

Tigers and Leopards for the Monastery: An Inventory of Gifts from sNar thang to Rwa sgrenḡ

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Over the past few decades, Tibetan scholarship has increasingly been enriched by multi-faceted approaches that combine historical and anthropological methods, consider religious doctrines and practices in their relationship with material culture, or look at art and textual sources side by side (as the recipient of this Festschrift has done in numerous publications). In an endeavour to gain a more rounded picture of social, intellectual, cultural, and material life on the plateau, sources outside the Tibetan literary mainstream are often particularly rewarding. Letters, administrative documents,¹ text types rendering speech,² and personal notes reveal details of Tibetan society and culture that might otherwise have escaped us. The present contribution will focus on one such document, a letter sent from sNar thang to Rwa sgrenḡ monastery preserved among the writings of the 7th abbot of sNar thang, mChims Nam mkha' grags (1210–1285).³ The letter concerns a donation of religious objects and material goods from sNar thang to Rwa sgrenḡ and contains—in addition to the description of the circumstances of this donation—a detailed list of the objects that were presented to the *saṅgha* of Rwa sgrenḡ at that time. Thus, it not only provides valuable insights into the relationship between the two monasteries, but also into the material culture of monastic life.

1 See the publications and studies of administrative documents by scholars such as Dieter Schuh, Karl-Heinz Everding, Hanna Schneider, Charles Ramble, and Peter Schwioger.

2 See for example Jackson 1984 on the *Mollas* (*mol bas*) of Mustang.

3 “A letter sent from the noble hermitage of sNar thang to the great institution of Rwa sgrenḡ, the hermitage of the Victor”; see *'Phrin yig*, fol. 21a6–7: *dpal snar thang gi dben gnas dam pa nas : ra sgrenḡ rgyal ba'i dben gnas kyi gtsug lag khang chen por [...] phul ba'i 'phrin yig*.

As the letter records, dGe bshes rTsang pa Jo gdan⁴ had conveyed a message from Rwa sgreng to sNar thang, and in response to this, it was decided in the following year to undertake extensive fundraising in gTsang and to collect various kinds of gifts to be sent to Rwa sgreng. As the letter explains, the religious objects at Rwa sgreng had become old and worn out and needed restoration. In particular, sNar thang provided various materials for the purpose of redecorating the dBu rtse, the central temple of Rwa sgreng that dates from the foundation period of the monastery (1057). This building was of particular importance as it housed the six-armed Mañjuvajra statue thought to have belonged to Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982–1054), and brought to Rwa sgreng by its founder 'Brom ston pa (1004–1064).⁵ All across gTsang, monks, local donors, and patrons made their contributions in a joint effort to collect various gifts and valuable items. These were dispatched to Rwa sgreng in the summer of a male iron monkey year.

Unfortunately, the dates provided in the letter do not entirely match up, and it is therefore difficult to establish its date with certainty.⁶ The letter is not signed. Its colophon is dated to a wood monkey year,⁷ and the letter states that it was sent in response to a message from Rwa

4 On the title Jo gdan and the *gdan gcig/stan gcig* “single mat” practice of eating only once a day, see Heimbel 2013: 221–224. The letter consistently uses the spelling rTsang for gTsang.

5 On this statue, see Iuchi 2016: 33; a good photograph can be found in Henss 2014: 285. When I visited Rwa sgreng in the early 2000s, the statue was in the inner shrine of the dBu rtse temple known as the chapel with two pillars (*ka gnyis ma*). The Ka gnyis ma has its own internal circumambulation path and is in this respect similar to other early monastic foundations of Central Tibet, such as the famous temple of Grwa thang. When I returned to Rwa sgreng in 2015, the assembly hall (*'du khang*) of the dBu rtse had just been enlarged and the image had been moved to an adjacent building. I am unable to say whether it has meanwhile returned to its original location.

6 Schuman 2016: 88 dates the letter to 1268 (which would be a *sa 'brug* year) and the donation itself to 1261 (*lcags bya*), unfortunately without providing any evidence or references for these dates.

7 The letter ends with “Here ends the letter sent from the noble hermitage of sNar thang to the great institution of Rwa sgreng, the hermitage of the Victor, in the first summer month of the male wood monkey year.” See *'Phrin yig* fol. 21a6–7: *dpal snar thang gi dben gnas dam pa nas : ra sgreng rgyal ba'i dben gnas kyi gtsug lag khang chen por : shing pho spre'u'i lo dbyar zla ra ba'i dus su phul ba'i 'phrin yig rdzogs sho //*.

sgreng in the previous year, a water sheep year.⁸ Within the 13th century, these years would correspond to either 1223 and 1224, or 1283 and 1284. A further date is provided at the end of the document in a note appended to the colophon in small script. An insertion mark makes it likely that it was meant to be a gloss relating to the expression “*ra sgreng rgyal ba’i dben gnas kyi gtsug lag khang chen po*” in the colophon. It is not entirely legible, but seems to say that the letter was copied “182 years after [the foundation of the dBu rtse] by Grags pa [don] grub from the personal book (*phyag dpe*) of the abbot and true Kalyāṇamitra by the name of Nam mkha’,”⁹ which cannot refer to anyone else but mChims Nam mkha’ grags. As the dBu rtse was founded in 1057, this addendum would have been written in 1239. Assuming that the calculation is correct, we have to conclude that the letter was written at the earlier of the two possible dates, in 1224.

Further details seem to support this timeframe. As the letter explains, dGe bshes rTsang pa Jo gdan served as messenger between Rwa sgreng and sNar thang. He is described as a “caretaker of the *dharma*,” and he conveyed the message “even though it was not fitting for him to serve as a messenger,”¹⁰ which implies that he was of high status at the time of writing. It is likely that he is identical with Slob dpon Jo gdan gTsang pa, the head of Rwa sgreng in 1230/31–1235/36,¹¹ who must already have been a highly respected person in 1224. It should also be noted that the letter makes no mention of the attack on Rwa sgreng by Mongol troops under general Dorta in 1240. If the gifts had been sent to Rwa sgreng for the purpose of restoring the buildings and art work after a Mongol raid, one might expect some allusion to this event, and its lack may therefore indicate that the raid had not yet taken place.

