pa'i chos la rjes su dgongs pa'i legs byas dang lhan gcig bsod nams rgya mtsho'i dpal gyis mngon par mtho ba'i sa skyong mi'i dbang po'i bka' khur spyi bor blangs nas| mang du thos pa'i dge slong bsod snyoms pa dpal ldan kun dga' grol mchog blo gsal rgya mtsho'i sdes ji lta'i don ji bzhin du bris pa'o||*. For the respective passages in A mes zhabs' proofread version, see the *Kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs lam dus sogs sgrub thabs* (pp. 487.6–488.2 and 489.6–490.1).

³⁰ See the *Nges gsang* (fol. 22a3–5): *'di ni mthu chen birwa'i rjes 'jug pa'i|| sa skya'i bla chen thugs mtsho las 'ongs pa|| rje btsun kun dga'i mtshan mchog bzang po des|| skal ldan snying la 'bab pa'i gsang chos yin|| tshig nyung bzung bde ngag snyoms mkhas pa'i tshig|| don zab rgya che snying por dril ba'i don|| bshad pa 'di ni snyon med gong mas bshad|| yin lugs chan [= mchan] bur bkod pa ji bzhin yin||*. For the respective passage in A mes zhabs' proofread version, see the *Kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs lam dus sogs sgrub thabs* (p. 488.4–5).

The second work is an explanation of Vajrabhairava practice entitled *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi rnam bshad rdo rje'i myu gu*. It was studied and utilised by A mes zhabs in preparation for his own explanation of a *sādhana* of Vajrabhairava, the *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa bdud sde ma lus pa 'joms pa'i rdo rje'i me 'od*.³¹ In his colophon, A mes zhabs recounts both the reason for the work's exclusion from the *Pod bzhi ma* and its own transmission history. In one section in the second half of that work, Ngor chen very clearly taught, according to A mes zhabs, the practice of accomplishing the group of ritual applications (*las tshogs*) through yogic exercises (*'khrul 'khor*) in the manner of something that was ready to be read (*bklags chog ma'i tshul gyis*). Thinking that, due to the clear nature of his exposition, the work would spread very widely when seen by discerning minds of monk scholars from central Tibet, and thus would turn into a public teaching (*khrom chos*), Ngor chen gave the manuscript, as soon as he had finished writing it, to a monk-disciple from Khams, who took it with him to his native region. Since Ngor chen's presentation of Vajrabhairava practice was not included in the versions of the *Pod bzhi ma* present in central Tibet, it did not become widely known at first. At a later time, however, a few copies of the work that went back to the original manuscript taken to Khams reached central Tibet. One of those copies was also kept in the library of the bZhi thog bla brang of Sa skya and studied by A mes zhabs. Having investigated the work in detail, he became absolutely certain that it did constitute a genuine work of Ngor chen. Yet, when he wondered why it had not been included in the *Pod bzhi ma*, he discussed this point with his teacher Ngag dbang chos grags (1572–1641), who shared with him the story that we find retold in A mes zhabs' colophon. This story had been passed down successively from Ngor chen's own disciples until it reached Ngag dbang chos grags, who in turn had heard it from rJe Ta ra ba Grub mchog bSod nams chos 'phel.³²

Another of Ngor chen's important writings that was surprisingly omitted from his collected works is the biography that he wrote of his main teacher, Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406).³³ Along with this biography, three lists recording the titles of Ngor chen's writings that were included in his collected works—namely those from the *gsan yigs* of two of A mes zhabs' teachers, sByin pa grags pa (fl. 17th century) and Kun dga' don grub (fl. 17th century), and from that of Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen—highlight several further works that were not included in the *Pod bzhi ma*.³⁴

- (1) *Chos rje shar pa'i rnam thar*
- (2) *mNgon byang gi bshad pa*
- (3) *bDe mchog dril bu pa'i rnam bshad*³⁵
- (4) *rNal 'byor rgyud kyi spyi rnam rtsom 'phro*

³¹ For this work, see the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 15, pp. 247–538). See also SOBISCH 2007: 274–276, no. 6.

³² See the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi rnam bshad* (pp. 535.2–538.1). See also SOBISCH 2007: 274–275. A mes zhabs had also relied on the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi rnam bshad rdo rje myu gu* in one of his earlier writings, the *rGyu dang 'bras bu'i theg pa'i spyi don legs par bshad pa mdo sngags bstan pa rgya mtsho'i sgo 'byed*. In the colophon, he relates the same story as presented above; see the *rGyu dang 'bras bu'i theg pa'i spyi don* (pp. 842.6–845.5) and SOBISCH 2007: 222–224, no. 2.

³³ On Shar chen's biography by Ngor chen, see Part Three, 6.1.2 and LIST (no. 6).

³⁴ See the *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (pp. 307.6–308.1), *sPyan snga chos kyi sphyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 118.4–5), and *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, p. 491.3), respectively. On the *gsan yig* of sByin pa grags pa, see also SOBISCH 2002a: 166 and SOBISCH 2007: 66 and 69. On the one of Kun dga' don grub, see also SOBISCH 2002a: 167 and SOBISCH 2007: 66 and 73–74.

³⁵ The *bDe mchog dril bu pa'i rnam bshad* might be identical to the *Dril bu pa'i lus dkyil gyi bshad pa*, which was included as the last title in the xylographic edition of Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge; see CATALOGUE (no. 182).

- (5) *Kye (or Kyai) rdo rje'i mngon rtogs bsdus pa*³⁶
 (6) *bKa' shog thor bu ba kha yar*

Though those lists refer to some scattered or miscellaneous letters (*bka' shog thor bu ba kha yar*) that were not included in the *Pod bzhi ma*, they record two interesting letters as belonging to it that are actually missing from the sDe dge recension. The first letter, the *Paṇḍi ta nags kyi rin chen la springs pa*, was addressed to the Indian *paṇḍita* Vanaratna (1384–1468), who had sojourned three times in Tibet and whom Ngor chen might have personally met.³⁷ The second letter, the *Bal yul ye rang gi paṇḍi ta shrī ma no bo dhi yab sras la springs pa*, was written for the great Newari *paṇḍita* from Pāṭan, Mahābodhi, and his son.³⁸ It was from Mahābodhi that Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412) had received the empowerments of the *Kriyāsamuccaya* cycle in Pāṭan and afterwards propagated on a large scale in Tibet, making Ngor chen its chief lineage holder.

Recently, my attention was drawn to an incomplete manuscript volume of what appears to be Ngor chen's collected works, which shall be catalogued below. This unpublished volume is marked in the left margin of each recto folio as the first volume (*ka*) of a further unknown set and contains eleven of his works, two of which are missing from any available list recording the titles of his writings (which shall be introduced below as well), and the sDe dge recension of his collected works (as discussed above and catalogued below). The first of these two works is titled *dPal kye'i rdo rje'i bsgrub thabs kyi ngag 'don rim pa gsal ba* and the second, the *dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs rnal 'byor snying po*, is Ngor chen's exposition of the Hevajra body *maṇḍala*, which has now been published in retyped form as well.³⁹

Another work that is traditionally ascribed to Ngor chen but missing from both his collected works and title lists of his writings is the aspiration prayer known as '*Gro la bde skyid ma*, which lacks a colophon by Ngor chen.⁴⁰

³⁶ This text might be the aforementioned work that Ngor chen wrote for the Glo bo king A ma dpal.

³⁷ For mentions of this letter in those title lists, see the *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 307.4), *sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 118.2), and *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, p. 490.6–491.1). The letter is also recorded in the earliest title list that is preserved in the *gsan yig* of dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor; see the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (p. 347.9–10). According to the manuscript catalogue of Ngor chen's collected works, he sent not one but two letters to Vanaratna; see the *Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum dkar chag* (fol. 2b3). With regard to a possible meeting between Vanaratna and Ngor chen, EHRHARD 2004b: 248 mentions that when on his first Tibetan sojourn in 1426, Vanaratna “travelled via Sa-skya to Sengge rdzong, and the first Tibetan teacher he met was Bla-ma Kun-dga' bzang-po, whom we can take to be Ngor chen Kun-dga' bzang-po (1382–1456).”

³⁸ For mentions of this letter in those title lists, see the *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 307.4), *sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 118.2), and *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, p. 491.1). The letter is also recorded in the earliest title list that is preserved in the *gsan yig* of dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor, and in the manuscript catalogue of Ngor chen's collected works; see the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (p. 347.10–11) and *Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum dkar chag* (fol. 2b3), respectively.

³⁹ See MANUSCRIPT VOLUME (nos. 5 and 7), respectively. On the retyped form of the latter work, see LIST (no. 7).

⁴⁰ The prayer has been included in various Sa skya collections, though with slightly varying titles: *bsTan rgyas smon lam 'gro bde ma* (W29975, vol. 2, pp. 372–378) and '*Dod gsol 'gro la bde skyid ma* (*Zhal 'don phyogs bsdus*, pp. 430–435; W1KG1677, pp. 327–330; and W22120, pp. 594–597). In one collection it has been included without any title being specified at all; see W1PD5282 (pp. 1255.4–1262.2). From the varying lengths of the different versions of the prayer, and its mentioning of Ngor chen himself, it becomes evident that it contains later additions as well. Two versions include a colophon within the prayer, identifying the part that was written by Ngor chen; see the '*Gro la bde skyid ma* 1 (p. 329.13–14): *ces 'gro ba'i don la gsol ba 'gro la bde skyid 'di ni ngor chen rdo rje 'changll kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa'oll*; and '*Gro la bde skyid ma* 2 (p. 433. 6–7): *ces 'gro ba'i don la gsol ba 'gro la bde skyid 'di ni ngor chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa'oll ll*. The commonly known title of the work originates from its incipit; see the '*Gro la bde skyid ma* 1 (p. 327.12): *'gro la bde skyid 'byung ba'i sgo gcig pull*. The fact that Ngor chen was the author of the prayer is also mentioned in the biographies of bKra shis lhun grub

In 2010, the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang published a new edition of Ngor chen's collected works as part of the *E wam bka' 'bum*. Among the writings included in the eighth (and last) volume of Ngor chen's collected works, we find six works that are not found in the *Pod bzhi ma* recension from sDe dge, but specified by the table of contents as Ngor chen's own compositions:⁴¹

- (1) *rNam 'grel bcu gcig gi ngos 'dzin dang de ji ltar gsungs pa'i go rim sdom tshig*
- (2) *rNam 'grel gyi ngos 'dzin lam 'bras kyi chos sna drug cu'i rkang grangs*
- (3) *dPal kye rdo rje'i bshad pa*
- (4) *sByor drug gi dris lan blo gsal dga' byed*
- (5) *Bhe ra wa'i zin bris*
- (6) *Chos kyi rgyal po dPal ldan bla ma dam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i rnam par thar pa dad pa rgyas byed* (this is the biography of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan mentioned above)

However, a closer investigation of these works based on their colophons reveals that only three (nos. 3, 4, and 6) were actually written by Ngor chen, whereas the others were put down in writing by his disciples.⁴²

This is hardly unusual since Ngor chen's biographer Sangs rgyas phun tshogs already informs us about such a work that had even been included in Ngor chen's collected works.⁴³ The work in question is the *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim*, which, according to its colophon, was put down in writing as mnemonic notes (*brjed byang*) by Shākya rgyal mtshan.⁴⁴ A mes zhabs could add that (Tshwa ba rong pa) Shākya rgyal mtshan had shown his notes to Ngor chen, which were then revised and later included within Ngor chen's collected works.⁴⁵ A similar work is the *Dri med gsang sngags kyi dkyil 'khor gyi bsgom bzlas*, which was set down in handwriting in Ngor chen's presence by bSod nams rin chen.⁴⁶

As illustrated by the following examples, several others of Ngor chen's disciples are also known to have fixed their master's teachings in writing, predominantly as lecture notes (*zin bris*). Though those works were not included in Ngor chen's collected works, they were considered important enough that A mes zhabs quotes many of them at length in his own compilatory compositions:

- (1) Within A mes zhabs' writings, we encounter numerous citations from works by Ngor chen's biographer **Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros (b. 1433)**:

- a) *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhaq*⁴⁷

(1672–1739), the thirty-first abbot of Ngor, and of Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med (1765–1820), the forty-fourth abbot of Ngor; see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 482.1): (...) *ngor chen gyis mdzad pa'i 'dod don gsol ba 'gro la bde skyid ma ces pa dang* (...); and *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 135.4): (...) *ngor chen gyis mdzad pa'i smon lam 'gro la bde skyid ma* (...). Zhu chen also confirms this in his *bsTan 'gyur* catalogue; see the *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* 2 (pp. 387.6–7 and 470.7–9).

⁴¹ See the *E wam bka' 'bum* (vol. 8, p. 1). In 2013, the third work was also published as part of the *Sa skyai chos mdzod* (vol. 28, pp. 314–393).

⁴² For a description of those works, see LIST (nos. 1–6).

⁴³ See the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar* 2 (p. 547.5): *'jigs byed rwa khrid/ 'di shākya rgyal mtshan gyis bris pa yin kyang rje'i gsung yin pas bka' 'bum du bzhugs/*.

⁴⁴ See CATALOGUE (no. 114).

⁴⁵ See the *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar nag 'jigs gsum gyi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (p. 534.2).

⁴⁶ See CATALOGUE (no. 133).

⁴⁷ See the *Kyai rdo rje'i rtsa ba'i rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa'i don 'grel* (pp. 618.2ff.).

- b) *Lam 'bras 'chad pa dang 'brel ba'i dam tshig gi chos skor gyi rnam bshad*⁴⁸
- c) *Nag po rim bzhi'i zin bris*⁴⁹
- d) *mKha' spyod ma'i chos skor zin bris*⁵⁰
- e) *bDe mchog dkar po'i zin bris*⁵¹
- f) *gShed dmar gtso bor gyur pa'i dam pa'i chos byung tshul bshad pa'i sgung rab*⁵²
- g) *'Pho ba'i man ngag gi bsgom don rim pa gsal ba 'gro kun bde ster*⁵³
- h) *gSang 'dus rgyud bshad zin bris*⁵⁴

Moreover, some of Kun dga' blo gros' works have survived in their entirety, though only one of them has been published so far: the *dPal bde mchog sdom 'byung nas kyi chang gi cho ga*.⁵⁵ Most others are found in an unpublished manuscript (73 fols.; missing fols. 49–60) compiling various of his writings:

- a) *dPal kye'i rdo rje'i bskyed pa'i rim pa'i ngag 'don ye shes 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu* (fols. 1a–13a3)
- b) *rJe btsun rtse mo'i mngon rtogs rgyas pa nas kyi gtor ma* (fols. 13a3–15a2)
- c) *dPal kye'i rdo rje'i dbang gi chu bo chen mo'i ngag 'don* (fols. 15a2–35a5)
- d) *rDul tshon gshegs su gsol ba* (fols. 35a6–36b7)
- e) *Gur gar gyi zin bris* (fols. 36b7–42b1)
- f) *lHa mo'i mtshan sku mdog phyag mtshan gyi bshad pa* (fols. 42b2–45a4)
- g) *rDo rje dril bu'i yig cha'i dbye gsal ngos 'dzin* (fols. 45a5–46a3)
- h) *rDo rje dril bu'i de kho na nyid* (fols. 46a4–48b7)
- i) *bSam gtan sgrub mchod kyi mtha' dpyad pa* (fols. 61a4–66b5)
- j) *'Pho ba'i rim pa* (fols. 66b6–71b2)
- k) *dBu ma lugs kyi rtsa ltung sogs* (fols. 71b3–73b)

Another three-folio manuscript compiles some of his oral instructions, the *Ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gi thugs sras srad pa grub chen kun dga' blo gros kyi zhal gdams*.

(2) Similarly, we find in A mes zhabs' works many references to and citations from the works by Ngor chen's disciple **Nyag re dPal gyi rgyal mtshan (fl. 15th century)**:

- a) *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi bskyed rim rnam bshad smra ba ngan 'joms*,⁵⁶ which has been published recently under the title *Bhe ra wa'i zin bris*⁵⁷
- b) *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul legs par bshad pa*⁵⁸

⁴⁸ See the *Dam tshig gi rnam par bshad pa'i don 'grel* (pp. 497.2–542.1). This work is also recorded in the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 72.10–13) as the *Lam 'bras kyi rnam bshad*.

⁴⁹ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 506.1–523.4).

⁵⁰ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 523.4–525.1).

⁵¹ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 525.1–528.4).

⁵² See the *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar nag 'jigs gsum gyi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 524.3–529.4).

⁵³ See the *'Pho ba'i man ngag gi bsgom don* (p. 602.4–5).

⁵⁴ See the *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi don 'grel* (pp. 50.2–59.5). See also the *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.5), where A mes zhabs refers to this work as the *gSang 'dus kyi rgyud kyi spyi rnam chen mo*. He also remarks that he saw many works on Guhyasamāja that had been written down as notes to Ngor chen's teachings, but whose authorship was unclear; see the *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.5–6). For another quotation from Kun dga' blo gros' notes on Ngor chen's style of teaching Guhyasamāja, see the *Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 483.5–492.3).

⁵⁵ See the *gDams ngag mdzod* (vol. 4, pp. 876–890).

⁵⁶ See the *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar nag 'jigs gsum gyi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 535.4–572.2).

⁵⁷ On the *Bhe ra wa'i zin bris*, see LIST (no. 5).

⁵⁸ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 422.5–446.2).

- c) *gSang 'dus kyi rnam bshad blo'i padmo rgyas byed*⁵⁹
- d) (*gSang 'dus kyi*) *rNam bshad yid bzhin nor bu*⁶⁰
- e) *Dam tshig gi chos skor lam 'bras 'chad pa dang 'brel ba'i skabs kyi zin bris*⁶¹

dPal gyi rgyal mtshan also wrote about teachings that Ngor chen had given on the presentation of the Tantra classes as a preliminary for the exposition of the *Hevajratantra*. That work was later on edited by A mes zhabs and included in his collected works under the title:⁶²

- f) *dPal kyai rdo rje'i rgyud 'chad pa'i sngon du 'gro ba rgyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhang la nye bar mkho ba'i legs bshad rdo rje 'chang gi gsung la chos rje dpal gyi rgyal mtshan gyis zin bris su mdzad pa'i gsung rab ngo mtshar can gyi ma dpe tshig sna ring thung sogs cung zad mi 'dra ba gsum la sa skya pa sngags 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams kyis 'dra bsdur zhus dag bgyis pa'i legs par bshad pa blo gsal mig thur*

One of the few presently available works of dPal gyi rgyal mtshan is his extensive exposition of the generation stage of *Cakrasamvara*, which he wrote at Ngor based on Ngor chen's teachings:⁶³

- g) *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog gi bskyed rim rnam bshad gsung sgros gnad kyi sgron me*

Similarly, he wrote a teaching manual of the *Lam 'bras* according to Ngor chen's teachings, which is preserved among the Ngor manuscript collection housed in the National Library of Bhutan:⁶⁴

- h) **gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag gzhung ji lta ba bzhin du dkri ba'i khrid*

⁵⁹ See the *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.4–5).

⁶⁰ See the *gSang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor 'khor lo sgrub pa'i tshul* (p. 519.2–3).

⁶¹ See the *Dam tshig gi rnam par bshad pa'i don 'grel* (pp. 642.5–760.2).

⁶² The work is contained in the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 21, pp. 1–82). On this work, see also SOBISCH 2007: 306–307, no. 19 and 319–320, no. 7 and SOBISCH 2008: 23, n. 27 and *passim*. It might be identical with the *dPal kye rdo rje'i bshad pa*; see LIST (no. 3).

⁶³ See the *bDe mchog gi bskyed rim* (pp. 177.6–178.1): *rje btsun rdo rje 'chang chen po| sku [= kun] dga' bzang po'i gsung gi bdud rtsi'i rgya mtsho chen po las| chu thigs tsaṃ gcig brelangs pa 'di| (...)*.

⁶⁴ The manuscript collection was photographed by Blo gsal don grub in 2008 while on his Himalaya expedition in search of Sa skya texts, which had been initiated by the late mKhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po. The manual's first part presents the Mahāyāna basis of the *Lam 'bras*, whereas the second part explains its Vajrayāna part; see the *Lam 'bras kyi khrid yig* (fols. 1b1–27a1 and 28a1–55b1). Unfortunately, both parts are lacking a title page and only the first part contains a colophon (*Lam 'bras kyi khrid yig*, fols. 26b4–27a1): *gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag gzhung ji lta ba bzhin du dkri ba'i khrid las| phar phyin theg pa dang thun mong du snang ba gsum gyi lam gyis 'khrid pa'i tshul grub chen rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug dpal bhir wa pa'i gdams ngag bzhin| rje btsun gong ma rnam las rim par bryud pa'i tshul phyin ci ma log pa| snyigs dus kyi rgyal ba gnyis pa| rje btsun mkhas pa'i dbang po rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po'i gsung gi bdud rtsi'i rgya mtsho las cung zad lon pa| snyom pa las pa dpal gyi rgyal mtshan gyis| rang gzhan la phan pa'i phyir du zin bris su btab pa'o||* For the incipit of the second part, see the *Lam 'bras kyi khrid yig* (fol. 28a1–4): (...) *rje btsun bla ma kun mkhyen gnyis pa kun dga' bzang por grags pa'i zhabs pad la|| sgo gsum dang ba'i gtsug gis 'dud do brtse ba chen pos rjes su bzung du gsol|| gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i khrid la| phar phyin theg pa dang thun mong du snang ba gsum gyis dkri ba'i khrid bstan zin pa| rdo rje theg pa'i lam gyis dkri ba la|*

The catalogue of the library holdings of 'Bras spungs Monastery registers several works by dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, among which two fifty-six-folio manuscripts are presented as notes on Cakrasaṃvara according to teachings by Ngor chen:⁶⁵

- i) *rDo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i gsung la dpal gyi rgyal mtshan gyis bde mchog gi zin bris sngon med pa'i legs par bshad pa'i rgya mtsho*
- (3) Ngor chen's biographer **Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po (fl. 15th century)** can most likely be identified as the Chos dpal bzang po whom we find mentioned by A mes zhabs to have recorded some of Ngor chen's teachings:
- a) The collected works of A mes zhabs contain a ten-folio work, the *rje btsun sa skya pa'i gsung rab la 'jug tshul legs par bshad pa'i yi ge bod yul 'gro kun bsgrod pa'i chos sgo phyogs brgyar ring du phye ba*,⁶⁶ which was written by Chos rje Chos dpal bzang po, a personal student of Ngor chen who put it down in writing according to his master's oral teachings (*gsung rgyun*).⁶⁷
- b) In a compilatory work on Cakrasaṃvara, A mes zhabs cites a longer passage from a work by Yongs 'dzin dam pa Chos dpal bzang po, the *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rnam par bshad pa smra ba ngan 'joms rin chen bsam 'phel*. Though A mes zhabs identifies Chos dpal bzang as a disciple of Ngor chen, we are not told whether Chos dpal bzang po wrote this work according to Ngor chen's teachings.⁶⁸
- c) Among the collection of manuscripts housed at the National Library of Bhutan, we find a seventy-eight-folio *dbu med* manuscript of a *Lam 'bras* teaching manual by bTsun pa Chos dpal bzang po. The text has no title page, but in its colophon the author refers to his work as a commentary on a list of (or notes on) the instruction of the *Lam 'bras* exactly following its basic text (i.e., the *rDo rje tshig rkang*), the *gZhung ji lta ba bzhin du bkri ba'i khrid kyi tho yig gi 'grel pa*. He informs us that he wrote down those teachings at the behest of some scholars after having received the *Lam 'bras* many times from Ngor chen and cherishing his master's oral teachings.⁶⁹
- (4) Based on Ngor chen's teachings, his paternal nephew **Kun dga' legs rin (fl. 15th century)** composed an instruction manual for the *Parting from the Four Attachments* (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*), the *Zhen pa bzhi bral gyi khrid yig rje bla ma ā nanda bha dra'i gsung sgras*. Having received that teaching two times from his uncle, Kun dga' legs rin wrote it down at the behest of Bla ma Kun dga' legs pa.⁷⁰ He then showed his notes to his uncle and finalised the manual based on his uncle's

⁶⁵ See the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 186, no. 1725 and p. 187, no. 1738). For other works by dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 360, no. 3643, p. 905, no. 10177, p. 994, no. 11249, p. 1112, no. 11046, p. 1195, no. 12043, and p. 1293, no. 13186). See also the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 72.15–73.1).

⁶⁶ For this work, see the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 4, pp. 167–187). On the work, its Wylie transliteration, and English translation, see SOBISCH 2008: [1]–[63], [227]–233, and [219]–226, respectively. See also SOBISCH 2007: 166, no. 14.

⁶⁷ See the *gSung rab la 'jug tshul* (p. 186.2–5).

⁶⁸ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 461.2–506.1).

⁶⁹ See the *Tho yig gi 'grel pa* (fol. 78a8–b2): *gzhung ji lta ba bzhin du bkri ba'i khrid kyi tho yig gi 'grel pa' rje btsun dam pa thams cad mkhyen pa kun dga' bzang po'i bka' drin gyis bskyangs pa'i btsun pa chos dpal bzang po zhes bgyi bas/ snga phyir gsung ngaq lan mang du thos shing de'i gsung gi rgyun rnam shin tu gces par bzung nas/ rje bla mas gsungs pa mdo tsam zhig/ dge ba'i bshes gnyen 'gas bskul nas 'bad pas bgyis pa'o||*

⁷⁰ Bla ma Kun dga' legs pa might be Byang phug pa Kun dga' legs pa. On the latter, see Part Four, 2.

corrections.⁷¹ According to Ngor dPon slob Ngag dbang legs grub (1811–1861), this work constituted the main manual of the *Zhen pa bzhi bral*.⁷² Later on, the manual was also included in the *rGyud sde kun btus* and *gDams ngag mdzod*.⁷³ The Ngor text collection in the National Library of Bhutan contains another one of Kun dga' legs rin's writings, namely a sixteen-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *Tshe dpag med kyi mdo yi gsal byed*,⁷⁴ which is also preserved in two different versions at 'Bras spungs Monastery: as an eight-folio *dbu med* manuscript titled *'Phags pa tshe dpag tu med pa'i mdo'i rnam bshad rin chen phreng ba* and as a seventeen-folio *dbu med* manuscript titled *Tshe mdo gsal byed*.⁷⁵

(5) **Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469)** also set down teachings of his master in writing:

- a) A mes zhabs cites in his Yamāntaka history a passage from Mus chen's *bCom ldan 'das rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi bshad pa'i gsung bgros zin bris*.⁷⁶ In a gloss, he explains that both dPal gyi rgyal mtshan (see above 2a) and Mus chen wrote notes of an oral teaching (*gsung rgyun zhig*) by Ngor chen on Yamāntaka, whereby the actual extent of each work had been determined by its target group, that is, dPal gyi rgyal mtshan's detailed presentation was directed at people with limited intellectual abilities and Mus chen's concise one was aimed at people of high intellect.⁷⁷
- b) Another work is the *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gnad kyi gsung sgros zin bris*, which is found as a supplementary work to the *Pod dmar ma* in the sDe dge recension of the *Lam 'bras slob bshad*.⁷⁸

(6) Along with having completed Ngor chen's *Lam 'bras* history,⁷⁹ **Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475)** wrote different works based on Ngor chen's teachings:

- a) According to Ngor chen's teachings, he wrote as notes or a memory aid (*brjed byang*) a ritual manual for the blessing of Nāro Khecarī, the *Nā ro pa'i thugs kyi snying khu sa skya pa'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa bzhin rnal 'byor ma'i byin rlabs kyi cho ga bya ba'i tshul rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung bzhin gung rus zin mdzad pa*, which was included in a collection on Nāro Khecarī.⁸⁰ A ten-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the work has also been preserved at 'Bras spungs, as registered in the catalogue of the monastery's library holdings,

⁷¹ See the *Zhen pa bzhi bral gyi khrid yig* (pp. 520.5–521.1).

⁷² See the *Nor bu ke ta ka'i do shal* (p. 522.1–2). The manual is also mentioned in the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 33.5–6).

⁷³ See the *rGyud sde kun btus* (vol. 23, pp. 492.2–521.1) and *gDams ngag mdzod* (vol. 4, pp. 806.2–831.6). A seventeen-folio *dbu med* manuscript has also been preserved at 'Bras spungs Monastery; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1122, no. 11159).

⁷⁴ See the *Tshe dpag med kyi mdo yi gsal byed* (fol. 12a2–5): *'phags pa tshe dang ye shes dpag tu med pa'i mdo yi gsal byed rin chen phreng ba zhes bya ba 'di ni/ chos kyi rje mkhyen rab kyi dbang phyug kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs rdul spyi bos len pa/ kun dga' legs rin la/ dam pa'i grogs blo gsal ming gzhan grags pa rgyal mtshan zhes bya ba bskul nas dpal e wam chos ldan du sbyar ba'o||*

⁷⁵ See the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 674, no. 7418 and p. 904, no. 10166), respectively.

⁷⁶ See the *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar nag 'jigs gsum gyi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 576.5–592.3).

⁷⁷ See the *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar nag 'jigs gsum gyi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (p. 577.3–4).

⁷⁸ See the *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 447.6–469).

⁷⁹ On this work, see Part Four, n. 655.

⁸⁰ See the *Nā ro mkha' spyod* (vol. 1, pp. 207.2–226.2). For the colophon, see the *rNal 'byor ma'i byin rlabs kyi cho ga* (p. 226.1–2): *(...) rje btsun rdo rje 'chang chen po a {ngor chen kun dga' bzang po} nanta bha dra'i gsung las ji ltar zin pa tsam zhig/ pradznyā bha {gu [= gung] ru shes rab bzang po} dras brjed byang du bris pa'o||*

the *Na ro pa'i thugs kyi nying khu rje sa skya pa'i dgongs pa bzhin| rnal 'byor ma'i byin brlabs kyi cho ga bya ba'i tshul rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung bzhin| gung ru shes rab bzangs pos zin bris su btab pa*.⁸¹

- b) He wrote the *'Khor lo bde mchog dkar po'i khrid yig* according to Ngor chen's teachings as well.⁸²
 - c) He also clarified mistaken views regarding the practice of Cakrasamvara based on notes that he had prepared of Ngor chen's teachings. This untitled four-folio *dbu med* manuscript is preserved at the National Library of Bhutan.⁸³
 - d) A mes zhabs mentions that he wrote the *gSang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim gyi rnam bshad rmongs pa'i mun sel*—which is also known as *Yid kyi mun sel* or *Log rtog gi mun pa sel ba padmo'i gnyen*—as notes that followed Ngor chen's teachings (*gsung*).⁸⁴
 - e) Though not specified by the compilers, the title of another work by him recorded in the catalogue of 'Bras spungs' library holdings suggests that he also wrote it as notes to Ngor chen's teachings: *Kun rig gi cho ga la nye bar mkho ba'i zin bris yid kyi mun pa sel ba'i sgron me* (54 fols.).⁸⁵
 - f) A detailed study of a manuscript of his writings housed in the Potala might reveal further works that he wrote based on Ngor chen's teachings.⁸⁶
- (7) **Nyag re Yon tan 'od zer (fl. 15th century)**, alias Guṇaprabha, is said to have written down notes on Ngor chen's teachings:⁸⁷
- a) One such text is preserved at the National Library of Bhutan, namely an eight-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *bDe mchog rim lnga'i khrid kyi zin bris*.⁸⁸
 - b) Another text is cited by A mes zhabs, the *'Khor lo bde mchog lū hi pa'i don 'grel zin bris*.⁸⁹
- (8) In his exposition of the *sādhana* of the *Guhyasamāja maṇḍala*, A mes zhabs mentions as one of his sources the *bDud rtsi'i char rgyun* by **mDo stod pa Yon tan**

⁸¹ See the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1334, no. 13551).

⁸² See the *'Khor lo bde mchog dkar po'i khrid yig* (fol. 3b4): *rje btsun kun dga'i gsung las| gung rus bris pa'o||*. This three-folio *dbu med* manuscript is preserved at 'Bras spungs; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 181, no. 1672). But note that in the catalogue the work's author is wrongly given as *rje btsun Kun dga'*.

⁸³ For the incipit, see the *Tshul min dri ma sel ba'i gsung sgros* (fol. 1.1–2): *dpal ldan bla ma 'khor lo bde mchog dang|| sngon gyi grub pa'i skyes bu mchog rnams la|| gus pas 'dud do zab mo'i tshul lugs 'dir|| tshul min dri ma sel ba'i gsung sgros bri|| de yang grub chen dril bu zhabs kyis mdzad pa'i gdams ngag bde mchog rim lnga 'di la||*. For the colophon, see the *Tshul min dri ma sel ba'i gsung sgros* (fol. 4b2): (...) *zhes pa chos rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung tho gung rus bris pa'o||*.

⁸⁴ See the *gSang 'dus chos 'byung* (p. 156.3–4). A mes zhabs also mentions this work in his *gSang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor 'khor lo sgrub pa'i tshul* (p. 519.1–2).

⁸⁵ See the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 547, no. 5928). For another work by him on the praxis of Sarvavid, see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 547, no. 5929).

⁸⁶ See the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (pp. 20–23, no. 1810). This manuscript has now been made available by TBRC (W4PD920). It contains the entire vol. 1 (*ka*) of his three-volume collected works, one text from volume two (*kha*), and other individual writings. After the table of contents, it contains as its first work a praise of Ngor chen featuring in the margins coloured miniature images of Ngor chen and Shes rab bzang po (TBRC, vol. 1, fol. 7b).

⁸⁷ See the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (p. 73.2–3): *yang yon tan 'od zer sogs kyis bla ma'i gsung zin bris mdzad pa du ma dang||*.

⁸⁸ See the *bDe mchog rim lnga'i khrid kyi zin bris* (fol. 8a4): *'di yang rje bla ma'i gsung la rten [= brten] nas gu na pra bhas bris pa'o||*.

⁸⁹ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul* (pp. 446.2–461.2).

rgya mtsho (fl. 15th century), who wrote it as notes according to Ngor chen's teachings (*gsung rgyun*).⁹⁰

(9) **Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507)** wrote his *rDzogs rim zab mo rtsa dbu ma'i khrid yig* as notes of a teaching (*gsung*) by Ngor chen.⁹¹

(10) In his compilation of commentaries on rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan's (1147–1216) exposition of tantric commitments (*dam tshig: samaya*), A mes zhabs cites at length from the notes of **Chos rje sDe snod 'dzin pa bSam 'grub bzang po (fl. 15th century)**, which the latter wrote according to teachings by Ngor chen (*gsung*).⁹²

The National Library of Bhutan preserves three other works that obviously originate from Ngor chen's disciples who wrote down their master's teachings: (1) a five-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *gTsug tor rnam par rgyal ma'i bzlas lung* by Khams pa Guṇabhadra (Yon tan bzang po), (2) a six-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *bCom ldan 'das mi 'khrugs pa'i cho ga'i zin bris* by Yon tan dpal, and (3) a twelfth-folio *dbu med* manuscript of the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi man ngag bcud thigs* of unknown authorship.⁹³ Likewise of unknown authorship is an untitled *dbu med* manuscript in fifty-seven folios of a work on practicing Cakrasaṃvara, which was written based on what the author had recalled of Ngor chen's teachings.⁹⁴

Many of Ngor chen's works—some of which were included within the *Pod bzhi ma*, while others were excluded—have survived at 'Bras spungs, as we come to know when making a first survey of the catalogue of the monastery's library holdings. The following list records only those works that are either missing from the *Pod bzhi ma* or that could not be identified as works therein:⁹⁵

- (1) *dPal dus kyi 'khor lo'i dal du bdag nyid 'jug pa'i cho ga ngag 'don dngos grub dpal 'bar*; two manuscripts: (a) *dpe tshugs*, 15 fols., (b) *'bru tsha*, 21 fols. (p. 25. nos. 215 and 216)
- (2) *sByor drug gi dri lan blo gsal dga' byed*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 15 fols. (p. 53, no. 466)⁹⁶

⁹⁰ See the *gSang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor 'khor lo sgrub pa'i thabs* (p. 519.2).

⁹¹ See the *rDzogs rim zab mo rtsa dbu ma'i khrid yig* (p. 511.1). On that work, see also CAUMANN 2006: 170, no. 33(1).

⁹² See the *Dam tshig gi rnam par bshad pa'i don 'grel* (pp. 542.1–642.5). Though bSam 'grub bzang po is not enumerated among the available lists of Ngor chen's disciples, we find him mentioned in two colophons of Ngor chen's works: in one case as requester and in another case as scribe; see CATALOGUE (nos. 126 and 127), respectively.

⁹³ See the *gTsug tor rnam par rgyal ma'i bzlas lung* (fol. 5a5–6): *'di yang dpal ldan bla ma dam pa ā nan da bha dra'i gsung bzhin du khams pa gu ṅa bha tras rang gi brjed thor bris pa'o||*; *Mi 'khrugs pa'i cho ga'i zin bris* (fol. 6b3–4): *bcom ldan 'das mi 'khrugs pa'i cho ga'i kha bskongs byed pa la dgos pa 'di ni| chos kyi rje thams cad mkhyen pa kun dga' bzang po'i gsung bzhin yon tan dpal gyis bris pa'o||*; and *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi man ngag* (fol. 12b5): *'jigs byed skyo lugs kyi rdzogs rims kyi zin bris/ rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung bzhin bris pa'o||*. With regard to the author of the first work, we have to inquire whether he might be the same person as Ngor chen's disciple Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang (d. 1507).

⁹⁴ See the *'Khor lo bde mchog gi bskyed pa'i rim pa* (fol. 57b4–5): *slob dpon spyod pa'i rdo rje'i gzhung gi rjes su 'brang ba| las dang po pa'i sgrub pa pos| 'khor lo bde mchog gi bskyed pa'i rim pa'i rnal 'byor thun bzhir nyams su blang ba'i rim pa 'di ni| rje btsun rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po'i gsung las cung zad zin pa rnams bris pa'o||*

⁹⁵ The list records works whose author is specified in most of the cases as either Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po or Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po. In other cases, for instance, the author is given as Ngor chen Kun bzang or simply as Kun dga' bzang po. To be sure, only the investigation of the original texts can prove whether Ngor chen was indeed their author or not.

⁹⁶ On a published version of this work, see LIST (no. 4).

- (3) *bDe mchog dkar po'i tshe sgrub zhal shes zab mo*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 6 fols. (p. 179, no. 1649)
- (4) *Dril bu rim lnga'i dgag bsgrub*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 7 fols. (p. 300, n. 2967)
- (5) *brTag pa gnyis pa'i rgyud kyi tshig don 'grel byed*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 2 fols. (p. 332, no. 3327)
- (6) *rTsa rgyud snying po kyai rdo rje'i mngon par rtogs pa'i lag len rnam nges*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 11 fols. (p. 334, no. 3350)⁹⁷
- (7) *dPal kyai rdo rje'i dal gyi cho ga'i rnam bshad 'khrul pa'i dri ma 'khrud par byed pa bdud rtsi'i rgya mtsho*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 65 fols. (p. 342, no. 3445)
- (8) *Yig brgya'i man ngag*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 7 fols. (p. 351, no. 3547)
- (9) *dPal kyai rdo rje'i rtsa ba'i rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa'i mngon rtogs ljon shing chen mo*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 181 fols. (p. 360, no. 3647)⁹⁸
- (10) *Kye rdor mtsho skyes lugs kyi mchog dbang gong ma gsum bskur tshul*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 3 fols. (p. 382, no. 3897)
- (11) *rGyud gsum gyi rgyud mchod bya thabs*; manuscript: *dbu can*, 7 fols. (p. 391, no. 4000)
- (12) *bKra shis dge legs rgya mtsho*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 2 fols. (p. 408, no. 4217)
- (13) *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bkra shis*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 1 fol. (p. 439, no. 4597)
- (14) *'Jam dpal rdo rje'i mchod phreng*; block-print, 16 fols. (p. 445, no. 4673)
- (15) *bCom ldan 'das rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi bshad pa mdor bsdu*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 12 fols. (p. 491, no. 5228)
- (16) *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed lha bcu gsum ma'i bsgrub thabs kyi cho ga lag tu blang ba'i rim pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 10 fols. (p. 495, no. 5279)
- (17) *Lam zab mo bla ma'i rnal 'byor gang drin ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 8 fols. (p. 638, no. 6871)
- (18) *O la pa ti'i gtum mo'i dmigs pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 3 fols. (p. 628, no. 6873)
- (19) *sNying po don gsum gyi man ngag zab mo*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 7 fols. (p. 633, no. 6934)
- (20) *mNgon byang gi bzhi bshad spas don gsal ba*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 12 fols. (p. 684, no. 7539)⁹⁹
- (21) *bGegs sel 'phrin las kun 'grub pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga 'phrin las char 'bebs*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 8 fols. (p. 715, no. 7901)
- (22) *sNying po don gsum gyi khrid*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 8 fols. (p. 806, no. 8988)
- (23) *rJe btsun ma'i sgrub thabs*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 4 fols. (p. 883, no. 9920)
rJe btsun sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs; manuscript that also contains the *Sher phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs*, *So sor 'brang ma'i sgrub thabs*, and *rNam rgyal rjes gnang*; *dpe tshugs*, 8 fols. (p. 1224, no. 12394)
- (24) *sNying po don gsum gyi gdams pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 7 fols. (p. 921, no. 10368)
- (25) *dPal rdo rje phreng ba'i gar dpe*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 12 fols. (p. 935, no. 10529)¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ This might be the aforementioned *sādhana* that Ngor chen wrote for the king of Glo bo, A ma dpal.

⁹⁸ Cf. the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 360, no. 3645), where another manuscript of the same work with the same amount of folios is attributed to (Shākya'i dge bsnyen cheg [= theg] pa mchog gi rnal 'byor pa) Grags pa rgyal mtshan. For the *rGyud kyi mngon par rtogs pa rin po che'i ljon shing* by rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum 1* (vol. 6, pp. 1–277).

⁹⁹ This is one of those works not included in the *Pod bzhi ma*, as recorded in title lists of Ngor chen's collected works; see Part Five, 3.

¹⁰⁰ This work is also listed as *rDo rje phreng ba'i gar* in the manuscript catalogue of Ngor chen's collected works; see the *Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum dkar chag* (fol. 2a6). It might be identical with Ngor chen's *rDo rje phreng bar gsungs pa'i sa yongs su gzung ba'i cho ga bdud las rnam par rgyal ba*; see CATALOGUE (no. 111).

- (26) *sGrub thabs kyi dgongs pa gzhung khrid kyi gdam ngag*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 19 fols. (p. 945, no. 10657)
- (27) *Bir ba pa'i snyan brgyud*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 2 fols. (p. 1035, no. 10140)
Bir wa pa'i snyan rgyud; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 2 fols. (p. 1203, no. 12142)
- (28) *rNam rgyal rjes gnang*; manuscript that also contains the *rJe btsun sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs*, *Sher phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs*, and *So sor 'brang ma'i sgrub thabs*: *dpe tshugs*, 8 fols. (p. 1224, no. 12394)
- (29) *sGrub thabs brgyad cu'i gdams ngag 'chi ba rnam grol*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 10 fols. (p. 1227, no. 12426)
sGrub thabs brgyad cu'i gdams ngag 'ching ba rang grol; manuscript: *'bru tsha*, 10 fols. (p. 1232, no. 12483)
- (30) *dPal tshogs kyi bdag po'i las sbyor man ngag dngos grub rgya mtsho*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 9 fols. (p. 1286, no. 13112)
- (31) *rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i nā ro mkha' spyod ki rgyun gyi nyams len*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 4 fols. (p. 1332, no. 13540)
- (32) *dPal tshogs kyi bdag po'i thun mong gi rjes gnang gi yi ge ngor chen rdo je 'chang gis mdzad pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 7 fols. (p. 1334, no. 13554)
- (33) *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar*; (a) manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 25 fols. (p. 1549, no. 17485); (b) *dpe tshugs*, 23 fols. (p. 1555, no. 17553)
Ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam thar; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 25 fols. (p. 1555, no. 17560)¹⁰¹
- (34) *Gur mgon gyi gtor ma'i man ngag| bstod pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 7 fols. (p. 1752, no. 20055)
- (35) *Nag po chen po'i bstod pa*; 5 fols. (p. 1797, no. 20576)
- (36) *dPal sa skya ba'i bka' bsrungs kyi bstod tshogs dngos grub rgya mtsho*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 29 fols. (p. 1799, no. 20607)
- (37) *dPal sa skya ba'i bka' srung la bstod pa yid bzhin nor bu*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 3 fols. (p. 1829, no. 20964)
- (38) *Chos srung rnam la bstod pa gsar pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 3 fols. (p. 1833, no. 21002)
- (39) *Ngor pa lugs kyi bskang gso he ru ka dpal ma*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 4 fols. (p. 1840, no. 21086)
- (40) *mGon po'i bskang gso*; manuscript: *dbu can*, 7 fols. (p. 1841, no. 21104)
- (41) *bKa' srung rnam la bstod pa dang bskang ba chos rje ngor nas [= pas?] mdzad pa dang bshags pa 'phags pa rin po ches mdzad pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 5 fols. (p. 1848, no. 21181)

Similarly, we find entries for works of unknown authorship that are specified as having been written down by Ngor chen's disciples as notes to their master's teachings:

- (1) *gShed dmar lha lnga'i dbang chog gi lhan thabs chos rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung la zin bris su btap pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 18 fols. (*'Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 520, no. 5594)¹⁰²
- (2) *gSung ngag rin po che'i zin bris| mtshan byang med pa*; manuscript: *dpe tshugs*, 14 fols. (*'Bras spungs dkar chag*, p. 1288, no. 13131)¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ On the biography of Shar chen, see LIST (no. 6).

¹⁰² The *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 520, no. 5594) specifies the author as Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po.

¹⁰³ The author is only given as a disciple of rJe Rin po che Kun dga' bzang po (i.e., Ngor chen); see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1288, no. 13131): *rje rin po che kun dga' bzang po'i slob ma zhiq gis zin bris su btap pa zhiq|*

Chapter Three

Five Title Lists of Ngor chen's Collected Works

Five title lists of Ngor chen's collected works can be found in the records of teachings received (*gsan yig*) of (1) dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot of Ngor, (2) sByin pa grags pa (fl. 17th century), (3) Kun dga' don grub (fl. 17th century), (4) Zhu chen Tshul khriims rin chen (1697–1774), and (5) in the form of a manuscript catalogue of an unknown edition of Ngor chen's collected works.¹⁰⁴ After checking these lists against each other and comparing them also with the revised xylographic edition of Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge, the following observations can be made:

- (1) The first four title lists are nearly identical and thus one version of Ngor chen's collected works was seemingly compiled and transmitted as a rather fixed set from as early as the fifteenth or sixteenth century on.
- (2) The vast majority of titles recorded therein are also found in the block-print recension from sDe dge. Though the order of a few works or groups of works was rearranged, the basic structure of the sDe dge recension is in line with the structure of those first four title lists. This suggests that the sDe dge print was based on an earlier edition of Ngor chen's collected works.
- (3) The fifth list, the manuscript catalogue, records much fewer works (about thirty) than the other four lists, though these works were also arranged as a four-volume set. The order of individual works or groups of works differs more widely from the other four lists and also the sDe dge recension than those latter lists differ among each other and from the sDe dge recension. The fifth list could thus either be the catalogue of a different edition of Ngor chen's collected works or an early forerunner of later editions, which are reflected in those other (later?) lists.
- (4) All five title lists include a few works that are not found in the sDe dge recension, as well as the other way around. Moreover, the title lists contained in the *gsan yigs* of sByin pa grags pa, Kun dga' don grub, and Zhu chen highlight a couple of writings that were not included in Ngor chen's collected works. Nor are these writings found in the sDe dge recension.

3.1 Title List from the *gSan yig* of dKon mchog lhun grub

dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor, received the reading transmission for Ngor chen's collected works from Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams. Prior to that, the lineage had been passed down through the following masters: Ngor chen, Kun dga' dbang phyug, fourth abbot, and dKon mchog 'phel, seventh abbot. In the following list (as well as the ones presented below), I have numbered the titles consecutively:¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Both sByin pa grags pa and Kun dga' don grub were teachers of A mes zhabs, who also obtained the teachings recorded in those *gsan yigs*. A sixth title list can be found in a modern catalogue, the *dKar chag mthong bas yid 'phrog* (pp. 44.8–54.9). However, as this list is based on the four-volume xylographic edition of Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge—the catalogue of which will be given in Part 6.2—, it won't be considered here. For enumerations of some of Ngor chen's writings, see also the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 463.1–5) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 547.1–6). For a list of his polemic writings, see the *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 462.4–463.1) and *Ngor chen gyi rnam thar 2* (p. 546.2–6).

¹⁰⁵ *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (pp. 343.19–347.19).

yang chos kyi rje de nyid kyi drung du/ bla ma chos kyi rje rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i bka' 'bum thob pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs la/ [1] rtsa ba'i bla ma dam pa rnams la bstod pa/ [2.1-5] shar chen la bstod pa lnga/ [3] grub chen buddha shri/ [4] sa bzang 'phags pa/ [5] mkhan chen bkra shis rin chen/ [6] lo chen rin chen bzang po/ [7] rje sa skya pa chen po rnams la bstod pa/ [8] sdom gsum bla ma brgyud pa la phyag 'tshal/ [9] lam zab brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs/ [10] lam 'bras phyag mchod kyi kha skong/ [11.1] lam 'bras/ [11.2] bsam mi khyab/ [11.3] lhan cig skyes grub/ [11.4] mchod rten drung thob/ [11.5] yi ge med pa/ [11.6] padma'i lam/ [11.7] gtum mo lam rdzogs/ [11.8] yon po bsrang ba/ [11.9] indra bhu ti'i lam/ [12] bde mchog rim lnga [13+14] rtsa dbu ma'i ring brgyud dang nye brgyud/ [15] bde mchog dkar po/ [16] mahā mā yā spros med/ [17] gsang 'dus rim lnga 'gos lugs/ [18] rwa rtse sems 'dzin/ [19] shin tu spros med/ [20] spyod 'jug/ [21] zhen pa bzhi bral rnams kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs/ [22] rdo rje rnal 'byor ma/ [23] sher phyin dkar mo/ [24] 'jam pa'i rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor/ [25] 'dod rgyal/ [26] tshogs bdag/ [27] 'chi bdag 'joms pa'i dkyil 'khor/ [28] gtsug gtor rnam rgyal/ [29] nor rgyun ma'i dkyil 'khor/ [30] sa skya pa'i bka' srung rnams la bstod pa/ [31] yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga/ [32] sa skya paṇḍi ta/ [33] grub chen buddha shri/ [34] sa bzang 'phags pa rnams kyi rnam thar/ [35] gsan yig chen mo/ [36] lam 'bras chos 'byung rtsom 'phro/ [37] bshad thabs gsang ba'i sgo 'byed/ [38] zhus lan gsal ba'i sa bcad/ [39] dbang bzhi'i rtogs bskyed/ [40] mngon rtogs tshul bcu bzhi'i sdom tshig/ [41] phyi nang gi bskyed rim dbang dang bcas pa'i sdom tshig/ [42] nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor/ [43] bir srung bar chad kun sell/ [44] sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris/ [45] bir srung thun mong ma yin pa'i byin rlabs bya tshul/ [46] de'i nyams len/ [47] de dang lam 'bras mtshan mtshon sbyar ba/ [48] bir srung gsar pa/ [49+50] lus dkyil rtsod spong che chung/ [51+52] rgyud gsum gnod 'joms rtsa 'grel/ [53] zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang gi sa mtshams bshad pa/ [54] kye rdo rje'i rgyud kyi byung tshul dang bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar/ [55] brtag gnyis kyi 'gyur chad bsabs pa sho lo ka gnyis/ [56] brtag gnyis kyi 'grel pa'i dkar chag/ [57] kye rdor ḍombi lugs kyi sgrub thabs/ [58] spring yig dbang po'i rdo rje/ [59] gzhai yas khang gi tshad rnam par gzhag pa/ [60] 'phar ma gnyis kyi don bshad pa/ [61] mtsho skyes dang ḍombi lugs kyi tho yig/ [62] sgrub thabs mtsho skyes kyi bsodus don/ [63] bstod pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel ba/ [64] mtsho skyes lugs kyi maṇḍal mchod chog/ [65] bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer/ [66] gtor chog gi 'grel ba/ [67] 'dod rgyal gyi sgrub thabs/ [68] sher phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs/ [69] gur rigs bsodus kyi sbyin sreg/ [70] gar gyi shan 'byed/ [71] sangs rgyas kyi gar/ [72] phyogs bzhi'i gtor ma'i gtong thabs/ [73] chos skyong gi man ngag rnams kyi dkar chag/ [74] mgon rkyang gi sgrub thabs rgyud 'grel las phyung ba/ [75] lha brgyad kyi rjes gnang/ [76] gtor chog dgra las rnam rgyal/ [77] gtor sgrub kyi man ngag/ [78] thugs dam bskang ba'i cho ga/ [79] kye rdor lha bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs/ [80] sambu ṭa rdo rje dbyings kyi sgrub thabs/ [81] gtor chog/ [82] mchod phreng/ [83] dkyil chog/ [84] sbyin sreg/ [85] bkra shis/ [86] tshogs 'khor gsang ba kun rgyan/ [87] tshogs 'khor kun bzang rnam roll/ [88] bde mchog bla ma mchod chog/ [89] bde mchog gi pho brang gi rnam gzhag/ [90] ril bu la brten nas mkha' spyod sgrub pa/ [91] nā ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs/ [92] bde mchog dkar po'i sgrub thabs/ byin rlabs kyi cho ga dang bcas pa/ [93] rdo rje lha mo'i tshe sgrub/ [94] lwa ba pa'i bde mchog lha bcu gsum ma'i mngon rtogs kyi tho/ [95] rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sgrub thabs kyi tho/ [96] za byed rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sbyin sreg/ [97] mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs gyi [= kyi] sgrub thabs/ [98] gtso bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs/ [99] sngags phreng mchan ma/ [100] dkyil chog/ [101] mchod phreng/ [102] gsang 'dus mi bskyod pa'i sgrub thabs/ [103] shin tu rnal 'byor gyi khyad par/ [104] gtor chog/ [105] mchod phreng/ [106] rdo rje sems dpa'i mchod chog/ [107] dkyil chog/ [108] sbyin sreg/ [109] rab gnas/ [110] bkra shis/ [111] rdo rje phreng ba'i sa

gzung ba'i cho ga/ [112] dgra nag gi rgyud nas gsungs pa'i char 'bebs/ [113] 'jigs byed kyi gtor chog/ [114] 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim/ [115] gshed dmar lha lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [116] de'i dag pa/ [117] sgrub thabs kyi lung sbyor/ [118] dkyil chog/ [119] spros med mdzes rgyan/ [120] kun rig dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs/ [121] gzhan phan mtha' yas/ [122] rdul tshon kha skong/ [123] cha gsum gtor ma/ [124] dkyil 'khor sgo srag [= sbrag] gi bshad pa/ [125] spyod rgyud spyi rnam/ [126] bya rgyud spyi rnam/ [127] mi' khrugs pa'i sgo nas gshin po rjes 'dzin/ [128] 'od zer dri med kyi dkyil chog/ [129] dri med lha nyi shu rtsa lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [130] a ra pa tsa na'i rjes gnang/ [131] 'od dpag med kyi tshe sgrub/ [132] seng ge sgra/ [133] sna tshogs yum/ [134] rma bya chen mol/ [135] so sor 'brang ma/ [136] 'byung po 'dul byed/ [137] rta mgrin rnam kyi sgrub thabs/ [138] sman bla'i mchod chog/ [139] sems bskyed rang gis blang ba'i cho ga/ [140] gso sbyong rang gis blang ba'i cho ga/ [141] mchod sbyin chen po'i zin bris/ [142] gtor chen gyi lhan thabs/ [143] gser sku rdo rje 'chang bzhengs tshul/ [144] gnod sbyin 'khor lo'i sngags la zhu dag mdzad pa/ [145] rags sdom bcu'i 'bru 'grel/ [146] bka' 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag/ [147] bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag mdor bsdus gcig/ [148] rdo rje theg pa'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag/ [149] mtshan nyid theg pa'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag/ [150] rje btsun gong ma gsum gyi bka' 'bum dkar chag/ [151] rang gi grwa pa spyi la gdams pa/ [152] sa bzang pa bsod nams dpa' [= dpal]/ [153] lo tsā ba rdo rje dpal/ [154] dge 'dun mgon/ [155] a mo ghal/ [156] bla chen chos rin pa/ [157] gling 'od zer rgyal mtshan/ [158] bla ma bsam grub rgyal mtshan/ [159] slob dpon bsam bzang/ [160] dbu ma pa shes rab rgya mtsho/ [161] mdo stod pa dge bzang rnam kyi dris lan/ [162] sde snod 'dzin pa ratna shri la gdams pa/ [163] gsang sngags pa kun dga' gzhon nu la gdams pa/ [164+165] bla ma sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan la gdams pa gnyis/ [166] byang chub sems dpa' bsod nams rin chen la gdams pa sho lo ka gcig/ [167] rgya rong pa bkra shis dpal la gdams pa/ [168+169] sgrub pa po blo bzang la gdams pa gnyis/ [170] nyag re sangs grags la gdams pa/ [171] pañdi ta nags kyi rin chen la springs pa/ [172] bal yul ye rong gi pañdi ta shri ma no bo dhi yab sras la springs pa/ [173] dpon po rgyal mtshan dpal yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa/ [174] ya rtse rgyal po hasti rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa/ [175.1] de'i blon po la gdams pa sho lo ka gcig/ [175.2] a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/ [176] dpon rgan thar pa ye shes la gdams pa/ [177] slob dpon bzod chen la bstod pa/ [178+179] phyi nang gi yas gtam/ [180] theg pa chen po'i smon lam/ [181] gser 'od dam pa las btus pa'i smon lam rnam thob pa'i brgyud pa ni/ rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po/ rgyal tshab dam pa kun dga' dbang phyug/ yongs 'dzin dkon mchog 'phel/ dpal sa skya pa 'jam dbyangs chen po/ des bdag dkon mchog lhun grub la'ol/.

