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The Kadampa: a Formative Movement of Tibetan Buddhism

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Summary and Keywords

The Bka' gdams pa (pronounced "Kadampa") emerged as a distinct tradition of Tibetan Buddhism in the 11th century CE. The most common understanding of the name in Tibetan sources is that this tradition taught the complete word of the Buddha (*bka'*) as explained in the instructions (*gdams*) of the Indian teacher Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054). This is sometimes specified as referring to his instructions on the graded path (*lam rim*) towards Buddhahood[1] that were later adopted and propagated by the Dge lugs pa (pronounced "Gelugpa") school, beginning with Tsong kha pa's (1357–1419) influential *Lam rim chen mo*. It is commonly assumed that around the early 15th century the Bka' gdams pa were absorbed into Tsong kha pa's reform movement of the "new Bka' gdams pa" (*bka' gdams gsar ma*), later known as the Dge lugs pa, but further research is needed to investigate the exact time and circumstances of their disappearance.

Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, also known by his Indian honorific title Atiśa[ya] or Adhīśa, was invited to Western Tibet by its rulers, and he arrived there in 1042. At the request of king Byang chub 'od (984–1078), he composed his famous "Lamp on the Path to Awakening" (*Bodhipatha-pradīpa*, Tib. *Byang chub lam sgron*) which became an important model for Tibetan works on the graded path to awakening. He then accepted an invitation to Central Tibet where he spent the rest of his life teaching, writing, performing rituals, and translating Buddhist works in collaboration with Tibetan translators. He passed away in Snye thang near Lhasa in 1054.

Several of Atiśa's Tibetan students played an important role in the development of Buddhism on the Tibetan plateau. However, it is his student 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas (pronounced "Dromtön Gyelway Jungnay", 1004-1064) who is traditionally regarded as the founding father of the Tibetan Bka' gdams pa lineage since his students became instrumental in spreading the Bka' gdams pa teachings in Central Tibet. In addition to the above-mentioned *lam rim*, they became famous for their instructions on "Mental Purification" or "Mind Training" (*blo sbyong*, pronounced "Lojong") which is meant to free the mind from attachment to the ego and generate the attitude of the "awakening mind" (Skt. *bodhicitta*). *Lam rim* and

blo sbyong became highly popular doctrinal and didactic genres and have had an impact on Tibetan Buddhism far beyond the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa traditions.

The Bka' gdams pa are often perceived as a tradition with an emphasis on monasticism and Mahāyāna ethics, rather than on yogic and tantric practice. However, it should be kept in mind that Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna himself had grown up in the tantric traditions of Bengal. His work on the stages of the path to awakening includes instructions on Tantra, but states that tantric practice may not contradict the vows taken (thus excluding antinomian practices for monastics). The early Tibetan Bka' gdams pa masters take the same stance and promote the idea that Pāramitānaya (i.e., non-tantric Mahāyāna Buddhism) and Tantra have the same validity and lead to the same goal, thus trying to strike a balance between the two approaches.

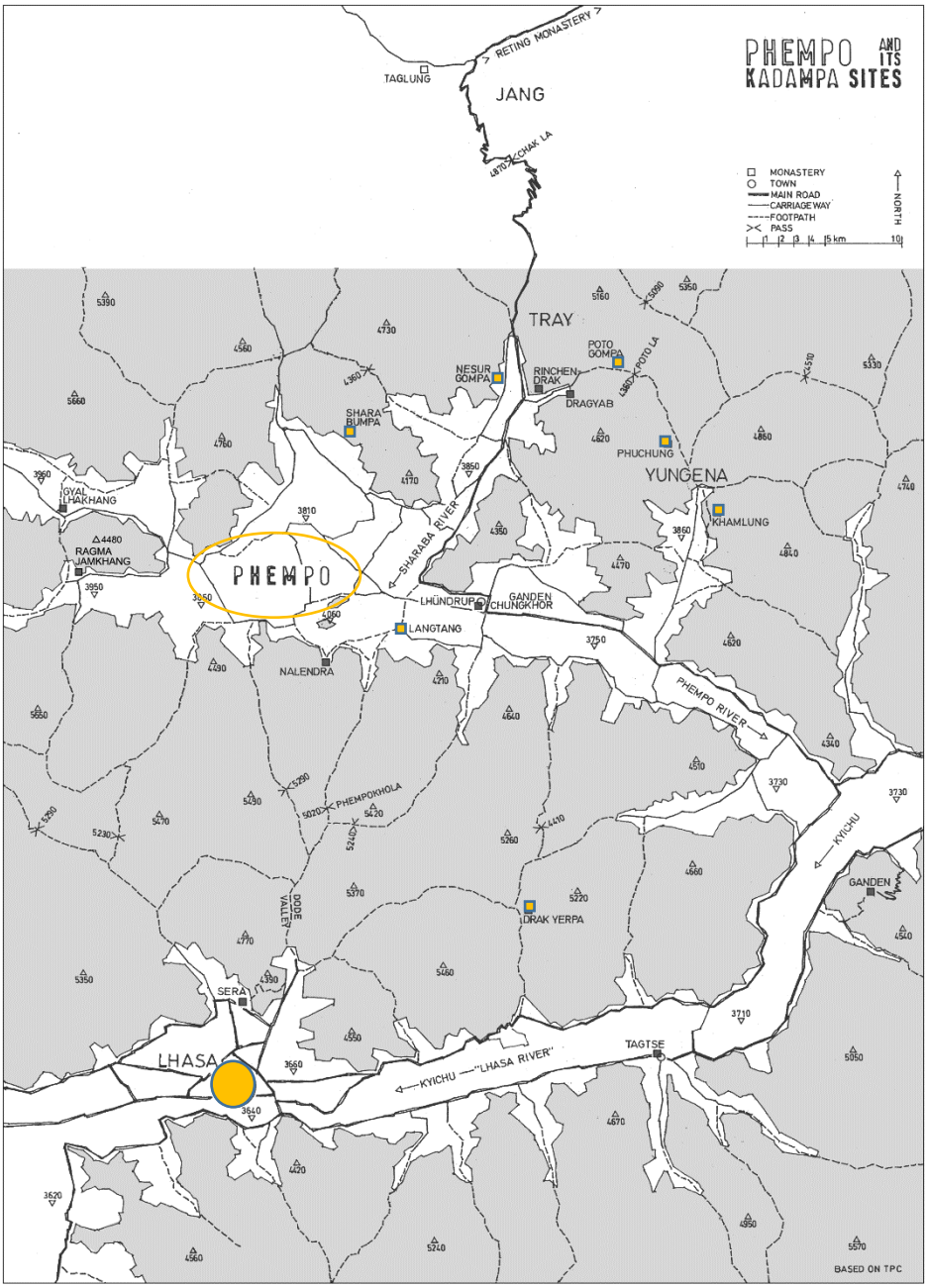
Keywords: Tibetan Buddhism, Bka' gdams pa (Kadampa), *lam rim*, *blo sbyong*, Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas

The Bka' gdams pa Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism

The Bka' gdams pa are one of the four major traditions or "schools" of Tibetan Buddhism that were formed in the context of the 11th century revival of Buddhism on the Tibetan plateau.[2] Schools or traditions of Tibetan Buddhism can be characterised according to a whole range of criteria, including their philosophical views and doctrines, their preferences for specific tantric cycles, their meditation practices, their institutional identity through main monastic seats, and their lineage of teachers. The last of these criteria seems of particular importance, given the emphasis on lineage and transmission in tantric Buddhism in general, and in Tibetan Buddhism in particular. All of the above-mentioned Tibetan traditions trace themselves back to Indian teachers, which from a Tibetan point of view means that they represent an authentic form of Buddhism coming from the homeland of Buddha Śākyamuni.

In the case of the Bka' gdams pa, the Indian teacher from whom the lineage originates is Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054), a tantric master and Buddhist scholar from Bengal, who is also known by his Indian honorific title as Atiśa[ya] or Adhīśa, or in Tibetan as Jo bo ("the master"), Jo bo rje ("the supreme master"), or Lha gcig ("the sole lord"). He was invited to the Western Tibetan kingdom of Gu ge and arrived there in 1042. He then accepted an invitation to Central Tibet where he stayed until he passed away in the autumn of 1054.

His Tibetan disciples became instrumental in passing on his legacy; as the most important we should mention his translator and travel companion over nineteen years, Nag tsho lo tsa ba Tshul khrims rgyal ba (1011–ca. 1064), as well as three students who are often named as the triad of "Khu, Rngog, and 'Brom". Khu ston's impact on the tradition is the least obvious; Rngog Legs pa'i shes rab (b. 10th cent.) and his nephew Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109) founded an important school of logic and epistemology;[3] and 'Brom Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1004-1064) is traditionally regarded as the founding father of the Bka' gdams pa tradition proper. At his monastery of Rwa sgreng (pronounced "Reting"), some of the most important Bka' gdams pa masters taught or were trained, and the Central Tibetan Bka' gdams pa tradition spread from there. The region of 'Phan yul (modern-day Phempo), north of Lha sa and not far from Rwa sgreng, became one of their main home regions; another important centre of Bka' gdams pa learning was the monastery of Lo on the northern side of the Gtsang po river.



Map of Phempo with early Kadampa monasteries, drawing by Hans-Ulrich Roesler (2004).

Kadampa seats are indicated by a coloured square.

From the 14th century onwards, another important monastic seat started collecting and publicising the Bka' gdams pa legacy: the monastery of Snar thang (pronounced "Nartang") in the province of Gtsang.[4] Several abbots of Snar thang were involved in compiling Bka' gdams pa works and creating mainstream collections of biographies and doctrinal works. Bka' gdams pa texts were reproduced early on when the technique of blockprinting became popular on the Tibetan plateau; the 16th century blockprints of some Bka' gdams pa works helped to enhance their literary impact and ensured a trans-regional distribution.[5] By this time, however, the Bka' gdams pa had already disappeared as a distinct tradition, and the Dge lugs pa tradition regarded itself as the rightful heir to the Bka' gdams pa legacy.

It should be noted that the influence of the Bka' gdams pa masters reaches far beyond Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa circles; Atiśa is a highly revered figure for other traditions too (especially the Bka' brgyud pa, who trace themselves back to the tantric guru Nā ro pa, who was also one of Atiśa's teachers). Moreover, the doctrinal genres associated with the Bka' gdams pa, the expositions of the graded path to Buddhahood (*lam rim, bstan rim*) and the instructions on "mind training" (*blo sbyong*), became highly popular across school boundaries, and works of this type were composed by authors from different strands of Buddhism.[6] The early Bka' gdams pas flourished at a time that was generally fairly non-sectarian (or perhaps better: pre-sectarian), and it was common that students of Tibetan Buddhism studied with famous masters of different traditions. Thus, what is said here about the Bka' gdams pa should not be understood as applying to an exclusive school or sect, but rather to a strand with many interconnections within the emerging lineage network of Tibetan Buddhism.

Early Bka' gdams pa teachers

Given the importance of teaching lineages, this survey needs to begin by introducing the most important early Bka' gdams pa teachers, those who shaped the tradition and are generally regarded as the most instrumental figures within the tradition. Their lives were recorded in writing at an early date, and in a wide range of sources.