8 *’Phrin yig*, fol. 9b2.

9 The handwriting is very faint, but seems to read (*’Phrin yig* fol. 21a7–8): *dge bshes ston pas lugi lo la ra sgreng du gdan phab de nas lo 2 na u rtse rin po che bzhangs : de nas lo brgya brgyad bcu rtsa 2 lon pa’i dus su : // mkhan po yongs kyi dge ba’i bshes gnyen nam mkha’i mtshan can gyi phyag dpe las (?) bris (?) pa (?) grags pa grub kyi lagso //*. BDRC (tbc.org) lists a Grags pa don grub among the students of mChims Nam mkha’ grags, but the dates given for him (1377–1467) are much too late.

10 *’Phrin yig*, fol. 9b1: *bstan pa’i spyi gnyer mdzad pa dge bshes rtsang pa jo gdan phonyar mi ’os kyang [...]*.

11 Iuchi 2016: 20 provides a list of the early abbots of Rwa sgreng and their dates as far as these are known.

While the details presented so far seem to match up, they are not in accordance with the date given for the year in which the gifts were dispatched. According to the letter, this happened in an iron monkey year, which would correspond to 1260. Should this read “wood monkey” (1224) rather than “iron monkey” and thus coincide with the date of the letter itself? Moreover, the proposed date does not fit very well if we assume that mChims Nam mkha’ grags is the author: 1224 is long before he became abbot of sNar thang in 1250/51, and he would have been only fourteen years old at the time. The editors of the *bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum phyogs bsgrigs* have presumably included the letter among his writings because of the above-mentioned note stating that it was copied from mChims Nam mkha’ grags’ own book. However, as the letter is not signed, it is entirely possible that mChims Nam mkha’ grags is not the author but only kept a copy among his personal manuscripts. He could easily have been in possession of a copy of the letter, since copies of official letters were usually kept at the place from where they were sent. mChims Nam mkha’ grags visited sNar thang in 1223 with his uncle mChims Blo gros brtan pa and returned there in 1230 to receive his full ordination and formal monastic training.¹² This would have given him an opportunity to access the letter and keep it among his own notes and writings.

All arguments considered, it seems plausible to assume that the letter was written in 1224 and survived because it was contained in a notebook in the possession of mChims Nam mkha’ grags, from where it was copied by the scribe of our manuscript in 1239. However, a more thorough investigation of the names mentioned in the letter would be needed to establish the dates with certainty, and due to the slightly inconclusive evidence,¹³ I shall leave the issue of dating open for now.

12 See Schuman 2016: 73–108 for a summary of mChims Nam mkha’ grags’ life based on his biography in the *sNar thang gser phreng*.

13 For example, the letter mentions those in the assembly “who were present at the time of the 4th throne holder” of sNar thang, Gro ston bDud rtsi grags (1153–1232) (see *’Phrin yig* fol. 4a1–2). This seems to imply that the letter was written after, but not too long after his lifetime, which would contradict the dating proposed here.

The structure of the letter follows established patterns of official letter writing,¹⁴ adapted to the specific contents and purpose of the letter. It can broadly be subdivided into the following sections:

- *Invocatio*: Homage to the lamas, the Buddha, and Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna (p. 254/fol. 2b1–6); praise of the monastery of Rwa sgreng and invocation of protective deities (pp. 254–256/fols. 2b6–3b1)
- The setting (broadly corresponding to the *intitulatio*): Description of the monasteries of Rwa sgreng and sNar thang (pp. 256–259/fols. 3b1–4a1)
- *Inscriptio*: Salutation and request to pay attention (“listen”) to the letter (p. 259/fol. 4a1–7)
- Praise (*bstod pa*) of Atiśa and ’Brom ston pa (pp. 260–264/fols. 4b1–6b7)
- *Narratio*: Description of the monastic community at Rwa sgreng (pp. 264–267/fols. 6b7–8a5), the need to restore the dBu rtse of Rwa sgreng (p. 267/fol. 8a5–6) and the decision to do so in response to a request from Rwa sgreng sent in the previous year (pp. 267–269/fols. 8a7–9a7); fundraising efforts in gTsang (pp. 269–272/fols. 9a7–10b1)
- List of gifts in prose and in verse (pp. 272–279/fols. 10b2–14a6)
- Requests to the *saṅgha* of Rwa sgreng to (1) achieve the task of renovating the temple (pp. 279–283/fols. 14a6–16a3), (2) observe the *dharma* (pp. 283–284/fol. 16a3–b6), and (3) dedicate the merit of the renovation (pp. 284–287/fols. 16b6–18a3)

14 The letter from sNar thang to Rwa sgreng is significantly longer than the administrative documents and letters presented in publications such as Schuh 1977 and Everding 2006, but it follows a similar structure. Its structure is also broadly comparable with the *skyabs tho* (letters of request) described in Jackson 1984, which consist of “I. Opening salutation, mentioning the recipients of the offerings and the ones to whom the request was addressed. II. The supplication [...]. III. Mention of offerings [...]. IV. Concluding summary of the request [...]” (Jackson 1984: 47). Convenient overviews of Tibetan conventions of diplomatic letter writing can be found in Schneider 2005, esp. pp. 259–260 and in Schwieger 2015: 4–6. Diplomatic letters differ significantly from the genre of Buddhist epistles (Tibetan *spring yig/’phrin yig*, Sanskrit *lekha*) presented in Dietz 1984. Both types of letters, diplomatic and religious ones, are included in a useful bibliographical survey on Tibetan letter writing by Jampa Samten and Dan Martin (Samten and Martin 2015: 323–326).

- Prayer including analogies between the splendour of the renovated buildings and the flourishing of the *dharma* (pp. 287–291/fols. 18a7–20a6)
- *sMon tshig* (pp. 291–293/fols. 20a6–21a5) and eschatocol/colophon: The letter was sent from sNar thang to Rwa sgren in the first summer month of the wood monkey year (p. 293/fol. 21a6–7). *Subscript*: The letter was copied from the book of the one called Nam mkha’ by Grags pa [don] grub 182 years after the foundation of the dBu rtse (p. 293/fol. 21a7–8).