3.2 Title List from the *gSan yig* of sByin pa grags pa

The reading transmission for Ngor chen's collected works was passed down to sByin pa grags pa and in turn to A mes zhabs by way of the following lineage: Ngor chen, Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor, dKon mchog 'phel, the seventh abbot, lHa mchog seng ge, the ninth abbot, Sangs rgyas seng ge, the eleventh abbot, and Kun dga' lung rigs. For this transmission, as it was received by A mes zhabs, an alternative lineage is recorded: Ngor chen, Kun dga' dbang phyug, Sa lo 'Jam pa'i rdo rje (alias Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams), dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot, sNgags 'chang Kun dga'

rin chen, 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams dbang po, and Śrī Dharmasvāmin Bhikṣu Kusalipa, who appears to have been A mes zhabs' teacher bDud 'joms dpa' bo.¹⁰⁶

yang chos kyi rje de nyid kyi drung du/ bla ma chos kyi rje rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i bka' 'bum thob pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs la/ [1] rtsa ba'i bla ma rnams la bstod pa/ [2.1-5] shar chen la bstod pa lnga/ [3] grub chen buddha shrī/ [4] sa bzang 'phags pa/ [5] mkhan chen bkra shis rin chen/ [6] lo chen rin chen bzang po/ [7] rje sa skya pa chen po rnams la bstod pa/ [8] sdom gsum bla ma brgyud pa la phyag 'tshal ba/ [9] lam zab brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs/ [10] lam 'bras phyag mchod kyi kha skong/ [11.1] lam 'bras/ [11.2] bsam mi khyab/ [11.3] lhan cig skyes grub/ [11.4] mchod rten drung thob/ [11.5] yi ge med pa/ [11.6] padma badzra'i lam/ [11.7] gtum mo lam rdzogs/ [11.8] yon po bsrang ba/ [11.9] indra bhu ti'i lam/ [12] bde mchog rim lnga/ [13] rtsa dbu ma'i ring brgyud/ [14] bde mchog dkar po/ [15] mahā ma ya'i sprod med/ [16] gsang 'dus rim lnga 'gos lugs/ [17] ra [= rwa] rtse sems 'dzin/ [18] shin tu spros med/ [19] spyod 'jug/ [20] zhen pa bzhi bral rnams kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs/ [21] rdo rje rnal 'byor ma/ [22] shes phyin dkar mo/ [23] 'jam pa'i rdo rje'i dkyil chog/ [24] 'dod rgyal/ [25] tshogs bdag/ [26] 'chi bdag 'joms pa'i dkyil chog/ [27] gtsug gtor/ [28] nor rgyun ma'i dkyil chog gi cho ga/ [29] sa skya pa'i bka' srung rnams la bstod pa/ [30] yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga/ [31] sa skya paṇḍi ta/ [32] grub chen buddha shrī/ [33] sa bzang 'phags pa rnams kyi rnam thar/ [34] gsan yig chen mo/ [35] lam 'bras chos 'byung rtsom phro/ [36] bshad thabs gsang ba'i sgo 'byed/ [37] zhus lan gsang ba'i sa bcad/ [38] dbang bzhi'i rtogs bskyed/ [39] mngon rtogs tshul bzhi'i sdom tshig/ [40] phyi nang gi bskyed rim dbang dang bcas pa'i sdom tshig/ [41] nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor/ [42] bir bsrung bar chad kun sell/ [43] sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris/ [44] bir bsrung thun mong ma yin pa'i byin rlabs bya tshull/ [45] de'i nyams len/ [46] de dang lam 'bras mtshan mtshon sbyar ba/ [47] bir bsrung gsar ma/ [48+49] lus dkyil rtsod spong che chung/ [50+51] rgyud gsum gnod 'joms rtsa 'grel/ [52] zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang gi sa mtshams bshad pa/ [53] kyai rdo rje'i rgyud kyi byung tshul dang/ bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar/ [54] brtag gnyis kyi 'gyur chad bsabs pa sho lo ka gnyis/ [55] brtag gnyis 'grel pa'i dkar chag/ [56] kyai rdor ḍombhi lugs kyi sgrub thabs/ [57] 'phrin yig dbang po'i rdo rje/ [58] gzhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par bzhag pa/ [59] 'phar ma gnyis kyi don bshad pa/ [60] mtsho skyes dang ḍombhi lugs kyi tho yig/ [61] sgrub thabs mtsho skyes kyi bsod don/ [62] bstod pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel pa/ [63] mtsho skyes lugs kyi maṅḍal mchod chog/ [64] bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer/ [65] gtor chog gi 'grel pa/ [66] 'dod rgyal gyi sgrub thabs/ [67] shes phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs/ [68] gur rigs bsod kyi sbyin sreg/ [69] gar gyi shan 'byed/ [70] sangs rgyas kyi gar/ [71] phyogs bzhi gtor ma'i btang thabs/ [72] chos skyong gi man ngag rnams kyi dkar chag/ [73] mgon rkyang gi sgrub thabs rgyud 'grel las phyung ba/ [74] lha brgyad kyi rjes gnang/ [75] gtor chog dgra las rnam rgyal/ [76] gtor sgrub kyi man ngag/ [77] thugs dam bskangs pa'i cho ga/ [78] kyai rdor bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs/ [79] sambhu ta rdo rje dbyings kyi sgrub thabs/ [80] gtor chog/ [81] mchod phreng/ [82] dkyil chog/ [83] sbyin sreg/ [84] bkra shis/ [85] tshogs 'khor gsang ba kun rgyan/ [86] tshogs 'khor kun bzang rnam rol/ [87] bde mchog bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga/ [88] bde mchog pho brang gi rnam gzha/ [89] ril bu la brten nas mkha' spyod bsgrub pa/ [90] nā ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs dang/ [91] bde mchog dkar po'i sgrub thabs byin rlabs cho ga dang bcas pa/ [92] rdo rje lha mo'i tshe sgrub/ [93] la wa pa bcu gsum ma'i mngon rtogs kyi tho/ [94] rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sgrub thabs kyi tho/ [95] za byed rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sbyin sreg/ [96] mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor yongs

¹⁰⁶ In one colophon, bDud 'joms dpa' bo refers to himself as Ku sa li pa Theg pa mchog gi rnal 'byor pa gSum ldan dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa bDud 'joms dpa' bo; see the *Pod chen drug gi 'bel gtam gyi dris pa* (p. 444.4-5).

rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs/ [97] gtso bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs/ [98] sngags phreng mchan ma/ [99] dkyil chog/ [100] mchod phreng/ [101] gsang 'dus mi bskyod pa'i sgrub thabs/ [102] shin tu rnal 'byor gyi khyad par/ [103] gtor chog/ [104] mchod phreng/ [105] rdo rje sems dpa'i mchod chog/ [106] dkyil chog/ [107] sbyin sreg/ [108] rab gnas/ [109] bkra shis/ [110] rdo rje phreng ba'i sa bzung gi cho ga/ [111] dgra nag gi rgyud nas gsungs pa'i char 'bebs/ [112] 'jigs byed kyi gtor chog/ [113] 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim/ [114] gshed dmar lha lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [115] de'i dag pa/ [116] sgrub thabs kyi lung sbyor/ [117] dkyil chog/ [118] spros med mdzes rgyan/ [119] kun rig dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs/ [120] gzhan phan mtha' yas/ [121] rdul tshon kha skong/ [122] cha gsum gtor ma/ [123] dkyil 'khor sgo sbrags kyi bshad pa/ [124] spyod rgyud spyi rnam/ [125] bya rgyud spyi rnam/ [126] mi 'khrugs pa'i sgo nas gshin po rjes 'dzin/ [127] 'od zer dri med kyi dkyil chog/ [128] dri med lha nyi shu rtsa lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [129] a ra pa tsa na'i rjes gnang/ [130] 'od dpag med kyi tshe sgrub/ [131] seng ge sgral/ [132] sna tshogs yum/ [133] rma bya chen mol/ [134] so sor 'brang ma/ [135] 'byung po 'dul byed/ [136] rta mgrin rnam kyi sgrub thabs/ [137] sman bla'i mchod chog/ [138] sems bskyed rang gis blang pa'i cho ga/ [139] mchod sbyin chen po'i zin bris/ [140] gtor chen gyi lhan thabs/ [141] gser sku rdo rje 'chang bzhengs tshul/ [142] gnod sbyin 'khor lo'i sngags la zhus dag mdzad pa/ [143] rags sdom bcu'i 'bru 'grel/ [144] bka' 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag/ [145] bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag mdor bsod shig/ [146] rdo rje theg pa'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag/ [147] mtshan nyid bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag/ [148] rje btsun gong ma gsum gyi bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag/ [149] rang gi grwa sa [= pa] spyi la gdams pa/ [150] sa bzang pa bsod nams dpal/ [151] lo tsā ba rdo rje dpal/ [152] dge 'dun mgon/ [153] a mo gha/ [154] bla chen chos rin pa/ [155] gling 'od zer rgyal mtshan/ [156] bla ma bsam 'grub rgyal mtshan/ [157] slob dpon sa [= bsam] bzang/ [158] dbu ma pa shes rab rgya mtsho/ [159] mdo stod pa dge bzang rnam kyi dris lan/ [160] sde snod 'dzin pa ratna shri la gdams pa/ [161] gsang sngags pa kun dga' gzhon nu la gdams pa/ [162+163] bla ma sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan la gdams pa gnyis/ [164] byang chub sems dpa' bsod nams rin chen la gdams pa sho lo ka gcig/ [165] rgya rong pa bkra shis dpal la gdams pa/ [166+167] sgrub pa po blo bzang la gdams pa gnyis/ [168] nyag re sangs grags la gdams pa/ [169] pañdi ta nags kyi rin chen la springs pa/ [170] bal yul ye rang gi pañdi ta shri ma no bo dhi yab sras la springs pa/ [171] dpon po rgyal mtshan dpal yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa/ [172] ya tshe rgyal po hasti rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa/ [173.1] de'i blon po la gdams pa'i sho lo ka gcig/ [173.2] a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/ [174] dpon rgan thar pa ye shes la gdams pa/ [175] slob dpon bzod chen la bstod pa/ [176+177] phyi nang gi yas gtam/ [178] theg pa chen po'i smon lam/ [179] gser 'od dam pa las btus pa'i smon lam/ der ma thus pa/ [180] chos rje shar pa'i rnam thar/ [181] mngon byang gi bshad pa/ [182] bde mchog dril bu pa'i rnam bshad/ [183] rnal 'byor rgyud kyi spyi rnam rtsom 'phro/ [184] kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs bsod pa/ [185] bka' shog thor bu ba kha yar rnam thob pa'i bryud pa ni/ rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po/ rgyal tshab dam pa kun dga' dbang phyug/ yongs 'dzin dkon mchog 'phel/ rgyal ba lha mchog seng gel rje sangs rgyas seng gel/ rje kun dga' lung rigs/ sdom brtson dam pa sbyin pa grags pa/ des bdag sa skya pa ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams la'o/ yang na/ yongs 'dzin dkon mchog 'phel/ sa lo 'jam pa'i rdo rje/ ngor chen dkon mchog lhun grub/ sngags 'chang chos kyi rgyal po/ ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen/ 'jam mgon grub pa'i dpa' bo bsod nams dbang po/ shri dharmā swa mi/ bi kṣu ku sa li pa las kyang zhib tu thos so//¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul (pp. 303.5–308.3).

3.3 Title List from the *gSan yig* of Kun dga' don grub

Kun dga' don grub and in turn A mes zhabs received the reading transmission for Ngor chen's collected works by way of this lineage: Ngor chen, Kun dga' dbang phyug, the fourth abbot of Ngor, dKon mchog 'phel, the seventh abbot, lHa mchog seng ge, the ninth abbot, Sangs rgyas seng ge, the eleventh abbot, Nam mkha' dpal bzang, the thirteenth abbot, and Kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub, the fifteenth abbot. A mes zhabs also received the reading transmission via an alternative lineage: Ngor chen, Kun dga' dbang phyug, dKon mchog 'phel, Sa lo 'Jam pa'i rdo rje (alias Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams), dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot, sNgags 'chang Kun dga' rin chen, 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams dbang po, and Dharmasvāmin Bande Kusalipa, who, as mentioned above, might have been A mes zhabs' teacher bDud 'joms dpa' bo.

yang chos kyi rje de nyid kyi drung dul rgyal bas lung bstan brnyes pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i bka' 'bum pod bzhi mar grags pa'i lung thob pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs la [1] *rtsa ba'i bla ma dam pa rnam la bstod pa* [2.1–5] *shar chen la bstod pa lnga* [3] *grub chen buddha shrī* [4] *sa bzang 'phags pa* [5] *mkhan chen bkra shis rin chen* [6] *lo chen rin chen bzang po* [7] *rje sa skya pa chen po rnam la bstod pa* [8] *sdom gsum bla ma brgyud pa la phyag 'tshal ba* [9] *lam zab brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* [10] *lam 'bras phyag mchod kyi kha skong* [11.1] *lam 'bras* [11.2] *bsam mi khyab* [11.3] *lhan cig skyes grub* [11.4] *mchod rten drung thob* [11.5] *yi ge med pa* [11.6] *padma badzra'i lam* [11.7] *gtum mo lam rdzogs* [11.8] *yon po bsrang ba* [11.9] *indra bhu ti'i lam* [12] *bde mchog rim lnga* [13] *rtsa dbu ma'i ring brgyud* [14] *rtsa dbu ma'i nye brgyud* [15] *bde mchog dkar po* [16] *mahā ma ya'i spros med* [17] *gsang 'dus rim lnga 'gos lugs* [18] *rwa rtse sems 'dzin* [19] *shin tu spros med* [20] *spyod 'jug* [21] *zhen pa bzhi bral rnam kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* [22] *rdo rje rnal 'byor ma* [23] *sher phyin dkar mo* [24] *'jam pa'i rdo rje'i dkyil chog* [25] *'dod rgyal* [26] *tshogs bdag* [27] *'chi bdag 'joms pa'i dkyil chog* [28] *gtsug gtor rnam rgyal* [29] *nor rgyun ma'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga* [30] *sa skya pa'i bka' srung rnam la bstod pa* [31] *yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga* [32] *sa skya paṇḍi ta* [33] *grub chen buddha shrī* [34] *sa bzang 'phags pa rnam kyi rnam thar* [35] *gsan yig chen mo* [36] *lam 'bras chos 'byung brtsams 'phro* [37] *bshad thabs gsang ba'i sgo 'byed* [38] *zhus lan gsang ba'i sa bcad* [39] *dbang bzhi'i rtogs bskyed* [40] *mngon rtogs tshul bzhi'i sdom tshig* [41] *phyi nang gi bskyed rim dbang dang bcas pa'i sdom tshig* [42] *nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor* [43] *bir srung bar chad kun sell* [44] *sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris* [45] *bir srung thun mong ma yin pa'i byin rlabs bya tshul* [46] *de'i nyams len* [47] *de dang lam 'bras mtshan mtshon sbyar ba* [48] *bir srung gsar ma* [49+50] *lus dkyil rtsod spong che chung* [51+52] *rgyud gsum gnod 'joms rtsa 'grel* [53] *zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang gi sa mtshams bshad pa* [54] *kyai rdo rje'i rgyud kyi byung tshul dang bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* [55] *brtag gnyis kyi 'gyur tshad [= chad] bsab pa sho lo ka gnyis* [56] *brtag gnyis 'grel pa'i dkar chag* [57] *kye rdor ḍombhi lugs kyi sgrub thabs* [58] *'phrin yig dbang po'i rdo rje* [59] *gzhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par bzhang pa* [60] *'phar ma gnyis kyi don bshad pa* [61] *mtsho skyes dang ḍombhi'i lugs kyi tho yig* [62] *sgrub thabs mtsho skyes kyi bsod don* [63] *bstod pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel pa* [64] *mtsho skyes lugs kyi maṅḍal mchod chog* [65] *bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer* [66] *gtor chog gi 'grel pa* [67] *'dod rgyal gyi sgrub thabs* [68] *sher phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs* [69] *gur rigs bsodus kyi sbyin sreg* [70] *gar gyi shan 'byed* [71] *sangs rgyas kyi gar* [72] *phyogs bzhi gtor ma'i gtang thabs* [73] *chos skyong gi man ngag rnam kyi dkar chag* [74] *mgon rkyang gi sgrub thabs rgyud 'grel las phyung ba* [75] *lha bdud [= brgyad?] kyi rjes gnang* [76] *gtor chog dgra las rnam rgyal* [77] *gtor sgrub kyi man ngag* [78] *thugs dam bskang pa'i cho*

gal/ [79] kye rdor bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs/ [80] sambu ṭi rdo rje dbyings kyi sgrub thabs/ [81] gtor chog/ [82] mchod phreng/ [83] sbyin sreg/ [84] bkra shis/ [85] tshogs 'khor gsang ba kun rgyan dang [86] tshogs 'khor kun bzang rnam roll [87] bde mchog bla ma mchod chog/ [88] bde mchog gi pho brang gi rnam gzhaḡ/ [89] ril bu la brten nas mkha' spyod bsgrub pa/ [90] nā ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs dang/ [91] bde mchog dkar po'i sgrub thabs byin rlabs cho ga dang bcas pa/ [92] rdo rje lha mo'i tshe sgrub/ [93] la wa pa bcu gsum ma'i mngon rtogs kyi tho/ [94] rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sgrub thabs kyi tho/ [95] za byed rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sbyin sreg/ [96] mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs/ [97] gtso bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs/ [98] sngags phreng mchan ma/ [99] dkyil chog/ [100] mchod phreng/ [101] gsang 'dus mi bskyod pa'i sgrub thabs/ [102] shin tu rnal 'byor gyi khyad par/ [103] gtor chog/ [104] mchod phreng/ [105] rdo rje sems dpa'i mchod chog/ [106] dkyil chog/ [107] sbyin sreg/ [108] rab gnas/ [109] bkra shis/ [110] rdo rje phreng ba'i sa bzung gi cho ga/ [111] dgra nag gi rgyud nas gsungs pa'i char 'bebs/ [112] 'jigs byed kyi gtor chog/ [113] 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim/ [114] gshed dmar lha lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [115] de'i dag pa/ [116] sgrub thabs kyi lung sbyor/ [117] dkyil chog/ [118] spros med mdzes rgyan/ [119] kun rig dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs/ [120] gzhan phan mtha' yas/ [121] rdul tshon kha skong/ [122] cha gsum gtor ma/ [123] dkyil 'khor sgo sbrags kyi bshad pa/ [124] spyod rgyud spyi rnam/ [125] bya rgyud spyi rnam/ [126] mi 'khrugs pa'i sgo nas gshin po rjes 'dzin/ [127] 'od zer dri med kyi dkyil chog/ [128] dri med lha nyi shu rtsa lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [129] a ra pa tsa na'i rjes gnang/ [130] 'od dpag med kyi tshe sgrub/ [131] seng ge sgra/ [132] sna tshogs yum/ [133] rma bya chen mo/ [134] so so [= sor] 'brang ma/ [135] 'byung po 'dul byed/ [136] rta mgrin rnams kyi sgrub thabs/ [137] sman bla'i mchod chog/ [138] sems bskyed rang gis blang ba'i cho ga/ [139] gso sbyong rang gi [= gis] blang ba'i cho ga/ [140] mchod sbyin chen po'i zin bris/ [141] gtor chen gyi lhan thabs/ [142] gser sku rdo rje 'chang bzhengs tshul/ [143] gnod sbyin 'khor lo'i sngags la zhus dag mdzad pa/ [144] rags sdom bcu'i 'bru 'grel/ [145] bka' 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag/ [146] bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag mdor bsduš shig/ [147] rdo rje theg pa'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag/ [148] mtshan nyid bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag/ [149] rje btsun gong ma gsum gyi bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag/ [150] rang gi grwa pa spyi la gdams pa/ [151] sa bzang bsod nams dpal/ [152] lo tsā ba rdo rje dpal/ [153] dge 'dun mgon/ [154] a mo gha/ [155] bla chen chos rin pa/ [156] gling 'od zer rgyal mtshan/ [157] bla ma bsam 'grub rgyal mtshan/ [158] slob dpon sa [= bsam] bzang/ [159] dbu ma pa shes rar rgya mtsho/ [160] mdo stod pa dge bzang rnams kyi dris lan/ [161] sde snod 'dzin pa ratna shri la gdams pa/ [162] gsang sngags pa kun dga' gzhon nu la gdams pa/ [163+164] bla ma sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan la gdams pa gnyis/ [165] byang chub sems dpa' bsod nams rin chen la gdams pa sho lo ka gcig/ [166] rgya rong pa bkra shis dpal la gdams pa/ [167+168] sgrub pa po blo bzang la gdams pa gnyis/ [169] nyag ro [= re] sangs grags la gdams pa/ [170] paṇḡi ta nags kyi rin chen la springs pa/ [171] bal yul ye rang gi paṇḡi ta shri ma no bo dhi yab sras la springs pa/ [172] dpon po rgyal mtshan dpal yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa/ [173] ya tshe rgyal po hasti rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa/ [174.1] de'i <slob dpon> [= blon po] la gdams pa sho lo ka gcig/ [174.2] a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/ [175] dpon rgan thar pa ye shes la gdams pa/ [176] slob dpon bzod chen la bstod pa/ [177+178] phyi nang gi yas gtam/ [179] theg pa chen po'i smon lam/ [180] gser 'od dam pa las btus pa'i smon lam/ der ma thus pa [181] chos rje shar pa'i rnam thar/ [182] mngon byang gi bshad pa/ [183] bde mchog dril bu pa'i rnam bshad/ [184] rnal 'byor rgyud kyi spyi rnam rtsom 'phro/ [185] kyai rdo rje'i mngon rtogs bsduš pa/ [186] bka' shog thor bu ba kha yar thob pa'i brgyud pa nil rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po/ rgyal tshab dam pa kun dga' dbang phyug/ yongs 'dzin dkon

*mchog 'phell rgyal ba lha mchog seng ge/ rdo rje 'chang sangs rgyas seng ge/ thar rtse nam mkha' dpal bzang/ rtse gdong bdag chen kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub/ spyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan kun dga' dron grub/ des bdag sa skya pa ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams la'o|| yang nal 'dren mchog dkon mchog 'phell sa lo 'jam pa'i rdo rje/ ngor chen dkon mchog lhun grub/ sngags 'chang chos kyi rgyal po ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen/ 'jam pa'i dbyangs bsod nams dbang po/ dharmā swa mi/ paṇḍe pa ku sa li/ des bdag sa skya pa ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams la'o||.*¹⁰⁸

3.4 Title List from the *gSan yig* of Zhu chen Tshul khirms rin chen

Down to Nam mkha' dpal bzang, the thirteenth abbot of Ngor, Zhu chen Tshul khirms rin chen had received the reading transmission for Ngor chen's collected works in the same lineage as the aforementioned Kun dga' don grub. But from Nam mkha' dpal bzang the lineage descended down to Zhu chen through the following masters: Mus chen Nam mkha' dpal bzang, dPal ldan don grub, the sixteenth abbot of Ngor, Nam mkha' sangs rgyas, the seventeenth abbot, bSod nams rgya mtsho, the twenty-first abbot, lHun grub dpal ldan, the twenty-fourth abbot, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, the twenty-fifth abbot, bsTan 'dzin lhun grub, the latter's nephew dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot, and the latter's nephew Rin chen mchog grub.¹⁰⁹

sgron ma'i bskal pa'i rnam par 'dren pa bcom ldan 'das shākya seng ge'i lung rtogs kyi rgyal srid chen po skyong ba'i rgyal tshab dam pa mi 'phrogs pa'i mkhyen rab dang thugs rje tshad med pa'i bdag nyid chen rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po pa'i gsung rab rin po che'i glegs bam bzhi'i lung thob pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs la/ [1] rtsa ba'i bla ma dam pa rnam la bstod pa/ [2.1–5] shar chen la bstod pa lnga/ [3] grub chen buddha shri/ [4] sa bzang 'phags pa/ [5] mkhan chen bkra shis rin chen/ [6] lo chen rin chen bzang po/ [7] rje sa skya pa chen po rnam la bstod pa re/ [8] sdom gsum bla ma brgyud pa la phyag 'tshal ba/ [9] lam zab brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs/ [10] lam 'bras phyag mchod kyi kha skong/ [11.1] lam 'bras/ [11.2] bsam mi khyab/ [11.3] lhan cig skyes grub/ [11.4] mchod rten drung thob/ [11.5] yi ge med pa/ [11.6] padma pa'i lam/ [11.7] gtum mo lam rdzogs/ [11.8] yon po bsrang ba/ [11.9] indra bhū ti'i lam ste lam skor dgu'i brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs/ [12] bde mchog rim lnga/ [13] rtsa dbu ma'i ring brgyud/ [14] rtsa dbu ma'i nye brgyud [15] bde mchog dkar po/ [16] mahā mā yā/ sprod med/ [17] gsang 'dus rim lnga 'gos lugs/ [18] rwa rtse sems 'dzin/ [19] shin tu spros med/ [20] spyod 'jug/ [21] zhen pa bzhi bral rnam kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs/ [22] 'jam pa'i rdo rje lha bcu dgu'i dkyil chog/ [23] rdo rje rnal 'byor ma/ [24] shes phyin dkar mo/ [25] 'dod rgyal/ [26] tshogs bdag/ [27] 'chi bdag 'joms pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs/ [28] gtsug gtor rnam rgyal lha dgu/ [29] nor rgyun ma lha bcu dgu'i bstod pa smon lam dang bcas pa/ [30] sa skya pa'i bka' srung rnam te de rnam la bstod pa le tshan re/ [31] yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga/ [32] sa skya paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar gsung sgras ma/ [33] grub chen buddha shri'i rnam thar/ [34] sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar/ [35] rje nyid kyi gsan yig rgya mtsho/ [36] lam 'bras chos 'byung rtsom phro/ [37] bshad thabs gsang ba'i sgo 'byed/ [38] zhus lan gsal ba'i sa bcad/ [39] dbang bzhi'i rtogs bskyed/ [40] mngon rtogs tshul bzhi'i sdom tshig/ [41] phyi nang gi bskyed rim dbang dang bcas pa'i sdom tshig/ [42] nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor/ [43] bir bsrung bar chad kun sell/ [44] sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris/ [45] bir bsrung thun

¹⁰⁸ sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul (pp. 114.2–119.2).

¹⁰⁹ For a biographical sketch of Rin chen mchog grub (1723–1779), see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 464.13–478.14).

mong ma yin pa'i byin rlabs bya tshull [46] de'i nyams len/ [47] de dang lam 'bras mtshan
 mtshon sbyar ba/ [48] bir bsrung gsar ma/ [49+50] lus dkyil/ rtsod spong che chung/
 [51+52] rgyud gsum gnod 'joms rtsa 'grel/ [53] zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang gi sa mtshams
 rnam par bshad pa/ [54] kye rdo rje'i rgyud kyi byung tshul dang bla ma bryud pa'i rnam
 thar ngo mtshar rgya mtshol/ [55] brtag gnyis kyi 'gyur chad bsabs pa shloka gnyis/ [56]
 brtag gnyis kyi 'grel pa'i dkar chag/ [57] kye rdor ḍombi lugs kyi sgrub thabs/ [58] 'phrin
 yig dbang po rdo rje/ [59] gzhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par gzhag pa/ [60] 'phar ma
 gnyis kyi don bshad pa/ [61] dpal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed
 rim gnad kyi zla zer/ [62] gtor chog gi 'grel pa/ [63] mtsho skyes lugs dang ḍombi lugs kyi
 sgrub thabs dang dkyil chog gi tho yig/ [64] sgrub thabs mtsho skyes kyi bsod don/ [65]
 bstod pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel pa/ [66] mtsho skyes lugs kyi maṅdal mchod chog/ [67] 'dod
 rgyal gyi sgrub thabs/ [68] shes phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs/ [69] gur rigs bsod kyi sbyin
 sreg/ [70] gar gyi shan 'byed/ [71] sangs rgyas kyi gar/ [72] phyogs bzhi gtor ma'i gtang
 thabs/ [73] chos skyong gi man ngag rnam kyi dkar chag/ [74] mgon rkyang gi sgrub
 thabs rgyud 'grel las phyung ba/ [75] lha brgyad kyi rjes gnang/ [76] gtor chog dgra las
 rnam rgyal/ [77] gtor sgrub kyi man ngag g.yul las rnam rgyal/ [78] bka' srung rnam kyi
 thugs dam bskang ba'i cho ga/ [79] kye rdo rje lha bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs/ [80] sampu
 ṭa rdo rje dbyings kyi dkil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs/ [81] yang dag sbyor ba'i rgyud las 'byung
 ba'i 'byung po thams cad pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga/ [82] rdo rje dbyings kyi mchod pa'i cho ga/
 [83] dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga/ [84] sbyin sreg/ [85] bkra shis dge legs nyi ma rnam dang/
 [86] tshogs kyi 'khor lo gsang ba kun rgyan/ [87] yang tshogs kyi 'khor lo kun bzang rnam
 rol/ [88] bde mchog bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga bsod nams rab rgyas/ [89] bde mchog 'khor
 lo'i pho brang gi rnam gzhag/ [90] nā ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs/ [91] mkha' spyod
 gyi man ngag zab mo/ [92] bde mchog dkar po'i sgrub thabs byin rlabs cho ga dang bcas
 pa/ [93] rdo rje lha mo'i tshe sgrub/ [94] lwa wa pa'i lugs kyi bde mchog sbyangs pa'i yon
 tan lha bcu gsum pa'i cho ga la dgos pa'i zin bris/ [95] rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sgrub thabs
 dang/ nag po pa'i sgrub thabs mi 'dra ba'i khyad par/ [96] za byed rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i
 sbyin sreg/ [97] mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs dngos
 grub rin po che'i mdzod/ [98] gtso bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs/ [99] de'i sngags phreng
 gsang sngags rin po che'i mdzod mchan ma/ [100] de'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dbang gi snye
 ma/ [101] mchod phreng bsod nams rin po che'i mdzod/ [102] gsang ba 'dus pa mi bskyod
 pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs dngos grub rgya mtshol/ [103] de'i gtor chog/ [104] mchod
 phreng/ [105] rdo rje sems dpa'i mchod chog/ [106] dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga/ [107] sbyin
 sreg/ [108] rab gnas/ [109] bkra shis dge legs rgya mtshol/ [110] gsang 'dus kyi bskyed
 rim shin tu rnal 'byor gyi khyad par/ [111] gsang 'dus rim lnga'i khrid yig zung 'jug gsal
 ba/ [112] rdo rje phreng bar gsung pa'i sa chog/ [113] dgra nag gi rgyud nas gsung pa'i
 char 'bebs/ [114] 'jigs byed kyi gtor chog/ [115] 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim/ [116] gshed
 dmar lha lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [117] de'i dag pa/ [118] sgrub thabs kyi lung sbyor/ [119]
 dkyil chog/ [120] spros med mdzes rgyan/ [121] kun rig gi dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi
 sgrub thabs sgrub pa rnam sell/ [122] kun rig gi cho ga gzhan phan mtha' yas/ [123] de la
 rye bar mkho ba'i cho ga/ [124] cha gsum gtor ma/ [125] dkyil 'khor sgo sbrags kyi bshad
 pa/ [126] spyod rgyud spyi'i rnam gzhag/ [127] bya rgyud spyi'i rnam gzhag/ [128]
 mi 'khrugs pa'i sgo nas gshin po rjes su gzung ba'i cho ga/ [129] 'phags pa 'od zer dri med
 kyi dkyil chog/ [130] dri med lha nyi shu rtsa lnga'i sgrub thabs/ [131] a ra pa tsa na'i
 rjes gnang/ [132] 'od dpag med kyi tshe sgrub/ [133] seng ge sgra/ [134] sna tshogs yum/
 [135] rma bya chen mo/ [136] so sor 'brang ma/ [137] 'byung po 'dul byed/ [138] rta
 mgrin rnam kyi sgrub thabs/ [139] bde gshegs brgyad kyi mchod pa'i chog sgrig/ [140]
 sems bskyed rang gis blang ba'i cho ga dbu ma lugs/ [141] gso sbyong rang gis blang ba'i

cho ga| [142] mchod sbyin chen po'i zin bris| [143] gtor chen gyi dbang gzugs| [144] gser sku rdo rje 'chang bzhengs tshul| [145] gnod sbyin 'khor lo'i sngags la zhus dag mdzad pa| [146] dge tshul gyi rags sdom bcu'i bslab bya| [147] bka' gyur ro cog gi dkar chag| [148] bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag mdor bsdus gcig| [149] rdo rje theg pa'i bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag| [150] mtshan nyid bstan 'gyur gyi dkar chag| [151] rje btsun gong ma gsum gyi bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag| [152] slob ma rnams la spring ba'i yi ge| [153] sa bzang pa bsod nams dpal| [154] lo tsā ba rdo rje dpal| [155] dge 'dun mgon| [156] a mo gha| [157] bla chen chos rin pa| [158] gling 'od zer rgyal mtshan| [159] bla ma bsam grub rgyal mtshan| [160] slob dpon bsam bzang| [161] dbu ma pa shes rab rgya mtsho| [162] mdo stod pa bshes gnyen dge bzang rnams kyis [= kyi] dris lan rel| [163] sde snod 'dzin pa ratna shri la gdams pa| [164] gsang sngags pa kun dga' gzhon nu la gdams pa| [165+166] bla ma sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan la gdams pa dang bsngags pa gnyis| [167] byang chub sems dpa' bsod nams rin chen la gdams pa shloka gcig| [168] rgya rong pa bkra shis dpal la gdams pa| [169] sgrub pa po blo bzang la gdams pa| [170] nyag re sangs grags la gdams pa| [171] pañdi ta nags kyi rin chen la springs pa| [172] bal yul ye rang gi pañdi ta shri ma no bo dhi yab sras la springs pa| [173] dpon po rgyal mtshan dpal yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa| [174] ya tshe rgyal po hasti rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa| [175.1] de'i blon po la gdams pa shloka gcig| [175.2] a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa| [176] dpon rgan thar pa ye shes la gdams pa| [177] slob dpon bzod chen la gdams pa| [178+179] phyi nang gi yas gtam| [180] theg pa chen po'i smon lam| [181] gser 'od dam pa las btus pa'i smon lam| der ma thus pa [182] chos rje shar pa'i rnam thar| [183] mngon¹¹⁰ byang gi bshad pa| [184] bde mchog dril bu pa'i rnam bshad| [185] rnal 'byor rgyud kyi spyi rnam rtsom 'phro| [186] kye rdo rje'i mngon rtogs bsdus pa| [187] bka' shog thor bu ba kha yar rnams thob pa'i brgyud pa ni| khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po| rgyal tshab dam pa kun dga' dbang phyug| yongs 'dzin dkon mchog 'phell rgyal ba lha mchog seng ge| rdo rje 'chang sangs rgyas seng ge| brang ti nam mkha' dpal bzang| mus chen nam mkha' dpal bzang| mkhas grub dpal ldan don grub| 'jam dbyangs nam mkha' sangs rgyas| mtshungs med bsod nams rgya mtsho| mkhan chen lhun grub dpal ldan| bstan pa'i sgron me sangs rgyas phun tshogs| mtshungs med bstan 'dzin lhun grub| kun mkhyen dpal ldan chos skyong| de dbon mtshungs med rin chen mchog grub| des bdag bande tshul khrims rin chen la bka' drin du tsal to||¹¹¹

3.5 A Catalogue of Ngor chen's Collected Works

A two-folio manuscript catalogue of Ngor chen's collected works, the *Chos rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung 'bum 'dkar chag*,¹¹² records a hundred and forty-nine works in four volumes: forty-seven in vol. *ka* (nos. 1–47), twenty-seven in vol. *kha* (nos. 48–74), twenty-nine in vol. *ga* (nos. 75–103), and forty-six in vol. *nga* (nos. 104–149).¹¹³ By comparison, the catalogue lists about thirty works less than the other title lists, and it also lists fewer works than the revised block-print recension from sDe dge. Whether this is indicative of

¹¹⁰ Here the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, p. 491.3–4) has the following gloss: 'di man gsan yig dbang gi rgyal por ma bzhugs pas lung rgyun yod med brtag|.

¹¹¹ *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, pp. 486.3–491.6).

¹¹² The unpublished manuscript does not have a title page. Its title is written on the left side above the beginning of the first line of the first folio; see the *Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum dkar chag* (fol. 1a).

¹¹³ In the upper centre of the first folio the indigenous catalogue number *phyi/la/361* is recorded in three stacked lines; see the *Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum dkar chag* (fol. 1a). The manuscript most likely originates from 'Bras spungs. But since it is not registered in the catalogue of the monastery's library, it most likely belongs to those texts that had been moved to other places in the past; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 12.3–8).

the fact that this is a catalogue of an early edition of Ngor chen's collected works when fewer of his writings were available, or whether this suggests that the collected works were produced at a place where fewer of his writings were available (or possible to bring together), remains pure speculation. Unfortunately, the catalogue itself does not contain any information about the production of Ngor chen's collected works. But as it is a handwritten manuscript in *dbu med*, it could have been the catalogue to a manuscript edition of Ngor chen's collected works, although it could also be the transcript of a catalogue in block-print.

Cho rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung 'bum dkar chag||
om swasti sidham| shes bya kun la legs sbyangs mthar phyin nas|| mkhas rnams dga' ba'i
mchad [= 'chad] rtsod rtsom pa yi|| bstan pa'i khur chen ring du khyer ba po|| 'dren mchog
bzang po'i zhabs kyi pad mor 'dud|| kun du dge ba'i bstan pa rin po che|| kun nas gsal ba'i
legs bshad 'od stong gil|| kun gyi rmongs pa'i mun pa sel mdzad pa|| kun mkhyen bla ma'i
gsung rab 'dir brjod bya|| || 'dir bdag cag gi 'dren pa gang 'di'i rnam dpyod kyis bsrub shing
gi bde bar gshegs pa'i gsung rab ma lus pa legs par bsrub pa las byung ba'i legs par bshad
pa mar gyi nying khu lta bu rnams phyogs gcig tu bzhugs pa ni 'di lta stel (ka) pa la| [1]
bla ma spyi'i bstod pa| [2] sdom gsum brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [3] lo chen rin chen bzang
po'i bstod pa sho lo ka gcig| [4] rje sa skya pa chen po'i bstod pa| [5.1-5] chos rje shar pa
la bstod pa lnga| [6] grub chen budha shri la bstod pa| [7] chos rje sa bzangs 'phags pa la
bstod pa| [8] mkhan chen bkra shis rin chen pa la bstod pa| [9] gsang 'dus rims lnga 'gos
lugs kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [10] 'jigs byed kyi rwa rtse sems 'dzin skye lugs kyi
bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [11] bde mchog rims lnga'i rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [12] rtsa
dbu ma'i khrid kyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [13] rtsa dbu ma'i nye rgyud kyi gsol 'debs| [14]
bde mchog dkar po'i man ngag gi rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [15] lam zab mo bla ma'i rgyud
pa'i gsol 'debs| [16.1] gsung ngag rin po che'i bla ma'i rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [16.2] bsam
mi khyab kyi bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [16.3] {lhan cig skyes grub kyi bla ma rgyud
pa'i gsol 'debs| [16.4] mchod rten drung du thob kyi bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [16.5]
phyag rgya chen po yi ge med kyi bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol x¹¹⁴| [16.6] padma badzra'i lam
gyi rgyud pa'i <gsol x> [= gsol x]| [16.7] gtum mo lam rdzogs kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol
x| [16.8] yon po bsrang ba'i bla ma rgyud pa'i gsol x| [16.9] indra bo dhi'i nye rgyud kyi
x¹¹⁵| [17] sgyu ma chen mo'i rdzogs rims spros med kyi rgyud pa'i x|| [18] spyod 'jug gi
rgyud pa'i x| [19] zhen pa bzhi bral gyi rgyud pa'i gsol 'debs| [20] gsang 'dus 'jam rdor lha
bcu dgu'i bstod pa| [21] rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i bstod pa| [22] sher phyin dkar mo'i bstod
pa| [23] gtsug gtor rnam rgyal gyi bstod pa| [24] dpal mo nor rgyun ma'i dal gyi lha tshogs
kyi bstod pa| [25] dpal 'dod pa'i rgyal po la bstod pa| [26] dpal tshogs kyi bdag po la bstod
pa| [27] dpal sa skya'i bka' 'bsrungs rnams kyi bstod pa| [28] yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga|
[29] sa skya pañdi ta'i rnam thar| [30] grub chen budha shri'i rnam thar| [31] bla ma sa
bzangs 'phags pa'i rnam thar| [32] chos kyi rje nyid kyi gsan yig| [33] bka' 'gyur ro cog gi
dkar chag| [34] bstan 'gyur dkar chag| [35] rje btsun sa skya pa gong ma gsum gyi bka'
'bum gyi dkar chag| [36] rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal kye'i rdo rje'i byung tshul dang| rgyud
pa'i bla ma rnams kyi rnam thar| [37] rtsa rgyud rtag gnyis kyi sngar gyi 'gyur la ma
byung ba'i rgya dpe gsum la mthong ba'i lhag pa'i 'gyur gcig| [38] dpal kya'i rdo rje'i 'grel
pa'i dkar chag| [39] rgyud gsum gnod 'joms kyi rtsa ba| [40] de'i 'grel pa| [41] rgyud gsum
lam rims kyi sa bcad| [42] lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyi man ngag zab mol
[43] nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor| [44] dbang bzhi'i rtogs pa bskyed pa| [45] bir bsrung gi

¹¹⁴ In this and also the following four cases, the sign x functions as a shorthand for 'debs.

¹¹⁵ In this and also the following two cases, the sign x functions as a shorthand for gsol 'debs.

man ngag/ [46] bir wa pa'i sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris/ [47] zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang gi sa 'tshams [= mtshams] rnam par bzhag pa rnams bzhugs so/ (kha) pa la [48] kyai'i rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rnam par bshad pa bskyes rims gnad kyi zla zer/ [49] gtor chog gi 'grel pa phrin las rgyas byed/ [50] lus kyi dal la rtsod pa spang ba lta ba ngan sell [51] lus dkyil rtsod spong smra ba ngan 'joms/ [52] dom bhi lugs kyi kya'i rdo rje'i sgrub thabs/ [53] 'phar ma gnyis kyi don bshad pa/ [54] spring yig dbang po'i rdo rje/ [55] mtsho skyes dang dom bhi lugs kyi sgrub dkyil gyi tho yig/ [56] gzhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par bzhag pa/ [57] bsgrub thabs mtsho skyes kyi bsod don/ [58] bstod pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel pa/ [59] mtsho skyes lugs kyi dal mchod pa'i cho ga/ [60] kyai rdor bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs/ [61] gur rigs bsod kyi sbyin bsreg/ [62] gur gyi sangs rgyas kyi gar/ [63] phyogs bzhi'i gtor ma'i btang thabs/ [64] 'dod rgyal gyi sgrub thabs/ [65] sher phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs/ [66] dpal sa skya pa'i bka' bsrungs rnams kyi gtor chog/ [67] gtor sgrub kyi man ngag/ [68] ma hā kā la'i thugs dam bkang ba/ [69] sam pu ti'i rdor dbyings kyi bsgrub thabs/ [70] de'i gtor chog/ [71] mchod phreng/ [72] dkyil chog/ [73] {sbyin sreg/} [74] bkra shis rnams bzhugs/ (ga) pa la [75] bde mchog dkar po'i sgrub thabs/ [76] mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i sgrub thabs/ [77] de'i sngags phreng/ [78] de'i gto bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs/ [79] mchod phreng/ [80] dkyil chog/ [81] bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga/ [82] bde mchog 'khor lo'i pho brang gi rnam bshad/ [83] lang ka ling ya la rten nas mkha' spyod bsgrub pa'i thabs/ [84] rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs/ [85] gsang 'dus kyi sgrub thabs/ [86] de'i shin du rnal 'byor gyi khyad par dang/ [87] gtor chog/ [88] mchod phreng/ [89] rdo rje sems dpa'i mchod chog/ [90] dkyil chog/ [91] sbyin sreg/ [92] rab gnas/ [93] bkra shis/ [94] rdo rje phreng ba'i gar/¹¹⁶ [95] gshed dmar lha lnga'i lung sbyar/ [96] de'i sgrub thabs/ [97] dkyil chog/ [98] spros med mdzes rgyan/ [99] 'jigs byed kyi gtor chog/ [100] de'i rdzogs rim/ [101] dgra nag gi char 'bebs/ [102] tshogs 'khor gsang ba kun brgyan/ [103] kun bzang rnam rol rnams bzhugs so/ (nga) pa la [104] kun rig cho ga gzhan phan mtha' yas/ [105] gtor ma cha gsum/ [106] kun rig gzhan phan mtha' yas la nye bar 'kho ba'i cho ga/ [107] spyod rgyud spyi'i rnam bzhag/ [108] bya rgyud spyi'i rnam bzhag/ [109] mi 'khrugs pa'i gshin po rjes 'dzin gyi cho ga/ [110] 'od zer dri med kyi dkyil chog/ [111] a {ra} pa tsa na'i rjes gnang/ [112] tshe bsgrub kyi man ngag/ [113] seng ge sgra/ [114] sna tshogs yum/ [115] rma bya chen mo/ [116] so so [= sor] 'phrang [= 'brang] ma/ [117] 'byung po 'dul byed/ [118] rta mgrin rnams kyi sgrub thabs chung ngu re re/ [119] bde bar gshegs pa brgyad kyi mchog [= mchod] chog/ [120] bso sbyong rang gi [= gis] blang ba'i cho ga/ [121] mchod sbyin chen po'i zin bris/ [122] gser sku rdo rje 'chang du byed thabs/ [123] rags rdog [= sdom] bcu pa'i 'bru 'grel/ [124] spring yig slob ma la phan pa/ [125] sa bzang pa bsod nams dpal gyi bris [= dris?] lan/ { [126] lo tstsha ba rdo rje dpal gyi dris lan/ [127] dge 'dun mgon gyi dris lan/ [128] bla chen chos rin pa'i dris lan/ [129] dpon btsun bsam 'grub rgyal mtshan pa'i dris lan/ [130] dbu ma pa shes rab rgya mtsho'i dris lan/ [131] mdo stod pa dge bzang gi dris lan/ } [132] sde snod 'dzin pa rad na shrī la gdams pa/ [133+134] bsgrub pa pa [= po] blo bzang la gdams pa gnyis/ [135+136] paṇḍi ta nags kyi rin chen la spring yig gnyis/ [137] ba yul ye rang gi paṇḍi ta shrī ma no bo dhi yab sras la spring pa/ [138+139] bla ma sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan pa la gnyis/ [140] dge slong bsod rin la sho lo ka gcig/ [141] dpon slob rgyal mtshan dpal la gdams pa/ [142] ya tshe rgyal po la gdams pa/ [143.1] de'i blon po la gdams pa/ [143.2] a ya dbang phyug

¹¹⁶ A twelve-folio dbu med manuscript of this work, the dPal rdo rje phreng ba'i gar dpe, is preserved among the library holdings of 'Bras spungs Monastery; see the 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 935, no. 10529). The work might be identical with Ngor chen's rDo rje phreng bar gsungs pa'i sa yongs su gzung ba'i cho ga bdud las rnam par rgyal ba; see CATALOGUE (no. 111).

bkra shis la gdams pa [144] *dge bshes rgyal rong pa la gdams pa* [145] *bkra shis kyi phreng ba* [146] *phyi'i ya [= yas] gtam* [147] *nang gi ya [= yas] gtam* [148] *gser 'od las bsdu pa'i smon lam* [149] *slob dpon bzod pa'i bstod pa* || {zhus dag} || ||.

3.6 Comparative Table

Based on the numerical listing of the individual titles in the five lists reproduced above, in this section I will present a table that compares the title lists as well as the xylographic edition from sDe dge. The earliest datable title list, that from the *gsan yig* of dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot of Ngor, serves as the basis for comparison. The following abbreviations have been used:

- Title List 1 = *gsan yig* of dKon mchog lhun grub
 Title List 2 = *gsan yig* of sByin pa grags pa
 Title List 3 = *gsan yig* of Kun dga' don grub
 Title List 4 = *gsan yig* of Zhu chen Tshul khrim rin chen
 Title List 5 = *Chos rje kun dga' bzang po'i gsung 'bum dkar chag*
 sDe dge = revised block-print recension from sDe dge

The numbers of the sDe dge recension are the ones given in the descriptive catalogue that is to follow in Part Six.

Title List 1	Title List 2	Title List 3	Title List 4	Title List 5	sDe dge
1	1	1	1	1	2
2.1-5	2.1-5	2. 1-5	2. 1-5	5. 1-5	3. 1-5
3	3	3	3	6	4
4	4	4	4	7	5
5	5	5	5	8	6
6	6	6	6	3	7
7	7	7	7	4	9
8	8	8	8	2	8
9	9	9	9	15	10
10	10	10	10	-	-
11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	16.1	1
11.2-9	11.2-9	11. 2-9	11. 2-9	16.2-9	11.1-8
12	12	12	12	11	13
13	13	13	13	12	14
14	- ¹¹⁷	14	14	13	15
15	14	15	15	14	16

¹¹⁷ It has to be further verified whether this work was not included in the title list or whether the scribe or the person doing the digital text input just forgot to copy it.

16	15	16	16	17	12
17	16	17	17	9	17
18	17	18	18	10	18
19	18	19	19	-	19
20	19	20	20	18	20
21	20	21	21	19	21
22	21	22	23	21	23
23	22	23	24	22	24
24	23	24	22	20	25
25	24	25	25	25	26
26	25	26	26	26	27
27	26	27	27	-	22
28	27	28	28	23	28
29	28	29	29	24	29
30	29	30	30	27	30
31	30	31	31	28	31
32	31	32	32	29	32
33	32	33	33	30	33
34	33	34	34	31	34
35	34	35	35	32	35
36	35	36	36	-	36
37	36	37	37	42	37
38	37	38	38	-	-
39	38	39	39	44	38
40	39	40	40	-	39
41	40	41	41	-	40
42	41	42	42	44	41
43	42	43	43	45	42
44	43	44	44	46	43
45	44	45	45	-	44
46	45	46	46	-	45
47	46	47	47	-	46
48	47	48	48	-	47
49	48	49	49	50	48
50	49	50	50	51	49

51	50	51	51	39	50
52	51	52	52	40	51
53	52	53	53	47	52
54	53	54	54	36	54
55	54	55	55	37	55
56	55	56	56	38	56
57	56	57	57	52	57
58	57	58	58	54	58
59	58	59	59	56	59
60	59	60	60	53	60
61	60	61	63	55	61
-	-	-	-	-	62
62	61	62	64	57	63
63	62	63	65	58	64
64	63	64	66	59	65
65	64	65	61	48	53
66	65	66	62	49	66
67	66	67	67	64	67
68	67	68	68	65	68
69	68	69	69	61	69
70	69	70	70	-	70
71	70	71	71	62	71
72	71	72	72	63	72
73	72	73	73	-	73
74	73	74	74	-	74
-	-	-	-	-	75
75	74	75	75	-	76
76	75	76	76	66	77
77	76	77	77	67	78
78	77	78	78	68	79
79	78	79	79	60	80
80	79	80	80	69	81
81	80	81	81	70	82
82	81	82	82	71	83

83	82	_118	83	72	84
84	83	83	84	73	85
85	84	84	85	74	86
86	85	85	86	102	92
87	86	86	87	103	93
88	87	87	88	81	94
89	88	88	89	82	95
90	89	89	91?	83	96
91	90	90	90	84	97
92	91	91	92	75	98
93	92	92	93	-	99
94	93	93	94	-	100
95	94	94	95	-	101
96	95	95	96	-	102
97	96	96	97	76	87
98	97	97	98	78	88
99	98	98	99	77	89
100	99	99	100	80	91
101	100	100	101	79	90
102	101	101	102	85	103
103	102	102	110	86	104
104	103	103	103	87	105
105	104	104	104	88	106
106	105	105	105	89	107
107	106	106	106	90	108
108	107	107	107	91	109
109	108	108	108	92	110
110	109	109	109	93	-
111	110	110	112	94?	111
112	111	111	113	101	112
113	112	112	114	99	113
114	113	113	115	100	114
115	114	114	116	96	115

¹¹⁸ It has to be further verified whether this work was not included in the title list or whether the scribe or the person doing the digital text input just forgot to copy it.

116	115	115	117	-	116
117	116	116	118	95	117
118	117	117	119	97	118
119	118	118	120	98	119
-	-	-	-	41	120
-	-	-	-	-	121
-	-	-	111	-	122
-	-	-	-	-	123 ¹¹⁹
120	119	119	121	-	125
121	120	120	122	104	126
122	121	121	123	106	127
123	122	122	124	105	128
124	123	123	125	-	129
125	124	124	126	107	130
126	125	125	127	108	131
127	126	126	128	109	132
128	127	127	129	110	133
129	128	128	130	-	134
130	129	129	131	111	135
131	130	130	132	112	136
132	131	131	133	113	137
133	132	132	134	114	138
134	133	133	135	115	139
135	134	134	136	116	140
136	135	135	137	117	-
137	136	136	138	118	141
138	137	137	139	119	142
139	138	138	140	-	143
140	-	139	141	120	144
141	139	140	142	121	145
142	140	141	143	-	146
143	141	142	144	122	147

¹¹⁹ An annotation in the catalogue to the third volume of Ngor chen's collected works remarks that works nos. 120 to 123—or better to say the respective teachings along with their lineages—are not recorded in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*; see the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 3, p. 3.3).

144	142	143	145	-	148
145	143	144	146	123	149
146	144	145	147	33	150
147	145	146	148	34?	151
148	146	147	149	34?	152
149	147	148	150	34?	153
150	148	149	151	35	154
151	149	150	152	124	155
152	150	151	153	125	156
153	151	152	154	126	157
154	152	153	155	127	158
155	153	154	156	-	159
156	154	155	157	128	160
157	155	156	158	-	161
158	156	157	159	129	162
159	157	158	160	-	163
160	158	159	161	130	164
161	159	160	162	131	124
162	160	161	163	132	165
163	161	162	164	-	166
164	162	163	165	138	167
165	163	164	166	139	168
166	164	165	167	140	169
167	165	166	168	144?	170
168	166	167	169	133	171
169	167	168	-	134	-
170	168	169	170	-	172
171	169	170	171	135	-
-	-	-	-	136	-
172	170	171	172	137	-
173	171	172	173	141	173
174	172	173	174	142	174
175.1-2	173.1-2	174.1-2	175.1-2	143.1-2	175.1-2
176	174	175	176	-	176
177	175	176	177	149	177

178	176	177	178	146	178
179	177	178	179	147	179
180	178	179	180	-	180?
-	-	-	-	145	-
181	179	180	181	148	181
Works recorded as having not been included in the <i>Pod bzhi ma</i>					
-	180	181	182	-	-
-	181	182	183	-	182?
-	182	183	184	-	-
-	183	184	185	-	-
-	184	185	186	-	-
-	185	186	187	-	-

Chapter Four

The Red Volume (*Pod dmar ma*)

Ngor chen's writings were not only compiled in the form of the *Pod bzhi ma*, but individual writings were also included in such important collections as the *Pod dmar ma*, *rGyud sde kun btus*, and *gDams ngag mdzod*.¹²⁰ The first collection, the *Pod dmar ma* (also known as *Po ti dmar chung* or *Pusti dmar chung*),¹²¹ was compiled by Ngor chen himself and contains a large number of short texts that mainly deal with "esoteric aspects of the practice of the Lam 'bras."¹²² Its compilation history is shortly outlined in *Lam 'bras* histories written by

¹²⁰ As the *rGyud sde kun btus* (TBRC: W21295) and *gDams ngag mdzod* (TBRC: W21811) were compiled much later, Ngor chen's works included in these two collections will not be discussed here.

¹²¹ The manuscript version of the *Pod dmar ma* gives the full title as *gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras glegs bam gyi kha skong zhal shes kyi gsung rabs rnam lhan cig tu bsgrigs pa po ti dmar chung*, whereas the sDe dge block-print recension of the *Lam 'bras Slob bshad* specifies the title only as *Lam 'bras gzhung bshad pod dmar ma*; see the *Po ti dmar chung* (p. 1) and *Pod dmar ma* (p. 1.3), respectively. For the short title *Pod dmar ma*, see the *Pod dmar ma* (p. 1.3), *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 501.2), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 276.4), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 7.4), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 3* (p. 50.1), and *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (p. 163.6). For *Po ti dmar chung*, see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 763.6), *Ngag dbang chos grags kyi rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 404.2–3), *Po ti dmar chung* (p. 1.2), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 280.4), and *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 214.1–4). For *Pusti* or *Pu sti dmar chung*, see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 48.1), *Pusti dmar chung gyi dkar chag* (p. 5.5), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 176.4), and *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 164.1 and 171.5). Other names, such as *Pu ti dmar chung*, *Pusti dmar chung ma*, *Pod dmar*, and *Po ti dmar btus*, can also be found; see the *Pu ti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 656.3), *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rnam thar* (p. 304.6), *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 48.1), and *'Jam mgon bsod nams dbang pos rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 570.3), respectively. Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho remarks that the *Pod dmar ma* became known as the *Pu sti dmar chung*; see the *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 163.6–164.1). Individual manuscripts from among the *Po ti dmar chung* have also survived at 'Bras spungs Monastery; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 327, no. 3272): *po ti dmar chung gi nang nas bsod pa'i dpe sna mang rab*. Note that Ngor chen's *Pod mar ma* collection should not be confused with the *gZhung bshad dmar ma* (or *gSung sgras ma*), which is a commentary on the *rDo rje tshig rkang* of Virūpa by dMar ston Chos kyi rgyal po (ca. 1198–ca. 1259); see the *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 163.6–164.2) and STEARNS 2001: 70–73.

¹²² STEARNS 2001: 38. Along with the *Pod dmar ma*, Ngor chen is said to have also compiled another collection of Mahākāla teachings known as the *Golden Volume* (*gSer pod*); see the *mGon po chos 'byung* (p. 229.2–5): *de ltar bla ma bdag nyid chen pos chos skyong gi skor rnam rang gi sras bzhi thog pa mkhas btsun nam mkha' legs pa dangl rin chen sgang ba'i zhal ngo dpal ldan bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan pa sku mched sogs la gnangl yang 'phags pa'i drung du chos skyong gi skor rnam gsan pa'i zhang dkon mchog dpal ba la grub chen nam [= na] bza' brag phug pas gsanl des chos rje bla ma dam pa| des bla ma dpal ldan tshul khriims| des grub chen buddha shri ba dangl shar chen ye shes rgyal mtshan pa gnyis la gnangl de gnyis car la chos kyi rje rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos zhus pa'i phyi sgrub kyi man ngag yi ge gser pod du grags pa po ti chung ngu zhig bsgrigs par mdzadl| chos skor 'di'i dkar chag rnam rgyal skor gsum la sogs pa'i cho ga'i yan lag gi yi ge cung zad kyang mdzadl. On the catalogue Ngor chen wrote about that teaching cycle, the *dPal nag po chen po'i sgrub skor rnam kyi dkar chag*, see CATALOGUE (no. 73). According to the *Mai tri don grub rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 34.5–6), those teachings were on Śrī Vajramahākāla Pañjaranātha: (...) rgyal bas lung bstan rje btsun e waṃ pa nas brgyud de 'ongs pa dpal rdo rje nag po chen po gur gyi mgon po'i sgrub skor gser pod pa grags pa dangl. Cf. the *Yol mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* (pp. 269.5–270.1), where the teachings are specified as being on Four-faced Śrīmahākāla: *de nas ma 'gyangs par ngor pa rin po che sangs rgyas seng ge skyed tshad du phebsl gsung ngag lam 'bras tshugs pa grol mtshams rin cen gling du spyen 'dren mdzadl| bzhugs zhag bdun tsam gnang ring gsang 'dus mi bskyod pa'i dbang ras bris la brten pa| ngor lugs kyi gur podl zhal bzhi pa'i gser podl ba ri lo tsā ba'i rigs pa 'bum chen dangl 'bum chung gi lung rnam gsanl. The fact that the *gSer pod* contained teachings on both Mahākāla forms is specified in the record of teachings received of Kun dga' grol mchog; see the *Dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig* (fol. 44b3–4): *mgon po che chung gi| dpe skor khungs 'brel rnam phyogs cig tu sgrigs [= bsgrigs] pa'i gser spod [= pod] kyi lung gi brgyud pa| rdo rje 'chang la| mkhas grub dpal ldan rdo rjes bsan [= gsan]l de la rje btsun kun dga' mchog grubl des bdag la'o||. After the *gSer pod* lineage record, Ngor chen is given as the source of another lineage of compiled teachings about implementing the forceful activities of Mahākāla called *Mal pod*; see the *Dam pa'i chos kyi thob yig* (fol. 44b5): *chos skyong gi drag las 'ba' zhiq lhan du sgrigs [= bsgrigs] pa'i lag len mthong rgyud canl****

Ngor chen's disciple Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475) and 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568). The former relates that Ngor chen inquired about all the minor esoteric instructions (*man ngag phra mo*) of the *Lam 'bras* that had not been included by rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216) in his *Pod ser*, collected them, and, to ensure that they would not get dispersed again, he compiled them along with an index into a small volume. As the manuscripts were wrapped in red cloth, the volume became known as the *Red Volume* (*Pod dmar ma*).¹²³ 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug informs us that this collection was comprised of minor texts (*yi ge phra mo*) written by masters from the time of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) until Ngor chen. These texts consisted of individual scattered writings that had not been included in other *Lam 'bras* collections, such as the *Pod nag ma* of Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375). The collection contained sixty works by different Tibetan authors and ten supplementary works by Ngor chen.¹²⁴ The catalogue to the whole collection was written by Ngor chen's nephew, Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478), the fourth abbot of Ngor, according to his uncle's instructions.¹²⁵ In certain histories and other works, we can find both detailed descriptions of the collection's structure and lists of the individual writings included within it.¹²⁶

mal spod [= pod] kyi brgyud pa| rdo rje 'chang| gug [= gu] ge pañdi ta| rwa ston yon tan dpal bzang| rje btsun kun dga' mchog grub| des bdag la'o||

¹²³ See the *Lam 'bras kyi byung tshul* (p. 501.2–3): *dkar chag du man ngag phra mo gzhan gyi dkar chag kyang brjod par ga la nus pas 'dir ma bris soll zhes gsungs pa'i man ngag phra mo thams cad kyang rtsad bcad ste phyogs gcig tu bsdus| mi 'thor bar bya ba'i phyir dkar chag dang bcas te glegs bam chung ngur mdzad pa pod dmar ma ste| 'di yang phyag dpe na bza' dmar pos gril bar mdzad pas pod dmar ma zhes grags soll*. Shes rab bzang po wrote also a separate work on the compilation of the *dPod dmar ma*, the *dPod dmar ma glegs bam la sbyar ba'i tshul*, a five-folio *dbu med* manuscript of which is preserved in the Potala; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab nams kyi dkar chag* (p. 22, no. 1810, text 24). In addition, see also the *Pu ti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (pp. 650.4–651.3), *Pusti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 2.2–4), *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 276.4), *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 163.6–164.1), and STEARNS 2001: 38. On the *Pod ser* (alias *Pod ser ma* or simply *Glegs bam*), see SOBISCH 2008: [85]–101, STEARNS 2001: 32–35, and STEARNS 2006: 301–302.