Biographical sources

The lives of the early Bka' gdams pa masters were recorded in a variety of early sources. Biographies were often produced locally, in many cases by the disciples of a Buddhist teacher, who produced oral or written accounts of their teacher's life story. Most of the early accounts are relatively brief; in subsequent centuries we can observe a growth in length and detail as well as a tendency towards a more hagiographical presentation. From the 13th century onwards the life stories of the Bka' gdams pa masters were also collected and assembled into collective lineage histories of the Bka' gdams tradition; this process of compiling the Bka' gdams pa legacy went hand in hand with the move to larger monastic centres, which also means a movement from local traditions to trans-regional mainstream traditions. From the late 15th century onwards, after the emergence of the Dge lugs pa, the biography collections were circulated in the form of large-scale Bka' gdams pa histories (*Bka' gdams chos 'byung*) that became the mainstream version of the life-stories of the Bka' gdams pa masters as well as their successors, the Dge lugs pa. They are usually arranged in chronological order and according to

the individual teacher-student lineages, thus forming a "life-story" of the tradition as a coherent whole.[7] In terms of literary genres, the main sources of biographical information are:

a. Verse eulogies (*bstod pa*) and prayers (*gsol 'debs*)

   Verse eulogies (*bstod pa*) are among the earliest biographical sources available. A famous eulogy of Atiśa, the *Bstod pa brgyad bcu pa* ("Hymn in Eighty Verses") was composed by his long-standing student, Nag tsho lo tsa ba Tshul khrims rgyal ba (b. 1011) when he learned that his teacher had passed away.[8] Another famous eulogy, the *Bstod pa sum bcu pa* ("Hymn in Thirty Verses"), is traditionally ascribed to 'Brom ston pa, an ascription that most scholars regard as spurious.[9] Prayers (*gsol 'debs*) too may contain biographical information; a famous lineage prayer known under its short title as *Lam mchog sgo 'byed,* composed by Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), was used as the framework for two important 18th century works on the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa masters.[10]

b. Individual prose biographies (*rnam thar*)

   Biographies of Bka' gdams pa masters were composed at least from the 12th century on, recorded in writing either immediately by a direct disciple of a teacher, or after a certain period of oral transmission. The latter is the case for the earliest prose biographies of Atiśa, the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* and the *Rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags* (12th-13th cent.). Both are based on the same source, which ultimately goes back to an oral account by Nag tso lo tsa ba.[11] We also have some early biographies of other teachers, such as the biography of Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (1059-1109) by his disciple Gro lung pa.[12] Not all of the early Bka' gdams pa biographies have survived, but there is reason to hope that some more may surface since plenty of new material has recently become available.[13]

c. Biographical information embedded in doctrinal works, commentaries, and "collected sayings"

   When the disciples of the early Bka' gdams pa masters recorded their instructions in writing from the early 12th century onwards, they often included biographical details of their teachers.[14] Another interesting source for the early Bka' gdams pa masters are anthologies of "collected sayings". The earliest of these, the *Bka' gdams gsung gros thor bu* by Lce sgom Shes rab rdo rje (1124/25-1204/05), consists of short and pithy instructions of the early teachers; a later anthology, the *Bka' gdams gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod* (19th

cent.),[15] adds biographical sketches of the individual teachers to these instructional vignettes.

d. Larger hagiographical compilations and lineage histories.

The earliest lineage history of the Bka' gdams tradition currently known is a work by Mchims Nam mkha' grags (1210–1285), the seventh abbot of Snar thang monastery. It is known as the *Snar thang gser phreng* ("Golden rosary of the Narthang tradition").[16] This "rosary" does not provide a full sketch of all Bka' gdams pa lineages, but traces one specific lineage, beginning in India with Atiśa's teachers including Nāropa and Ḍombhipa, followed by the life stories of Atiśa and his Tibetan disciple 'Brom ston pa, and ending with the lineage from 'Brom ston's disciple Po to ba to the abbots of Snar thang.

An anthology of a much more varied character is the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* ("The Book of the Bka' gdams").[17] This work is based on a variety of biographical, legendary, and doctrinal sources and was redacted and committed to writing in 1302 in Snar thang monastery.[18] The overall agenda of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* is the promotion of 'Brom ston pa, who is portrayed as a manifestation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and reincarnation of King Srong btsan sgam po (7th cent.), who honed and demonstrated his bodhisattva qualities over many previous lifetimes.

The late 15th century saw the emergence of comprehensive Bka' gdams pa histories (*Bka' gdams chos 'byung*) that present the main teacher-student lineages, arranging the life-stories of the Bka' gdams pa masters in the form of a lineage tree. The most important ones are (in chronological order) the Bka' gdams histories by Ye shes rtse mo (1484),[19] Bsod nams lha'i dbang po (1484),[20] Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1494),[21] and Paṇ chen Bsod nams grags pa (1529).[22] They were written in a period when the Dge lugs tradition was on the rise, and Tsong kha pa's school came to be understood as the true heir to the Bka' gdams pa lineages. Another Bka' gdams pa history was composed by the famous Sa skya scholar A myes zhabs (1597-1659/60).[23] Two further important lineage histories were written in the 18th century, one by Paṇ chen bla ma Blo bzang ye shes (1663-1737), and one by Tshe mchog gling yongs 'dzin Ye shes rgyal mtshan (completed in 1787).[24]

The following survey will introduce some of the main actors of the early Bka' gdams pa tradition: the Indian teacher Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna and his Tibetan disciple 'Brom ston pa, as well as his three disciples known as the "three [spiritual] brothers". Among the biographical sources introduced above, preference will be given to early accounts. Due to constraints of

space, other important students of Atiśa, including Nag tsho lo tsa ba Tshul khrims rgyal ba (1011–ca. 1064), Dgon pa pa Dbang phyug rgyal mtshan (1016–1082), and Rngog Legs pa'i shes rab and his lineage, cannot receive the attention they would deserve.

Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054)

The following brief account of Atiśa's life is based on his earliest available biographies, the *Rnam thar rgyas pa* and the *Rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags* (12th and 13th centuries).[25] Atiśa was born in 982 in the city of Vikramapura or Vikramapuri in Za hor (Bengal), as the middle son of the ruling family. His birth name was Candragarbha. As a young man he went to study Tantra at Kālaśilā, one of the seven hills near Rājgir, and was initiated into the Hevajra Tantra; his tantric initiation name was Jñānaguhyavajra. He studied for seven years with the yogi Avadhūtipa, and for three years he concentrated on yoga, learned tantric "vajra songs", and participated in tantric feasts (*gaṇacakra*).

When he was 28 years old he was ordained into the Vinaya of the Mahāsāṅghika school at the Mativihāra in Bodh Gayā and received the ordination name Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna. The early biographies point out that as a tantric practitioner he could only be ordained into the Mahāsāṅghika Vinaya, an interesting remark that deserves further investigation.[26] He spent several years studying the doctrines of the "four great schools" of Indian Buddhism (Mahāsāṅghikas, Sarvāstivādins, Sammitīyas and Sthaviravādins) as well as Abhidharma, which was taught by Dharmarakṣita at the monastery of Odantapuri. In addition to his studies of the Pāramitānaya (i.e. the Mahāyāna), he continued to study Tantra with teachers such as Kusali, Jetāri, Ḍombhipa, Nāropa, Ratnākaraśānti. His most important teacher of Mahāyāna doctrines and the "generation of the awakening mind" (*bodhicittodpāda*) became Suvarṇadvīpa Dharmakīrti (Tib. Gser gling pa Chos kyi grags pa), named after his home country Sumatra (Skt. Suvarṇadvīpa), with whom he studied Śāntideva's famous works. Later on, Atiśa again visited Kālaśilā, which indicates that his studies of Mahāyāna doctrines did not make him abandon his engagement with tantric practice.

Atiśa became a senior scholar (*gnas brtan chen po*) at the monastic university of Vikramaśīla, which was famous for its tantric scholarship. While Tibetan biographies highlight Atiśa's purity of conduct and accomplishment as a scholar, it is difficult to assess his role within the Indian tradition because neither his own works nor Indian commentaries on his writings have survived there. This absence may at least in part be due to the fact that the Buddhist monastic universities were destroyed not very long after his lifetime, and the survival of works from this period is slightly haphazard. In Tibet, on the other hand, Atiśa has left a rich literary

legacy, consisting not only of his famous *Bodhipathapradīpa* but also numerous small-scale works as well as translations of Buddhist Sanskrit literature into Tibetan.[27]

Atiśa was invited by the kings of the Western Tibetan kingdom of Gu ge, where Buddhism saw a revival under the royal patronage of king Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od ("Yeshe Ö", 947-1019/24) and his nephew and successor Byang chub 'od ("Changchub Ö", 984–1078). Two of Ye shes 'od's missions to invite scholars from India had reached Vikramaśīla, but it was only at the time of Byang chub 'od that a delegation headed by Nag tsho lo tsa ba Tshul khrims rgyal ba succeeded in bringing Atiśa to Tibet. Ratnākara, the abbot of Vikramaśīla, gave permission for this journey, but asked Nag tsho lo tsa ba to bring Atiśa back after three years. The party travelled via Nepal where Atiśa composed the *Vimalaratnalekha*, an epistle to king Neyapāla, and founded a monastery in Kathmandu.[28] In 1042 they arrived in Western Tibet. At Mtho lding, the capital of the kingdom of Gu ge, Atiśa gave Buddhist instructions, had an encounter with the famous translator Rin chen bzang po ("Rinchen Sangpo", 958-1055), and met king Byang chub 'od who asked for explanations on the Śrāvakayāna, the Pāramitānaya (i.e., the Mahāyāna), and on Tantra, as well as a handbook on the Guhyasamāja Tantra. In response to this request, Atiśa composed his famous *Bodhipathapradīpa*, which defines three categories of Buddhist practitioners and then provides step-by-step instructions for the most advanced of these, the followers of the Mahāyāna. This work laid the foundations for later Tibetan literature on the graded path to awakening (*lam rim*). While in Pu hrangs, Atiśa met 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas, and the biographies do not fail to highlight the importance of this encounter which would lead to a long-term teacher-student relationship, and ultimately to the foundation of the Bka' gdams pa tradition.

Since the way to India was barred by civil war on the Nepalese border and 'Brom ston pa had invited him to visit the Buddhist sites of Central Tibet, Atiśa did not return to Vikramaśīla, but travelled towards the province of Dbus (Central Tibet). During a stay at Bsam yas, the famous first monastery of Tibet founded in the late 8th century, Atiśa collaborated in translation projects and gave tantric instructions and initiations. His student Khu ston invited him to his home region in Yar klungs, but Atiśa and 'Brom ston pa left because Khu ston did not let his own students study with Atiśa. The biographers vividly describe their clandestine flight across the Gtsang po river, with Khu ston following in hot pursuit and falling into the river. Back in Bsam yas monastery Atiśa was excited to discover rare Sanskrit manuscripts. A noble lady from the Mchims family began spreading slander about Atiśa, and so he and his followers left for Lhasa. Here, Atiśa is said to have discovered the *Bka' chems ka khol ma*