The letter contains a number of interesting elements which will be discussed elsewhere.¹⁵ In this paper, I shall focus on the list of gifts (pp. 272–279/fols. 10b–14a) alone. The items donated to Rwa sgren are listed twice, first in prose and then in verse, including their respective quantities. Through this meticulous recording, the donor obviously wanted to ensure that everything was safely delivered and none of the precious items could get lost or diverted to other destinations. Researchers interested in the manuscripts and artwork housed at Rwa sgren may find it interesting to read the letter side by side with other documents related to the monastery’s sacred objects, as they provide “snapshots” of the items in its possession at specific times and may allow us to trace the history of their acquisition and preservation to some degree.¹⁶

The list presents a fascinating overview of objects that were considered valuable and suitable as gifts to a monastery. As one would expect, it opens with the three types of religious objects: statues and paintings as “objects of the body” (*sku rten*), manuscripts of religious texts as “objects of speech” (*gsung rten*), and *mchod rten* and relics as “objects of the mind” (*thugs kyi rten*). Book lovers will be pleased to find a wide range

15 I am planning to discuss the letter in more detail in the context of a monograph on the early history of Rwa sgren with the working title *Tibetan Monasticism in the Making: The Case of Rwa sgren Monastery* (in preparation).

16 The letter can provide useful information if compared with the accounts of Atiśa’s and ’Brom ston pa’s life included in mChims Nam mkha’ grags’ *sNar thang gser phreng* (on these two biographies see Eimer 1997 and 2008), the *Rwa sgren gi bshad pa nyi ma’i ’od zer* by ’Brom Shes rab me lce (Iuchi 2016), and the modern *Rwa sgren dkar chag*, *Rwa sgren chos sde chen po’i lo rgyus*, and *Rwa sgren chos sde chen po’i gnas yig*. Kano 2015 demonstrates how a careful comparison of sources such as these can provide evidence for the fate of the Indian manuscripts brought to Tibet by Atiśa.

of terms for books and manuscripts (*glegs bam*, *deb*, *po ti*, *pod*), individual volumes (*dum* or *dum pa*), and sets of books (*cha*) in the section on the “objects of speech.” It is also interesting to see that both donations of *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts mentioned in the letter—one to Rwa sgreng and one to Po to dgon pa—are accompanied by donations of butter lamps to be lit in front of these sacred scriptures as offerings, which highlights their special status as objects of devotion. However, the gifts do not only include high status religious objects, but also other items to be used for the restoration of the temple and for the use of the *saṅgha*: gold and precious stones, animals, fabrics, paper, and metal implements and tools. A striking element in the list of animals donated to Rwa sgreng are the tiger (*stag*), leopard (*gzig*), and snow leopard (*gung*).¹⁷ As it seems unlikely that sNar thang would have sent three large live predators to Rwa sgreng, one may presume that the list refers to animal furs. However, if that is the intended meaning, it is puzzling why they are listed together with living domestic animals that are sent to Rwa sgreng as gifts, rather than listing them among the various types of fabrics and textiles mentioned further down in the letter. It is possible that this list of animals goes back to a standard trope of gift inventories that was incorporated into our letter.¹⁸

17 Franke et al (2010: 207) explains *gung* as “Leopard” or “Luchs” (‘leopard’ or ‘lynx’). The *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod*, p. 75 states: *ri mo med pa’i stag ste / gcan gzan rtswa gzig la’ang zer /* (“A tiger without stripes; it is also called ‘grass leopard.’”). The *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, p. 357 on the other hand, has the explanation: [...] *stag dang dbyibs cha tsam ’dra zhing / spu ris nar mo dang sgor mo gnyis ’dres pa’i gcan gzan zhig ste*, “a carnivore, in shape similar to a tiger, with a mixture of oblong and round patterns in its fur,” which suggests a snow leopard. The synonym *rtswa gzig* in the *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod* could therefore be a misspelling for *gsa’*, the regular name of the snow leopard. I am grateful to Dr Lama Jabb for providing this explanation.

18 The letter lists *stag gzig gung gsum* alongside horses and pack animals. Similar lists of animals are found in ritual texts, where the animals are presented as offerings to Buddhist or indigenous Tibetan deities. The triad of *stag gzig gung gsum* is not uncommon in rituals to mountain deities, where they form part of *mdos* rituals or *gtor ma* offerings. This context of offerings may perhaps have led to the idea that *stag*, *gzig*, and *gung* should also be included in the list of gifts for Rwa sgreng. Some sources suggest the notion of animal skins; these include the 12th century Bon history *Grags pa gling grags* which mentions collars made of the furs of *stag gzig gung gsum* as part of the attire of Bon priests (*Three Sources for the History of Bon*; *g.Yung drung bon gyi rgyud ’bum*, p. 22.4 and *sGrags pa gling grags*, p. 53.3).

The following pages contain the list of gifts from sNar thang to Rwa sgreng, presented as a gift of appreciation to the recipient of this Festschrift. The Tibetan text is provided in the appendix.

The inventory of gifts sent from sNar thang to Rwa sgreng¹⁹

Religious objects listed in prose

[p. 272.1/fol. 10b1] ...The quantities of these useful objects, offered to the *saṅgha* of Rwa sgreng in the first summer month of the male iron monkey year are, if listed in short: [2] objects of the three jewels who are [our] refuge; additional implements for their ritual service; and donations of valuable materials for the roof of the dBu rtse rin po che.²⁰

[3] Regarding the list of images, the objects of the body: There are one painting (*thang sku*) and one metal statue (*lugs ma*) of the master of the teaching, the *sugata* Śākyamuni. [4] There are one painting and one metal statue of the *sugata* King of Physicians (Bhaiṣajyaguru). There is one set (*cha*) of paintings of the five Jina families, embodying all the buddhas. [5] There is one metal statue of the Holder of the Vajra Body, Speech, and Mind²¹ of all *sugatas*, Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi (rGyal sras Phyag na rdo rje). In short, seven paintings and three statues, [6] [i.e.,] ten objects of the body are being donated.