¹²⁴ See the *gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 214.1–4): *gnysis pa yi ge phra mo'am po ti dmar chung tshad ma bzhi dang sbyar ba la'ang| ngos gzung ba dang tshad ma bzhi dang sbyar ba gnyis| dang po la| rje sa skya pa chen po nas ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gi bar du byon pa'i bla ma so sos mdzad pa'i yi ge phra mo zhes pa pod nag ma lta bu lus yongs rdzogs ma yin pa'i yig sna thor bu ba nams yin la| de'ang bla ma tshad ma'i skabs su lam 'bras brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs nas| sgo drug chos 'brel gcig tu bgrangs pa yan la yig sna drug cu| lam 'bras bshad thabs gsang ba'i sgo 'byed sogs ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa bcu nams kyi mtshan ni dkar chag na gsal zhing|*. See also STEARNS 2001: 38. Cf. the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 765.2), which specifies the total number of texts excluding Ngor chen's works with sixty-three. Cf. also SOBISCH 2008: [103]–109, who records a total of seventy-three works excluding Ngor chen's writings. Cf. further the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 48.1–2), which also states that the *Pod dmar ma* contained a total of seventy-three works: *ngor chen rdo rje 'chang yab sras kysis bsgrigs pa'i gsung ngag rin po che pusti dmar chung ngam pod dmar du grags pa la| chos tshan che phra thams cad bsdoms pas bdun bcu don gsum mchan dang bcas pa|*. On the *Pod nag ma*, see STEARNS 2001: 36–38 and STEARNS 2011.

¹²⁵ See the *Pu ti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (pp. 654.5–655.5). See also the *Pusti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 5.4–6). Two versions of the catalogue are preserved. One is attached as a separate text to a manuscript edition of the *Pod dmar ma*, whereas the other forms the opening part of the collection in the sDe dge recension of the *Lam 'bras Slob bshad*. Both colophons give the title of the catalogue as *Zab mo'i gnad nams lhan cig tu bsgrigs pa mtshan pu ti| pusti dmar chung zhes bya ba'i dkar chag gi rin chen phreng ba*; see the *Pu ti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 656.3) and *Pusti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 5.4). The *Pu ti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 649), however, features a title page specifying the title as *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa la mkho ba'i pod dmar ma'i dkar chag*.

¹²⁶ For descriptions of the collection's structure, see the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 280.4–286.4) and *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 171.5–174.5). For lists of the individual writings included within the collection, see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 763.5–765.5), *Ngag dbang chos grags kysis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (pp. 404.2–406.1), *'Jam mgon bsod nams dbang pos rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (pp. 570.3–573.1), and *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 382.16–384.4). For a discussion of the content of the *Pod dmar ma* based on its catalogue by Kun dga' dbang phyug, see SOBISCH 2008: [103]–112.

According to the catalogue of Kun dga' dbang phyug, the following ten works by Ngor chen concluded the first compilation of the *Pod dmar ma*:¹²⁷

- (1) *gSung ngag rin po che'i man ngag mtha' dag gtan la 'bebs pa'i bstan bcos/ lam 'bras bshad thabs kyi man ngag gsang ba'i sgo 'byed* (CATALOGUE, no. 37)
- (2) *rGyud gsum lam rim gyi sa bcad* (CATALOGUE, no. 120)
- (3) *Lam zab nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor* (CATALOGUE, no. 41)
- (4) *dBang bzhi rtogs pa bskyed pa* (CATALOGUE, no. 38)
- (5) *Bir bsrungs kyi man ngag bar chad kun sel* (CATALOGUE, no. 42)
- (6) *Bir wa pa'i sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris* (CATALOGUE, no. 43)
- (7) *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir bsrung gi byin brlabs bya tshul* (CATALOGUE, no. 44)
- (8) *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir bsrung nyams su len tshul* (CATALOGUE, no. 45)
- (9) *Man ngag 'di dang lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag mtshon bya mtshon byed du sbyar ba* (CATALOGUE, no. 46)
- (10) *Bir bsrung gсар ma* (CATALOGUE No. 47)

In accord with that catalogue, a manuscript version of the *Pod dmar ma* concludes with these ten writings of Ngor chen:¹²⁸

- (1) *Lam 'bras dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyi man ngag* (CATALOGUE, no. 37)
- (2) *rGyud gsum lam gyi sa bcad* (CATALOGUE, no. 120)
- (3) *Lam zab nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor* (CATALOGUE, no. 41)
- (4) *dBang bzhi'i rtogs pa bskyed pa* (CATALOGUE, no. 38)
- (5) *rJe btsun bir wa pa'i bsrung ba'i man ngag bar chad kun sel* (CATALOGUE, no. 42)
- (6) *Bir wa pa'i sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris* (CATALOGUE, no. 43)
- (7) *Thun mong min pa'i bir srung gi byin rlabs bya tshul* (CATALOGUE, no. 44)
- (8) Untitled. Following the catalogue of Kun dga' dbang phyug, one would expect to find here the *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir srung nyams su len tshul*. However, given a comparison with Ngor chen's collected works, it becomes evident that the reproduced text is the *Bir srung gсар ma* (CATALOGUE, no. 47)
- (9) *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir bsrungs* (CATALOGUE, no. 46)
- (10) Although the title is given as *Bir srung gсар ma*, the reproduced text is actually the *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir srung nyams su len tshul* (CATALOGUE, no. 45).

A similar structure is also found in the *Pod dmar ma* as included in the reprint of the sDe dge recension of the *Lam 'bras Slob bshad*:¹²⁹

- (1) *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyi man ngag gsang ba'i sgo 'byed* (CATALOGUE, no. 37)
- (2) *rGyud gsum gyi lam gyi rim pa'i sa bcad* (CATALOGUE, no. 120)

¹²⁷ See the *Pu ti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 656.1–5) and *Pusti dmar chung gi dkar chag* (p. 5.2–4). See also the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 765.2–5), *Ngag dbang chos grags kyi rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (pp. 405.5–406.1), *'Jam mgon bsod nams dbang pos rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 572.3–5), and *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (p. 384.4–9). The first section of the *Red Volume* opens with a supplication to the lineage lamas, the *Bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (also known as *Bla ma rdo rje 'dzin ma*) by rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan along with two supplements by Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan and Ngor chen; see the *Po ti dmar chung* (pp. 2–14) and *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 5.6–13.3). Ngor chen's two four-lined stanzas are missing from his collected works. On this supplication, see also SOBISCH 2008: [103].

¹²⁸ See the *Po ti dmar chung* (pp. 585–594, 595–598, 599–603, 605–609, 611–627, 629–630, 631–632.2, 632.3–635, 637–643, and 645–648), respectively.

¹²⁹ See the *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 410.2–416.3, 416.3–419.3, 419.3–422.2, 422.2–425.2, 425.3–435.2, 435.2–436.2, 436.2–437.3, 437.3–439.5, 439.5–443.6, and 443.6–446.1), respectively.

- (3) *Lam zab nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor* (CATALOGUE, no. 41)
- (4) *rGyu dus kyi dbang gi rtogs pa bskyed pa'i rim pa* (CATALOGUE, no. 38)
- (5) *rJe btsun birwa pa'i bsrung pa'i man ngag bar chad kun sel* (CATALOGUE, no. 42)
- (6) *Birwa pa'i sku'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris* (CATALOGUE, no. 43)
- (7) *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir srung gi byin rlabs bya tshul* (CATALOGUE, no. 44)
- (8) Untitled. Following the catalogue of Kun dga' dbang phyug, one would expect to find here the *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir srung nyams su len tshul*. However, given a comparison with Ngor chen's collected works, it becomes evident that the reproduced text is the *Bir srung gsar ma* (CATALOGUE, no. 47)
- (9) *Bir srung thun mong ma yin pa'i man ngag dang lam 'bras kyi gdams ngag mtshon bya dang mtshon byed du sbyar ba* (CATALOGUE, no. 46)
- (10) Although the title is given as *Bir srung gsar ma*, the reproduced text is actually the *Thun mong ma yin pa'i bir srung nyams su len tshul* (CATALOGUE, no. 45).

At the end, the sDe dge recension features two supplementary texts written respectively by Ngor chen and Mus chen that are neither mentioned in the original catalogue nor found in the manuscript edition:¹³⁰

- (11) *Tshe sgrub kyi man ngag* (CATALOGUE, no. 136)
- (12) *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gnad kyi gsung sgros zin bris*

Later descriptions of the structure of the *Pod dmar ma* by Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1596) and A mes zhabs—the latter evidently copied his description from the former—show that over time several supplements were added. Both authors list a total of four such supplements: the first consisting of works by Ngor chen, the second of works by Mus chen, the third of works by bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1444–1495), and the fourth of works by Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–1566).¹³¹ By adding still other writings of Ngor chen, almost all of his works that previously had concluded the *Pod dmar ma* were combined and rearranged into its first supplement:¹³²

- (1) *gSang ba'i sgo 'byed* (CATALOGUE, no. 37)
- (2) *rGyud gsum lam rim sa bcad* (CATALOGUE, no. 120)
- (3) *Nang gi lam zab* (CATALOGUE, no. 41)
- (4) *dBang bzhi'i rtogs bskyed* (CATALOGUE, no. 38)
- (5) *Thun mong ba'i bir srung bar chad kun sel* (CATALOGUE, no. 42)
- (6) *Thun mong ma yin pa'i byin rlabs* (CATALOGUE, no. 44)
- (7) *mTshan don gsung ngag dang sbyar ba* (CATALOGUE, no. 46)
- (8) *Bir srung gsar ma* (CATALOGUE, no. 47)
- (9) *sKu'i rnam 'gyur drug (ste brgyad dam)* (CATALOGUE, no. 43)
- (10) *gNad kyi zla zer* (CATALOGUE, no. 53)
- (11) *rGyud gsum 'khrul 'joms* (CATALOGUE, nos. 50? and 51?)
- (12) *Lus dkyil rtsod spong* (CATALOGUE, no. 49)
- (13) *sMra ba ngan 'joms* (CATALOGUE, no. 48)
- (14) *Tshogs 'khor gsang ba kun rgyan* (CATALOGUE, no. 92)
- (15) *gTor chog gi 'grel pa phrin las rgyas byed* (CATALOGUE, no. 66)

¹³⁰ See the *Pod dmar ma* (pp. 446.2–447.6 and 447.6–469.5), respectively.

¹³¹ See the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (pp. 285.4–286.4) and *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 173.4–174.5). One of Mus chen's writings listed among the works of the second supplement, the *mNgon rtogs yan lag drug pa*, was also included in the sDe dge recension of the *Lam 'bras Slob bshad*. It has been reproduced subsequent to the *Pod dmar ma*; see the *Lam 'bras 1* (vol. 13, pp. 471–609).

¹³² See the *Lam 'bras khog phub* (p. 285.4–6) and *gSung ngag slob bshad khog phub* (pp. 173.4–174.1).

Part Six

Catalogue of Ngor chen's Writings

The revised sDe dge edition of Ngor chen's collected works of 1894 is the only traditional recension of his works that is available, and it has been published in three different reproductions. The first appeared in two volumes as part of the Japanese reprint of the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* compiled by bSod nams rgya mtsho (1933–1987)—alias 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the seventy-fourth abbot of Ngor—in 1968.¹ The second was published in four volumes as the Indian reprint by the Ngor Monastery from 1993, which was used throughout this book and serves as the basis for the catalogue presented below.² The third appeared in two volumes as part of a Chinese reprint in the series *dPyad gzhi'i yig cha phyogs bsrgrigs*.³ Moreover, the sDe dge recension seemingly served as the basis for two new digital-input editions of Ngor chen's collected works. The first was published by Lama Guru of Sachen International (rGyal yongs sa chen) in *dpe cha* format in Kathmandu in 2005, and the second by the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang in Western book format as part of the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vols. 1–8) in China in 2010. As attested by different catalogues to printing blocks and block-prints housed at the printing house of sDe dge, Ngor chen's collected works are still extant there.⁴

From the published catalogues of Tibetan texts housed at various libraries and institutions, it is evident that one of the two sDe dge editions of Ngor chen's collected works has also been preserved in the Potala, the Mi rigs dpe mdzod khang, the Tibetan Academy of Social Science (Bod ljongs spyi tshogs tshan rig khang), the Kawaguchi Collection of Tibetan Texts kept in the Toyo Bunko, and the Library of the Istituto

¹ See the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 2 (vols. 9 and 10).

² See the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum*.

³ The arrangement of the four volumes of Ngor chen's *Pod bzhi ma* in the two volumes of the *dPyad gzhi'i yig cha phyogs bsrgrigs* series, which are both named *Ngor chen kun dga' bzang po'i gsung 'bum*|| [pod] ka, is confusing, however. The first volume (*Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum*, no. 12) contains the following parts of the sDe dge recension of the *Pod bzhi ma*: vol. 1 (pp. 1–59, fols. 1–117), vol. 3 (pp. 60–276, fols. 1–432), and vol. 4 (pp. 277–379, fols. 1–208). The second volume (*Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum*, no. 13) contains vol. 1 (pp. 1–115, fols. 118–343) and vol. 2 (pp. 116–[345], fols. 1–442). The missing parts of the fourth volume have been reproduced as part of the first volume of the two-volume *Ngor chen dkon mchog lhun grub kyi gsung 'bum* in the *dPyad gzhi'i yig cha phyogs bsrgrigs* series (*dKon mchog lhun grub kyi gsung 'bum*, nos. 24–25): vol. 4 (pp. 1–89, fols. 209–385).

⁴ See the *sDe dge par khang gi dkar chag* 1 (pp. 307–369), *sDe dge par khang gi dkar chag* 2 (pp. 144–146), and *sDe dge par khang gi par shing dkar chag* (pp. 224–227).

Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (IsIAO).⁵ Except for the Kawaguchi Collection, however, the respective catalogues merely list the works that feature a separate title page, thereby leaving out the majority of those works whose title is only given in the running text. In the case of Ngor chen's collected works, the works with title pages constitute the beginning of a section or body of works grouped together due to some defining characteristics and feature their own pagination that runs parallel to that of the entire volume. Nevertheless, the catalogue entries suffice to allow us to establish that they represent one of the two sDe dge recensions of Ngor chen's collected works. Since the catalogues to the Kawaguchi Collection and IsIAO both only record as the last title the printing colophon to the project sponsored by the sDe dge king Blo gros rgya mtsho, it seems that they might preserve the first sDe dge edition of Ngor chen's works.⁶ To be certain, however, both sets have to be examined in person.

The aforementioned catalogue to the extensive library holdings of 'Bras spungs Monastery registers numerous of Ngor chen's writings, some of which are also found within his collected works, while others are not. It registers more than fifty titles that form part of the *Pod bzhi ma* from sDe dge, among which the majority are manuscripts with only a few block-prints. An investigation of those manuscripts might shed more light on the early compilation history of Ngor chen's writings.

As preliminary remarks to the catalogue, I would like to summarise the most important findings that emerged from my investigation of the colophons of Ngor chen's writings:

- ❖ Ngor chen mentioned himself as author in the colophons using the name Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po. In some cases, he employed variations of that as well as such different names as Shākya'i dGe slong Ā nanda bha dra, Shākya'i dGe slong sPong ba pa Kun dga' bzang po, dGe slong bSam gtan pa Kun dga' bzang po, dGe slong rGyud gsum pa, rGyud sde smra ba Ā nanda, rDo rje 'dzin pa Chos btsun bzang po, or Kun dga'i ming can.
- ❖ Ngor chen's earliest extant writings date to the year 1404.⁷ From then on, the colophons attest to his writing activities in the following years until his first journey to dBus in about 1414. Other colophons verify that he continued writing after his return to Sa skya in 1417.
- ❖ The majority of Ngor chen's writings were composed at Sa skya prior to his founding of Ngor in 1429. Nevertheless, the colophons also attest to his writing activities at Ngor as well as while at Sa bzang and in Glo bo.⁸
- ❖ Many colophons do not specify a date of composition. However, based on the place of writing, a preliminary timeframe can be established: the works written at Sa skya date from between 1404 and 1428 and the ones written at Ngor from between 1429 and 1456.
- ❖ More than thirty texts included in Ngor chen's collected works do not refer to Ngor chen as author or have a colophon at all.

⁵ See the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (pp. 33–35), *Shes bya'i gter mdzod* (pp. 365–367), *gSung 'bum dkar chag* (pp. 130–131), KAWAGUCHI COLLECTION (call nos. 37–40), and DE ROSSI FILIBECK 1994: [72]–74, respectively.

⁶ See KAWAGUCHI COLLECTION (call no. 40, ref. no. 0677) and DE ROSSI FILIBECK 1994: 74, no. 75 a–b, section 4.

⁷ See CATALOGUE (nos. 52 and 121).

⁸ For works written at Sa bzang, see CATALOGUE (nos. 66 and 93) and LIST (no. 7). For works written in Glo bo, see CATALOGUE (nos. 152 and 153).

Chapter One

Structure of the Catalogue

In the following catalogue, I will describe the revised recension of Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge based on its Indian reprint. This description is restricted to details presented under four categories:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. Title | a. title page
b. editor's title ⁹
c. incipit title
d. colophon title ¹⁰
e. <i>dkar chag</i> title |
| 2. Colophon | a. name of author
b. date and place of composition
c. written at whose request
d. name of scribe
e. additional information (given only selectively) |
| 3. Remarks | for example, initial figures of deities or lamas (<i>dbu lha</i>) |
| 4. References | to the same work in the <i>Pod dmar ma</i> , <i>'Bras spungs dkar chag</i> , or National Library of Bhutan |

A more detailed classification—including the transliteration of colophons, description of contents, subject outline, and references to mentions in works of modern scholarship—would go beyond the scope of this study.¹¹ The aim of this catalogue is to present a first overview of Ngor chen's writings that will hopefully serve as a basis for future research and lead to a more complete description.

The description follows the internal order of texts in the four volumes by employing a progressive numbering. Each work that features both an individual title—be it either on the title page or in form of the editor's title—and is recorded in the *dkar chag* at the beginning of each volume, has been treated and described as a separate work in its own right and listed with an Arabic numeral. In contrast, as the *dkar chag* to each volume as well as the two printing colophons at the end of volume four were not written by Ngor chen, they have been numbered by letters from a to f. For the sake of convenience in numbering individual works, the original structure of each volume, which groups works together into larger thematic sections or bodies of works with separate title page and pagination, has been ignored. Therefore, I shall first briefly present here this arrangement into thematic groups.

⁹ The editor's title refers to titles in small letters prefixed in the running text to works that do not feature a title page. These titles probably originate with the editor of this or an older edition of Ngor chen's collected works.

¹⁰ Some works contain both a versified colophon followed by a colophon in prose. In these cases, the former colophon has only been considered when it provided additional information not found in the latter.

¹¹ For a detailed Tibetan catalogue of Ngor chen's collected works from sDe dge that also provides the subject outline of each work, see the *sDe dge par khang gi dkar chag* 1 (pp. 307–369). For a catalogue that gives both the incipit and colophon, see the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* 2 (vol. 9, pp. [v]–xvi and vol. 10, pp. [v]–xviii).

Vol. 1 (ka)

Nos. 1–22 (pp. 5–52, fols. 3a–26b; a total of 24 fols.)

- this section includes various eulogies (*bstod pa*), such as those of Ngor chen's teachers, and also supplications of masters in various teaching lineages (*brgyud 'debs*)

Nos. 23–34 (pp. [53]–178, fols. 27a–89b; a total of 63 fols.)

- this section includes eulogies (*bstod pa*) of different deities and biographies (*rnam thar*)

No. 35 (pp. 179–434, fols. 90a–217b; a total of 128 fols.)

- this section consists only of Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho*

Nos. 36–47 (pp. 435–544, fols. 218a–269b; a total of 52 fols.)

- this section seems to compile *Lam 'bras*-related scriptures

Nos. 48–52 (pp. 545–692, fols. 270a–343b; a total of 74 fols.)

- this section brings together some of Ngor chen's polemical writings

Vol. 2 (kha)

No. 53 (pp. 1–418, fols. 3a–211b; a total of 209 fols.)

- this section only consists of Ngor chen's Hevajra compendium, the *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer*

Nos. 54–65 (pp. 419–522, fols. 212a–263b; a total of 52 fols.)

- this section contains texts pertaining to the practice of Hevajra

Nos. 66–80 (pp. 523–698, fols. 264a–351b; a total of 88 fols.)

- this section comprises a variety of texts such as *sādhanas* and other rituals; many of the texts deal with Pañjarañātha, though not exclusively

Nos. 81–86 (pp. 699–879, fols. 352a–442a; a total of 91 fols.)

- this section contains texts dealing with the practice of Vajradhātu

Vol. 3 (ga)

Nos. 87–91 (pp. 5–238, fols. 3a–119b; a total of 117 fols.)

- this section contains texts dealing with the Cakrasaṃvara practice of Ḍākārṇava

Nos. 92–102 (pp. 239–366, fols. 120a–183b; a total of 64 fols.)

- this section contains texts dealing with the practice of Cakrasaṃvara

Nos. 103–110 (pp. 367–604, fols. 184a–302b; a total of 109 fols.)

- this section contains texts dealing with the practice of Guhyasamāja

Nos. 111–124 (pp. 605–864, fols. 303a–432b; a total of 130 fols.)

- this section comprises texts dealing with the practice of Yamāntaka and Vajrabhairava, and other tantric ritual texts as well as two letters Ngor chen wrote in reply to questions (*dris lan*)

Vol. 4 (a)

Nos. 125–129 (pp. 5–132, fols. 3a–66b; a total of 64 fols.)

- this section comprises texts dealing with the practice of Sarvavid Vairocana and other topics

Nos. 130–131 (pp. 133–416, fols. 67a–208b, a total of 142 fols.)

- this section consists of Ngor chen's presentations of the Kriyā and Caryā tantric systems

Nos. 132–154 (pp. 417–618, fols. 209a–309b; a total of 101 fols.)

- this section is comprised of various texts such as *sādhana*s of different deities and catalogues to manuscript editions of the *bKa' 'gyur*, *bsTan 'gyur*, and the collected works of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) and his sons, Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216)

Nos. 155–182 (pp. 619–770, fols. 310a–385b; a total of 76 fols.)

- this section brings together Ngor chen's epistle (the *sPring yig slob ma la phan pa*), various letters, and a few other texts

Chapter Two

Descriptive Catalogue of the Revised sDe dge Recension

Vol. 1 (ka)**a. (pp. 1–3.6, fol. 1a–2a6)**

- 1a. *rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam ka pa'i dkar chag* (p. 1, fol. 1a)

No. 1 (pp. 5–8.5, fols. 3a–4b5)

- 1a. *(rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam dang po las) Lam 'bras bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (p. 5.3, fol. 3a3)
- 1d. *gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol ba 'debs pa rim pa* (p. 8.4, fol. 4b4)
- 1e. *Lam 'bras gsol 'debs* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 8.4, fol. 4b4)
- 2b. *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 8.4, fol. 4b4)
3. image left margin: *srid zhir mi gnas mya ngan las|| 'das pa khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang||*;
image right margin: *rnam kun mchog gi steng nyi dang|| snying rje dbyer med kye rdo rje||* (p. 6, fol. 3b)

No. 2 (pp. 8.5–11.3, fols. 4b5–6a3)

- 1b. *rTsa ba'i bla ma spyi la bstod pa yon tan rjes su dran pa* (p. 8.5, fol. 4b5)
- 1c. *rTsa ba'i bla ma dam pa rnams la bstod pa'i rab tu byed pa yon tan rjes su dran pa* (p. 8.6, fol. 4b6)
- 1d. *rTsa ba'i bla ma dam pa rnams la bstod pa'i rab tu byed pa yon tan rjes su dran pa* (p. 11.2, fol. 6a2)
- 1e. *rTsa ba'i bla ma spyi la bstod pa* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 11.2–3, fol. 6a2–3)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 11.3, fol. 6a3)

No. 3 (pp. 11.3–19.1, fols. 6a3–9a1)

- 1b. *Chos rje ye shes rgyal mtshan la bstod pa lnga* (p. 11.3, fol. 6a3)
- 1e. *Chos rje ye shes rgyal mtshan la bstod pa lnga* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)

3.1 (pp. 11.3–14.4, fols. 6a3–7b4)

- 1d. *Dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas thams cad kyi ngo bo dpal ldan bla ma dam pa ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po la gsol ba 'debs pa'i tshigs su bcad pa nyi shu pa* (p. 14.3, fol. 7b3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 14.3–4, fol. 7b3–4)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 14.4, fol. 7b4)

3.2 (pp. 14.4–16.3, fols. 7b4–8b3)

- 1d. *Bla ma dam pa ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po la gsol ba 'debs pa'i tshigs su bcad pa bcu gnyis pa* (p. 16.2, fol. 8b2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 16.2–3, fol. 8b2–3)

3.3 (pp. 16.3–17.2, fols. 8b3–9a2)

- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 17.2, fol. 9a2)

3.4 (pp. 17.2–[18.]2, fol. 9a2–b2)

2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. [18.]2, fol. 9b2)

3.5 (pp. [18.]2–19.1, fols. 9b2–10a1)

2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (pp. [18.]6–19.1, fols. 9b6–10a1)

No. 4 (pp. 19.1–20.4, fol. 10a1–b4)

- 1b. *Grub chen buddha shrī la bstod pa* (p. 19.1, fol. 10a1)
 1d. *Drin chen rtsa ba'i bla ma dam pa grub chen buddha shrī la gsol ba gdab pa'i tshigs su bcad pa* (p. 20.3, fol. 10b3)
 1e. *Grub chen buddha shrī la bstod pa* (p. 2.1–2, fol. 1b1–2)
 2a. dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 20.3–4, fol. 10b3–4)

No. 5 (pp. 20.4–23.2, fols. 10b4–12a2)

- 1b. *Chos rje sa bzang 'phags pa la bstod pa* (p. 20.4, fol. 10b4)
 1d. *Chos kyi rje sa bzang 'phags pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rab tu byed pa* (p. 23.1–2, fol. 12a1–2)
 1e. *Sa bzang 'phags pa la bstod pa* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Ā nanda bha dra (p. 23.2, fol. 12a2)

No. 6 (pp. 23.2–24.6, fol. 12a2–b6)

- 1b. *bKra shis rin chen la bstod pa* (p. 23.2, fol. 12a2)
 1d. *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa bkra shis rin chen la gsol ba 'debs pa* (p. 24.6, fol. 12b6)
 1e. *bKra shis rin chen la bstod pa* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 24.6, fol. 12b6)

No. 7 (pp. 24.6–25.1, fols. 12b6–13a1)

- 1b. *Lo chen rin chen bzang po'i bstod pa* (p. 24.6, fol. 12b6)
 1e. *Lo chen la bstod pa* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)

No. 8 (pp. 25.1–26.1, fol. 13a1–b1)

- 1b. *sDom gsum brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (p. 25.1, fol. 13a1)
 1e. *sDom gsum bla ma brgyud pa la phyag 'tshal ba* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)

No. 9 (pp. 26.1–28.3, fols. 13b1–14b3)

- 1b. *rje sa chen gyi bstod pa gang thugs ma* (p. 26.1, fol. 13b1)
 1e. *rje sa chen la bstod pa* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
 2a. Kun dga' bzang po (p. 28.3, fol. 14b3): *gang gis dad pas bstod pa 'di kun|| dga' dang spro bas lan cig tsaṃ yang|| dad pa bzang pos brjod par byed na|*

No. 10 (pp. 28.4–29.6, fols. 14b4–15a6)

- 1b. *Lam zab bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (p. 28.4, fol. 14b4)
 1d. *Lam zab mo bla ma'i rnal 'byor gyi man ngag gi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rab tu byed pa* (p. 29.6, fol. 15a6)
 1e. *Lam zab brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (p. 2.2–3, fol. 1b2–3)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 29.6, fol. 15a6)

No. 11 (pp. 30.1–34.5, fols. 15b1–17b5)

- 1d. *Lam skor bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i tshigs bcad* (p. 34.5, fol. 17b5)
 2a. *dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 34.5, fol. 17b5)

No. 11.1 (p. 30.1–5, fol. 15b1–5)

- 1d. *bSam mi khyab pa'i brgyud pa'o* (p. 30.5, fol. 15b5)
 1e. *Lam 'bras bsam mi khyab* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 11.2 (pp. 30.5–31.2, fols. 15b5–16a2)

- 1d. *lHan gcig skyes grub kyi brgyud pa'o* (p. 31.2, fol. 16a2)
 1e. *lHan cig skyes grub* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 11.3 (p. 31.2–5, fol. 16a2–5)

- 1d. *'Phags pa klu sgrub kyi lam gyi brgyud pa'o* (p. 31.5, fol. 16a5)
 1e. *mChod rten drung thob* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 11.4 (pp. 31.5–32.3, fol. 16a5–b3)

- 1d. *Phyag rgya chen po yi ge med kyi brgyud pa'o* (p. 32.3, fol. 16b3)
 1e. *Yi ge med pa* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 11.5 (p. 32.3–6, fol. 16b3–6)

- 1d. *Padma badzra lam gyi brgyud pa'o* (p. 32.6, fol. 16b6)
 1e. *Padma'i lam* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 11.6 (pp. 32.6–33.4, fols. 16b6–17a4)

- 1d. *gTum mo lam rdzogs kyi brgyud pa'o* (p. 33.4, fol. 17a4)
 1e. *gTum mo lam rdzogs* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 11.7 (pp. 33.4–34.1, fol. 17a4–b1)

- 1d. *Yon po srong ba'i brgyud pa'o* (p. 34.1, fol. 17b1)
 1e. *Yon po bsrang ba* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 11.8 (p. 34.1–5, fol. 17b1–5)

- 1c. *Indra bhu ti'i lam gyi nye brgyud kyi bla ma rnam la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa'o* (p. 34.4–5, fol. 17b4–5)
 1e. *Indra bhu ti'i lam* (p. 2.3–4, fol. 1b3–4)

No. 12 (pp. 34.5–36.4, fols. 17b5–18b4)

- 1b. *Ma hā mā yā'i bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa'o* (p. 34.5, fol. 17b5)
 1d. *dPal sgyu ma chen po'i man ngag spros pa med pa'i khrid kyi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa* (p. 36.4, fol. 18b4)
 1e. *Ma hā mā yā'i bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 36.4, fol. 18b4)

No. 13 (pp. 36.4–38.5, fols. 18b4–19b5)

- 1b. *bDe mchog rim lnga'i rgyud [= brgyud] 'debs* (p. 36.4, fol. 18b4)
 1d. *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rdzogs pa'i rim pa lam rim pa lnga'i bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa* (p. 38.5, fol. 19b5)
 1e. *bDe mchog rim lnga'i brgyud 'debs* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
 2a. *Shākya'i dge slong bSam gtan pa Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 38.5, fol. 19b5)
 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1126, p. 11214): *dPal bde mchog rim pa lnga'i bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*

No. 14 (pp. 38.6–41.1, fols. 19b6–21a1)

- 1b. *rTsa dbu ma'i khrid kyi* [empty space of about one syllable (add: *brgyud*)] '*debs* (p. 38.6, fol. 19b6)
- 1d. *dPal nā ro ta ba'i man ngag rdo rje rnal 'byor ma mkha' spyod kyi rim gnyis lam gyi yan lag dang bcas pa'i bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa* (p. 40.6, fol. 20b6)
- 1e. *rTsa dbu ma'i ring brgyud* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong sPong ba pa Kun dga' bzang po* (pp. 40.6–41.1, fols. 20b6–21a1)
3. This work is included in a collection on Nāro Khecarī, though with a slightly different title (*Nā ro mkha' spyod kyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs rdo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa*) and also features other variations within the text; see the *Nā ro mkha' spyod* (vol. 1, pp. 71–75.1). Its colophon title also varies to a certain extent: *mKha' spyod man ngag gi bla ma brgyud rim la gsol pa 'debs pa*; see the *Nā ro mkha' spyod* (p. 74.6). Also, Ngor chen's name is missing the element *sPong ba pa* in the colophon; see the *Nā ro mkha' spyod* (vol. 1, pp. 74.6–75.1).
4. '*Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 237, no. 2278): *rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud [= brgyud] 'debs| bstod pa rdo rje 'chang gi [= gis] mdzad pa|; Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 11, no. 1808, text 3): *Nā ro mkha' spyod kyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa*

No. 15 (p. 41.1–4, fol. 21a1–4)

- 1b. *rTsa dbu ma'i nye brgyud kyi gsol 'debs* (p. 41.1, fol. 21a1)
- 1d. *Nā ro pa'i man ngag gi nye brgyud la gsol ba 'debs pa* (p. 41.4, fol. 21a4)
- 1e. *rTsa dbu ma'i nye brgyud* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 41.4, fol. 21a4)
3. Though missing any sort of title, this short work is also included in the above-mentioned collection on Nāro Khecarī, directly following CATALOGUE (no. 14); see the *Nā ro mkha' spyod* (vol. 1, p. 75.1–4). Also, no title is mentioned in the colophon, and Ngor chen's name is given as *dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po*; see the *Nā ro mkha' spyod* (vol. 1, p. 75.4).
4. '*Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 237, no. 2278): *rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud [= brgyud] 'debs| bstod pa rdo rje 'chang gi [= gis] mdzad pa|; Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 11, no. 1808, text 3): *Nā ro mkha' spyod kyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs ngor chen rdo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa*

No. 16 (pp. 41.4–42.5, fol. 21a4–b5)

- 1b. *bDe mchog dkar po'i brgyud 'debs* (p. 41.4, fol. 21a4)
- 1d. *bDe mchog dkar po'i man ngag gi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa (...)* (p. 42.5, fol. 21b5)
- 1e. *bDe mchog dkar po* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 42.5, fol. 21b5)
- 2c. written at the behest of aspiring disciples (p. 42.5, fol. 21b5)

No. 17 (pp. 42.6–45.2, fols. 21b6–23a2)

- 1b. *gSang 'dus 'gos lugs kyi brgyud 'debs* (p. 42.6, fol. 21b6)
- 1d. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i lam rim pa lnga 'gos lugs kyi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa* (p. 45.1–2, fol. 23a1–2)
- 1e. *gSang 'dus rim lnga 'gas [= 'gos] lugs* (pp. 2.4–3.1, fols. 1b4–2a1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 45.2, fol. 23a2)

4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 425, no. 4425): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i brgyud pa'i bla ma rnams la gsol ba 'debs pa (?)*

No. 18 (pp. 45.2–46.6, fol. 23a2–b6)

- 1b. *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi rwa rtse sems 'dzin skyo lugs kyi brgyud 'debs* (p. 45.2, fol. 23a2)
 1d. *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi bskyed rdzogs kyi man ngag dge ba'i bshes gnyen skyo yab sras kyi lugs kyi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa* (p. 46.6, fol. 23b6)
 1e. *Rwa rtse sems 'dzin* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 46.6, fol. 23b6)

No. 19 (p. 47.1–4, fol. 24a1–4)

- 1b. *sPros med kyi brgyud 'debs* (p. 47.1, fol. 24a1)
 1d. *Shin tu spos [= spros] pa med pa'i man ngag gi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa* (p. 47.3–4, fol. 24a3–4)
 1e. *Shin tu spros med* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 47.4, fol. 24a4)
 4. The same eulogy is preserved among a collection of manuscripts housed at the National Library of Bhutan that are said to originate from Ngor. It directly follows the *Shin tu spros med kyi khrid yig* (fols. 18b7–19a4; CATALOGUE, no. 119), which is also preserved among that collection.

No. 20 (pp. 47.4–49.4, fols. 24a4–25a4)

- 1b. *sPyod 'jug gi brgyud 'debs* (p. 47.4, fol. 24a4)
 1d. *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa* (p. 49.4, fol. 25a4)
 1e. *sPyod 'jug* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 49.4, fol. 25a4)

No. 21 (pp. 49.5–51.1, fols. 25a5–26a1)

- 1b. *Zhen pa bzhi bral gyi brgyud 'debs* (p. 49.5, fol. 25a5)
 1d. *Zhen pa bzhi bral gyi man ngag gi bla ma brgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i rim pa* (p. 50.6, fol. 25b6)
 1e. *Zhen pa bzhi bral de rnams kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 50.6, fol. 25b6)
 2b. *Sa skya* (pp. 50.6–51.1, fols. 25b6–26a1)

No. 22 (p. 51.1–6, fol. 26a1–6)

- 1b. *'Chi 'joms kyi bstod pa* (p. 51.1, fol. 26a1)
 1e. *'Chi bdag 'joms pa'i dkyil 'khor* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 51.5–6, fol. 26a5–6)
 2e. for (*ched du*) *bKa' bcu pa rGyal mtshan bkra shis* (p. 51.5, fol. 26a5)

No. 23 (pp. [53]–55.6, fols. 27a–28a6)

- 1a. *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma'i bstod pa* (p. [53], fol. 27a)
 1d. *mKha' 'gro'i dbang phyug rnal 'byor ma dpal| bstod pa'i tshig* (p. 55.5, fol. 28a5)
 1e. *rDo rje rnal 'byor ma* (p. 3.1–2, fol. 2a1–2)
 2a. *dGe slong rGyud gsum pa*; gloss: *Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 55.5, fol. 28a5)
 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 55.5–6, fol. 28a5–6)

3. This work is included in the collection on Nāro Khecarī, though with a slightly different title: *Nā ro mkha' spyod kyi bstod pa ngor chen kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa*; see the *Nā ro mkha' spyod* (vol. 1, pp. 79.3–81.4).
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 237, no. 2278): *rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud 'debs/ bstod pa rdo rje 'chang gi [= gis] mdzad pa bzhugs*; *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnam s kyid dkar chag* (p. 17, no. 1809, text 2): *rJe btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nā ro mkha' spyod ma la yan lag bdun ldan gyi sgo nas bstod pa ngor chen rdo rje 'chang chen pos mdzad pa*

No. 24 (pp. 55.6–57.4, fols. 28a6–29a4)

- 1b. *Sher phyin dkar mo la bstod pa* (p. 55.6, fol. 28a6)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje gur nas gsungs pa'i bcom ldan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma dkar mo la bstod pa bstod tshig rgyan gyi phreng ba* (p. 57.3–4, fol. 29a3–4)
- 1e. *Shes phyin dkar mo* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 57.4, fol. 29a4)

No. 25 (pp. 57.4–67.3, fols. 29a4–34a3)

- 1b. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa 'jam pa'i rdo rje lha bcu dgu'i bstod pa* (p. 57.4, fol. 29a4)
- 1d. *rJe btsun 'jam pa'i dbyangs dkyil 'khor gyi gtso bor gyur pa'i dpal gsang ba 'dus pa lha bcu dgu'i bdag nyid can la bstod cing smon lam du gsol ba'i rab tu byed pa shlo ka drug cu rtsa bdun pa* (pp. 66.6–67.1, fols. 33b6–34a1)
- 1e. *'Jam pa'i rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 67.2, fol. 34a2)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 67.3, fol. 34a3)
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by dGe slong bSod nams rin chen (p. 67.1–2, fol. 34a1–2)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 446, no. 4678): *gSang 'dus 'jam dpal rdo rje'i bstod pa*

No. 26 (pp. 67.3–69.2, fols. 34a3–35a2)

- 1b. *'Dod rgyal gyi bstod pa* (p. 67.3, fol. 34a3)
- 1d. *dPal 'dod pa'i rgyal po la bstod pa ci bsam kun grub* (p. 69.1–2, fol. 35a1–2)
- 1e. *'Dod rgyal* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 69.2, fol. 35a2)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 69.2, fol. 35a2)

No. 27 (pp. 69.2–72.3, fols. 35a2–36b3)

- 1b. *Tshogs kyi bdag po'i bstod pa* (p. 69.2, fol. 35a2)
- 1d. *dPal tshogs kyi bdag po mkhas gsum gyi 'khor los sgyur ba po la bstod pa* (p. 72.2–3, fol. 36b2–3)
- 1e. *Tshogs bdag* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 72.3, fol. 36b3)

No. 28 (pp. 72.3–78.5, fols. 36b3–39b5)

- 1b. *gTsug gtor rnam par rgyal ma la bstod pa 'chi med dpal sbyin* (p. 72.3, fol. 36b3)
- 1c. *gTsug gtor rnam par rgyal ma la bstod pa 'chi med dpal sbyin* (p. 72.4, fol. 36b4)
- 1d. *De bzhin gshegs pa gtsug gtor rnam par rgyal ma la bstod cing gsol ba 'debs pa'i tshigs su bcad pa sum cu so dgu pa* (p. 78.3–4, fol. 39b3–4)
- 1e. *gTsug gtor rnam rgyal* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 78.4, fol. 39b4)

- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the first half of the second month of 1426 at Sa skya (p. 78.4–5, fol. 39b4–5)
- 2e. for the fulfilment of Ngor chen's personal wishes (p. 78.4, fol. 39b4): (...) *rang gis [= gi]* 'dod don zhu ba'i phyir du (...)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 569, no. 6180): 'Di na 'chi med dpal sbyin ma bzhugs so; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 655, no. 7185, p. 656, no. 7194, and p. 1247, no. 12657): 'Chi med dpal sbyin ma

No. 29 (pp. 78.5–87.2, fols. 39b5–44a2)

- 1b. *dPal lha mo nor rgyun ma'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs la bstod pa chos dang dpal 'byor rgyas byed* (p. 78.5, fol. 39b5)
- 1c. *dPal lha mo nor rgyun ma'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs la bstod pa chos dang dpal 'byor rgyas byed* (p. 78.5–6, fol. 39b5–6)
- 1d. *rTog pa las gsungs pa'i nor gyi rgyun ma lha bcu dgu'i bdag nyid can la bstod cing gsol ba 'debs pa chos dang dpal 'byor rgyas byed* (p. 86.6, fol. 43b6)
- 1e. *Nor rgyun ma'i dkyil 'khor* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 87.1, fol. 44a1)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the first half of the eighth month of 1438 at E waṃ chos ldan (p. 87.1–2, fol. 44a1–2)
- 2d. Kun dga' legs pa'i rin chen (p. 87.2, fol. 44a2)
- 2e. for the benefit of his close disciples or attendants (*nye bar gnas pa*), such as rGyal mtshan dpal (p. 78.1, fol. 44a1)

No. 30 (pp. 87.2–92.3, fols. 44a2–46b3)

- 1b. *dPal ldan sa skya'i bka' srung rnam la bstod pa'i tshigs su bcad pa bdud las rnam rgyal* (p. 87.2, fol. 44a2)
- 1c. *dPal ldan sa skya pa'i bka' srung rnam la bstod pa'i tshigs su bcad pa bdud las rnam par rgyal ba* (p. 87.2–3, fol. 44a2–3)
- 1e. *Sa skya pa'i bka' srung rnam la bstod pa* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 92.2, fol. 46b2)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the first half of the second month of 1426 at Sa skya (p. 92.2, fol. 46b2)
- 2e. in order to request the activities of the *dharmapālas* for Ngor chen's own ends (p. 92.2, fol. 46b2): (...) *rang gi 'dod pa'i phrin las zhu ba'i phyir du* (...)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1818, no. 20824): *bsTod pa bdud las rnam rgyal*

No. 31 (pp. 92.3–121.4, fols. 46b3–61a4)

- 1b. *Yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga chos dang bsod nams rgyas byed* (p. 92.3, fol. 46b3)
- 1c. *Yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga chos dang bsod nams rgyas byed* (p. 92.3, fol. 46b3)
- 1d. *Las dang po pa'i nyams su blang pa'i rim pa yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga chos dang bsod nams rab tu rgyas par byed pa* (p. 121.2–3, fol. 61a2–3)
- 1e. *Yan lag bdun pa'i cho ga* (p. 3.2–3, fol. 2a2–3)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 121.3, fol. 61a3)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the third month of 1418 at Sa skya (p. 121.3–4, fol. 61a3–4)
- 2d. *Grag pa dpal bzang po* (p. 121.4, fol. 61a4)

No. 32 (pp. 121.4–145.6, fols. 61a4–73a6)

- 1b. *Chos rje sa skya paṇḍi ta chen po'i rnam thar gsung sgros ma* (p. 121.4, fol. 61a4)¹²
- 1d. *rNam thar gsung sgros ma* (p. 145.5, fol. 73a5)
- 1e. *Sa skya paṇḍi ta'i rnam thar* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)

No. 33 (pp. 145.6–169.2, fols. 73a6–85a2)

- 1b. *Bla ma grub chen buddha shri'i rnam thar* (p. 145.6, fol. 73a6)
- 1d. *Drin chen rtsa ba'i bla ma dam pa mkhas pa dang grub pa'i dbang phyug rdo rje 'chang gnyis pa buddha shri'i rnam thar mdor bsdus* (p. 169.1–2, fol. 85a1–2)
- 1e. *Grub chen buddha shri'i rnam thar* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 169.2, fol. 85a2)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 169.2, fol. 85a2)
- 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1551, no. 17503): *Grub chen bud dha shri'i rnam thar*

No. 34 (pp. 169.2–177.6, fols. 85a2–89a6)

- 1b. *Bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros kyi rnam par thar pa* (p. 169.2, fol. 85a2)
- 1d. *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa chos kyi rje sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdus* (p. 177.4–5, fol. 89a4–5)
- 1e. *Sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 177.6, fol. 89a6)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 177.6, fol. 89a6)
- 2c. in response to the earlier request by Slob dpon Tshul khirms rgyal mtshan and the later, immediate request of bShes gnyen dGe slong bSod nams rin chen, who also provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink (p. 177.5–6, fol. 89a5–6)
- 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1550, no. 17498 and p. 1571, no. 17751): *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i rnam thar*

No. 35 (pp. 179–433.6, fols. 90a–217a6)

- 1a. *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 179, fol. 90a)
- 1c. *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams las dam pa'i chos ji ltar nod pa'i tshul gsal bar bshad pa thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 180.1, fol. 90b1)
- 1d. *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams las dam pa'i chos ji ltar nod pa'i tshul gsal bar bshad pa thos yig rgya mtsho* (p. 433.3–4, fol. 217a3–4)
- 1e. *gSan yig chen mo* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 433.5, fol. 217a5)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 433.5, fol. 217a5)
- 2d. *mDo khams stod pa Blo gros seng ge and others* (p. 433.5–6, fol. 217a5–6)
- 3. image left margin: *gnas lnga'i rig pas srid pa'i mun|| mthar byed sar [= sa] bzang ma ti paṇ||*; image right margin: *mDo sngags chos kyi snang byed che|| shar pa ye shes rgyal mtshan zhabs||* (p. 180, fol. 90b)

¹² On the attribution of authorship to Ngor chen, see HUGON 2012: 55, n. 14 and JACKSON 1987: 18–19. Though Ngor chen's authorship is uncertain, the biography had been included in his collected works early on. This is evident from the title list of Ngor chen's collected works as found in the record of teachings received of dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot of Ngor; see the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (p. 344.13–14).

No. 36 (pp. 435–508.3, fols. 218a–251b3)

- 1a. *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i man ngag gi byung tshul gsung ngag rin po che bstan pa rgyas pa'i nyi 'od* (p. 435, fol. 218a)
- 1c. *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i man ngag gi byung tshul gsung ngag bstan pa rgyas pa'i nyi 'od* (p. 436.1, fol. 218b1)
- 1d. *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i man ngag gi byung tshul gsung ngag bstan pa rgyas pa'i nyi 'od* (p. 507.6, fol. 251a6)
- 1e. *Lam 'bras chos 'byung rtsom 'phro* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2a. begun by Ngor chen (pp. 435–474.3, fols. 218a–237a3) and completed by Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475) (pp. 474.3–508.3, fols. 237a3–251b3) according to Ngor chen's words (p. 508.1–2, fol. 251b1–2)
- 2c. Shes rab bzang po was requested by religious teachers (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen*), in general, and the Hor sde dPon po and his nephew, in particular (p. 508.1–2, fol. 251b1–2)
4. *Sa skya'i gsung rabs rnam kyī dkar chag* (p. 21, no. 1810, text 7): *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i man ngag gi byung tshul gsung ngag bstan pa rgyas pa'i nyi 'od*

No. 37 (pp. 508.3–514.4, fols. 251b3–254b4)

- 1b. *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyī man ngag* (p. 508.3, fol. 251b3)
- 1c. *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyī man ngag gsang ba'i sgo 'byed* (p. 508.3, fol. 251.3)
- 1e. *bShad thabs gsang ba'i sgo 'byed* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 514.3, fol. 254b3)
- 2c. at the behest of a few faithful disciples who were keeping their tantric commitments (p. 514.2, fol. 254b2)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 585–594 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 410.2–416.3); *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 351, no. 3550); *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyī man ngag gsal ba'i sgo 'byed*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 358, no. 3633); *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyī man ngag gsang ba'i sgo 'byed*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 379, no. 3869); *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyī man ngag zab mo*

No. 38 (pp. 514.4–517.5, fols. 254b4–256a5)

- 1b. *dBang bzhi'i rtogs bskyed* (p. 514.4, fol. 254b4)
- 1e. *dBang bzhi'i rtogs bskyed* (p. 3.3–4, fol. 2a3–4)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 517.5, fol. 256a5)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 517.5, fol. 256a5)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 605–609 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 422.2–425.2); *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 351, no. 3549); *dBang bzhi pa'i rtogs pa bskyed pa*

No. 39 (pp. 517.5–519.6, fols. 256a5–257a6)

- 1b. *Tsa tur da sha bhā dā nām he badzra sya bi dza ha ram* (p. 517.5, fol. 256a5)
- 1e. *mNgon rtogs tshul bcu bzhi'i sdom tshig* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 2a. *dGe slong rGyud gsum pa* (p. 519.5, fol. 257a5)

No. 40 (pp. 519.6–521.1, fols. 257a6–258a1)

- 1b. *Phyi nang gi bskyed rim dbang dang bcas pa'i sdom tshig* (p. 519.6, fol. 257a6)
- 1e. *Phyi nang gi bskyed rim dbang dang bcas pa'i sdom tshig* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 2a. *sPong ba pa Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 521.1, fol. 258a1)

No. 41 (pp. 521.1–523.6, fols. 258a1–259a6)

- 1b. *Lam zab nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor* (p. 521.1, fol. 258a1)
- 1d. *Nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor gyi gdams ngag lam 'bras kyi bcud bsdu pa lta bu* (p. 523.5–6, fol. 259a5–6)
- 1e. *Nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 523.6, fol. 259a6)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 599–603 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 419.3–422.2); 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 351, no. 3548): *Zab mo nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 379, no. 3863): *Lam zab mo bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang| bir bsrung thun mong ma yin pa*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 767, no. 8515): *Lam zab nang gi bla ma'i rnal 'byor*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 896, no. 10077): *Lam zab bir bsrung (?)*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1156, no. 11572): *Lam zab mo bla ma'i rnal 'byor*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1223, no. 12386): *Zab mo nang bla ma sgrub pa'i thabs (?)*

No. 42 (pp. 523.6–533.5, fols. 259a6–264a5)

- 1b. *rje btsun birwa pa'i srung ba'i man ngag bar chad kun sel* (p. 523.6, fol. 259a6)
- 1c. *rje btsun birwa pa'i srung ba'i man ngag bar chad kun sel* (pp. 523.6–524.1, fol. 259a6–b1)
- 1e. *Bir srung bar chad kun sel* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 533.4, fol. 264a4)
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by Bla ma Kun dga' legs pa (p. 533.2, fol. 264a2)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 611–627 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 425.3–435.2); 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 370, no. 3764): *rNal 'byor dbang phyug dpal ldan bir wa pa'i bsrungs pa'i man ngag bar chad kun sel*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 729, no. 8067): *Bir bsrungs kyi man ngag dang zhal gdams chos rje ngor pas mdzad pa (?)*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 730, no. 8068): *Bir bsrung bar chad kun sel la sogs chos rje kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 896, no. 10077): *Lam zab bir bsrung (?)*

No. 43 (pp. 533.5–534.5, fol. 264a5–b5)

- 1b. *sKu'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris* (p. 533.5, fol. 264a5)
- 1e. *sKu'i rnam 'gyur drug gi zin bris* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 2a. collected by rNal 'byor pa Rin chen rdo rje¹³ from the miscellaneous writings of the previous Sa skya masters (p. 534.5, fol. 264b5): *zhes pa rnal 'byor pa rin chen rdo rjes gong ma'i gsung thor bu pa rnam las btus pa'o||*
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 629–630 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 435.2–436.2)

No. 44 (pp. 534.5–535.5, fols. 264b5–265a5)

- 1b. *Byin rlabs bya tshul* (p. 534.5, fol. 264b5)
- 1e. *Thun mong ma yin pa'i byin rlabs bya tshul* (p. 3.4–5, fol. 2a4–5)
- 2a. dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 535.5, fol. 265a5)
- 2c. at the behest of a disciple (p. 535.4, fol. 265a4)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 631–632.2 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 436.2–437.3); 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 343, no. 3461): *Thung mong ma yin pa'i bir bsrung gi bskor*;

¹³ rNal 'byor pa Rin chen rdo rje was apparently another (secret ordination?) name of Ngor chen. When enumerating Ngor chen's supplementary writings that concluded the *Pod dmar ma*, Ngor chen is named Bla ma rDo rje 'chang chen po dPal Rin chen rdo rje; see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 765.2–4). See also the *'Jam mgon bsod nams dbang pos rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 572.4–5).

'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 379, no. 3863): *Lam zab mo bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang| bir bsrung thun mong ma yin pa*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 796, no. 8858): *rje btsun bir wa pa'i thun mong ma yin pa'i man ngag*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1036, no. 10143): *Bir wa pa'i gsung [= srung?] thun mong ma yin pa (?)*

No. 45 (pp. 535.5–537.6, fols. 265a5–266a6)

- 1b. *De'i nyams len* (p. 535.5, fol. 265a5)
- 1e. *Yang de'i nyams len* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 537.6, fol. 266a6)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 632.2–635 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 443.6–446.1)¹⁴

No. 46 (pp. 537.6–541.6, fols. 266a6–268a6)

- 1b. *Yang de dang lam 'bras mtshan mtshon sbyar ba* (p. 537.6, fol. 266a6)
- 1d. *mTshon byed rnal 'bor dbang phyug gi man ngag 'dis mtshon bya lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag thams cad shes par nus pa* (p. 541.4, fol. 268a4)
- 1e. *Yang de dang lam 'bras mtshan mtshon sbyar ba* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)
- 2a. *dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 541.5, fol. 268a5)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 637–643 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 439.5–443.6)

No. 47 (pp. 541.6–543.6, fols. 268a6–269a6)

- 1b. *Yang bir srung gsar ma* (p. 541.6, fol. 268a6)
- 1e. *Yang bir srung gsar ma* (p. 3.4, fol. 2b4)
- 2a. *dGe slong bSam gtan pa Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 543.4, fol. 269a4)
4. *Pod dmar ma* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 645–648 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 437.3–439.5)¹⁵

No. 48 (pp. 545–580.6, fols. 270a–287b6)

- 1a. *dPal kye'i rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor la rtsod pa spong ba smra ba ngan 'joms* (p. 545, fol. 270a)
- 1c. *dPal kye'i rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor la rtsod pa spong ba smra ba ngan 'joms* (p. 546.1, fol. 270b1)
- 1d. *dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs zab mo la rtog btags dang| mun sprul du 'dod pa'i shes byed ltar snang rnam bkag nas yang dag pa'i lung dang rig [= rigs] pas mang ngag mchog tu sgrub pa'i bstan bcos smra ba ngan 'joms* (p. 580.2–3, fol. 287b2–3)
- 1e. *Lus dkyil rtsod spong che chung gnyis* (p. 3.4, fol. 2b4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 580.3–4, fol. 287b3–4)
- 2b. on the third day of the first half of the third month of 1426 at Sa skya (p. 580.4, fol. 287b4)

No. 49 (pp. 580.6–625.3, fols. 287b6–310a3)

- 1b. *dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor la rtsod pa spong ba lta ba ngan sel* (p. 580.6, fol. 287b6)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor la rtsod pa spong ba lta ba ngan sel* (p. 580.6, fol. 287b6)

¹⁴ For the confusion of nos. 45 and 47 in the *Pod dmar ma* recension from sDe dge, see Part Five, 4.

¹⁵ For the confusion of nos. 45 and 47 in the *Pod dmar ma* recension from sDe dge, see Part Five, 4.

