

Za hor and its Contribution to Tibetan Medicine, Part One: Some Names, Places, and Texts^{*}

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In memoriam of E. Gene Smith the mkhas mchog of Tibetan Studies

In an earlier paper on Za hor and its place in the Tibetan imagination and, more concretely, its significance for Tibetan religious and political history^①, I first briefly discussed the various mentions of the toponym *za hor* – it is possibly derived from Persian *shahr*, “town, city, walled city” – in the Tibetan Buddhist canonical literature. Of course, the literature in question consists of translations from purported Sanskrit texts and Za hor figures in these as one of several loci in which Buddhist tantric traditions were able to flourish. At the same time, I bemoaned the fact that so far not one single manuscript of a Sanskrit Buddhist text seems to have survived from which we might have otherwise retrieved the actual equivalent of this place name. Our sources by and large suggest that Za hor was roughly found in the area that is now occupied by Dacca, even if it also seems to have been occasionally conflated and confounded with U rgyan [and its variants] – Uḍḍiyāna or Oḍḍiyāna, that is, the Swāt Valley, which is located in what is now northwestern Pakistan or perhaps even Kañci in what is now Tamil Nadu, India. Both placenames Za hor and U rgyan are regularly encountered in Tibetan medical writings, so that their presence indicates that some of the individuals associated with them played as yet unascertained roles in, or at least contributed to, the formation and development of the Tibetan health sciences. For example, in the very succinct survey of medical literature of his *Blon po'i bka'i thang yig*, U rgyan gling pa (1323–?) notes the following three titles

* I should like to thank Dr. Zhang Changhong, Sichuan University, for having translated this paper into Chinese and for her careful reading of the English version, which allowed me to correct several oversights.

① See my “On the Edge of Myth and History: Notes on the Land of Za hor, its Place in the History of Early Indian Buddhist Tantra, and Dalai Lama V and the Genealogy of its Royal Family,” that was presented at the Conference on Cross-Cultural Researches on Buddhist Mythology, held on July 30–31, 2010 at Peking University. It will appear in a volume that is edited by the organizers, Profs. Wang Bangwei 王邦维 and Chen Ming 陈明.

of medical works that he suggests came from Za hor^①:

1. *Gsang mdzod bcu gsum* [*Thirteen Arcane Treasures*]
2. *Srin po'i shi gsos byer brgyad* [*Eight Destructions of {or: Eight Distinctions between} the Life and Death of the Cannibal Demon*]^②
3. *Lha ma yin gyi gso rgyud chen* [*Great Medical Tantra of the Demi-gods*]

None of these tracts are extant if, that is, they ever existed. The present essay is the first part of a two-part study in which I examine the rather modest place Za hor occupies in this particular domain of Tibetan knowledge. There is still much uncertainty in the textual history of the development of Tibetan medicine. Here I attempt to do some preliminary but essential textual and historical weeding in order to provide a larger context for the sequel of the present paper, which I intend to publish in the next issue of this journal. This sequel will consist of annotated translations of several short medical instructions that are associated with Za hor and one [or more] of its unnamed kings.

It is a truism that the *Rgyud bzhi*, the *Four Books*, a work that was allegedly written and

① *Bka' thang sde lnga* [based on the Sde dge xylograph], ed. Rdo rje rgyal po (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986) 499. According to A. M. Blondeau, "Le lha 'dre bka' thang," *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1980), 42, this *Bka'i thang yig* may have been written in part anywhere from 1368 to 1393.

② I am not at all sure whether I have understood the intent of this title. The term *srin po* is probably unproblematic, although it may be short for *srin po'i nad*, that is, a disease caused by micro organisms that cause pain; but *gsos* and *byer* definitely give me discomfort. Btsan lha Ngag dbang tshul khriims, *Brda dkrol gser gyi me long*, ed. Thang Shes rab 'od zer (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), 1001, 558, renders these two, respectively, by *rgyu* or *mchog* and [1] 'thor ba and *bro pa* and [2] *so sor phye ba* or *g. yes pa*. In case of the latter, I opt for [2]. For the first, he cites the entry for *gsos* in A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar (1759–after 1840), *Gangs can gyi brda gsar rnying las brtsams pa'i brda yig blo gsal mgrin rgyan* [Sku 'bum xylograph], *Collected Works*, vol. Kha [2] (Delhi, 1972), 405, who refers to [the Tibetan translation of] Dāṇḍin's (7th c.) *Kāvyādarśa*, I: 80b. However, there the term *gsos* renders Sanskrit *jīvita*, which has the meaning of "life" – see D. Dimitrov, *Mārgavibhāga. Die Unterscheidung der Stilarten*, Indica et Tibetica, Band 40 (Marburg: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 2002), 192–3, 225. Such commentators as Dpang Lo tsā ba Blo gros brtan pa (1276–1342) and Khams sprul IV Bstan 'dzin chos kyi nyi ma (1730–79) do not explain *gsos* in the sense of "cause" or "supreme"; the first glosses it by "life" and "essence" (*srog*, *snying*, and *snying po*) – see *Snyan ngags me long gi rgya cher 'grel pa gzung don gsal ba*, *Rig gnas phyogs bsdebs* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1981), 324 – and the second also has *srog* and *snying po* – see *Rgyan gyi bstan bcos me long paṇ chen bla ma'i gsung bzhin bkral ba dbyangs can ngag gi rol mtsho legs bshad nor bu'i 'byung khungs* (Thimphu, 1976), 162–3. But the interpretation of *gsos* by *rgyu* is not at all unprecedented, for Khams sprul IV cites Snar thang Lo tsā ba Dge 'dun dpal's early fifteenth century *Kāyādarśa* commentary which offers this very equivalence.

compiled by G. yu thog Yon tan mgon po (12th c.)^① was one of the literary pillars of the post-twelfth century Tibetan medical traditions. He is often called G. yu thog the New (*gsar ma*) as opposed to the alleged, eighth century G. yu thog the Old (*rnying ma*), a contrast that is now spurious and unsustainable^②. There is no hard and fast evidence that there ever was a G. yu thog the Old. But it should pique the attention of the historian of Tibetan culture why the existence of such an individual should ever have been proposed and why, once it was proposed, this notion was held on so tenaciously by so many Tibetan intellectuals. Unless specified otherwise, in this paper “G. yu thog” always intends G. yu thog the New. The biographies of G. yu thog the Old and G. yu thog have come down to us in one single volume that had the imprimatur and blessings of Dalai Lama V Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–82), which no doubt is one reason why the existence of G. yu thog the Old gained such prominence. The first of these was apparently written by G. yu thog Jo bo Lhun grub bkra shis (?–?) on the basis of earlier biographical documents by a certain Kong po Bde rgyal and others. This work was then subsequently edited and recast by Dar mo Sman rams pa Blo bzang chos grags (1638–after 1697), alias Drung ’tsho Dar mo, who then wrote a very short biography of G. yu thog, short because much of his life had already been told in the “biography” of G. yu thog the Old! The identity of G. yu thog Lhun grub bkra shis is unclear. Since nothing is so far known about him, it is not altogether helpful that he should be identical to G. yu thog Dpal ldan lhun grub, who is mentioned among the descendants of G. yu thog the Old. Ah well, there is still so much that

① Yang Ga, *The Sources for the Writing of the Rgyud bzhi, Tibetan Medical Classic*, unpublished Harvard University doctoral dissertation (Cambridge, 2010), 91–100. It should also be mentioned that some scholars were working with manuscripts of the *Rgyud bzhi* that did not associate either G. yu thog the Old or G. yu thog with the text at all. In fact, some of these manuscripts had a “translator’s colophon” (*gyur byang*) which claimed that the text had been translated [from Sanskrit] by the Kashmirian Zla ba la mngon par dga’ ba [* Candranandana] and the Tibetan Vairocana. An important case in point is the text of the *Rgyud bzhi* manuscript that was used by Byang bdag Rnam rgyal grags pa bzang po (1395–1475), the founder of the Byang school of Tibetan medicine and one of the *Rgyud bzhi*’s foremost commentators. Apart from the fact that the writer of this manuscript informed its reader that the text was a translation, it was in addition apparently also a *gter ma*—treasure text. Byang bdag himself cites its *kha byang*, that is, the “entrance certificate,” that is so important in the Tibetan *gter ma*—treasure literary tradition. It states that the original text issued from the copy that had belonged to emperor Khri srong lde btsan (ca. 742–ca. 800), a copy that had been hidden away in a pillar of the second floor (*bar khang*) of Bsam yas monastery’s primary and central temple (*dbu rtse*). Grwa pa Mngon shes then recovered it some one hundred and fifty years later. We find all this in, for example, his 1462 study of the *Rgyud bzhi*’s second book, the *Bshad rgyud*, and in his 1474 commentary on the twenty-seventh chapter of the fourth and last book, the *Phyi ma rgyud*; see, respectively, *Bdud rtsi’i chu rgyun*, Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib ’jug khang, Arura 001 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), 629–30, and *Rgyud bzhi’i rtsa ba’i ’grel pa / Yongs gtad rgyud kyi ’grel chen*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib ’jug khang, Arura 074 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2008), 252–3. Finally, for the influence of Byang bdag’s medical school on later developments in Tibetan medicine, see Th. Hofer, “Die tibetischen Medizintraditionen aus Ngamring und deren Einfluss auf das medizinische Werk von Desi Sangye Gyatso (1653–705),” *Der Rand und die Mitte – Beiträge zur Sozialanthropologie und Kulturgeschichte Tibets und des Himalaya*, ed. A. Gingrich and G. Hazod (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 78–101.

② Yang Ga, *The Sources for the Writing of the Rgyud bzhi, Tibetan Medical Classic*, 93–6, provides convincing arguments that the eighth century G. yu thog the Old is a fictional character.

needs unraveling and analysis in the early histories of Tibetan medicine^①, and this holds in particular for the biographies of these two G. yu thog—s!