("Pillar Testament"), a famous "treasure text" (*gter ma*) related to King Srong btsan sgam po, in the Jo khang temple in 1048.[29]

Atiśa and his disciples spent the summer in the mountain hermitage of Brag Yer pa, where the dialogues of the famous *Bka' gdams glegs bam* ("The Book of the Bka' gdams") are said to have taken place. Then they followed an invitation to Snye thang near Lhasa, where Atiśa stayed until his death in the late autumn of 1054.[30] The *stūpa* that contained Atiśa's relics can still be visited there. After Atiśa's death the community split up after a last joint assembly held in 1055, and it seems that the four Vinaya groups of Lhasa became involved with the Bka' gdams pa movement.[31] Atiśa's disciples left Snye thang and went their own ways, taking their share of his relics to their own new monastic residences.

'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1004–1064)

Later authors of the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa traditions tend to highlight 'Brom ston pa's role as the most important of Atiśa's disciples and the true Tibetan founding figure of the Bka' gdams pa (*bka' gdams kyi mes po*), in spite of the fact that his role and activities are in some ways frustratingly elusive. Episodes from his life are included in the above-mentioned early Atiśa biography *Rnam thar rgyas pa*; the earliest full biography currently known, however, was written by Mchims Nam mkha' grags (1210–1285), the 7th abbot of Snar thang monastery.[32] Further accounts of 'Brom ston's life can be found in the *Bka' gdams chos 'byung*s and other religious histories such as the *Deb ther sngon po*.[33] The biographical sketch below is primarily based on Mchims Nam mkha' grags' *Snar thang gser phreng*.

'Brom ston was born in Phug rings in the nomad area of Byang Rtswa sgye mo in Stod lung (north-west of Lha sa) in the year 1004, according to Bka' gdams pa histories. Some biographical sources report that his childhood name was Chos 'phel.[34] The name of his father, Yag gzher sku gshen (with numerous spelling variants across the sources), points to a Bon po background, although this is not stated explicitly. His mother died early, and the young Chos 'phel who did not get on with his stepmother longed to leave home. In his fourteenth year he was sent to do trade in Snye mo, which gave him a chance to study reading and writing with a certain G.yung chos mgon.

He met the scholar Se btsun Dbang phyug gzhon nu ("Setsün Wangchuk Shönnu") from Khams (Eastern Tibet) and decided to study with him. Before setting out to Khams, he took the lay vows from Zhang Sna nam Rdo rje dbang phyug and received the name Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas. He then travelled east; in Mdo smad he studied the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* with a local household priest called Gru Nam mkha', and then went to Khams where he studied

Abhidharma and the Old Tantras with Se btsun, with whom he stayed for nineteen or twenty years. He and two of his fellow students became known collectively as "Khu, Rngog, and 'Brom" (i.e., Khu Brtson grus g.yung drung, Rngog Legs pa'i shes rab, and 'Brom Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas).'Brom ston also studied the "Indian language" with a scholar called Sgra tsher ma ("Language Thorn").

When news about Atiśa reached Eastern Tibet, 'Brom ston decided to go and meet this important teacher. During his journey via Central Tibet, 'Brom ston met his future patron 'Phrang kha ber chung, and 'Brom convinced him not to go to war, but to build a temple at Phong mdo instead. He also went to visit his father and Sna nam Rdo rje dbang phyug from whom he had taken the lay vows, and urged the Buddhist teachers of the region to invite Atiśa once the time was ripe. Further west, in Pu hrangs, he met Atiśa, who formally accepted him as his student and gave him his own statue of the six-armed Mañjuvajra, a meditation deity of the Guhyasamāja system, which is said to be the one still housed in Rwa sgreng monastery today.[35] 'Brom ston invited Atiśa to Central Tibet and accompanied and supported him for the following twelve years, until the teacher died.

About a year after Atiśa had passed away, 'Brom ston pa and other students left Snye thang, apparently due to leadership disputes. 'Brom ston followed an invitation from a son of the above-mentioned Phrang kha ber chung to found a monastery in the Rwa sgreng ("Reting") valley. The investigation of the geomantic features of the valley (1056) and the consecration rituals for the monastery (1057) are described at some length, highlighting the importance of this place for the later Bka' gdams pa tradition.[36] Among the texts and doctrines taught by 'Brom ston, the biography mentions the *Prajñāpāramitā, Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra, Bodhipathapradīpa, Bhāvanākrama*, and treatises on Cittamātra and Madhyamaka philosophy. He is also said to have taught the "graded path" to awakening (*lam rim*), although he did not compose a written work on this topic himself, perhaps due to the largely oral nature of the early Bka' gdams pa movement. According to the *Snar thang gser phreng* 'Brom ston passed away on the 20th day of the middle summer month in a dragon year, which corresponds to 1064.

The Bka' gdams pa lineages after 'Brom ston pa

The Bka' gdams pa tradition is usually mapped out in several main lineages, although there is some slight variation in the way the teacher-disciple lineages are defined.[37] Of particular importance are three lineages originating with the "three (spiritual) brothers" (*sku mched gsum*), a term collectively used for the most important students of 'Brom ston pa at Rwa sgreng. These three lineages are the scriptural tradition (*gzhung pa*) going back to Po to ba Rin

chen gsal ("Potowa Rinchensel", 1027-1105), the instructional tradition (*gdams ngag pa* or *man ngag pa*) going back to Spyan snga ba Tshul khrims 'bar ("Chengawa Tsültrimbar", 1033-1103), and the tradition of biographical and esoteric transmissions that later fed into the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* ("Book of Bka' gdams"), transmitted by Phu chung ba Gzhon nu rgyal mtshan ("Puchungwa Shönnu Gyeltsen").