- 1d. *dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs zab mo la rtog btags dang mun sprul du 'dod pa'i shes byed ltar snang rnams bkag nas/ yang dag pa'i lung dang rigs pas mang ngag mchog tu sgrub pa'i bstan bcos lta ba ngan sel* (p. 624.5–6, fol. 309b5–6)
- 1e. *Lus dkyil rtsod spong che chung gnyis* (p. 3.4, fol. 2b4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 625.1–2, fol. 310a1–2)
- 2b. on the third day of the first half of the third month of 1426 at Sa skya (p. 625.2, fol. 310a2)

No. 50 (pp. 625.3–630.2, fols. 310a3–312b2)

- 1b. *rGyud gsum gnod 'joms zhes bya ba'i bstan bcos* (p. 625.3, fol. 310a3)
- 1c. *rGyud gsum gnod 'joms* (p. 625.3, fol. 310a3)
- 1d. *rGyud gsum gnod 'joms* (p. 630.2, fol. 312b2)
- 1e. *rGyud gsum gnod 'joms kyi bstan bcos* (p. 3.4, fol. 2b4)

No. 51 (pp. 630.2–659.5, fols. 312b2–327a5)

- 1b. *rGyud gsum gnod 'joms kyi 'grel pa* (p. 630.2, fol. 327a2)
- 1d. *rGyud gsum gnod 'joms zhes bya ba'i rnam bshad/ rgyud gsum gnad kyi sgron ma* (p. 659.2, fol. 327a2)
- 1e. *rGyud gsum gnod 'joms rtsa 'grel* (p. 3.4–5, fol. 2b4–5)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 659.4, fol. 327a4)
- 2b. on the seventeenth day of the ninth month of 1406 at Sa skya (p. 659.4–5, fol. 327a4–5)

No. 52 (pp. 659.5–691.6, fols. 327a5–343a6)

- 1b. *Zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang chen po'i sa mtshams rnam par bshad pa log rtog ngan sel* (p. 659.5, fol. 327a5)
- 1c. *Zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang chen po'i sa mtshams rnam par bshad pa log rtog ngan sel* (p. 659.5–6, fol. 327a5–6)
- 1e. *Zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang gi sa mtshams bshad pa* (p. 3.5, fol. 2b5)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 691.6, fol. 343a6)
- 2b. on the thirteenth day of the third month of 1404 at Sa skya (p. 691.6, fol. 343a6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1025, no. 10014): *Zung 'jug rdo rje 'chang gi sa mtshams rnam par bshad pa log rtog ngan sel*

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b. (pp. 1–[3.3], fol. 1a–2a3)

- 1a. *rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam kha pa'i dkar chag* (p. 1, fol. 1a)

No. 53 (pp. 1–417.6, fols. 3a–211a6)

- 1a. (*rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam gnyis pa las*) *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer* (p. 1.3, fol. 3a3)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer* (p. 2.3, fol. 3b3)
- 1d. *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub pa'i thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer* (p. 417.2–3, fol. 211a2–3)
- 1e. *bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer* (fol. 1b1)

- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 417.4–5, fol. 211a4–5)
- 2b. on the eighth day of the seventh month of 1419 at Sa skya (p. 417.5, fol. 211a5)
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by many canon specialists (*sde snod 'dzin pa: piṭakadhara*) (p. 417.3, fol. 211a3)
- 2d. Lung rigs smra ba Yon tan seng ge (p. 417.5, fol. 211a5)
3. image left margin: *sku bzhi ye shes lnga'i khyab bdag|| bla ma dges pa rdo rje'i zhabs||*;
image right margin: *grub pas rdo rje'i sar gshegs pa'i|| 'jigs bral dpal ldan chos skyong zhabs||* (p. 2, fol. 3b)
image left margin: *'phags yul mkhas dang grub pa'i mchog|| rab brnyes mi thub zla bar 'dud||*;
image right margin: *bcu dag rig gzhung kun gzigs pa'i|| paṅ chen ga ya dha ra'i zhabs||* (p. 3, fol. 4a)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 325, no. 3241): *dPal kyai rdo rje'i rnam par bshad pa bskyed rim gnas kyi zla zer*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 352, no. 3557, p. 360, no. 3644, and p. 397, no. 4073): *dPal kyai rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer*

No. 54 (pp. 419–445.3, fols. 212a–225a3)

- 1a. *rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal kye rdo rje'i byung tshul dang brgyud pa'i bla ma dam pa rnam kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho* (p. 419, fol. 212a)
- 1c. *rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal kye rdo rje'i byung tshul dang|| brgyud pa'i bla ma dam pa rnam kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho* (p. 420.1, fol. 212b1)
- 1e. *Kye rdo rje'i byung tshul dang bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* (fol. 1b1)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 445.2, fol.225a2)
- 2b. on the fifth day of the third month of 1405 at Sa skya (p. 445.3, fol.225a3)
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by dGe bshes Sangs rgyas blo gros, who also provided the paper for writing (*byang bu*) (p. 445.2–3, fol.225a2–3)

No. 55 (pp. 445.3–446.1, fol. 225a3–b1)

- 1b. *rTsa rgyud brtag gnyis kyi 'gyur* (p. 445.3, fol. 225a3)
- 1e. *brTag gnyis kyi 'gyur chad* (fol. 1b1)
- 2a. Bi butpa ta'i Lo tstsha ba dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 445.6, fol.225a6)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 445.6, fol.225a6)

No. 56 (pp. 446.1–447.2, fols. 225b1–226a2)

- 1b. *Kye rdo rje'i 'grel pa'i dkar chag* (p. 446.1, fol. 225b1)
- 1e. *brTag gnyis kyi 'grel pa'i dkar chag* (fol. 1b2)

No. 57 (pp. 447.2–474.6, fols. 226a3–239b6)

- 1b. *Ḍombhi he ru ka'i lugs kyi dpal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs* (p. 447.2–3, fol. 226a2–3)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs bskyed rim gsal byed* (p. 447.3, fol. 226a3)
- 1e. *Kye rdo rje Ḍombi lugs kyi sgrub thabs* (fol. 1b2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 474.4, fol. 239b4)
- 2b. on the tenth day of the fifth month of 1407 at Sa skya (p. 474.5–6, fol.239b5–6)
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by Blo gsal mNga' ris pa (p. 474.2–3, fol. 239b2–3)
- 2d. Blo gsal mNga' ris pa (p. 474.6, fol. 239.6)

No. 58 (pp. 474.6–486.6, fols. 239b6–245b6)

- 1b. *'Phrin yig dbang po'i rdo rje* (p. 474.6, fol. 239b6)
- 1c. *Kye rdo rje dombi he ru ka'i lugs la phyag len du mdzad pa rnams la| 'phrin du zhu ba dbang po'i rdo rje* (pp. 474.6–475.1, fols. 239b6–240a1)
- 1e. *Phrin yig dbang po rdo rje* (fol. 1b2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 486.5, fol.245b5)

No. 59 (pp. 487.1–488.2, fol. 246a1–b2)

- 1c. *gZhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par gzhaq pa'i zin bris* (p. 487.1, fol. 246a1)
- 1e. *gZhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par bzhaq pa* (fol. 1b2)
- 2a. *rGyud sde smra ba Ā nanda* (p. 488.2, fol. 246b2)
3. An annotation at the beginning of the text remarks that it was once again included below (CATALOGUE, no. 62) and thus constitutes a superfluous double occurrence of the same work (p. 487.1, fol. 246a1): *'di 'og la yang yod pas lhaq|*.

No. 60 (pp. 488.2–493.1, fols. 246b2–249a1)

- 1b. *'Phar ma gnyis kyi don bshad pa* (p. 488.2, fol. 246b2)
- 1e. *'Phar ma gnyis kyi don bshad pa* (fol. 1b2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 493.1, fol. 249a1)
- 2e. to eliminate the misconceptions of a certain fool (p. 492.6, fol.248b6): *zhes pa 'di'ang blun po kha cig gi log rtogs bsal ba'i don du| (...) shākya'i dge slong kun dga' bzang pos skras||*

No. 61 (pp. 493.1–495.2, fols. 249a1–250a2)

- 1b. *mTsho skyes lugs kyi sgrub dkyil dang dombi lugs kyi sgrub dkyil gyi tho yig* (p. 493.1–2, fol. 249a1–2)
- 1e. *mTsho skyes dang dombi lugs gnyis kyi tho yig* (fol. 1b2–3)
- 2a. *Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 495.2, fol. 250a2)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 495.2, fol. 250a2)

No. 62 (pp. 495.3–496.4, fol. 250a3–b4)

- 1c. *gZhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par gzhaq pa'i zin bris* (p. 495.3–2, fol. 250a3)
- 1e. *gZhal yas khang gi tshad lhaq po gcig* (fol. 1b3)
- 2a. *rGyud sde smra ba Ā nanda* (p. 496.4, fol. 250b4)
3. By editorial mistake, this text was included here a second time; see above CATALOGUE (no. 59).

No. 63 (pp. 496.4–501.2, fols. 250b4–253a2)

- 1b. *sGrub thabs mtsho skyes kyi bsdus don* (p. 496.4, fol. 250b4)
- 1e. *sGrub thabs mtsho skyes kyi bsdus don* (fol. 1b3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 501.2, fol. 253a2)
- 2c. The name of the person at whose behest the text was written (*bris*) is most likely hidden among the following verse (pp. 500.6–501.2, fols. 252b6–253a2): *phun tshogs bsod nams chen po dpal mnga' zhing|| dkon mchog gsum dngos bla ma'i gsung tshab mchog|| mkhyen dang brtse ba'i rgyal mtshan mngon mtho bas|| thub bstan dpal 'byor bzang po skyong mdzad pa|| mi dbang chos kyi bla ma 'gro ba'i rje|| gang gi bka' yis bskul ba khur blangs nas||*.

No. 64 (pp. 501.2–512.2, fols. 253a2–258b2)

- 1b. *dPal kye rdo rje'i bstod pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel pa* (p. 501.2, fol. 253a2)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje la bstod pa'i rnam bshad mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog* (p. 501.2–3, fol. 253a2–3)
- 1d. *bsTod pa'i rnam par bshad pa mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog* (pp. 511.6–507.1, fol. 258a6–b1)
- 1e. *bsTod pa nyi shu ba'i 'grel pa* (fol. 1b3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 512.1, fol. 258b1)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 512.2, fol. 258b2)
- 2c. in response to the requests of many intelligent people (p. 512.2, fol. 258b2)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1694, no. 19311): *bsTod pa nyi shu pa'i 'grel pa mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog*

No. 65 (pp. 512.2–521.6, fols. 258b2–263b6)

- 1b. *dPal kye rdo rje mtsho skyes lugs kyi dkyil 'khor mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis rgyas byed* (p. 512.2, fol. 258b2)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis rgyas byed* (p. 512.2–3, fol. 258b2–3)
- 1e. *mTsho skyes lugs kyi maṅdal mchod chog* (fol. 1b3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 521.6, fol. 263a6)
- 2b. on the eighth day of the first half of the fourth month of 1407 at Sa skya (p. 521.6, fol. 263a6)

No. 66 (pp. 523–566.2, fols. 264a–285b2)

- 1a. *dPal kye rdo rje'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i 'byung po thams cad pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga phrin las rgyas byed* (p. 523, fol. 264a)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i 'byung po thams cad pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga'i 'grel pa phrin las rgyas byed* (p. 524.1, fol. 264b1)
- 1e. *gTor chog gi 'grel pa phrin las rgyas byed* (fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 566.1, fol. 285b1)
- 2b. in the seventh month of 1408 at dGe ldan Sa bzangs (i.e., Sa bzang Monastery) (p. 566.1–2, fol. 285b1–2)
- 2d. *Rong ston Blo gros rab gsal* (p. 566.2, fol. 285b2)

No. 67 (pp. 566.2–571.1, fols. 285b2–288a1)

- 1b. *'Dod rgyal gyi sgrub thabs* (p. 566.2, fol. 285b2)
- 1e. *'Dod rgyal gyi sgrub thabs* (fol. 1b4)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 936, no. 10551): *'Dod rgyal gyi mngon rtogs ngag 'don rdo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa* (?)

No. 68 (pp. 571.1–578.1, fols. 288a1–291b1)

- 1b. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma'i sgrub thabs ye shes snang ba* (p. 571.1, fol. 288a1)
- 1c. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin ma'i sgrub thabs ye shes snang ba* (p. 571.1, fol. 288a1)
- 1e. *Shes phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs* (fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 578.1, fol. 291b1)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 578.1, fol. 291b1)
- 2c. at the behest of Bla ma dBon po Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (p. 577.6, fol. 291b6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1224, no. 12394): *rje btsun sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs| Sher phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs| So sor 'brang ma'i sgrub thabs| rNam rgyal rjes gnang*

No. 69 (pp. 578.1–590.4, fols. 291b1–297b4)

- 1b. *Gur rigs bsodus pa'i sbyin sreg* (p. 578.1–2, fol. 291b1–2)
- 1c. *rDo rje gur rigs bsodus pa'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga phrin las kun 'grub* (p. 578.2, fol. 291b2)
- 1e. *Gur rigs bsodus kyi sbyin sreg* (fol. 1b4)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 590.1, fol. 297b1)
- 2b. in the twelfth month of the year called *sa skyong* (i.e., *shing bya*), that is, in late December of 1405 or January of 1406) (p. 590.3, fol. 297b3)

No. 70 (pp. 590.4–602.4, fols. 297b4–303b4)

- 1b. *dPal rdo rje gur gyi rgyud las gsungs pa'i gar gyi mi 'dra ba'i khyad par brjod pa legs par bshad pa'i glu dbyangs* (p. 590.4–5, fol. 297b4–5)
- 1c. *dPal rdo rje gur gyi rgyud las gsungs pa'i gar rnams kyi mi 'dra ba'i khyad par brjod pa legs par bshad pa'i glu dbyangs* (p. 590.5, fol. 297b5)
- 1e. *Gar gyi shan 'byed* (fol. 1b4)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 602.2, fol. 303b2)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 602.2, fol. 303b2)
- 2c. at the behest of sDom brtson sDe snod 'dzin pa Slob dpon dBon po Kun dga' rgyal mtshan from the nephew line (*dbon rgyud*) of Byang chub sems dpa' A seng (fl. 12th century),¹⁶ a spiritual son or close disciple (*thugs sras*) of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (p. 601.6, fol. 303a6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1049, no. 10307): *Gar gyi shan 'byed legs par bshad pa'i glu dbyangs*

No. 71 (pp. 602.4–616.2, fols. 303b4–310b2)

- 1b. *Gur las gsungs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi gar bde chen rnam rol* (p. 602.4, fol. 303b4)
- 1c. *dPal rdo rje gur las gsungs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi gar gyi cho ga bde chen rnam rol* (p. 602.4–5, fol. 303b4–5)
- 1e. *Sangs rgyas kyi gar* (fol. 1b4)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 616.1, fol. 310b1)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 616.2, fol. 310b2)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1022, no. 11577): *rDo rje gur gyi cho ga bde chen rnam rol*

No. 72 (pp. 616.2–618.5, fols. 310b2–311b5)

- 1b. *Phyogs bzhi'i gtor ma gtong tshul* (p. 616.2, fol. 310b2)
- 1e. *Phyogs bzhi'i gtor ma gtong thabs* (fols. 1b4–2a1)

No. 73 (pp. 618.5–623.5, fols. 311b5–314a5)

- 1b. *dPal nag po chen po'i sgrub skor rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 618.4–5, fol. 311b4–5)
- 1e. *Chos skyong gi man ngag rnams kyi dkar chag* (fol. 2a1)
- 2a. dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 623.5, fol. 314a5)
- 2e. for Bla ma 'Phags pa of dNgul chu Chos rzdong (p. 623.5, fol. 314a5)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1750, no. 20027): *rJe btsun sa skya pa'i man ngag nag po chen po'i sgrub skor rnams kyi dkar chag*; *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 93, no. 1862, text 43): *dPal nag po chen po'i chos skor gyi dkar chag rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa*

¹⁶ On A seng rDo rje brtan pa—to whom Sa chen gave his very first bestowal of the *Lam 'bras* and for whom he fixed the *rDo rje tshig rkang* in writing and also wrote a verse commentary, the *A seng ma* or *Don bsodus ma*—, see STEARNS 2001: 16–19.

No. 74 (pp. 623.6–624.6, fol. 314a6–b6)

- 1b. *Gur gyi mgon po'i sgrub thabs rgyud las byung ba* (p. 623.6, fol. 314a6)
- 1d. *dPal nag po chen po'i sgrubs thabs rgyud las phyung ba* (p. 624.5, fol. 314b5)
- 1e. *mGon po'i sgrub thabs rgyud 'grel las byung ba* (fol. 2a1)

No. 75 (pp. 624.6–626.4, fols. 314b6–315b4)

- 1b. *Nag po chen po'i man ngag gur rgyan las 'byung ba* (p. 624.6, fol. 314b6)
- 1d. *Nag po chen po'i man ngag gur rgyan las byung ba* (p. 626.4, fol. 315b4)
- 1e. *Man ngag gur rgyan las byung ba* (fol. 2a1)

No. 76 (pp. 626.5–634.6, fols. 315b5–319b6)

- 1b. *Gur mgon lha brgyad kyi rjes gnang ngag 'don* (p. 626.5, fol. 315b5)
- 1c. *dPal sa skya pa'i gdams ngag gur mgon lha brgyad kyi rjes gnang thun mong ma yin pa* (p. 626.5, fol. 315b5)
- 1d. *Nag po chen po'i rjes gnang thun mong ma yin pa bya tshull' bklags pas don grub pa* (p. 634.5, fol. 319b5)
- 1e. *lHa brgyad kyi rjes gnang* (fol. 2a1–2)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1332, no. 13541): *Gur lha brgyad kyi rjes gnang; Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 93, no. 1862, text 44): *dPal nag po chen po lha brgyad kyi rjes gnang chos rje 'chang gis mdzad pa*

No. 77 (pp. 634.6–654.3, fols. 319b6–329b3)

- 1b. *dPal sa skya'i bka' srung rnams kyi gtor ma'i cho ga dgra las rnam par rgyal ba* (p. 634.6, fol. 319b6)
- 1c. *dPal sa skya'i bka' srung rnams kyi gtor ma'i cho ga dgra las rnam par rgyal ba* (p. 634.6, fol. 319b6)
- 1d. *dPal ldan sa skya'i bka' srung rnams kyi gtor ma'i cho ga dgra las rnam par rgyal ba* (p. 654.1, fol. 329b1)
- 1e. *gTor chog dgra las rnam rgyal* (fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 654.2, fol. 329b2)
- 2b. at the time when the *ḍākinīs* gather (*mkha' 'gro 'du ba'i dus*) on the twenty-ninth day of the first month of 1434 at E waṃ chos ldan (p. 616.2, fol. 310b2)
- 2d. *bShes gnyen bzang po* (p. 654.2–3, fol. 329b2–3)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 268, no. 2612): *gTor chog dgra las rnam rgyal dang lhan thabs g.yul las rnam rgyal*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1245, no. 12636): *gTor chog dgra las rnam rgyal*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1791, no. 20510, p. 1799, no. 20608, and p. 1829, no. 20963): *dPal sa skya'i bka' bsrung rnams kyi gtor ma'i cho ga dgra las rnam par rgyal ba*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1854, no. 21250): *dPal sa skya pa'i bka' bsrung rnams kyi gtor ma'i cho ga dgra las rnam par rgyal ba*

No. 78 (pp. 654.3–660.1, fols. 329b3–332b1)

- 1b. *gTor sgrub kyi man ngag g.yul las rnam rgyal* (p. 654.3, fol. 329b3)
- 1d. *gTor ma la brten nas las sgrub pa'i man ngag g.yul las rnam par rgyal ba* (pp. 659.6–660.1, fol. 332a6–b1)
- 1e. *gTor sgrub kyi man ngag* (fol. 2a2)
- 2b. *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 660.1, fol. 332b1)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 268, no. 2612): *gTor chog dgra las rnam rgyal dang lhan thabs g.yul las rnam rgyal*

No. 79 (pp. 660.1–666.2, fols. 332b1–335b2)

- 1b. *Thugs dam bskang ba'i cho ga* (p. 660.1, fol. 332b1)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje nag po chen po gur gyi mgon po'i thugs dam bskang ba'i cho ga* (p. 666.1–2, fol. 335b1–2)
- 1e. *Thugs dam bskang ba'i cho ga* (fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 666.2, fol. 335b2)
- 2b. *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 666.2, fol. 335b2)
- 2e. This ritual work was based on a composition of Ngor chen's younger half-brother, gZhon nu seng ge, and Ngor chen modified and corrected difficult parts of it (p. 666.2, fol. 335b2).
4. *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 93, no. 1862, text 45): *dPal rdo rje nag po gur gyi mgon po'i thugs dam bskang ba'i cho ga rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa*

No. 80 (pp. 666.2–697.6, fols. 335b2–351a6)

- 1b. *dPal kye rdo rje lha bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs* (p. 666.2–3, fol. 335b2–3)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje lha bcu bdun gyi bdag nyid can gyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs gsang don gsal byed* (p. 666.3, fol. 335b3)
- 1d. *bCu bdun bdag nyid dpal ldan he ru ka'i' sgrub thabs rgyud 'grel gsang don gsal byed* (p. 697.2, fol. 351a2)
- 1e. *Kye rdo rje lha bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs* (fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 697.4–5, fol. 351a4–5)
- 2b. on the eighth day of the first half of the first month of 1412 at Sa skya (p. 697.6, fol. 351a6)
- 2c. in response to the requests of many intelligent and aspiring disciples, such as rGyud sde 'dzin pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 697.2–3, fol. 351a2–3)
- 2d. mDo khams pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 697.6, fol. 351a6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 334, no. 3349): *dPal kyai rdo rje lha bcu bdun ma'i sgrub thabs*

No. 81 (pp. 699–738.3, fols. 352a–371b3)

- 1a. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub snye ma* (p. 699, fol. 352a)
- 1c. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub snye ma* (p. 700.1, fol. 352b1)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs* (p. 737.5, fol. 371a5)
- 1e. *Sambu ṭa rdar [= rdor] dbyings kyi sgrub thabs* (fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 738.1, fol. 371b1)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the first half of the first month of 1412 at Sa skya (p. 738.2, fol. 371b2)
- 2c. in response to the initial request by Slob dpon sByin pa grags and the urgent appeal by mDo khams stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu, who also provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink (p. 737.5–6, fol. 371a5–6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 554, no. 6018): *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud las 'byung ba'i dpal rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i bsgrub thabs dngos grub snye ma*

No. 82 (pp. 738.3–748.6, fols. 371b3–376b6)

- 1b. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i 'byung po thams cad pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga 'dod don snye ma* (p. 738.3, fol. 371b3)
- 1c. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud las gsungs pa'i 'byung po thams cad pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga 'dod don snye ma* (p. 738.3–4, fol. 371b3–4)
- 1e. *gTor chog* (fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 748.5, fol. 376b5)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 748.6, fol. 376b6)
- 2c. in response to the appeal by mDo stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 748.5, fol. 376b5)

No. 83 (pp. 748.6–771.1, fols. 376b6–388a1)

- 1b. *dPal rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis snye ma* (p. 748.6, fol. 376b6)
- 1c. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis snye ma* (pp. 748.6–749.1, fols. 376b6–377a1)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i mchod pa'i cho ga* (p. 770.4, fol. 387b4)
- 1e. *mChod phreng* (fol. 2a3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 770.5, fol. 387b5)
- 2b. on the eighth day of the first month of 1412 at Sa skya (pp. 770.6–771.1, fols. 387b6–388a1)
- 2c. in response to the request of many aspiring disciples, such as of rGyud sde 'dzin pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 770.4–5, fol. 387b4–5)
- 2d. mDo stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 771.1, fol. 388a1)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 553, no. 6001): *dPal yang dag sbyor ba'i rgyud las 'byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis snye ma*

No. 84 (pp. 771.1–860.6, fols. 388a1–432b6)

- 1b. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dbang gi snye ma* (p. 771.1–2, fol. 388a1–2)
- 1c. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dbang gi snye ma* (p. 771.2, fol. 388a2)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dbang gi snye ma* (p. 860.1, fol. 432b1)
- 1e. *dKyi chog* (fol. 2a3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 860.5, fol. 342b5)
- 2b. on the twenty-sixth day of the first month of 1412 in the large *gtsug lag khang* of Sa skya (p. 860.5–6, fol. 342b5–6)
- 2c. in response to the requests of many aspiring disciples, such as of mDo stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 860.1–2, fol. 432b1–2)
- 2d. mDo stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 860.6, fol. 432b6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 554, no. 6019): *dPal yang dag pa sbyor ba'i rgyud las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dbang gi snye ma*

No. 85 (pp. 860.6–878.4, fols. 432b6–441b4)

- 1b. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi sbyin sreg gi cho ga phrin las snye ma* (p. 860.6, fol. 432b6)
- 1c. *dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud las byung ba'i rdo rje dbyings kyi sbyin sreg gi cho ga phrin las snye ma* (pp. 860.6–861.1, fols. 432b6–433a1)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje dbyings kyi sbyin sreg gi cho ga mdor bsdu pa* (p. 878.1, fol. 441b1)

- 1e. *sByin sreg* (fol. 2a3)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 878.2, fol. 441b2)
- 2b. on the first day of the first month of 1412 at Sa skya (p. 878.3, fol. 441b3)
- 2c. at the behest of rGyud sde 'dzin pa Kun dga' gzhon nu and others (p. 878.1, fol. 441b1)
- 2d. mDo stod pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 878.4, fol. 441b4)
4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 534, no. 5768): *Sam bu ṭi'i rdor dbyings kyi sbyin bsreg gi cho ga phrin las snye ma*

No. 86 (pp. 878.4–879.6, fols. 441b4–442a6)

- 1b. *dPal rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi bkra shis kyi tshigs su bcad pa dge legs snye ma* (p. 878.4, fol. 441b4)
- 1c. *dPal rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi bkra shis kyi tshigs su bcad pa dge legs snye ma* (p. 878.4–5, fol. 441b4–5)
- 1d. *bKra shis kyi tshigs su bcad pa dge legs snye ma* (p. 879.6, fol. 442a6)
- 1e. *bKra shis* (fol. 2a3)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 879.6, fol. 442a6)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 879.6, fol. 442a6)

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c. (pp. 1–3.4, fol. 1a–2a4)

- 1a. *rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam ga pa'i dkar chag* (p. 1, fol. 1a)

No. 87 (pp. 5–56.6, fols. 3a–28b6)

- 1a. (*rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam gsum pa las*) *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho 'khor lo bcu gnyis su mngon par brjod pa'i dkyil 'khor chen po'i sgrub thabs dngos grub rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 5.3, fol. 3a3)
- 1c. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho 'khor lo bcu gnyis su mngon par brjod pa'i dkyil 'khor chen po'i sgrub thabs dngos grub rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 6.1, fol. 3b1)
- 1d. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 56.3–4, fol. 28b3–4)
- 1e. *mKha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 56.6, fol. 28b6)
- 2b. on the third day of the third month of 1419 at Sa skya (p. 56.6, fol. 28b6)
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by bShes gnyen Seng ge bzang po, who also made an offering of gold (*gser gyi me tog*); sDe snod 'dzin pa sDom brtson Shes rab rgyal mtshan provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink (p. 56.4–5, fol. 28b4–5)
4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 195, no. 1829): *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho 'khor lo bcu gnyis kyi mngon rtogs* (?); 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 240, no. 2311): *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i 'khor lo bcu gnyis su mngon par brjod pa'i dkyil 'khor chen po'i sgrub thabs dngos grub rin po che'i mdzod*

No. 88 (pp. 57.1–83.6, fols. 29a1–42a6)

- 1b. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i gtso bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 57.1, fol. 29a1)

- 1c. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i gtso bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs bskyed rim rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 57.1, fol. 29a1)
- 1d. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor gyi gtso bo'i sgrub thabs* (p. 83.5, fol. 42a5)
- 1e. *gTso bo yab yum gyi sgrub thabs* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 83.5–6, fol. 42a5–6)
- 2b. in the first month of 1434 at E waṃ chos ldan (p. 83.6, fol. 42a6)
- 2d. Rin chen grub (p. 83.6, fol. 42a6)

No. 89 (pp. 84.1–122.1, fols. 42b1–61b1)

- 1b. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha rnam kyī sngags phreng gsang sngags rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 84.1, fol. 42b1)
- 1c. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha rnam kyī sngags phreng gsang sngags rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 84.1, fol. 42b1)
- 1e. *sNgags phreng mtshan [= mchan] ma* (p. 2.1–2, fol. 1b1–2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 121.6, fol. 61a6)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 121.6, fol. 61a6)
- 2d. *dGe slong bSod nams rin chen* (p. 122.1, fol. 61b1)
- 2e. written in Tibetanised Sanskrit according to the *sādhana* of Jayasena. However, as many scribes had gradually corrupted that work, Ngor chen corrected it on the basis of many Tibetan manuscripts (*bod dpe*) and sections compiling *mantras* from the *tantras* (*rgyud kyī sngags btu ba'i skabs*). He also gave as annotations the Tibetan equivalents of the original Sanskrit *mantras* (p. 121.5–6, fol. 61a5–6).
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 165, no. 1498): *bCom ldan 'das dpal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor gyi sngags phreng gsang sngags rin po che'i mdzod*

No. 90 (pp. 122.1–135.6, fols. 61b1–68a6)

- 1b. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor chen po mchod pa'i cho ga bsod nams rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 122.1–2, fol. 61b1–2)
- 1c. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor chen po mchod pa'i cho ga bsod nams rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 122.2, fol. 61b2)
- 1d. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor mchod pa'i cho ga* (p. 135.4, fol. 68a4)
- 1e. *mChod chog* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 135.5, fol. 68a5)
- 2b. on the eighth day of the first half of the first month of 1434 at E waṃ chos ldan (p. 135.6, fol. 68a6)
- 2c. at the behest of the aspiring disciple Rin chen grub, who also provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink (p. 135.5, fol. 68a5)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1316, no. 13396): *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor mchod pa'i cho ga*

No. 91 (pp. 136.1–237.6, fols. 68b1–119a6)

- 1b. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i 'khor lo bcu gnyis su mngon par brjod pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 136.1, fol. 68b1)
- 1c. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i 'khor lo bcu gnyis su mngon par brjod pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 136.1–2, fol. 68b1–2)
- 1d. *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 237.3, fol. 119a3)

- 1e. *dKyil chog yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 237.5, fol. 119a5)
- 2b. at the time when the *dākinīs* gather (*mkha' 'gro 'du ba'i dus*) on the twenty-fifth day of the first month of 1434 at E wam chos ldan (p. 237.6, fol. 119a6)
- 2c. at the behest of sDe snod 'dzin pa chen po dKon mchog bzang po (p. 237.4, fol. 119a4)
- 2d. Byang bZang ldan pa Rin chen grub (p. 237.6, fol. 119a6)
4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 171, no. 1568 and p. 231, no. 2212): *dPal mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga (?)*

No. 92 (pp. 239–285.2, fols. 120a–143a2)

- 1a. *rNal 'byor chen po'i sgrub thabs thams cad la nye bar mkho ba'i cho ga gsang ba kun rgyan* (p. 239, fol. 120a)
- 1c. *rNal 'byor chen po'i sgrub thabs thams cad la nye bar mkho ba'i cho ga gsang ba kun rgyan* (p. 240.1, fol. 120b1)
- 1d. *rNal 'byor chen po'i sgrub thabs thams cad la nye bar mkho ba'i cho ga gsang ba kun rgyan* (pp. 284.6–285.1, fols. 142b6–143a1)
- 1e. *Tshogs 'khor gsang ba kun rgyan* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 285.1–2, fol. 143a1–2)
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests made by bShes gnyen mKhas pa Grags pa rin chen (p. 284.5–6, fol. 142b5–6)
- 2d. dGe slong bSod nams rin chen (p. 285.2, fol. 143a2)
4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 953, no. 10749 and p. 1019, no. 11544): *rNal 'byor chen po'i sgrub thabs thams cad la nye bar mkho ba'i cho ga gsang ba kun rgyan*

No. 93 (pp. 285.2–302.4, fols. 143a2–151b4)

- 1b. *Tshogs kyi 'khor lo'i cho ga kun bzang rnam rol* (p. 285.2, fol. 143a2)
- 1c. *rNal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud rnam las byung ba'i tshogs kyi 'khor lo'i cho ga kun bzang rnam rol* (p. 285.2–3, fol. 143a2–3)
- 1e. *Tshogs 'khor kun bzang rnam rol* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 302.3, fol. 151b3)
- 2b. on the twenty-fifth day of the fifth month of 1410 at dGe ldan Sa bzang (i.e., Sa bzang Monastery) (p. 302.3–4, fol. 151b3–4)
- 2c. written at the behest of Bla ma Grags pa rin chen (p. 302.1–2, fol. 151b1–2)
4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 196, no. 1831): *Tshogs kyi 'khor lo'i cho ga kun bzang rnam rol*

No. 94 (pp. 302.4–322.2, fols. 151b4–161b2)

- 1b. *Bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga bsod nams rab rgyas* (p. 302.4, fol. 151b4)
- 1c. *rJe btsun bla ma dam pa mchod pa'i cho ga bsod nams rab rgyas* (p. 302.4–5, fol. 151b4–5)
- 1d. *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rgyud rnam las gsungs pa/ grub pa'i dbang phyug chen po nā ro ta pa'i man ngag/ bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga bsod nams rab rgyas* (p. 321.6, fol. 161a6)
- 1e. *bDe mchog bla ma mchod chog* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 322.1, fol. 161b1)
- 2b. on the first day of the second month of 1424 at Sa skya (p. 322.1, fol. 161b1)
- 2d. sDe snod 'dzin pa Shākya'i rgyal mtshan (p. 322.2, fol. 161b2)

4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 655, no. 7187 and p. 656, no. 7196): rje btsun bla ma dam pa mchod pa'i cho ga bsod nams rab rgyas

No. 95 (pp. 322.2–326.2, fols. 161b2–163b2)

- 1b. bDe mchog 'khor lo'i pho brang gi rnam bshad (p. 322.2–3, fol. 161b2–3)
 1e. bDe mchog gi pho brang gi rnam gzhag (p. 2.2–3, fol. 1b2–3)
 2a. dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 326.2, fol. 163b2)
 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 230, no. 2202): bDe mchog pho brang gi rnam bzhag

No. 96 (pp. 326.2–329.3, fols. 163b2–165a3)

- 1b. mkha' spyod kyi man ngag ril bu la brten nas sgrub pa (p. 326.2, fol. 163b2)
 1e. Ril bu la brten nas mkha' spyod sgrub pa (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 97 (pp. 329.4–333.6, fols. 165a4–167a6)

- 1b. rNal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs (p. 326.2, fol. 163b2)
 1e. Nā ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 333.6, fol. 167a6)
 4. Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag (p. 11, no. 1808, text p): rDo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa'i rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgrub thabs

No. 98 (pp. 334.1–343.5, fols. 167b1–172a5)

- 1b. dPal 'khor lo sdom pa lhan cig skyes pa'i sgrub thabs byin rlabs cho ga dang bcas pa (p. 334.1, fol. 167b1)
 1c. dPal 'khor lo sdom pa lhan cig skyes pa'i sgrub pa'i thabs byin rlabs kyi cho ga dang bcas pa rdzogs pa'i rnal 'byor gsal ba (p. 334.1–2, fol. 167b1–2)
 1d. dPal bde mchog lhan cig skyes pa'i sgrub pa'i thabs byin rlabs kyi cho ga dang bcas pa (p. 343.3–4, fol. 172a3–4)
 1e. bDe mchog dkar po'i sgrub thabs byin rlabs kyi cho ga dang bcas pa (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 343.4, fol. 172a4)
 2d. dGe slong bSod nams rin chen (p. 343.5, fol. 172a5)
 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 280, no. 2748): dPal 'khor lo sdom pa lhan cig skyes pa'i sgrub thabs byin rlabs kyi cho ga dang bcas pa; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1117, no. 11105): dPal 'khor lo sdom pa lhan cig skyes pa sgrub pa'i thabs

No. 99 (pp. 343.5–356.3, fols. 172a5–178b3)

- 1b. 'Chi med tshe'i dngos grub sgrub pa'i rgyal po (p. 343.5, fol. 172a5)
 1c. 'Chi med tshe'i dngos grub sgrub pa'i gdams ngag dngos grub kyi rgyal po (p. 343.5–6, fol. 172a5–6)
 1d. 'Chi med sgrub pa'i gdams ngag 'khor lo bde mchog gi rgyud don bzhin du/ rje btsun rdo rje 'chang chen po grags pa rgyal mtshan gyis mdzad pa'i sgrub thabs kyi gsal byed (p. 355.5–6, fol. 187a5–6)
 1e. rDo rje lha mo'i tshe sgrub (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 356.1, fol. 178b1)
 2b. E waṃ chos ldan (p. 356.1–2, fol. 178b1–2)
 2c. at the urgent request of rGyud sde 'dzin pa chen po Bla ma Kun dga' legs pa (p. 355.6, fol. 178a6)
 2e. aiming for the well-being of Kun dga' legs pa (p. 356.1, fol. 178b1): (...) bskul ba po nyid kyi sku rim du dmigs te (...)

No. 100 (pp. 356.3–359.4, fols. 178b3–180a4)

- 1b. *bDe mchog sbyangs pa'i yon tan lha bcu gsum gyi mngon rtogs la dgos pa'i zin bris 'di bla mas mdzad pa yin no* (p. 356.3, fol. 178b3)
- 1e. *lHa bcu gsum gyi mngon rtogs la dgos pa'i zin bris* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)

No. 101 (pp. 359.4–362.6, fols. 180a4–181b6)

- 1b. *rDo rje mkha' 'gro'i sgrub thabs dang bde mchog nag po pa'i sgrub thabs kyi mi 'dra ba'i khyad par* (p. 359.4–5, fol. 180a4–5)
- 1e. *rDo rje mkha' 'gro'i sgrub thabs dang nag po pa'i sgrub thabs mi 'dra ba'i khyad par* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *rDo rje 'dzin pa Chos btsun bzang po* (p. 362.5, fol. 181b5)
- 2d. *rGyu mgon dBon po* (p. 362.5, fol. 181b5)

No. 102 (pp. 362.6–365.6, fols. 181b6–183a6)

- 1b. *rDo rje mkha' 'gro'i sbyin sreg* (p. 362.6–5, fol. 181b6)
- 1e. *Za byed rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sbyin sreg* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)

No. 103 (pp. 367–408.2, fols. 184a–204b2)

- 1a. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho* (p. 367, fol. 184a)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho* (p. 368.1, fol. 184b1)
- 1d. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho* (p. 407.5, fol. 204a5)
- 1e. *gSang 'dus mi bskyod pa'i sgrub thabs* (pp. 2.4–3.1, fols. 1b4–2a1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 407.6, fol. 204a6)
- 2b. *on the first day of the first half of the eleventh month of 1423 at Sa skya* (p. 408.1, fol. 204b1)
- 2c. *at the behest of Shes rab rdo rje* (p. 407.3, fol. 204a3)
- 2d. *bShes gnyen bzang po* (p. 408.2, fol. 204b2)
- 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 409, no. 4230): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 438, no. 4580): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sgrub pa'i thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 447, no. 4690): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho dang bskyed rim shin tu rnal 'byor*

No. 104 (pp. 408.2–411.5, fols. 204b2–206a5)

- 1b. *Shin tu rnal 'byor gyi khyad par sgrub thabs kyi yan lag tu bris pa'o||* (p. 408.2, fol. 204b2)
- 1e. *Shin tu rnal 'byor gyi khyad par* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 411.4–5, fol. 206a4–5)
- 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 446, no. 4681): *gSang ba 'dus pa'i bskyed rim gyi shin tu rnal 'byor*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 447, no. 4690): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub thabs dngos grub rgya mtsho dang bskyed rim shin tu rnal 'byor*

No. 105 (pp. 411.5–418.6, fols. 206a5–209b6)

- 1b. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho* (p. 411.5, fol. 206a5)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho* (p. 411.5, fol. 206a5)
- 1d. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga* (p. 418.5, fol. 206a5)
- 1e. *gTor chog* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)

- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 418.6, fol. 206a6)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 418.6, fol. 206a6)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 409, no. 4231): *gSang 'dus gtor chog 'dod rgu'i rgya mtsho*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 438, no. 4581 and p. 439, no. 4596): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i gtor ma'i cho ga 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 445, no. 4670): *gSang 'dus gtor chog 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho*

No. 106 (pp. 418.6–451.4, fols. 209b6–226a4)

- 1b. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs rnams mchod pa'i cho ga mchod sprin rgya mtsho* (p. 418.6, fol. 209b6)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs rnams mchod pa'i cho ga mchod sprin rgya mtsho* (pp. 418.6–419.1, fols. 209b6–210a1)
- 1d. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs rnams mchod pa'i cho ga mchod sprin rgya mtsho* (pp. 450.6–451.1, fols. 225b6–226a1)
- 1e. *mChod sprin* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 451.1, fol. 226a1)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 451.3, fol. 226a3)
- 2c. at the behest of a few aspiring disciples, such as sDe snod 'dzin pa rDo rje rgyal mtshan (p. 451.1–2, fol. 226a1–2)
- 2d. bShes gnyen bzang po (p. 451.3, fol. 226a3)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 410, no. 4232): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa mchod pa'i cho ga mchod sprin rgya mtsho*

No. 107 (pp. 451.4–469.5, fols. 226a4–235a5)

- 1b. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rdo rje sems dpa' mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho* (p. 451.4, fol. 226a4)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rdo rje sems dpa' mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho* (p. 451.4, fol. 226a4)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje sems dpa'i mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho* (p. 469.3, fol. 235a3)
- 1e. *rDo rje sems dpa'i mchod chog* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 469.4, fol. 235a4)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 469.5, fol. 235a5)
- 2c. at the behest of many scholars such as sDe snod 'dzin pa dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (p. 469.3–4, fol. 235a3–4)
- 2d. bShes gnyen bzang po (p. 469.5, fol. 235a5)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 410, no. 4233 and p. 445, no. 4669): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rdo rje sems dpa' mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 439, no. 4599): *dPal ldan gsang ba 'dus pa'i rdo rje sems dpa'i mchod pa'i cho ga tshogs gnyis rgya mtsho*

No. 108 (pp. 469.5–538.6, fols. 235a5–269b6)

- 1b. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga ye shes rgya mtsho* (p. 469.5–6, fol. 235a5–6)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga ye shes rgya mtsho* (p. 469.6, fol. 235a6)
- 1d. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga ye shes rgya mtsho* (p. 538.3–4, fol. 269b3–4)
- 1e. *dKyil chog* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 538.4–5, fol. 269b4–5)

- 2b. on the fifth day of the first half of the eleventh month of 1423 at Sa skya (p. 538.6, fol. 269b6)
- 2c. at the behest of bShes gnyen bSam gtan dpal (p. 538.2–3, fol. 269b2–3)
- 2d. bShes gnyen bzang po (p. 538.6, fol. 269b6)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 410, no. 4234, p. 438, no. 4582, p. 445, no. 4672, and p. 447, no. 4691): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga ye shes rgya mtsho*

No. 109 (pp. 539.1–553.2, fols. 270a1–277a2)

- 1b. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga phrin las rgya mtsho* (p. 539.1, fol. 270a1)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga phrin las rgya mtsho* (p. 539.1, fol. 270a1)
- 1d. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga phrin las rgya mtsho* (p. 552.6, fol. 276b6)
- 1e. *sByin sreg* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 553.1, fol. 277a1)
- 2b. on the seventh day of the first half of the eleventh month of 1423 at Sa skya (p. 553.2, fol. 277a2)
- 2c. at the behest of bShes gnyen bzang po, who also provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink (pp. 552.6–553.1, fols. 276b6–277a1)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 410, no. 4235 and p. 445, no. 4671): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sbyin bsreg gi cho ga 'phrin las rgya mtsho*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 439, no. 4598): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i sbyin sreg cho ga 'phrin las rgya mtsho*

No. 110 (pp. 553.2–604.2, fols. 277a2–302b2)

- 1b. 'Dir dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rab gnas kyi cho ga bkra shis rgya mtsho (p. 553.2–3, fol. 277a2–3)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga'i sgo nas rten la rab tu gnas pa bya ba'i cho ga bkra shis rgya mtsho* (p. 553.3, fol. 277a3)
- 1d. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga bkra shis rgya mtsho* (p. 603.5–6, fol. 302a5–6)
- 1e. *Rab gnas* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 604.1, fol. 302b1)
- 2b. on the first day of the first half of the first month of 1425 at Sa skya (p. 604.1–2, fol. 302b1–2)
- 2c. at the initial behest of gNas brtan Sangs rgyas rin chen and the immediate request by bShes gnyen bzang po, who also provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink (pp. 603.6–604.1, fol. 302a6–b1)
- 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 425, no. 4427): *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rab gnas kyi cho ga bkra shis rgya mtsho*

No. 111 (pp. 605–636.4, fols. 303a–318b4)

- 1a. *rDo rje phreng bar gsungs pa'i sa yongs su gzung ba'i cho ga bdud las rnam par rgyal ba* (p. 605, fol. 303a)
- 1c. *dPal rdo rje phreng bar gsungs pa'i sa yongs su gzung ba'i cho ga bdud las rnam par rgyal ba* (p. 606.1, fol. 303b.1)
- 1d. *dPal rdo rje phreng ba'i sa yongs su bzung ba'i cho ga* (p. 636.2, fol. 318b2)
- 1e. *rDo rje phreng ba'i sa bzung ba'i cho ga* (p. 3.1–2, fol. 2a1–2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 636.4, fol. 318b4)
- 2b. Sa skya (p. 636.4, fol. 318b4)

- 2c. at the behest of some aspiring disciples (p. 636.4, fol. 318b4)
 2d. dGe slong bSod nams rin chen (p. 636.4, fol. 318b4)

No. 112 (pp. 636.5–644.3, fols. 318b5–322b3)

- 1b. *dPal gshin rje'i gshed dgra nag gi rgyud la brten nas char dbab pa'i man ngag* (p. 636.5, fol. 318b5)
 1d. *dPal dgra nag gi rgyud las gsungs pa'i char 'bebs kyi cho ga* (p. 644.2, fol. 322b2)
 1e. *dGra nag gi rgyud nas gsungs pa'i char 'bebs* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 644.3, fol. 322b3)

No. 113 (pp. 644.4–660.2, fols. 322b4–330b2)

- 1b. *dPal rdo rje'i 'jigs byed kyi gtor ma'i cho ga phrin las char 'debs [= 'bebs]* (p. 644.4, fol. 322b4)
 1c. *dPal rdo rje'i 'jigs byed kyi gtor ma'i cho ga phrin las char 'bebs* (p. 644.4, fol. 322b4)
 1e. *'jigs byed kyi gtor chog* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 659.6, fol. 330a6)
 2b. on the eighth day of the ninth month of 1406 at Sa skya (p. 660.2, fol. 330b2)
 2c. at the behest of Kun dga' dge legs (p. 659.5, fol. 330a5): *'gro kun dga' byed dge legs dpal yon can|| bshes gnyen dam pa'i bka' yis bskul ba'i ngor||*
 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 490, no. 5212 and p. 491, no. 5232): *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi gtor ma'i cho ga phrin las char 'bebs*

No. 114 (pp. 660.3–665.4, fols. 330b3–333a5)

- 1b. *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim* (p. 660.3, fol. 330b3)
 1d. *dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim bla ma skyo lo tstsha ba yab sras kyi man ngag thor bu gnas pa rnam lam gyi rim pas phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa* (p. 665.4–5, fol. 333a4–5)
 1e. *'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
 2a. Shākya rgyal mtshan (p. 665.5, fol. 333a5)
 2e. as mnemonic notes (*brjed byang*) according to the words of Ngor chen (p. 665.5, fol. 333a5)
 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 510, no. 5465): *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi rdzogs rim rnal 'byor bzhi rim*

No. 115 (pp. 665.5–679.4, fols. 333a5–340a4)

- 1b. *gShin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i mngon par rtogs pa* (p. 665.5, fol. 333a5)
 1c. *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi sgrub pa'i thabs bdud rtsi'i bum pa* (p. 665.5–6, fol. 333a5–6)
 1e. *gShed dmar lha lnga'i sgrub thabs* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 679.2, fol. 340a2)
 2b. Sa skya (p. 679.2, fol. 340a2)
 2c. at the behest of sBying bdag chen po rGyal mtshan dpal and in response to the appeal of many aspiring disciples (p. 679.2–3, fol. 340a2–3)
 2d. dGe slong bSod nams rin chen (p. 679.3, fol. 340a3)
 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 521, no. 5600): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi sgrub thabs bdud rtsi 'byung ba; 'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 526, nos. 5666 and 5667): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi bsgrub pa'i thabs bdud rtsi bum pa*

No. 116 (pp. 679.4–680.1, fol. 340a4–b1)

- 1e. *De dag la tshang ba* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
3. This short section appears to be the correction to CATALOGUE (no. 115).

No. 117 (pp. 680.1–716.2, fols. 340b1–358b2)

- 1b. *dPal gshin rje'i gshed dmar po lha lnga'i sgrub thabs lung sbyor bdud rtsi'i rol mtsho* (p. 680.1–2, fol. 340b1–2)
- 1c. *dPal gshin rje'i gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi sgrub pa'i thabs lung dang sbyar ba bdud rtsi'i rol mtsho* (p. 680.2, fol. 340b2)
- 1e. *sGrub thabs kyi lung sbyor* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 715.5, fol. 358a6)
- 2b. on the first day of the fifth month of 1418 (p. 716.2, fol. 358b2)
- 2c. at the behest of Kun dga' bzang po and Grags pa dpal bzang po (pp. 715.6–716.1, fol. 358a6–b1)
- 2d. *dGe slong bSod nams rin chen* (p. 716.2, fol. 358b2)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 485, no. 5152): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi sgrub thabs lung dang sbyar ba bdud rtsi'i rol mtsho*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 520, no. 5591): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi bsgrub thabs*

No. 118 (pp. 716.2–749.6, fols. 358b2–375a6)

- 1b. *dPal gshin rje'i gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun* (p. 716.2–3, fol. 358b2–3)
- 1c. *dPal gshin rje'i gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi dkyil 'khor cho ga bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun* (p. 716.3, fol. 358b3)
- 1e. *dKyil chog* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 749.5, fol. 375a5)
- 2b. in the large *gtsug lag khang* of Sa skya (p. 749.6, fol. 375a6)
- 2c. at the behest of sByin bdag chen po rGyal mtshan dpal and in response to the immediate request by Slob dpon dPal ldan rin chen (p. 749.5–6, fol. 375a5–6)
- 2d. *dGe slong bSod nams rin chen* (p. 749.6, fol. 375a6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 516, no. 5544): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi dkyil chog bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 519, no. 5577): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i dal gyi cho ga bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 519, no. 5578): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho [= cho ga] bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 520, no. 5593): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 523, no. 5632): *dPal gshin rje'i gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyi dal gyi cho ga bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*; *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 579, no. 6296): *dPal gshin rje gshed dmar po lha lnga'i bdag nyid can gyis [= gyi] sa chog bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*

No. 119 (pp. 750.1–789.5, fols. 375b1–395a5)

- 1b. *Shin tu spros pa med pa'i khrid yig gi zhal shes dang gsung sgros rnam bris pa'i spros med mdzes rgyan* (p. 750.1, fol. 375b1)
- 1e. *sPros med mdzes rgyan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3);
- 2a. *rGyud gsum pa* (p. 789.4, fol. 395a4)

- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by sDe snod 'dzin pa Chos rgyal dpal bzang to write such a work according to the teachings of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406) (p. 789.3–4, fol. 395a3–4)
4. The same work is also preserved among the collection of manuscripts housed at the National Library of Bhutan, which are said to originate from Ngor. Its *dbu med* manuscript comprises nineteen folios and on the title page the manual is referred to as *Shin tu spros med kyi khrid yig*. At the end (fols. 18b7–19a4), the manuscript also contains Ngor chen's supplication to the lineage masters of that teaching, the *Shin tu spros pa med pa'i man ngag gi bla ma rgyud pa la gsol ba 'debs pa* (CATALOGUE, no. 19). 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 520, no. 5586): *sPros med zin bris (?)*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 524, no. 5644): *Shin tu spros pa med pa'i khrid yig zhal shes dang gsung sgros rnam bris pa'i zin bris spros med mdzes rgyan*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 684, no. 7536): *Shin tu spros pa med pa'i khrid yig zhal shes dang gsung sgros rnam bris pa'i spros med mdzes rgyan*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 703, no. 7752): *rDo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa'i spros med mdzes par byed rgyan*

No. 120 (pp. 789.5–792.3, fols. 395a5–396b3)

- 1b. *rGyud gsum lam gyi rim pa'i bsdus don* (p. 789.5, fol. 395a5)
- 1d. *rGyud gsum gyi lam gyi rim pa'i bsdus don* (p. 792.3, fol. 396b3)
- 1e. *rGyud gsum lam gyi rim pa'i bsdus don* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3); an annotation remarks that the subsequent titles (i.e., CATALOGUE, nos. 120–123) are not recorded in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3): *'di man chad gsan yig la med*
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 792.3, fol. 396b3)
4. The work has also been included in the *Pod dmar ma* as the *rGyud gsum lam gyi sa bcad* and *rGyud gsum gyi lam gyi rim pa'i sa bcad* (*Po ti dmar chung*, pp. 595–598 and *Pod dmar ma*, pp. 416.3–419.3).

No. 121 (pp. 792.4–810.1, fols. 396b4–405b1)

- 1b. *dBang gi rim pa rab tu gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me* (p. 792.4, fol. 396b4)
- 1c. *dBang gi rim pa rab tu gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me* (p. 792.4, fol. 396b4)
- 1d. *dBang gi rim pa rab tu gsal bar byed pa rin po che'i sgron ma* (p. 809.5, fol. 405a5)
- 1e. *dBang gi rim pa rab tu gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2a. *Kun dga'i ming can* (p. 809.6, fol. 405a6)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of 1404 in the *gtsug lag khang* of Sa skya (p. 809.6, fol. 405a6)
- 2c. written at the behest of dGe bshes brTson 'grus bzang po (p. 809.5–6, fol. 405a5–6)

No. 122 (pp. 810.1–850.6, fols. 405b1–425b6)

- 1b. *gSang 'dus rim lnga'i khrid yig* (p. 810.1, fol. 405b1)
- 1c. *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rim pa lnga'i man ngag gi khrid yig gzung 'jug gsal ba'i sgron me* (p. 810.1, fol. 405b1)
- 1e. *gSang 'dus rim lnga'i khrid yig* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)

No. 123 (pp. 851.1–861.3, fols. 426a1–431a3)

- 1b. *rDo rje phreng ba'i thig rnam phyogs gcig bsdus pa* (p. 851.1, fol. 426a1)
- 1e. *rDo rje phreng ba'i lugs kyi thig rtsa* (p. 3.3–4, fol. 2a3–4)

No. 124 (pp. 861.4–863.6, fols. 431a4–432a6)

- 1b. *Bla ma dge bzang ba'i dris lan* (p. 861.4, fol. 431a4)
- 1e. *Bla ma dge bzang ba'i dris lan* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
3. two replies to *Bla ma dGe bzang* grouped under one title

No. 124.1. (pp. 861.4–863.2, fols. 431a4–432a2)

- 2a. *dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 863.2, fol. 432a2)
- 2b. *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 863.2, fol. 432a2)

No. 124.2 (p. 863.2–6, fol. 432a2–6)

- 2b. *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 863.6, fol. 432a6)

Vol. 4 (a)**d. (pp. 1–3.6, fols. 1a–2a6)**

- 1a. *rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam a pa'i dkar chag* (p. 1, fol. 1a)

No. 125 (pp. 5–37.3, fols. 3a–19a3)

- 1a. (*rGyal bas dri med lung gis bsngags pa'i rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i zhabs kyi gsung rab glegs bam bzhi pa las*) *dPal kun rig gi dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs sgrub pa rnam sel* (p. 5.3, fol. 3a3)
- 1c. *dPal kun rig gi dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs sgrub pa rnam sel* (p. 6a1, fol. 3b1)
- 1e. *dPal kun rig dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi sgrub thabs* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 37.2, fol. 19a2)
- 2b. on the first day of the fourth month of 1442 at *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 37.2–3, fol. 19a2–3)
- 2d. *Yo ga pa Chos skyong bzang po* (p. 37.3, fol. 19a3)
3. figure left margin (p. 6, fol. 3b): *mkhyen brtse nus pa'i* [two syllables illegible] *yis|| ngan 'gro'i sgrub sbyong rnam snang mdzad||*; figure right margin (p. 6, fol. 3b): *gsang ba'i bdag po sa dbang gi|| gar mkhan po 'am(?) rab gsal zla||*; figure left margin (p. 7, fol. 4a): *rnam mang rgyud sde rgya mtsho yi|| mdzod 'dzin rab 'byor khyod(?) la 'dud||*; figure right margin (p. 7, fol. 4a): *rnal 'byor rgyud kyi dgongs don kun|| 'grol byed kun dga' snying po'i zhabs||*
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 536, no. 5790): *dPal kun rig gi dkyil 'khor yongs rdzogs kyi bsgrub thabs sgrub pa rnam sel*

No. 126 (pp. 37.3–110.4, fols. 19a3–55b4)

- 1b. *dPal kun rig gzhan phan mtha' yas* (p. 37.3–4, fol. 19a3–4)
- 1c. *dPal kun rig gi ras ris la brten pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga gzhan phan mtha' yas* (p. 6a1, fol. 3b1)
- 1d. *Kun rig rtsa ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga gzhan phan mtha' yas* (p. 110.1, fol. 55b1)
- 1e. *gZhan phan mtha' yas* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 110.2, fol. 55b2)
- 2b. on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month of 1442 at *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 110.4, fol. 55b4)
- 2c. in response to the initial request by *lHa rigs Byang chub sems dpa' Gu ge Chos kyi rgyal po*—that is, the *Gu ge king Khri Nam mkha'i dbang po Phun tshogs lde* (b. 1409)—, the subsequent requests by very many scholars, and, finally, the repeated

requests of sDe snod 'dzin pa bSam 'grub bzang po, who also provided the preconditions for writing (*yi ge'i rkyen nye bar sbyar ba*), that is, paper and ink (p. 110.2–4, fol. 55b2–4)

4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 536, no. 5787): *Kun rig gi dkyil 'khor gzhan phan mtha' yas*

No. 127 (pp. 110.4–121.6, fols. 55b4–61a6)

- 1b. *rDul tshon kha skong ngam nyer mkho* (p. 110.4, fol. 55b4)
 1d. *Kun rig rtsa ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga la nye bar mkho ba* (p. 121.5, fol. 61a5)
 1e. *rDul tshon kha skong* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 121.6, fol. 61a6)
 2b. *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 121.6, fol. 61a6)
 2d. *sDe snod 'dzin pa bSam 'grub bzang po* (p. 121.6, fol. 61a6)
 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1090, no. 10788): *Kun rig gzhan phan mtha' yas la nye bar mkho ba'i cho ga*

No. 128 (pp. 121.6–129.6, fols. 61a6–65a6)

- 1b. *rGyud sde 'og ma gsum la nye bar mkho ba'i cha gsum gtor ma* (p. 121.6, fol. 61a6)
 1d. *rGyud sde 'og ma gsum gyi cho ga la nye bar mkho ba'i yan lag gtor ma cha gsum gyi cho ga bsdus pa* (p. 129.5, fol. 65a5)
 1e. *Cha gsum gtor ma* (p. 2.1, fol. 1b1)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 129.5–6, fol. 65a5–6)
 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 562, no. 6101): *rNal 'byor rgyud kyi gtor ma ca [= cha] gsum mdor bsdus*

No. 129 (pp. 129.6–131.6, fols. 65a6–66a6)

- 1b. *dKyiil 'khor sgo sbrag gi bshad pa* (p. 129.6, fol. 65a6)
 1e. *dKyiil 'khor sgo sbrag gi bshad pa* (p. 2.1–2, fol. 1b1–2)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 131.6, fol. 66a6)
 2e. to eliminate doubts of some ignorant persons who falsely imagine themselves to be practitioners of the Secret Mantra (p. 131.6, fol. 66a6): (...) *gsang sngags par rlom pa'i rmongs pa kha cig the tshom bsal ba'i phyir du!* (...)

No. 130 (pp. 133–202.2, fols. 67a–101b2)

- 1a. *sPyod pa'i rgyud spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa legs par bshad pa'i sgron me* (p. 133, fol. 67a)
 1c. *sPyod pa'i rgyud spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa legs par bshad pa'i sgron me* (p. 134.1, fol. 67b1)
 1d. *sPyod pa'i rgyud spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa legs par bshad pa'i sgron me* (p. 201.4, fol. 101a4)
 1e. *sPyod rgyud spyi'i rnam gzhag* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 201.6, fol. 101a6)
 2b. on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of 1420 at Sa skya (p. 202.2, fol. 101b2)
 2d. *dGe slong bSod nams rin chen* (p. 202.2, fol. 101b2)
 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 558, no. 6063): *sPyod pa'i rgyud spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa legs par bshad pa'i sgron me*

No. 131 (pp. 202.2–415.6, fols. 101b2–208a6)

- 1b. *Bya rgyud spyi'i rnam par bshad pa legs par bshad pa'i rgya mtsho* (p. 202.2–3, fol. 101b2–3)

- 1c. *Bya ba'i rgyud spyi'i rnam par bshad pa legs par bshad pa'i rgya mtsho* (p. 202.3, fol. 101b3)
- 1d. *Bya rgyud spyi'i rnam par gzhang pa* (p. 415.2, fol. 108a2); *Legs par bsgrub pa'i bstan bcos legs par bshad pa'i rgya mtsho* (p. 415.4–5, fol. 108a4–5)
- 1e. *Bya rgyud spyi'i rnam bshad* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 415.6, fol. 208a6)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of 1420 at Sa skya (p. 415.6, fol. 208a6)
- 2d. *dGe slong bSod nams rin chen* (p. 415.6, fol. 208a6)

No. 132 (pp. 417–430.1, fols. 209a–215b1)

- 1a. *bCom ldan 'das mi 'khrugs pa'i sgo nas gshin po rjes su gzung ba'i cho ga* (p. 417, fol. 209a)
- 1e. *Mi 'khrugs pa'i sgo nas gshin po rjes 'dzin* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)

No. 133 (pp. 430.1–435.2, fols. 215b1–218a2)

- 1b. *Dri med gsang sngags kyi dkyil 'khor gyi bsgom bzlas* (p. 430.1, fol. 215b1)
- 1d. *gTsong tor dri med gsang sngags kyi dkyil 'khor lha nyi shu rtsa lnga'i sgrub thabs* (p. 435.1, fol. 218a1)
- 1e. *Dri med lha nyi shu rtsa lnga'i sgrub thabs* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)
- 2a. *bSod nams rin chen* (p. 435.2, fol. 218a2)
- 2d. *bSod nams rin chen* (p. 435.2, fol. 218a2)
- 2e. set down in handwriting by *bSod nams rin chen* in the presence of *Ngor chen* according to the latter's instructions (p. 435.1–2, fol. 218a1–2): (...) *rgyud sde'i dbang phyug mkhas grub khyung po lhas pas mdzad pa'i dkyil chog gi zhabs tog tu dmigs nas drin chen bla ma dam pa'i zhal las ji ltar 'byung ba bzhin bdag bsod nams rin chen gyis rje nyid kyi spyang sngar sug bris su bkod pa'o||*

No. 134 (pp. 435.2–471.4, fols. 218a2–236a4)

- 1b. *'Phags pa 'od zer dri ma med pa rnam par dag pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dge legs kun 'byung* (p. 430.2–3, fol. 218a2–3)
- 1c. *'Phags pa 'od zer dri ma med pa rnam par dag pa'i 'od kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga dge legs kun 'byung* (p. 435.3, fol. 218a3)
- 1e. *'Od zer dri med kyi dkyil chog* (p. 2.2, fol. 1b2)

No. 135 (pp. 471.4–473.4, fols. 236a4–237a4)

- 1b. *A ra pa tsa na'i rjes gnang* (p. 471.4, fol. 236a4)
- 1e. *A ra pa tsa na'i rjes gnang* (p. 2.2–3, fol. 1b2–3)

No. 136 (pp. 473.4–475.1, fols. 237a4–238a1)

- 1b. *'Od dpag med kyi tshe sgrub* (p. 473.4, fol. 237a4)
- 1e. *'Od dpag med kyi tshe sgrub* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
4. This work is also included as a supplement in the *Pod dmar ma* under the title *Tshe sgrub kyi man ngag zab mo* (*Pod dmar ma*, pp. 446.2–447.6). A colophon was added giving the author as *rDo rje 'chang Kun dga' bzang po* (*Pod dmar ma*, p. 447.5–6): *rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa'o||*. At the very end of the work, as included in the *sDe dge* recension of *Ngor chen's* collected works, a mistake was made by the editors or carvers who skipped two passages (pp. 474.6–475.1, fols. 237b6–238a1): *mi dmigs par bsam pa gang rung byas nas| dge ba 'di yis myur du bdag|| nas| de*

yis la 'god par shog||; cf. the *Pod dmar ma* (p. 447.4–5): *mi dmigs par bsam pa gang rung byas nas| dge ba 'di yis myur du bdag|| tshe dpag med mgon 'grub gyur nas|| 'gro bag cig kyang ma lus pa|| de yis la 'god par shog||*.

