

Some Remarks on the Meaning and Use of the Tibetan Word *bam po*

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Abstract: This essay seeks to ascertain the various meanings of the word *bam po* and is mainly a contribution to its lexicography. A study of several treatises in which it occurs suggests that it, and its subordinate unit the *shlo ka* (< Sanskrit *śloka*), were terms that were used to designate various lengths of the textual matter of the earliest translated Buddhist texts. As a unit of text, a *bam po* can consist of a varying number of *shlo ka*s. Curiously, both terms also occur in several writings that do not belong to this translated literature but rather to the first indigenous, Tibetan works on Buddhism. As catalographic terms, *bam po* and *shlo ka* are used in the earliest catalogs of titles of translated scripture and indigenous Tibetan literary studies. There is some evidence that, by fixing the length of a text, they may have been used to prevent unwarranted editorial interventions. There is also some evidence that they played a role in the economy of text production. The *bam po* and the *shlo ka* were apparently used in connection with calculating the amount of payment translators and scribes should receive for their labors.

Key words: *bam po*, *shlo ka*, Catalog, *Abhisamayālamkāra*, Lha Bla ma Ye shes 'od, Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer, Bu ston Rin chen grub, Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal, Gser mdog Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan.

In the earliest Tibetan catalogs of translated scripture, namely the 824 (?) *Lhan*

dkar ma and the 830 (?) *'Phang thang ma* catalogs^①—the extant manuscript witnesses of both are of a much later vintage and the recent publication of what is so far a unique manuscript of the *'Phang thang ma* overtly shows a greater degree of later editorial revisions than the seventeenth century xylographs of the *Lhan dkar ma*^②—the term *bam po* is used as the larger of two units by which the length of a translated text was measured. The other, smaller unit is variously written as *shlo ka*, *sho lo ka*, *shu lo ka*, or *shu log* (< Skt. *śloka*) – for purposes of economy, I will only use *shlo ka* even if a text has *sho lo ka*, etc. These units of measurement have to do with the number of syllables that a text contains even if these two catalogs themselves do not divulge their actual relative values. These catalogs list the titles of texts that were translated not only from Sanskrit, but also from Chinese manuscripts of Buddhist texts—the latter are glossed by *rgya 'gyur*, *rgya las bsgyur ba*, or *rgya nag las bsgyur*. Neither the *Lhan dkar ma*

① The first was first edited in M. Lalou, “Les textes Bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri srong lde btsan,” *Journal asiatique* CCXLI (1953), 313–353, but see now also A. Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die lHan kar ma. Ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte. Kritische Neuauflage mit Einleitung und Materialien* (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008); for the second, see the *Dkar chag 'phang thang ma / Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, ed. Bod ljongs rten rdzas bshams mdzod khang (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 1–67. Herrmann–Pfandt, *Die lHan kar ma. Ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte. Kritische Neuauflage mit Einleitung und Materialien*, xviii–xxvi, dates these, respectively, to 812 and 806. Two glosses in the manuscript of the *'Phang thang ma* refer to the *Lhan dkar ma* which, as Herrmann–Pfandt rightly states, do of course not tell us anything about their relative dates. Recent work on the *Lhan dkar ma* also includes the notices in Khri Bsam gtan's detailed study of the history of translation in the Tibetan cultural area from the very beginning to the present day in his *Skad gnyis smra ba' i rin chen bang mdzod* (Lanzhou: Kan su' u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2005), 124–135, 138–151.

② An interlinear note in the manuscript refers to a reading found in another manuscript of the text, for which see the *Dkar chag 'phang thang ma / Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, ed. Bod ljongs rten rdzas bshams mdzod khang, 64. Furthermore, it is of interest that, on pp. 19, 7, the first under the rubric of translations from Chinese, the second not, it expressly states that one Tibetan version of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra* from the Chinese in ten *bam po* is an “old translation” and that the other one is a “new translation.” Not marked as a gloss, this particular comment is absent from the *Lhan dkar ma*, as it is from the circa 1280 catalog of Dar ma rgyal mtshan (1227–1305), alias Bcom ldan {rig [s] pa' i} ral gri, for which see K. R. Schaeffer and L. W. J. van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Bcom ldan ral gri*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 64 (Cambridge: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, 2009), 159. Lalou, “Les textes Bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri srong lde btsan,” 325 [= Herrmann–Pfandt, *Die lHan kar ma. Ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte. Kritische Neuauflage mit Einleitung und Materialien*, 134–136] lists a translation in ten *bam po*, whereas the second registers one in slight excess (*lhag*) of ten *bam po*. Be this as it may, the translation from the Chinese that is currently available is [more or less] the version of Yijing (义净, 635–713), which the ninth century Chinese translator extraordinaire Wú Fáchéng (吴法成), alias 'Gos [Lo tsā ba] Chos grub, translated into Tibetan. Bu ston Rin chen grub's (1290–1364) 1322–1326 *Bde bar gshegs pa' i bstan pa' i gsal byed chos kyi 'byung gnas gsung rab rin po che' i mdzod*, *Collected Works* [of Bu ston and Sgra tshad pa], part 24 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), 928, is the earliest of the sources used for this paper to link 'Gos [Lo tsā ba] Chos grub to this translation that was edited long ago by J. Nobel in his *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, Bd. II (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958). Both Nobel and C. Oetke, *Aus dem chinesischen übersetzten tibetischen Versionen des Suvarṇaprabhāsasūtra*, *Alt- und Neu- Indische Studien* 18 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1977), 7–9, have shown that this translation has been variously transmitted in the extant editions of the Kanjur.

nor the *'Phang thang ma* explicitly register any titles of texts that were translated from Khotanese manuscripts, although we do explicitly find this detail in the later catalog by Dar ma rgyal mtshan.^① Further, there are several purportedly eighth and ninth century translations of texts in the *Rnying ma' i rgyud 'bum* collection that were apparently based on manuscripts that were written in “the language of 'Bru zha [= Gilgit],” meaning that they^② were allegedly written in Burushaski!

The Tibetan texts that were translated from the Chinese use the term *bam po* in two different senses. A passage of the large commentary on the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, which the great Korean scholar—monk Wōnch' uk (圆测, 613–696) [= Ch. Yuáncè] wrote in Chinese, and its Tibetan translation by 'Gos [Lo tsā ba] Chos grub. suggests that it is used both as a unit for measuring the number of Tibetan syllables, that is, as *bam po* as such, as well as the equivalent of Chinese *juàn* (卷), that is, “roll, fascicle, volume.”^③

The occurrence of the tag “the first *bam po*” (*bam po dang po*) in a text is not always consistent. It is usually located at the beginning of a given text and placed immediately after the bilingual titular identification of the text and the translator's invocation. Examples of this are the Tibetan translation of Wōnch' uk's commentary that I just cited, as well as Rngog Lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab's (ca. 1059–ca. 1109) translations of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitāsūtra* and Haribhadra's (8th c.) *Abhisamayālaṃkāravṛtti*.^④ But we also not infrequently find this tag at the end of what amounts to the first *bam po* portion of the text. An example of this is Rngog Lo tsā ba's translation of Prajñākaragupta's (ca. 800) *Pramāṇavārttikālamkāra*. Oddly, the first two chapters of the Sde dge xylograph of this work are not divided into *bam po* units, and only the third chapter is divided into such units, where the identification “the first *bam po*” occurs not at the very beginning of the third chapter, but rather at the end of the chapter's first *bam po*

① Schaeffer and van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Dar ma rgyal mtshan*, 161–162.

② An important treatise in this connection is the *Dgongs pa ' dus pa' i mdo*, for which see, for example, the text in *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei [= Sde dge] Edition*, ed. A. W. Barber (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1991), vol. 19, no. 824 [829], and now also J. P. Dalton, *The Uses of the Dgongs pa ' dus pa' i mdo in the Development of the Rnyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, unpublished University of Michigan dissertation, 2002. The various older commentaries on this work that are collected in different editions of the Bka' ma corpus of the Rnying ma school contain a number of alleged Burushaski lexemes, together with their putative Sanskrit and Tibetan equivalents.