We will probably never know what the proto—*Rgyud bzhi* may have looked like at its conception and gestation. In his recent dissertation, Yang Ga, a traditionally trained Tibetan physician, has in part continued the late R. Emmerick's efforts at uncovering the mechanics of G. yu thog's literary workshop and further develop a source—criticism of the *Rgyud bzhi*. But thusfar, the earliest mention of what was most likely this work may very well be the one found in the biography of 'Gro mgon Rin chen dpal (1170—1249), a hierarch of the Smar pa Bka' brgyud sect of Smar khams. There we learn that he had studied the *Gso sman rgyud bzhi*, the *Four Books on Healing and Medicine*, under his father Nor bzang lha rgyas sometime between 1182 and 1187. Were this work identical to the *Rgyud bzhi*, and I believe it may very well be, it would mean that a text called the *Rgyud bzhi* was in existence at least as early as around 1150^②. Although G. yu thog's dates have been given as 1126 or 1127 to 1202 and 1203 and, most recently, as 1112 to 1203^③, there is no hard evidence for either set and, indeed, the mention of the *Rgyud bzhi* in 'Gro mgon's biography would provide evidence against their veracity. G. yu thog's biography contains a reference to a horse—year, which is followed by a remark that he passed away at the age of seventy—six [= seventy—five] or shortly thereafter^④. Not one single source that has been published to date identifies the years in question. But there is no need for us to continue clutching at straws. Instead, we should try to find some comfort in the fact that so far no reliable sources have turned up that provide unequivocal evidence for any dates. Earlier, and in a similar vein, Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1552—1624) offered the reasonable

① In addition to D. Martin's paper below in n. ①page 32, mention should also be made of the historical weeding done in O. Czaya, "A Hitherto Unknown 'Medical History' by Mtsho smad Mkhan chen (b. 16th cent.)," *The Tibet Journal* 30/31 (2005), 155—74, and in F. Garrett, "Critical Methods in Tibetan Medical Histories," *Journal of Asian Studies* 66 (2007), 363—87.

② See Byang chub 'od zer, *Tsom mdo gdan rabs kun btus, Smar pa bka' brgyud kyi nam thar phyogs sgrig*, ed. Padma tshul khrims (Chengdu: Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa and Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006), 84.

③ For some of these, see Yang Ga, *The Sources for the Writing of the Rgyud bzhi, Tibetan Medical Classic*, 97—8. The third set of dates was *inter alia* proposed in Dkon mchog rin chen, *Bod kyi gso rig chos 'byung bai d'urya'i 'phreng ba* (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1992), 62, 64, and can be found in the recent secondary literature, for which see lastly F. Garrett, "Tapping the Body's Nectar: Gastronomy and Incorporation in Tibetan Literature," *History of Religions* 49 (2010), 307. Again, there is as yet no textual evidence for this. For the spiritual—ritual practices associated with him, see now F. K. Ehrhard, "A Short History of the G. yu thog snying thig," *Indica et Tibetica. Festschrift für Michael Hahn Zum 65. Geburtstag von Freunden und Schülern überreicht*, ed. K. Klaus and J. U. Hartmann, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 66 (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2007), 151—71, who is inclined to date G. yu thog from 1126 to 1202. The *Lcags po ri xylograph* was recently used for the reprint in the *G. yu thog snying thig*, ed. Sngags mang zhib 'jug khang, Sngags mang dpe tshogs 9 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005).

④ See *G. yu thog gsar rnying gi nam thar*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 007 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005), 328—9, 334. The year *gnam lo rgyal po rta lo* also occurs in the *Sum pa/ston Ye shes gzung [s] 'Brgyud pa'i nam thar med thabs med pa*, for which see *Yuthok's Treatise on Tibetan Medicine*, ed. L. Chandra (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), 332 [= *Cha lag bco brgyad*, Smad cha, ed. Blo bzang et al. (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1998), 692].

notion that he was a contemporary of the third Sa skya pa patriarch Rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216) and, more recently, the late Dmu dge Bsam gtan (1914–93) raised the possibility that his *floruit* should be placed around the year 1100^①.

Why Sog bzlog pa should mention Rje btsun in this context is not altogether obvious. Rje btsun own rather substantial contribution to medicine consists of a good number of various instructions, does not mention G. yu thog, and is by and large indebted to the Indo–Tibetan tradition that was initiated by Vāgbhaṭa's (7th c.) *Aṣṭāṅgahrdayasamhitā* and to one or more Nāgārjunas^②.

The fact that G. yu thog and his relation G. yu thog Dar po are mentioned in Rwa Lo tsā ba Rdo rje grags' (? 1016–? 1128) embellished biography might – but only might, since this biography has its own significant text–historical problems–therefore be revealing. Its putative author, Rwa Ye shes seng ge, who was the son and disciple of his nephew Rwa Lo tsā ba Chos 'bar and thus his grand–nephew^③, writes that one day, the mature Rwa Lo tsā ba had come to Tshong 'dus mgur mo, a market place not far from Zhwa lu monastery in Gtsang, and that^④:

de'i tshe g. yu thog dar po bya ba'i sman pa mkhros pa gcig na re / nged kyi g. yu thog yon tan mgon po des 'dir a ru ra'i char phab pa yin / khyed kyang rgya bal gyi bla ma mang po la chos zhus nas grub pa thob pa yin 'dug pas / de ring sgrub rtags gcig bstan dgos zer ba la / bla mas dgongs pa mdzad nas g. yu dang byu ru mon sran tsam gyi char nyin zhag bdun du phab pas / tshong 'dus kyi skye bo thams cad dad pa'i 'ur langs te 'bul ba ri ltar spungs / chos byed pa bsam gyis mi khyab pa byung bas / sman pa de yang shin tu dad de / ja bsig rta khrab / dar zab sogs kyi 'bul ba cher byas nas gdams pa zhur byung ba la / dbang 'khrid mdzad pas mchog gi dngos grub brnyes te lhan skyes ye shes sgrib med du mthong / sman dang chos kyi sgo nas

① See, respectively, *Rgyud bzhi'i bka' bsgrub nges don snying po*, *Collected Writings*, vol. II (New Delhi, 1975), 231, and *G. yu thog gsar rnying gi rnam thar*, *Gso rig mkhas dbang khag gi rnam thar phyogs sgrigs*, ed. Mdzod dge rdzong bod sman zhib 'jug khang (Chengdu: Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa and Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006), 94.

② See his undated *Gso dpyad rgyal po'i dkor mdzod*, *Collected Works*, vol. 5 [12/25], *Mes po'i shul bzhang*, vol. 14, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 372–533.

③ Himself a descendent of Rwa Lo tsā ba, Jo nang Kun dga' snying po (1575–1635), alias Tāranātha, writes in his undated study of the history of the Gshin rje gshed [Yamāntaka] cult that Rwa Ye shes seng ge was Rwa Lo tsā ba Chos rab's eldest son; see *Rgyud rgyal gshin rje gshed skor gyi chos 'byung rgyal ba yid ches ngo mtshar*, *Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha'i gsung 'bum dpe bsdur ma*, vol. 11/45, *Mes po'i shul bzhang*, vol. 53, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2008), 106–7. This would date his biography to the middle of the twelfth century. But as Tāranātha himself has already pointed out, for example, on p. 95, this work contains several narratives that render its dating [and historical authenticity] problematic and I hope to return to this question on a future occasion. For this biography, see further H. Decler, "The Melodious Drumsound All – Persuading. Sacred Biography of Rwa Lotsāwa: about early Lotsāwa *rnam thar* and *chos 'byung*," *Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, vol. 1, ed. Sh. Ihara and Z. Yamaguchi (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), 13–28.

④ *Rwa lo tsā ba'i rnam thar*, *Mtsho sngon zhing chen mi rigs chos lugs las don u yon lhan khang gi grangs nyung mi rigs gna' dpe gzhung las khang* (Xining: Mtsho sngon min rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989), 184 [*Mthu stobs dbang phyug rje btsun rwa lo tsā ba'i rnam par thar pa kun khyab snyan pa'i rnga sgra*, 1905 Yab gzhis Dge legs bde skyid rab brtan xylograph, 81b–2a].

*sems can mtha' yas pa'i don mdzad pa zhig byin te / phyis sku 'das nas spur sbyong
ba'i tshe / sha khrag gi gsur gzhib med par thams cad 'od du yal nas me lce las 'ja'
tshon 'byung ba sogs ya mtshan du ma byung ngo //*

At that time, a learned physician called G. yu thog Dar po said: "My G. yu thog Yon tan mgon po is one who has rained a *ru ra*^① here^②. Since you, too, seem to be one who, having requested teachings from many Indian and Kathmandu Valley teachers, has attained spiritual realization, today you need to demonstrate an indication of having spiritual attainments." The Lama considered this and since he rained for seven days turquoise, coral, and beans, all the people of the market place were suddenly seized with faith and piled up offerings like a mountain. Since an inconceivable number of religious practitioners had come, the physician, too, was of great faith. And when the occasion arose to request instructions after having extensively made offerings of brick tea, a coat of mail for a horse, satin, etc., it was because the Lama had given him empowerments and teachings that he attained the highest spiritual realization and witnessed a co-emergent gnosis without obscuration. G. yu thog acted for the benefit of each and every sentient being using medicine and religion, and later, when he was cremated upon his passing, there were many marvelous signs such as a rainbow emerging from the tongue of the flame after everything had shrunk into light without the odor of seared flesh and blood.

This little vignette provides further circumstantial evidence that G. yu thog's life may very well have coincided with the turn of the twelfth century, and, indeed, that it may have been written after G. yu thog had passed away, that is, after he had obtained rainbow-body ('*ja' lus*).

Famously, the author of the *Rgyud bzhi* indirectly describes the multiplicity of other medical traditions on which he drew for his work at the end of the twenty-sixth chapter of *Book Four*. He mentions those that hailed from India, China, and Dol po. Thus, Za hor and U rgyan do not figure among them. Commenting on this passage, such later writers as Dar mo Sman

① This is the Black or Chebula Myrobalan, the botanical name for which is *Terminalia chebula* Retz. There is little use in suggesting that *arura* is here used as the name of the fruit of the tree rather than that of the tree itself! For *arura* and the parts of this plant that are used as medicine, see B. Dash, "The Drug *Terminalia Chebula* in āyurveda and Tibetan Medicine", *Kailash* IV (1976), 5–20.