No. 137 (pp. 475.1–476.6, fol. 238a1–b6)

- 1b. *'Phags pa seng ge sgra'i sgrub thabs* (p. 475.1–2, fol. 238a1–2)
- 1e. *Seng ge sgra'i sgrub thabs* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
- 2e. given or sent to Phu gsum pa (p. 476.6, p. 238b6): *phu gsum pa la gnang ba'o||*

No. 138 (pp. 476.6–477.2, fols. 238b6–239a2)

- 1b. *sNa tshogs yum gyi sgrub thabs* (p. 476.6, fol. 238b6)
- 1e. *sNa tshogs yum gyi sgrub thabs* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
- 2e. given or sent to a monk (p. 477.2, p. 239a2): *zhes pa grwa pa gcig la gnang ngo||*

No. 139 (pp. 477.2–478.5, fol. 239a2–b5)

- 1b. *rMa bya chen mo'i sgrub thabs* (p. 477.2, fol. 239a2)
- 1e. *rMa bya chen mo'i sgrub thabs* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)

No. 140 (pp. 478.5–480.2, fols. 239b5–240b2)

- 1b. *So sor 'brang ma'i sgrub thabs* (p. 478.5, fol. 239b5)
- 1e. *So sor 'brang ma'i sgrub thabs* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzung po* (p. 480.2, fol. 240b2)
- 4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1129, no. 11254): *So so [= sor] 'brangs ma'i sgrub thabs; 'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1224, no. 12394): *rJe btsun sgröl ma'i sgrub thabs| Sher phyin dkar mo'i sgrub thabs| So sor 'brang ma'i sgrub thabs| rNam rgyal rjes gnang*

No. 141 (pp. 480.3–481.4, fols. 240b3–241a4)

- 1b. *rTa mgrin gyi sgrub thabs* (p. 480.3, fol. 240b3)
- 1e. *rTa mgrin gyi sgrub thabs* (p. 2.3, fol. 1b3)
- 2e. for the benefit of A ka e jo (p. 481.4, fol. 241a4)

No. 142 (pp. 481.4–493.2, fols. 241a4–247a2)

- 1b. *bDe gshegs brgyad kyi mchod pa'i cho ga* (p. 481.4, fol. 241a4)
- 1e. *sMan bla'i mchod chog* (p. 2.3–4, fol. 1b3–4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzung po* (p. 493.2, fol. 247a2)
- 2d. *dGe slong bSod nams rin chen* (p. 493.2, fol. 247a2)
- 2e. for the benefit of bSod nams rin chen (p. 492.6, fol. 246b6). Though this ritual was extremely popular, there were very few people who performed it in a correct way and thus Ngor chen composed the work for their benefit (p. 493.1–2, fol. 247a1–2).

No. 143 (pp. 493.2–498.3, fols. 247a2–249b3)

- 1b. *dBu ma lugs kyi sems bskyed rang gi [= gis] blang ba'i cho ga* (p. 493.2–3, fol. 247a2–3)
- 1e. *Sems bskyed rang gis blang pa'i cho ga* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)

No. 144 (pp. 498.3–502.6, fols. 249b3–251b6)

- 1b. *gSo sbyong rang gis blang ba'i cho ga* (p. 498.3–4, fol. 249b3–4)
- 1e. *gSo sbyong rang gis blang pa'i cho ga* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)

No. 145 (pp. 503.1–507.3, fols. 252a1–254a3)

- 1b. *mChod sbyin chen mo'i zin bris* (p. 503.1, fol. 252a1)
- 1e. *mChod sbyin chen po'i zin bris* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)

No. 146 (pp. 507.3–508.3, fol. 254a3–b3)

- 1b. *gTor chen gyi lhan thabs* (p. 507.3, fol. 254a3)
- 1e. *gTor chen gyi lhan thabs* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *rDo rje 'chang Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 508.3, fol. 254b3): *rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang pos mdzad pa rdzogs soll*; the colophon appears to have been added by another person

No. 147 (pp. 508.3–512.6, fols. 254b3–256b6)

- 1b. *gSer sku rdo rje 'chang chen du mdzad pa* (p. 508.3, fol. 254b3)
- 1e. *gSer sku rdo rje 'chang bzhengs tshul* (p. 2.4, fol. 1b4)
- 2a. *Ā nanta bha dra* (p. 512.6, fol. 256b6)

No. 148 (pp. 512.6–513.6, fols. 256b6–257a6)

- 1b. *gNod sbyin gyi 'khor lo'i sngags la zhus dag mdzad pa* (pp. 512.6–513.1, fol. 256b6–257a1)
- 1e. *gNod sbyin gyi 'khor lo'i sngags la zhus dag mdzad pa* (pp. 2.4–3.1, fols. 1b4–2a1)
- 2e. colophon unclear (p. 513.5–6, fol. 257a5–6): *zhes pa'i sngags 'di rnams mus pa'i lha chen gyi 'khor lo 'bri dus/ rje nyid kyis zhu dag mdzad nas dag par yod pa 'di bzhin ring thung 'dogs 'brel rnams ma nor par ci lta ba bzhin bri'o||*; the colophon appears to have been added by another person. My reading suggests that the *mantras* were originally written by Mus chen and corrected by Ngor chen.

No. 149 (pp. 513.6–516.1, fols. 257a6–258b1)

- 1b. *dGe tshul gyi bslab bya mdor bsdu pa rags sdom bcu'i 'bru 'grel* (pp. 513.6–516.1, fol. 257a6–257a1)
- 1e. *Rags sdom bcu'i 'bru 'brel* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)

No. 150 (pp. 516.1–537.6, fols. 258b1–269a6)

- 1b. *bKa' 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag bstan pa gsal ba'i sgron me* (p. 516.1, fol. 258b1)
- 1c. *sTon pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi gsung rab rin po che 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag/ bstan pa gsal ba'i sgron me* (p. 516.1–2, fol. 258b1–2)
- 1e. *bKa' 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2e. The production of the *bKa' 'gyur* was sponsored by dPon po A ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan (1388–ca. 1456), that is, A ma dpal, king of Glo bo (p. 518.2–5, fol. 259b2–5).
- 3. The catalogue does not cover the entire *bKa' 'gyur*, ending with the following section (p. 537.6, fol. 269a6): *bde bar shegs pa'i gsung rab bka' 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag bstan pa gsal ba'i sgron me las/ gzungs 'bum gyi mtshan gyi rnam grangs bshad pa ste skabs gsum pa'o||*.

No. 151 (pp. 537.6–539.6, fols. 269a6–270a6)

- 1b. *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* (p. 537.6, fol. 269a6)
- 1e. *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)

No. 152 (pp. 540.1–571.3, fols. 270b1–286a3)

- 1b. *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (p. 540.1, fol. 270b1)
- 1c. *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag gsang sngags bstan pa rgyas byed* (p. 540.1, fol. 270b1)
- 1e. *rDo rje theg pa'i bstan 'gyur dkar chag* (p. 3.1, fol. 2a1)
- 2b. in the *gtsug lag khang* of Brag dkar Monastery in Glo bo (p. 571.2, fol. 286a2)
- 2e. The production of the *bsTan 'gyur* was sponsored by sByin bdag chen po bZang po rgyal mtshan, that is, the Glo bo king A ma dpal (p. 570.4–6, fol. 285b4–6).

No. 153 (pp. 571.3–607.4, fols. 286a3–304a4)

- 1b. *bsTan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag thub bstan rgyas pa'i nyi 'od* (p. 571.3, fol. 286a3)
- 1c. *bsTan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag thub bstan rgyas pa'i nyi 'od* (p. 571.3, fol. 286a3)
- 1d. *Theg pa chen po mdo'i phyogs kyi bstan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag* (p. 607.2–3, fol. 304a2–3)
- 1e. *bsTan bcos 'gyur ro 'tshal gyi dkar chag thub bstan rgyas pa'i nyi 'od* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 607.3, fol. 304a3)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the first half of the eleventh month of 1447 in the large *gtsug lag khang* of dPal Brag dkar Theg chen gling Monastery in Glo bo (p. 607.3, fol. 304a3)
- 2e. The project was sponsored by Drung chen A mgon bzang po (1420–1482), and when Ngor chen wrote his catalogue, the non-tantric sections of the *bsTan 'gyur* had been completed and also consecrated (p. 606.2–4, fol. 303b2–4).

No. 154 (pp. 607.4–617.6, fols. 304a4–309a6)

- 1b. *rJe btsun sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag* (p. 607a4, fol. 304a4)
- 1c. *rJe btsun sa skya pa 'gran zla dang bral ba'i grub chen gsum gyi gsung rab rin po che rnam kyī mtshan gyi rnam grangs gsal bar bshad pa dkar chag rin po che'i lde mig* (p. 607a4–5, fol. 304a4–5)
- 1e. *rJe btsun gong ma gsum gyi bka' 'bum gyi dkar chag* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2c. at the behest of Kun dga' gzhon nu, the patron of the project, and his nephew gZhon nu bzang po (p. 617.3–4, fol. 309a3–4)

No. 155 (pp. 619–660.2, fols. 310a–330b2)

- 1a. *sPring yig slob ma la phan pa* (p. 619, fol. 310a)
- 1c. *Rang gi gra [= grwa] pa spyi la gdams pa slob ma la phan pa* (p. 620.1, fol. 310b1)
- 1d. *Rang gi gra [= grwa] pa spyi la gdams pa'i spring yig slob ma la phan pa* (p. 659.6, fol. 330a6)
- 1e. *Rang gi grwa pa spyi la gdams pa* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)
- 2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (p. 660.1, fol. 330b1)
- 2b. on the fifth day of the first half of the first month of 1425 at Sa skya (pp. 660.1–2, fol. 330b1–2)
- 2d. bShes gnyen bzang po (p. 660.2, fol. 330b2)
4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1599, no. 18093 and p. 1603, no. 18146): *sPrings yig slob ma la phan pa*

No. 156 (pp. 660.2–668.3, fols. 330b2–334b3)

- 1b. *Sa bzang bsod nams dpal gyi dris lan* (p. 660.2, fol. 330b2)
- 1e. *Sa bzang bsod nams dpal gyi dris lan* (p. 3.2, fol. 2a2)

4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1585, no. 17908): *rDo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po la ldan ma bsod nams dpal gyi zhus lan(?)*

No. 157 (pp. 668.3–681.2, fols. 334b3–341a2)

- 1b. *Lo tstsha ba rdo rje dpal gyi dris lan* (p. 668.3, fol. 334b3)
 1e. *Lo tstsha ba rdo rje dpal (...) de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.2–3, fol. 2a2–3)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 681.2, fol. 341a2)
 2c. encouraged by the words of *Lo tstsha ba rDo rje dpal* (p. 681.1–2, fol. 341a1–2)

No. 158 (pp. 681.2–690.1, fols. 341a2–345b1)

- 1b. *Slob dpon dge 'dun mgon gyi dris lan* (p. 681.2–3, fol. 341a2–3)
 1e. *dGe 'dun mgon (...) de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 690.1, fol. 345b1)
 2b. *Sa skya* (p. 690.1, fol. 345b1)
 2e. in reply to questions by *Slob dpon dGe 'dun mgon* (p. 690.1, fol. 345b1)

No. 159 (pp. 690.2–692.6, fols. 345b2–346b6)

- 1b. *A mo bha'i [= gha'i] dris lan* (p. 690.2, fol. 345b2)
 1e. *A mo gha (...) de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
 2c. *dPal kye rdo rje'i sgrub [= sgrub] thabs kyi ṭī ka'i skabs gyi [= kyi] dogs spong* (p. 690.2, fol. 345b2)
 2e. sent in reply to questions by *bShes gnyen dam pa*, that is, *Don yod dpal* (1398–1484) (p. 692.5–6, fol. 346b5–6)
 3. Under the title *Ṭī ka'i dogs spong*, the same work has also been included in the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 28, pp. 394–396) and *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 8, pp. 110–112.12).
 4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 334, no. 3351): *Ṭīk ka'i dogs spong*

No. 160 (pp. 692.6–697.2, fols. 346b6–349a2)

- 1b. *Chen po chos rin gyi dris lan* (p. 692.6, fol. 346b6)
 1e. *Chen po chos rin (...) de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
 2b. sent on the twenty-sixth day (p. 697.2, fol. 349b2)

No. 161 (p. 697.2–6, fol. 349a2–6)

- 1b. *Gling 'od zer rgyal mtshan gyis [= gyi] dris lan* (p. 697.2, fol. 349a2)
 1e. *Gling 'od zer rgyal mtshan (...) de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
 2b. *E waṃ chos ldan* (p. 697.6, fol. 349a6)

No. 162 (pp. 698.1–704.2, fols. 349b1–352b2)

- 1b. *bSam grub rgyal mtshan gyi dris lan* (p. 698.1, fol. 349b1)
 1e. *bSam 'grub rgyal mtshan (...) de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
 2b. sent on the twenty-seventh day from *Brag dkar Monastery* (p. 704.2, fol. 352b2)

No. 163 (pp. 704.2–705.6, fols. 352b2–353a6)

- 1b. *Slob dpon bsam bzang gi dris lan* (p. 704.2, fol. 352b2)
 1e. *Slob dpon bsam bzang (...) de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)

No. 164 (pp. 706.1–708.3, fols. 353b1–354b3)

- 1b. *dBu ma pa la gdams pa* (p. 706.1, fol. 353b1)

- 1e. *dBu ma pa shes rab rgya mtsho de rnams kyi dris lan* (p. 3.3, fol. 2a3)
- 2b. sent from E waṃ Ri khrod (i.e., Ngor E waṃ chos ldan) (p. 708.2, fol. 354b4)

No. 165 (pp. 708.3–710.2, fols. 354b3–355b2)

- 1b. *Ratna shri la gdams pa* (p. 708.3, fol. 354b3)
- 1e. *Ratna shri la springs pa* (p. 3.3–4, fol. 2a3–4)
- 2b. sent on the twenty-third day of the twelfth month from E waṃ chos ldan (p. 710.1, fol. 355b2)

No. 166 (pp. 710.2–711.6, fols. 355b2–356a6)

- 1b. *Nyag re gsang sngags la springs pa* (p. 710.2, fol. 355b2)
- 1e. *gSang sngags pa kun dga' gzhon nu la springs pa* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 3. sent from Kun dga' bzang po to Kun dga' gzhon nu (p. 710.3–4, fol. 355b3–4)

No. 167 (p. 712.1–6, fol. 356b1–6)

- 1b. *Bla ma sangs rgyal mtshan la springs pa* (p. 712.1, fol. 356b1)
- 1e. *Bla ma sangs rgyal mtshan la springs pa gnyis* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 2a. *Chos smra ba Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 712.6, fol. 356b6)
- 2e. sent by Kun dga' bzang po to Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (p. 712.6, fol. 356b6)

No. 168 (pp. 712.6–713.4, fols. 356b6–357a4)

- 1b. *Sangs rgyal mtshan la springs pa* (p. 712.6, fol. 356b6)
- 1e. *Bla ma sangs rgyal mtshan la springs pa gnyis* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)
- 2a. *Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 713.4, fol. 357a4)
- 2e. eulogy (*bsngags pa*) to bShes gnyen Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (p. 713.4, fol. 357a4)

No. 169 (p. 713.4–5, fol. 357a4–5)

- 1b. *dGe slong bsod nams rin chen la springs pa* (p. 713.4, fol. 357a4)
- 1e. *bSod nams rin chen la springs pa shlo ka gcig* (p. 3.4, fol. 2a4)

No. 170 (pp. 713.5–714.6, fol. 357a5–b6)

- 1b. *rGyal mo rong pa bkra shis dpal la gdams pa* (p. 713.5, fol. 357a5)
- 1e. *rGyal rong pa bkra shis dpal (...) de rnams la gdams pa re re* (p. 3.4–5, fol. 2a4–5)
- 2b. written on the eighth day of the first half of the second month of the horse year (i.e., 1414 or 1426) at Sa skya (p. 714.6, fol. 357b6)
- 2e. a parting or farewell teaching (*'gro chos*) for rGyal mo rong pa bKra shis dpal (p. 714.6, fol. 357b6)
- 3. given by Kun dga'i ming can Shākya'i dGe slong to bKra shis dpal (p. 713.6, fol. 357a6)

No. 171 (pp. 714.6–715.6, fols. 357b6–358a6)

- 1b. *Blo bzang la gdams pa* (p. 714.6, fol. 357b6)
- 1e. *sGrub pa po blo bzang la (...) de rnams la gdams pa re re* (p. 3.4–5, fol. 2a4–5)
- 3. instructions for Blo gros bzang po (p. 715.1, fol. 358a1)

No. 172 (pp. 715.6–716.6, fol. 358a6–b6)

- 1b. *Nyag re sangs rgyas grags la gdams pa* (p. 715.6, fol. 358a6)
- 1e. *Nyag re sangs rgyas grags (...) de rnams la gdams pa re re* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)

3. instructions by Kun dga'i ming can to dGe slong Sangs rgyas grags (pp. 715.6–716.1, fol. 358a6–b1)

No. 173 (pp. 716.6–717.6, fols. 358b6–359a6)

- 1b. *dPon po rgyal mtshan dpal yum sras bcas la gdams pa* (pp. 716.6–717.1, fols. 358b6–359a1)
- 1e. *dPon po rgyal mtshan dpal yum sras (...)* *de rnams la gdams pa re re* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)
3. instructions for the ruler—that is, rGyal mtshan dpal from the 'Bring mtshams branch of the house of rGyal rtse—along with his wife and son or sons (*mi dbang yum sras bcas*) (p. 717.1–2, fol. 359a1–2)

No. 174 (pp. 717.6–720.5, fols. 359a6–360b5)

- 1b. *Ya tshe rgyal po <ha sti> [= hasti] rā dza yab yum sras bcas la gdams pa* (pp. 717.6–718.1, fol. 359a6–b1)
- 1e. *Ya tshe rgyal po hasti rā dza yab yum sras bcas (...)* *de rnams la gdams pa re re* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)
3. Kun dga' bzang po addresses Chos kyi rgyal po Hasti rā dza (i.e., Hastirāja alias Bālrāja), his eldest son A ru rā dza dpal, and his queen Dza gad smal (p. 718.2–4, fol. 359b.2–4)

No. 175 (pp. 720.5–721.1, fols. 360b5–361a1)

- 1b. *Ya tshe blon po la gdams pa* (p. 720b5, fol. 360b5)
- 1e. *De'i blon po la (...)* *de rnams la gdams pa re re* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)
- 2b. sent on an auspicious day (p. 721.1, fol. 361a1)
3. instructions for A ya dBang phyug bkra shis (p. 720.6, fol. 360b6)
According to the title lists of Ngor chen's collected works introduced in Part Five, Ngor chen sent both one verse of instructions to a minister of the Ya tshe king and separate instructions to A ya dBang phyug bkra shis, who might be the same person as that minister.¹⁷ Here in the sDe dge recension of Ngor chen's collected works, these two are apparently compiled as one work. Only the first work features a title (*Ya tshe blon po la gdams pa*), and the second work follows the former, separated by an empty space of about four syllables; see the *Ngor chen gyi bka' 'bum* (vol. 4, p. 720.5–6/fol. 360b5–6 and pp. 720.6–721.1/fols. 360b5–361a1), respectively.

No. 176 (pp. 721.2–722.2, fol. 361a2–b2)

- 1b. *Thar pa ye shes la springs pa* (p. 721.2, fol. 361a2)
- 1e. *Thar pa ye shes te de rnams la gdams pa re re* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)
- 2b. sent on the fifteenth day of the third month of the tiger year (i.e., either 1434 or 1446) from E waṃ chos ldan (p. 722.1–2, fol. 361b1–2)
3. addressed to dPon rgan Thar pa ye shes (p. 721.2, fol. 361a2), who is also addressed as sponsor (*sbyin bdag*) (p. 721.6, fol. 361a6)

¹⁷ See the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (p. 347.12–13): *de'i blon po la gdams pa sho lo ka gcig/ a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/*; *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 307.5): *de'i blon po la gdams pa'i sho lo ka gcig/ a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/*; *sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 118.3): *de'i slob dpon la gdams pa sho lo ka gcig/ a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/*; *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, p. 491.1–2): *de'i blon po la gdams pa shloka gcig/ a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/*; and *Ngor chen gyi gsung 'bum dkar chag* (fol. 2b4): *de'i blon po la gdams pa/ a ya dbang phyug bkra shis la gdams pa/*.

No. 177 (pp. 722.2–723.4, fols. 361b2–362a4)

- 1b. *Slob dpon bzod pa la bstod pa* (p. 722.2, fol. 361b2)
- 1d. *Yang dag pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen bzod chen phyogs las rnam rgyal la bstod pa* (p. 723.4, fol. 362a4)
- 1e. *Slob dpon bzod pa la bstod pa* (p. 3.5, fol. 2a5)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 723.4, fol. 362a4)

No. 178 (pp. 723.4–725.6, fols. 362a4–363a6)

- 1b. *Phyi'i gtam bshad legs po cig* (p. 723.4, fol. 362a4)
- 1e. *Phyi'i gtam* (p. 3.5–6, fol. 2a5–6)

No. 179 (pp. 725.6–728.4, fols. 363a6–364b4)

- 1b. *Nang gi yas gtam* (p. 725.6, fol. 363a6)
- 1e. *Nang gi yas gtam* (p. 3.6, fol. 2a6)

No. 180 (pp. 728.4–729.2, fols. 364b4–365a2)

- 1b. [*Theg pa chen po'i smon lam?*]¹⁸
- 1c. *na mo ratna tra yā ya| phun tshogs mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer stong ldan pas|| thub bstan padma'i tshal brgya 'byed mdzad pa|| dpal ldan bla ma rgyal ba sras bcas kyis|| rgya chen smon lam 'grub par mdzad du gsoll||* (p. 728.4–5, fol. 364b4–5)

No. 181 (pp. 729.2–732.6, fols. 365a2–366b6)

- 1b. *gSer 'od dam pa las btus pa'i smon lam* (p. 729.2–3, fol. 365a2–3)
- 1e. *gSer 'od dam pa las btus pa'i smon lam* (p. 3.6, fol. 2a6)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (p. 732.6, fol. 366b6)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1636, no. 18561): *gSer 'od dam chos las btus pa'i smon lam*

No. 182 (pp. 733.1–764.1, fols. 367a1–382b1)

- 1b. *Dril bu pa'i lus dkyil gyi bshad pa* (p. 733.1, fol. 367a1)
- 1c. *dPal 'khor lo bde mchog lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs kyi dka' ba'i gnas kyi mtha' rnam par dpyad pa| 'khrul 'joms nyi ma'i 'od zer* (p. 733.1, fol. 367a1)
- 1e. *Dril bu pa'i lus dkyil gyi bshad pa* (p. 3.6, fol. 2a6)
3. According to an annotation, this teaching is not recorded in Ngor chen's *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (p. 3.6, fol. 2a6): *'di gsan yig la med|*

e. (pp. 764.1–767.4, fols. 382b1–384a4)

- 2e. The printing colophon (*par byang*) and dedication of merit (*dge bsngo*) for the xylographic edition of Ngor chen's collected works were written by Ngag dbang dge legs lhun grub, a nephew of Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774). He wrote them in response to the request made by the chief editor or supervisor (*par dpon*) and proofreader (*zhus dag pa*) when his uncle was about to die. The project was executed under the patronage of Sa skyong sDe dge Blo gros rgya mtsho (1723–1774) at lHun grub steng (pp. 766.6–767.4, fols. 383b6–384a4).

¹⁸ This untitled prayer might be the *Theg pa chen po'i smon lam*, which in the first four title lists introduced above is recorded after the *Nang gi yas gtam* and before the *gSer 'od dam pa las btus pa'i smon lam*; see the *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul* (p. 347.14–16), *sByin pa grags pas rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 307.6), *sPyan snga chos kyi spyan ldan gyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul* (p. 118.3–4), and *Dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge* (vol. 2, p. 491.2).

3. figure left margin (p. 767, fol. 384a): *phun tshogs 'dod dgu'i dpal ster ba'i|| nor sbyin dbang po ngal bsos so||*; figure right margin (p. 767, fol. 384a): *chos sbyin rgya chen legs byas bdaq sa dbang blo gros rgyal mtshan che|*

f. (pp. 768.1–769.5, fols. 384b1–385a5)

- 2e. The printing colophon (*spar byang*) and auspicious verses (*shis brjod*) for the revised xylographic edition of Ngor chen's collected works were written by Bande 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rab at the behest of lHa sras Bla ma mchog. The edition was completed in 1894 under the supervision of lHa rigs Bla ma Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin, who assigned its revision to such qualified scholar-adepts as 'Jam mgon Bla ma. The first edition sponsored by Blo gros rgya mtsho is said to have contained many superfluous additions and omissions (*lhag chad*) as well as spelling mistakes (*'bru nor*), because the original texts utilised as models were incorrect or corrupt (*ma dpe ma dag pa*) (pp. 768.1–769.5, fols. 384b1–385a5).

Chapter Three

Descriptive List of a Manuscript Volume

The eleven texts described in this section form an incomplete manuscript volume of Ngor chen's works written in *dbu med*. This unpublished volume is marked in the left margin of each recto folio as the first volume (*ka*) of a further unknown set and contains two works that are missing from both the sDe dge recension of Ngor chen's works and any available lists recording the titles of his writings that were included in his collected works (i.e., nos. 5 and 7). The manuscript is paginated twice in the left margin of each recto folio: an individual pagination for each text is given above and the running pagination of the entire manuscript below. Unfortunately, no short title is specified in the margin, which would have immediately revealed whether these texts indeed belonged to the first volume of a manuscript set of Ngor chen's collected works. The description of the eleven texts contained in that volume will be based on the same categories as the catalogue to the sDe dge recension.

No. 1 (fols. 456a–460b4; 5 fols.)

- 1a. *Lam 'bras gsang ba'i sgo byed* (fol. 1a/456a)
- 1c. *Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i bshad thabs kyi gdam ngag gsang ba'i sgo 'byed* (fol. 1b1/456b1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (fol. 5b3/460b3)
- 2c. at the behest of a few faithful disciples who were keeping their tantric commitments (fol. 5b1–2/460b1–2)
4. CATALOGUE (no. 37)

No. 2 (fols. 461a–463a5; 3 fols.)

- 1a. *rGyu dus kyi dbang gi rtogs pa* (fol. 1a/461a)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (fol. 3a5/463a5)
- 2b. *Sa skya* (fol. 3a5/463a5)
4. CATALOGUE (no. 38)

No. 3 (fols. 464a–465b5; 2 fols.)

- 1a. *mNgon rtogs tshul bcu bzhi'i tshig bcad ma* (fol. 1a/464a)
- 2a. *dGe slong rGyud gsum pa* (fol. 2b4/465b4)
4. CATALOGUE (no. 39)

No. 4 (fols. 504a–525a3; 22 fols.)

- 1a. *dPal kyai'i rdo rje lha bcu bdun ma'i bsgrub thabs gsang don gsal byed* (fol. 1a/504a)
- 1c. *dPal kyai'i rdo rje lha bcu bdun gyi bdag nyid can gyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs gsang don gsal byed* (fol. 1b1/504b1)
- 1d. *bCu bdun bdag gnyi dpal ldan he ru ka'i/ sgrub thabs rgyud 'grel gsang don gsal byed* (fol. 21b2–3/524b2–3)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (fol. 21b7/524b7)
- 2b. on the eighth day of the first half of the first month of 1412 at Sa skya (fol. 22a2/525a2)
- 2c. in response to the requests of many intelligent and aspiring disciples, such as rGyud sde 'dzin pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (fol. 21b3/524b3)

- 2d. mDo khams pa Kun dga' gzhon nu (fol. 22a2-3/525a2-3)
4. CATALOGUE (no. 80)

No. 5 (fols. 540a-566a4; 27 fols.)

- 1a. *dPal kye'i rdo rje'i bsgrub thabs kyi ngag 'don rim pa gsal ba* (fol. 1a/540a)
1d. *dPal kye'i rdo rje'i sgrub thabs yan lag drug pa'i ngag 'don gyi rim pa gsal ba* (fol. 27a1-2/566a1-2)
2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (fol. 27a2-3/566a2-3)
4. This work is missing from both the sDe dge recension of Ngor chen's collected works and lists recording the titles of his writings that were included in his collected works

No. 6 (fol. 567a1-b2; 1 fol.)

- 1b. (written on the left side above the first line:) *Kye'i rdo rje'i nyams len gyi mngon rtogs dang lam dus kyi sdom tshig* (fol. 1a/567a)
2a. sPong ba pa Kun dga' bzang po (fol. 1b2/567b2)
4. CATALOGUE (no. 40)

No. 7 (fols. 568a-584b7; 24 fols.)

- 1a. *dPal kyai rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs rnal 'byor snying po* (fol. 1a/568a)
1b. *dPal kyai rdo rje lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs rnal 'byor gyi snying po* (fol. 1b1-2/568b1-2)
2a. Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (fol. 14b6/584b6)
2b. on the fifteenth day of the first half of the third month of 1410 at dGa' ldan Sa bzang (i.e., Sa bzang Monastery) (fol. 14b6-7/584b6-7)
2c. at the repeated request of sDe snod 'dzin pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan from the nephew line (*dbon rgyud*) of Byang chub sems dpa' A seng,¹⁹ a disciple of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (fol. 14b4-5/584b4-5)
2d. gZhon nu dbang phyug (fol. 14b7/584b7)
4. This work is missing from both the sDe dge recension of Ngor chen's collected works and lists recording the titles of his writings that were included in his collected works. It was recently published in retyped form; see LIST (no. 7).

No. 8 (fol. 585a1-b6; 1 fol.)

- 1b. (written on the left side above the first line:) *gZhal yas khang kyi [= gi] tshad kyi rnam bzhag* (fol. 1a/585a)
1c. *gZhal yas khang gi tshad rnam par bzhag pa'i zin bris* (fol. 1a1/585a1)
2a. rGyud sde smra ba Ā nan da (fol. 1b5-6/567b5-6)
4. CATALOGUE (no. 59)

No. 9 (fols. 599a-602a2; 4 fols.)

- 1a. *gSung ngag mtshon nus pa'i zab chos chig brgyud ma* (fol. 1a/599a)
1d. *mTshon byed rnal 'byor dbang phyug gi man ngag 'dis mtshon bya lam 'bras dang bcas pa'i gdam ngag thams cad shes par nus pa* (fol. 3b5-6/601b5-6)
2a. dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po (fol. 3b7/601b7)
4. CATALOGUE (no. 46)

¹⁹ On A seng rDo rje brtan pa, see Part Six, n. 16.

No. 10 (fols. 603a–604b6; 2 fols.)

- 1a. 'Bi [= *Bir*] *bsrungs gsar ma* (fol. 1a/603a)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (fol. 2b5–6/604b5–6)
4. The content of the text is identical to CATALOGUE (no. 45), although it bears a different title

No. 11 (fols. 605a–606b6; 2 fols.)

- 1a. *Birwa pa'i sgrub thabs thun mong ma yin pa'i snyan rgyud chig brgyud ma* (fol. 1a/605a)
- 2a. *dGe slong bSam gtan pa Kun dga' bzang po* (fol. 2b4/606b4)
4. The content of the text is identical to CATALOGUE (no. 47), although it bears a different title²⁰

²⁰ A similar issue with the titles of both works (nos. 10 and 11) is also found in the *Pod dmar ma*; see Part Five, 4.

Chapter Four

Descriptive List of Further Writings

The seven texts described in this chapter are not contained in the sDe dge recension of Ngor chen's collected works, but became available only recently in two new collections. The first collection is the twenty-volume *E waṃ bka' 'bum*, which was edited by the dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang in 2010 and contains Ngor chen's collected works, among which the eighth (and last) volume contains six of those seven texts. The second new collection is the first forty-volume set of the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod*, which was edited by the Si khron bod yig dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu rtsom sgrig khang in 2013. Its volume twenty-eight comprises texts that Ngor chen wrote on Hevarja, in which we find two of those seven texts. Although both table of contents (*dkar chag*) specify the author of all texts as Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po, it will be shown that only three of them can be ascribed to him with certainty.²¹

The description of those texts will be based on the same categories as the catalogue to the sDe dge recension. However, since both collections constitute modern retyped inputs of the original texts in Western book format, the first category (1. Title) has been modified:

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| 1. Title | a. title |
| | b. incipit title |
| | c. colophon title |

The following abbreviations will be used: “E” for *E waṃ bka' 'bum* and “S” for *Sa skya'i chos mdzod*.

No. 1 (E, pp. 1–2)

- 1a. *rNam 'grel bcu gcig gi ngos 'dzin dang de ji ltar gsungs pa'i go rim sdom tshig* (E, p. 1.1–2)
- 2e. The presentation is given following the teachings of a certain Bla ma dam pa, who might have been Ngor chen (E, p. 2.7–8): *rnam 'grel gsungs pa'i go rim gyi|| sdom tshig bla ma dam pa'i gsung||*.

No. 2 (E, pp. 3–6)

- 1a. *rNam 'grel gyi ngos 'dzin lam 'bras kyi chos sna drug cu'i rkang grangs* (E, p. 3.1–2)

No. 2.1 (E, p. 3)

- 1a. (annotation below the title:) *mus srad pa gtsang rdo rje rgyal mtshan gyis mdzad pa'i tshigs bcad rnam sags so||* (E, p. 3.3)
- 2a. The basic work originates from a teaching of Mus srad pa (alias gTsang Byams pa) rDo rje rgyal mtshan (1424–1498), to which Brag dkar Sems dpa' chen po bSod nams rin chen—who was a disciple of Ngor chen—made annotations regarding additions and elisions (E, p. 3.16–18): *ces pa 'di rnam sags pa gtsang rdo rje rgyal mtshan gyi gsung la lhag chad kyi mtshan bu 'di rnam sags pa' brag dkar bas so||*.

²¹ See the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* (vol. 8, p. 1) and *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 28, p. 1).

3. This section relates to the first part of the title, the *rNam 'grel gyi ngos 'dzin*, which deals with the eleven commentaries that Sa chen Kun dga' snying po wrote on the *rDo rje tshig rkang*.

No. 2.2 (E, pp. 4–6)

- 1c. *Chos sna drug bcu'i grangs dang ngos 'dzin* (E, p. 6.2–3)
3. This section relates to the second part of the title, the *Lam 'bras kyi chos sna drug cu'i rkang grangs*.

No. 3 (E, pp. 7–109 and S, pp. 314–393)

- 1a. *dPal kye rdo rje'i bshad pa* (E, p. 7.1 and S, p. 314.1)
- 1c. *dPal kye rdo rje'i bshad pa rin po che'i phreng ba* (E, p. 108.18 and S, p. 393.7)
- 2e. The exposition consists of notes compiled from Ngor chen's teachings (E, pp. 108.18–109.1 and S, pp. 393.7–9): *gangs can gyi rdo rje 'dzin pa thams cad kyi gtsug rgyan dam pa| dPal ldan bla ma dam pa kun dga' bzang po'i gsung rab rgya mtsho las btus pa'i zin bris so||*.
3. This work might have been written by Ngor chen's disciple Nyag re dPal gyi rgyal mtshan and later on edited by A mes zhabs and included in the latter's collected works as the *dPal kyai rdo rje'i rgyud 'chad pa'i sngon du 'gro ba rgyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag la nye bar mkho ba'i legs bshad rdo rje 'chang gi gsung la chos rje dPal gyi rgyal mtshan gyis zin bris su mdzad pa'i gsung rab ngo mtshar can gyi ma dpe tshig sna ring thung sogz cung zad mi 'dra ba gsum la sa skya pa sngags 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams kyi 'dra bsdur zhus dag bgyis pa'i legs par bshad pa blo gsal mig thur*.²²
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 334, no. 3356): *dPal kyai rdo rje'i bshad pa*

No. 4 (E, pp. 125–131)

- 1a. *sByor drug gi dris lan blo gsal dga' byed* (E, p. 125.1)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Ā nanda* (E, p. 131.9–10)
- 2b. on the twelfth day of the sixth month (E, p. 131.10): (...) *chu stod zla ba'i bzang po gsum gyi nyi ma la (...)*
- 2c. in response to the repeated requests by a few bright-minded persons (E, p. 131.5–7)
- 2d. *dGe slong Kun dga' grags pa* (E, p. 131.11)
3. in reply to questions by a certain Bla ma dPal ldan (i.e., Byams gling Chos rje?) (E, p. 125.4)
4. *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 53, no. 466): *sByor drug gi dri [= dris] lan blo gsal dga' byed*

No. 5 (E, pp. 132–211)

- 1a. *Bhe ra wa'i zin bris* (E, p. 132.1)
- 1c. *bCom ldan 'das dPal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi zab mo bskyed pa'i rim pa'i bshad pa| smra ba ngan pa'i mun 'joms* (E, p. 211.6–7)
- 2a. *dPal gyi rgyal mtshan* (E, p. 211.8)
- 2b. *E wam chos ldan* (E, p. 211.9–10)
- 2e. Ngor chen's teachings were put down in writing as notes (E, p. 211.7–10): *rje btsun rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' bzang po'i gsung gi rgyun| (...)* *zin bris su btab pa'o||*
4. The *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 491, no. 5222) registers a thirty-two-folio manuscript of the *rDo rje 'jigs byed kyi zin bris* by sNyoms las pa dPal gyi rgyal mtshan, which

²² See the *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 21, pp. 1–82) and Chapter Five, 2.

might be the text in question and also the master copy of the modern digital-input version.

No. 6 (E, pp. 220–261)

- 1a. *Chos kyi rgyal po dpal ldan bla ma dam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i rnam par thar pa dad pa rgyas byed* (E, p. 220.1–3)
- 1b. *Chos kyi rgyal po dpal ldan bla ma dam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i rnam par thar pa dad pa rgyas byed* (E, p. 220.4–5)
- 1c. *Chos kyi rgyal po dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdu pa* (E, p. 260.14)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (E, p. 261.1)
- 2b. on the tenth day of the ninth month of 1406 at Sa skya (E, p. 261.1–2)²³
- 2c. at the repeated requests made by many of his befriended scholars, such as Slob dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan and Bla ma Byang phug pa (E, p. 260.15–18)
3. Though the title does not reveal that the work constitutes the biography of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan, Ngor chen hinted at this already in his opening verses (E, p. 220. 6–8): *bsod nams ye shes tshogs gnyis mthar phyin pas|| bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dri med legs 'dzin cing|| phan bde'i dpal 'byor bzang pos gdul bya rnam|| skyong mdzad chos kyi rje la phyag 'tshal lo||* (emphasis added by the author).
4. 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1549, no. 17485 and p. 1555, no. 17553): *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa'i rnam thar*; 'Bras spungs dkar chag (p. 1555, no. 17560): *Ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam thar*

No. 7 (S, pp. 296–312)

- 1a. *dPal kye rdo rje'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs rnal 'byor snying po* (S, p. 296.1–2)
- 1b. *dPal kye rdo rje lus kyi dkyil 'khor gyi sgrub pa'i thabs rnal 'byor gyi snying po* (S, p. 296.4)
- 2a. *Shākya'i dGe slong Kun dga' bzang po* (S, p. 311.21)
- 2b. on the fifteenth day of the first half of the third month of 1410 at dGa' ldan Sa bzang (i.e., Sa bzang Monastery) (S, pp. 311.21–312.1)
- 2c. at the repeated requests made by sDe snod 'dzin pa Kun dga' rgyal mtshan from the nephew line (*dbon rgyud*) of Byang chub sems dpa' A seng,²⁴ a disciple of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (S, p. 311.17–19)
- 2d. *gZhon nu dbang phyug* (S, p. 312.1–2)
4. MANUSCRIPT VOLUME (no. 7)

²³ On this dating, see Part Three, 6.1.2.

²⁴ On A seng rDo rje brtan pa, see Part Six, n. 16.

Chapter Five

An Extended Edition of the *E waṃ bka' 'bum*

Ngor Monastery in Tibet is nowadays preparing an extended edition of the *E waṃ bka' 'bum* that will bring together in more than hundred volumes a comprehensive collection of all presently available works of successive Ngor abbots, of the candidates to the abbacy (*zhabs drung*) originating from Ngor's four main *bla brangs*, and of Ngor's chief ritual masters (*dpon slob*).²⁵ According to the collection's preliminary catalogue, it will feature a few new works by Ngor chen originating from the eight-volume *Chos skyong pod* manuscript, which has been written in a *dbu med* script known as *khams yig*:

- (1) *mGon po'i rjes gnang chos rje a nan tas mdzad pa* (vol. 3, fols. 109–131)²⁶
- (2) *bKa' bsrung rnams kyi bstod tshogs dngos grub rgya mtsho* (vol. 3, fols. 1108–1110)²⁷
- (3) *Nag po chen po'i dbang gi sbyin bsreg dang dbang bsdus kyi dmigs rim rnams* (vol. 8, fols. 392–402)
- (4) *Nag po chen po'i dbang gi sbyin sreg gi zhal shes* (vol. 8, fols. 402–403)
- (5) *rDo rje nag po chen po'i sgo nas dbang gi dngos grub sgrub pa'i thabs zab mo'i nying khu* (vol. 8, fols. 403–404)

²⁵ Phan bde mKhan Rin po che (Ngor, 04 August 2015 and Ngor, 25 August 2016).

²⁶ A similar work is contained in a four-volume manuscript set of teachings on Vajrapañjara (*dPal nag po chen po gur gyi mgon po'i chos skor*), the *mGon po'i rjes gnang chos rje rin po che a nan da pas mdzad pa*, as recorded in a recently published catalogue of Sa skya pa works housed in the Potala; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 89, no. 1861, text 38). Both works seem to differ from the *rjes gnang* for Vajrapañjara that is contained in Ngor chen's collected works; see CATALOGUE (no. 76). This is also supported by the fact that the four-volume manuscript set contains the *mGon po'i rjes gnang chos rje rin po che a nan da pas mdzad pa* (text ji, 13 fols., 6 lines per page, *dpe tshugs*) in its first volume and the *dPal nag po chen po lha bryad kyi rjes gnang chos rje rdo rje 'chang gis mdzad pa* (text ru, 7 fols., 6 lines per page, *dpe tshugs*) in its second; see the *Sa skya'i gsung rab rnams kyi dkar chag* (p. 89, no. 1861, text 38 and p. 93, no. 1862, text 44), respectively.

²⁷ Among the library holdings of 'Bras spungs Monastery, a block-print with a similar title has been preserved, though in twenty-nine folios; see the *'Bras spungs dkar chag* (p. 1799, no. 20607).

Appendices

Appendix One

List of the Successive Abbots of Ngor Monastery

This list presents the succession of the abbots of Ngor Monastery and provides some basic details about their lives and tenures.¹ These details were mainly extracted from their full-length biographies and the four successive abbatial histories of Ngor Monastery.² My presentation is restricted to details presented under five categories:

[Position in the sequence of abbatial succession] [Name]³ [(Birth and death dates)]

- a. place of birth
- b. familial relation
- c. tenure
- d. *bla brang* affiliation
- e. references to (auto)biographies and (auto)biographical sketches⁴

¹ In presenting this succession, I follow the tradition established by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, the twenty-fifth abbot (*Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1). However, other ways of counting also exist. 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po, for instance, omits dPal ldan rdo rje, the fifth abbot, from his succession of Ngor abbots; see the *gSang sngags gsar rnying gi gdan rabs* (p. 68.2–3). A probable reason for his omission is given by the late mkhan chen A pad Rin po che Yon tan bzang po (1927–2010); see the *dKar chag Lam 'bras* 3 (p. 840.4–6): *mkhyen brtse'i dbang pos/ mkhas grub dpal ldan rdo rje gdan rabs su ma bgrang/ sangs rgyas phun tshogs dang dpal ldan chos skyong sogs kyis bgrang bas mkhan po gcig gis mang nyung byung ba nil dpal ldan rdo rje mkhas grub kyi yon tan dang ldan cing ngor pa'i gdan sa gnang bas 'ga' zhiig gis bgrang/ khong las byung ba'i rgyu dbang gi brgyud pa tsam las/ lam 'bras kyi brgyud pa med pa'i sgras zhiig 'dug pas 'ga' zhiig gis ma bgrang ba yin nam snyam ste/ thugs rgyus mnga' ba rnam kyis gsung bar rigs so/ mkhan chen bkra shis lhun grub dang/ blo gter dbang po yang nyung ba'i phyogs su bzhugs/|. Moreover, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs mentions another way of counting, depending on whether Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, the twentieth abbot, is counted or not; see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 80.2–3) and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 108.4–109.1). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 45.2–5), where he counts him as abbot without any further comment. After the demise of Nam mkha' rin chen, the nineteenth abbot, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan was installed in 1658, but served as abbot only for a few months. In 1655, prior to his appointment, he had already given the annual *Lam 'bras* at Ngor as representative of Nam mkha' rin chen, though, apparently, he did not do so during his short tenure as abbot; see the *Khang gsar bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 58.5–59.1), *Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi rang rnam* (pp. 848.6–850.3), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 45.4). In addition, another way of counting is utilised by Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566). Not counting Ngor chen, the monastery's founder, as first abbot, he refers to 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, the third abbot, as its second abbot (*e waṃ gdan sa gnyis pa*), explaining in an annotation (*Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar* 2, p. 225.5): *rje btsun rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po nyid e waṃ dgon gnas 'debs pa po yin pas gdan sa'i ming mi thob/ chos rje mus chen mo (...)* rgyal tshab dang gdan sa'i ming gi tha snyad rjes su 'dogs gsungs/|.*

² The most important study on the abbatial succession of Ngor was presented by David Jackson; see JACKSON 1989a and JACKSON 1993: 127–129. Since most of the full-length biographies were not available at the time his study was written, he utilised the first three abbatial histories of Ngor and some additional lists of its abbot.

³ The names of the abbots are given in line with those mentioned in the four abbatial histories of Ngor.

⁴ The references to (auto)biographical sketches are mostly restricted to those included within Ngor's abbatial histories and make no claim to completeness.

1. rGyal ba rDo rje 'chang chen po Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456)

- a. born in Sa skya, gTsang
 - b. alleged father: dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan (b. 1356); true father: Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen (1339–1399), the sixteenth throne-holder of Sa skya (tenure: 1364–1399); mother: bSod nams dpal 'dren (b. 1358); born into the 'Khon lineage
 - c. tenure: 1429–1456
 - e. extant biographies:⁵
 - Mus chen dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469)
 - 'Jam mgon Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705)
- non-extant biographies:
- Gu ge Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1415–1486)
 - Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (fl. 15th century)
 - Srad pa Kun dga' blo gros (b. 1433)
 - Gu ge Chos dpal bzang po (fl. 15th century)

2. rJe btsun Mus pa Sems dpa' chen po dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388–1469)

- a. born in rTa (or sTag) mo Gling skya, Upper Mus (Mus stod), gTsang
 - b. father: dKon mchog bzang po; mother: Nam mkha' skyong
 - c. tenure: 1456–1462⁶
 - e. extant biographies:
 - Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), the sixth abbot
 - verse biography with supplement; see the *Go rams pa'i bka' 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 25.3–39.1) and *Lam 'bras 3* (vol. 27, pp. 135–149)
 - prose biography with supplement; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1*, *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 1, pp. 830.4–891), and *Lam 'bras 3* (vol. 27, pp. 151–204)
 - Gung ru Shes rab bzang po (1411–1475); see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 2* and *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 3–55)
 - bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1444–1495); see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 3*, *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 2, pp. 3–41), and *Lam 'bras 3* (vol. 1, pp. 587.5–619.4)
- biographical sketches:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 3.6–6.1)
 - *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 218.15–221.1)

3. 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (1396–1474)

- a. born in Bya 'dab phyug grong, Chu mig, gTsang
 - b. father: rGyal mtshan dar; mother: lHun grub rgyal mo
 - c. tenure: 1462–1465⁷
 - e. non-extant biography:
 - Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang (d. 1507)
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 6.1–9.6)

⁵ On the details of Ngor chen's biographies, see Part Two.

⁶ Just prior to his passing on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth month of 1456, Ngor chen appointed Mus chen as his successor to the throne of Ngor; see Part Four, 12.

⁷ 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho was installed by Mus chen on the fourth day of the sixth month of 1462; see Part Two, n. 27.

4. rGyal tshab dam pa Kun dga' dbang phyug (1424–1478)

- a. born in Sa skya(?), gTsang
 - b. father: Drung chen bDe legs, who was the brother of Ngor chen's alleged father, dPon tshang Grub pa yon tan (b. 1356), and the personal attendant (*gsol dpon*) of Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1359–1406); mother: Sras (or mKhas) btsun dPal ldan bzang mo from mThong ba, Mus, gTsang
 - c. tenure: 1465–1478⁸
 - e. extant biographies:
 - Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456–1532); see the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 1*, *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 1, fols. 107a–129a; vol. 4, pp. 255–315; and vol. 5, pp. 241–285), and *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 57–107)
 - A mes zhabs (1597–1659); see the *Kun dga' dbang phyug gi rnam thar 2*
- non-extant biography:
- Rwa ston Yon tan dpal bzang (d. 1507)
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 9.6–11.4)

5. mKhas grub dPal ldan rdo rje (1411–1482)

- a. born in Sa skya, gTsang
 - b. father: dPal 'byor bzang po; mother: sKyid pa dpal
 - c. tenure: 1479–1481⁹
 - e. extant biography:
 - Shar Mi nyag Pañḍi ta Grags pa rdo rje (fl. 15th century); see the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar*
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 11.5–13.6)

6. Go bo Rab 'bymas pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489)

- a. born in 'Bom, sMar khams, mDo khams (or born in 'Bom lung mda' of Go bo (or 'Bom) la steng; or born in 'Bom chung, the smaller of two parts of 'Bom)
- b. father: Zhang skyabs (*gdung rus*: sTod pa section of the Ru tsha stod smad); mother: rGyal ba sman (*rus*: 'Bor tsha)
- c. tenure: 1483–1486¹⁰

⁸ Kun dga' dbang phyug was appointed by Mus chen; see the *Mus chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 620.3–5).

⁹ dPal ldan rdo rje was installed in 1479, after his predecessor, Kun dga' dbang phyug, had passed away the previous year in Glo bo while on his second sojourn there; see the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 601.1–2). Prior to his installation, he had already represented Kun dga' dbang phyug during the latter's two sojourns in Glo bo (1466 and 1477–1478); see the *dPal ldan rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 601.1–2).

¹⁰ Go rams pa's biographers mention that his predecessor, dPal ldan rdo rje, retired from the abbacy in 1481. dPal ldan rdo rje is also said to have travelled to Sa skya asking for advice on who should succeed him on the abbatial throne of Ngor, and was told to approach Go rams pa with regard to this matter. During that same year, Go rams pa was approached at Thub bstan rnam rgyal by a delegation from Ngor, requesting that, in the best case, he would act as the next abbot of Ngor, but if he could not agree to that, they requested that he serve transitionally as Ngor's acting abbot (*mkhan tshab*) to give such teachings as the annual *Lam 'bras*. Go rams pa travelled, in 1482, to Ngor, where, as acting abbot, he gave such tantric teachings as the annual *Lam 'bras* and also different kinds of ordinations. Afterwards, he left again, probably for Thub bstan rnam rgyal, and after having taught at mDo mkhar, he was officially installed as the sixth abbot of Ngor on the fifth day of the first month of 1483. On these developments, see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1* (p. 115.6–18), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 2* (pp. 15.9–13 and 16.1–4), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 3* (pp. 325.16–328.16), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 4* (p. 369.3–9), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 5* (pp. 397.8–398.4), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6* (pp. 65.11–66.20), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 7* (pp.

e. extant biographies:

- Kong ston dBang phyug grub pa (b. 1443); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 1*, *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 417–499), *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 39, pp. 87–137), and TBRC (W11051).
- Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453–1524); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 2*, *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 109–143), *Lam 'bras 3* (vol. 27, pp. 609–638), *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 39, pp. 262.15–282.19), *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29, pp. 4.1–31.4), and TBRC (W2CZ7926)
- 'Bring mtshams bTsun pa or gTing skyes pa Ri (khrod) pa Kun dga' mchog ldan (15th/16th century); see the *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 145–161), *Lam 'bras 3* (vol. 27, pp. 639–652), *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 39, pp. 22–30 and 423.2–430.14), and *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29, pp. 220.2–233.1)
- dGa' gdong mKhan chen Rin chen dpal bzang (15th/16th century); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 5* and *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29, pp. 166.2–208.3)
- Rwa ston (or dbon) Yon tan 'byung gnas from Dol po (fl. 15th/16th century); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 3* and *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29, pp. 60.4–128.3)
- Yi ge pa or Yig mkhan A'u gZhon nu bzang po (15th/16th century); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 4* and *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29, pp. 128.3–166.3)
- Glo bo mKhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456–1532); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 7*, *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 1, fols. 130a–147a; vol. 4, pp. 317–359; and vol. 5, pp. 287–321), *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 501–537), *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 39, pp. 283.2–305.1), *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29, pp. 31.4–60.4), and TBRC (W23791)
- Thub bstan mKhan chen Byams pa rab brtan (fl. 16th century); see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 6*, *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 163–253), and *Lam 'bras 3* (vol. 27, pp. 653–730)
- gSang phu ba Don grub legs bzang (15th/16th century); see the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 39, pp. 414.9–422.19) and *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29, pp. 208.3–220.2)
- *A mes zhabs* (1597–1659); see the *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 34, pp. 255–415) and *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 39, pp. 160–260); *A mes zhabs* also made a one-volume compilation of older biographies of *Go rams pa*; see the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 39, pp. 261–432) and *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 29)

non-extant biographies:

- 'Bol rdzongs pa Rig pa'i dbang phyug (fl. 15th/16th century)
- Pu ru Chos rje Byang chub rgyal mtshan
- Thub bstan mKhan chen Chos rnam rgyal (b. 1575), the thirteenth abbot of Thub bstan rnam rgyal, made a compilation of *Go rams pa*'s biographies that had previously been written by the latter's disciples

149.18–150.13), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 8* (pp. 231.14–233.21), *'Bul sdud kyi yi ge* (pp. 653.6–654.3), and HEIMBEL (forthcoming 2). Note that some biographers state that *Go rams pa* served as acting abbot for not one but two monastic winter sessions (*dgun thog gnyis*), namely in 1481 and 1482; see the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 2* (p. 15.9–13), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 3* (p. 328.15–17), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar 5* (pp. 397.8–398.4). As new abbot, *Go rams pa* divided his time mainly between Ngor and his other monastery, Thub bstan rnam rgyal.

biographical sketches:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 13.6–14.6)
- *bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed* (pp. 230.14–233.5)

7. rJe Rin po che dKon mchog 'phel ba (1445–1514)

- a. born in Gu ra bDe ldan steng, Sa skya, gTsang
- b. father: dPon ne bKra shis legs pa, the son of Ngor chen's younger half-brother dPon ne bSod nams dpal; mother: Bu 'dren skyid
- c. tenure: 1486–1513¹¹
- d. resided, at the end of his life, in the Thar rtse bla brang and passed away there as well¹²
- e. extant biographies:
 - dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), the tenth abbot; see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1, *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 1, pp. 113–130 and vol. 2, pp. 33–48), *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 34, pp. 539–631), *E wam bka' 'bum* (vol. 11, pp. 83–155), and TBRC (W10241: pp. 87–155)
 - Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453–1524), the eighth abbot; see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 2 and *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 35, pp. 5–27)

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 14.6–15.6)

8. rJe Mus pa Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453–1524)

- a. born in rTa mo Gling skya, Upper Mus, gTsang
- b. father: dKon mchog legs pa, the son of dKon mchog bzang mo, who in turn was the sister of Mus chen, the second abbot; mother: Chos skyong rgyal mo, the daughter of the *a ce* (elder sister?) of Chos rje Tshul khriims dpal bzang, who in turn was Mus chen's *spyān tshab pa* (surrogate?)
- c. tenure: 1513–1516¹³
- e. extant biographies:
 - Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams (1485–1533); see the *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 35, pp. 29–53), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 2, and TBRC (W00KG02531: fols. 170a–182a, W00KG04094: pp. 303–324, and W1KG4325: pp. 291–313.6). For his supplement, see the *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 35, pp. 55–69), *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 28, pp. 23–35), and TBRC (W00KG02531: fols. 183a–190a, W00KG04094: pp. 325–338, and W1KG4325: pp. 313.6–325)
 - Nā tha (fl. 16th century); see the *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 35, pp. 71–173) and *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 3

¹¹ dKon mchog 'phel was installed by his predecessor, Go rams pa, on Ngor chen's death anniversary on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth month of 1486; see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 785.2–5), *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 822.6–823.2), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 2 (p. 16.10–16), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 5 (pp. 398.11–399.15), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 6 (p. 68.10–15), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 7 (p. 155.7–14), and *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 8 (p. 239.2–8). See also the *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 3 (p. 333.1–5), *Go rams pa'i rnam thar* 4 (pp. 370.20–21 and 373.3–6), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 14.4 and 15.4).

¹² On the founding of the Thar rtse bla brang; see Part Four, n. 237.

¹³ After the health of his predecessor, dKon mchog 'phel, had declined during the autumn of 1512, Sangs rgyas rin chen was called by him from Mus to Ngor. dKon mchog 'phel then officially installed Sangs rgyas rin chen as the new abbot on the fourteenth day of the first month of 1513; see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 1 (pp. 794.3–795.2), *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar* 2 (pp. 825.6–826.4), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 16.2–3 and 18.5), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 1 (p. 106.5–6), and *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 75.3–76.1).