As the designation *gzhung pa* indicates, this tradition transmitted a range of important Buddhist works, including the so-called "six Bka' gdams pa core texts" (*gzhung drug*): the *Jātakamālā, Udānavarga, Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra, Bodhisattvabhūmi, Śikṣāsamuccaya*, and *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. They also produced works on "mind training" (*blo sbyong*) and on the graded path to awakening (*lam rim*), including two works containing Po to ba's oral instructions on the graded path, written down by his students (see below). The most influential teachers among Po to ba's disciples were Glang ri thang pa Rdo rje seng ge (1054–1123), to whom the short but influential "*Blo sbyong* in Eight Verses" is attributed, and Sha ra ba Yon tan grags (1070–1141). The latter became the teacher of 'Chad kha ba Ye shes rdo rje (1101–1175), author of the famous *Blo sbyong don bdun ma* ("Mind Training in Seven Points").[38]

The instructional lineage (*gdams ngag pa* or *man ngag pa*) goes back to Spyan snga ba,[39] famous as an accomplished yogi and meditator, who founded the monastery of Lo (Lo dgon) in 1093 based on the Guhyasamāja *maṇḍala*; this monastery became an important Bka' gdams pa seat.[40] He later stayed in Smyug rum, where his teachings continued to flourish. Among his most important students were Smyug rum pa Brtson grus 'bar (1042–1109) and Bya yul ba Gzhon nu 'od (1075–1138).

The third of the "three brothers", Phu chung ba Gzhon nu rgyal mtshan (1031–1106), is traditionally credited with the transmission of the biographical tradition that is codified in the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*.[41] In the *Bka' gdams chos 'byung*s his lineage is also identified as the lineage of the (tantric) blessing (*byin rlabs*) which he received from 'Brom ston pa. He is said to have focused on his own meditation practice rather than teaching larger numbers of students, and one may wonder whether his small monastery in 'Phan yul was later abandoned[42] because he did not initiate a broader student lineage.

While these three main lineages originate with 'Brom ston pa's disciples, the Bka' gdams pa tradition in the wider sense also includes lineages going back to other important students of Atiśa, such as Nag tsho lo tsa ba and his disciples, Rngog Legs pa'i shes rab and his disciples, and Dgon pa ba and his disciples.[43] In later times, after the disappearance of the Bka' gdams pa as a distinct tradition, the idea emerged that all main transmission lineages come

together in Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419), the founder of the Dge lugs pa, who is thus regarded as the heir to the entire Bka' gdams tradition.

The Graded Path to Buddhahood (*lam rim* and *bstan rim*)

The Bka' gdams pa have become famous for their systematic step-by-step approach to the Buddhist path, laid down in works on the "steps of the path" (*lam rim*) or "stages of the doctrine" (*bstan rim*). As Jackson has pointed out, the former typically operate with a subdivision into three kinds of Buddhist practitioners and the teachings related to each of them, and they normally close with a section on Tantra as the most advanced (and most risky) form of practice. Works of the *bstan rim* genre, on the other hand, tend to present the same step-by-step programme without the division into three kinds of practitioners, and typically close with an exposition of the Bodhisattva levels and Buddhahood as the highest goal.[44]

Atiśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa* is the *locus classicus* for the definition of the three types of individuals: Buddhist beginners, the *śrāvaka*s, and the Mahāyāna Buddhists,[45] a subdivision that goes back to a stanza from Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya.* Later works on the *lam rim* usually refer to Atiśa's definition of the three kinds of individuals; however, the *Bodhipathapradīpa* itself cannot be regarded as a comprehensive blueprint for the *lam rim* as a whole since it does not discuss the complete graded path, but focuses on the steps for the most advanced practitioners, those following the Mahāyāna. However, two short works preserved in the collection of the "Short Treatises of Atiśa" (*Jo bo'i chos chung*) briefly outline the path from beginning to end thus seem to bear witness to the fact that Atiśa did indeed teach the complete *lam rim* as we know it. It therefore seems justified to trace these teachings back to him, even if he did not elaborate on them in detail in his written works.[46]

Numerous Bka' gdams pa masters taught or composed works on the graded path; the works that are currently available to us all follow a similar structure.[47] They typically begin with propaedeutic considerations for the 'inferior type of individuals' who are meant to consider a) the rare opportunity of a human rebirth with its advantages for Buddhist practice, b) the impermanence of this state, and c) the fact that their future fate is driven by their current actions (*karman*). These considerations are meant to lead them to the stage of the 'intermediate beings' (or *śrāvaka*s) who are striving for their own liberation, and who are advised to consider the unsatisfactory nature of *saṃsāra* and take the monastic vows. The final and longest section is for the 'excellent individuals' who have developed the Mahāyāna attitude; they are encouraged to cultivate wisdom and compassion, generate *bodhicitta*, and practice the six

perfections. They may also use the methods of Tantra to traverse the path to awakening even faster, as long as they make sure not to contradict any of the vows they have taken.

The charm of the early Bka' gdams pa *lam rim* literature lies in its accessible and witty style, which is due to the fact that these instructions were mostly given orally in the early generations of teachers. In the case of Po to ba Rin chen gsal, his disciples committed his instructions to writing and created two highly popular works, the *Dpe chos rin chen spungs pa* ("Dharma Exemplified") and the *Be'u bum sngon po* ("Blue Compendium"). Both are fully fledged *lam rim* works, but what distinguishes them from later more scholastic expositions is their colloquial language and the use of similes and anecdotes to illustrate the Buddhist path, as the following example from the "Dharma Exemplified" may illustrate:

> "An abbot in Khams, who had taken the monastic vows, drank small amounts of beer. When all his students imitated him and drank beer as well, he said: "Don't drink beer, because you and I are not the same," but they didn't listen. One day he assembled the students, poured a handful of needles into each tea cup, and said: "If you want to imitate me, then take these into your mouth!" And as he poured the needles into his mouth and chewed them with a crunching noise, the others were defeated, it is said."[48]

This story is used in the text to illustrate that a good Buddhist teacher needs special abilities to restore faith and proper behaviour in his students.