③ *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei [= Sde dge] Edition*, vol. 38, no. 4021 [# 4016], 1/2, 3/7 [Ti, 1a, 11a] {= *Jiěshēnmìjīng shū* (解深密经疏), *Dai nihon zoku zōkyō*, (大日本大藏经), ed. K. Kawamura (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōku, 1975–1989), vol. 21, no. 369, 175a_{3, 6}}.

④ *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei [= Sde dge] Edition*, vol. 7, no. 12, 261/2 [Ka, 1a] and vol. 33, no. 3798 [# 3793], 121/2 [Ja, 78b]. For the curious position of this phrase in the Tabo text of the *Sgra sbyor* [*bam po gnyis pa*], *Register*, see C. A. Scherrer–Schaub, “Enacting Words. A Diplomatic Analysis of the Imperial Decrees (*bka' bcad*) and their Application in the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* Tradition,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25 (2002), 279, n. 57.

unit of text. ① Why such apparent inconsistencies should exist is not altogether obvious to me, but it is quite possible that a more systematic study than I have carried out while writing this paper will reveal certain patterns that might explain them. Equally unclear, at least to me, is why not all translations, whether actual or purported, in the Kanjur, Tanjur, and the *Rnying ma' i rgyud ' bum* are divided into *bam po* and *shlo ka* units. To my knowledge, with few exceptions, these units are not found in manuscripts of writings by Tibetan scholars or with one or the other catalographic function in the indigenous catalogs of their collected writings. Exceptions would of course be the *Lhan dkar ma*'s listing of writings attributed to emperor Khri srong lde btsan (ca. 742 – ca. 800) and the *'Phang thang ma*'s listing of the same together with the titles of the writings of a number of Tibetan scholars of the imperial period that are, however, not registered in the *Lhan dkar ma*. ②

It is true that there is some evidence that the compilers of the *Lhan dkar ma* and *'Phang thang ma* used the *shlo ka* and *bam po* units for purposes of cataloging, but, again, they did so very inconsistently. For example, after a brief introduction, they both begin their catalogs with the section on the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* – s in which they list each individual sutra in a descending order of magnitude in step with the length of the actual text, from the longest to the shortest. Thus they begin with the *śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* in three hundred *bam po* units and end with the *Svalpākṣaraprajñāpāramitāsūtra* of a mere thirty *shlo ka* in length^③. Only the *'Phang thang ma* ends this list with a not uncommon designation for this corpus of sutras in its entirety, namely “the seventeen sons and mothers [sutras]” (*sras yum bcu bdun*). ④ On the other hand, in their listings of titles of texts that are found under such rubrics as the *shin du rgyas pa* (*vaipulya*), *dkon brtsegs* (*ratnakūṭa*) sutras, etc., we notice that the compilers did not always follow any particular catalographic sequence and certainly not one that has to do with the length of the translated texts either in an ascending or in a

① *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei [= Sde dge] Edition*, vol. 47, no. 4226 [#4221], 301/5 [The, 132b].

② Lalou, “Les textes Bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri srong lde btsan,” 336–337 [= Herrmann–Pfundt, *Die lHan kar ma. Ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhis – tischen Texte. Kritische Neuausgabe mit Einleitung und Materialien*, 402–404], and *Dkar chag 'phang thang ma / Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, ed. Bod ljongs rten rdzas bshams mdzod khang, 38, 47, 54–60. For the second, see the convenient listing in G. T. Halkias, “Tibetan Buddhism Registered: A Catalogue from the Imperial Court of 'Phang thang,” *The Eastern Buddhist* XXXVI (2004), 82–89 –missing from the latter is Klu' i rgyal mtshan's commentary on the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* that is listed on p. 38 of the text.

③ E. Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with the Divisions of the Abhisamayāla mkāra* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), includes English translations of but a few portions of the first; an English translation of the second may be found in E. Conze, *The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts* (London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1973), 144–147.

④ Bu ston cites several opinions about the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras in the concluding remarks of his catalog of these sutras in his *Bde bar gshegs pa' i bstan pa' i gsal byed chos kyi ' byung gnas gsung rab rin po che' i mdzod*, 924. The first is that some Tibetans did not agree on the accuracy, and thus on the usefulness, of the expression *sras yum bcu bdun*.

descending sequence.

At first blush, it appears that these catalogs' use of the term *shlo ka* to measure the extent of a Tibetan translation—as, for instance, above in the case of the *Svalpākṣara-prajñāpāramitāsūtra*—is not quite coextensive with the Sanskrit usage of *śloka*, the usual meaning of which is a stanza of four feet with eight syllables per metrical foot. Indeed, something else is going on, particularly when we recall that the *Svalpākṣara-prajñāpāramitāsūtra* is written in prose! Bu ston's claim that I cite below to the effect that the Indian Buddhist tradition does not recognize the *bam po* unit of measurement is most likely correct. To be sure, we do encounter such an Indic use of the *shlo ka*. An example of this is Dharmakīrti's (7th c.) *Pramāṇavārttikasvopajñavṛtti/Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti*, a work that is largely written in prose. The eleventh century Kashmirian scholar and commentator Yamāri refers to this treatise with the phrase “the [text in] three and a half thousand [? ślokas]” (*stong phrag phyed dang bzhi pa*). This designation is also found at the end of Rma Lo tsā ba Dge ba' i blo gros' circa 1050 Tibetan translation and, indeed, this particular sobriquet is often used in the later catalogs and Tibetan exegeses of Dharmakīrti's thought^①. Of course, this calls to mind the fact that so many Prajñāpāramitāsūtras are titled after their number in ślokas, not to mention Nāgārjuna's (2nd c.) *śūnyatāsapṭati* or *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, Āryadeva's (2nd–3rd c.) *Catuhṣataka*, etc.

Of the two recent Tibetan publications that deal with cataloguing Tibetan books, only the one by the late Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las suggests in his remarks anent the 'Phang thang ma catalog that one *shlo ka*-unit consists of textual matter that is demarcated by eight intermediate dots that separate individual words or, at times, syllables (*bar tsheg*), and that three hundred such units make up one *bam po*^②. It should be pointed out that neither the published manuscript of this catalog nor the *Lhan dkar ma* contain any indications as to the numerical values of the *bam po* or the *shlo ka*.

The meaning of the term *bam po* as such remains somewhat obscure. It does not figure in the Sanskrit–Tibetan *Mahāvvyutpatti* lexicon of the early ninth century. Neither, for that matter, does the compound *glegs bam*, which refers to a book that is most often “bound” between two wooden covers that are called *glegs shing*. Of course, *glegs bam* is found in many early, circa 800 Tibetan translations of Buddhist scriptures among which we may mention such sutras as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* and

① See my “A Treatise on Buddhist Epistemology and Logic Attributed to Klong chen Rab ' byams pa (1308–1364) and Its Place in Indo–Tibetan Intellectual History,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 31 (2003), 412, 432, n. 112.