② The grammar of this sentence with a transitive use of an intransitive verb and an ergative construction is most interesting.

rams pa and Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705) add nothing more to this^①.

① See, respectively, his 1679 *Rgyud bzhi'i 'grel pa mes po'i zhal lung*, Smad cha, ed. Rdo rje rgyal po (Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1989), 762, and his 1690 *Bka' phreng mun sel sgron me*, Legs bshad gser gyi thur ma / *Bka' phreng mun sel sgron me*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 031 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005), 613, as well as the Sde srid's 1688 *Baidūr sngon po* [Sde dge xylograph], vol IV (Leh, 1981), 296 [= based on the Sde dge xylograph, ed. Blo bzang tshe ring and Dkar blo (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1982), 1377]. To be noted is that Lha rje Skyem pa Tshe dbang (1514–after ? 1571) does not comment on this passage in his *Rgyud bzhi'i rnam bshad*, ed. Rta mgrin rgyal (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2000). In fact, he does not comment at all on the last two chapters, chapters twenty–six and twenty–seven, of the last of *Rgyud bzhi*'s four books, the *Phyi ma rgyud*! Thus, contrary to the manuscript used by, for example, Byang bdag, it appears that the manuscript of the *Rgyud bzhi* that was at his disposal while writing his work did not have these chapters, since his commentary seamlessly transitions from chapter twenty–five of the *Phyi ma rgyud* to his concluding remarks and the colophon. To be sure, they do make their [re] appearance in the Grwa thang or Yar rgyab xylograph edition (*par ma*) of the *Rgyud bzhi*, the blocks for which were carved in 1546 under the supervision of Zur mkhar ba Blo gros rgyal po (1509–after 1572), alias A bo Chos rje II and Karma legs bshad 'tshol, who was recovering from an encounter with [? small] pox ('*brum nad*); see *Grwa thang rgyud bzhi*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 020 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005) and also the pertinent remarks in K. Schaeffer, “Textual Scholarship, Medical Tradition, and Mahāyāna Buddhist Ideals in Tibet”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 31 (2003), 625 ff. This was the very first time that a text of the *Rgyud bzhi* was committed to the printing block! For Lha rje Skyem pa, see Byams pa phrin las, *Gangs ljongs gso rig bstan pa'i nyin byed rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*, ed. Rta mgrin rdo rje (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2000), 220–2. His remarks can be supplemented [and corrected]. Byams pa phrin las writes that he lived in roughly the fifteenth century, suggesting that he wrote his commentary on the *Bshad rgyud* chapter of the *Rgyud bzhi* in the earth–pig year of the eighth sexagenary cycle, that is, in 1479. On occasion, we also read in the secondary literature that he was born in that year, and all this is in spite of the Sde srid's judgement that he was a contemporary of *inter alia* Zur mkhar ba, for which see his 1704 medical history, the *Dpal ldan gso ba rig pa'i khog 'bugs legs bshad baidūrya'i me long drang srong dgyes pa'i dga' ston* [*Āyurveda in Tibet*] {Sde dge xylograph} (Leh, 1970), 353 [= *Gso rig sman gyi khog 'bugs* [based on the Lha sa Zhol xylograph], ed. Blo bzang rgya mtsho (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982), 351; *Mirror of Beryl. A Historical Introduction to Tibetan Medicine*, tr. G. Kilty, *The Library of Tibetan Classics*, vol. 28, ed. Thupten Jinpa (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2010), 312]. This finds further support in Zur Mkhar ba's own published work; see, for example, his quite fascinating [*Tshe dbang brgya rtsa / Man ngag kun gyi snying bsdus /*] *Rdo ring mdzes byed*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 046 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2007), 203, 228–9. Of passing interest is that Zur mkhar ba's biography–cum–reverential petition of and to Zur mkhar ba A bo Chos rje I was requested by a certain Legs bshad kun snang from Skyem; see * *Drang srong chen po mnyam nyid rdo rje'i rnam thar gsol 'debs* in *Tshe dbang brgya rtsa / Man ngag kun gyi snying bsdus / Rdo ring mdzes byed*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, 313–8. Either this is an alternate name of Tshe dbang or this man may have been his relation, a student but in any event a contemporary. Born in Skyem, a place in Upper Kong po, and mainly active in Bla rta phan bde and Zeng so khang gsar, Lha rje Skyem pa's main teacher was Bla rta Lha rje Mi Dar bkra shis who, as we read in his *Rgyud bzhi'i rnam bshad*, ed. Rta mgrin rgyal, 23, belongs to the following line of transmission: ...Zur mkhar ba A bo Chos rje [I] – Phrag dbon/ dpon Bsod nams bkra shis – Bla rta Lha rje Mi Dar bkra shis [– “me”]. The dates of Zur mkhar ba A bo Chos rje I who is better known as Mnyam nyid rdo rje are 1445 to 83 or 1439 to 75, depending on whether one reads Lha rje Dge 'bum's study of his life that is included in his major collection of various medical instructions [and of several other physicians such as his disciple Phrag dbon/ dpon, another native of Kong po!], that is, *Dpal ldan zur mkhar ba'i rnam thar thar pa'i lam sgron*, *Man ngag bye ba'i ring srel bod chung rab 'byams gsal ba'i sgron me* [based on the Sde dge xylograph] ed. Gtsos Klu 'bum rgyal and 'Brug sgra (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1993), 671, 676, or his 1539 biography by Zur mkhar ba, for which see *Drang srong chen po mnyam nyid rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa 'gog pa med pa'i yi ge'i gtam chen po* in *Tshe dbang brgya rtsa / Man ngag kun gyi snying bsdus / Rdo ring mdzes byed*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, 278, 302. It should therefore be obvious that our Lha rje Skyem pa flourished in the sixteenth century. This means that we can now date his exegeses of each of the four books of the *Rgyud bzhi* as follows:

- I. *Rtsa rgyud* – 1538
- II. *Bshad rgyud* – 1538–9
- III. *Man ngag gi rgyud* – 1567, at the age of 53
- IV. *Phyi ma rgyud* – ? 1571

An incomplete manuscript of a series of his instructions, recipes, etc. was published in *Tshe dbang brgya rtsa / Man ngag kun gyi snying bsdus / Rdo ring mdzes byed*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 046 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2007), 5–118. Some of these instructions, etc. are his own, others are taken from elsewhere.

Be this as it may, Yang Ga has shown that, aside from the obvious borrowing from such Indian and Indic sources as Vāgbhata's *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṃhitā* and the anonymous *Sman dpyad zla ba'i rgyal po* [* *Somarāja*]^①, the *Rgyud bzhi* contains traces of the much earlier *Byang khog dmar byang gsal ba'i sgron me*, the *Bi ji po ti kha ser*, and directly or indirectly even of the Chinese medical classic, the *Huangdi neijing* 黄帝内经^②.

While it is undeniable that some important inroads are being made in the study of the various Tibetan medical traditions, whether in the Tibetan cultural area, China, and elsewhere, it can hardly be denied that the scientific study of their development and the various Tibetan works on *materia medica* has yet to begin in full force, for there is so much that is still quite unclear about their histories and bibliographies. The ambiguities surrounding G. yu thog Yon tan mgon po, the date of G. yu thog himself, and the compositional history of the *Rgyud bzhi* are but a few examples of the many quite fundamental issues that still await resolution, never mind the very substantial number of other basic bibliographic hurdles that confront us at almost every turn! Surveying in a very preliminary and superficial way the awesome wealth of rare source material that has been published in recent years one cannot help but be struck by the extraordinary large number of medical instructions in the form of diagnostics, therapeutics, the pre-paration of medicines, recipes, etc. that were handed down in a wide variety of sources both within and from without the Tibetan cultural area. Not a few of these instructions have short prologues or epilogues that describe in various degrees of detail their origin and at times list the names of those individuals who had been involved in their transmission. These often brief and to the uninitiated at times cryptic literary pieces form essential components of the complicated mosaic [s] that make up the story of the Tibetan medical traditions. And it is in these collections that we encounter sporadic references to Za hor.

Four such collections of short tracts are the so-called '*Bum khu tshur*, *Khu tshur 'bum*,

① This is the *Sman dpyad zla ba'i rgyal po* [based on the Sde dge xylograph], ed. Rdo rje rgyal po (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985); a Chinese translation is found in *Yue wang yaozhen* 月王药诊, tr. Ma Shilin 马世林, Wang Zhenhua 王振华, and Mao Jizhu 毛继祖 (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1993). This work was inspired by Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai [shan] and a * *Nāgārjuna* [garbha] and others had something to do with its composition. The text was purportedly translated by Hwa shang Mahāyāna and the Tibetan translator Vairocana during the reign of Khri srong lde btsan. Of interest is that, writing in the sixteenth century, the famous physician Zur mkhar ba states that they had nothing to do with it and that, instead, it was written by a Chinese medical scholar (*rgya nag gi sman pa mkhas pa*) and that its Tibetan translation is "faulty because of being quite infelicitous" (*shin tu mi legs pas nongs...*); see his *Sman pa rnams kyis mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2001), 207–8. Let it be said for the record that the *Sman dpyad zla ba'i rgyal po* is fully informed by the *tridoṣa* – three humor theory of Indo–Tibetan medicine, which is not found in traditional Chinese medical theory. But the consensus is that significant elements have their counterpart in Chinese medicine, so that this work's hybridity is beyond question. Of course, we now know that Indian or Indic *āyurveda* did exert some influence on the theory and practise of Chinese medicine, which was enabled through the translation of Indian or Indic Buddhist texts in which aspects of Indian *āyurveda* were mentioned or played a more or less significant role. The recent work of Chen Ming 陈明 has been quite instrumental in bringing this to the fore; see, for example, the collection of his essays in *Shufang yiyao. Chu wenshuyu xiyu yixue* 殊方异药. 出土文书与西域医学 [Remarkable Prescriptions and Unique Drugs. Unearthed Documents and Medical Science of the Western Regions] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2005).

② See also n. 22 of my paper that I cited above in n. 1 in the first page of this paper.