The humorous and down-to-earth teaching style was well-suited to explain the complexities of the *lam rim* to largely untrained Tibetan audiences in the 11th and early 12th centuries and made these works highly popular. Their long-term impact has been enormous, beginning with Tsong kha pa's famous works on the graded path, and continuing with *lam rim* and *bstan rim* works of more recent times. Far from being limited to the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa schools, the *lam rim* and *bstan rim* genres have been adopted by other traditions too, and expositions of the graded path to Buddhahood can be found throughout the centuries and across the schools of Tibetan Buddhism.[49]

Mind Training (*blo sbyong*)

In early Bka' gdams pa literature *blo sbyong* is frequently used as a verb ("to purify / train the mind") and qualified by the topic in which the mind should be trained. A 19th century anthology defines *blo sbyong* in the following way: "The foundational oral instruction of the Bka' gdams pas called *blo sbyong* consists in generating the awakening mind."[50] *Blo sbyong* instructions teach various techniques that lead to this goal, such as contemplating the propaedeutic steps of the graded path, reflecting on the fact that oneself and others are equal,

and mentally taking all suffering upon oneself and giving all happiness and well-being to others (*gtong len*). While *blo sbyong* as a genre is a Tibetan creation, many of its key ideas go back to Indian Mahāyāna literature; Nāgārjuna's *Ratnāvalī* is considered a source of *blo sbyong* thought, and chapter eight of Śāntideva's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* is of particular importance for the idea of the equality of 'self' and 'other' (*parātmasamatā*).

Since *blo sbyong* instructions are defined through their topic and aims rather than their specific contents, their form is more varied than that of *lam rim* and *bstan rim* works. *Blo sbyong* texts are often fairly brief; Bka' gdams pa histories explain that they were originally given as personal oral instructions from teacher to disciple, but teachers of the 12th century began to pass them on publicly and committed them to writing. Among *blo sbyong* texts, the *Blo sbyong don bdun ma* ("Mind Training in Seven Points") by Bya 'Chad kha ba (1101-1175) has become particularly famous, partly through the commentary by Tsong kha pa's disciple Hor ston Nam mkha' dpal (1373-1447). 'Chad kha pa himself had developed an interest in the *blo sbyong* through the "Mind Training in Eight Lines" (*Blo sbyong tshig brgyad ma*) of Glang ri thang pa (1054-1123), and received *blo sbyong* instructions from Sha ra ba Yon tan grags (1070-1141). Later on, an extensive collection of *blo sbyong* works and related materials was compiled by two scholars of the Sa skya pa tradition, Sems dpa' chen po Gzhon nu rgyal mtshan and Mus chen Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan (1388-1469).[51] Due to its short format and straightforward instructions, the *blo sbyong* has remained highly popular, and Tibetan blockprints of *blo sbyong* texts are still reproduced in large numbers today.

Like the *lam rim*, *blo sbyong* works too are sometimes classified into instructions for the three types of practitioners, although this is not fundamental to the genre as such, and is to the best of my knowledge never expressed in the early *blo sbyong* works themselves. Even so, it is fair to say that *lam rim* and *blo sbyong* are closely related genres, and the Tibetan tradition itself tends to present them together in Buddhist compendia, doxographies, and historical works.[52] Both have had a far reaching impact on the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, far beyond Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa circles.

Tantra and Monasticism

The Bka' gdams pa have often been portrayed as a tradition that contributed to the growth of monasticism in Tibet and that valued monastic vows over tantric practice, especially the antinomian practices of the higher tantra classes.[53] It is true the early Bka' gdams pa literature puts an emphasis on basic Buddhist ethics and Mahāyāna doctrines, rather than propagating the highly developed late tantra cycles from India. Compared to the developments

in Western Tibet in the 11th century, where scholars such as the famous translator Rin chen bzang po brought tantric traditions from Kashmir to Tibet, and where tantric art has been preserved in the monuments of this period, the Bka' gdams pas of Central Tibet appear to have been a largely rural community that was happy to establish small and unassuming monasteries, with a building style not too different from local Tibetan farm houses, and often situated in or near their own home regions. Central Tibetan *mchod rten* (*stūpa*s) of this era are mostly simple cylindrical structures with a small roof and spire, distinctly different from the vase-shaped structures of other regions and later times. The early monasteries of teachers such as Po to ba and Spyan snga ba and their disciples consist of smallish temples, usually facing south to catch the sunlight, with simple living quarters for the monks and (in some cases) nuns.[54] These establishments were not designed to look grand, but were constructed as pragmatic community environments for practising Buddhists.

In terms of tantric transmissions, it must be remembered that Atiśa himself was steeped in the tantric traditions of Bengal, but there is no textual evidence about whether he passed these on to his Tibetan disciples to any significant degree. Atiśa's main meditation deities were Buddha Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara, Acala, and Tārā, and their meditation practice, together with the *tripiṭaka*, became known under the name of "the seven deities and teachings" (*lha chos bdun ldan*). These practices are obviously quite different from the complex rituals and antinomian practices of the late tantric period in India, or indeed of other strands of Tibetan Buddhism.