② *Bod kyi dkar chag rig pa*, *Collected Works*, vol. Kha [3], ed. Rnam rgyal Ra 'Phrin las rgya mtsho (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), 10. The other work is the one by Ngag dbang tshe dpag et al., *Bod kyi dkar chag rig pa' i lag deb*, Ska ba Dpal brtsegs Series in Katalogos, 1 (Varanasi: Siddhartha Publications, 2004). For a study of the book in Tibet, see now K. R. Schaeffer, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra* that were translated before the compilation of the *Lhan dkar ma* and ‘Phang thang ma and even the *Mahāvvyutpatti* itself. In these, it represents Sanskrit *paṭṭa* and *pustaka*^①. But *glegs bam* can also be a rendition of *pothi*, which itself also often occurs in various orthographic guises as a loanword in Tibetan^②. Of course, *be* [’u] *bum* and especially *dpe* and *dpe cha* are also a fairly common words for “book [let]” or “manuscript,” but I am not entirely sure what Sanskrit expression these may have reflected. A fairly early use of the first and third is found in Gu ge Khyi thang pa Yes shes dpal’s biography of his teacher Lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang po (958–1055)^③, whereas *dpe* by itself already not infrequently occurs in the colophons of the canonical literature. The word *dpe* also makes its appearance in the fairly uncommon locutions *rgya dpe ngo bo* and *dpe dpang gi rgya dpe* which seem to make a qualitative text–critical distinction between two kinds of Sanskrit manuscripts. These are attested in the colophon of Zhwa lu Lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po’s (1441–1528) translation of the *Tattvārtha* commentary on Vasubandhu [II]’s (5th c.) *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* that is attributed to Sthiramati (6th c.)^④. On occasion, we also come across the expressions *pu ti* and the binom *dpe pu tipu ti* reflects *pothi* – and even the more modern *dpe deb*. Shes rab rin chen’s undated study of his master Karma pa III Rang byung rdo rje’s (1284–1339) versified epitome of the *Āryasaddharmasmṛtyupasthānasūtra* contains an example of the second^⑤.

But there is some light at the other side of the tunnel. The available dictionaries are of course helpful in pinpointing the use of *bam po* as a catalographic term. The Tibetan–Chinese dictionary under the nominal editorship of Zhang Yisun contains some fourteen entries in which *bam* occurs by itself and as an initial in compound expressions, and Btsan lha Ngag dbang tshul khriṃs’s very useful lexicon of relatively rare words and expressions

① See, respectively, the *Abhisamayāla mkārālokā Prajñāpāramitāvyākhyā* (*Commentary of the Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*), *The Work of Haribhadra together with the Text commented on*, ed. U. Wogihara, Fascicle 7 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1935), 955, and J. Oshika, “An Index to the Tibetan Translation of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*,” *Acta Indologica* III (1975), 16, which includes the Chinese equivalents. The *Sam bod skad gnyis shan sbyar*, ed. Dmu dge Bsam gtan et al. (Lanzhou: Kan su’ u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989), 11, 26, 285, suggests its equivalence with a number of other Sanskrit expressions. This otherwise quite rewarding lexicon does not have an entry for *bam po*.

② See my “On the Composition and Printings of the *Deb gter sngon po* by ‘Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392–1481),” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 2 (2006), 5; www. thdl. org? id=T2714.

③ *Byang chub sems dpa’ lo tsā ba rin chen bzang po’ i ’khrungs rabs dka’ spyad sgron ma rnam thar shel phreng lu gu rgyud* (Dharamsala: Tho gling gtsug lag khang lo gcig stong ’ khor ba’ i rjes dran mdzad sgo’ i go sgrig tshogs chung, 1996), 14, 20.

④ *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei [= Sde dge] Edition*, vol. 52, no. 4428 [# 4421], 111/3 [Do, 387a]; see also my “The Names of ‘Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392–1481),” *The Pandita and the Siddha. Tibetan Studies in Honor of E. Gene Smith*, ed. R. N. Prats (Dharamshala: Amnye machen Institute, 2007), 285.

⑤ *Dam pa’ i chos dran pa nye bar bzhag pa’ i bstan bcos kyi ’ grel pa*, *Collected Works of Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje*, vol. Cha (Xining, 2006), 219.

signals some five entries with an initial bam^①; these are *bam chen*, *bam du sbam*, *bam po*, *bam por sbres pa*, and *bam me ting nge*. For the third, *bam po*, he cites Bstan 'dzin blo gros rgya mtsho' s (? -?) *Brda sprod dpag bsam ljon pa' i snye ma* which offers "corpse" (*ro*) as its equivalent, and for the fourth, *bam por sbres pa*, he refers to a passage which, he says, is found in Co ne Grags pa bshad grub's (1675—1748) *Brda gsar rnying gi rnam gzhag blo gsal yid' phrog*, which in turn points to an entry in Dge' dun grub pa's (1391—1474) undated *'Dul ba gleng' bum* to the effect that it means "to tie, to bundle together" (*mnyam por bsdams pa*)^②. The recently published eighteen-volume set of Co ne Grags pa bshad grub' s writings does not contain a work with the title *Brda gsar rnying gi rnam gzhag blo gsal yid' phrog*. But it does have a short piece of his on old versus new terminologies (*brda gsar rnying*) that forms part of a larger tract on poetics and lexicography. However, it does not have an entry for *bam por sbres pa*^③. The Tibetan—Chinese dictionary only recognizes *bam* and not *bam po* as the equivalent of *ro*, and registers the expression *bam por sbrel* instead of *bam por sbres pa*. To be sure, *sbrel* and *sbres* are to all purposes synonyms.

The non-catalographic usage of *bam po* is attested in the *vinaya* literature and elsewhere. For example, it occurs in the *circa* 800 translations of the *Vinayavastu* and the *Vinayavibhaṅga*, albeit in a sense that is obviously not catalographic. For instance, in the former, it is glossed as a secondary form of *sbam pa*, "to collect, gather, place together," as in *de dag sbam pa' am bam por byas te zung nga la gdags par bya' o //* as well as in the sense of "bale [of cloth]" as in the phrase *ras rnams bam por bcings te song*

① See, respectively, the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, Bar cha [vol. II] (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985), 1815—1816, and the *Brda dkrol gser gyi me long* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), 532.

② For Dge' dun grub pa's large work in which he culled various narrative tales from the *Vinaya* texts, see the handy edition on the basis of a xylograph from the Bla brang Bkra shis 'khyil printing blocks in the *'Dul ba'i gleng' bum chen mo* (Xining: Mtsho sngon dpe skrun khang, 1990). Shen Weirong, *Leben und historische Bedeutung des ersten Dalai Lama dGe' dun grub pa dpal bzang po* (1391—1474). *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der dGe lugs pa Schule und der Institution der Dalai Lamas*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XLIX (Sankt Augustin: Insitut Monumenta Serica, 2002), 196, n. 252, notes that it was not included in the 1894 edition of his *Collected Works*. A kya Yongs 'dzin Blo bzang don grub (1740—1827) has written a lexical study of its more unusual diction, for which see his *'Dul ba'i gleng' bum chen mo las byung ba' i ming brda go dka' ba rnams bshad pa blo ldan dga' skyed* (New Delhi: Lama Guru Deva, 1971), 151—208. To be sure, Dge' dun grub pa's work has as its forerunners Bu ston' s' *'Dul ba pha'i gleng' bum chen mo* of 1354 and the *'Dul ba ma' i gleng' bum* of 1352 in *The Collected Works of Bu ston (and Sgra tshad pa)* [Lhasa print], part 23 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), 1—837, 839—955. Jampa Losang Panglung, *Die Erzählstoffe des Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya Analysiert auf Grund der tibetischen übersetzung*, *Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series III* (Tokyo: The Reiyukai Library, 1981) is the latest in a string of their successors!