[*Snyan rgyud*] *Be'u bum nag po*, and *Yan lag brgyad pa'i khong nying 'bum khu tshur*; the first two titles and the last portion of the fourth, *'bum khu tshur*, can be freely rendered into English as *A Hundred Thousand [Instructions in a] Fist*^①. The first title seems to have been fairly popular, for there may have been as many as four different compendia that carried something like it^②. These four collections are not unproblematically attributed to a certain Skyes bu me lha, who is already foretold in the “biography” of G. yu thog the Old as a teacher of G. yu thog and Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po^③. His alias is said to have been Bha ro Phyag rdum or Bha ro Lag rdum – *phyag* is the honorific form of *lag* – and he allegedly flourished in the second half of the eleventh century^④. To be sure, the word *bha ro* is not Tibetan. It is possibly derived from the Nevārī word *bare*, which in turn seems to be a reflex of Sanskrit *vandya*, “venerable”^⑤. Or, more likely, *bha ro* (< *bhāro*) is a well-established title of sorts, one that was held by wealthy [Buddhist] Newar merchants of the Kathmandu Valley or members of their extended families. In fact, we also know of a Bha ro Phyag / Lag rdum who was a Newar teacher of Rwa Lo tsā ba and his co-translator of several texts on the practice of Yamāntaka and Vajrabhairava. In connection with him and his nickname, R. M. Davidson rightly pointed out that *lag rdum* (Skt. *kuṇḍa*) can not only mean a “deformed limb,” but can also refer to a special kind of ritual object, namely a fire-pit for *inter alia* the fire-*homa* offerings^⑥. Bha ro Phyag/Lag rdum is mentioned as Rwa Lo tsā ba's co-translator in the relevant translation-colophons (*'gyur byang*) of several canonical texts. However, in some of these, he is said to have been an Indian (*rgya gar*) *paṇḍita* and thus not a native of the Kathmandu Valley (*bal po*), and this throws a small wrench into the import of *bha ro*.^⑦ Noteworthy is that Rwa Lo tsā ba's embellished biography, never refers to him by this nickname, being evidently content to address him only as “Slob dpon Bha ro,” “Bla ma Bha ro,” or “Rje btsun Bha ro”^⑧. Newar

① This explanation is found in the *Khu tshur 'bum* in Bha ro Phyag rdum et al., *'Bum khu tshur, Khu tshur 'bum, Be'u bum nag po*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 034 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006), 225.

② See M. Taube, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medizinischen Literatur Tibets*, Monumenta Tibetica Historia, Abt. Scriptorum, Band 1 (Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1981), 62, n. 233.

③ See the *G. yu thog gsar rmying gi rnam thar*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, 76–7 [= Rechung Rinpoche, *Tibetan Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 190–1]. For Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po, see below.

④ See, for example, Byams pa phrin las, *Gangs ljongs gso rig bstan pa'i nyin byed rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgribs*, ed. Rta mgrin rdo rje, 121–4.

⑤ “A Note on the Newari Term *bare*,” *Indologica Taurenensia* 14 (1987–88), 265–8 [= Siegfried Lienhard, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. O. von Hinüber, Glaserapp-Stiftung, Band 44 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2007), 310–3].

⑥ R. M. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance. Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 134–6.

⑦ See, for example, *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei Edition*, vol. 17, ed. A. Barber (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1991), no. 467 [#468], 142/5 [Ja, 164a].

⑧ See, for example, *Rwa lo tsā ba'i rnam thar*, 60, 66, 85 [= *Mthu stobs dbang phyug rje btsun rwa lo tsā ba'i rnam par thar pa kun khyab snyan pa'i rnga sgra*, 28a, 30b, 37b]. See also Tāranātha, *Rgyud rgyal gshin rje gshed skor gyi chos 'byung rgyal ba yid ches ngo mtshar*, 85, 89, 92.

custom dictates that titles are placed behind the proper name, whereas it is the reverse in Tibet, where the title occurs immediately in front of the name. Hence, if anything, he would have been called Kuṇḍa Bhāro in the Kathmandu Valley. Modestly disclaiming any expertise in texts and practices other than those having to do with Rdo rje 'jigs byed [Vajrabhairava] and Rdo rje phag mo [Vajravārāhī], he told Rwa Lo tsā ba that it would not be very useful for him to accompany him to Tibet, and suggested that he should continue his journey to India proper to look for and find better suited informants.

I will examine the *Khu tshur 'bum* and the *Yan lag brgyad pa'i khong nying 'bum khu tshur* and their individual chapters or entries in the sequel to this paper. These two collections contain two short texts that were written by an unnamed king [or: kings] of Za hor, namely, the *Za hor rgyal po'i bcud sbyor* and the *Za hor gyi rgyal po'i bcud bzhi'i man ngag*, and this will provide an additional limiting context.^① Here, I propose to look a little more closely at the identity of Bha ro Phyag/Lag rdum to whom the core of the texts included in these much *later* compilations are attributed. Obviously, there is no question that individuals such as Phyag sman Rin chen nam rgyal of Mnga' ris, Shes rab seng ge and others played major roles in the compilation of these *Khu tshur* texts as they are presently constituted. Some interesting, albeit initial, [auto] biographical information about Bha ro Phyag/Lag rdum can be retrieved from the first chapter of the *Khu tshur 'bum* and the first and the twentieth chapter of the *Be'u bum nag po* or *Snyan brgyud be'u bum nag po*, yet another collection of instructions that is in part ascribed to him.^②

In the first chapter of the *Snyan brgyud be'u bum nag po*, we are informed that he was a wondrous reembodiment (*sprul sku*) – it is not related of whom – and that he was born in U rgyan as the son of a certain Dzi na mi tra [* Jinamitra]. Given that his physician father had a good Sanskrit name, one that it is identifiably Buddhist, we may venture to reconstruct the Tibetan translation of his son's name, Skyes bu me lha, as Puruṣāgnideva. But we should not lose sight of the fact that, if “Puruṣāgnideva” were ever a personal name, it would be a very peculiar name indeed! This same chapter states furthermore that his grandfather (*mes po*) had the equally curious name of U pa de sha [* Upadeśa] and that his great-grandfather (*yang mes*) was [a] Shantigarbha [* Śāntigarbha]. Now Śāntigarbha is of course hardly an uncommon name. In his large study of the Indian origins of the *yoga-tantra*-literature, and ritual practices of 1342, Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364) notes one scholar called Śāntigarbha who was

① For these, see *Yan lag brgyad pa'i khong nying 'bum khu tshur*, ed. 'Brug mo skyid and Rdo rje rin chen (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), 165–9, 173–6, and for only the second, Bha ro Phyag rdum et al., *'Bum khu tshur, Khu tshur 'bum, Be'u bum nag po*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, 377–9. Zur mkhar ba merely notes a *Log gnon*, *Surpressing the Gone Awry*, by a King of Za hor in his history of Tibetan medicine, for which see *Sman pa rnams kyis mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 254. But that is all.

② For what follows, see Bha ro Phyag rdum et al., *'Bum khu tshur, Khu tshur 'bum, Be'u bum nag po*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, 224–5, and 569–71, 625; see also the relevant passages in *Snyan brgyud be bum nag po dang Man ngag rin chen gter mdzod, Bod kyi gso rig dpe rnying phyogs sgrigs gangs ri dkar po'i phreng ba*, ed. Khro ru Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, vol. 11 (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), 1–3, 66.

active in Tibet during the second half of the eighth century and another Śāntigarbha who, with Smṛtijñānakīrti (ca. 960 – ca. 1030), was apparently a co-disciple of a certain Deveśvara^①. The first may very well have been the physician-cum-herbalist to whom we partly owe the first translation of an as yet unidentified Indian work of *materia medica*, that is, *dravyaguṇaśāstra* – the “Tibskrit” title of this piece is given at the outset: *Tsa sha pe du shi na ra sa dzha sa ra up pa ni spar ta na* (sic!)^②. Right or wrong, we know with relative certainty that by the twelfth or early thirteenth century the Tibetan medical tradition identified a Jinamitra from U rgyan as one of its manifold sources of inspiration. Che rje Zhang ston Zhig po Thugs rje khri ’od

① Both are respectively noted in *Rnal ’byor rgyud kyi rgya mtshor ’jug pa’i gru gziugs*, *The Collected Works of Bu ston*, part 11 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), 178–9, 135. The second one may be identical to the co-translator, with ’Gos Lo tsā ba [Khug pa Lhas btsas] Bsod nams rtse mo (11th c.), of the * *Caturabhiśekha prakaraṇa*, a little work that is attributed to [a] Nāgārjuna.

② Titled *Gso dpyad sngo sna tshogs kyi man ngag rin po che’i ’khrungs dpe bstan pa* – when referring to this work, later sources often abbreviate this title by *Rin chen ’khrungs dpe* – the entire text was recently reprinted in *Gso rig sman gyi ro nus ngos ’dzin gsal ston phyogs sgrig rin chen sgron me*, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib ’jug khang, Mes po’i shul bzhang, vol. 2 (Beijing: Krung go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007), 73–208. It was allegedly translated from the Sanskrit by a śāntigarbha together with [the] seven imperial physicians (*bla sman*); for the more common grouping of nine *bla sman*, see Taube, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medizinischen Literatur Tibets*, 15–7. Moreover, this work was ostensibly extracted from a much larger, purported Indic treatise, the *Gso dpyad rin chen ’khrungs dpe bstan pa*, with one hundred and twenty chapters, but it is otherwise unknown to the world of Indic medicine. Needless to say, and not unlike all the major Tibetan medical [and pharmacological] treatises, its textual history urgently needs to be examined. In doing so, the native Tibetan *materia medica* texts in which it is copiously cited will be of considerable utility, as will be the translations of other early cognate texts that are likewise of obscure provenance, namely, the *Jam dpal gyi sngo ’bum gsal ba’i sgron me* and the *Khrungs dpe g. yu yi phreng ba*, on which see *Gso rig sman gyi ro nus ngos ’dzin gsal ston phyogs sgrig rin chen sgron me*, 1–23, 24–74. Of interest is that the *Rin chen ’khrungs dpe* contains several references to *bod yul*, “Tibet,” on, for example, pp. 73 and 116. This is curious inasmuch as Indic treatises usually do not refer to Tibet by a phrase that could ostensibly have read something like * *bhoṭadeśa*.