The same description is also given in Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan's history of Bon (Karmay 2005: 226; Engl. tr. p. 44). The attestations in Bon histories and rituals to mountain deities may perhaps indicate that *stag gzig gung gsum* were a standard group in pre-Buddhist Tibetan traditions. Be that as it may, it was apparently a common triad to be listed among offerings or gifts, which may explain why the animals appear in our list. Donations of animal skins, including those of tigers and leopards, remained common in later centuries, and I thank Dr Yannick Laurent for providing me with images of murals from the Nor bu gling ka that show tiger and leopard furs, piled up together with other gifts in front of the *dharmarājas* of the Tibetan empire as well as religious figures, including Atiśa and the Dalai Lama.

19 Schuman 2016: 89–91 provides a tabular overview of the items mentioned in the prose parts of the list.

20 As mentioned above, the dBu rtse is the central temple of Rwa sgreng that houses the most important statue of the monastery. Here and in a few other instances, the scribe spells the name *u rtse* instead of *dbu rtse*.

21 Tib. *sku gsung thugs kyi gsang ba 'dzin pa*. The holder of the “secret” (of the “vajra” body, speech, and mind) is Vajrapāṇi.

Regarding the objects of speech: The lord and subjects of dMyal, the noble people of gTsang 'Gur mo tshong 'dus,²² serve the three jewels in general, and in particular hold the *saṅgha* of Rwa sgren high [7] like a crown jewel. Among these, there are those in the region of dMyal Khur po sgang, blessed by Jo bo Atiśa with an uninterrupted stream of the adornments of splendid enjoyments, [p. 273.1/fol. 11a1] and out of these there are those who abide in the worldly *dharma* with faith and wisdom [2] and who accomplish supreme activities with untiring vigour; [a region] where the leaves of the tree of merit flourish and where the sweet scent of a good reputation pervades the ten directions, [3] where subjects of the divine three jewels, who wield power in a kingdom without crown, are the norm—[these people] are donating the meditation object of the great patron 'Bum skyabs, [4] the Great Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā (*rGyal ba'i yum chen mo*), the Larger [*Prajñāpāramitā*] in gold in fourteen fine volumes.²³ It is donated together with the materials for venerating it [in the form of] a good butter lamp which [is large enough to] last day and night, [5] together with the requisite (*cha rkyen*) of a *pa tre* (?)²⁴ for a continuous ritual service of reading it out every year. Moreover, there is one good volume (*glegs bam*) of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* in precious gold. [6] There are forty-one volumes (*pod*) of Sūtras [made of] precious [materials].²⁵ All in all, fifty-seven books [made of] precious [materials] (*rin chen po ti*) are being donated. Similarly, in terms of white

22 A place in gTsang, also known as Tshong 'dus gur mo/'gur mo/mgur mo.

23 Tib. *gser gyi rgyas pa bcu 4 dum bzang po*; I assume that *rgyas pa* stands for *yum rgyas pa* and *dum* is here used in the sense of *dum pa* “book, volume,” although it could of course also have the usual meaning “piece, portion.”

24 The first letter has a slightly unusual shape, but most likely represents the syllable *pa*. Tib. *pa tre* could be an alternative spelling for Tib. *pa tra*, which can according to S.C. Das represent 1. Skt. *patra* “figures, pictures of various designs,” 2. Skt. *pātra* “begging bowl,” and 3. “a gem” (Das 1902: 776). The first meaning relates to Skt. *patra* (n.) “leaf, document.” A document or chart (outlining the order of the ritual service?) is perhaps the most plausible meaning in this context, but I am not entirely certain.

25 Or: “precious Sūtras” (*rin po che'i mdo*)? The frequent mention of the materials used for the production of these books makes it likely that the letter is talking about “sūtras written in precious materials,” such as gold, silver, and copper on dark blue-black paper (*mthing shog*). An instructive description of Tibetan writing materials and paper is given in chapter 5 in Diemberger, Elliott and Clemente 2014.

[books],²⁶ [7] there are eight sets (*cha*) of the Larger *Prajñāpāramitā* (*rGyal ba'i yum rgyas pa*). There are thirty-four middle[-length] *Prajñāpāramitās*.²⁷ There is one set of the *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*. There are nine sets of the *Ārya Aṣṭasāhasrikā*[*prajñāpāramitā*] *sūtra*.

[p. 274.1/fol. 11b1] And as for the scriptures based on this,²⁸ there is one set of the *Ārya Ratnakūṭa*. There is one set of the *Collected Dhāraṇīs*, the main part of the *Vidyādharaṇīka* (*rig 'dzin pa'i sde snod*). [2] In short, there are three hundred and four white volumes (*dkar po'i dum pa*). If one counts them all in all, three hundred and sixty-one books (*po ti*), the objects of speech, are being donated.

[3] Regarding the objects of the mind, there are sixteen *stūpas* with relics (*gdung rten*), headed by the reliquary (*gdung khang*) of the Kal-yānamitra sTabs ka ba the Great, and the reliquary of Shangs pa A me[s?], and the relics of sGyer gnon pa chen po.²⁹ [4] There are two vajras. Counting all together, eighteen receptacles of the mind are being donated.

[5] As for the ritual implements for their veneration, if we classify them: There is one umbrella.³⁰ There is one piece of conch-shell [in-laid] with precious copper. There is one white auspicious conch trumpet. There is one canopy. [6] There are three *maṇḍalas* of precious bronze and one *maṇḍala* of copper as seats [for the deities] (?),³¹ making four. There is one set of seven offering bowls. There is one set of

26 Tib. *dkar po'i dbang du bgyis na yang*. “White” must here refer to the colour of the paper, as opposed to the “blue” books mentioned further down.

27 *Yum bar ma*, presumably identical with *Yum 'bring ba* (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*).

28 Tib. *de la brten pa'i gsung rab*. This is an interesting remark; so far, I have not come across the idea that the *Ratnakūṭa* collection is based on or relies on the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

29 Quite likely a misspelling for *dGyer sgom pa chen po, i.e., dGyer sgom pa gZhon nu grags pa (1090–1171?).

30 The previous part of the list used the honorific form *bzhugs* when referring to the statues, books, and *mchod rten*, whereas the verb used for the following objects of lower status is the ordinary form *mchis*.