③ See the *Snyan ngag mngon brjod brda gsar rnying gi rnam gzhag mdor bsdus blo gsal yid' phrog*, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, *Mes po' i shul bzhag*, vol. 92, ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib' jug khang (Beijing: Krung go' i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009), 257—262. Btsan lha's title is no doubt taken from this longer title. Co ne Grags pa bshad grub signals that he used the earlier writings on the subject by Dbus pa Blo gsal [Rtsod pa' i seng ge (ca. 1255—?)] and Skyogs ston Lo tsā ba Rin chen bkra shis [1536]; for these two works, see below.

ngo^①. And in the *Vinayavibhaṅga*, we have, for example, *gtur bu' i bam po bsgres nas* and *'char kas bal de dag gzar thag gis bam po gnyis su dam du rab tu bcings te sgo glegs kyi phag tu bzhag go* //^②. Finally, the word *bam po* also occurs in what I believe to be a “mythical” toponym of a place in India. In his fascinating 1734 study of a number of key tutelary deities associated with the Tibetan state as well as with individual religious hierarchs, Sle lung pa Bzhad pa' i rdo rje (b. 1697) writes that Ācārya Nyi 'od grags pa [** Sūryaprabhākīrti*] had excavated the treasure text on the deity Gnod sbyin chen po [= Zangs kyi beg rtse can and Dregs pa lcam sring] in Bam po dmar po, which was evidently a place that was located in India^③. Sle lung pa's narrative appears to be in part taken from an earlier “chronicle” (*lo rgyus*) of this deity by Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–1566/7). To my knowledge, not one single manuscript of Tshar chen's work has surfaced so far. Sle lung pa then suggests the following father–son transmission: Paṇḍita Zla ba nag po [** Kṛṣṇacandra*] – Gayadhara who was called Ācārya Dmar po, “the Red Master” in Tibet. He stipulates that this Gayadhara was not identical to the Gayadhara – his actual name in religion is reported to have been Ratnaśrījñāna – who was the well known master and informant of 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Shākya ye shes' (11th c.)^④. Ācārya Dmar po was a teacher of *inter alia* Mar pa Lo tsā ba Chos kyi blo gros and Gnyan Lo tsā ba Dar ma skyabs, and “Prajñāgupta” may have been his [? assumed] name in religion^⑤.

Of course, it should go without saying that, as a catalographic term, *bam po* has been the object of some discussion in the secondary literature where, however, no really firm conclusions were formulated. For example, in her edition of the *Lhan dkar ma* catalog, M. Lalou indicated that the intent of *bam po* was far from clear, offered the pretty decent interpretation of “bundle of sown together pages, scroll?”, and also pointed out that its

① For what follows, see *The Tibetan Tripitaka*, vol. 1, no. 1, 81/4 [Ka, 282b], 207/6 [Ga, 94b]. Needless to say, I am very much indebted to the Asian Classics Input Project for these and the next references.

② *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei* [= Sde dge] Edition, vol. 1, no. 2, 448/3 [Cha, 44a], 475/7 [Cha, 140b].

③ *Dam can bstan srung rgya mtsho' i rnam par thar pa cha shes tsam brjod pa sngon med legs bshad* (Thimphu, 1976), 421 [= *Bstan srung rgya mtsho' i rnam thar*, vol. 2 (Leh, 1979), 81, *Dam can bstan srung gi rnam thar*, ed. 'Phrin las rgyal mtshan and Bka' mgon (Beijing: Mirigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 340]. For this particular deity, see also R. de Nebesky–Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet. The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (Kathmandu: Tiwari' s Pilgrim Book House, 1993), 88–93, 490–492, where on p. 492, the toponym is read “Bam so dmar po” – in cursive *dbu med* Tibetan *so* and *po* are virtual homographs.

④ See R. M. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance. Tantric Buddhism and the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 161–209, Index, 577.

⑤ Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance. Tantric Buddhism and the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*, Index, 581.

value was not fixed, inasmuch as it can denote units of text that are of different length^①. Later, E. Steinkellner devoted some attention to this term and once again pointed out its various values, as did Sh. Kawasaki^②. Aside from the various examples that Khri Bsam gtan adduced for the differences in the number of *bam po* and *shlo ka* of texts registered in the *Lhan dkar ma* and the ones we find in the later xylographed texts of the printed canons, the fragmentary handwritten *dbu chen* manuscript of a Tibetan translation of the Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra from Khotan also shows this quite clearly when its fourteenth chapter ends in the eighth and the same chapter of the version of the xylographed Kanjurs ends in the tenth *bam po*^③!

But it is to C. Scherrer—Schaub that we owe the most detailed analysis^④. She suggested the term was used in some five different contexts; these are:

1. A catalographic unit
2. A measure which may have a prosodic measure (śloka!) as its antecedent
3. A catalographic unit in terms of the sequence of divisions and sub-divisions
4. A catalographic unit in the card—inventory of a library
5. The calibration of a text for the amount of paper required, etc.

In the following, I will cite a few Tibetan authors who have had something to say about the intent of *bam po* and, towards the end, provide evidence for Scherrer—Schaub's crucial observation under no. 5 that, following a tradition current in part of medieval Europe, it may very well have been a unit of measurement by means of which the scribe [? and the translator] could be paid for his labor — the same would hold for its subdivision the

① “Les textes Bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri srong lde btsan,” 313—314. She cites the entry for the Kaśyapaparipṛcchā in three *bam po* and contrasts it with the xylographed text in the Snar thang Kanjur which consists of two *bam po*! H. Eimer made a similar observation with respect to the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra, for which see his “Remarks on the *bam po* Numbers in the Extensive Tibetan *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*,” *Facets of Indian Culture. Gustav Roth Felicitation Volume Published on the Occasion of His 82nd Birthday*, ed. C. P. Sinha (Patna: Bihar Purvavid Parishad, 1988), 465—472

② See, respectively, “*Paralokasiddhi—Texts*,” *Buddhism and Its Relation to Other Religions. Essays in Honour of Dr. Shozen Kumoi on His Seventieth Birthday* (Kyoto, 1985), 21, note 8, “Who is Byang chub rdzu 'phrul? Tibetan and non—Tibetan Commentaries on the Saṃdhanirmocanasūtra. A Survey of the Literature,” *Berliner Indologische Studien* 4/5 (1989), 240, note 37, and “Discrepancies in the Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts of Bhavya's *Madhya—maka—hr̥daya—Tarkjavālā* (the IXth and Xth Chapters),” *Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Buddhist Studies Narita 1989*, ed. Sh. Ihara and Z. Yamaguchi, vol. 1 (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), 142, n. 8.

③ See respectively, Khri Bsam gtan, *Skad gnyis smra ba' i rin chen bang mdzod*, 124 ff., and S. Karashima, “An Old Tibetan Translation of the Lotus Sutra from Khotan: The Romanised Text Collated with the Kanjur Version (1),” *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2004 16* (2005), 105.

④ “śa cu: 《Qu' y-a-t-il au programme de la classe de philologie bouddhique?》,” *Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Buddhist Studies Narita 1989*, ed. Sh. Ihara and Z. Yamaguchi, vol. 1 (Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji, 1992), 218—220.

shlo ka as well. That these measurements must, at a minimum, have had something to do with the activity of copying is already borne out by a remark we find, for example, in the colophon to the Tibetan translation of Ratnākaraśānti's (11th c.) *Sūtrasamuccayālam — kārabhāṣyaratnā*. We read there the following^①:

yi ge pa yi don ched du // brtsis nas shlo ka sum stong dang // de las lnga bcu
lhag cig ni // 'di yi tshad du byas pa yin // *bam po* bcu dang shlo ka lnga bcu yod //
Having calculated the length of the text for the sake of the scribe, fifty
more than three thousand *shlo ka* was its length. The text has ten *bam po*
and fiftyśloka.

This means that one *bam po* equals 300 *shlo ka*, which is but only one of the known equivalents. Unnoticed so far in the secondary literature available to us are the following two glosses on *bam po*, the first of which occurs in Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer's (1124–1192) chronicle of Indo–Tibetan Buddhism; there we read^②:

zhu chen gyi^a tsā^b bas bod dpe la bklags^c / rgya dpe la pa ṅḍi tas zhu tig byed pa / lo tsā^b bas tsheg
bar bdun la tshig rkang gcig^d / tshig rkang bzhi la^e sho lo ka gcig^d sho lo ka sum brgya la *bam po*
gcig^d / *bam po* zhes pa' i^f tshad ni sho lo ka^e sum brgya dang sum cu rtsa gcig^g / tshig rkang^h
gcig^e gi sum cha la *bam po* gcig^d tu bshad do // slob dpon zhi ba la sogsⁱ pas bam po zhes^j pa' i
tshad ni sho lo ka stong gi sum cha la 'dod de / che chung gi tshad ni^k tshig rkang ring thung
dang^l ming^m mang nyung la rnam par bzhag par bshad doⁿ // de rnams ni^e bstan bcos rin po che'
i mtsho las bshad do //

^aNYANGb; omit. ^bNYANGb, m; tstsha. ^cNYANGb; klag, NYANGm; klags. ^dNYANGb;
1, NYANGm; cig. ^eNYANGm; omits. ^fNYANG, b; ces pa. ^gNYANGb, m; 1. bzhag par
bshad do. ^hNYANG; adds [stong] which indicates that it should be placed under editorial
scrutiny. ⁱNYANGm; adds ;^jNYANGb, m; ces. ^kNYANGb; adds :.