It is also not entirely expected that a translation from Sanskrit to Tibetan would contain an explicit notice of a Tibetan translation of a technical term like the ones in the entries on pp. 81–2 and 116 anent “*a dza na* which removes ocular disease” and *ga bra ba*. Dga’ ba’i rdo rje, *Khrungs dpe dri med shel gyi me long*, ed. ’Jam dga’ (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1995), 270, 301–2, identifies *a dza na* [or *zhim thig le*] with *Lagopsis supina* (Stephan) and *ga bra ba* with *Rumex crispus* Linn. On the other hand, the *Bdud rtsi sman gyi ’khrungs dpe legs bshad nor bu’i phreng ba*, ed. Karma chos ’phel (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1993), 374–5, 220–1, identifies *a dza na* with *Plectranthus irroratus* Forrest ex Diels and *ga bra ba* [or: *ga bra ma*] with *Rumex acetosa* Linn. and *Oxyria digyna* (Linn.) Hill. With its plethora of names for one and the same plant, the identification of plant names of the Indo-Tibetan *materia medica* with actual plants, shrubs, etc. and their botanical names is a very complicated affair, as was demonstrated in an exemplary fashion for Indian *āyurveda* in G. J. Meulenbeld, *The Mādhavanidāna and Its Chief Commentary, Chapters 1–10* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 520–611, and in his essay in R. P. Das, *Das Wissen von der Lebensspanne der Bäume. Surapālas Vṛkṣāyurveda*, *Alt-und Neu-Indische Studien* 34 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1988), 425–65. For a preliminary assessment of the strategies employed in the Tibetan *materia medica* towards the identification of plants, see now also A. Boesi, “Plant categories and Types in Tibetan *materia medica*,” *The Tibet Journal* 30/31 (2005), 67–92, and the additional references mentioned therein, including his forthcoming and much anticipated *Materia Medica Tibetana*. Lastly, the two handwritten, but incomplete manuscripts of this alleged translation by śāntigarbha that were published in India contain a number of significant variant readings that suggest that the manuscript of the full text is also not without its problems.

made such a proposal in his 1204 [or 1264] history of Indo-Tibetan and Tibetan medicine^①. Were Jinamitra's grandfather the same as the first *sāntigarbha*, then it obviously follows that

① See D. Martin, "Greek and Islamic Medicines' Historical Contact with Tibet. A Reassessment in View of Recently Available and Relatively Early Sources on Tibetan Medical Eclecticism"; I thank him for graciously sending me a copy of a draft of his essay that he first presented during the Islam and Tibet Conference, November 18, 2006, at the now besieged Warburg Institute in London. It is now forthcoming in *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, ed. A. Akasov, Ch. Burnett, and R. Yoeili-Tlalim (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). *Che rje* figures only briefly in Taube, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medizinischen Literatur Tibets*, 65, n. 243, but he does not have his own entry in Byams pa phrin las' biographical dictionary of the history of Tibetan medicine that I cited above in n. ① in page 26. The title *che rje* appears to have been the province of those who traced their knowledge of medicine to Lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang po (958–1055). A certain physician with the name Dpal mgon is mentioned in Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan's circa 1420 *Brang ti lha rje'i rim brgyud kyi man ngag gser bre chen mo*, *Dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gsung rab*, vol. 9, Gso rig, ed. Mkhan po Kun dga' bzang po (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang - Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), 225. His name is there prefixed by *bi ci che rje* - here *bi ci* (< Manichean Sogdian βyc < Sanskrit *uidya* < Prakrit *vejja*), for which see N. Sims-Williams, "Indian Elements in Parthian and Sogdian," *Sprachen des Buddhismus in Zentralasien*, ed. K. Röhrborn and W. Veenker (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 137. This suggests that he was part of a line of physicians who traced their origin to Tsan Bashilaha. He apparently arrived in Tibet sometime during the eighth century from Khrom, an area to the west of the Indus river. I tentatively follow Martin's suggestion in reading his name as Tsan Bashilaha - he also proposes to see "Basileos" in "Bashilaha" -, but it must be pointed out that, perhaps uniquely, Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–92) refers to him as Bla sman pa Myang Tsan Ba shi la, thereby perhaps implying that (a) he was a court physician (*bla sman pa*) under Emperor Khri srong lde btsan and (b) that he was a Tibetan from the Myang valley!; see the *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*, ed. Nyan shul Mkhyen rab 'od gsal, *Gangs can rigs mdzod* 5 (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1988), 337 (= R. O. Meisezahl, ed., *Die große Geschichte des tibetischen Buddhismus nach alter Tradition. Rnying ma'i chos 'byung chen mo* (Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1985), Tafel 244/3 [*bla sman btsan...*]; *Manuscript "A"* (Paro, 1979), 539 [*bla sman pa myang tsan...*]; *Manuscript "B"* (Paro, 1979), 394 [*bla sman pa myang tsan*]). He is no doubt the same as Bla sman Nyang Btsan pa who is mentioned in an identical context in the *Zangs gling ma* biography of Padmasambhava (8th c.) that Nyang ral had recovered earlier; see (?) Ye shes mtsho rgyal, *Slob dpon padma'i rnam thar zangs gling ma*, ed. Thub bstan nyi ma (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989) 111 [= *The Lotus-Born. The Life Story of Padmasambhava*, tr. E. Pema Kunsang (Boston: Shambhala, 1993), 120]. He appears transmuted as the translator (*lo tsā ba*) *bi rje* (< *bi ci*) Btsan pa shi la in U rgyan gling pa's (1323–?) 1352 *Padma bka' thang* [based on the Sde dge blockprint] (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988), 499 [= *Le dict de Padma. Padma Thang yig*, tr. G. Ch. Toussaint (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1933), 336], - as well as in Sangs rgyas gling pa's (1340–96) cognate *Orgyan gu ru padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar rgyas pa gser gyi phreng ba thar lam gsal byed*, ed. Don grub phun tshogs (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2007), 328; Lo tsā ba Bi rje Btsan po shi la. Skyem pa Tshe dbang, *Tshe dbang brgya rtsa* [*Man ngag kun gyi snying bsdus / Rdo ring mdzes byed*], ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, 73–7, is a little *gter ma*—treasure text that was allegedly hidden by Bla sman Tsan pa shi la and that was later excavated by Nyang ral. A manuscript of the undated history of Tibet's medical traditions by U rgyan gling pa's contemporary Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed, the *Bdud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad* [*pa*] *gsang pa man ngag gis* (sic) *rgyud kyi spyi don shes bya rab gsal rgyas pa, dbu med* manuscript in forty-eight folios, Chinese Nationalities Library, Cultural Palace of Nationalities, Beijing, catalog no. 002291 (4), 27a–b, notes a physician from Khrom by the name of Tsam pa shi la ha, and has it that the *bi ci* tradition [? and family] derives from him. Moreover, he relates that he was of royal descent and had come to Tibet during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po (d. 649). Zur mkhar ba has very different takes on him in his history of Tibet's medical traditions. Thus, in his *Sman pa rnams kyi mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 284, 289–92, he first cites a *Thang yig chen mo* study of Padmasambhava's life in which he is identified as a Tibetan, and then proceeds to affirm that he hailed from Khrom, etc. Much of what we find there is then repeated in Byams pa phrin las, *Gangs ljongs gso rig bstan pa'i nyin byed rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*, 51–3. The quite early Tibetan medical text of the *Bi jo po ti kha ser* in *Sman dpyad zla ba'i rgyal po / Bi ji po ti kha ser*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 033 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006), 331–459 [= *Bi ci'i pu ti kha ser*, ed. Don grub phun tshogs et al. (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang,

Skyes bu me lha, or whatever his name may have been, could not have flourished much beyond the tenth century. Clearly, this requires further research.

This problem is happily ignored in such later histories of medicine by, for example, Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed^① and Zur mkhar ba—only the latter has been published on the basis of

2005)] is associated with him. Bi ci Che rje Dpal mgon was one of the teachers of Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed's teachers, meaning that his medical expertise should be placed in the traditions of Tsan Bashilaha and Lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang po. As I argue below, this Brang ti flourished in *circa* 1310–80, so that Dpal mgon must have lived in the second half of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century. Lastly, the title of Che rje's work contains the term *khog dbubs*. Although the deployment of this term found particular favor with writers on the history of medicine who liberally used it in their titles – see, for example, *Sman pa rnams kyis mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 251–2—, it is already attested in titles of late eleventh and early twelfth century works that actually have nothing to do with medicine; witness for example those of several writings attributed to Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (11th c). An early explanation of this expression in different hermeneutic contexts is found in the *Khog dbug khyung chen sding ba* that is ascribed to the G. yu thog; see *Yuthok's Treatise on Tibetan Medicine*, ed. L. Chandra, 5 [= *Cha lag bco brgyad*, Stod cha, ed. Blo bzang et al., 4]. The concluding portion of one of Sum pa [or: Sum ston] Ye shes gzung [s]' commentaries on the *Bshad rgyud* chapter of the *Rgyud bzhi* already attributes a compendium called the *Cha lag bco brgyad* to his teacher G. yu thog; see his *'Bum chung gsal sgron*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 017 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005), 371. But this may have been a later editorial remark and not Sum pa's. In fact, this work is included in the *Cha lag bco brgyad*; see *Yuthok's Treatise on Tibetan Medicine*, ed. L. Chandra, 85–166 [= *Cha lag bco brgyad*, Stod cha, ed. Blo bzang et al., 158–312]. Needless to say, the authorship of several of the eighteen texts in the collection that is now referred to as the *Cha lag bco brgyad* is disputed. For example, Taube, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medizinischen Literatur Tibets*, 40–2, pointed out that many later Tibetan scholars had argued that the *Khog dbug khyung chen sding ba* was not written by him. Similarly, S. R. Karmay, "The Four Tibetan Medical Treatises and their Critics," *The Arrow and the Spindle. Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet* (Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998), 231, n. 19, concluded that "it is certainly not a work by him," because the text quotes the *Brgyud pa'i rnam thar med thabs med pa* by Sum pa/ston. Itself part of the *Cha lag bco brgyad*—see *Yuthok's Treatise on Tibetan Medicine*, ed. L. Chandra, 331–4 [= *Cha lag bco brgyad*, Smad cha, ed. Blo bzang et al. (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1998), 690–6]—the *Brgyud pa'i rnam thar med thabs med pa* is not quoted by title in the *Khog dbug khyung chen sding ba*. In fact, the only title that comes close to it is the *Rnam thar bka' rgya can* concerning which Karmay, "The Four Tibetan Medical Treatises and their Critics," 229, n. 5, himself wrote that the *Brgyud pa'i rnam thar med thabs med pa* and the *Sku lnga lhun grub ma* are sometimes referred to as the *Rnam thar bka' rgya can*. Two other works of G. yu thog were recently published, namely, a piece anent the *Man ngag gi rgyud* chapter of the *Rgyud bzhi*, the *Bu don ma*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 012 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005), and the summary-cum-study of the *Aṣṭ āṅgahr̥ dayasaṃhitā*, the *Yan lag brgyad pa'i gzhung las bsdus pa nor bu'i 'phreng ba*, ed. Padma tshul khriims, *Bod kyi gso rig dpe mnying phyogs sgrig gangs ri dkar po'i phreng ba*, vol. 9 (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003).