31 Tib. *bzhugs gdan rin po che 'khar ba'i ma rdal 3 / zangs kyi ma rdal 1 dang 4 mchis pa lags*. The term *ma rdal* means “in the right proportions,” which is possible: “There are three seats in the right proportions made of precious bronze [...]” However, the versified list that follows contains the word *ma 'dal* = *maṇḍala*, which suggests that *ma rdal* is more likely to be a misspelling for *ma 'dal*.

seven copper teapots; [7] [counting their] upper and lower [parts] it is two sets. There are four brass lamps, together with the implements for butter lamps. There is one bell, given as a decoration for the dBu rtse rin po che. [p. 275.1/fol. 12a1] In short, forty-five ritual implements are being donated.

Religious objects listed in verse

About these [gifts], we say:

“[2] Two [images of] Śākyamuni (*thub dbang*), the *vaiḍūrya* gem that illuminates our world far and wide (?),³²

[one set of paintings of] the five Jinas, whose nature is the sphere of primordial wisdom (*ye shes dbyings*),

together with the Bodhisattva who holds the *vajra* (Vajrapāṇi), the holder of the secret—

[3] [these] ten exquisite receptacles of the body are being donated.

The core of the doctrine, the Extensive Sūtras,³³

[including] the precious mother of the Victors,³⁴ the long, short, and very short [*Prajñāpāramitā*],

[4] together with the master of all secret tantras—

[these] fifty-seven books [copied in] precious [materials] (*rin chen po ti*) are being donated.

Similarly, the white [volumes of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras*], the long and middle one,

together with the short [*Perfection of Wisdom*] which is based on them, are forty-nine;

[5] [and] the profound *Collection of Dhāraṇīs*—[these] immaculate receptacles of speech

32 Tib. *mi mjed be dur rgyar snang thub dbang 2 // mi mjed*, “fearless,” is commonly used as a synonym for “world” (corresponding to Sanskrit *sahā*). Skt. *sahāloka dhātu*, Tib. *mi mjed kyi khams*, is a designation for the world we humans live in; *mi mjed kyi dbang po* “lord of the world” is used as an epithet of Buddha Śākyamuni. Alternatively, one might consider the emendation **mi rje* “lord of men,” although it seems slightly unlikely that such a common term would be corrupted to *mi mjed*. I assume that *be dur* stands for *bai ḍūrya*, but my translation of the whole phrase remains tentative.

33 Tib. *bstan pa'i snying po shin *tu rgyas pa'i sde*, i.e., the Vaipulyasūtras.

34 As above, *rin chen* presumably has the double meaning of “precious” and “[written in] precious [materials].”

[consisting of] three hundred and sixty white and blue books are being donated.

Relics (*ring srel*), endowed with the essence of the two Buddha bodies [*rūpakāya* and *dharmakāya*],

[6] reliquaries of excellent beings, made of precious materials, together with the indestructible *vajra* that overcomes the accumulations of what needs to be abandoned—

[all in all] nineteen excellent receptacles of the mind [full of] blessing are being donated.

[7] For their worship, *maṅdalas* (*ma 'dal*) and a canopy, a parasol, a melodious sounding bell, vessels for offerings of scented water, and implements for a lamp to be lit in front of [the altar], together with brass lamps [p. 276.1/fol. 12b1] are being donated.”

Other material gifts listed in prose

Furthermore, to enumerate the valuable materials for the roof of the dBu rtse rin po che: As the foremost prerequisite, [2] we present precious copper [to the amount of] eight hundred and thirty. Ten *srang* of gilt are being donated. As further material necessities, [3] seventy precious turquoises are being donated, headed by 'Od ldan, the queen of valuables, worth seven thousand [ordinary] turquoises.

Thirteen good horses; [4] three good *mdzo* (yak-cow hybrids) and one pack ox [making] four, together with the three: the tiger, the leopard, and the snow leopard are being donated.

Forty-five pouches of sugar, [5] eight pouches of shellac (**rgya skyegs*), two pouches of salt, two pouches of *a ru ra*, and one pouch of *ba ru ra*³⁵—all together sixty pouches are being donated.

[6] Furthermore, one good bale (*dos*) of pure cotton and one good bale of white cotton; in short, one hundred and twenty pieces (*yug*) of cloth are being donated.³⁶

One hundred [units] of iron are being donated. [7] Moreover, three woollen cloaks, two pieces of the [patched] upper robe, two mendicant

35 *Myrobalan* or *terminalia chebula* and *terminalia belerica*; their fruits are used in Tibetan medicine.

36 This implies that one “load” or bale (*dos*) consists of sixty pieces (*yug*) of cloth.

staffs, and one yak hair gown (*re bcam*)³⁷ are being donated. One piece of large Indian silk, together with *bse ma bu* (?)³⁸ [p. 277.1/fol. 13a1] making four, and one and a half volumes (*po ti*) of paper are being donated. Moreover, one honeycomb,³⁹ nineteen [pieces of] leather parchment, and one large hide (?)⁴⁰ are being donated.

Seventeen large pans and [2] iron sieves, two *rte chu* (?), an anvil (?),⁴¹ one tripod, two iron pegs, one iron chain, two iron spoons, four shovel tops, [3] one “iron yak” (*lcags gyag*), and one sickle are being donated.

Moreover, two seating cushions, one [piece of] carpet frills (*brum tshe*), one animal skin (*gyang shun*),⁴² five [pieces of] felt, three [pieces of] woollen cloth, six tarpaulins.

[4] One good ritual brass vase, one rosary of *gzi* stones, one wooden tub, two woollen shawls, five bowls, a leather bag together with an iron [hook/lock?] making two, and fourteen pieces of [5] saddle-and-cushions for *mdzos* and horses are being donated.

And finally, in order to make the precious teaching abide for a long time, a white offering banner that completely overwhelms the dark forces is being offered—this many material items are [now] in the hands of the *saṅgha* of Rwa sgrenḡ. [7] Moreover, the great seat of the perfect Kalyāṇamitra Pu to ba, the gTsub lag khang of Pu to is presented with [p. 278.1/fol. 13b1] the three: the long, middle, and short *Prajñāpāramitā*, together with the implements for butter lamps.

37 A *re bcam* is a warm cloak made of *re ba* (cloth made of yak hair) worn by monks in the winter. It is similar in meaning to *zla gam* (honorific *sku bcam*). I thank Dr Lama Jabb for this explanation.