^lNYANGb, m; add ;^mNYANG; mi. ⁿNYANGm; bzhag pa' o for rnam pa.

The translator who is a great editor read the Tibetan manuscript out loud. In the Indian manuscript, the Indian paṅḍita makes ? editorial ascertainments (*zhu tig*). The translator explained that a phrase having seven syllables (*tsheg bar*) constitutes one line of verse, four lines of verse constitute one quatrain (*shlo ka*), three hundred quatrains constitute one *bam po*; the length of a *bam po* is actually three hundred and thirty—one quatrains [? or] one third of a thousand lines of verse. Scholars such as the master Zhi ba [śānta {rakṣita}, ? śānta/i {bhadra}] etc. claimed that the length of a *bam po* is one—third of a thousand quatrains and

① *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei* [= Sde dge] Edition, vol. 36, no. 3940 [# 3935], 542/2 [Ki, 334a].

② 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), 393–394 [= NYANG] (= Meisezahl, ed., *Die große Geschichte des tibetischen Buddhismus nach alter Tradition* (Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1985), Tafel 283/3–4/3 [= NYANGm]; *Manuscript "B"* (Paro, 1979), 460 [= NYANGb]).

explained that the extent of the large and small *bam po*'s length is established on the basis of whether the lines of verse are long or short and whether the compounds (*ming*) are numerous or few. Those items are stated in the *Bstan bcos rin po che' i mtsho*.

No treatise with the title *Bstan bcos rin po che' i mtsho* is known to me. For the record, the late G. Uray has suggested that Zhang Yisun's Tibetan-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary indicates that the *Bye brag tu rtogs byed chung ngu*, the pendant to the **Mahāvvyutpatti* and the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, deals with the units of measurements of treatises. But this is based on a misreading of the entry in the dictionary, for nothing of the kind is mentioned there.^① It is perhaps not insignificant that Nyang ral says that it was the translators who were responsible for dividing their texts into discrete quantities. It is likely that such measurements had something to do with how they might have gotten paid for their services, which is something that is expressly claimed for those who were employed as scribes in a work that I cite below. In fact, as my colleague M. Witzel informed me, this practise of paying scribes by the *śloka* is already found in the Indian subcontinent.

The Tibetan sources make it transparent that the *bam po* unit primarily involves the number of *shlo ka* occupied by a portion of a text and that its length can be variable. Little surprise, then, that the second chapter of Bcom ldan ral gri's catalog has it that the variable length of the *bam po* was either a function of the variable number of syllables or was on account that a rough estimate was made on the basis of the number of pages when it was difficult to count the number of syllables^②. It is worth noting that this very same passage is also found, albeit unattributed, in Rgyal sras Thugs mchog rtsal's chronicle of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism of 1423^③. The instability of the value, that is, the length of the *bam po* is also underscored by Si tu Pañ chen Chos kyi' byung gnas (1700–1774) in connection with the *circa* 800 translation of the *Avataṃsakasūtra* by a consortium of Indian scholars and Tibetan translators such as Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, Ye shes sde,

① He made this remark in his "Contributions to the date of the *Vyutpatti*-treatises," *Acta academiae scientiarum hungarica* XLIII (1989 [1990]), 3, note 3, and *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, Stod cha [vol. I] (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985), 80. see more, Scherrer-Schaub, "Enacting Words. A Diplomatic Analysis of the Imperial Decrees (*bkas bcad*) and their Application in the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* Tradition," 305–307, 324.

② Schaeffer and van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pargyas pa rgyan gyi nyi' od of Dar ma rgyal mtshan*, 115–116.

③ *Chos' byung rin po che' i gter mdzod bstan pa gsal bar byed pa' i nyi' od*, ed. Bu byung Dbang' dus, *Gangs can rig mdzod 17* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 1991), 306. For this work and its author, see my "On the Authorship and Date of the Ecclesiastic Chronicle *Chos' byung rin po che' i gter mdzod bstan pa gsal bar byed pa' i nyi' od*," *Tibetstudien. Festschrift für Dieter Schuh zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Maurer and P. Schwieger (Bonn: Bier'sche Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 127–148.

etc. and its revision by Vairocana [rakṣita]^①.

Not least because the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* was conceived as an epitome of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* and therefore as a vehicle for gaining access to the massive *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* literature in toto, the Indo-Tibetan scholastic traditions paid enormous attention to this work and to one Indian commentary in particular, namely, Haribhadra's (late 8thc.) *vṛtti*. That the Tibetan commentators were pressed to comment on the term *bam po* and that they were well aware of its polysemy is exemplified by the following. Let us first take a look at what Bu ston has to say in his 1319 commentary on Haribhadra's *vṛtti on the Abhisamayālaṃkāra*^②:

bam po che ba ni / sho lo ka stong gi sum cha la byas pa dang / chung ba sho lo ka gsum brgya la byas pa gnyis las / ' dir tha ma ste / rgya dpe la sho lo ka stong lnga brgya zhes ' byung bas so // sho lo ka ni tshigs bcad yin na / tshigs bcad kyi rkang pa bzhi la sho lo ka gcig go / lhug pa la tsheg bar sum cu so gnyis la sho lo ka gcig go / dgos pa gzhung tshad mang nyung rtogs pa' i phyir lo tsā bas byas kyi / rgya dpe la *bam po* mi bgrang sho lo ka bgrang ngo //

The large *bam po* is made up of one third of a thousand *shlo kas* and a small one is made up of three hundred *shlo kas*; from among these two, the latter figures in this work, because there occurs the statement: "The Indian manuscript has one thousand and fifteen hundred *shlo kas*." When a *shlo ka* is a stanza, then four feet of one quatrain is one *shlo ka*. In prose, thirty-two syllables constitute one *shlo ka*. While the *bam po* was created by the translators so that the length and size of a required text was known, the *bam po* is not calculated in an Indian manuscript, but the *shlo ka* is calculated.

Both the *Lhan dkar ma* and the *'Phang thang ma* state that the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* consists of six hundred *shlo ka* or two *bam po*, as does Bu ston in his chronicle^③. Be this as it may, the Tibetan translation of the text that is part of the xylographed Tenjurs does not relate anything about its purported length, so that Bu ston's statement anent "the Indian manuscript" suggests that this part was elided by later editors. We need to clarify one item in connection with Bu ston's claim that the *bam po* unit is alien to an Indian text.

① *Sde dge' i bka' ' gyur dkar chag* (Chengdu: Sichuan mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989), 342–343 [= *Collected Works*, vol. 9 (Sansal: Sherabling Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1990), 429]. This very passage is also cited in Khri Bsam gtan, *Skad gnyis smra ba' i rin chen bang mdzod*, 125, albeit with some mistakes.

② *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa' i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa' i rgyan ces bya ba' i ' grel pa' i rgya cher bshad pa lung gi snye ma*, *The Collected Works of Bu ston (and Sgra tshad pa)* [Lhasa print], part 18 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), 10.