① Byams pa phrin las, *Gangs ljongs gso rig bstan pa'i nyin byed rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*, 177–9, does not offer an approximate date for him, but the recently published lexicon of Tibetan medicine, the *Bod lugs gso rig tshig mdzod chen mo*, ed. Dgra 'dul et al. (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006), 566, places him towards the end of the thirteenth century. I believe this is too early and that his dates need to be pushed forward to *circa* 1330–1400. Brang ti, *Bdud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad* [pa] *gsang pa man ngag gis (sic) rgyud kyi spyi don shes bya rab gsal rgyas pa*, 26b, 40a, gives us several fundamental clues. He mentions there *inter alia* the writings of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1307) and Dar ma rgyal mtshan (1227–1305), alias Bcom ldan [rigs pa'i] ral gri. Writing about his own line of transmission and his teachers, he notes that he had studied Gnas drug pa Blo gros mtshungs med's glosses on the *Aṣṭ āṅgahr̥ dayasaṃhitā* with them. This Gnas drug pa was an important Sa skya scholar – *gnas drug* is the name of a "minor" residence of Sa skya monastery – , who flourished around the middle of the fourteenth century. For example, he is mentioned as a petitioner of, and a scribe for, several of Bla ma dam pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan's (1312–75) writings of 1338–41; see my "Fourteenth Century Tibetan Cultural History III: The oeuvre of Bla ma dam pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375), Part One," *Berliner Indologische Studien* 7 (1993), 127–8, 141, 142. There, I identified Gnas drug as a place-name in Khams, which now needs to be modified accordingly. See further below.

a single and somewhat incomplete manuscript [a short piece of the end is missing]. In Brang ti's work we learn that a certain Me lha phyag rdum from Uḍḍiyāna flourished during the reign of Rtse lde, of whom we know that he ruled over Gu ge from 1057 to circa 1090^①. Me lha phyag rdum had come to Tibet and must have acquired an excellent knowledge of Classical Tibetan, for it is also said that he was responsible for a good number of translations of medical texts, namely, the so-called Five Sutras (*mdo lnga*) written by a Nāgārjuna^②, the 'Khrug [s] bcos sprin bral zla zer, the *Bdud rtsi ku mu da spyi don bzhi le'u bco lnga pa*, his own father's collection of instructions called the *Gso ba stong dgu bcu rtsa gcig*, etc., thereby becoming the fountain head of an important Tibetan medical tradition in his own right. Zur mkhar ba's narrative is essentially the same as Brang ti's except that he simply calls the physician from Uḍḍiyāna, Phyag rdum^③—rdum is occasionally written as ldum, but this is an unproblematic variant, since these are homophones. It may of course very well turn out to be premature to argue that the names "Skyes bu me lha" and "Bha ro Phyag/Lag rdum" are here contracted into "Me lha Phyag rdum," which, incidentally, is the same name as that of an individual who occurs, as we have seen, in a prophecy about G. yu thog in the "biography" of the G. yu thog the Old. To be sure, the assertion made in this prophecy that Me lha Phyag ldum, Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po, and G. yu thog were contemporaries is at least quite incorrect as far as Brang ti is concerned. According to Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan's *Brang ti lha rje'i rim brgyud kyi man ngag gser*

① *Bdud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad* [pa] gsang pa man ngag gis (sic!) rgyud kyi spyi don shes bya rab gsal rgyas pa, 32a. For Rtse lde, see R. Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu. ge Pu. hrang According to the Mnga' ris rgyal rabs by Gu ge Mkhan chen Ngag dbang grags pa* (Dharamsala: Tho ling gtsug lag khang lo gcig stong 'khor ba'i rjes dran mdzad sgo'i go sgrig tshogs chung, 1996), 294–346.

② Forming a complete system of medicine, the *Khog dbug khyung chen lding ba*, Yuthok's *Treatise on Tibetan Medicine*, ed. L. Chandra, 12 [= *Cha lag bco brgyad*, Stod cha, ed. Blo bzang et al., 20] has the *Mdo lnga* comprise the following: [1] *Reg pa rtsa'i mdo*, [2] *'Tsho ba zas kyi mdo*, [3] *Sbyor ba sman gyi mdo*, [4] *Gtar sreg dpyad kyi mdo*, and [5] *Rma chas bzo'i mdo*. Several Tibetan medical texts that are purported translations from the Sanskrit are attributed to a Nāgārjuna. One of these is the *Mdor bsdus gsang tig sgron ma*, a summary of the *Phung po lnga'i nad sel bdud rtsi'i sman rin chen gsang ba'i tik* (sic), for which see *Dpal mgon klu sgrub kyi mdor bsus gsang tig sgron ma*, ed. Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, *Bod kyi gso rig dpe rnying phyogs sgrig gangs ri dkar po'i phreng ba*, vol. 10 (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004). Other ones in which a Nāgārjuna plays an important role are the first two texts that are reproduced in *Klu rgyal 'jog po dang dge slong chen po'i zhus lan*, ed. Dbyangs can lha mo, *Bod kyi gso rig dpe rnying phyogs sgrig gangs ri dkar po'i phreng ba*, vol. 13 (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005), 1–298. Of significance are also the various instructions attributed to him in Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan, *Sa skya sman grong pa'i man ngag dngul bre ma*, ed. Rkang btsugs (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2005). For a rather exhaustive listing of additional āyurvedic writings attributed to Nāgārjuna [s], see now G. J. Meulenbeld, *A History of Indian Medical Literature*, vol. IA (Groningen: E. Forsten, 1999), 363–8. For recent accounts of "his" Lives, see R. J. Corless, "The Chinese Life of Nāgārjuna," *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. D. S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 525–31, and R. A. Ray, "Nāgārjuna's Longevity," *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. J. Schober (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 129–59. A Nāgārjuna also figures in the history of Chinese medicine, for which see V. Deshpande, "Nāgārjuna and Chinese Medicine," *Studia Asiatica. International Journal of Asian Studies* IV–V (2003–4), 243–59 – I thank my student N. Koehle for this reference.

③ *Sman pa rnam kyis mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 263–4.

bre chen mo, Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po was a teacher of Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed and Dpal ldan 'tsho byed was in turn a teacher of Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan^①. Combining the information given in the histories of Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed and Zur mkhar ba, we arrive at the following line of transmission for these men^②:

G. yu thog 'Bum seng - 'Bal sman Nyi ma dpal—G. yu thog 'Jam dpal [and Brang ti Bsod nams 'bum] - the latter's son Brang ti 'Jam dpal bzang po, alias Brang ti theng / 'theng po - his son Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po, alias Brang ti Shing rkang - Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed

G. yu thog 'Bum seng was G. yu thog's son; G. yu thog the Old's "biography" foretells that he would be reborn as Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po^③ and Zur mkhar ba suggests that Brang ti 'Jam dpal bzang po was a junior contemporary of Karma pa II. If there be any truth to this, then we may calculate Brang ti 'Jam dpal bzang po's dates to have been *circa* 1250–1320. He, together with a G. yu thog 'Tsho byed and Bi ji Jo bo Dpal mgon, trained Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po in the art of healing. Phag ston Shākya mgon po and Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po were the main teachers of Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed, who was Rgyal ba bzang po's younger brother^④. We also learn from Zur mkhar ba that Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan was Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed's nephew (*sku tsha*). This might mean that he was Rgyal ba bzang po's son. But we must be careful here. None of the various lineages of transmission contained in a good number of the medical instructions in *Brang ti lha rje'i man ngag gter mdzod rin po che gser bre ma* or the *Sa skya sman grong ba'i man ngag thun mong ma yin pa dngul bre chen mo* that are attributed to Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan state with any degree of explicitness that Dpal ldan 'tsho byed was Rgyal ba bzang po's younger brother or that Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan was Dpal ldan 'tsho byed's

① *Brang ti lha rje'i rim brgyud kyi man ngag gser bre chen mo*, 36–7, 46, etc. Also titled *Man ngag rin chen nor bu rin chen*, the latter compiled his work in the Nyi thog sman grong seminary of Sa skya monastery. An incomplete manuscript with the same title, but only in small part with the same text, was published by Tsering Paljor Emchi as the *Gser bre chen mo* (Leh, 1975).

② *Bdud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad [pa] gsang pa man ngag gis (sic) rgyud kyi spyi don shes bya rab gsal rgyas pa*, 38b–40a, and the *Sman pa rnams kyis mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 307.

③ Rechung Rinpoche, *Tibetan Medicine*, 317. The passage in which this occurs is absent from *G. yu thog gsar rnying gi rnam thar*, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, where it ought to begin on p. 288. It is also absent from the earlier edition, also based on the Lhasa xylograph, in *G. yu thog gsar rnying gi rnam thar*, ed. Dbang 'dus (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982), 298.