- A mes zhabs (1597–1659); see the *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 1* and *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 5, pp. 80.4–131.3). This work by A mes zhabs is actually the biography of Mus chen Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1542–1618), but also includes a biography of Sangs rgyas rin chen, who was considered to be the previous existence of Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan.

non-extant biographies:

- gZhung brgya pa dNgos grub dpal 'bar (1456–1527) with a supplement by Slob dpon Grags pa rgya mtsho
- Chos rje dKon mchog rin chen (fl. 16th century), the twenty-ninth abbot of Gle lung Chos sde in Mus
- Chos rje Lo chen Ratna bha dra (1489–1563)
- rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566)

biographical sketches:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 15.6–16.4)
- *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 339.3–349.17)

9. rJe lHa mchog seng ge (1468–1535)

- a. born in Sa skya, gTsang
- b. father: dPon ne Kun dga' rgyal mtshan from the nephew line (*dbon rigs*) of Ngor chen, that is, from that of Ngor chen's alleged father Grub pa yon tan; mother: dGe bsnyen ma dKon mchog 'bum, the niece (*dbon mo*) of Kon ting Gu shrī Nam mkha' bzang po of Sa skya's Nyi lde bla brang
- c. tenure: 1516–1534¹⁴
- d. resided, at the end of his life, in the Thar rtse bla brang and passed away there as well
- e. extant biography:
 - Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1535–1602), the thirteenth abbot; see the *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 35, pp. 175–229) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar*

non-extant biography:

- rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog (1507–1566); this work served Nam mkha' dpal bzang as the base for his biography

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 16.5–20.5)

10. Ngor chen Thams cad mkhyen pa dKon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557)

- a. born in (the *gzims khang* called gNyan 'og, which is close to) the gNyan bla brang of Sa skya, gTsang

¹⁴ lHa mchog seng ge was installed by his predecessor, Sangs rgyas rin chen, on the third day of the fourth month of 1516; see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 242.3–4), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 18.5–6), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 109.1–2), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 3* (pp. 79.6–80.2), and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 150.5–6). When lHa mchog seng ge visited Glo bo during his tenure from 1523 to 1524, Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams (1485–1533), following the order of Sangs rgyas rin chen, gave the annual *Lam 'bras* of 1524 and other teachings at Ngor; see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 244.6–245.3), *Glo bo mkhan chen gyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 315.5–325.4), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 19.2–3), *bDe mchog chos 'byung* (p. 240.1–3), *Sa skya lo tsā ba'i rnam thar* (pp. 210.14–211.18), *Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 117.1), and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 157.5–158.6). Prior to his installation, lHa mchog seng ge had stepped in for the incumbent abbot, dKon mchog 'phel, when the latter travelled, in 1504, to rTse gdong to give teachings; see the *dKon mchog 'phel gyi rnam thar 1* (p. 796.2) and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (p. 146.1–6).

- b. father: Kun grub dar; mother: lHa mo bu 'dren, the niece (*dbon mo*) of dKon mchog 'phel ba, the fourth abbot¹⁵
- c. tenure: 1534–1557¹⁶
- e. extant biographies:
 - dKon mchog dpal ldan (1526–1590), the twelfth abbot; see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 1*, *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 35, pp. 231–301), and *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 3, pp. 567–610)
 - rTa nag mKhan chen Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje (b. 1584); see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2*, *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 35, pp. 303–363), and *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 3, pp. 611–649); his work is mainly based on the previous biography by dKon mchog dpal ldan
 - A mes zhabs (1597–1659); see the *Sa skya'i chos mdzod* (vol. 3, pp. 650–683), *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum* (vol. 4, pp. 568–615), and TBRC (W10334 and W1KG11772)
- non-extant biographies:
 - a verse autobiography called 'Dod dgu'i dpal 'byung ma
 - commentaries of that verse autobiography (the biography by dKon mchog dpal ldan mentioned above is also an explanation of the verse autobiography)
 - a biography written by dKon mchog lhun grub's disciple Chos rje Blo gros rgyal mtshan (A mes zhabs' biography is based on this work)
- biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (pp. 20.5–21.5)

11. Ngor chen Sangs rgyas seng ge (1504–1569)

- a. born in Gu ra bDe ldan steng, Sa skya, gTsang
- b. father: dPon ne Tshe dbang dpal 'byor, a paternal relative (*dbon rgyud* or *rigs kyi dbon po*) of Ngor chen, that is, on the side of Ngor chen's alleged father Grub pa yon tan; mother: g.Yung drung sras 'dzom(s)
- c. tenure: 1557–1569¹⁷
- d. resided in the Thar rtse bla brang and passed away there as well
- e. extant biography:
 - Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1535–1602), the thirteenth abbot; see the *Lam 'bras 2* (vol. 35, pp. 365–473) and *Sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar*

¹⁵ See the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 1* (p. 179.1–3), *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (p. 235.4–6), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 20.5–6). Cf. the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 3* (p. 571.2–3) by A mes zhabs, who gives dKon mchog lhun grub's father as Kun dga' don grub of the family line (*rigs*) of Blo gros rnam rgyal and his mother as dPon ne lHa mo bu 'dren, a niece (*dbon mo*) of Ngor chen.

¹⁶ dKon mchog lhun grub was officially installed by his predecessor, lHa mchog seng ge, on the eighth day of the first half of the tenth month (the death anniversary of Mus chen) of 1534. Prior to his official appointment, he had already stepped in for lHa mchog seng ge who had fallen ill. He gave the first teachings as substitute for lHa mchog seng ge in 1533 and stepped in once more when the latter fell ill again during his annual teaching of the *Lam 'bras* in 1534, which dKon mchog lhun grub completed, also giving other teachings during that year's summer session. On these developments, see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 198.3–199.4), *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 248.5–250.3), and *lHa mchog seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 164.4–165.6). Prior to that, dKon mchog lhun grub had served as assistant teacher (*zur chos pa*) at Ngor, namely from 1521 to 1533; see the *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 1* (pp. 197.5–198.3) and *dKon mchog lhun grub kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 243.3–249.5).

¹⁷ Sangs rgyas seng ge was installed on the third (or thirteenth day) of the first half of the tenth month of 1557, after his predecessor, dKon mchog lhun grub, had passed away on the twenty-first day of the previous month of that year; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 1* (p. 23.3) and *Sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar* (pp. 346.6–348).

non-extant biography:

➤ gZims dpon Mus pa 'Tsho byed Nam mkha' dpal bzang
biographical sketch:

➤ *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 21.5–25.4)

12. rJe dKon mchog dpal ldan (1526–1590)

- a. born in the gNyan Khang gsar, Sa skya, gTsang
- b. father: lHa mo dar, the younger brother of dKon mchog lhun grub, the tenth abbot; mother: dPal ldan bu dga', the daughter of dPon ne Tshe dbang dpal 'byor, who in turn was also the father of Sangs rgyas seng ge, the eleventh abbot, and a paternal relative (*dbon rigs*) of Ngor chen, that is, on the side of Ngor chen's alleged father Grub pa yon tan
- c. two tenures: 1569–1579¹⁸ and 1582/83–1590¹⁹
- e. extant biography:
 - Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis (1558–1615), the fourteenth abbot; see the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* and *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 35, pp. 601–745)
 biographical sketches:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 25.4–27.5)
 - *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 386.1–387.5)

13. Thar rtse nas Brang ti Paṅ chen Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1535–1602)

- a. born in mDo brjod bkra shis gling, Sa skya, gTsang
- b. father: Kun dga' don grub; mother: lHa mo bu 'dren; born into the Brang ti lineage
- c. two tenures: 1579–1582/83²⁰ and 1590–1595²¹
- d. Thar rtse
- e. extant biography:

¹⁸ dKon mchog dpal ldan was first installed on the third day of the fifth month of 1569, after his predecessor, Sangs rgyas seng ge, had passed away a few days earlier on the twenty-seventh day of the fourth month of that year; see the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 422.3–425.2), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 26.2–3), and *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (p. 387.1). Prior to that, the abbacy had first been offered to Shar khang pa Chos rje Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1505–1573), who declined it. But Shes rab rgyal mtshan functioned afterwards as acting abbot (*mkhan tshab*) in 1570, giving the annual *Lam 'bras*, and taught on other occasions when the incumbent abbot was not residing at Ngor. Throughout his religious career, Shes rab rgyal mtshan occupied different positions at Ngor: until 1541 he served as *dbu mdzad* (appointed by the order of lHa mchog seng ge in 1529), *tshogs dpon* (appointed by the order of dKon mchog lhun grub), and *zur chad pa*. After a teaching tour in Khams, he came back to Ngor in 1549 and served as *zur chos pa*, taking residence in the gZims Khang Shar Khang; see the *Shes rab rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 537.3–540.2). On his teaching of the *Lam 'bras* in 1570, see also the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (p. 656.3–4) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 35.3–4).

¹⁹ After dKon mchog dpal ldan had taken a break from the abbacy to enter retreat, he began his second tenure in about the ninth month of 1583, giving the annual *Lam 'bras*; see the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 436.2–438.1 and 442.5–443.2) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 26.6). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 31.5–6) and *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 593.2–3 and 594.1), according to which Nam mkha' dpal bzang had already offered him the abbacy one year earlier in the autumn of 1582.

²⁰ Nam mkha' dpal bzang was installed on the third day of the fifth month of 1579 by his predecessor, dKon mchog dpal ldan, who wanted to take a break from the abbacy to enter into retreat; see the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 436.2–438.1), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 26.4 and 31.2–4), and *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 592.1–593.3).

²¹ Nam mkha' dpal bzang began his second tenure after the death of the incumbent abbot, dKon mchog dpal ldan, who had passed away on the second day of the eighth month of 1590. After dKon mchog dpal ldan had fallen sick earlier that year, Nam mkha' dpal bzang gave the summer teachings of that year already; see the *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 595.1–4) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 31.6–32.1). However, the year given for these developments, 1566 (*me pho stag*), needs to be corrected to 1590 (*lcags pho stag*); see the *dKon mchog dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 478.5–479.1, 484.5–485.1, and 493.5–6).

- Drung chen bSod nams shes rab (fl. 16th/17th century); see the *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* non-extant biography:
 - Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis (1558–1615), the fourteenth abbot biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 27.5–34.4)

14. Shar chen Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis (1558–1615)

- a. born in the Gu ra bla brang to the east of Sa skya, gTsang
- b. father: bDag po Slob dpon chen po Kun dga' ye shes; mother: dBang ldan rgyal mo; born into the Shar lineage
- c. tenure: 1595–1615²²
- d. Klu sdings²³
- e. extant biography:
 - rTa nag mKan chen Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje (b. 1584), alias Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje blo gros rnam par gsal ba'i sde; see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 34.4–40.3)

15. rTse gdong Khri chen 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub (1571–1642)

- a. born in the gZim chung Zil gnon (of the *bla brang chen po'i gzim khang*) at rTse gdong, gTsang
- b. father: bDag chen Kun dga' bde legs (1549–1588) from the 'Khon lineage; mother: dPal bu 'khrid
- c. tenure: 1615–1618²⁴
- e. non-extant biography:
 - rTa nag mKan chen Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje (b. 1584) biographical sketches:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 40.3–41.3)
 - *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (pp. 48–113)

16. sGrub khang nas mKhas grub dPal ldan don grub (1563–1636)

- a. born in Chu 'dus Kha rnga, gTsang
- b. father: bSod nams shes rab from the lineage (*brgyud pa*) of Nam mkha' grags, who was the illegitimate son (*zur sras*) of Ngor chen's patron Chu 'dus sDe pa sGrol

²² Byams pa Kun dga' bkra shis was installed on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month of 1559, following the order of his predecessor, Nam mkha' dpal bzang. Prior to that, during the same year, he had already given the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor, most likely because Nam mkha' dpal bzang had secluded himself in a strict retreat. On these developments, see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (p. 677.2–6), *Nam mkha' dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 597.1–598.3), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 32.2–6 and 39.6). Prior to that, since his sixteenth year (i.e., 1573), he had served as a *zur chos pa* of Ngor and then also as *chog dpon*; see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 657.6–658.6) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 35.5).

²³ On the founding of the Klu sdings bla brang, see Part Four, n. 237.

²⁴ Kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub was officially installed at the outset of the winter teaching session of 1615, giving the annual *Lam 'bras*. Earlier that year, beginning in the second month, he had already given the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor, after his predecessor, Kun dga' bkra shis, had fallen sick and passed away on the eighth day of the third month. During the monastic autumn session of that year, he also gave the empowerments for the *Vajrāvalī*. On these developments, see the *Kun dga' bkra shis kyi rnam thar* (pp. 689.5–6, 709.1–710.5, and 712.2–6), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 40.1–2 and 41.1), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (p. 78.2–19).

smyon, who in turn originated from within the lineage (*brgyud pa*) of Sa skya dPon chen 'Od zer seng ge; mother: dPal ldan bu 'dren

c. tenure: 1618–1621²⁵

d. resided in the sGrub khang, though this building was not considered a *bla brang*

e. extant biography:

- rTa nag mKhan chen Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje (b. 1584); see the *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar*

biographical sketch

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 41.3–43.2)

17. Brang ti Nam mkha' sangs rgyas (fl. 16th/17th century)

a. born in rJe (or rDzi) lung, Upper Shab (Shab stod), gTsang

b. father: Nang so rTag (or sTag) rgyal don grub, the elder brother of Nam mkha' dpal bzang, the thirteenth abbot; born into the Brang ti lineage

c. 1622–1625²⁶

d. Thar rtse, which he headed after death of his uncle, Nam mkha' dpal bzang, the thirteenth abbot, in 1602

e. extant biography:

- Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot, compiled into one work all the information on the life of three members of the Thar rtse bla brang who served as Ngor abbots. He opens his work with the biography of Nam mkha' sangs rgyas, which also contains a short genealogy of the Brang ti lineage; see the *Nam mkha' sangs rgyas kyi rnam thar*.

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 43.2–6)

18. Shar chen Shes rab 'byung gnas (1596–1653)

a. born in Khyel, bZhad, gTsang

b. father: bDag chen Byang chub sems dpa' Kun dga' dpal ldan; mother: Padma tshe ring, who was a daughter of Nang so Shar phyogs nas, a patron of sPyan snga dKon mchog rgya mtsho; born into the Shar lineage

c. 1625–1653²⁷

d. Klu sdings

e. extant biography:

- Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1598–1674), the twentieth abbot; see the *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar*

biographical sketches:

²⁵ dPal ldan don grub was installed by his predecessor, Kun dga' bsod nams lhun grub, after the completion of the annual *sgrub mchod* rituals in the fourth month around Ngor chen's death anniversary; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 42.3–4), *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 729.4–5), and *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs kha skong* (p. 80.1–2).

²⁶ Nam mkha' sangs rgyas was installed by his predecessor, dPal ldan don grub, in 1622. However, due to certain tensions at Ngor, dPal ldan don grub had already stepped down as abbot one year earlier in 1621. But he still gave the annual *Lam 'bras* of that year, but declined to reside in the abbot's quarters, staying instead in his residence, the sGrub khang. On these developments, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 43.4), *Nam mkha' sangs rgyas kyi rnam thar* (p. 773.6), and *dPal ldan don grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 729.5–730.4 and 732.6–734.4).

²⁷ Shes rab 'byung gnas was installed by his predecessor, Nam mkha' sangs rgyas, on the thirteenth day of the third or fifth month of 1625; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 43.4–5 and 44.3–4), *Nam mkha' sangs rgyas kyi rnam thar* (pp. 773.6–775.2), and *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (pp. 801.5–802.4).

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 43.6–44.6)
- *Zha lu'i gdan rabs* (pp. 390.5–391.6)

19. mKhan chen Nam mkha' rin chen (1612–1657)

- a. born in rJe lung, Upper Shab (Shab stod), gTsang
- b. nephew (*sku dbon*) of Nam mkha' sangs rgyas, the seventeenth abbot; born into the Brang ti lineage
- c. 1653/54–1657²⁸
- d. Thar rtse, which he headed from a young age on
- e. extant biography:
 - Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot, compiled the information on the life of three members of the Thar rtse bla brang who served as Ngor abbots into one work. The short biographical sketch of Nam mkha' rin chen is the second section of that work; see the *Nam mkha' rin chen gyi rnam thar*.

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 44.6–45.2)

20. bDag po rGyal rtse ba Byang pa Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1598–1674)

- a. born in rGyal mkhar rtse, gTsang
- b. father: bDag po mThu stobs; mother: lHa sras Yid 'dzin dbang mo, the *lcam* (sister?) of the g.Yas ru Byang pa; born into the Shar kha ba lineage
- c. 1658²⁹
- e. extant biography:
 - His autobiography, the *rGyal rtse ba dge slong ku sa li bya bral ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi rtogs brjod dge sbyor gsar 'phel*, in which he relates his life until 1668, was edited and supplemented by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot; see the *Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi rang rnam*

biographical sketch:

²⁸ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs provides two different dates for the beginning of Nam mkha' rin chen's tenure: 1653 and 1654. He gives the former in his abbatial history of Ngor, whereas he states the latter in his short biography of Nam mkha' rin chen, adding that he was installed by the official order of the Gong sa chen po, that is, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 45.1) and *Nam mkha' rin chen gyi rnam thar* (p. 779.12), respectively. Since his predecessor, Shes rab 'byung gnas, passed away on the twenty-third day of the first month of 1653, the former date appears more likely; see the *Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar* (p. 818.4–5). However, according to the abbatial history of Thub bstan rnam rgyal, Ngag dbang brtan pa'i rdo rje (b. 1584) was invited to Ngor at the time of the passing of Shes rab 'byung gnas and presided over the monastic community of Ngor. Though unanimously requested to become the next abbot of Ngor, this did not work out due to some further unspecified factors (*rkyen*); see the *Thub bstan rnam rgyal gyi rten gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i lo rgyus* (p. 19.9–14). In addition to the approval by Sa skya, each new abbot of Ngor also needed the approval of the dGa' ldan pho brang, after this regime was established in 1642; see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam* 2 (pp. 28.19–29.4) and Part Two, 2.

²⁹ After the death, in 1657, of his predecessor, Nam mkha' rin chen, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan was installed, in 1658, as abbot by order of Mi dbang bSod nams chos 'phel (1595–1658), though he resigned soon after. In 1655, prior to his appointment, he had already given the *Lam 'bras* at Ngor as a representative of Nam mkha' rin chen. However, he apparently did not give the *Lam 'bras* during his short tenure as abbot, which is why Sangs rgyas phun tshogs refers to another way of counting the abbots of Ngor that excludes Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan. On these details, see the *Khang gsar bsod nams rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 58.5–59.1), *Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan gyi rang rnam* (pp. 848.6–850.3), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 45.4), and Appendix One, n. 1.

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 45.2–5)

21. dPal gling Chos rje bSod noms rgya mtsho (1616–1667)

- a. born in dPal 'byor (phun tshogs) gling near sNar thang, gTsang
 - b. father: rGyal po bkra shis;³⁰ mother: dPa' mo sgron (or sgröl) ma
 - c. 1658–1667³¹
 - d. Khang gsar³²
 - e. extant biography:
 - lHun grub dpal ldan (1624–1697), the twenty-fourth abbot; see the *Khang gsar bsod noms rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 45.5–48.2)

22. sGrub khang nas 'Jam mgon dPal mchog rgyal mtshan (1599–1673)

- a. born in mKhas rnga (or snga) in gCan lung, 'Bring mtshams, gTsang
 - b. father: Chos skyong bkra shis;³³ mother: A khrid; he was a nephew (*sku dbon*) of dPal ldan don grub, the sixteenth abbot
 - c. 1667–1671³⁴
 - d. resided in the sGrub khang, though this building was not considered a *bla brang*
 - e. extant biography:
 - Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot; see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar*
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 48.2–49.2)

³⁰ The family history of rGyal po bkra shis is related in his son's biography; see the *Khang gsar bsod noms rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 21.2–22.6). According to that work, the forefathers of rGyal po bkra shis were Mongolian in origin and known as *gyad*. They accompanied Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (1235–1280) from the imperial court back to Sa skya. Chos rgyal 'Phags pa endowed them with some land not far from Shangs Srad shing, where they first settled. One of their numerous family members served then under the sDe pa sNar thang pa, who gave him an estate called Bem pe in Phyug po gzhung. He settled there for some years, and having served as his minister, he was offered a piece of land called Lor at the foot (*zhabs*) of sNar thang Chos sde. His son, 'Dzam gling phun tshogs, newly established (*gsar rgyab byas*) both the family's estate and the dPon khang dPal 'byor gling, and the family's power increased under him. His son, gZims dpon mThong legs, served under the rule of the sDe pa gTsang pa. The elder of his two sons, Phun tshogs, was a famous physician who went to China and acted as court physician (*bla sman*) of the Ming emperor, becoming known as Anzir. He had two sons: the elder, sPo lod, served the emperor as master artist and the younger, rGyal po bkra shis, was the father of bSod noms rgya mtso. On this family relation, see also the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 686.6–687.3), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 45.5–6), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 525.5–526.1 and 568.1–2), and *bSod noms lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 651.4–5).

³¹ bSod noms rgya mtsho gave the *Lam 'bras* in the spring of 1658 as a replacement of Ngag dbang bsod noms rgyal mtshan, the twentieth abbot, and was shortly thereafter officially installed as abbot of Ngor on the twenty-first day of the fourth month of that year. He was installed with the official approval of the Fifth Dalai Lama. On his installation, see the *Khang gsar bsod noms rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 58.5–59.6).

³² On the founding of the Khang gsar bla brang, see Part Four, n. 237.

³³ Like his uncle, dPal mchog rgyal mtshan belonged to the lineage (*brgyud pa*) of Nam mkha' grags, who was the illegitimate son (*zur bu*) of Ngor chen's patron Chu 'dus sDe pa sGrol smyon, who in turn originated from within the lineage (*brgyud pa*) of the Sa skya dPon chen 'Od zer seng ge. Apparently, Nam mkha' grags was abandoned by his father, settling at mKhas rnga. On his family history, see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 81.6–82.5).

³⁴ dPal mchog rgyal mtshan was installed in the autumn of 1667 with the official approval of the Fifth Dalai Lama; see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 93.6–95.1). See also the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 124.3–4).

23. 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1611–1672)

- a. born among the nomads in the upland part (*phu*) of 'U yug, gTsang
- b. father: Khor tsha ra (or dar); mother: 'Khor (or Khor) mo nor 'dzom; born within the lineage (*brgyud pa* or *rigs*) of Kublai Khan
- c. 1671–1672³⁵
- d. Thar rtse, which he headed since 1653/54
- e. extant biography:
 - Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot, compiled all the information on the life of three members of the Thar rtse bla brang who served as Ngor abbots into one work. The short biographical sketch of Nam mkha' dpal bzang is the third and last section of that work; see the *'Jam dbyangs nam mkha' dpal bzang gyi rnam thar*.

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 49.2–50.1)

24. mKhan chen lHun grub dpal ldan (1624–1697)

- a. born in Yul 'Dun pa, Shar Mi nyag, mDo smad
- b. father: rDo rje thar;³⁶ mother: rGya bzag (or zag)
- c. 1673–1686³⁷
- d. Phan bde, where he resided after retiring from the abbacy³⁸
- e. extant biography:
 - Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), the twenty-fifth abbot; see the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 50.1–6)

25. 'Jam mgon Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705)

- a. born among the nomads of Tre pa, Lower Western mNga' ris (mNga' ris smad)
- b. father: g.Yung drung skyabs (*rigs rus*: gNam ru); mother: 'A pha ma bu 'dren (or 'A pha mo bu 'dren; 'A pham bu 'dren)
- c. 1686–1689³⁹

³⁵ Nam mkha' dpal bzang was installed on the twenty-fifth day of the second month of 1671 with the official approval of the dGa' ldan pho brang regime; see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 100.2–4). He was installed after his predecessor, dPal mchog rgyal mtshan, had retired earlier that year due to his old age; see the *dPal mchog rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 99.2–100.4) and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 124.4).

³⁶ On the ancestry of rDo rje thar, see the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 110.2): *rigs ni 'khor ba sgo'i rigs/ gling sa dmar sa ngon nas chad pa'i stag ra pha tshan bcu gnyis yod pa'i nang tshan nas stag ma zhes grags pa yin/*.

³⁷ lHun grub dpal ldan was installed on the seventh day of the first half of the ninth month of 1673 with the official approval of the Fifth Dalai Lama; see the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 124.3–126.2). His predecessor, Nam mkha' dpal bzang, had passed away on the nineteenth day of the fourth month of the previous year, 1672; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 49.6–50.1), *'Jam dbyangs nam mkha' dpal bzang gyi rnam thar* (p. 781.6), and *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (p. 124.4). At that time, lHun grub dpal ldan resided at Thang dkar dgon in mDo khams, where he was collecting offerings for the Khang gsar bla brang. There he was approached by Zhabs drung Rin po che bDag chen bSod nams dbang phyug who invited him back to Ngor; see the *lHun grub dpal ldan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 119.2–4, 123.4–5, and 124.4–5). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 50.4–5).

³⁸ On the founding of the Phan bde (or Phan khang), see Part Four, n. 237.

³⁹ Sangs rgyas phun tshogs was installed on the twenty-second day of the eleventh month of 1686 with the official approval of the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya, the respective degrees being issued by sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705) and sNgags 'chang Ngag dbang kun dga' bkra shis (1656–1711); see Part Two, 2.

d. Thar rtse

e. extant autobiography:

- Sangs rgyas phun tshogs; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rang rnam*

extant biography:

- Tshul khrims dpal bzang (1675–1710), the twenty-eighth abbot; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi rang rnam thar*

autobiographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 50.6–51.4)

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 497.1–516.1)

26. bDag chen Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin (1667–1693)

a. born in bZhad chos, gTsang

b. father: Zhabs drung Sri thar; mother: dPon mo rGya rgan za [= pa?] Padma lha legs; born into the Shar lineage

c. 1689–1693⁴⁰

d. Klu sdings?

e. biographical sketches:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 51.4–6)
- *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (pp. 210.6–212.1)

27. mKhan chen (mTshungs med) Shes bya bzang po (1661–1702)

a. born in rJe lung rGya mtsho('i) gling, Upper Shab (Shab stod), gTsang

b. father: U rgyan; mother: dPal 'dzom, who originated from within the nephew line (*dbon rigs*) of the Brang ti lineage

c. 1695–1702⁴¹

d. Thar rtse; was taken there in young age by his maternal uncle (*sku zhang*), Thar rtse mKhan chen Shes rab rgya mtsho (d. 1694)

e. biographical sketches:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 51.6–52.3)
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 516.1–517.2)

28. Tshul khrims dpal bzang po (1675–1710)

a. born in sKyid bu'i grong, Rab sgang, Shar Mi nyag, mDo smad

b. father: bKra' shis dga' (*rus*: Mi nyag, *brgyud pa*: Bha rus); mother: A skyid

c. 1703–1709⁴²

⁴⁰ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin was installed on the fourteenth day of the ninth month of 1689; see the *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 211.3–4). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (p. 51.6), where his day of installation is specified as the tenth.

⁴¹ Shes bya bzang po was installed in 1695. After his predecessor, Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin, had passed away on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month of 1693, the abbacy had remained vacant for more than one year or, what is more likely, an eminent Ngor master had stepped in as acting abbot (*khri tshab* or *mkhan tshab*). On these events, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 1 (pp. 51.6–52.2), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 516.5), and *Sangs rgyas phun tshogs kyi myong ba brjod pa* (p. 211.6).

⁴² Tshul khrims dpal bzang po was installed on the eighth day of the first half of the tenth month of 1703 with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya; see the *Tshul khrims dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 405.4–406.3). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 519.4). Prior to his installation, he served as acting abbot (*khri tshab*) after the death of his predecessor, Shes bya bzang po, who had passed away on the twenty-sixth day of the sixth month of 1702; see the *Tshul khrims dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (p. 405.2–3). In this function, he bestowed the *Lam 'bras* on Ngor's monastic assembly at the end of 1702; see the *Tshul khrims dpal*

d. Phan bde, where he resided after retiring from the abbacy

e. extant biography:

- dGe srong bKra shis dbang phyug with some additions by Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774); see the *Tshul khrims dpal bzang gi rnam thar*, which is based on his non-extant biography mentioned below

non-extant biography:

- Byams pa bSod nams bzang po (1689–1749), the thirtieth abbot, *Nges don bstan pa'i nyid 'od*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 517.3–521.3)

29. bSod nams dpal ldan (1669–1713)

a. born in sPel skya, Phyug gzhung, gTsang

b. father: Don yod dpal; mother: A sgos (who descended from the *rigs* of the Shel dkar Nang pa)

c. 1709–1713⁴³

e. biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 521.3–525.5)

30. Byams pa bSod nams bzang po (1689–1749)

a. born in Gling ma, gTsang rong, gTsang

b. father: sDe pa Kun dga' bsod nams; mother: dPon mo Pa sangs; born into the nephew line (*sku'i dbon*) of bSod nams rgya mtsho, the twenty-first abbot

c. two tenures: 1713–1722⁴⁴ and 1739–1740⁴⁵

d. Khang gсар, where he resided after retiring from the abbacy

bzang gi rnam thar (pp. 405.3–4 and 406.3–5). His biography continues to state that he occupied the office of *dbu mdzad* (*dbu mdzad kyi las thog tu bzugs*) from 1701 to 1703. The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 519.3) adds that he was appointed as *vajra* master (*rdo rje slob dpon: vajrācārya*) in 1697.

⁴³ According to the *Tshul khrims dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 406.3–4 and 415.2–5), bSod nams dpal ldan was installed by his predecessor, Tshul khrims dpal bzang po, on the eleventh day of the sixth month of 1709 with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya; see *Tshul khrims dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 406.3–4 and 415.2–5). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 520.5 and 523.5–6), which dates the installation of bSod nams dpal ldan to 1710.

⁴⁴ Byams pa bSod nams bzang po was installed in 1713, aged twenty-five, after his predecessor, bSod nams dpal ldan, had passed away on the twenty-fourth day of the second month of that year; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 524.6 and 528.1–2).

⁴⁵ Byams pa bSod nams bzang po's second tenure began when dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot, stepped down from the abbacy, following the request of the royal family of sDe dge to serve as their next court chaplain after their previous chaplain, bKra shis lhun grub, the thirty-first abbot, had passed away there in sDe dge on the twentieth day of the second month of 1739. When the news of bKra shis lhun grub's passing reached central Tibet, dPal ldan chos skyong was invited, in the fifth month of that year, by sDe dge Bla ma Phun tshogs bstan pa (d. 1751), alias Kun dga' phrin las rgya mtsho (which was his full ordination name). After the passing of the latter's father, the sDe dge king bsTan pa tsho ring (1678–1738), Phun tshogs bstan pa, the next king of sDe dge, was on pilgrimage in central Tibet (1738–1739) at that time and had just returned to lHa sa from his visit to Ngor, where he had received teachings and full ordination from dPal ldan chos skyong. For inviting dPal ldan chos skyong, he now secured the backing of the dGa' ldan pho brang regime, the official letter of which (along with those from Phun tshogs bstan pa and Sa skya) dPal ldan chos skyong cites in his autobiography. dPal ldan chos skyong then approached Byams pa bSod nams bzang po, asking him to once again serve as the abbot of Ngor. The latter accepted and was officially installed on the fifteenth day of the ninth month of 1739. On these developments, see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 614.1–2), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 533.1–534.6, 546.3–4, and 566.1–4), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 599.2), *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag 2* (pp. 345.2–398.15), *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, pp. 251.1–269.2), and *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (p. 645.2–6).

e. biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 525.5–538.3)

31. 'Jam mgon bKra shis lhun grub (1672–1739)

- a. born in Rang zhabs mDo mkhar, gTsang
- b. father: rDo rje rab brtan; mother: g.Yung drung bu khrid⁴⁶
- c. 1722–1725⁴⁷
- d. connected to the Klu sdings bla brang; retired into the sGrub khang bla brang, which was, however, not counted among Ngor's five *bla brangs*
- e. extant biography:
 - Sangs rgyas ye shes (fl. 18th century), the thirty-eighth abbot, with additions by Zhu chen Tshul khirms rin chen (1697–1774); see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 538.3–547.3)

32. 'Jam mgon Tshul khirms lhun grub (1676–1730)⁴⁸

- a. born in Dar rtse mdo, Khams
- c. 1725–1730⁴⁹
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 547.3–551.3)

33. Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub dpal bzang po alias Kun dga' mtshan dpe'i rgyal mtshan (1696–1755)⁵⁰

- a. born in rJe lung, Upper Shab (Shab stod), gTsang
- b. father: dBon po g.Yang 'dzom; mother: dBon sa Tshe bkras; born into the Brang ti lineage⁵¹
- c. 1731–1733⁵²

⁴⁶ On the familial background of bKra shis lhun grub's father (*rus: gzhu*) and mother (*rigs: zhang*), see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 453.3–4) and *Ngor gyir gdan rabs 2* (p. 538.4–5).

⁴⁷ bKra shis lhun grub was installed, in 1722, by his predecessor, Byams pa bSod nams bzang po, with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya; see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 512.3–513.1) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 530.1–2 and 542.6–543.1).

⁴⁸ Tshul khirms lhun grub passed away on the fourteenth day of the second month of 1730; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 550.4). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 555.1), where the year of his passing is given as 1729.

⁴⁹ Tshul khirms lhun grub was installed by his predecessor, bKra shis lhun grub, on the eighth day of the first half of the ninth month of 1725, with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya; see the *bKra shis lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 526.5–527.6) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 549.3–5).

⁵⁰ Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub passed away on the twelfth day of the twelfth month of the wood-dog year (*shing khyi*), which fell in January of 1755; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 559.4–560.6).

⁵¹ gYang 'dzom is introduced as a son of rGyal po, who was a brother (*sku mched*) of Shes bya bzang po, the twenty-seventh abbot, who in turn originated from within the nephew line (*dbon rigs*) of the Brang ti lineage. Tshe bkras is given as a daughter of Zhal dkar mas sangs, who originated from within the family line (*rigs rgyud*) of the rGyal rtse ruler Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags (1389–1442). On the father and mother of Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 551.4–5). On religious masters of the Brang ti family of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see JACKSON (in press, Appendix E).

⁵² Byams Nam mkha' bsam 'grub was installed on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month of the male iron-dog year (*lcags pho khyi*), which fell in January 1731, with the official approval of both Sa skyong Mi dbang chen po (i.e., Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyas?) and Sa skya; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 555.1–3). He was installed after the death of his predecessor, Tshul khirms lhun grub, who had passed away on the fourteenth day of the second month of 1730; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 550.4–551.2). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 555.1), where the year of his passing is given as 1729. The Sa skyong Mi dbang, the head of the dGa' ldan pho

- d. Thar rtse, which he also headed
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 551.3–562.1)

34. dPal ldan chos skyong (1702–1760)

- a. born in sPe'i rong (i.e., sPel rong grong tsho), located right below Ngor Monastery, gTsang
- b. father: Kun dga' rdo rje of the family or household (*khyim*) called Ja dpon Zur khang pa; mother: dPal bu khrid⁵³
- c. 1733–1739⁵⁴
- d. Phan bde⁵⁵
- e. extant autobiography:
 - dPal ldan chos skyong and supplemented by Zhus chen Tshul khri ms rin chen; see the *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod*, *dPal ldan chos skyong gi gsung 'bum* (vols. 1–2), *E waṃ bka' 'bum kha skong* (vols. 2–5), and TBRC (W1KG10872)
 autobiographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 562.1–567.6)
 biographical sketch:
 - *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 460.7–464.12)

35. mKhas grub Sangs rgyas dpal bzang (1699–1745)⁵⁶

- a. born in Bya ra (or Go 'jo or lDan ma, mDo khams)⁵⁷
- b. father: A mye Thugs rjes skyabs (or Am gye 'Pho su);⁵⁸ mother: bKra shis mtsho

brang, granted special land rights to Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub and his successors, issuing a land tenure document (*gtan tshigs*); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 556.4–5).

⁵³ On the familial background of dPal ldan chos skyong's father and mother, his paternal relatives and their relationship with Ngor, and his brothers and sisters, see the *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol.1, pp. 16.6–19.5). One of his uncles, bStan 'dzin lhun grub (d. 1726), was a prominent master at Ngor connected to the Klu sdings bla brang.

⁵⁴ dPal ldan chos skyong was installed on the eighth day of the eighth month of 1733, after his predecessor, Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub, had retired from the abbacy earlier that same year. dPal ldan chos skyong was installed with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya, quoting in his autobiography the official letters issued by the latter two institutions. On these developments, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (pp. 556.6–557.1 and 565.6–566.1) and *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, pp. 155.5–166.4). According to his autobiographical sketch that dPal ldan chos skyong included in his abbatial history of Ngor, he was officially approved by Mi dbang bSod nams rab rgyas (i.e., Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyas?); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 2* (p. 565.6).

⁵⁵ dPal ldan chos skyong is considered the founder of Phan bde (or Phan khang), which, according to JACKSON 2001: 90, he founded as “a sort of offshoot of the Klu-sdings.” SMITH 2001: 89 also recognises him as its founder. However, Ngor-related sources suggest that the monastic structure itself had been built prior to dPal ldan chos skyong's birth. He should thus rather be considered to be the lama who transformed that building into an independent *bla brang*, most likely upon returning to Ngor after having served as the court chaplain of the king of sDe dge. On these developments, see Part Four, n. 237. Moreover, dPal ldan chos skyong was also connected to the Khang gсар bla brang, which he headed for one year; see the *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 1, p. 103.3–5).

⁵⁶ See the *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 632.4–633.2 and 646.3–6). Cf the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 433.3–4, 433.16–17, 434.2, 436.18, 437.3–4, 437.9–10, and 442.12–17), where his dates are given as 1700 to 1743.

⁵⁷ See the *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 632.4–633.1), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 598.4–5), and *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (p. 416.14), respectively.

⁵⁸ On the familial background of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang's father, see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (p. 416.14–17) and *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (p. 633.1).

- c. 1740–1741⁵⁹
 - d. connected to the Khang gсар bla brang⁶⁰
 - e. extant biography:
 - dPal ldan chos skyong (1702–1760), the thirty-fourth abbot; see the *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar*
- biographical sketches:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 598.4–599.5)
 - *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 416.10–445.13)

36. mKhas chen bSod nams lhun grub (1714–1745)

- a. born in Gling ma mkhar near Chos lung, gTsang
 - b. father: sDe pa Blo bzang, the brother of Byams pa bSod nams bzang po, the thirtieth abbot;⁶¹ mother: dPon bZa' drung
 - c. 1741–1745⁶²
 - d. Khang gсар
 - e. extant biography:
 - mDzod pa bsTan 'dzin rgya mtsho from Shar Mi nyag (fl. 18th century) with corrections by dPal ldan chos skyong (1702–1760), the thirty-fourth abbot; see the *bSod nams lhun grub kyi rnam thar*
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 568.1–577.2)

37. Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan (1717–1780)

- a. born at bZhad chos, gTsang⁶³
- b. father: Phun tshogs rab brtan; mother: Tshe brtan bu khrid; born into the Shar lineage
- c. 1746–1751⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Sangs rgyas dpal bzang was installed, in 1740, by his predecessor, Byams pa bSod nams bzang po, who retired from his second term as the replacement of dPal ldan chos skyong; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 534.6) and Appendix One, n. 45. In his biography of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, dPal ldan chos skyong reports that he considered installing Sangs rgyas dpal bzang as his replacement, but did not do so because of slightly inauspicious circumstances. Instead, Byams pa bSod nams bzang po became his replacement for one year, before the latter installed Sangs rgyas dpal bzang as the new abbot of Ngor; see the *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (p. 645.2–6). Cf. the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 437.9–10 and 440.3–441.6), where his installation, judging from its occurrence in his biography's chronology, took place in or after 1741.

⁶⁰ See the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (p. 429.1–12) and *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (p. 641.1–2). According to the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 598.5–6), Sangs rgyas dpal bzang joined the Ga zi khang tshan when he first came to Ngor in about 1720. After his return from Khams in the early 1730s, he took residence in the sGrub khang; see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (p. 429.12–14).

⁶¹ On the lineage of bSod nams lhun grub, see Appendix One, n. 30.

⁶² bSod nams lhun grub was installed on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of 1741 with the official approval of Mi dbang chen mo (or Mi dbang Chos rgyal; i.e., Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyas?), after his predecessor, Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, had resigned due to an illness after about one year in office in the spring of 1741; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 572.5–573.3), *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (p. 441.18–21), *Sangs rgyas dpal bzang gi rnam thar* (pp. 645.6–646.2), and *bSod nams lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 667.6–669.2). On difficulties that could occur during the handover (*rtsis sprod*) of the abbacy, and also during the time between the resignation of an old abbot and the installation of a new one (e.g., deciding which *bla brang* was responsible for the annual teachings), see the *bSod nams lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 669.3–6 and 678.4–679.3).

⁶³ On the Shar family's seat at bZhad chos, see the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 9a2–4).

⁶⁴ Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan was installed on the twenty-fifth day of the eighth month of 1746 with the official approval of Mi dbang Chos rgyal (i.e., Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyas?); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 583.4) and *bSod nams lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (p. 679.2–4). Cf. the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam*

- d. Klu sdings
- e. extant biography:
 - Gu ru 'phel (secretary and court physician of sDe dge; fl. 18th century); see the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* autobiographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 577.2–588.5)

38. 'Jam mgon Sangs rgyas ye shes (fl. 18th century; short-lived)

- a. born in Rang zhabs mDo mkhar, gTsang
- b. a nephew (*sku dbon*) of bKra shis lhun grub, the thirty-first abbot
- c. 1751⁶⁵
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 599.5–600.5)

39. mKhan chen rDo rje 'dzin pa dKon mchog grags pa (b. 1715)

- a. born in rGyal bzang (one of the twelve sTag ra pha tsho), located to the north of bZhang brag lHa rtse, mDo smad
- b. father: gZi rgan A 'bum padma; mother: A 'tsho ma
- d. Khang ser⁶⁶
- c. 1751–1765⁶⁷
- e. biographical sketch (which appears to be an edited version of an autobiographical sketch):
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 588.5–593.6)

40. Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po (1723–1779)

- a. born in dPal 'byor gling, sNar thang, near Nub Chos lung dgon, gTsang⁶⁸
- b. father: sDe pa Blo bzang mgon po (d. 1757); mother: sGos skyid bu khrid⁶⁹

thar (fol. 13b5), where his year of installation is given as 1747 (*me mo yos*), though the corresponding passage is taken from his autobiographical sketch as included in the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 583.5), which dates it to 1746 (*me pho stag*). After his predecessor, bSod nams lhun grub, had passed away on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of 1745, the abbacy remained vacant until his installation; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 575.2–576.3) and *bSod nams lhun grub kyi rnam thar* (pp. 672.5–680.5).

⁶⁵ In his autobiographical sketch, Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan states that he handed over the abbacy to Sangs rgyas ye shes in 1751 (*lcags mo lug*); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (p. 586.5–6). However, in his biography, his year of retirement is specified as 1752 (*chu pho spre'u*), though the passage is borrowed from his autobiographical sketch (*Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2, p. 586.5–6); see the *Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (fol. 15a5–6). Sangs rgyas ye shes' installation is also mentioned in the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 600.2–3), though without any date.

⁶⁶ dKon mchog grags pa is considered to be the founder of the Khang ser bla brang; see Part Four, n. 237.

⁶⁷ dKon mchog grags pa was installed in 1751 with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 592.2–3). See also the *dPal ldan chos skyong gi rtogs brjod* (vol. 2, p. 363.1–4). Prior to that, in 1739, he had been appointed as vajra master (*rdo rje slob dpon: vajrācārya*); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 2 (pp. 591.6–592.1).

⁶⁸ See the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 687.4–5). On his family's seat at dPal 'byor gling, see Appendix One, n. 30. For later visits that Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po paid to his family's seat, see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 690.5–6, 702.4–6, and 757.3–758.1). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 600.6), where his place of birth is given as gTsang rong Gling ma mkhar.

⁶⁹ Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po was born into the nephew line (*dbon rigs*) of such masters as Byams pa bSod nams bzang po, the thirtieth abbot, and bSod nams lhun grub, the thirty-sixth abbot; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 687.1–3) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 600.6). The familial background of his mother is given as (*Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar*, p. 687.3–4): *yum yang lus can bsod nams zhing mchog rong byams chen gyi sku brnyan bzhugs pa'i g.yas zur| shar zur khang pa zhes rje'u rigs las (...)*

d. Khang gsar

c. 1765–1776⁷⁰

e. extant biography:

- Shākya'i bTsun pa Ngag dbang chos grags (fl. 18th century), who wrote his work for the events until 1777 mainly based on his teacher's records; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 600.6–602.1)

41. mKhas grub Sangs rgyas grags pa (fl. 18th century)

a. born in Sha grong behind (*rgyab*) bZhag ra lHa rtse, Mi nyag, mDo smad

c. 1776–178?⁷¹

e. biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 602.1–603.2)

42. Ngag dbang phun tshogs don grub (fl. 18th century)

a. born in rGyal bzang to the north of bZhag brag lHa rtse, Mi nyag, mDo smad

b. born into the nephew line (*dbon rigs*) of dKon mchog grags pa, the thirty-ninth abbot

c. 178?–178?⁷²

d. Khang ser?

e. biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 603.2–604.1)

⁷⁰ For a detailed description of his installation, in which, as was customary, representatives of the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya also participated, see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 715.4–723.2). His installation is also mentioned in the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 601.4), though without any date. In 1764, one year prior to his installation, he had already acted as a surrogate (*khri tshab*) for dKon mchog grags pa, the thirty-ninth abbot, who had fallen ill, bestowing the annual *Lam 'bras* teaching and ordinations; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 712.1–713.5). The worsening of dKon mchog grags pa's physical condition was also the reason for his installation one year later; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 715.4–6). On disputes arising from the handover (*rtsis sprod*) of the abbacy, see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 720.4–723.2). Once during his tenure, due to severe impediments (*gegs*), the annual *Lam 'bras* teaching and ordinations had to be given by Zhal dkar ba Ngag dbang shes rab as surrogate (*khri tshab*); see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 744.6–746.2). Like dPal ldan chos skyong, Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po's resignation from the abbacy was not by his own choice, but rather brought about due to the pressure exercised by the king of sDe dge, who wanted him to serve as his new chaplain as a replacement for Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan, the thirty-seventh abbot; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 749.6–757.1).

⁷¹ The installation of Sangs rgyas grags pa is mentioned within the context of the resignation of his predecessor, Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po, who had been invited to sDe dge in 1775 and left Ngor in the eighth month of 1776; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 749.6–756.2). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 602.5–6) mentions his installation, but does not specify any date. Prior to his installation, Sangs rgyas grags pa had served as *dbu mdzad* and gave, in 1775, the annual *Lam 'bras* teaching in place of Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po, who was busy with his preparations for travelling to sDe dge; see the *Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 751.1–2.). Sangs rgyas grags pa was still in office in 1780, though ill; see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 67.1–2). See also JACKSON 1989a: 82 and 87, and JACKSON 1993: 128.

⁷² The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 603.5–6) mentions his installation, but does not specify any date.

43. mKhas grub Kun dga' bsod noms (d. 1787)

- a. born in Brag mgo rTa dmar, mDo khams
- c. 178?–1787⁷³
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 604.1–605.1)

44. Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med (1765–1820)

- a. born in rTse na rGya mtsho gling near Ngor Monastery, gTsang
 - b. father: rTa mgrin;⁷⁴ mother: Pa sangs sgrol ma
 - c. 1789–1793⁷⁵
 - d. Thar rtse
 - e. extant biography:
 - Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870), the fifty-fourth abbot; see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar*, *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 7, pp. 3–186.2), and *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 7, pp. 1–159)
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 605.1–606.5)

Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med served as abbot until 1793, when he accepted an invitation from the king of sDe dge to act as his court chaplain. But since gZim phrug khang dPon slob Ngag dbang dam chos declined the initial request to become his abbatial successor, it was decided that the abbacy should provisionally rotate annually through the five *bla brangs* of Ngor. Thus, in the following four years, it rotated through Khang gsar (1793–1794), Khang ser (1794–1795), Klu sdings (1795–1796), and Phan bde (1796–1797). The respective abbots from these *bla brangs* were Zhabs drung Rin po che bSod noms bstan 'dzin, Khang ser dBon Shākya phun tshogs pa, Ngag dbang dam chos, and Zhabs drung Rin po che Ngag dbang bstan pa rin chen. By that time, a certain 'Bum rab 'byams pa of 'Bras yul sKyed mos tshal Monastery appealed to Sa skya, requesting that he be made the next abbot of Ngor, because no one else wanted to take on that responsibility. However, since this move was not welcomed by the Ngor pa, Ngag dbang dam chos finally agreed to be installed as the next abbot.⁷⁶

⁷³ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 604.5) mentions his installation, but does not specify any date. On Kun dga' bsod noms' passing away, in 1787, as incumbent abbot, see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 75.3–5). See also JACKSON 1989a: 82 and 87 and JACKSON 1993: 128.

⁷⁴ The father of Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, rTa mgrin, was the brother of Thar rtse Zhabs drung dPal ldan chos skyong (d. 1769), who in turn was a paternal nephew (*rus kyi dbon po*) of Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub, the thirty-third abbot. His mother, Pa sangs sgrol ma, belonged to a family line (*rigs*) called rDzong pa lags, which produced many powerful rNying ma practitioners. On his father, mother, and siblings, see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 22.2–23.6).

⁷⁵ The predecessor of Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, Kun dga' bsod noms, passed away in 1787. After that, Khang gsar Zhabs drung Rin po che bSod noms bstan 'dzin served first as acting abbot (*mkhan tshab*) for one year. Then, Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med took over as acting abbot in the twelfth month of the male earth-monkey year (*sa pho spre'u*), which fell in January or February of 1789, and was officially installed as abbot on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of that year. He was installed with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya. On these developments, see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 75.3–76.3 and 77.6–80.1). In 1790, due to a smallpox infection, Ngag dbang dam chos, the forty-fifth abbot, stepped in for Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med and gave the annual *Lam 'bras* teaching as acting abbot; see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 81.3–4). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 605.6) mentions Nam mkha' 'chi med's installation, but does not provide any date.

⁷⁶ On these developments, see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 81.2–3 and 85.3–88.4) and *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 166.6–167.3). See also JACKSON 2001: 90 and 103, n. 16.

45. mKhas grub Ngag dbang dam chos (d. 1805)

- a. born in Pho sgang steng, Rong yul, gTsang
- c. 1797–1805⁷⁷
- d. connected to the Klu sdings bla brang?
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 606.5–607.5)

46. mKhan chen bSod noms dpal 'byor (fl. 18th/19th century)

- a. born in Mo la gshis, Li'u thang, mDo smad
- c. 1805–1811⁷⁸
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 607.5–608.4)

47. mKhan chen Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin (1776–1862)

- a. born in rTse na rGya mtsho gling near Ngor Monastery, gTsang
 - b. father: Padma don grub, the brother of Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, the forty-fourth abbot; mother: Padma bu khrid;⁷⁹ born into the Brang ti lineage
 - c. 1812–1821⁸⁰
 - d. Thar rtse, which he headed since 1793
 - e. extant biography:
 - Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870), the fifty-fourth abbot; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar*, *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 7, pp. 186.2–445.3), and *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 7, pp. 161–386)
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 608.4–612.2)

⁷⁷ Though the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 607.3) mentions Ngag dbang dam chos' installation, it does not specify any date. Already in 1790, Ngag dbang dam chos had briefly served as acting abbot (*mkhan tshab*); see Appendix One, n. 75. During his own tenure, in 1804, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, the forty-seventh abbot, served briefly as acting abbot (*mkhan tshab*); see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (p. 172.6).

⁷⁸ bSod noms dpal 'byor was installed after the sudden death of his predecessor, Ngag dbang dam chos, who had passed away on the twelfth day of the twelfth month of the wood-mouse year (*shing byi*), which fell in January 1805; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 172.6–173.2). The fact that bSod noms dpal 'byor was installed in 1805 is also confirmed by the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (pp. 107.4–111.3), which relates that Nam mkha' 'chi med, the forty-fourth abbot, received teachings from bSod noms dpal 'byor as incumbent abbot (*mkhan chen las thog pa*) after his return to Ngor from sDe dge in the ninth month of 1805. Though the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 608.2–3) mentions bSod noms dpal 'byor's installation, it does not specify any date.

⁷⁹ On the familial background of Padma bu khrid, the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 151.6–152.1) states: *yum ni gnas grongs la sgang zhes pa sger pa rta rkyang zhiq gi rigs las byon pa'i (...)*.

⁸⁰ Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin was installed on the fifteenth day of the first half of the twelfth month of the female iron-sheep year (*lcags mo lug*), which fell in January 1812. He was installed with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya. He was installed after his predecessor, bSod noms dpal 'byor, had handed in his resignation, following the deterioration of the latter's eyesight sometime after the eighth month of 1811. He was chosen over two other candidates to the abbacy: Ngag dbang blo gros bzang po, the *zhabs drung* of the Khang gsar bla brang, who would follow him on the abbatial throne, and dPal ldan rin chen chos mdzod, the *zhabs drung* of the Phan bde bla brang. On these events, see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 214.3–218.1). Though the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 609.3–4) mentions that Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin taught on Ngor chen's throne for nine years, it does not specify any concrete dates.

48. mKhan chen Ngag dbang blo gros bzang po (fl. 18th/19th century)

- b. born into the nephew line (*dbon rigs*) of Ngag dbang chos skyong bzang po, the fortieth abbot⁸¹
- c. 1821–ca. 1825?⁸²
- d. Khang gsar
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 612.2–613.3)

49. Yongs 'dzin dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan dri med legs pa'i blo gros (1780s–1850s)⁸³

- a. born in mGar thar Ma 'ju brag, Mi nyag, mDo smad
- b. father: born within the lineage of mGar thar dPon;⁸⁴ mother: A la padma
- c. ca. 1825?–ca. 1831? (tenure for seven years when about forty or when in his forties)⁸⁵
- e. extant biography:
 - Blo gter dbang po (1847–1914); see the *dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar*
- biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 613.3–616.5)

50. Byams pa dPal ldan bzang po (fl. 18th/19th century)

- a. born in Pad nang (i.e., Pa snam) near dGa' ba gdong Monastery, gTsang
- b. *sprul sku* of Rin chen mchog grub (1723–1779), who was a nephew (*dbon po*) of dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot, and acted as abbot of Gle lung Chos sde in Mus⁸⁶
- c. ca. 1831?–1835⁸⁷
- d. Phan bde

⁸¹ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 612.2–3).

⁸² Ngag dbang blo gros bzang po was installed on the thirteenth day of the first half of the tenth month of 1821, after his predecessor, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, had resigned from the abbacy earlier that year, accepting an invitation from the king of sDe dge; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 219.1–2 and 224.4–225.6). Though the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 612.5–6) mentions Ngag dbang blo gros bzang po's installation, it does not specify any date. Already prior to that, he had been considered for the abbacy; see Appendix One, n. 80.

⁸³ dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan died at age seventy-one or seventy-two. For the former date, see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 616.2–3) and *dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 813.4–6). For the latter date, see the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi byung tshul* (p. 316.4–5).

⁸⁴ On this lineage (*gdung rgyud*), see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 613.4) and *dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 799.3–4).

⁸⁵ See the *dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 808.3–4) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 615.2), respectively. Both these works were written by dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan's nephew, Blo gter dbang po. Along with dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 'Jam dpal bzang po, who would later become the fifty-first abbot, was also considered for the abbacy; see the *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (p. 481.4–6). Prior to his installation, dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan served for a long time as chief ritual master (*dpon slob*) of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 614.6) and *dPal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 808.2). He was serving as *dpon slob* when Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, the forty-fourth abbot, returned to Ngor from sDe dge in the ninth month of 1805; see the *Nam mkha' 'chi med kyi rnam thar* (p. 111.5–6).

⁸⁶ For a biographical sketch of Rin chen mchog grub, see the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang gdan rabs* (pp. 464.13–478.14).

⁸⁷ Byams pa dPal ldan bzang po was in office in the ninth month of 1832; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (pp. 243.6 and 247.6–247.2). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 617.3) does not specify any date for his installation.

e. biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 616.5–617.6)

51. rNal 'byor 'Jam dpal bzang po (1789–1864)

- a. born in rTse na rGya mtsho gling near Ngor Monastery, gTsang
- b. father: Padma don grub, a paternal nephew (*rus dbon*) of Byams pa Nam mkha' bsam 'grub, the thirty-third abbot; mother: Padma bu khrid; 'Jam dpal bzang po was the younger brother of Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, the forty-seventh abbot; born into the Brang ti lineage

c. 1835–1842⁸⁸

d. Thar rtse

e. extant biography:

- Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870), the fifty-fourth abbot; see the '*Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar*, *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 7, pp. 445.3–678.6), and *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 7, pp. 387–590)

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 617.6–619.4)

52. Khang gsar mKhan po Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin (fl. 19th century)

- b. born into the nephew line (*dbon rigs*) of Ngag dbang blo gros bzang po, the forty-eighth abbot

c. 1842–1848⁸⁹

d. Khang gsar

e. biographical sketches:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 619.4–620.2)
- *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar* (pp. 8.5–10.1)

53. Phan khang mKhan po Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros (1822–1884)

- a. born in rTogs ldan dgon (known as bKra shis chos sdings) near Ngor Monastery, gTsang⁹⁰

- b. father: Kun bzang padma'i rig 'dzin (b. 1791) from the 'Bras ljongs dPa' bo hūm ri family line (*rigs brgyud*), whose members were upholders of the teachings of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem; mother: Gang legs bu khrid (b. 1787); incarnation (*sku skye* or

⁸⁸ 'Jam dpal bzang po was installed on the fifteenth day of the first half of the eleventh month of 1835, after his predecessor, Byams pa dPal ldan bzang po, had handed in his resignation earlier that year. He was installed with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya. Other candidates to the abbacy were Khang gsar Zhabs drung Rin po che Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin and the Klu sdings Zhabs drung Rin po che, but the former was in mGo zi dgon in Gling tshang at that time and the latter travelling to sDe dge. 'Jam dpal bzang po was considered for the abbacy already in 1821, after the resignation of his elder brother, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, the forty-seventh abbot. On these developments, see the '*Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 420.2–423.6). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 618.4–5) does not specify any date for his installation.

⁸⁹ Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin was installed in the eleventh month of 1842, after his predecessor, 'Jam dpal bzang po, had retired earlier that year; see the '*Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 424.1 and 432.1–5). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 619.6) does not specify any date for his installation. Already prior to that, he had been considered for the abbacy; see Appendix One, n. 88.

⁹⁰ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 620.2–3). According to his biography, Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros was born in the bKra shis chos sdings bla brang, located in Chu sgo gzhung, Nyang smad, gTsang, close to the birthplace of rDo ring pa Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1449–1524); see the *Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros kyi rnam thar* (pp. 821.6–822.1).

yang srid) of dPal ldan rin chen chos mdzod, a nephew (dbon) of dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot, and zhabs drung of the Phan khang bla brang

c. 1848–1851⁹¹

d. Phan bde

e. extant biography:

- dPal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan (1840–1900), the fifty-seventh abbot; see the *Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros kyi rnam thar*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 620.2–622.1)

54. Thar rtse'i mKhan chen rDo rje 'chang Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870)

a. born in (gZhis ka chen po) bSam 'grub rtse, gTsang

b. father: sDe pa rGyal po tshe ring, a brother of Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, the forty-seventh abbot, and 'Jam dpal bzang po, the fifty-first abbot; mother: sGrol ma tshe ring; born into the Brang ti lineage

c. 1851–1859⁹²

d. Thar rtse

e. extant biography:

- Ngor dPon slob Khu na 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (d. ca. 1893/94); see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar*, *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 7, pp. 679.1–871), and *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 7, pp. 591–757)

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 622.1–627.6)

55. mKhan chen Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b. 1830s; dies in his fifty-ninth year)

a. born in rGya sngon, gTsang rong, gTsang

b. nephew (*sku'i dbon*) of Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin, the fifty-second abbot

c. 1859–1866?⁹³

⁹¹ Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros was installed on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of 1848 with the official approval of Sa skya; see the *Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros kyi rnam thar* (pp. 826.3–827.5). This is also confirmed by the biography of 'Jam dpal bzang po, the fifty-first abbot, which mentions the imminent handover of the abbacy when 'Jam dpal bzang po reached Ngor on the sixth day of the tenth month of 1848; see the *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 455.6–456.44 and 460.2–461.2). According to the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 620.6–621.1), he served as abbot from his twenty-seventh until his thirty-first year of age (i.e., 1848–1852).