③ Lalou, "Les textes Bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri srong lde btsan," 331 [= Herrmann-Pfandt, *Die lHan kar ma. Ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte. Kritische Neuausgabe mit Einleitung und Materialien*, 294], *Dkar chag ' phang thang ma / Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*, ed. Bod ljongs rten rdzas bshams mdzod khang, 35, and the *Bde bar gshegs pa' i bstan pa' i gsal byed chos kyi ' byung gnas gsung rab rin po che' i mdzod*, 945.

The synopsis of the *śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* that is attributed to a Kashmirian *paṇḍita* with the name of Chos dpal [* Dharmasrī] — it was included in the fourteenth century Tenjurs of Snar thang, Mtshur phu, and Zhwa lu^① — does observe at one point that the sutra consisted of one hundred thousand *tshigs su bcad pa* and three hundred *bam po*^②! The catalogs of these Tenjurs do not disclose the identity of this work's translator [s]. * Dharmasrī's slight *Prajñāpāramitākośatala* was translated by a certain Ba reg Lo tsā ba. If the latter's personal name were Thos pa dga', then this Tibetan Sanskritist should be placed in the second half of the eleventh century. And what of course follows from this is that * Dharmasrī must have lived no later than this. Bu ston does not cast aspersions on this text's Indic integrity, so that, if this were not an oversight on his part, we may surmise that * Dharmasrī might have written this synopsis with a knowledge, direct or otherwise, of the Tibetan translation of the *śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*!

Nya dbon Kun dga' dpal (1285–1379) says basically the same thing in his 1371 study of Haribhadra's *vṛtti*^③. He adds that someone — a gloss identifies this “someone” by *chos bshes*, that is Chos kyi bshes gnyen [* Dharmamitra] — had held that a *shlo ka* consists of thirty—three syllables, a notion which he dismisses as incorrect (*ma dag pa*). He also adds another reason why the translators introduced these measures, namely, that these would “eliminate [the possibility of] making the wording of a text more or less numerous” (*gzhung tshig la sgro skur spang ba*), that is, and here I interpret, it will ensure the stability of a text in general.

A Dharmamitra was the author of an *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* commentary where he characterized himself or where he is styled “a master of the Mahayana Madhyamaka” and where we learn that he was born in (?) Vaidala^④. He seems to have flourished around the year 800. It is a bit counterintuitive to hold that he is the same Dharmamitra who was the author of a commentary on Guṇaprabha's (? 7thc.) *Vinayasūtra*, if only because there the

① For these, see, respectively, Dbus pa Blo gsal's undated *Bstan bcos kyi dkar chag*, eighty—one—folio, slightly incomplete handwritten *dbu med* manuscript, 38b, Karma pa III's equally undated *Rje rang byung rdo rje' i thugs dam bstan' gyur gyi dkar chag*, *Collected Works of Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje*, vol. Nga (Xining, 2006), 550, and Bu ston's 1335 *Bstan' gyur gyi dkar chag yid bzhin nor bu dbang gi rgyal po' i phreng ba*, *Collected Works* [of Bu ston and Sgra tshad pa], part 26 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), 573.

② *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei* [= Sde dge] *Edition*, vol. 33, no. 3807 [#3802], 311/4 [Ta, 205b].

③ *Bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa' i rgyan' grel dang bcas pa' i rgyas' grel bshad sbyar yid kyi mun sel*, vol. 1 (New Delhi, 1981), 18 [= Jo nang dpe mdzod, vol. 4, ed. Ngag dbang kun dga'' jam dbyangs blo gros et al. (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2007), 14–15]

④ *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei* [= Sde dge] *Edition*, vol. 33, no. 3801 [#3796], 209/2 [Nya, 110a].

author is styled “a Vaibhāṣika master of Tho gar.”^① Tibetan *tho gar* refers to Kamboja^②, that is, an area to the northwest of Gandhāra in what is now northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan. The colophon of the translation (*'gyur byang*) of this commentary relates that it was translated by the Kashmirian Vaibhāṣika Jinamitra and Cog ro Klu' i rgyal mtshan at the command of a Dbang phyug dam pa' i mnga' bdag Lha btsan po. The latter should most probably be identified as emperor Khri srong lde btsan (ca. 742—ca. 800). Of some interest is what this Dharmamitra relates of himself in the author's colophon (*mdzad byang*), namely, that he was associated with Tar mi ta (sp?), an area that was located on the bank of the river Pakṣu, that is, the Oxus or Amu Darya.

To these two discussions we may add Gser mdog Paṅ chen Shākyā mchog ldan's (1428—1507) rather full gloss on this term that we find in his remarkable 1454 study of the *Abhisamayālamkāra*; there he writes as follows^③:

bam po dang po zhes pa ste / ska ba dpal brtesgs kyis / mngon rtogs rgyan rtsa ba *bam po* gnyis su byas shing / lo tsa ba chen pos *bam po* lngar mdzad / *bam po* zhes pa tha snyad rnying pa ste / dbus pa blo gsal gyis brda gsar rnying shan ' byed pa' i me long las / mnyam po' i don du bshad do // bstan bcos las / [? las / = la] lhad mi ' jug pa' i phyir lo tsa bas byas pa yin gyi / rgya dpe la *bam po* ' i tha snyad med do // spyir *bam po* ' i tshad la nges pa mi ' dug ste / sho lo ka lnga brgya la bam por byas pa spyod ' jug lta bu dang / sher snying *bam po* gcig tu byas pa dang / sho lo ka stong gi gsum cha la bam por byas pa dang / sho lo ka gsum brgya la byas pa las / ' dir phyi ma la bya dgos ste / ' di' i rgya dpe' i tshad la sho lo ka stong lnga brgyar bshad pa' i phyir ro // sho lo ka zhes pa ni bod skad la tshigs su bcad pa ste / rkang pa bzahir longs pa' o // rkang pa' i tshad la' ang nges pa med de / me tog phreng ' dzin la tsheg bar nyer gcig dang / rtag [= stag] rnam par rtsen pa la tsheg bar bcu bdun dang / rjes su bsngags pa la bdun [= brgyad] pa dang / ' phags pa' i dbyangs la dgu par snang ba' i phyir ro // tshig lhug pa la ni tsheg bar sum cu rtsa gnyis la sho lo ka re re byed par grags so // *bam po* byed pa' i rgyu mtshan ni / rgya gar gyi sho lo ka' i tshad des / bod kyi tshig bcad ma tshang ba dang lhag pa ci rigs su ' gyur bas sho lo ka' i tshad dang de smos ma nus pas / tshad [211] de mnyam por bgos nas bam por byas pa' o //

The expression: “The first *bam po* :” Ska ba Dpal brtsegs (ca. 800) made (*byas*) the basic text of the Tibetan translation of the *Abhisamayālamkāra* into two *bam po* and the Great Translator

① What follows is taken from *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei* [= Sde dge] Edition, vol. 45, no. 4125 [#4120], 112/1—2 [Yu, 389b—90a].

② See, H. W. Bailey, “Irano—Indica III,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950), 404, notes that the Tibetan expression *tho gar yul gyi bu mo brgya* reflects Sanskrit śataṃkāmbojikānāṃ kanyānāṃ, that is, “a hundred maidens from Kamboja,” hence the equation Tho [g] gar = Kamboja.

③ *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa' i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa' i rgyan ' grel pa dang bcas pa'i snga phyi' i ' brel rnam par btsal zhing / dngos bstan kyi dka' ba' i gnas la legs par bshad pa' i dpung tshogs rnam par bkod pa / bzhed tshul rba rlabs kyi phreng ba*, *Collected Works*, vol. 11 (New Delhi, 1975), 210—211.

[= Rngog Lo tsā ba] created (*mdzad*) it into five *bam po*^①. The term *bam po* is an old expression; the *Brda gsar rnying shan 'byed pa' i me long* by Dbus pa Blo gsal explained it in the sense of *mnyam po* ('together, even').^② While the Tibetan translator devised it so as not to introduce a corruption in a text, an Indian manuscript does not have the term *bam po*.