38 As the term appears in a list of clothing and fabrics, I assume that *bse* here means “leather” rather than “rhinoceros.” According to the *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*, p. 1004, *bse* can also be a designation for “copper.” I am not at all sure what *ma bu* (“mother and child”) means in this context; could it perhaps refer to a large and two smaller pieces of leather (thus “making four” together with the piece of Indian silk, as the text says)? Or is *bse* a misspelling for the homophone syllable *bsre*, and thus similar in meaning to *bsre bo* “maroon” [cloth]?

39 The manuscript has *sbrang dong* “honeycomb.” As the word appears between various kinds of cloth and leather, I wonder whether it is a misspelling for some kind of fabric.

40 The manuscript has *rgya bko*; probably a misspelling for **rgya ko* (*ko = ko ba*).

41 I take *'og rtog* of the manuscript as a misspelling for **'og rdo*.

42 Tib. *gyang shun* = *lpags shog gi ming ste* / (*brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*, p. 859); similar to *gyang lugs*.

Other material gifts listed in verse

About these, we say:

“[2] A condition for [sustaining] Great Beings (*skyes bu chen po*), a material for vessels,⁴³

the foundation [to be] covered in blazing purified gold,
the necessary [material] of gentle and pleasing reddish radiance (*'od chags*)—

[3] more than eight hundred [units of] rare and valuable copper are being donated.

A market commodity if hoarded and sold well [for a good price] by the fools,

the condition for what is beneficial if offered to the three jewels by the wise,

[4] the most noble when properly purified and applied [to the roof],
the giver of light rays—eighty *zho* of precious gold are being donated.

A valuable resource of wealth in the mountain solitude of Tibet,

the sole protector of the poor in time of need [5],

the best of ornaments on festive occasions

called “turquoise”—seventy of these precious stones are being donated.

The noble ones who compensate for the [frail] legs of the weak, [6]

a means of going wherever they wish for the mighty,

the best of animals, obtained due to the merit of excellent people—

thirteen tame and capable excellent horses [7] are being donated.

The medicine gathered from the core of the plant that pleases all,⁴⁴

the supreme food that generates strength, offered [as a gift] to people of high birth,

sweet and soothing in smell and taste like nectar—

[p. 279.1/fol.14a1] sixty pouches of raw sugar are being donated.

43 Tib. *skyes bu chen po rnam's kyi rkyen gyur snod kyi rgyu*. The expression *snod kyi rgyu* may be intended to have a double meaning in this context: as a material, it designates the metal that vessels are made of; in a metaphorical sense, it can also designate the cause for becoming a person who is a suitable vessel (Tib. *snod*, Skt. *bhājana*) for the *dharma*, and would thus be identical with the *skyes bu chen po* (the Great Beings, i.e., accomplished Buddhist masters).

44 Tib. *kun dga'i ljon shing* “the all-pleasing tree,” here obviously refers to sugarcane.

The best of garments of the excellent beings who live [lit.: “wander”] in
 pure regions
 and the best of precious merchandise to carry for those who hasten
 along the road,
 [2] the ground on which images of deities are painted, embellished with
 a hundred features—
 one hundred and twenty [pieces] of stainless cotton, fine and soft, are
 being donated.

The protective armour that keeps you alive in this world,
 [3] the ornament of heroes, conquering the hosts of hostile opponents,
 the very first among all [materials for] crafts—
 one hundred [units] of precious iron, firm, supple, and powerful, are be-
 ing donated.

[4] Moreover, pack *mdzos*, protecting cloaks (*ber*),
 and [skins of?] the kings of the beasts of prey: the tiger, leopard, and
 snow leopard, etc.
 together with a white banner of complete victory,
 [these] material goods [5]—excluding the three [kinds of religious] ob-
 jects [mentioned above]—
 are seventy if counted according to their respective categories.
 If counted according to their individual appearance,
 one thousand three hundred fifty (*brgya phrag phyed dang bcu 4*) kinds
 of precious goods [6] are being donated.
 Moreover, a mountain of precious copper is being offered.”

Appendix: Tibetan Text⁴⁵

[p. 272.1/fol. 10b₁] don gyi dngos po rnam lcags pho spre'u'i dbyar zla ra pa (*ba) la dge 'dun ra sgren pa'i phyag tu 'bul ba'i grangs smos pa mdor bsdu na 'di lta ste : skyabs dkon mchog 3 gyi rten dang : de rnam kyi bsnyen bkur gyi yan lag mchod cha dang / u (*dbu) rtse rin po che'i rgya phibs kyi cha rkyen dkor [3] nor rnam so // de la rten gyi rnam grangs la : sku'i rten bstan pa'i bdag po bde bar gshegs pa shag kya thub pa'i thang sku 1 dang lugs ma 1 bzhugs / [4] bde bar gshegs pa sman pa'i rgyal po'i thang sku 1 dang lugs ma 1 bzhugs / sargyas (= sangs rgyas) thamd (= thams cad) kyi rang bzhin rgyal ba rigs lnga'i thang sku cha 1 bzhugs / bde bar [5] gshegs pa thed (*thamd = thams cad) dag gi sku gsung thugs kyi gsang pa 'dzin pa rgyal sras phyag na rdo rje'i lugs sku 1 bzhugs te : mdor na thang sku bdun : lugs sku 3 ste [6] sku'i rten bcu tham pa 'bul lags // gsung gi rten la : spyir dkon mchog 3 gyi zhabs nas 'degs shing : sgos dge 'dun ra sgren pa gtsug [7] gi nor bu lta bur khur ba rtsang 'gur mo tshong 'dus rin po che'i ya rabs dmyal rje 'bangs las : jo bo a ti shas longs spyod kyi dpal 'byor rgyan mi 'chad par