④ *Bdud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad [pa] gsang pa man ngag gis (sic) rgyud kyi spyi don shes bya rab gsal rgyas pa*, 40a, where Rgyal ba bzang po is said to be his "elder brother" (*gcen po*).

nephew^①. Again, neither of these collections are dated – they, too, deserve to be studied separately and in their own right—and, as is hardly surprising, we do learn from several of the instructions they contain that Brang ti 'Jam dpal bzang po had also taught Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed^②. But some of the lineages along which certain therapies, recipes, and treatments, etc. were transmitted are indeed potentially more informative. For example, the chapter with the metaphorical title *Drying Sulphur's Abscess* (*mu zi'i rnag skems*) in both the *Gser bre* and the *Gser bre chen mo* contains one that runs as follows^③:

the Chinese abbot Hwa shang Ma ha ya na (ca. 780) ... Lha rgyud sman pa Dharma dza la (* Chos 'bar) – Gnyal pa Yon btsun – Myang [or: Nyang] sman Ston mkhris [? –] Lho brag pa – Chos rje U lang – [? his son] Zla ba – [? his son] Zho nag – [? his son] Shākya dpal lo [or: le] – Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po – Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed—Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan

① See the *Gser bre* [*Brang ti lha rje'i man ngag gter mdzod rin po che gser bre ma*] *Dngul bre* [*Sa skya sman grong ba'i man ngag thun mong ma yin pa dngul bre chen mo*], ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 006 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005), 1–85, 86–303. Zur mkhar ba gives the following list of the uninterrupted post-Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan transmission of medical know-how within the Brang ti family: Dpal ldan blo gros – Kun dga' bzang po – Dpal 'byor rgya [1] mtshan – Rdo rje dpal bzang – Chos rgyal bkra shis – Kun dga' don grub; see the *Sman pa rnams kyis mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 307–8. On the other hand, the Sde srid cites the *Gser bre chung ba's* chapter on treating accumulations of serous fluid/dropsy (*dmu chu*) in his *Dpal ldan gso ba rig pa'i khog 'bugs legs bshad baid ūrya'i me long drang srong dgyes pa'i dga' ston*, 299 [= *Gso rig sman gyi khog 'bugs*, ed. Blo bzang rgya mtsho, 295; *Mirror of Beryl. A Historical Introduction to Tibetan Medicine*, tr. G. Kilty, 263]. But he omits Dpal ldan blo gros, has a Stag la dpal follow Kun dga' bzang po, and omits Dpal 'byor rgyal mtshan. Further, he has Dpal 'byor don grub follow Rdo rje dpal bzang and states that Dpal mgon rdo rje and Chos rgyal bkra shis were “leaders” (*zhal ngo*) of the Brang ti family. This is reiterated in De'u dmar Bstan 'dzin phun tshogs' (1673–?) equally derivative *Gso ba rig pa'i chos 'byung rnam thar rgya mtsho'i rba rlabs drang srong dgyes pa'i 'dzum phreng*, *De'u dmar gso rig gces btus*, Smad cha, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, Arura 044 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2007), 1140–1]. For De'u [or: Dil] dmar, see D. P. Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting. The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), 44–5, 62. The secondary literature vacillates between dating the year of his birth to 1665, 1672 or 1725, and Jackson wryly finds the first to be “more likely.” My dating of the year in which he was born, 1673, is based on the information provided by the colophon of his *Sangs rgyas sman bla'i zhing khamts lta na sdug gi gsol 'debs sangs rgyas myur 'grub* where it is stated that he was twelve [= eleven] years old in the wood-rat year [= 1684] and the colophon of his *Pu ri skra bcing gi sngags chog dug 'dzoms spyi'i rgyal po* states that he composed it in the fire-sheep year of the twelfth sexagenary cycle, that is, in 1727. For these, see *De'u dmar gso rig gces btus*, Stod cha, ed. Mtsho sngon zhing chen bod kyi gso rig zhib 'jug khang, 35, 498]. Chinese Nationalities Library, Cultural Palace of Nationalities, Beijing, catalog no. 005069 (34) is a seven-*folio*, *dbu med* manuscript of a list of medical texts titled *Gso ba rig pa'i rgyud gzhung 'grel tshogs man ngag bcas kyi dkar chag* that a certain De wa [= Deva = Tib. Lha] had put together at De'u dmar's request.

② *Gser bre*, 3.

③ *Gser bre*, 48, and *Brang ti lha rje'i rim brgyud kyi man ngag gser bre chen mo*, 79–80. The editors of the first suggest that we read: *nyang sman stod khri* for *myang sman ston mkhris*. The manuscript of the latter has *myang ban ston khri lho pa*, where *ban* (< *ban de* [or: *dhe*] < *vandya*) instead of *sman* is more convincing. It appears we have to separate Myang ban from Lho [brag] pa. It should furthermore be noted that the manuscript of the latter is incomplete, for which see, for example, the glosses on pp. 107–8, 121,

As said, the *Gser bre* and the *Dngul bre che mo* are generally attributed to Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan. Alas, this too is hardly unproblematic. For one, Zur mkhar ba only mentions the *Gser bre* and *Dngul bre* [and not the *Dngul bre chen mo*], and states that they belong to the Sa skya Sman grong pa, that is, the person associated with Sa skya's Sman grong, "medical village," a not very helpful but nonetheless telling attribution^①. For another, the *Dngul bre* has the following lineage of transmission for the *Dngul chu 'dul ba'i sngags dang 'dul thabs*, *A Means for Pacifying and a Mantra for Pacifying Mercury*: Paṇḍita Ngags kyi rin chen [= Vanaratna] (1384–1468) – Byang pa Lha rje – Chos rgyal Chos rje – me, which means that this particular instruction most probably did not enter Tibet until 1426 at the earliest – this coincides with Vanaratna's first visit^②—and was most likely not included in a *Dngul bre* manuscript until around 1500! To be sure, Zur mkhar ba was quite familiar with Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan, but evidently, and this is hardly insignificant, he chose not to ascribe these two compilations to him. On the other hand, the Sde srid has it that, aside from having written a commentary on the first book of the *Rgyud bzhi*, Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan also compiled a series of medical instructions (*man ngag*) that had been handed down in his family^③. The result of this effort was the *Man ngag gser bre*. The Sde srid then cites from the aforementioned chapter on serous fluids/dropsy of the *Gser bre chung ba*, the *Small Gser bre*, without mentioning anything about its authorship, and writes that Brang ti Dpal 'byor don grub compiled a small text on the basis of what he calls the *Gser bre che ba*, the *Large Gser bre*, which he handed to his [unnamed] son. Finally, it was this son who compiled the *Man ngag dngul bre*. Neither the published texts of the *Gser bre* [*Gser bre chung ba*], *Gser bre chen mo* nor the *Dngul bre* have colophons in which their authors and/or compilers are identified. It may be that the compilation that was published as the *Gser bre chen mo* was originally called *Man ngag rin chen nor bu*, for the [so far] anonymous author—compiler suggests this title in the colophon, where he also informs his reader that he wrote it in the two-storied "medical village" seminary (*nyi thog sman grong gi grwa tshang*) of Sa skya. Was this seminary one of the first hospitals or "medical colleges" in the Tibetan world? While we are not given a specific date for the compilation of the *Gser bre chen mo*, the author reproduces several short texts that are dated. One of these is a tract on the treatment of tumors (*'bras zlum*) at the end of which we learn that a certain 'Tsho byed Shākya tha na (? = nā tha = mgon po) had written at Klu lung monastery in the iron—male—dog year, that is, in ? 1370 or ? 1430, at the behest of a certain Sngags 'chang Prdznyā spun

① *Sman pa rnams kyis mi shes su mi rung ba'i shes bya spyi'i khog dbubs*, ed. Gzhon nu nyi ma and Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 309.

② See F. K. Ehrhard, "Spiritual Relationships between Rulers and Preceptors: The Three Journeys of Vanaratna (1384–1468) to Tibet," *The Relationship between Religion and State (chos srid zung 'brel) in Traditional Tibet*, ed. C. Cüppers (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2004), 248 ff.

③ *Dpal ldan gso ba rig pa'i khog 'bugs legs bshad baidūrya'i me long drang srong dgyes pa'i dga' ston*, 299–300 [= *Gso rig sman gyi khog 'bugs*, ed. Blo bzang rgya mtsho, 294–5; *Mirror of Beryl. A Historical Introduction to Tibetan Medicine*, tr. G. Kilty, 263–4].

(* Shes rab)^①.

Combining Rgya rog O rgyan Rang byung rdo rje's and G. yu thog's instructions together with the *Bdud rtsi snying po me lce 'khor lo*, *Elixir's Essence: Circle of Tongues of Flame*, etc., the a scholar of the five domains of knowledge, Chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, wrote the *Bdud rtsi 'od zer*, *Elixir's Radiant Light*, a little work on the treatment of a certain kind of poison, in the year *rnam rgyal* (* vijaya)^②. He had been requested to do so by 'Tsho byed Shākya mgon and the monk 'Phags pa rgyal mtshan, and this little work was then edited by the personal physician (*bla sman pa*) Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po of this 'Gro mgon Paṇḍita, that is, Chos kyi rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po. I am inclined to identify the latter as the brilliant but perhaps politically naive scion of Sa skya's Lha khang Residence who lived from 1332 to 1358. This means that this little work would date from 1353 and the one just before that from probably 1370. U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1307) was renowned for his expertise in medical alchemy and in particular for the manipulation of mercury (*dn̄gul chu*), and he is associated with a number of brief works that belong to this genre. This collection contains several such tracts. One of these is his translation of ? Sambhata's Sanskrit manuscript of the *Profound Instruction for Mercury*, which he effected in Jalandhar[a], in the present-day Punjab; the translation was later edited and corrected by the Tibetan translator (*lo tsā ba*) Ka nan shri [=sri = dpal] whom I am unable to identify at the moment. Its transmission is then given as follows^③:

Paṇḍita Dha ma shi la (? * Dharmaśīla) – O rgyan pa [Rin chen dpal (1230–1307)]
– Grub thob Mun sel – Bla ma Snye mdo ba [? Kun dga' don grub dpal bzang po
(1268–1328)] – Bla ma Drag 'bum – Dharma sing ha (* Chos kyi seng ge) –
Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po – Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed – me, Brang ti Dpal ldan
rgyal mtshan

To be sure, this line of transmission once again tells us that Rgyal ba bzang po must have flourished well into the fourteenth century. At the end of another cognate work that is attributed to Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan, we come across the following lineage along which this medical treasure—text of that had at first been concealed by Padmasambhava and then retrieved much later by a Gu ru Dbang phyug was handed down; the line of its transmission is said to have been as follows^④:

[Gu ru Dbang phyug] – Dharma bho de (= ? bodhi = * Chos kyi byang chub) –

① *Brang ti lha rje'i rim brgyud kyi man ngag gser bre chen mo*, 135–8. I am unable to locate Klu lung monastery.