In general, the size of a *bam po* is not fixed; apart from the fact that five hundred *shlo kas* were made into a *bam po*, as in the translation of the *Bodhicāryāvātāra*, the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra* was made into one *bam po* and one third of a thousand *shlo kas* were made into a *bam po*, and three hundred *shlo kas* were made into a *bam po*, in this work, the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, the latter must be the case, because it was explained that the length of its Sanskrit manuscript was one thousand and five hundred *shlo kas*.

The term *shlo ka* is *tshigs su bcad pa* in Tibetan; it extends to four metrical feet. The length of a metrical foot, too, was not fixed, because the *me tog phreng 'dzin* (**sragdharā*) metre appears in twenty-one syllables, the *stag [gi] rnam par rtsen pa* (**śārdūlavikrīḍita*) metre in seventeen, the *rjes su bsngags pa* (**anuṣṭubh*) in eight and the *'phags pa' i dbyangs* (*

① The texts contained in the Tenjurs do not divide it into any units of measurement.

② Neither word occurs in the manuscript of a treatise of this genre edited by Mimaki Katsumi under the almost generic title of *Brda gsar rnying gi rnam par dbye* in "Dbus pa blo gsal no 'Shin kyū goi shū' - kōteibon shokō [The *Brda gsar rnying gi rnam par dbye* ba of Dbus pa blo gsal - a First Attempt at a Critical Edition," *Asian Languages and General Linguistics. Festschrift for Prof. Tatsuo Nishida on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday* (Tokyo, 1990), 17-54. For that matter, the term *bam po* is not found in Mimaki Katsumi, "Index to Two *Brda gsar rnying* Treatises: The Works of Dbus pa blo gsal and Lcang skya Rol pa' i rdo rje," [*Bukkyō bunkoshi ronshū* (Collected Articles on the Cultural History of Buddhism)] *Journal of the Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies* [Special Issue] (1992), 479-503, or in the *Li shi' i gur khang* lexicon of possibly 1536 that is attributed to Skyogs ston [or: Smin grub] Lo tsā ba Rin chen bkra shis, including the version that was edited by A myes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597-1659) on the basis of a handful of manuscripts, for which see his *Gsar rnying gi brda' i rnam dbye legs par bshad pa gsung rab kun la lta ba' i sgron ma*, *Sum rtags dang Dag yig*, *Dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gsung rab*, vol. 2, ed. G. yag' Jam (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skun khang / Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), 413-440 - a different manuscript of this work was published in the edition of his *Collected Works*, vol. 26 (Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2000), 253-284. Skyogs ston Lo tsā ba reports in the biography of his teacher Zhwa lu Lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441-1528) that the latter had written a study of Dbus pa Blo gsal' s work, for which see the *Rje btsun zhwa lu lo tsā ba' i rnam par thar pa brjed byang nor bu' i khri shing*, forty-two-folio handwritten *dbu med* manuscript, 37b. This work is there re-referred to as the *Dbus pa blo gsal bas bya ba' i brda' gsar rnying la dpyad pa*, which is probably not a title. In addition to the titles that are given by Gser mdog Paṅ chen and the manuscript published by Mimaki of Dbus pa Blo gsal' s lexicon, there are several other manuscripts of cognate texts with different titles that are attributed to him as well; see the *'Bras spungs dgon du bzhugs su gsol ba' i dpe rnying dkar chag*, Smad cha [2], comp. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004), 1481-1482, 1486-1487 [nos. 016696, 016706, 016748 016756] for respectively, an eight-folio *Skad brda' i rnam dbye*, an eleven-folio *'Gyur skad snga phyi' i brda' i khyad par mdo tsam bstan pa' i tshig gi le' u*, a five-folio *Brda skad gsar rnying gi khyad par gdams ngag*, and a seven-folio *Brda gsar rnying gi dbye ba*. Lastly, we do find the entry *bam por sbrel* in Rnam rgyal tshe ring's recent *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod* (Beijing: Krung go' i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2001), 350, meaning *mnyam por bsdams pa*, "to tie together, to bind together," albeit without an indication whence he had taken this expression.

ārya) in nine^①. It is well-known that in prose (*tshig lhug*, * *gadya*) each *shlo ka* constitutes thirty-two syllables. The *raison d'être* for creating the *bam po*: Since there will be a host of incomplete Tibetan verses or a surplus due to the size of an Indian *shlo ka* and since one was unable to speak of the measure of a *shlo ka* and that, because one was unable to speak of the size of a *shlo ka*, etc., the *bam po* was created to standardize the length^②.

Lastly, the notion that the *bam po* unit played a role in ensuring textual integrity in the sense of being a marker that was placed in the translated text to prevent unauthorized elisions or interpolations is also signaled in, for example, the Dge lugs pa scholar Gung thang pa Dkon mchog bstan pa' i sgron me's (1762—1823) study of Haribhadra's *vṛtti*

① Witness the dissonant note in the descending order, with the nine following the eight-syllable metre, which is in part due to the fact that the first three belong to the *samavṛtta* (Tib. *mnyam pa' i' phel*) category of Sanskrit metres, which is different from the fourth and last one, which belongs to the *jāti* (tib. *bskyed pa*) metre. For the first three, see M. Hahn, *Jñānaśrīmitra's Vṛttamālāstuti. Eine Beispielsammlung zur altindischen Metrik*, Asiatische Forschungen, Band 33 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), 23, 25 and 188—189, 181—182, 87—88. *Jñānaśrīmitra* conceived the *Vṛttamālāstuti* as a eulogy of *Mañjuśrī* and Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182—1251) himself experimented with prosody in a work titled *Bde bar gshegs pa' i thugs rje la bskul ba, Sa skya pa' i bka' 'bum*, ed. Bsod nams rgya mtsho, vol. 5 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968), no. 16, 141/4—3/1 [= *Gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, Mes po' i shul bzhag, vol. 18, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go' i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007), 258—262]. He discusses the aforesaid metres [for the first time in the history of Tibetan letters] in his *circa 1225 Sdeb sbyor sna tshogs me tog gi chun po, Sa skya pa' i bka' 'bum*, ed. Bsod nams rgya mtsho, vol. 5 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968), no. 15, 136/4: *me tog phreng rgyud 'dzin*], 136/1—2; *son rtse mo can ma*, 134/2; *rjes su bsngags pa*, and 139/1: *'phags pa' i dbyangs* [= *Gsung 'bum*, vol. 4, Mes po' i shul bzhag, vol. 18, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang (Beijing: Krung go' i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007), 237, 234—235, 226—227, 246]. For his discussions of Sanskrit prosody, he based himself in part on Ratnākaraśānti's (early 11th c.) *Chandoratnākara*, *Jñānaśrīmitra's* (?) later *Vṛttamālāstuti*, as well as some unnamed other sources. As for the *'phags pa' i dbyangs* [or: *'phags pa*] metre, he writes that it is for the better part (*phal cher*) a *viṣamavṛtta* (tib. *mi mnyam pa' i' phel*) metre and this is precisely Ratnākaraśānti's position as found in his autocommentary on the *Chandoratnākara*, for which see *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei* [= *Sde dge*] *Edition*, vol. 50, no. 4309 [#4304], 285/4 [Se, 373b]. For the extant folios of almost half the Sanskrit text of the latter, see now M. Hahn, "Ratnākara. Śānti's Autocommentary on His *Chandoratnākara*," *Vicitrakusumāñjali. Volume Presented to Richard Othon Meisezahl on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday*, ed. H. Eimer (Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1986), 77—100. Sa skya Paṇḍita writes furthermore in his *Sdeb sbyor sna tshogs me tog gi chun po*, 140/4 [*Gsung 'bum*, 253], that Nāgārjuna's (2nd c.) *Suhṛllekha* was originally written in the *'phags pa' i dbyangs* metre and that the translator simplified it by making it a quatrain with nine syllables in each metrical foot. Additional meters that may have been known to the post-Dpang Lo tsā ba Blo gros brtan pa Tibetan intelligentsia could have been taken from Śākyarakṣita's *vivṛti*—commentary on the *Vṛttamālāstuti*, for which see now M. Hahn, "Sanskrit Metrics — As Studied at the Buddhist Universities in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries A. D.," *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre IX* (1993), 56—76.