[p. 273.1/fol. 11a₁] / rigs rgyud byin gyis rlabs sa dmyal khur po sgang pa : de'i nang nas kyang dad pa dang shes rab kyis 'jig rten gyi chos dge ba la gnas shing / [2] mi zhun pa'i brtson 'grus kyis ya rabs kyi bya ba mthar 'byin pa : bsod nam kyi ljon shing lo 'dab rgyas shing : grags snyan gyi dri zhim pos phyogs bcur khyab [3] pa : cod pan med pa'i rgyal srid la dbang sgyur yang lha dkon mchog 3 gyi 'bangs tshad mar gyur pa ; yon bdag chen po 'bum skyabs kyi thugs dam rgyal [4] ba'i yum chen mo gser gyi rgyas pa bcu 4 dum bzang po : de'i mchod pa'i cha rkyen gdugs_m tshan khor ma'i mar me bzang po / de lo re re zhing (*bzhin) glog (*klog) pa'i [5] chos spyod rgyun ma chad pa'i pa tre'i cha rkyen dang bcas pa 'bul ba lags // gzhan yang rin po che gser gyi glegs

45 The punctuation marks imitate the shape of the Tibetan punctuation, i.e., the slash stands for a *shad*, the colon corresponds to a double dot in the Tibetan text, and the semicolon corresponds to a *shad* with a dot on top in the Tibetan text. The letter o is used to render two small semi-circles in the manuscript marking the end of a sub-section. For a list of similar punctuation marks, see Iuchi 2016: 15. The full forms for contracted spellings (*bsdus yig* and *bskungs yig*) are added in parentheses after the respective word; emendations are added in parentheses, marked with an asterisk. Subscript letters correspond to letters added in smaller script below the line in the manuscript.

bam brgyad stong pa bzang po 1 bzhugs / [6] rin po che'i mdo pod 4 bcu zhe 1 bzhugs te : spyir rin po che'i po ti lnga bcu rtsa bdun 'bul ba lags / de bzhin du dkar po'i dbang du bgyis na [7] yang rgyal ba'i yum rgyas pa cha brgyad bzhugs : yum bar ma sum bcu rtsa 4 bzhugs / khri brgyad stong pa cha 1 bzhugs / mdo 'phags pa brgyad

[p. 274.1/fol. 11b1] stong pa cha dgu bzhugs / de la brten pa'i gsung rab : 'phags pa dkon mchog brtsegs pa cha 1 bzhugs / rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod phal che ba gzungs [2] 'dus cha 1 bzhugs pas : mdor na dkar po'i dum pa sum brgya dang bzhi bzhugs te : spyir bsdom na gsung gi rten po ti gsum brgya drug bcu rtsa 1 'bul ba lags / [3] thugs kyi rten la dge ba'i bshes gnyen stabs ka ba chen po'i gdung khang dang : shangs pa a me'i gdung khang dang / sgyer gnon (*sgom?) pa chen po'i gdung [4] rnams kyis dbu mdzad pa'i gdung rten bcu drug bzhugs / rdoe (= rdo rje) 2 bzhugs te spyir sdom na thugs kyi rten bco brgyad 'bul ba lags / de rnams [5] kyi mchod pa'i cha spyad la gdugs 1 mchis / rin po che zangs kyi dung cha 1 mchis / bkra shis kyi bud (*bud) dung dkar po 1 mchis / bla res (*re) 1 mchis : [6] bzhugs gdan rin po che 'khar ba'i ma rdal (*ma 'dal?) 3 / zangs kyi ma rdal (*ma 'dal?) 1 dang 4 mchis pa lags / spyang sngar 'bul ba'i ting bdun cha 1 dang / zangs teb (*tib) [7] bdun cha 1 ste steng 'og bcas pa cha 2 mchis pa lags / ra gan gyi rkong bu 4 mar me'i cha rkyen dang bcas pa mchis / dbu rtse rin po che'i rgyan

[p. 275.1/fol. 12a1] rgyan⁴⁶ du 'bul ba'i dril bu 1 mchis te mdor na mchod cha'i rnam grangs bzhi bcu zhi (*zhe) lnga 'bul ba lags so // o de dag nyid la 'di skad [2] ces bya ste / mi mjed be dur rgyar snang thub dbang 2 // yeas (= ye shes) dbyings kyi rang 4n (= bzhin) rgyal ba lnga // gsang 'dzin rgyal sras rdoe (= rdo rje) 'dzin dang bcas // rab mdzes [3] sku'i rten mchog rnam bcu 'bul // bstan pa'i snying po shin du (*tu) rgyas pa'i sde // rin chen rgyal yum rgyas bsdus shin du (*tu) bsdus // gsang pa'i rgyud rnams [4] kun gyi bdag por bcas // rin chen po ti lnga bcu rtsa bdun 'bul // de bzhin rnam dkar rgyas dang bar sde 2 // de rten 'dus pa bzhi bcu rtsa dgur ldan : [5] zab mo'i gzungs 'dus dri med gsung gi rten // dkar sngo po ti sum brgya drug bcu 'bul // thub pa'i sku 2 ring srel snying po can // rin chen las [6] grub skyes mchog gdung gi rten // spang bya'i tshogs 'joms mi 'jig rdo rjer bcas // byin brlabs thugs kyi rten mchog bcu dgu 'bul // [7] de dag mchod rkyen ma 'dal bla re

46 *rgyan* is a dittography and needs to be deleted.

dang // brdugs (*gdugs) dang dril bu snyan pa'i sgra ldan du // dri chab
a rga'i snod dang mdun sel ba // sgron ma'i cha rkyen rgong bur

[p. 276.1/fol. 12b1] bcas pa 'bul ces bya'o // // o gzhan yang dbu
rtse rin po che'i rgya phibs kyi cha rkyen nor gyi rnam grans la / rkyen
gtso bor gyur pa [2] rin po che zangs brgyad brgya dang sum bcu tham
pa 'bul ba lags / de la byug pa'i gser srang bcu tham pa 'bul ba lags / de
2 kyi nye 'khor du nye bar [3] mkho ba'i dngos po g.yu stong tsho bdun
ri ba'i rgyal mo 'od ldan gyis sna drangs pa'i rin po che g.yu bdun bcu
tham pa 'bul ba lags / rta bzang po bcu [4] 3 : mdzo bzang po 3 : khal
glang bzang po 1 dang 4 / stag gzig gung 3 dang bcas pa 'bul ba lags /
bu ram ltang tse (*tshé) bzhi bcu rtsa lnga : rgya [5] skyags (*skyegs)
ltang tse (*tshé) brgyad / tsha la ltang tshé 2 / a ru ra ltang tshé 2 : ba ru
ra ltang tshé 1 ste sdoms pas ltang tshé drug bcu tham pa 'bul ba lags /
[6] gzhan yang btso ras dos bzang po 1 / ras dkar po dos bzang po 1 ste
mdor na ras yug brgya dang nyi shu 'bul ba lags / lcags brgya tham d
(= thams cad) 'bul ba [7] lags / gzhan yang ber 3 : snam sbyar 2 : khar
(*mkhar) sil 2 : re bcam 1 'bul ba lags / rgya gar gyi zab chen yug 1 : bse
ma bu dang bcas