⁹² With the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was installed on the third day of the eleventh month of 1851, after his predecessor, Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros, had handed in his resignation earlier that year; see the *Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros kyi rnam thar* (p. 831.1–4) and *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 583.5–591.5). Other candidates to the abbacy were, for instance, 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po and 'Jam pa'i dbyangs Ngag dbang legs grub (i.e., Ngor dPon slob Ngag dbang legs grub?); see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 584.5–585.6). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 622.1–627.6) counts him among the abbots of Ngor, but does not mention his installation. It mentions, however, that his predecessor handed over the abbacy to the Thar rtse bla brang; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 621.2).

⁹³ Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan was installed on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1859. In 1858, his predecessor, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, had already asked Sa skya to approve his resignation, but apparently continued in office until 1859. At first, another zhabs drung of the Khang gсар bla brang, 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, the fifty-sixth abbot-to-be, was chosen to succeed Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. But since, at that time, 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho was residing in mGo zi Monastery in Khams, Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan chose Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan as his abbatial successor. On these developments, see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar*

- d. Khang gsar
- e. non-extant biography:
 - gTsug lag smra ba 'Jam dbyangs chos 'phel biographical sketches:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 627.6–633.3)
 - JACKSON 1999

56. 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho (d. 1873?)⁹⁴

- a. born in sMan thangs, gTsang rong, gTsang
- b. incarnation (*rnam 'phrul* or *ye shes sgyu 'phrul*) of Ngag dbang blo gros bzang po, the forty-eighth abbot, in whose nephew line (*dbon rigs*) he was born
- c. 1866?–1870?⁹⁵
- d. Khang gsar
- e. non-extant biography:
 - 'Jam dbyangs chos 'phel biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 633.3–635.4)

57. dPal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1840–1900)

- a. born in Pad nang (i.e., Pa snam), gTsang
- b. born into the family line (*rigs*) of (or nephew (*sku dbon*) of) Byams pa dPal ldan bzang po, the fiftieth abbot
- c. 1870?–1876?⁹⁶
- d. Phan bde
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 635.4–641.1)

58. 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rdo rje (1837–1901)

- a. born in (gZhis ka chen po) bSam 'grub rtse, gTsang
- b. father: Bla ma Pad rdor; mother: sByin pa bzang mo of the Brang ti lineage
- c. ca. 1876?–ca. 1881?⁹⁷

(pp. 594.2–4 and 605.6–607.5). According to the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 629.4), his tenure lasted for about eight years. Cf. the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi byung tshul* (p. 317.4), where his tenure is given as ten years.

⁹⁴ 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho died in the tenth month of a bird year (*bya lo*); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 635.3).

⁹⁵ Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the fifty-fourth abbot, mentions 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho as present abbot in the biography of his uncle Byams pa Kun dga' bstan 'dzin when enumerating the latter's disciples who become abbots of Ngor; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar* (p. 290.3–4). Together with the biographies of his great-uncle (Byams pa Nam mkha' 'chi med, the forty-fourth abbot) and other uncle ('Jam dpal bzang po, the fifty-first abbot), he wrote this biography in 1861 and finished further addendums on the third day of the first half of the third month of 1867, after the passing of both of his uncles; see the *'Jam dpal bzang po'i rnam thar* (pp. 522.2–524.2). This suggests that 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho was already abbot in 1867. The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 634.3) does not specify any date for his installation. Previously, he had been considered as the successor of Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the fifty-fourth abbot, see Appendix One, n. 93.

⁹⁶ dPal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan was in office in the spring of 1870; see the *Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (p. 643.4–5). Cf. the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi byung tshul* (p. 318.3), which gives the tenure of his predecessor, 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, as being seven years (i.e., 1866?–1872?). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 637.3) does not specify any date for his installation.

⁹⁷ Though the biography of 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rdo rje does mention his installation, which took place with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya, it does not specify any date; see

d. Thar rtse

e. extant biography:

- *Ngor gter dbang po* (1847–1914); see the *'Jam dbyangs rin chen rdo rje'i rnam thar*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (pp. 641.1–644.2)
- *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar* (pp. 10.1–13.2)

59. Ngag dbang blo gros snying po (d. ca. 1905/06)⁹⁸

b. born into the Zha lu sKu zhang lCe lineage (*rigs brgyud*); reincarnation (*sprul pa'i sku*) of Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin, the fifty-second abbot

c. ca. 1881?–ca. 1890?⁹⁹

d. Khang gсар

e. biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (pp. 644.3–646.2)

60. Ngag dbang mkhyen rab 'jam dpal snying po (1868–1949)¹⁰⁰

b. paternal nephew (*dbon rigs*) of Ngag dbang blo gros snying po, the fifty-ninth abbot (i.e., born into the Zha lu sKu zhang lineage)

c. ca. 1890?–1895¹⁰¹

d. Khang gсар

e. biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 646.3–5)

61. Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1863–1899)

a. born near Thub bstan Yangs pa can, gTsang

b. born into the nephew line (*dbon brgyud*) of dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot; born into a family line (*rigs*) from which many masters of the Bla brang dkar po (i.e., the Khang gсар bla brang?) originated

the *'Jam dbyangs rin chen rdo rje'i rnam thar* (pp. 872.3–874.3). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 642.2) does also not specify any date for his installation. According to both the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi byung tshul* (p. 319.1) and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 637.3–4), the tenure of his predecessor, dPal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, lasted for seven years (i.e., 1870?–1876?).

⁹⁸ See JACKSON 2003b: [14]. On Ngag dbang blo gros snying po, see also JACKSON 2001: 91 and JACKSON (in press, Appendix E)

⁹⁹ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 645.1–2) does not specify any date for the installation of Ngag dbang blo gros snying po, mentioning merely that his tenure lasted for about ten years. He was in office when sGa ston Ngag dbang legs pa (1864–1941) came to Ngor in 1881; see the *Ngag dbang legs pa'i rnam thar* (p. 342.3–5). However, the *rGyud sde kun btus kyi byung tshul* (p. 320.1), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 642.2–3), and *'Jam dbyangs rin chen rdo rje'i rnam thar* (p. 875.2) all give an eight-year tenure for his predecessor, 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rdo rje (i.e., 1876?–1883?).

JACKSON 2001: 103, n. 21 mentions that “according to Dezhung Rinpoche, oral communication 1979,” Khu na 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho—the author of biographies of three abbots from the Thar rtse bla brang (nos. 47, 51, and 54)—“served as *dpon-slob* and acting abbot (*khri tshab*) at Ngor, though he was never officially installed as abbot. But in the opinion of Dezhung Rinpoche and his masters, he actually deserved to be counted among the abbots at about number 59.” This is also why JACKSON 1989a: 76 and 89 enumerates him as abbot “58A.” This opinion was also confirmed by Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che (Ngor ma dgon, 13 May 2009).

¹⁰⁰ See the *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar* (p. 40.1–2) and *Lam 'bras bla brgyud kyi rnam thar 2* (pp. 229–230). On Ngag dbang mkhyen rab 'jam dpal snying po, see also JACKSON (in press, Appendix E).

¹⁰¹ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 3* (p. 646.4) does not specify any date for the installation of Ngag dbang mkhyen rab 'jam dpal snying po.

- c. 1895–1898¹⁰²
- d. Phan bde
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 646.5–649.3)

62. Byams pa dPal ldan chos mdzad (d. ca. 1915)¹⁰³

- a. born in the Zur khang, sPis grong (i.e., sPel rong grong tshog), right below Ngor Monastery, gTsang
- b. born into the nephew line (*dbon brgyud*) of dPal ldan chos skyong, the thirty-fourth abbot
- c. 1898–1904?¹⁰⁴
- d. Phan bde
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 649.3–6)

63. 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' [or bzang] bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (fl. 19th/20th century)

- b. father: Shes rab seng ge;¹⁰⁵ mother: originated from within the family line (*rigs*) of gSang bdag sGrol phug; born into the Brang ti lineage; nephew of 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rdo rje, the fifty-eighth abbot; incarnation (*slar yang ye shes sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i rol gar du*) of Byams pa Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the fifty-fifth abbot
- c. 1904?–1920?¹⁰⁶
- d. Thar rtse
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 649.6–651.1)

¹⁰² Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was installed during the winter teaching session of the wood-sheep year (*shing lug*; i.e., 1895), most likely before beginning to give the annual *Lam 'bras* teaching in about the tenth month of that year; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 648.4).

¹⁰³ See JACKSON 2003b: 581, n. 56.

¹⁰⁴ Though the abbatial history of Ngor does not specify any date for the installation of Byams pa dPal ldan chos mdzad, in the biographical sketch of his predecessor, Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, it does mention that the latter served as abbot until the earth-dog year (*sa khyi*, i.e., 1898); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 648.4–5 and 649.5), respectively. However, the same work also mentions that Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan's tenure lasted for five years, which should be corrected to four, if the given dating of 1898 is correct; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 648.4–5).

¹⁰⁵ JACKSON (in press, Appendix E) points out that this Shes rab seng ge was actually Zhabs drung Nam mkha' bzang po: "Up to the time of Ngor Thartse mKhan po Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1829–1870), the Ngor Thartse abbots had come from the original Drangti agnatic lineage. However, the paternal line threatened to come to an end in the 1860s/70s, and so the abbot Jamyang Rinchen Dorje (1837–1901) (a *maternal* nephew, *snag dbon*, of Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan) had his maternal nephew, who was called Shabdrung Namkha Zangpo, disrobe and marry. (...) It would seem that Shabdrung Namkha Zangpo's layman name was Shes rab seng ge."

¹⁰⁶ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 650.5) does not specify any date for the installation of Kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. But he was in office when Blo gter dbang po finished writing his addendum to the abbatial history of Ngor; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (pp. 650.5–651.1). According to the late gDong thog Rin po che (1933–2015), the tenure of his predecessor, Byams pa dPal ldan chos mdzad, lasted for seven years (i.e., 1898–1904?); see the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung* 2 (p. 220.5). Cf. the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 3 (p. 650.5), where his tenure is merely given as "some years" (*lo shas*). Note that JACKSON 1989a: 83 and 89 points to the possibility of a second tenure. See also JACKSON 1993: 128.

- 64. Phan bde mKhan Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (b. ca. late 1870s?; d. ca. 1930)¹⁰⁷**
- born in mGron mda' near Thar lam Monastery, sGa stod, Khams
 - born into the family or household (*khyim*) called Gad thog tshang
 - ca. 1920?–ca. 1922?¹⁰⁸
 - Phan bde
 - biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 470.4–471.4)
- 65. Khang gsar mKhan chen Dam pa Rin po che alias mKhan chen Ngag dbang blo gros gzhan phan snying po (1876–1953)**
- born in sMan thang, Rong, gTsang
 - born into the gNubs lineage (*gdung rigs*)
 - two tenures: ca. 1922?–1924 and 1926–1927¹⁰⁹
 - Khang gsar
 - extant biography:
 - gDong thog bsTan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1933–2015); see the *Dam pa rin po che'i rnam thar*, *Lam 'bras* 2 (vol. 10, pp. 3–29), and *Lam 'bras* 3 (vol. 8, pp. 403–424)
 biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 471.4–474.2)
 - *Sa skya'i chos 'byung* 2 (pp. 340.5–349.1)
 - JACKSON 2003b: 172–177
- 66. Shar chen rGyal sras 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi nyi ma thub bstan rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1872–1953)**
- father: Zhabs drung 'Jam dbyangs Shes rab rgya mtsho, a son of Shar chen dam pa; mother: a daughter of the sDe dge Ho cho tshang family; born into the Shar lineage
 - 1924–1926¹¹⁰
 - Klu sdings
 - biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 474.2–476.5)
- 67. Thar rtse mKhan Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1903–1960)¹¹¹**
- born in (gZhis ka chen po) Pad gling, gTsang

¹⁰⁷ See JACKSON 2003b: 521, 534, and 580, n. 47.

¹⁰⁸ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 471.1–2) does not specify any date for the installation of 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan, mentioning merely that his tenure lasted for three years. Cf. JACKSON 2003b: 534 and 580, n. 47, who gives his tenure as 1917?–1921?.

¹⁰⁹ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 471.1–2) does not specify any date for the installation of Dam pa Rin po che, mentioning merely that his tenure lasted for three years. The tenure of his predecessor, 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan, is likewise given as three years; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 472.3–4). When his abbatial successor, 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi nyi ma, passed away on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1926 while giving the annual *Lam 'bras* teaching, Dam pa Rin po che completed that teaching (as acting abbot?); see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 476.3–4).

¹¹⁰ 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi nyi ma was installed in 1924; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 476.1).

¹¹¹ See JACKSON 1989a: 84 and 93–94 and JACKSON 1993: 129.

- b. mother: sister (*sku sring ma*) of 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the sixty-third abbot; born into the Brang ti matrilineage (*sha brgyud*); incarnation (*sprul sku*) of 'Jam dbyangs Rin chen rdo rje, the fifty-eighth abbot¹¹²
- c. two tenures: 1927–1929/30? and 1940–1941/42?¹¹³
- d. Thar rtse
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 476.5–478.2)

68. Phan khang mKhan Rin po che Ngag dbang (blo gros) theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1906–ca. 1960)¹¹⁴

- a. born in sDe dge, Khams
- b. father: Zla ba bzang po; incarnation (*sprul sku*) of dPal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan, the fifty-seventh abbot
- c. 1929/30?–1933¹¹⁵
- d. Phan bde
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 478.2–479.2)

69. Khang gsar mKhan Rin po che Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho (1902–ca. 1963)¹¹⁶

- a. born in the village (*grong*) called Dung 'khor, sGa stod, Khams
- b. born into the family or household (*khyim*) called Lab (or La) kha tshang; father: sKal bzang phrin las alias sKal dga' (or Kar dga'); mother: sGron lha dbang mo; incarnation (*sprul sku*) of Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, the fifty-fifth abbot
- c. 1933–1935/36?¹¹⁷
- d. Khang gsar
- e. biographical sketches:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 479.2–481.2)
 - JACKSON 2001¹¹⁸

¹¹² See the *Sa skya'i chos 'byung* 2 (pp. 220.6–221.3).

¹¹³ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 477.2–4) does not specify any date for the installation of 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan, mentioning merely that his first tenure lasted three years and his second two years. But it does mention that his predecessor, 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi nyi ma, passed away on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1926 while giving the annual *Lam 'bras* teaching, which was thereafter completed by Dam pa Rin po che; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 476.3–4). This suggests that he was installed sometime in 1927 after the completion of the annual *Lam 'bras* earlier that year. See also JACKSON 1989a: 84 and 89 and JACKSON 1993: 129. He was installed a second time after the sudden death, in early 1940, of Byams pa Nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the seventy-first abbot; see the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 486.1–4). See also JACKSON 1989a: 84 and 93.

¹¹⁴ See JACKSON 1993: 129.

¹¹⁵ The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 478.6) does not specify any date for the installation of Ngag dbang theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, merely mentioning that his tenure lasted for three years. See also JACKSON 1989a: 84 and 89 and JACKSON 1993: 129.

¹¹⁶ See JACKSON 2001: 88.

¹¹⁷ Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho was installed on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of 1933; see the *Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 903.6–904.2). The *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 480.1–2) does not specify any date for his installation, merely mentioning that his tenure lasted for three years. On a revolt during his abbacy, see JACKSON 2001: 92–95.

¹¹⁸ See also JACKSON 2003b: 188–189.

70. Phan bde mKhan chen Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho (1917–1969)

- a. born in 'Dzi mda' (or 'Dzin 'da') village, sGa stod, mDo khams
 - b. father: Byang chub bzang po; mother: Don grub mtsho mo; incarnation (*sprul sku*) of Byams pa dPal ldan chos mdzad, the sixty-second abbot
 - c. two tenures: 1936–1938 and 1948–1951¹¹⁹
 - d. Phan bde
 - e. extant biographies:
 - Phan bde mKhan Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs Thub bstan snying po (b. 1968); see the *Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*
 - Phan bde lHag pa tshe ring, *dPal e wam chos ldan mkhan rabs bdun bcu pa phan bde mkhan rin po che ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*¹²⁰
- biographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 481.2–485.2)

71. Thar rtse mKhan rin po che Byams pa Nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1907–1940)

- b. born into the Zha lu sKu zhang lineage
- c. 1939–1940¹²¹
- d. Thar rtse
- e. biographical sketches:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 485.2–486.4)
 - JACKSON 1989a: 93
 - JACKSON 2003b: 109–110

72. Shar chen 'Jam dbyangs Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1896–1952)

- b. father: mGon po; mother: bSod nams bu khrid, the daughter of Bo dong dPal yon; born into the Shar lineage; incarnation (*sprul sku*) of Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan, the thirty-seventh abbot
- c. 1942–1945¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho was installed on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of 1936 with the official approval of both the dGa' ldan pho brang regime and Sa skya; see the *Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 905.1–906.2) and *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar* (p. 38.2–3). On his second tenure, which began in the tenth month of 1948, see the *Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 906.5–907.2). On his two tenures, see also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 482.4–5 and 483.4–6).

¹²⁰ This manuscript (“104 pp. in lined notebook”) written in 'khyug yig is mentioned by JACKSON 2003b: 735, who adds: “Unfinished biography of the late Phan bde Mkhan po Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho (1917–1969), including brief biographies of two Phan bde Bla brang predecessors.”

¹²¹ According to JACKSON 1989a: 93, Byams pa Nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was installed in “late 1939 and died unexpectedly in early 1940.” *Ibid.*: 84 specifies his tenure as being four months. See also JACKSON 1993: 129. The biography of his predecessor, Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho, mentions that the abbacy was handed over in the tenth month of 1939; see the *Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (p. 906.1–2). Prior to that, the summer retreat (*dbyar gnas*) was overseen by dGe slong mKhyen brtse rin chen as acting abbot (*mkhan tshab*), because Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho had already left for Thub bstan rnam rgyal to receive the entire transmission of the *rGyud sde kun btus* from Dam pa Rin po che, the sixty-fifth abbot, who gave that teaching from 1938 to 1940?; see the *Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 905.6–906.1) and *Dam pa rin po che'i rnam thar* (p. 401.2–3). See also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 486.1–2), which mentions that Byams pa Nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was installed in 1939 and passed away in early 1940.

¹²² 'Jam dbyangs Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan was installed in 1942. He is said to have divided his time between teaching during the winter at Ngor and joining, during the summer, Dam pa Rin po che's transmission of the *rGyud sde kun btus* at Sa skya, which began in 1943 and lasted until 1945?; see the *Klu lding*

d. Klu sdings

e. extant biography:

- Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs bsTan pa'i nyi ma (b. 1931); see the *Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 486.4–493.2)

73. Khang gsar mKhan chen Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po (1913–1988)

a. born in dPal rnam (i.e., Pa snam), Nyang gzhung, gTsang stod¹²³

b. father: A khu Phur don; mother: sPen pa lha mo; incarnation (*sprul sku*) of Ngag dbang blo gros rnying po, the fifty-ninth abbot

c. two tenures: 1945–1948 and 1957–1959¹²⁴

d. Khang gsar

e. extant biography:

- 'Jam dbyangs shes rab; see the *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar*

biographical sketch:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 493.2–497.3)

74. Thar rtse mKhan Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1933–1987)

a. born in Shud gud spel, rTa nag, gTsang stod

b. incarnation (*sprul sku*) of 'Jam dbyangs Kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, the sixty-third abbot

c. 1951–1954¹²⁵

d. Thar rtse

e. biographical sketches:

- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 497.3–499.4)
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mKhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1 (pp. 2.17–4.16), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam* 2 (pp. 17.16–25.2), *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 491.2–4), *Thub bstan lung rtogs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar* (pp. 20.6–21.4), and *Dam pa rin po che'i rnam thar* (pp. 400.6–401.1).

¹²³ See the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 493.2). Cf. the *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar* (p. 16.1–2): *dpal e wam chos ldan dang nye ba'i sa'yul sho po grong mi steng pa ru!*

¹²⁴ Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po was installed on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of 1945; see the *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar* (pp. 35.1–36.2) and *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* 4 (p. 494.2). His second tenure began in the tenth month of 1957, when Klu lding mKhan chen Rin po che, the seventy-fifth abbot, resigned from the abbacy; see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam* 1 (p. 7.14–17), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam* 2 (pp. 38.18–39.5), *Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po'i rnam thar* (pp. 49.6–50.2), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (pp. 494.5–6 and 503.2–3).

¹²⁵ 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was installed in 1951, after Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho, the seventieth abbot, had retired from his second tenure handing over the abbacy to the Thar rtse bla brang in the tenth month of 1951; see the *Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* (pp. 906.5–906.2). On his abbacy, see also the *Ngor gyi gdan rabs* 4 (p. 498.2–4).

75. Klu lding pa 'Jam dbyangs bsTan pa'i nyi ma (b. 1931)

- b. father: bDag chen Shar pa bKra shis rgyal mtshan (b. 1901); mother: sPen skyid (b. 1904), a daughter of Bo dong dPal yon; born into the Shar lineage
 - c. 1954–1957¹²⁶
 - d. Klu sdings
 - e. extant autobiographies:
 - 'Jam dbyangs bsTan pa'i nyi ma; see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* and *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2*
- autobiographical sketch:
- *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 499.4–507.2)

76. Shar chen Klu lding pa 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (b. 1967)

- b. father: Shar chen Klu lding pa'i Rin chen dbang rgyal; mother: 'Chi med phrin las (b. 1938), the older sister of H. H. the Sakya Trizin Ngag dbang kun dga' theg chen dpal 'bar (b. 1945), the forty-first throne-holder of Sa skya; born into the Shar lineage
- c. since 2000 (Ngor ma mdgon, Manduwala)¹²⁷
- d. Klu sdings
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 507.2–509.5)

77. Thar rtse mKhan Rin po che Ngag dbang bsod nams mchog ldan (b. 1968)

- b. father: 'Gyur med rig 'dzin; mother: mThong grol, a niece (*sku tshwa ma*) of bCo brgyad Khri chen Rin po che Thub bstan legs bshad rgya mtsho (1919–2007)
- c. since 2001 (Ngor ma dgon, Manduwala)¹²⁸
- d. Thar rtse
- e. biographical sketch:
 - *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 509.5–512.3)

¹²⁶ Klu lding mkhan chen Rin po che was installed on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of 1954; see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (pp. 6.9–7.2) and *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (pp. 28.19–33.13). See also Rin po che's autobiographical sketch in his *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 502.6–503.2). Rin po che moved to India in 1959 and first settled in Gangtok (sGang tog), Sikkim, where he established, in 1961, the Sa ngor chos tshogs. After H. H. the Sakya Trizin moved, in 1963, to Mussorie, Dehradun, he accompanied him and assisted in establishing the Sa skya chos sgar (or Sa skya'i chos tshogs) in Rajpur. After discussions with H.H. the Sa skya Trizin and senior Ngor pa masters, such as those former Ngor abbots that were still alive, Rin po che jointly founded, in 1978, a new Ngor pa monastic seat, the Ngor ma dgon, in Manduwala, Dehradun. Rin po che assumed the main responsibility for this institution until retiring in 2000, when his nephew, the Klu sdings Zhabs drung, 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, was installed as its new abbot. The next year, in 2001, the Thar rtse Zhabs drung, Ngag dbang bsod nams mchog ldan, was also installed as its new abbot. Since then, the abbacy alternates between these latter two masters on a yearly basis. On these developments, see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam thar 1* (pp. 8.4ff.), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam thar 2* (pp. 42.6ff.), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 503.5–506.6).

¹²⁷ 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi rgyal mtshan was installed by H.H. the Sakya Trizin on March 16, 2000; see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (pp. 61.17–62.9), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (pp. 204.18–207.17), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (p. 509.2–4). He takes turns on a yearly basis with Ngag dbang bsod nams mchog ldan, the seventy-seventh abbot.

¹²⁸ Ngag dbang bsod nams mchog ldan was installed by H.H. the Sakya Trizin on March 29, 2001; see the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (p. 65.5–10), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (pp. 218.19–219.6), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 511.5–512.1). He takes turns on a yearly basis with 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, the seventy-sixth abbot.

78. Phan bde mKhan Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs Thub bstan snying po (b. 1968)

- b. nephew of Khang gsar mKhan chen Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po, the seventy-third abbot
- c. since 1997 (Ngor, Tibet Autonomous Region)¹²⁹
- d. Phan bde

¹²⁹ The destruction of Ngor Monastery began in 1961 and continued until about 1965, four years during which thieves are said to have plundered numerous of Ngor's treasures of religious art. When the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, Ngor Monastery was already lying in ruins, yet those few remaining ruins were then further demolished. The stepwise rebuilding began in 1985, and Ngor's present abbot, Phan bde mKhan Rin po che, took over responsibility in 1997. On these developments, see the *Ngor gyi lo rgyus* (pp. 125–135.14). See also the *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 1* (pp. 15.18–17.20, 24.14–25.10, and 39.5–42.10), *Klu lding mkhan chen rin po che'i rang rnam 2* (pp. 68.9–72.20, 95.11–98.15, and 136.5–141.17), and *Ngor gyi gdan rabs 4* (pp. 496.3–6 and 506.2–3). For an image of the destroyed monastic complex from 1985 taken by Bla ma Kun dga' Thar rtse Rin po che (b. 1935), see www.himalayanart.org/exhibits/ancient_photographs/photograph.cfm?page=9 (accessed 21.02.2017).

Appendix Two

Text Editions

The following text editions reproduce those longer Tibetan passages from two of the main sources that were given in translation in Part Three and Part Four. For the editions, a positive apparatus has been followed. Less significant variations regarding the use of punctuation markers (i.e., *shads*), however, were not considered.

2.1 Passages from the Ngor chen Biography of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs

The edition of passages from the biography of Ngor chen compiled by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs is based on the collation of two block-print recensions described in Part Two:

- A = *Ngor chen gyi nam thar* 2–3
B = *Ngor chen gyi nam thar* 4–6

The edition reproduces textual witness A and records in the notes the variations as contained in witness B, as well as my own conjectures. The folio numbers for each new folio of both block-print recensions are given in raised and angled brackets (e.g., ^(A27a1)). Annotations or glosses (*mchan*) are given in curly brackets (e.g., {...}) within the main body of the text immediately after the word or passage they are related to. For the edition, the following abbreviations are used:

- a recto
add. addendum
b verso
conj. conjecture
om. omit

2.1.1 Foundation Account of Ngor Monastery

(A25b2–27b6, B30a7–33a2) de ltar de yan chad gdan sa phyogs ^(B30b) su gzhan don phrin las bsam gyis mi khyab pa mdzad do|| gdan sa chen por gzhan don phrin las bsam gyis mi khyab kyang| 'on kyang gdan sa chen por g.yeng ba dang| chang sa ches pas grwa pa rnams kyi slob gnyer la gnod pa dang| chas ka la gzan cing| grwa pa gnyen po chung ba 'ga' re chud zos la yang 'gro bar 'dug pas| chang ma med par dben gnas shig¹ tu bzhugs te 'chad nyan mdzad na| bstan pa dang grwa pa la phan che bar dgongs nas| sngar chos

¹ shig] A, gcig B

rje dpal ldan tshul khrims pa'i gsung gis 'u cag brag phug pa'i dge bshes cig byed pa yin no zhes gsungs pa la brten nas| nam za² brag phug dang| gzhan yang bsam gling sogs dben gnas du mar thugs 'dun mdzad de| gur gyi mgon po la mchod gtor phul zhing³ gsol ba ttab pas| de rnam gang du yang brtag pa ma byung bar| thugs 'dun ma mdzad pa'i e waṃ chos ldan gyi ri khrod de rang 'od gsal la gsal por shar byung kyang gnas 'di na yod gsal ba rang ma byung ba la| nub cig⁴ mnal lam du khyod kyi dgon pa don grub kyis ston pa yod do zer ba cig byung ba| physis nyag re dge bshes don grub zer ba cig yod pa dang gsung gleng byung bas| khong gis chu mig tu bsdad nas ngor na yar me shing bsgrub⁵ la phyin pas| e waṃ chos ldan gyi sa cha de mthong| khong pa sa skyar slebs nas rje'i sku mdun du byung ba dang| khong gis me ^(A26a) shing la phyin pa la sogs pa lo rgyus byung bas| sngar gyi thugs dam du byung ba'i sa cha de yin par mkhyen nas nye gnas bkra shis rgyal mtshan dang| nyi ma rgyal mtshan gnyis bltar btang ba wa rong man gyi nyin srib mthong bas 'di 'dra ba 'dug zhus pas| da dung cung min gsungs| sprel ^(B31a) lo'i dgun mkhan chen shākya bzang po dpon slob 'ga' zhig skor du btang bas| la mgo⁶ man gyi nyin srib thams cad gzigs| da lta ldan ma'i spyi khang dang rdzing gi bar der chos skyong gi gdan nas spungs te| yar byon nas rgyu mtshan zhus pas| de ga yin tshod du 'dug ces gsungs| zhal da⁷ ji lta gnang ba lta 'dug cing| de tshe dgun yin kyang me tog so ma gcig skyes pa yang gzigs te rten 'brel legs po byung zhes gsungs so⁸|| de nas sa mo bya lo'i dbyar e waṃ chos ldan gyi ri khrod du phebs| me tog skyes sar bla brang ttab| de yang dgon gnas 'di nyid sa dpyad kyi rten 'brel yang bkra shis rtags brgyad padma 'dab brgyad| gnam sgo dang gnam gzhung ma dod pas 'khor lo'i dbyibs tshang| dngos grub kyi chu mig mang po| nor lha dang chos skyong gi gzugs brnyan can gyi ri dang brag mang po| gnas dngos chos 'byung gi dbyibs can| dngos grub kyi rdzas mtha' dag tshang ba| o ḍi ya na'i gnas dang dbyer med cing shin tu bka' gnyan te| sa gzhi'i dbyibs bkra shis dung gzugs 'dra bas snyan grags chen po dung la yod zer| {'dir ga ring bas brtags pa'i yi ger| sa 'bum dkar nag| stag pho gsham mo gsham⁹| sa rgyud che chung| ga ring¹⁰ rgyal po'i bzhed gzhung bzhin brtags par| gnam sgo sogs ma dod pa sa bzang dpyad du 'gro| sa gzhi 'khyog lung pa byings shing sdong gi dbyibs dang mtshungs pas sa gzhi ljon shing 'dra zhing| spang dang brag ri rgyas mi rabs re re dar ba'i dpyad yin| phu'i gdong byang phyogs grogs rtse la khar phyin dang mang du gyis| pad sdong utpal¹¹ 'dra na bshad nyan 'phel| bshad nyan dgon pa'i gnas su bshad pa yin| byang ri skyob mtho lho phyogs ^(A26b) blta ba¹² sogs bshad pa mang du byung snang|} rang bzhin gyi lhun gyis grub pa'i gnas chen| gtsug tor rnam par rgyal ma dang| gur gyi mgon po la sogs pa yi dam mkha' 'gros lung bstan pa'i gnas ^(B31b) te| de yang rje dpon slob rnam gnas 'dir phebs dus gnas kyi dngos gzhi gzigs pa'i gnas skor¹³ phebs nas gzigs pa'i tshe| dge bshes don grub la dung bus gsungs nas bus pas shin tu legs shing thams cad bla dros pa lta bu byung bas| sa cha'i ming yang bla rdzing du grags shing rdo la rje'i mtshan byang brkos pa yang yod do|| da lta gtsug lag khang

² nam za] AB, conj. na bza'

³ zhing] A, cing B

⁴ cig] A, gcig B

⁵ bsgrub] A, sgrub B

⁶ mgo] A, 'go B

⁷ da] A, lta B

⁸ gsungs so] A, gsung ngo B

⁹ pho gsham mo gsham] A, pho bsham mo bsham B

¹⁰ ring] A, rings B

¹¹ utpal] A, udpal B

¹² blta ba] A, kha lta ba B

¹³ skor] A, sgor B

yod sa de nas phan tshun yas mar du| gzigs nas| thog ka ba'i spyi khang {da lta gzims khang 'og zer} yod sa de la phyag mdzub gtad nas| 'di skor du chu mig cig yod dgos te mi snang| de min 'di ga yin tshod du 'dug gsungs¹⁴| der chos skyong dang gzhi bdag la gtor ma mdzad pas| gtor len la bya rog lnga byung zer| khar sing¹⁵ mkhan po pas¹⁶ nas spungs sar byon pas snye ma bzang po gsum 'dug zer| gnas 'di shin tu bka' gnyan pas bya lo hor zla¹⁷ bcu gnyis pa'i tshes bcu gnyis la mkhar las byed mi rnams sa skya nas bteg¹⁸| bco brgyad la ngor du sleb¹⁹| zla ba gsum pa'i tshes bdun la gza' skar²⁰ bzang bas| gzims²¹ khang ka drug ma'i rmang²² bhag nas mkhar las byas| zla ba lnga pa'i tshes gnyis la dgon par chu thog babs| mig mthong mkhan gyis mthong snang la a tsa ra nag po chen po gcig gis srung zhing 'dug pa rmis²³ pa| khang pa 'gyel rgyu yin zer ba'i grags pa byung ngol| chos rje nyid gting khebs na bzhugs pa la yang de'i mtshan ma byung gsungs| snga phyr byung ba'i ltas 'ga' zhig la bsams²⁴ na| dgon pa 'di sa skya pa'i bka' srung²⁵ rnams kyis bdag tu bzung ba zhig²⁶ yin par nges te| chos rje glo bor byon nas mar lam sa skyar lam ^(A27a) 'bras sogs gsungs tshel sa skya'i ^(B32a) yang dgon bla brang nas srang kha mdung tshugs kyi bar de rnams shing nags chen po| kha dog dmar sing byas pa rgya chen po cig 'dug pa| 'di ci yin byas pas khyed kyis bstan 'gyur bzhengs pa'i smyu gu yin zer ba rmi gsungs| de ni deng sang sku bsod dang bstan pa la phan thogs chen po 'ong ba'i ltas yin| gzhan yang rje btsun rin po che'i zhal bu lto phor du gtang ba²⁷| mahā kā la'i ras bris rnying pa chen po cig gi rgyab la yig phreng dgu 'dug pa la| da sa skya pa la 'di 'dra 'ong zer ba 'dug pa tshar gcig bklags pa rmis pa de mnal sad tsa na brjed gsungs²⁸| de'i tshe bal po dang| lha bris pa sogs glo²⁹ bur du dgon par sleb byung ba sogs rgyas par 'og tu 'chad| dbyar chos la dge 'dun sum brgya tsam tshogs pa rnams la lam 'bras gnang bas| lam 'bras tshogs pa la gsungs pa'ang 'di nas 'go zug pa yin no|| thugs dam mdzad pa dang lam dus len pa bskyang 'dren byed pa rnams gzigs nas chos rje nyid kyang thugs dges par gyur to|| gong du bshad pa'i gnas phun sum tshogs pa der dben gnas mdzad cing dgon pa'i ming yang stod nas byon nas gso sbyong cig mdzad pa'i sang snga dro| mdang nga'i rmi lam la yi ge e dang waṃ gnyis las chos kyis phung po 'byung ba yin zhes sogs la bshad pa byas pa rmi bas| rang re'i dgon pa 'di la e waṃ chos ldan 'dogs pa yin no zhes gsung zhing thugs dges pa'i sgo nas rab gnas mdzad de| dbyar gnas pa mdzad| dbyar chos la 'dul ba'i bslab bya dang| byang sa dang| bslab btus lam 'bras sogs gsungs| bdag chen chu mig pas sa thams cad bde spyod du phul ba yin na'ang chu mig tu byon te bka' shog zhus| ^(B32b) shel gyi phor pa sogs sa rin du 'bul ba mdzad| dgon pa'i khang du³⁰ sha chang dang nag mo 'grims sa med pa dang| der bzhugs kyis dge 'dun ^(A27b) thams cad dang tshugs la gnas

¹⁴ gsungs] A, gsung B

¹⁵ khar sing] A, kha ra sing B

¹⁶ pas] A, bas B

¹⁷ zla] A, om. B

¹⁸ bteg] A, add. pa B

¹⁹ du sleb] A, ngo ra bu sles B

²⁰ bdun la gza' skar] A, bdun lag za skar B

²¹ gzims] A, gzim B

²² rmang] A, rmangs B

²³ srung zhing 'dug pa rmis] A, bsrum bzhing 'dug min pa B

²⁴ bsams] A, bsam B

²⁵ srung] A, bsrung B

²⁶ zhig] A, cig B

²⁷ gtang ba] A, gtad pa B

²⁸ gsungs] A, gsung B

²⁹ glo] A, blo B

³⁰ khang du] A, khongs su B

pa dang| sa gzhan du 'khon rtsod³¹ la sogs pa ci yod kyang| e waṃ chos ldan du 'khon rtsod³² la sogs pa bya sa med pa'i bca' khrims legs po mdzad| de'i tshe nyin gcig rong po'i spyi khang 'og ma de la gzigs nas| zhing steng pha ta na| sa skya'i gur mgon lcam dral gyi 'cham sku de gnyis bzhugs 'dug pa yin te| khang pa pha ta na 'ong ba³³ la blta ba yin par 'dug| mgon khang cig dgos pa yod de zhes gsungs³⁴ pa ni| sngar ri khrod thugs dam la shar ba'i tshe gzigs par snang ngo|| phyis 'du khang cig bzhengs par dgongs dus| nub gcig mnal lam du 'du khang chen mo mdzad par dgongs pa'i gyong³⁵ ra de na| bla ma sa chen yab sras gsum gyi sku sngar gyi lta bu dang| chos rje sa paṅ gyi sku yang de tsho dang 'dra ba'i 'od zer dang gzi brjid mtha' yas pa dang bcas gzigs pa rmis zhes gsungs³⁶ pa ni| de rnams spyir sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dang| bye brag tu sa skya pa'i bstan pa la phan pa dang dar rgyas chen po 'ong ba'i³⁷ ltas su 'dug gsung| gtsug lag khang gi logs³⁸ bris sogs kyi dkar chag 'og tu 'chad| dbyar chos la gsung ngag gsungs pa de nas bzung ste| gtso bor gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa rgyud sde gzhi'i³⁹ chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba las| dben gnas 'dir phebs nas rdo rje theg pa don du gnyer ba'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen phyogs mtha' dag nas dus dang gnas skabs nges pa med par 'byon pas dbang dang byin rlabs| rgyud dang man ngag la sogs pa rnams kyang dus dang go rims⁴⁰ (B^{33a}) nges pa med par don du gnyer ba'i shes 'dod kyis stabs ka dang bstun nas rgyun mi chad par gsung zhing| {gsang sngags pa'i dam tshig tu dzambha la'i chu sbyin sogs rten 'brel 'ga'i dbang las mtshan nyid grwa sa las sngags grwa longs spyod che bar 'ong⁴¹ gsung pa'i lo rgyus 'dug|}

2.1.2 Three Glo bo Sojourns

(a) Introduction to the First Journey (A31b1–6, B37a1–b1): yang de ltar 'chad nyan kho na la dril ba las rje 'di'i drung du| rgya hor| mdo khams| glo bo sogs nas spyan 'dren pa mang du byung yang| bstan pa'i gzhi ma 'chad nyan mdzad cing gzhan du mi 'byon par dgongs mod| 'on kyang zhu nan ches pas smad mdo khams dang| stod mnga' ris gang 'thad gzigs pas| stod mnga' ris la thugs dam la shar nas byon pa yin te| brag dkar sems dpa' chen po bsod nams rin chen gyi zhal nas| de dag rtse gcig sgrub pa 'chad nyan sogs|| gang 'thad gzigs pas 'chad nyan phan gzigs nas|| dri med bstan pa rab tu rgyas mdzad pa|| stod smad gdul bya gang 'thad gzigs gsung ba|| stod phyogs 'thad par dgongs nas spyan drangs byon|| bstan pa dar rgyas gdul bya smin grol mdzad|| ces gsungs so|| de yang zhib tu bshad na glo bor lan gsum phebs pa'i dang po sa skya nas yin cing| phyi ma gnyis e waṃ nas yin no|| de yang stod phyogs su phebs pa'i lung bstan byung tshul ni| sngar bshad pa ltar 'chad nyan chag dogs dang| khyad par lo tsā ba ngag dbang gis mnga' ris su phyin kyang phan thogs mi 'ongs pa'i rgyu mtshan zhus nas stod phyogs su mi phebs pa'i thugs thag chod| glo bo phyogs su yig lan mdzad par dgongs pa'i nub mo mnal lam du mnga' ris la 'gro zer nas zi thang gi thad ka la| gdugs dkar po bcu gsum gcig zho

³¹ rtsod] A, brtsod B

³² rtsod] A, brtsod B

³³ pha ta na 'ong ba] A, pha ga yong ba B

³⁴ gsungs] A, gsung B

³⁵ gyong] A, gyeng B

³⁶ gsungs] A, gsung B

³⁷ 'ong ba'i] A, yong ba'i B

³⁸ logs] A, log B

³⁹ gzhi'i] A, conj. bzhi'i B

⁴⁰ rims] A, rim B

⁴¹ 'ong] A, yong B

le⁴² byas 'dug gsungs| thams cad gser tog dang ^(B37b) bcas pa 'dzin mkhan med par 'gro ba rmis| de nas yar phebs par dgongs so|| 'di gdan sa pa gdugs thog bcu gsum 'byung ba'i rtags su'ang gsungs|

(b) Introduction of A ma dpal (A31b6–32a4, B37b1–5): de'ang spyen 'dren pa glo bo sde pa bstan pa'i sbyin bdag chen po dge sbyong ^(A32a) a me dpal zhes pa yab sras kyi lo rgyus ni| drung dge sbyong ba 'di 'jam dpal rtsa rgyud dang| slob dpon padma'i lung bstan la yod gsung zhing| khong mnga' ris rdzong ka'i⁴³ drung skor yin| gdung rus gnam ru khyung yin| sngon gyi grub thob rje btsun mi la sogs dang gcig| a me dpal 'di mkhyen pa yod pas| bod chos rgyal gyi gdung brgyud dri ma med pa mnga' ris rdzong kar⁴⁴ gyi chos rgyal 'bum sde mgon gyis glang gi las thabs bcu gsum yod par bshad pa'i glo bor gtsang rang bya pho'i ze ba zhes pa'i rdzong rgyab yod pa'i rdzong dpon la brkos⁴⁵ pa las| phyis glo bo khong gis sger du tshong⁴⁶| dol po pu hrangs| gu ge sogs la'ang lung 'gro ba byung| khong gis dang por bo dong pañ chen spyen drangs kyang| de tsam bstan pa la phan pa ma byung| rje rdo rje 'chang 'di'i snyan pa thos nas dad 'dun dang bka'⁴⁷ spyad chen pos yang yang spyen drangs kyang|

(c) Ban on Travel (A32a4–5, B37b5–7): snga ma sa skya pa'i rgyud gsum man ngag dang bcas pa'i lta ba sems tsam yin zer ba dang| sa skya pa'i lus dkyil rgyud gzhung nas ma bshad zer ba'i rtsod pa byung nas| sa skya pa'i dge bshes rnams 'thor sa med pa'i bca' khirms byas nas 'byon stabs ma byung| de'i dus su gnang ba'i yig lan bka' shog dang| chos bskul pusti gnang tshul sogs rje mkhan chen pa'i rnam thar du blta|

(d) First Journey (A32a5–b3, B37b7–38a6): de nas kyang nan chen pos spyen drangs pas| glo bor ^(B38a) lan gsum phebs pa'i dang po ni| sngar gyi mtshan lam la brten nas bstan pa la phan pa 'ong⁴⁸ bar dgongs nas de bas⁴⁹ te lug lo'i ston rje mus chen shāk⁵⁰ bzang du sku tshab la bzhag nas chos gsungs| rje rin po che dpon slob rnams kyis zla ba drug la 'khor bar mdzad| dang po yul der bka' 'gyur tshang ma mi bzhugs pa la| rgyud 'bum sa skya nas| gzhan rnams phyogs mtha' dag ^(A32b) nas ma phyi btsal nas tshang bar bzhengs| rgyas par rjes mdzad pa'i bka' 'gyur dkar chag tu blta| dkyil khang du bka' 'gyur lha khang sbyong rgyud dkyil 'khor bcu gnyis sogs logs ris la bzhengs| steng chen 'dul grwar chos sde btsugs| gtsug lag khang bzhengs| dge 'dun brgya phrag la rgyun gyi 'tsho ba btsugs| 'dul ba dang byang chub sems dpa'i sde snod kyi bshad pa gtso bor mdzad| brag dkar gyi chos sde theg chen dar rgyas gling btab cing lha khang gi gzhi bting⁵¹| rab byung bsnyen rdzogs grangs mang po la sogs pa lam thun mong ba'i sgo nas gdul bya mang po sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la bkod| bstan pa'i sbyin bdag a me dpal yang rab tu byung ste mtshan bzang po rgyal mtshan du btags| khong rab byung ma mdzad gong gi sras chos rgyal a mgon bzang po| de'i sras tshang pa bkra shis mgon dang glo bo mkhan chen sogs yin no||

⁴² zho le] A, zhol ye B

⁴³ ka'i] AB, conj. kha'i

⁴⁴ kar] AB, conj. dkar

⁴⁵ brkos] AB, conj. bskos

⁴⁶ tshong] A, chong B

⁴⁷ bka'] A, dka' B

⁴⁸ 'ong] A, yong B

⁴⁹ dgongs nas de bas] A, conj. dgongs te phebs te B

⁵⁰ shāk] A, shāg B

⁵¹ bting] A, gtings B

(e) Second Journey (A32b3–33a6, B38a6–39a4): lan bar ma phebs dus ni 'brug lo ste de dus kyang mus chen ngor du spyang drangs| lam 'bras sogs gsungs| rje nyid kyis glo bor byon| phreng ba'i dbang dang zur bka' 'ga' zhig| sa skya bka' 'bum gyi lung| sbyong rgyud kyi bshad pa la sogs chos kyi 'khor lo mang ^(B38b) du bskor zhing| sbyin bdag chen po la sogs pa mang po bsnyen par rdzogs par mdzad cing| skal ba dang ldan pa'i gdul bya 'ga' la lam 'bras kyi khrid la sogs pa thun mong ma yin pa yang gsungs| sbyin bdag chen po la kye rdor gyi mngon rtogs khyad 'phags zhig⁵² mdzad nas gngang 'dug ste bka' 'bum du ma tshud yod do| sngar gyi bka' 'gyur bzhengs pa'i zhal da⁵³ yang mdzad| gser rkyang gis⁵⁴ bka'⁵⁵ 'gyur gyi dbu btsugs| rnam rgyal chos sde gso ba sogs mdzad| gzhan yang dge sbyong chen pos cho 'phrul zla bar sgrub mchod btsugs pa'i bdag rkyen| sa dkar nas zhing khal brgya'i sa dang| rbad mang po btsugs| ^(A33a) bla ma rjes rgyud sde so so nas gsungs pa'i dkyil 'khor lnga bcu nga bdun tsam gyi dbang bka' gngang| de dag gi sgrub thabs dkyil chog rnam kyi yig cha gang dang gang gi tho tshe dang| nye bar mkho⁵⁶ ba sbyin sreg sogs phyag len rnam par dag pa| dgon sde so so'i dge 'dun rnam la gngang zhing| sgrub dkyil gang byed sogs kyi dril chen po mdzad do|| da lta mnga' ris skor gsum| dbus gtsang khams gsum na sgrub mchod kyi phyag len gtsang ma rnam par dag pa ni glo bo kho na yin par 'dug ces grags pa ltar gyi don dang yang mthun par snang lags so|| lan bar ma'i skabs 'dir bzhi sde pa drung nam rtses| gu ge rgyal po khri nam mkha'i dbang po dang bka' 'gros⁵⁷ te| gu ge'i mkhan chen chos nyid seng ge dpon slob rnam gdan 'dren par brdzangs⁵⁸ chos rje rin po che dpon slob brgya tsam zhig pu hrangs su spyang drangs| rgyal de'ur⁵⁹ zla ba gsum gyi bar bzhugs| gu ge nas bla ma sprul sku ba sogs dang| pi ^(B39a) ti nas mkhan po rin bsod| mar yul pa'i dge bshes 'ga' sogs pu hrangs dang bcas pa'i dge 'dun mang po la| dus 'khor mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho gur rigs bsdu sogs kyi dbang gngang| nya rtse rig tu dus 'khor sgrub mchod| bzhi sde ru mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i sgrub mchod btsugs| brtag gnyis| sbyong rgyud| dus 'khor 'grel chen sogs kyi bshad bka'| gzhan yang 'gro ba mang po la sems bskyed chen po⁶⁰ blo sbyong sogs chos 'khor rgya chen po bskor| gu ge rgyal po rab tu byung zhing chos sde chen po gsar du btsugs| de'i tshe bstan rtsis khyad par can mdzad pa'ang yod do|| kha char jo bo'i drung du mar me'i phreng ba grangs med pa phul nas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dar pa'i smon lam mdzad| skyid grong du yang de ltar mdzad do||

(f) Third Journey (A33a6–b4, B39a4–b2): de nas theng gsum gyi rjes ma yos lo la| bstan pa'i sbyin bdag chen po a mgon bzang pos spyang ^(A33b) drangs| bka' 'gyur| bstan 'gyur tshang mar bzhengs pa'i zhal da⁶¹ dang| gser gyi bka' 'gyur gyi 'phro tshar ba'i zhal da⁶² sogs mdzad| lhag pa rnam bton| ma tshang ba rnam gsos nas dkar chag kyang mdzad| gser gyi byams pa chen po| lam 'bras brgyud pa| kun rig gi gzhal yas khang sogs| sku gsung thugs kyi rten du ma rab gnas mdzad| thub bstan dar rgyas gling gi chos sder

⁵² zhig| A, shig B

⁵³ da| A, ta B

⁵⁴ gis| A, om. B

⁵⁵ bka'| A, 'ka' B

⁵⁶ mkho| A, 'kho B

⁵⁷ 'gros| A, bsgros B

⁵⁸ brdzangs| A, rdzangs B

⁵⁹ rgyal de'ur| A, rgyal de 'ur B

⁶⁰ po| A, mo B

⁶¹ da| A, ta B

⁶² da| A, ta B

dge 'dun stong phrag tu langs pa 'dzugs pa'i zhal da⁶³ dang| chos dpon 'jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho bkod pa mdzad| gzhan yang rab byung bsnyen rdzogs sems bskyed| yo ga rdo rje rtse mo| khams gsum rnam rgyal| chos dbyings gsung ^(B39b) dbang| yon tan kun 'byung sogs kyi dbang bskur| rgyud dang bskyed rdzogs kyi bshad pa sogs mang du mdzad cing| mdo sngags kyi chos 'khor rgya chen po bskor nas gdul bya dpag tu med pa rnams smin grol gyi lam la 'god par mdzad pa yin no|| sbyin bdag chen po dar ra kha che sogs sku mched kyi⁶⁴ gser gyi ga'u lngas gtso byas gser srang lnga brgya la sogs pa'i 'bul ba grangs med pa phull|

(g) Ngor chen's Impact on the Further Development of Buddhism in Glo bo (A33b4–34a2, B39b2–40a1): de ltar mnga' ris glo bo'i phyogs nas bstan pa'i sbyin bdag a me dpal yab sras kyis lan gsum gyi bar du gdan 'dren zhus pas| bstan pa dang sems can gyi don rgya chen po 'byung bar dgongs te| mnga' ris phyogs la chag⁶⁵ phebs te| zab pa dang rgya che ba'i chos kyi 'khor lo yun ring du bskor| de'ang glo bor dang por rab byung gi chos bka' tshang ba bzhir langs⁶⁶ pa yang dkon pa la| dge 'dun gyi sde khyad par du 'phags pa 'dzugs⁶⁷ te| da lta 'dul ba 'dzin pa stong phrag tu langs⁶⁸ pa| mdo sngags kyi bshad nyan sgom sgrub la sogs pa dbus gtsang⁶⁹ dang 'dra bar yod pa dang| bstan pa spyi dang| bye brag tu dpal ldan sa skya pa'i bstan pa ^(A34a) gsal bar mdzad pa dang| rin chen gser la sogs pa las grub pa'i bde bar gshegs pa'i rten gsum ngo mtshar ba du ma dang| rin po che gser dang snag tsha sogs las grub pa'i bka' 'gyur du ma la sogs pa'i gsung rab mtha' yas pa mang du bzhangs pa'i bka' gnang ste| tshul bzhin du bzhangs nas rab gnas mdzad pa la sogs pa'i mdzad phrin bzang pos mnga' ris skor gsum 'phags yul sangs rgyas bzhugs pa'i dus dang mtshungs pa byung ba ni rje nyid kyi⁷⁰ bka' ^(B40a) drin no||

2.2 Passages from the Autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen

The passages from the autobiography of Glo bo mKhan chen are a reproduction of the critical edition prepared by Jowita Kramer, which is based on the collation of two manuscript versions of that work.⁷¹ The first version is the *rje btsun bsod nams lhun grub legs pa'i 'byung gnas rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa zhus lan* (= TÖNTH), a manuscript from Glo bo that forms part of the collection of golden manuscripts (*gser chos*). Kramer writes that the manuscript is

preserved in the Tōyō Bunko, Tokyo, under no. 41-683. The original text, with alternating lines of gold and silver *dbu can* letters on black paper measuring 6 x 32 cm, comprises thirty-seven folios (numbered 1–37), with three to five lines per side.⁷²

⁶³ da] A, ta B

⁶⁴ kyi] AB, conj. kyis

⁶⁵ chag] A, conj. phyag B

⁶⁶ langs] A, longs B

⁶⁷ 'dzugs] A, btsugs B

⁶⁸ langs] A, longs B

⁶⁹ gtsang] A, btsang B

⁷⁰ kyi] A, kyis B

⁷¹ See KRAMER 2008: 113–142. For the full description of the manuscripts utilised in her edition and Kramer's method of editing, see *Ibid.*: 53–56 and [111]–112, respectively.

⁷² KRAMER 2008: 55.

The second manuscript, the *rje btsun bla ma'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho* (= GeNTh), is

a copy of an *dbu med* manuscript that was microfilmed by the NGMPP in the bKra-shis-chos-gling monastery of Gelung, a village in the present district of Mustang, in 1986, and is now kept in the National Archives in Kathmandu (reel no. 101/26). The text measures 40.6 x 9 cm and is 14 folios (1a–14a) long, with seven lines per side.⁷³

The edition by Kramer “follows primarily the reading of TōNTh, while the variants of GeNTh, except punctuation, are listed in the notes.”⁷⁴ In my reproduction of Kramer’s edition, I have not included all variant readings recorded by her, but restricted myself to only those that are relevant for the proper understanding of the autobiography. Moreover, I have not mentioned obvious misspellings that have been emended by her in the edited text. For my edition, I applied the same method as in the previous section. The following abbreviations are used to refer to the two different manuscript versions of the autobiography as edited by Kramer:

A^K = TōNTh
B^K = GeNTh

The raised siglum K (e.g., A^K) indicates that both texts are Kramer’s edition. In cases that I have read against Kramer, I have marked my own conjectures with the raised siglum H (e.g., rgang] A^K, conj.^H sgang B^K).

2.2.1 Three Glo bo Sojourns

(a) Introduction (pp. 114.6–116.2): rje btsun rdo rje 'chang kun dga' bzang po'i mtshan nas gzhan gyis brjod pa gsan pa tsam gyis dad pa'i rlabs g.yos te| bshes gnyen dam pa tshol ba'i bya ba la shin tu brtson pa'i sgo nas| gdan sa chen po dpal ldan sa skyar| rje'i drung shāk bzang sku 'bum na bzhugs dus| gdan 'dren snga ma rdzangs te| de dus lotstsha ba ngag dbang grags pa mnga' ris nas gdan sar 'khor te| chos rje'i drung du 'phros pa zhus pa la mnga' ris su phebs kyang| phan thogs chen po mi yong zer ba'i rgyu mtshan zhus pa yin par 'dug pas| lan gcig yar la mi phebs pa'i lan la sogs pa tshar bar mdzad kyang| de'i nub mo'i mnal lam du mtshan ltas shin tu bzang ba la sogs pa byung ste| sngar gyi gsung shog tshar ba rnam kyang spos nas|

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ ma nor lam ston bshes gnyen bsten pa dang||
rnam dag khrims la rim gyis slob pa dang||
bde gshegs gsung la thos pa bya ba gsum||
dang po chos la 'jug pa'i sgo gsum yin||

las 'bras blang dor tshul bzhin spyod pa dang||
mtha' yas 'gro la snying rje sgom pa dang||
spros bral zab mo'i don la sgom pa gsum||
bar du dam chos 'phel ba'i sgo gsum yin||

rgya chen mchod pas dkon mchog mnyes pa dang||

⁷³ KRAMER 2008: 55–56.