② I am not at all confident of my rendition of the last sentence. I have taken, at my peril, the phrase *...tshad dang de...* to indicate something like *de dang de*, "that and that," that is, "etc."

and the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*^①.

We are now perilously close to becoming tiresomely repetitive. At first glance it appears that the post—fourteenth century literature does not bring anything substantial on the table that might be added to the dossier that has accumulated thusfar. But we should be careful not to jump too hastily to conclusions and remain on the lookout for additional sources. One of these is now surely Gu ge Paṅ chen Gags pa rgyal mtshan's (1415—1486) 1480 biography of Bla bla ma Ye shes ' od (947—1019/24) of which so far a single and not very satisfactory manuscript witness has been located. I must confess at the outset that the diction of this work is at times difficult to follow and I am not at all sure that I have interpreted the ensuing passage correctly. At one point, Gu ge Paṅ chen comes to speak of matters having to do with the economics of the production of copies of manuscripts of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*, and the cost of having them recited. He thus writes the following about the payments of scribes and the cost of their recitation^②:

shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la / bam po re re la zho phyed dang 2 bras bu rtsis nas / srang drug bcu rtsa phyed dang gsum / nyi khri lnga stong pa la srang bco lnga dang zho lnga / khri brgyad stong pa la srang bcu gcig dang zho 2 / khri pa la srang drug dang zho 2 / brgyad stong pa la srang lnga / ... gsung rab klog pa' i tshe / ji lta ba 4n du byung na shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa / tshar 1 la srang 1 / nyi khri lnga stong pa la zho gnyis / khri brgyad stong pa la zho phyed do / khri pa la zho re ' bul / de las tshar mang du klog na / nyer khri pa ni 4 srang / khri brgyad stong pa la lnga srang / khri pa la bcu srang / brgyad stong pa la bcu gnyis srang /

This can be tabulated as follows:

1. Copying:

For the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*, that is, the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (?):

one and a half *zho* for each *bam po*; the resultant calculation is sixty—two and a half *srang*^③

For the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*:

fifteen *srang* and five *zho*

① 'Grel pa don gsal gyi steng nas rgyas ' bring bsduḡ gsum mngon rtogs rgyan rtsa ' grel sogs mdo rgyan sbyar ba' i gzab bshad kyi zin bris sbas don gsal ba' i sgron me, *Collected Works*, vol. I (New Delhi, 1975), 45a: bam po zhes pa ' di gzhung gi cha mang po sdoms pa la zer de' ang lhag pa bsnan nas je mang du gtong ba dang / sngar yod bsal nas je nyung du gtong ba lta bu' i sgro skur spangs pa' i ched du lo tsā bas byas pa yin [la /].

② *Lha bla ma ye shes ' od kyi rnam* [s] *thar*, 5b; I have expanded the abbreviated spellings of various expressions in the text. Gu ge Paṅ chen wrote this work in Lha bla ma' s see of Mtho gling monastery, and my thanks go out to Mr. Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po for sharing with me his copy of this valuable handwritten dbu med manuscript in forty—one folios.

③ If my interpretation of this cryptic (for me!) line is correct, then the figure must be based on the fact that the sutra has three hundred *bam po*. If the scribe were to get paid one and a half *zho* per copied *bam po*, then he would receive two hundred *zho* in all. If this is the equivalent of sixty—two and half *srang*, then one *srang* equals three and two—tenths of a *zho*.

For the *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
eleven *srang* and two *zho*

For the *Daṣṭasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
six *srang* and two *zho*

For the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
five *srang*

2. Exact recitation:

For the *Prajñā pāramitāsūtras*, *Śatasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* (?):
one time one *srang*

For the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
two *zho*

For the *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
half a *zho*

For the *Daśasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
one *zho*

When they are recited many more times than that one occasion:

For the [*Pañca*] *viṃśatisāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
four *srang*

For the *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
five *srang*

For the *Daśasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
ten *srang*

For the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñā pāramitāsūtra* :
twelve *srang*

I must confess that I do not quite understand why, if my reading of the text is correct, one should get paid less for reciting a longer sutra and more for a shorter one. This will probably have to be rethought.

That the translators were also paid for their work is variously attested. A translator who felt he was not sufficiently recompensed by his patron might even go so far as to contaminate his text on purpose, so that it could not deliver the spiritual efficacy that was promised by the proper and sustained use of its mantras. Citing earlier authorities, Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1385–1456) points to such an instance in connection with the *Aparamitāyurjñāna* in his 1420 study of the Action—tantras^①.

A final word: Anyone familiar with the indigenous Tibetan commentarial literature

① *Bya rgyud spyi' i rnam par bshad pa legs par bshad pa' i rgya mtsho*, *Sa skya pa' i bka' ' bum*, comp. Bsod nams rgya mtsho, vol. 10 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1968), no. 135, 274/1.

will have occasionally found that Tibetan intellectuals at times refer to a specific *bam po* when quoting a passage from a large, multi-*bam po* work. A case in point is ' Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392–1481) who, in his *Rtsis la ' khrul pa sel ba* of 1442–1443, a po-lemical treatise on Kālacakra calendrical computation, cites “others” who in turn quoted a passage from the massive *Vinayavibhaṅga* by referring to the *bam po* in which it occurs^①.

Summa summarum: The different meanings of the Tibetan word *bam po* depend on the different contexts in which it is and can be used. In the earliest, early ninth century catalogs of translated scripture [and a few texts written by Tibetans intellectuals themselves], *bam po* is used catalographically as well as, when considering an individual text, as a measure word indicating the length of a unit of written text in terms of the number of *shlokas* it contains. We have seen that this number can vary considerably, so that the length of a *bam po* is variable and not stable. Whereas the *shlo ka* as a unit of text is not at all uncommon in Indian writing, the *bam po* unit is indigenous to the Tibetan cultural area. The *bam po* and the subordinate *shlo ka* units are also significant for the economics of the translation and reproduction of texts. It appears that these were used to establish how much a person should get paid for the translation, the copying, or for the recitation of a text that contains an x number of *bam pos* and an x number of *shlo kas*. As far as I am aware, the use of measuring texts in terms of the number of *bam pos* and *shlo kas* is not attested in the indigenous Tibetan literature that dates from the middle of the ninth century onward. For example, unless references to *bam po* have been elided in the course of its copying, the text of Gñubs Sangs rgyas ye shes' (844–?) famous *Bsam gtan mig sgron* was never divided into *bam pos* and *shlo kas*. Needless to say, a number of puzzles still remain and this brief paper is by no means not the final word on the *bam po* and, indeed, more systematic work needs to be done on this still little explored subject.

① See the 1466 Rgyal bzangs smon mkhar blockprint, fol. 3a. This passage is very similar to what we find in the *Dpal dus kyi ' khor lo las ' byung ba' i rtsis kyi tshul la yang dag pa' i ngag sbyin pa legs par bshad pa padma dkar po' i zhal lung* of 1447 in which Grwa phug pa Lhun grub rgya mtsho (ca. 1400–ca. 60) systematically laid out his profound reservations with ' Gos Lo tsā ba' s work; see the 1681 Dga' ldan phun tshogs gling blockprint, fol. 14a [= *Rtsis gzhung pad dkar zhal lung*, ed. Yum pa (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2002), 20]. The passage is attributed to “contemporary Kālacakra exponents.” A gloss of unknown authorship includes among these “others” a certain “Chos”, which most probably is a short-hand reference to ' Jam dbyangs Chos kyi mgon po (ca. 1330–ca. 1400).