② *Brang ti lha rje'i rim brgyud kyi man ngag gser bre chen mo*, 247–8.

③ *Brang ti lha rje'i rim brgyud kyi man ngag gser bre chen mo*, 103–4.

④ *Gser bre*, 84–5.

Gu ru Chos [kyi] dbang [phyug] (1212–68/70) – Nya mgo Rin chen – Phyag rdor rgyal dpe – Dbang phyug seng ge – Gtsang Lha ghi – Rin chen dpal – Slob dpon Kun dga' mchog dpal – Slob dpon Kun dga' dpal – Dkon mchog skyabs – Slob dpon Bzang po – Me nyag Sheb [=? Mi nyag Shes rab] – Dharma rsmi – Bla ma Kun dga' bzang po – Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed – Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan.

Something seems to have gone awry here with Gu ru Dbang phyug as the treasure–text revealer (*gter ston*), especially in view of the fact that Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug was one of the greatest treasure–text revealers of the tradition. This will have to be looked into on a future occasion. Lastly, at the end of an instruction titled *Gsang ba man ngag shog gcig ma*, *Single Page of a Secret Instruction*, we have this line of transmission^①:

Brag lung pa Rtogs ldan Gzhon nu seng ge – Sad mda' chen po Brag lung pa Rin chen dpal bzang po – Mkhan chen Byams pa rin chen – Mkhan chen Byang chub seng ge – 'Phags pa Gzhon nu blo gros^② – Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po – Brang ti Dpal ldan 'tsho byed – Brang ti Dpal ldan rgyal mtshan – me, Brang ti Dpal 'byor bzang po.

This would place Brang ti Rgyal ba bzang po in *circa* 1380 and Brang ti Dpal 'byor bzang po in *circa* 1440. To add two final examples, the *Gser bre chen mo* includes instructions that were authored by the Sa skya school's *Lam 'bras*, *Path and Result*, specialist Gzungs kyi dpal (1306–89) and Kun spangs Btsun pa, that is, possibly Kun spangs pa Chos grags dpal bzang po (1283–ca. 1363), the founder of the Jo nang pa monastery of Bzang ldan^③. To sum up, what makes these and other similar collections so interesting and significant is that they contain hitherto unknown writings of otherwise well known Tibetan religious virtuosi and intellectuals. Questions and the ambiguities surrounding the authorship of the *Gser bre*, *Dngul bre*, and *Gser bre chen mo*, the history of their compilation, and many of their individual tracts should be noted and will require further sustained examination. However, it should be obvious from what was sketched out that, these problems notwithstanding, their study will add substantially to our knowledge and understanding of more general aspects of Tibetan intellectual history.

But let us now return to the *Snyan brgyud be'u bum nag po*. There the story is related that *Purūṣāgnideva owed the second part of his nickname, *lag rdum*, “stumpy,” or, more respectfully, *phyag rdum*, “withered hand,” to the fact that, though sparing his life, a displeased king whose wife he had failed to cure had his hand cut off – there is no doubt an

① *Gser bre*, 80.

② He may be identified as Sa bzang 'Phags pa gzhon nu blo gros (1358–1412), who was one of the teachers of the more famous Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456) and a disciple of Gnyags ston Byang chub seng ge. Ngor chen wrote his undated biography for which see Ngor chen's *Bla ma dam pa sa bzang 'phags pa gzhon nu blo gros kyi rnam par thar pa*, *Collected Writings*, vol. 1 (Dehra Dun: Sa skya Centre, 199?), 169–78.

③ *Brang ti lha rje'i man ngag gter mdzod rin po che gser bre ma*, 183, 224–6.

interesting connection and resonance, albeit still somewhat elusive, between *lag/ phyag rdum* and *khu tshur*. Employment as a royal physician (*bla sman*) thus had its potential downside! And if this were not enough, he was also banished (*spyugs*) from the kingdom to the Tibetan region. There is, however, a serious problem with the first part of his nickname, for the word/title *bha ro* is not known as ever having had anything to do with U rgyan. Further, could there be a connection with Rwa Lo tsā ba's Newar teacher? This is difficult to answer. There is nothing in the aforementioned colophons of this Bha ro's translation efforts, nor in Rwa Lo tsā ba's biography that suggests that this Bha ro had any expertise in medicine or that he originally hailed from U rgyan. Though of course not impossible, it is hard to imagine two different more or less contemporary foreign nationals who, in Tibet, are referred to by one and the same nickname. This difficulty notwithstanding, I nonetheless suspect that some kind of contamination and conflation has taken place. In any event, the author of the *Snyan brgyud be'u bum nag po*'s first chapter continues, Skyes bu me lha ended up in Tibet. "Opening the lotus of his heart," his father carried the complete set of instructions that had been orally handed down (*snyan brgyud gdam* [s] *pa ma lus*) to him from Spu rang [s] Mtho 'thing - this must refer to Mtho gling monastery that Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od (947-1019/24) founded in 996 - without omitting one word and without writing it down (•••*tshig gcig ma chad pa // yi ge ris su ma btab par //*). He also taught him a summary of the *Sde skor ma bu'i sman dpyad* without adding or leaving out anything. Thereafter, these medical instructions spread throughout the Tibetan world. I will have more to say about these and their diffusion in the second part of this paper.

The first chapter of the *Khu tshur 'bum*, on the other hand, is solely concerned with placing this work in an historical context, which it does by providing rather detailed lines along which many of the instructions contained in this collection were handed down. It actually appears to consist of two works. In the first, Jinamitra plays a crucial position as its originator and it details the line of transmission that extended from him to a Phyag sman as follows:

Jinamitra - his son Dar ma bo dhi (* Dharmabodhi = Chos kyi byang chub) - La stod 'Dar Che [r] rje Zhig po [?] Thugs rje khri 'od] - Gtsang stod Dar ma mgon po - Nyi [ma] 'od [zer] - Bzang 'od chos skyong - Phyag sman Rin [chen] rgyal [mtshan] - Pha rgan Bsam me - Sangs [rgyas] mgon [po] - Sbyangs pa'i stobs yod - Phyag sman [?] Rin chen rnam rgyal]

To be noted here is the absence of any mention of Bha ro Lag/phyag rdum or Skyes bu me lha.

The second work that forms part of and indeed closes this chapter begins with a listing of the "nine men who are learned" (*mkhas pa'i mi dgu*) who are better known as the "nine imperial physicians" (*rgyal po'i bla sman*) of the second half of the Tibetan empire, even if their geographical connections are here given somewhat differently from other sources; here the nine are:

Three Learned Men from Stod:

1. Bi ji
2. Chos [read: Cher] rje
3. 'Ug pa

Three Learned Men from Bar:

1. Mtha' bzhi
2. Brang ti
3. G. yu thog

Three Learned Men from Smad:

1. Gnya'
2. Mi nyag
3. Sog po

The text is somewhat muddled, but it appears to list five individuals after these nine, namely, Cher rje, Mi nyag, G. yu thog pa, Mnga' ris Mkhas pa and Gtsang stod Dar ma mgon po. The text then appears—I am not quite sure of the soundness of my interpretation at this point, since its grammar does not indicate an agent—to state that, in agreement with these five men, our A tsa ra (< ācārya) Lag rdum:

*gzhung chen 'o ma'i rgya mtsho bsrubs pa las / bcud kyi snying po khu tshur 'bum
nag brtsams pa yin /*

Having stirred the milky ocean of the great textual tradition (*gzhung chen*) [of medicine], composed its quintessence, the *Khu tshur 'bum nag*.

The result consisted of two parts, “external ware” (*phyi rdig*) and “internal ware” (*nang rdig*), whereby the latter was what it calls the *Khu tshur*, the line of transmission of which is given as:

A tsa ra Lag rdum – Mkhas pa Mi nyag—Phyag sman 'Tsho byed – 'Jig rdo [? 'Jigs med rdo rje] – Gzi brjid – Rin [chen] rgyal [mtshan] – Shākya ye shes – Bsam me – Rin chen bzang po – Dge chen – U ru pa – Sa mgon – Mgon ne – Chos rje – me, Dar ra

Nothing is said about the “external ware.” And the chapter closes with a few general remarks about the text, how it was and should be preserved, etc.

The *Khu tshur* collections and their individual tracts, long and short, raise many obvious and some not so obvious questions. Many of these have to do with the identification of some of the main players in and contributors to their transmission, whose names have thusfar not even been mentioned in the secondary literature and about whom

not much seems to be known. I address at least some of these questions in the sequel to this paper that will be published in the 2011 issue of this journal, together with annotated translations of a few short tracts that have to do with medicine as practiced in the land of Za hor.

Additional note: As stated earlier, the name Skyes bu me lha (Skt. *Puruṣ āgnideva) is puzzling—*skyes bu* could reflect Sanskrit *puruṣa* and *me lha āgnideva*. In conversation, my colleague M. Witzel kindly alerted me to an article by O. von Hinüber — “Indische Namen in Zentralasien bis 1000 n. Chr.,” *Kleine Schriften*, ed. H. Falk and W. Slaje, Glassenap Stiftung, Bd. 47 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 661. Following an earlier, 1980 paper on the colophons of Sanskrit manuscripts of Buddhist texts found in Gilgit, von Hinüber suggested there that Sanskrit *puruṣa* may in fact be derived from *buroṣo*. This might, but only might suggest that Skyes bu me lha’s name should be written “Skyes bu Me lha,” that the Tibetan translation of his actual name was “Me lha,” and that he in fact hailed from Gilgit.

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