⁷⁴ KRAMER 2008: [111]. The passages on Glo bo mKhan chen’s familial background and Ngor chen’s three Glo bo sojourns were also copied and utilised by Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams (1485–1533) for his own biography of Glo bo mKhan chen, his teacher; see the *Glo bo mKhan chen gyi rnam thar* 3 (pp. 259.3–267.2).

dri med gsung rab mang du klag pa dang||
 thos bsam ldan pa'i dge 'dun bsten pa gsum||
 tha ma bstan pa rgyas pa'i sgo gsum yin||

de ltar shes nas skal bzang dang ldan khyod||
 'khor dang longs spyod khyim thab la sogs la||
 chags pa spangs te rab tu byung zhig dang||
 bstan dang 'gro la phan par 'gyur ro kye||

rgyu mtshan rnams zhib par slob dpon grogs mched la gsal zhing| yi ge'i rten mtshon⁷⁵
 chos bskul gyi glegs bam chung ngu⁷⁶ dang| khyod rab tu byung ste| mdo sngags gnyis kyi
 bstan pa rgyas par 'gyur ba'i ⁽¹¹⁶⁾ rten 'brel du dar chen gser mdog kha do sbrel gcig phull|
 rta'i lo smin drug zla ba'i nyer lnga la| dpal sa skya'i chos grwa chen po nas phul ba dge
 legs mchog tu gyur cig| ces gsung ba'i bka' shog kyang gngang|

(b) First Journey (p. 116.3–12): de nas lan snga ma phebs pa'i dus su| bstan pa'i gzhi
 ma 'dul grwa chen po btsugs| de'i dus su mnga' ris glo bo na dge slong bzhi sder longs pa
 yang dka' mo las med par yod kyang| dge 'dun brgya phrag du ma 'du ba'i rten 'brel
 bsgrigs| rgyud sde dri ma med pa nas gsungs pa'i dkyil 'khor bdun cu don gnyis lhag tsam
 zhig rgyun mar sgrub pa'i dbu btsugs| bka' 'gyur ro cog dang bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog gi
 gsung rab rnams bzhengs pa'i gzhi rkyen madzad| rje nyid kyis kyang gdul bya thun
 mong ba rnams la| pha rol tu phyin pa'i lam gyi rim pa| rgyal sras byang chub sems dpa'i
 lam bzang la sogs pa mang du gsungs shing| thun mong ma yin pa⁷⁷ 'os su gyur pa rnams
 la| dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga rdo rje 'phreng ba'i bka' yongs su rdzogs pa dang| shin tu spros
 pa med pa'i man ngag dang| gsung ngag kyang sbyin bdag gis gtso byas nyung shas shig
 la gsungs pa yin par mchis| sbyin bdag nyid kyang rab tu byung zhing| mtshan yang bzang
 po rgyal mtshan zhes bya bar btags sol|

(c) Ban on Travel (pp. 116.13–117.5): de nas yang lan gnyis pa gdan 'dren par dgongs
 te| zhu yig rim par phul ba la| lan snga ma zhig la| da lan res shig yong rtsis lags na'ang|
 lchang ra bka' bcu pas| kye rdor lus dkyil chos rnam dag ma yin zer ba'i yi ge mdzad pa la
 rten⁷⁸ nas| gdan sa pa thams cad thugs rgyal bzhengs te| ⁽¹¹⁷⁾ 'di'i thag ma chod bar la dge
 bshes rnams gar yang mi 'gro ba'i khirms mdzad nas| bdag kyang 'ong ba ma byung ba
 de lags| gu ger bla ma gcig phebs na| thugs⁷⁹ bzhed e 'grub| mi 'grub par bdag cis kyang
 yong dgos na| sa cha gzhan du 'gro mi dgos pa dang| yun rings mi 'thogs pa'i do dam
 thugs rjes 'dzin na res shig yong ba bgyid pas| der yang g.yas g.yon nas 'bod mi byung na|
 mdzad bde ba dang| 'dir yod rnams yid ches pa'i don du| phyag rtags cig gngang ba zhu
 gsung ba'i lan byung|

(d) Second Journey (pp. 117.6–119.15): de nas yang gdan drangs pas| dpon slob sngar
 bas mang ba zhig phebs te| sngar nas bkod pa mdzad pa'i brag dkar theg chen gling gi
 gser sku rdo rje 'chang chen po dang| gtsug lag khang steng shod rnams kyi rab tu gnas
 pa| mkha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur rigs bsdu pa'i dkyil 'khor chen po rdul tshon gyi dkyil 'khor
 la kha dog dang mthun pa'i rin po che sna tshogs pa bkod pa legs par bzhengs nas| de'i

⁷⁵ mtshon] A^k, mtshon par B^k

⁷⁶ ngu] A^k, add. gcig B^k

⁷⁷ pa] A^k, pa'i B^k

⁷⁸ rten] A^k, conj.^h brten B^k

⁷⁹ thugs] A^k, de zhor la thugs B^k

thog nas spyang dbye'i cho ga rgyas pa dang bcas pa mdzad gsung zhing| de ni bdag gi bla ma pañdi ta chen po grags pa rgyal mtshan gyis| rje rdo rje 'chang la smin byed kyi dbang bskur ba gsan pa'i thog ma yang yin no||

de nas ri bo cher 'khor lo sdom pa'i pho brang chen po bzhengs pa la rab tu gnas pa rgyas par mdzad de| de'i dus kyi dga' ston dang 'brel bar| bla brang chen po⁸⁰ nas| chos rgyal ba la chen po'i las ka gnang ba dang| dmag dpon pa la| rin chen rgang⁸¹ bla brang nas| dar ra kha che'i las ka gnang 'dug pa rnams kyang| rje'i drung nas bka' lung mdzad de| gnang ba yin par gda'|

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ de nas yang drung nam rtse bas snga⁸² 'khyud yod pa'i mtshams sbyor byas te| chos rje'i drung nas pu hrangs kyi jo bo mched gsum la dkar me 'bul ba⁸³ phebs| de dang sgo bstun te gu ge nas kyi lha| rje btsun pa yang phebs nas| rab tu byung zhing bsnyen pa rdzogs| byang chub sems dpa'i sdom pa dang dbang bskur ba du mas thugs ltams te| rig pa 'dzin pa'i brtul zhugs mchog gi rgyan gyis kyang mdzes par mdzad do||

de'i dus su sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa'i rtsis kyang mdzad de| chos kyi rje sa skya pañdi ta chen po'i rtsis mdzad pa'i dus yan chad la| sangs rgyas mya ngan las 'das nas lo sum stong sum brgya lnga bcu tham pa lon pa ni 'dra la| de nas lo lnga bcu rtsa dgu song ba me mo glang gi lo dpyid zla ra ba la| chu mig dpal gyi sde⁸⁴ chen du sa gsum gyi bla ma chos kyi rgyal po 'phags pa rin po ches| ngur smrig 'dzin pa khri phrag bdun la| chos kyi 'khor lo rgya chen po bskor ba'i dus su rtsis pas| sangs rgyas mya ngan las 'das nas lo sum stong bzhi brgya dang bcu lon no|| de ⁽¹¹⁹⁾ nas lo bzhi bcu zhe drug song ba chu pho khyi'i lo la| bla ma chen po kun dga' blo gros bsnyen par rdzogs pa'i dus su rtsis pas lo sum stong bzhi brgya lnga bcu rtsa drug lon no|| de nas lo lnga bcu song ba chu pho byi ba'i lo la| bo dong e chos 'byung ba'i gtsug lag khang chen por gnas lnga rig pa'i pañdi ta chen po bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang pos| dge 'dun khri phrag gsum la chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ro|| de'i tshe sangs rgyas mya ngan las 'das nas| lo sum stong lnga brgya dang drug lon no|| de nas glang nas glang gi bar| drug bcu bskor gcig dang lo gsum 'gro ba bzhi pa'i steng me pho 'brug gi lo la| chos kyi rgyal po khri phun tshogs lde rab tu byung ba'i tshe rtsis pas| ston pa mya ngan las 'das nas lo sum stong lnga brgya dang drug bcu re dgu song nas| da lo'i lo 'di bdun bcu pa'i steng na yod pa yin no zhes gsung zhing| pu hrangs kyi dgon pa nya rtse rig tu| dus kyi 'khor lo'i dbang bskur ba dang| dgon pa gzhi sder bcom ldan 'das mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i dbang bskur ba dang| chos 'khor khwa char du rten gtor 'dzugs pa dang| rab tu byung ba dang bsnyen par rdzogs pa'i tshogs grangs med pa sgrub par mdzad|

de nas yang sa phyogs 'di nyid kyi ri bo cher phebs te| 'khor lo bde mchog gi pho brang blos slang⁸⁵ ba bzhin du bsgrubs pa la| lu hi pa'i lugs kyi dkiyl 'khor rdul tshon du bzhengs te rab tu gnas pa| rje nyid kyis bskyar ma gsang ste mdzad nas| 'khor lo bde mchog dril bu pa'i rim pa lnga pa dang| rtsa dbu ma la sogs pa'i shin tu zab mo'i gdams pa mang du gsung zhing bzhugs nas| slar yang chos sde chen po 'dzugs pa dang| byams pa chen po bzhengs pa dang| gdan sa chen por| grwa skor gyi rgyun 'dzugs pa la sogs pa ma 'ongs pa'i bkod pa tsam zhig mdzad| dge sbyong pa rang la yang| dpal ldan sa skya pa'i 'chag med bzhi dang shin tu zab pa'i nyams len du ma gnang zhing khyad par rje btsun ma nā ro mkha' spyod kyi gdams pa zab mo gnang zhing| de la brten nas mtho ris kyi rten rnam

⁸⁰ po] A^k, add. gzhi thog B^k

⁸¹ rgang] A^k, conj.^h sgang B^k

⁸² snga] A^k B^k, conj.^h sngar

⁸³ ba] A^k, conj.^h add. la B^k

⁸⁴ sde] A^k, conj.^h bde B^k

⁸⁵ slang] A^k, conj.^h blang B^k

par dag pa yang sku'i skye ba phyi ma la thob par mdzad do|| de nas gdan sa chen po nyid du phyag phebs par 'dug lags|

(e) Third Journey (pp. 119.16–123.11): de nas yang drung dge sbyong pa la| sras po che ba drung chen a mgon bzang po dang| de'i 'og ma dmag dpon a mo gha dang| de'i 'og ma dpon btsun kun dga' rgyal mtshan⁸⁶| de'i 'og⁸⁷ dpon btsun ⁽¹²⁰⁾ rin chen bzang po ste bzhi yod kyang| drung chen sku mched che ba gnyis kyis bka' bgros mdzad de| rje'i drung na sku nas 'thon por phebs kyang 'di phyogs su slar yang bstan pa'i bya ba rgya chen po grub par mdzad| da dung sbyin pa'i bdag po rnam dang| bstan pa rin po che la dgongs te ci nas kyang zhabs kyi⁸⁸ 'chag pa dgos zhes nan gyis gsol ba btab pas| thugs rjes tshad med pas bskyangs te 'dir phebs|

thub bstan dar rgyas gling gi chos sde chen por| 'jam pa'i dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho mkhan por bskos shing| chos sde chen po la dge 'dun stong phrag gcig tu rtsis pa'i dgun chos⁸⁹ zhag grangs brgya dbyar chos la zhag grangs bzhi bcu zhe lnga rnam kyis gzhi rkyen btsugs| chos sde chen po'i sgrigs dang rnam bzhag gi rim pa⁹⁰ phar tshad kyi bshad pa g.yag rong⁹¹ gang rung gi sgros kyi thog nas byed pa dang| rigs gter rang 'grel gyi thog nas 'chad pa dang| dbu ma rje btsun gong ma'i sgros dang mthun pa kho nar 'chad pa la sogs pa'i dril chen po mdzad nas rje nyid dang sbyin bdag sku mched kyi⁹² dam rgyas kyang btab pa yin zhing| bdag rkyen la sogs pa⁹³ ji ltar sbyar ba'i tshul ni bem chag tha dad du 'khod⁹⁴ pa la gsal te| mdor na sde pa smon thang pa rang gi glo bo stod smad kyi sa gzhis phyed| chos sde chen po la sbyar bar grags|

⁽¹²¹⁾ 'dir rang re'i chos sde mkhan po'i thog ma ni| 'jam pa'i dbyangs nyid yin gyil 'ga' zhig gis mkhan chen⁹⁵ ratna shrī pa yin zer ba ni gtam ma dag pa yin te| ratna shrī pa gsang phu ba'i 'chad nyan nas thon⁹⁶ te| rgyang 'bum mo che na bzhugs pa'i dus su 'o brgyal po byung nas chos rje rin po che gdan sa na bzhugs dus|

dam pa nyi ma kun bzang de drung du||
padmo rgyas pa lta bu'i khang bu nas||
longs spyod sbrang rtsi'i bcud kyis dben pa yi||
rkang drug ratna shrī yis don 'di zhu||

zhes pa dang| mnga' ris su byon⁹⁷ snying 'dod pa la sogs pa'i sdug skad mang po zhig phul nas| rje'i drung nas kyang| khong pa mkhan chen g.yag pa'i grwa rigs sku yon can yin pa dang| chos rje rang gi yang slob bu yin pa la dgongs nas| 'dir drung dge sbyong pa la bsri⁹⁸

⁸⁶ mtshan] A^K, add. dang B^K

⁸⁷ 'og] A^K, conj.^H add. ma B^K

⁸⁸ kyi] A^K, conj.^H kyis B^K

⁸⁹ chos] A^K, conj.^H add. la B^K

⁹⁰ pa] A^K, conj.^H add. la B^K

⁹¹ rong] A^K, add. gnyis B^K

⁹² kyi] A^K, conj.^H kyis B^K

⁹³ pa] A^K, add. gzhan B^K

⁹⁴ 'khod] A^K, conj.^H bkod B^K

⁹⁵ gis mkhan chen] A^K, mkhan po B^K. Though KRAMER 2008: 121.2 records only *mkhan che* instead of *mkhan chen*, it is obvious from the corresponding footnote (*Ibid.*: 121, n. 1) that this is an editing mistake that probably occurred while inputting the text. I thus emended *che* to *chen*.

⁹⁶ Though KRAMER 2008: 121.3 has only *tho*, it is obvious from the context that this is an editing mistake that probably occurred while inputting the text. I thus emended *tho* to *thon*, which is confirmed by the original reading of B^K (GeNTH, fol. 5a5).

⁹⁷ byon] A^K, conj.^H 'byon B^K

⁹⁸ bsri] A^K, sri B^K

thabs kyi⁹⁹ phyag dam mdzad| de'i dus su rnam rgyal chos sde rnying pa 'di zhang pa rnam kyi yin pas| khong dbang che bar yod kyang rje'i phyag ⁽¹²²⁾ dam la rten¹⁰⁰| dge sbyong pas zhang pa la zhus nas| dgun thog gcig tsam chos sde rnying pa'i mkhan por bzhugs pa lags sam| de nas ni phu hrangs su byon te sa g.yos kyis gshegs par 'dug| des na de'i dus su| chos sde gsar pa 'di¹⁰¹ mtshan du btags pa med pa yin|

thub bstan dar rgyas gling gi chos sde gtsugs nas| rje rin po ches kyang lan rjes ma 'di la lo gsum gyi bar du yang| brag dkar theg chen dar rgyas gling du bzhugs nas| gsung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i khrid dang| zab lam rdo rje'i rnal 'byor sbyor ba yan lag drug gi khrid dang| shin tu spros med la sogs pa nyams len gyi rim pa dang| de nyid 'dus pa'i rgyud¹⁰² ngan song thams cad sbyong ba'i rgyud dang| rtsa ba'i rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa la la sogs pa rgyud sde'i tshogs dang| de nyid 'dus pa dang| rdo rje rtse mo dang| dpal mchog la sogs pa yo ga'i dkyil 'khor chen po rnam dang| sbyong dkyil bcu gnyis dang| bla med kyi'ang 'di na bsgrub mchod yod pa'i zur bka' thams cad cha tshang bar de'i dus su mdzad cing| de dus rje rang gi drung du| dbang bskur thob pa'i dge bshes bgres po 'ga' rel de'i¹⁰³ lo lnga drug gi gong du yang 'di'i dgon pa rnying pa rnam na yod do||

de'i tshe sku mched rnam kyis| rje'i drung du gser gyi ga'u lngas gtso byas pa'i gser srang lnga brgya la sogs pa'i 'bul ba'i rnam bzhag mdzad cing| gdan sa chen por grwa bskor gyi rgyun tshugs pa dang| dbus gtsang gi sa skya pa'i grwa tshang so sor| rje'i dgongs pa dang mthun pa'i grwa rgyun rdzong lugs dang| gtsug lag khang dang dgon gnas so so'i dge rgyun la sogs pa'i rnam bzhag thams cad de'i dus su mdzad pa ⁽¹²³⁾ yin zhing| khyad par du yang mnga' ris kyi sa'i phyogs 'di ru| rje btsun sa skya pa'i bstan pa dar zhing rgyas pa'i phyir| byams pa chen po'i dbu rtser| dpal gur gyi mgon po'i sku thun mong ma yin pa'i gzungs bzhugs¹⁰⁴ dang bcas pa bzhangs shing| bstan pa ji srid nam gnas kyi bar du rten gtor btsugs| rje'i drung du sku mched bzhi| sde pa chen po bkra shis mgon pa yang sku nas¹⁰⁵ gzhon nu yod pa dang bcas pa'i sku mched khu dbon lnga la| dpal rdo rje nag po chen po gur gyi mgon po lcam 'dral¹⁰⁶ 'khor dang bcas pa'i rjes gnang thun mong ma yin pa yang gnang nas| bka' bsgos shing gdam¹⁰⁷ la bzhag pa yin pas| glo bo'i sa phyogs 'dir de dang mi 'gal ba'i dam tshig la gnas pa zhig| mchod gnas dang sbyin bdag kun gyis mdzad pa¹⁰⁸ byung na ni| chos dang 'jig rten gyi bya ba thams cad gong 'phel du 'gro zhing| de lta ma yin na cir 'gyur mi shes pa| bla ma brgyud pa chos bsrungs dang bcas pa'i dam tshig gnyan po sangs rgyas kyi bka' bden pa las shes pa lags zhes gsungs shing| de'i dus kyi mchod g.yog mdzad pa po ni| pañdi ta chen po grags pa rgyal mtshan yin no||

⁹⁹ kyi] A^K, kyis B^K

¹⁰⁰ rten] A^K, conj.^H brten nas B^K

¹⁰¹ 'di] A^K, conj.^H 'di'i B^K

¹⁰² rgyud] A^K, conj.^H add. dang B^K

¹⁰³ KRAMER 2008: 122, n. 12 suggests to read 'di'i or da'i.' Following my reading of B^K (GeNTH, fol. 5b6), I suggest da'i.

¹⁰⁴ bzhugs] A^K, conj.^H gzhug B^K

¹⁰⁵ nas] A^K, conj.^H na B^K

¹⁰⁶ 'dral] A^K, bral B^K, conj.^H dral

¹⁰⁷ gdam] A^K, conj.^H dam B^K

¹⁰⁸ pa] A^K, add. zhig B^K

Illustrations:

Thangkas, Maps, and Photographs



Plate 1 An early depiction of Ngor chen (with two lineages)
1430s–1460s
86.5 x 52 cm
Michael Henss Collection, Zürich
Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 179–181, fig. 8.2; HAR (88708)
Courtesy of Michael Henss, Zürich



Plate 2 Most likely another early depiction of Ngor chen (with Sa skya lineage masters)
1440s–1470s
118.11 x 102.87 cm
Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection, New York
P1994.21.5
Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 190–192, fig. 8.8; HAR (134)
Courtesy of Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection, New York



Plate 3 Ngor chen and Mus chen with their lineage of full monastic ordination
Mid-fifteenth century
87.6 x 80 cm
Stephen and Sharon Davies Collection
Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 31, fig. 2.12 and 192–193, fig. 8.9; HAR (36418)
After PAL 1991: 155, no. 87



Plate 4 Grub chen Buddhaśrī (1339–1420) surrounded by the Yogācāra lineage masters of the *bodhisattva* vow (as part of a series of *Lam 'bras* lineage master paintings); commissioned by lHa mchog seng ge (1486–1535), the ninth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1516–1534)

1516–1534

91.44 x 58.42 cm

Rubin Museum of Art, New York

C2006.66.220

Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 197–199, fig. 8.13, REPO 2014: 66–69, fig. 8; HAR (269)

Courtesy of Rubin Museum of Art, New York



Plate 5 Vajradhara as the first painting in the set of lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Buddhaśrī
1420s
86.4 x 78.7 cm
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
Stella Kramrisch Collection, 1994
1994-148-634
Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 182–185, fig. 8.4; HAR (87083)
Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Plate 6 Virūpa and Kṛṣṇapāda as the second painting in the set of lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Buddhaśrī 1420s
86.40 x 80 cm
The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Kinney
Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 185–186, fig. 8.5; HAR (81552)
After LINROTHE 2006, no. 49



Plate 7 Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216) as the seventh painting in the set of lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Buddhaśrī
1420s
84 x 78.2 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
67.831
Gift of John Goelet
Literature: JACKSON 1986, JACKSON 2011: 83–85, fig. 3.12; HAR (87230)
Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Photograph © 2017 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Plate 8 Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412)
 Ca. 1420–1450
 52.1 x 47 cm
 Private Collection
 Literature: JACKSON 2011: 17–18, fig. 1.17; HAR (88595)
 After SOTHEYBY'S 1994: no. 114



Plate 9 First painting of the *Vajrāvālī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa
1429–1456
88 x 74 cm
Musée Guimet
Literature: MORI 2009: 715, Table D
After BÉGUIN 1990: 71, no. 32



Plate 10 Fifth painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa
1429–1456
89.5 x 73.7 cm
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
Stella Kramrisch Collection, 1994
1994-148-635
Literature: MORI 2009: 715, Table D; HAR (87084)
Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia



Plate 11 Seventh painting of the *Vajrāvālī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa
1429–1456
91.4 x 73.7 cm
Private Collection
Literature: MORI 2009: 715, Table D; HAR (101370)
After KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: [170], pl. 47c

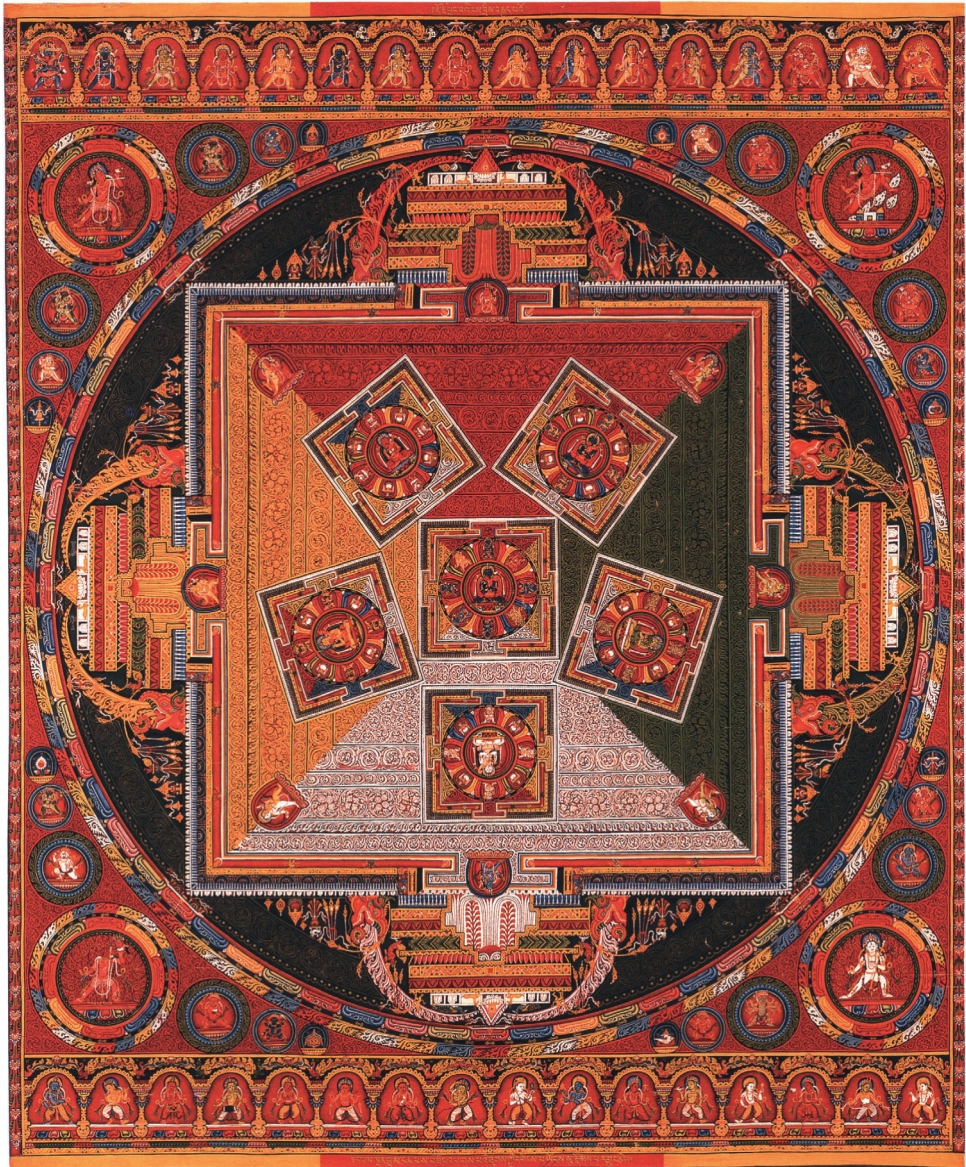


Plate 12 Eighth painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa
1429–1456
88.5 x 74.5 cm
Private Collection
Literature: MORI 2009: 715, Table D; HAR (101368)
After KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: [167], pl. 47a

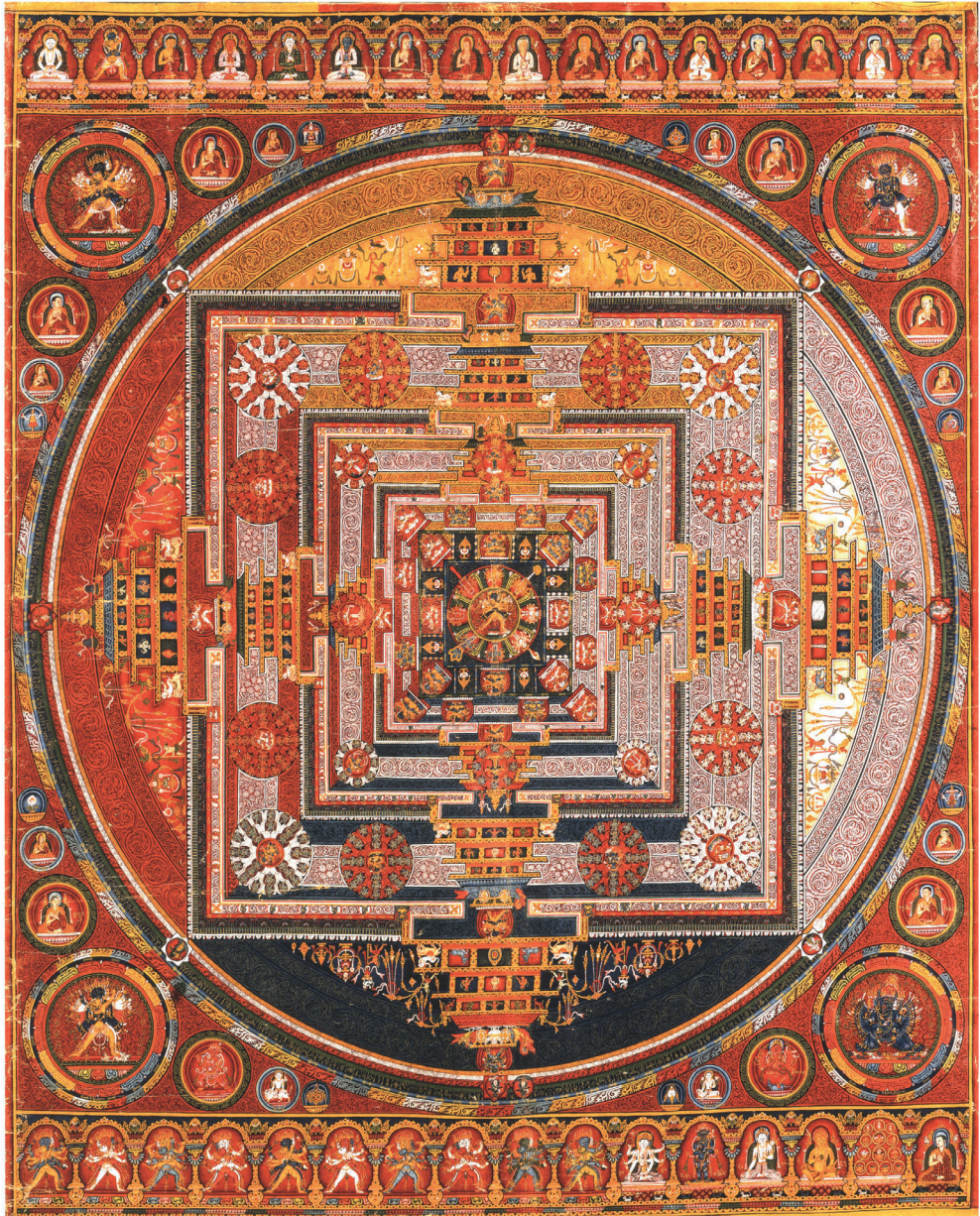


Plate 13 Eleventh painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa
1429–1456
90.5 x 75.5 cm
Michael Henss Collection, Zürich
Literature: HENSS 2014: 690–691, pl. 992, KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: 165–171, pl. 47b;
HAR (88706)
Courtesy of Michael Henss, Zürich



Plate 14 Thirteenth painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa
1429–1456
81.92 x 73.66 cm
Rubin Museum of Art, New York
C2007.6.1
Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 186–188, fig. 8.6; HAR (81826)
Courtesy of Rubin Museum of Art, New York



Plate 15 Fourteenth (and last) painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa
1429–1456
88.9 x 73.7 cm
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas
AP 2000.01
Literature: BRAUEN 2009: 103 and [105], pl. 14; MORI 2009: 715, Table D; HAR (31323)
Courtesy of Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas



Plate 16 Ngor Monastery and its surroundings: (A) Ngor, (B) Chu mig, (C) sNar thang, and (D) bKra shis lhun po; Photo: Google Earth, 2016

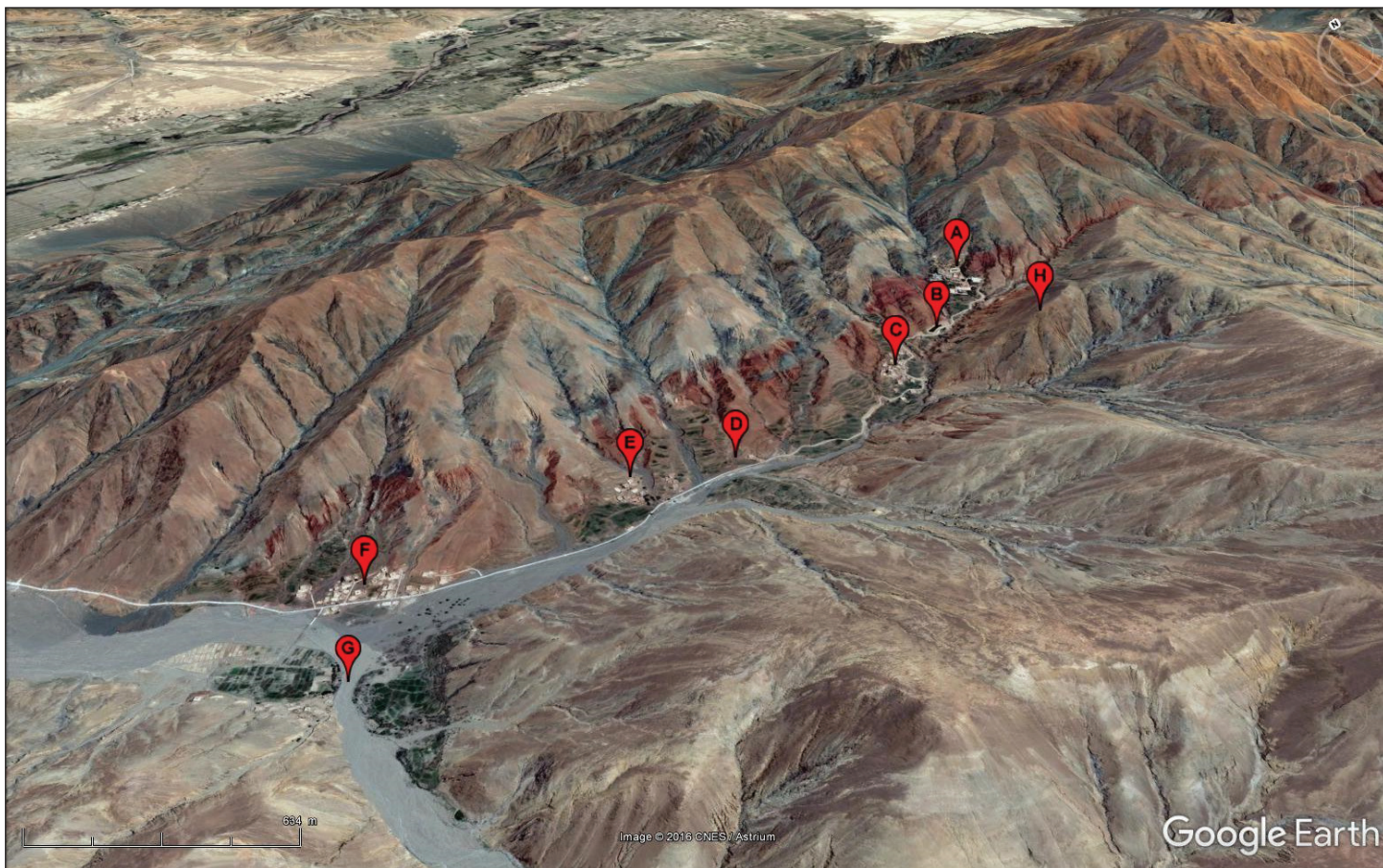


Plate 17 The upper Ngor Valley: (A) Ngor Monastery, (B) Bla rdzing, (C) sPel rong grong tsho, (D) Wa rong, (E) Gyo mo grong tsho, (F) sDel grong tsho, (G) sDel grong tsho and dPal mjal (or sPang lcal), and (H) dPa' bo ri; Photo: Google Earth, 2016

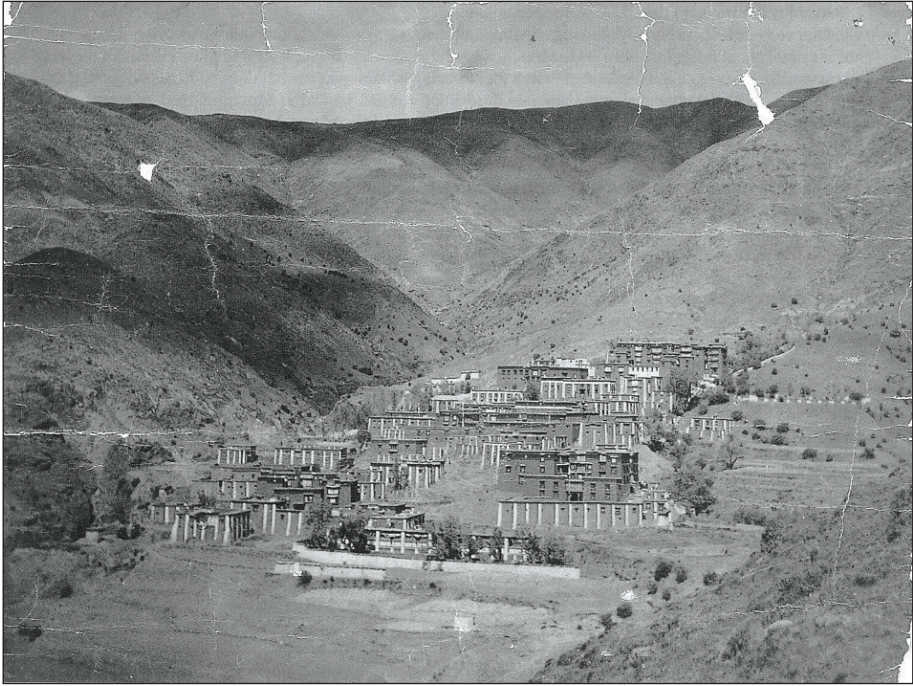


Plate 18 Ngor Monastery, pre-1959; Photo taken by Chos dga', the business manager (*phyag mdzod*) of Klu lding mKhan chen Rin poche



Plate 19 Ngor Monastery, 2016; Photo by JH



Plate 20 Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/08); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 21 Ngor Monastery, 2016; Photo by JH



Plate 22 Ngor Monastery, pre-1959; Photo taken by Chos dga', the business manager (*phyag mdzod*) of Klu lding mKhan chen Rin poche



Plate 23 Ngor Monastery, 2016; Photo by JH



Plate 24 Tucci Expedition on its way to Zha lu via the lCags pass with Ngor Monastery in the background, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6106/24); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 25 Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6106/30); Photo (taken from below the lCags pass) by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 26 Lower part of Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/10); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 27 Area below Ngor Monastery (where once Ngor's rTa babs mchod rten stood), Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/35); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 28 Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/13); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 29 Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. ISIAO 6105/14); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 30 and 31 Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. ISIAO 6105/17 and 6105/19); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 32 Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. ISIAO 6105/21); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 33 Lotus *Maṇḍala*, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/26); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 34 Lotus *Maṇḍala*, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/24); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 35 Bla rdzing, 2010; Photo by JH



Plate 36 Bla rdzing (after the construction of the new road), 2016; Photo by JH



Plate 37 Stone with name inscription: Kun dga' bzang po, 2016; Photo by JH



Plate 38 Stone with name inscription: Kun dga' bzang po, 2010; Photo by JH



Plate 39 Chos dung mThong thos rnam grol, the conch shell said to be blown by Grub thob Don grub, Lam 'bras lha khang, Ngor Monastery, 2015. Photo by JH



Plate 40 Ngor Valley with the area called Wa rong located below the red rock formation in the centre, 2016; Photo by JH

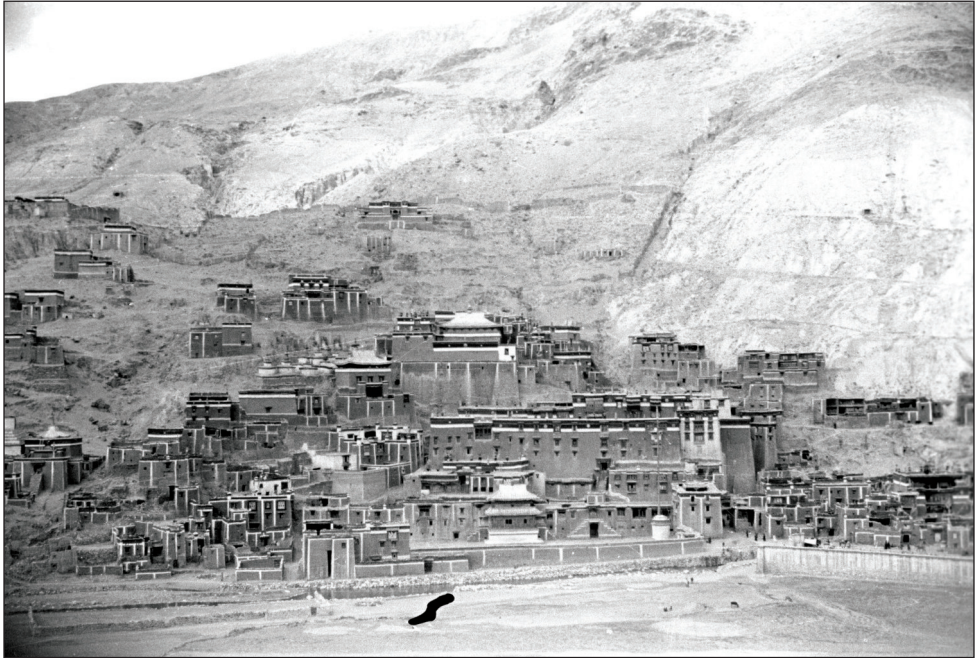


Plate 41 Sa skya Monastery with the courtyard of the Sa skya tshogs, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6117/20); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran

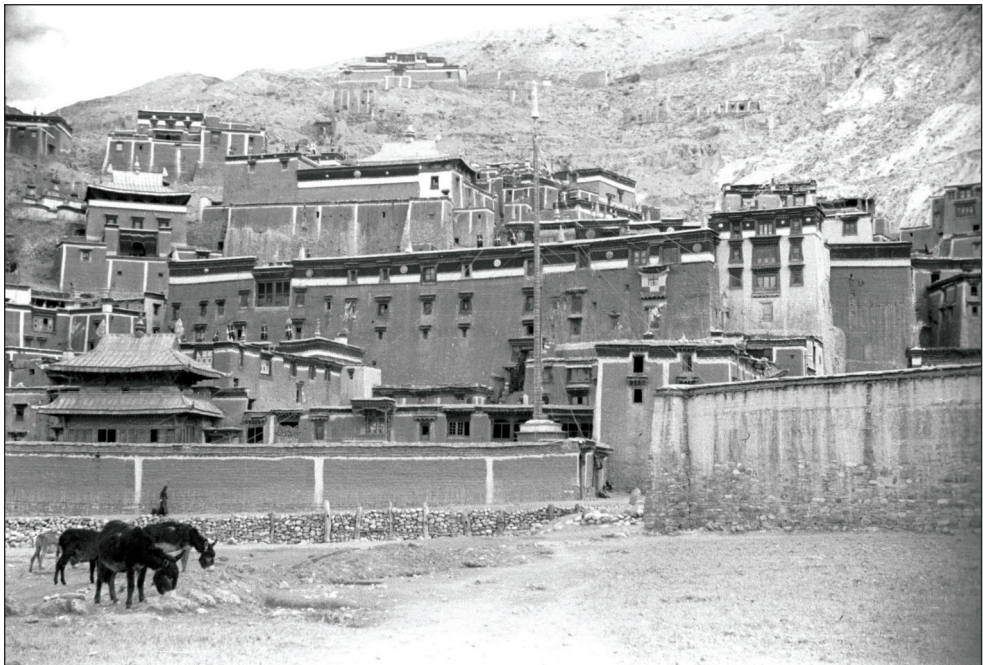


Plate 42 bZhi thog (centre) and Sa skya tshogs (bottom left), Sa skya Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6145/37); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 43 bZhi thog (centre) and Sa skya tshogs (below), Sa skya Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6145/30); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran



Plate 44 Mural of Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen and Blo gros rgyal mtshan, Gur pa grwa tshang, dPal 'khor Chos sde, rGyal rtse, 2010; Photo by JH



Plate 45 Zhi dgon and its surroundings: (A) Zhi dgon, (B) mDog Valley, and (C) Ngam ring;
Photo: Google Earth, 2016



Plate 46 Zhi dgon, 2016; Photo by 'Jam dpal bshad sgrub



Plate 47 Zhi dgon, 2016; Photo by 'Jam dpal bshad sgrub



Plate 48 Zhi dgon, 2016; Photo by 'Jam dpal bshad sgrub

List of Plates

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- Plate 2** Most likely another early depiction of Ngor chen (with his Sa skya lineage masters). Commissioned: 1440s–1470s (JACKSON 2010a: 190); Size: 118.11 x 102.87 cm; Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection, New York (P1994.21.5); Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 190–192, fig. 8.8; HAR (134); Courtesy of Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection, New York.
- Plate 3** An early depiction of Ngor chen and Mus chen with their lineage of full monastic ordination. Inscription at the bottom below Ngor chen (JACKSON 2012: 215, n. 150): *kun mkhyen gsang gi bdud rtsi yi[s]|| dga' ston 'phel la 'gro la 'gyed mdzad pa|| bzang po'i phrin las gdul bya yi|| dpal du [gyur pa] la phyag 'tshal||*; Inscription at the bottom below Mus chen (JACKSON 2012: 215, n. 150): *dkon mchog dges pa'i [lhag bsam] can|| mi mthun phyogs [las rnam] rgyal [ba'i]|| dge mtshan dpal yon bzang po can|| dpal ldan bla ma'i zhabs la 'dud||* (emphasis added by the author). These verses originate from the *Lam 'bras bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga khrigs chags su bkod pa tshogs gnyis rab rgyas* (gDams ngag mdzod, vol. 4, p. 856.2–3), and David Jackson edited the verses from the inscription based on that text, adding missing parts in square brackets. Commissioned: mid-fifteenth century (JACKSON 2010a: 193); Size: 87.6 x 80 cm; Stephen and Sharon Davies Collection; Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 31, fig. 2.12 and 192–193, fig. 8.9; HAR (36418); After PAL 1991: 155, no. 87.
- Plate 4** Grub chen Buddhaśrī (1339–1420) surrounded by the Yogācāra lineage masters of the *bodhisattva* vow (as part of a series of *Lam 'bras* lineage master paintings). Commissioned by lHa mchog seng ge (1486–1535), the ninth abbot of Ngor (tenure: 1516–1534). Inscription (front side, bottom centre): *||grub pa'i dbang phyug budhā shri sems tsam lugs kyi brgyud pa dang bcas pa'i zhabs kyi padmo la/ bdag shākya'i dge slong lha mchog seng ge phyag 'tshal zhing skyabs su 'chi'o/ skye ba dang tshe rab [= rabs] kun du rjes su bzung du gsol/ pir 'dzin dbang po rdo rje tshe brtan yin/ māṅgalaṃ||*; Inscription (back side): *bris thang gtso bsod chung ngu gras cig gi bcu gcig pa grub chen budha shri la sems tsam lugs kyi sems bskyed kyi bla ma brgyud pas bskor ba 'di/ rje lha mchog seng gel/ rje sangs rgyas seng gel/ rje nam mkha' dpal bzang rnam kyis rim par bzhengs shing/ thugs dam rten phyag gnas ma byin rlabs can 'di/ sa skya pa ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams kyi lag tu dad pa'i dbang gi [= gis] bab pa'o||*; Commissioned: 1516–1534; Size: 91.44 x 58.42 cm; Rubin Museum of Art, New York, (C2006.66.220); Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 197–199, fig. 8.13, REPO 2014: 66–69, fig. 8; HAR (269); Courtesy of Rubin Museum of Art, New York.

- Plate 5** Vajradhara as the first painting in the set of lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Buddhaśrī. Commissioned: 1420s; Size: 86.4 x 78.7 cm; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; Stella Kramrisch Collection, 1994 (1994-148-634); Literature JACKSON 2010a: 182–185, fig. 8.4; HAR (87083); Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.
- Plate 6** Virūpa and Kṛṣṇapāda as the second painting in the set of lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Buddhaśrī. Commissioned: 1420s; Size: 86.4 x 80 cm; The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Kinney; Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 185–186, fig. 8.5; HAR (81552); After LINROTHE 2006, no. 49.
- Plate 7** Slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216) as the seventh painting in the set of lineage masters of the *Lam 'bras* that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Buddhaśrī. Commissioned: 1420s; Size: 84 x 78.2 cm; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (67.831); Gift of John Goelet; Literature: JACKSON 1986, JACKSON 2011: 83–85, fig. 3.12; HAR (87230); Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photograph © 2017 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- Plate 8** Sa bzang 'Phags pa gZhon nu blo gros (1346–1412). Inscription (bottom centre): *||gzhon nur rab byung dam pas rjes su bzung|| blo gros khang bzangs rgyud sde'i nor bus gang|| dbang bzhi'i rgyun gyis 'gro kun tshim par mdzad|| chos rje 'phags pa'i zhabs la phyag 'tshal lol||* (emphasis added by the author). Above the head of the main subject, in the centre of the throne backrest is Sa bzang 'Phags pa's principal teacher, Sa bzang Ma ti Paṅ chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan. He is recognisable not only from his central placement in the painting, but also by a tiny inscription beneath his lotus throne: *sa bzang ma ti (...)* [*la phyag*] 'tshal lol. In the upper corners of the painting two teachers of Sa bzang 'Phags pa are shown: in the proper right corner (i.e., from the point of view of the subject), rGyal sras Thogs med bzang po (inscription: *thogs med pa*), and in the proper left corner, Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo (inscription: *byang rtse pa*). Commissioned: ca. 1420–1450 (JACKSON 2011: 18, fig. 1.17); Size: 52.1 x 47 cm; Private Collection; Literature: JACKSON 2011: 17–18, fig. 1.17; HAR (88595); After SOTHEYBY'S 1994: no. 114.
- Plate 9** First painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, showing four *maṅḍalas*: Mañjuvajra, Tricatvāriṃsadātmaka-mañjuvajra, Piṇḍikramokta-akṣobhya, and Yamāri (MORI 2009: 714, Table C). Inscription (top centre): *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris dang po'o||*; Inscription (bottom centre): *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*; Commissioned: 1429–1456; Size: 88 x 74 cm; Musée Guimet; Literature: MORI 2009: 715, Table D; After BÉGUIN 1990: 71, no. 32.
- Plate 10** Fifth painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, showing four *maṅḍalas* of Hevajra, each in a different form: Garbhahevajra, Cittahevajra, Vākhevajra, and Kāyahevajra (MORI 2009: 714, Table C). Inscription (top centre): *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris lnga pa'o||*; Inscription (bottom centre): *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*; Commissioned: 1429–1456; Size: 89.5

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- Plate 11** Seventh painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, showing four *maṇḍalas*: three of Vajravārāhī and one of Vajrahūmkāra (MORI 2009: 714, Table C). Inscription (top centre): *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris bdun pa'o||*; Inscription (bottom centre): *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*; Commissioned: 1429–1456; Size: 91.4 x 73.7 cm; Private Collection; Literature: MORI 2009: 715, Table D; HAR (101370); After KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: [170], pl. 47c.
- Plate 12** Eighth painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, showing the *maṇḍala* of Ṣaṭcakra Martin (MORI 2009: 714, Table C). Inscription (top centre): *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris brgyad pa'o||*; Inscription (bottom centre): *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*; Commissioned: 1429–1456; Size: 88.5 x 74.5 cm; Private Collection; Literature: MORI 2009: 715, Table D; HAR (101368); After KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: [167], pl. 47a.
- Plate 13** Eleventh painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, showing the *maṇḍala* of Kālacakra. Inscription (top centre): *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris bcu gcig pa'o||*; Inscription (bottom centre): *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*; Inscription (bottom right on the left and right of Ngor chen's depiction): *a nanta bhadra* (i.e., Kun dga' bzang po). Ngor chen is shown as the last master in the lineage for the initiation into Kālacakra according to the 'Bro tradition (*'bro lugs*). The depicted lineage splits into two lines after the Kālacakra master Kun spangs Thugs rjes brtson 'grus (1243–1313), one that Ngor chen received from his teacher Shar chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan (the lineage masters of which are depicted on the left side of the *maṇḍala*) and bKra shis rin chen (the lineage masters of which are depicted on the right side of the *maṇḍala*). These two lineages are recorded in Ngor chen's record of teachings received; see the *Thob yig rgya mtsho* (pp. 215.3–216.4 and 419.2–6), respectively. Commissioned: 1429–1456; Size: 90.5 x 75.5 cm; Michael Henss Collection, Zürich; Literature: HENSS 2014: 690–691, pl. 992, KOSSAK and SINGER 1998: 165–171, pl. 47b; HAR (88706); Courtesy of Michael Henss, Zürich.
- Plate 14** Thirteenth painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, showing four *maṇḍalas*: Vajradhātu, Durgatipariśodhana, Bhūṭadāmara, and Māricī (MORI 2009: 714, Table C). Inscription (top centre): *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris bcu gsum pa'o||*; Inscription (bottom centre): *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*; Commissioned: 1429–1456; Size: 81.92 x 73.66 cm; Rubin Museum of Art, New York (C2007.6.1); Literature: JACKSON 2010a: 186–188, fig. 8.6; HAR (81826); Courtesy of Rubin Museum of Art, New York.
- Plate 15** Fourteenth (and last) painting of the *Vajrāvalī* cycle that Ngor chen commissioned in memory of Sa bzang 'Phags pa, showing four *maṇḍalas*: Pañcarakṣā, Vasudhārā, Grahamātrkā, and Uṣṇīṣavijayā (MORI 2009: 714, Table

C). Inscription (top centre): *||rdo rje phreng ba'i ras bris bcu bzhi pa'o| shu bham||*; Inscription (bottom centre): *||dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa'i thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs su rdzogs par gyur cig||*; Inscription (bottom right below Ngor chen's depiction): *dge slong kun dga' bzang po la byin gyi[s] [b]rlo[bs]||*; Commissioned: 1429–1456; Size: 88.9 x 73.7 cm; Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas (AP 2000.01); Literature: BRAUEN 2009: 103 and [105], pl. 14, MORI 2009: 715, Table D; HAR (31323); Courtesy of Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

- Plate 16** Ngor Monastery and its surroundings: (A) Ngor, (B) Chu mig, (C) sNar thang, and (D) bKra shis lhun po; Photo: Google Earth, 2016.¹
- Plate 17** The upper Ngor Valley: (A) Ngor Monastery, (B) Bla rdzing, (C) sPel rong grong tsho, (D) Wa rong, (E) Gyo mo grong tsho, (F) sDel grong tsho, (G) sDel grong tsho and dPal mjal (or sPang lcal), and (H) dPa' bo ri; Photo: Google Earth, 2016.
- Plate 18** Ngor Monastery, pre-1959; Photo taken by Chos dga', the business manager (*phyag mdzod*) of Klu lding mKhan chen Rin poche.
- Plate 19** Ngor Monastery, 2016; Photo by JH.
- Plate 20** Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/08); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 21** Ngor Monastery, 2016; Photo by JH.
- Plate 22** Ngor Monastery, pre-1959; Photo taken by Chos dga', the business manager (*phyag mdzod*) of Klu lding mKhan chen Rin poche.
- Plate 23** Ngor Monastery, 2016; Photo by JH.
- Plate 24** Tucci Expedition on its way to Zha lu via the lCags pass with Ngor Monastery in the background, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6106/24); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 25** Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6106/30); Photo (taken from below the lCags pass) by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 26** Lower part of Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/10); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 27** Area below Ngor Monastery (where once Ngor's rTa babs mchod rten stood), Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/35); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.

¹ The satellite maps (pls. 16–17 and 45) were prepared by the author. References to photographs by the author are abbreviated as JH.

- Plate 28** Statues in the gSer sku lha khang,² Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/13); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 29** Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/14); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 30** Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/17); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 31** Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/19); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 32** Statues in the gSer sku lha khang, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/21); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 33** Lotus *Maṇḍala*, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/26); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 34** Lotus *Maṇḍala*, Ngor Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6105/24); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 35** Bla rdzing, 2010; Photo by JH.
- Plate 36** Bla rdzing (after the construction of the new road), 2016; Photo by JH.
- Plate 37** Stone with name inscription (Kun dga' bzang po) mentioned in Ngor chen's biography, 2016; Photo by JH.
- Plate 38** Stone with name inscription (Kun dga' bzang po) mentioned in Ngor chen's biography, 2010; Photo by JH.
- Plate 39** Chos dung mThong thos rnam grol, the conch shell said to be blown by Grub thob Don grub, Lam 'bras lha khang, Ngor Monastery, 2015; Photo by JH.
- Plate 40** Ngor Valley with the area called Wa rong located below the red rock formation in the centre, 2016; Photo by JH.
- Plate 41** Sa skya Monastery with the courtyard of the Sa skya tshogs, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6117/20); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 42** bZhi thog (centre) and Sa skya tshogs (bottom left), Sa skya Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6145/37); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.

² The gSer sku lha khang, which was part of Ngor's assembly hall, the dBang khang chen mo, is described by Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho (*dBus gtsang gnas yig*, p. 398.8–10): *gser sku lha khang ka gnyis na/ ngor chen dkon mchog lhun grub sku mdun du birwa pa'i gser sku spus dag li rag zangs gser sna tshogs kyi sku nyis brgya tsam/*.

- Plate 43** bZhi thog (centre) and Sa skya tshogs (below), Sa skya Monastery, Tucci Expedition, 1939 (MNAO, neg. Dep. IsIAO 6145/30); Photo by Felice Boffa Ballaran; Courtesy of Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'Giuseppe Tucci'.
- Plate 44** Mural of Ta dben Kun dga' rin chen and Blo gros rgyal mtshan (Ngor chen's father and half-brother), Gur pa grwa tshang, dPal 'khor Chos sde, rGyal rtse, 2010; Photo by JH.
- Plate 45** Zhi dgon and its surroundings: (A) Zhi dgon, (B) mDog Valley, and (C) Ngam ring; Photo: Google Earth, 2016.
- Plate 46** Zhi dgon, 2016; Photo by 'Jam dpal bshad sgrub.
- Plate 47** Zhi dgon, 2016; Photo by 'Jam dpal bshad sgrub.
- Plate 48** Zhi dgon, 2016; Photo by 'Jam dpal bshad sgrub.

Abbreviations
and
Bibliography

1. Abbreviations

CATALOGUE	Part Six, 2. Descriptive Catalogue of the Revised sDe dge Recension
D	sDe dge bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur. Numbers according to: Hakuju Ui et al. 1934. <i>A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)</i> . Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University.
HAR	Himalayan Art Resources www.himalayanart.org (accessed 21.02.2017)
KAWAGUCHI COLLECTION	Volume Index to the Kawaguchi Collection of Tibetan Literature http://124.33.215.236/Database/kawaguchi_titles.html (accessed 21.02.2017)
LIST	Part Six, 4. Descriptive List of Further Writings
MANUSCRIPT VOLUME	Part Six, 3. Descriptive List of a Manuscript Volume
MAP 1	<i>Bod rang skyong ljongs srid 'dzin sa khul gyi sa bkra</i> . Tibet International Network, 1994. For an index to this map, see Verhufen, Gregor. 1995. <i>Tibet und seine Nachbarn: Der Index zur neuen Karte</i> . Bonn: Gregor Verhufen.
MAP 2	The Tibet Map Institute, Maps of Tibet (157 sheets) www.tibetmap.org/eros3br.html (accessed 21.02.2017)
NGMCP	Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project https://catalogue.ngmcp.uni-hamburg.de/content/index.xml (accessed 21.02.2017)
P	Peking bKa' 'gyur and bsTan 'gyur. Numbers according to: Daisetz T. Suzuki (ed.). 1961. <i>The Tibetan Tripitaka. Peking Edition: Catalogue & Index</i> . Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation.
TBRC	Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center www.tbrc.org (accessed 21.02.2017)

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Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra = *Saddharmapuṇḍarikanāmamahāyānasūtra*. *bKa' gyur dpe bsdur ma* 131 and P 781.

Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtrendrarājāḥ = Āryasuvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtrendrarājāḥnāmamahāyānasūtra. *bKa' gyur dpe bsdur ma* 585 and P 176.

2.2 Tibetan Sources

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Sangs rgyas rin chen gyi rnam thar 3 = Authorship unclear. *rje btsun dam pa sangs rgyas rin chen dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa dad pa skyes byed*. In *Lam 'bras 3*, vol. 28 (sa), pp. 37–124. This biography of Mus chen Sangs rgyas rin chen (1453–1524), the eighth abbot of Ngor, was written by a disciple of Sa skya Lo tsā ba Kun dga' bsod nams (1485–1533). The author's identity is given as Nā tha in an annotation.

Sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar = Thar rtse nas Brang ti Pañ chen Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1535–1602). *rje btsun mkhyen rab kyi dbang phyug dpal ldan bla ma dam pa sangs rgyas seng ge pa'i rnam par thar pa dad pa'i me tog gi phreng ba*. In *Lam 'bras 3*, vol. 28 (sa), pp. 287–379.

Sam bho ta'i dbon brgyud dpe tshogs = rDzong pa'i dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu khang (ed.). *Sam bho ta'i dbon brgyud dpe tshogs*. 7 vols. [s.l.]: rDzong pa'i dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu khang, [2012?].

Seng ge rgyal mtshan gyi ngo sprod = dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (ed.). *rTsom pa po'i ngo sprod mdor bsdu*. In *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum* 3, vol. 90, pp. 3–10.

Srog dus bzhi pa = gNyos ston (alias La stod) dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (fl. 13th/14th century) with annotations by Grub chen Buddhaśrī (1339–1420). *Srog dus bzhi pa*. *dBu med* manuscript, 4 fols., housed at the National Library of Bhutan, Thimphu, Bhutan.

Slob bshad dang tshogs bshad kyi dbye ba = A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597–1659). *gSung ngag rin po che slob bshad dang tshogs bshad kyi dbye ba rje klu sgrub rgya mtsho'i gsung gi zin bris la slar yang rje nyid kyis zhus dag mdzad pa'i yid ches can gyi dpe la bar skabs su yi ge ma dag pa'i skyon rnam sa skya pa sngags 'chang ngag dbang kun dga'i ming can gyis zhus dag bgyis pa'i legs bshad blo gsal kun dga'*. In *A mes zhabs kyi gsung 'bum*, vol. 22 (za), pp. 211–237.

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gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed = 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568). *'Jam mgon mkhyen brtse'i lam 'bras slob bshad khrid yig skor*. *gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i khog phub kyi rnam bshad las gdams ngag byung tshul gyi zin bris gsang chen bstan pa rgyas byed ces bya ba kha'u brag rdzong pa'i bzhed pa ma nor ba ban rgan mkhyen brtse'i nyams len*. In *Lam 'bras* 1, vol. 14 (pha), pp. 1–155.4.

gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong = Kun dga' dpal ldan (fl. 19th century) with additions by 'Jam dbyangs Blo gter dbang po (1847–1914). *gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i khog phub rnam bshad las gdams ngag gi byung tshul zin ris gsang chen bstan pa rgyas byed kyi zhal skong byin rlabs gzi brgya 'bar ba*. In *Lam 'bras* 1, vol. 14 (pha), pp. 155.4–195.5.

gSang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad = 'Jam dbyangs Blo gter dbang po (1847–1914). *gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa ngor lugs thun mong ma yin pa'i slob bshad kyi 'chad thabs gsang chen mdzod brgya 'byed pa'i legs bshad 'phrul gyi lde'u mig*. In *Lam 'bras* 1, vol. 12 (na), pp. 477–615.

gSang 'dus chos 'byung = A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597–1659). *dPal gsañ ba 'dus pa'i dam pa'i chos byuñ ba'i tshul legs par bsad pa gsañ 'dus chos kun gsal ba'i ñin byed [and] dPal gsañ ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor 'khor lo sgrub pa'i thabs rnam par bsad pa ñes don phrin las rgya mtsho'i 'byuñ gnas*. A history and detailed exegesis of the Guhyasamāja tantric cycle in India and Tibet and its practice. Reproduced from a block print from the Sde-dge Dgon-chen blocks. Dehra Dun, U.P.: Sakya Centre, 1985.

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¹ Including anglicised Tibetan names.

Generally speaking, this [place] Ngor [is located] at the head of a valley having many cliffs [of various colours] like red ochre, yellow, and light blue. If [one] views [it] from a distance, [it] is grim looking, but when [one] arrives inside, [it] is pleasing to the mind. In particular, if [one] looks from the top of the Thar rtse [bla brang] at the dPa' bo ri, [i.e.,] the mountain in front [of it], with [its] small amount of meadows, [it] is quite pleasant.

dBus gtsang gnas yig (p. 401.13–17): *lar ngor 'di lung pa zhig gi phur rtsag [= btsag] ser sngo skya sogs gad shar mang po yod pa rgyang nas bltas na nyams sdug po yod kyang nang du sleb na nyams skyid| khyad par mdun ri dpa' bo ri spang cung zad yod pa thar rtse'i rtse nas bltas na nyams skyid bde ba lta bu yod|.*