[p. 277.1/fol. 13a1] / pa 4 : shog bu po ti phye dang 2 'bul ba lags /
gzhan yang sbrang dong 1 / kha sha bcu dgu / rgya bko (*ko) 1 'bul ba
lags // slang ba (= *sla(ng) nga) dang [2] lcags tshags bcu bdun : rte chu
2 / 'og rtog (*'og rdo) / lcags sgyed 1 / lcags phur 2 / lcags thag 1 : lcags
thom 2 : khyem tog 4 : lcags [3] g.yag 1 / rtsa gri 1 'bul ba lags / gzhan
yang 'bol stan 2 : brum tshé 1 / g.yang shun 1 : phying pa lnga : snam bu
3 / phyar ba drug / [4] ra gan gyi bya ma bum bzang po 1 / gzi mchong
phreng 1 / gzhong pa 1 : bal sder (*ther) 2 / kong tse lnga : sgro ba la lcags
dang bcas pa 2 / mdzo rta'i sga [5] stan cha bcu bzhi 'bul ba lags / kun
gyi mthar bstan pa rin po che yun du gnas par bya ba'i phyr nag po'i
phyogs sde dang bcas pa zil gyis [6] gnon pa rnam par rgyal ba'i ba dan
dkar po 1 'bul ba lags pas / dge 'dun ra sgrenge pa'i phyag tu rgyu'i dngos
po de tsam du gda' // o // [7] gzhan yang dge bshes ston pa'i thugs kyi
sras dam pa : yongs kyi dge ba'i bshes gnyen pu to ba'i gdan sa chen po :
pu to'i gtsug lag khang du yang

[p. 278.1/fol. 13b1] shes rab kyi pha rol du phyin pa bka' rgyas 'bring
bsdus pa 3 mar me'i char rkyen dang bcas pa 'bul ba lags so // : de dag
nyid la 'di skad ces bya ste / [2] skyes bu chen po rnams kyi rkyen gyur

snod kyi rgyu // btso ma'i gser 'od 'bar ba 'dzin pa'i gzhi // 'jam gnyen (*mnyen) dmar ba'i 'od chags nyer mkho ba // [3] rnyed dka'i nor zangs brgyad brgya lhag bcas 'bul // blun pos sba bde btsong na brin pa'i nor // mkhas pas rten 3 mchod na mkho ba'i rkyen // legs [4] sbyangs byugs na 'od bzang 'byin pa yi // khyad 'phags rin chen gser zho brgyad bcu 'bul // gangs ri'i khrod na 'byor ldan nor gyi dbyig // phongs dus [5] dbul po rnams kyi mgon 1 pu // dga' ston dus na ya rabs rgyan gyi mchog // g.yu zhes bya ba'i rin chen bdun bcu 'bul // nyams chung rnams [6] kyi rkang mthud dam pa ste // chen po rnams kyi rkyen gyur 'dod dgur phyin // mi mchog bsod nams las grub dud 'gro'i rab // zhi dul rtsal ltan rta mchog [7] bcu 3 'bul // kun dga'i ljon shing snying po 'du ba'i sman // stobs skyed ya rabs bsnyen bkur zas kyi mchog // mngar zhi dri ro bdud rtsi dang mtshungs pa //

[p. 279.1/fol. 14a1] / bu ram phal che'i ltang tse (*tshe) drug bcu 'bul // dkar po gling na 'gro mchog gos kyi phul // lam rings bkur na yang zong nor gyi rab : [2] mtshan brgyas spras pa'i lha sku bri ba'i gzhi // srab 'jam dri med ras brgya nyi shu 'bul // 'jig rten 'tsho ba'i rkyen gyur skyob pa'i go // pha rol [3] dgra tshogs 'joms byed dpa' bo'i rgyan // gzo (*bzo) rig gnas rnams kun gyi sngon 'gro ba // sra mnyen ngar ldan rin chen lcags brgya 'bul // gzhan [4] yang theg pa'i mdzo dang skyob pa'i ber :/ gcan zan rgyal po stag gzig gung lasogs (= la sogs) // rnam par rgyal ba'i ba dan dkar po'i bar // rten 3 ma [5] gtogs zang zing dngos po rnams // rigs mthun re rer bgrangs na bdun phrag bcu // gsal ba so sor bgrangs na nor gyi sna // brgya phrag phyed dang [6] bcu 4 'bul zhing mchis // gzhan yang rin chen zangs kyi ri bo 'bul : ces bya'o // //.

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Volume One



INDIAN AND TIBETAN STUDIES 12.1

Hamburg • 2021

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*His Holiness
The Gongma Trichen*
SUPREME HEAD OF THE SAKYAPA ORDER
OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

FOREWORD

I am very pleased that this commemorative volume is being compiled in celebration of David Jackson's 70th birthday.

I have known Ngawang Kalden, as we know him in Tibetan, for a very long time and in one instance, we received teachings from Chogye Trichen Rinpoche together. We have always maintained contact throughout the years.

David's grasp of the Tibetan language is truly remarkable, certainly placing him among the most accomplished Tibetan-speaking westerners. Likewise, his knowledge of Tibetan literature and of the Tibetan Buddhadharmas is pre-eminent, while his translations of the same are of exceptional precision.

He is a scholar in the true sense of the word, and it is befitting that his former students at Hamburg University show their gratitude to his accomplishments by dedicating this Festschrift to him.

With blessings,

The Sakya Trichen

3rd February 2021

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White Tārā, Artist: Tsechang Penba Wangdu (brTse byang sPen pa dbang 'dus).

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