As discussed above, the significance of Atiśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa* lies in the fact that it condenses the highly developed Indian Buddhism of the time into a system, with a strong emphasis on the Mahāyāna; Tantra is included as an advanced technique to achieve the same goal, but the work warns against practices that would lead to a breach of one's vows. The biographies of the Tibetan Bka' gdams pa teachers do not give the impression that tantric initiations and transmissions played a major role in their Buddhist training. However, physical traces of Atiśa's own tantric practice have survived: Rwa sgreng houses a statue of the six-armed Mañjuvajra of the Guhyasamāja system that is said to have belonged to Atiśa himself. A peculiar feature of the Bka' gdams tradition is that it has created a tantric system of its own, known as the "sixteen spheres" (*thig le bcu drug*). It consists of a meditation in which the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara is the central figure, and fifteen other figures are visualised emanating from him in a specific sequence. These figures include not only Atiśa's four main meditation deities, but also Atiśa and 'Brom ston pa themselves.[55] The practice of the "sixteen spheres" seems to have played a significant role in constructing a Bka' gdams pa identity, both

fulfilling the demand for a "Tantra of one's own", and elevating the founding fathers of the tradition. It is being actively revived at Rwa sgreng monastery nowadays and is documented in a voluminous modern publication.[56]

It should also be mentioned in this context that the Bka' gdams pa have their own – albeit very limited – stories of *gter ma* revelation. One of these is the "Pillar Testament" (*Bka' chems ka khol ma*) mentioned above in the context of Atiśa's life story. The other is – to a certain degree – the "Book of the Bka' gdams" (*Bka' gdams glegs bam*). To a certain degree, because this work is a compilation of very diverse materials, built around a versified explanation of Mahāyāna ethics composed by Atiśa, and including biographies, prophesies, pre-birth stories, and a long section of (fictional) dialogues between the early Bka' gdams pa masters. In these dialogues, the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* itself appears as a "magical book" (*'phrul pa'i glegs bam*); it manifests, but then disappears, and is finally enclosed in a *stūpa* in Stabs ka. While this "magical book" certainly seems like an inspirational, non-material object, one passage mentions a concrete number of pages, which makes "The Book" oscillate between a material and an immaterial object. While of course not being a *gter ma* proper, which would require a prescribed process of hiding and rediscovering the text, the *'phrul pa'i glegs bam* is certainly conceived as a book with special supernatural properties, and the process of its transmission is described with revelatory overtones.[57] Quite in tune with this, "The Book" describes its contents as a secret knowledge that should not be disclosed publicly, not because of tantric esoteric practices, but because – as Bka' gdams pa authors sometimes remark – the workings of *karman*, and therefore also life stories and pre-birth stories, are a great mystery that can only be fully gauged by an omniscient being, i.e., a Buddha or a fully realised Buddhist master.

A Formative Movement

In conclusion, is it fair to say, as the title of this article suggests, that the Bka' gdams pa were a formative movement of Tibetan Buddhism? After all, the early Bka' gdams pa have not developed a sophisticated Sanskrit scholarship like the Sa skya pa, they have not brought forth spectacular yogi poets like the Bka' brgyud pa, they have not gained any significant political power in Central Tibet, and they even disappeared as a distinct tradition altogether about four hundred years after Atiśa's arrival in Tibet. Yet, it seems justified to regard them as a formative movement in several respects, apart from creating and disseminating the instructional genres of *lam rim* and *blo sbyong* discussed above.

The Central Tibetan Bka' gdams pa movement, established locally by 'Brom ston pa and disseminated by his main disciples and their students, seems to have had an enormous impact on the growing popularity of Buddhism in the region. The biographies of the early Bka' gdams pa masters give a vivid impression of this process. Many life stories begin with the remark that the family followed the indigenous Bon tradition, but the child was drawn towards Buddhism, found a Buddhist teacher and entered one of the small local monasteries, and later in life became a major figure with hundreds or even thousands of students. After the collapse of the Tibetan Empire in the 9th century, the centralised state sponsorship of Buddhism had disappeared, and there had been a rapid decline of the tradition in Central Tibet. The monastic ordination lineage was reintroduced from Eastern Tibet in the late 10th century, but Buddhism was far from being popular and widespread among the people on the plateau. The Bka' gdams pa began as a grassroot movement which spread locally in the province of Dbus through the creation of relatively small-scale monasteries and hermitages, situated typically in remote places hidden at the upper end of the valleys, and thus well-suited for a secluded religious practice.

The early generations of teachers in the 11th century did not generate a large-scale written legacy, but taught their disciples orally, often on an individual basis. The oral nature of their instructions shines through in the written works that have come down to us: anthologies of 'sayings' of the Bka' gdams pa masters, and works in a highly colloquial style with dialect expressions (*yul skad*) and idiomatic language. They have a strongly local flavour, referring to specific places in Central Tibet, the flora and fauna of the Tibetan plateau, local people and their customs, and well-known figures of the early Bka' gdams pa environment. Thus, they adapt the doctrines of Indian Buddhism for their audiences on the plateau, both preserving and indigenising the Buddhist teachings.

The originally oral instructions, such as Po to ba's *Dpe chos* introduced above, were written down by students in the early 12th century to preserve them for future generations. Some of these students also moved to more public places by founding monasteries in the main valleys, along the routes of travel and trade. Their biographies record rapidly growing numbers of disciples. At the same time, we read that the teachers of the 12th century initiated public instructions on *lam rim* and *blo sbyong*, and they began composing their own written texts on this topic, beginning with works that often did not have proper titles, but were just known as "the *blo sbyong* of teacher X", or "the *lam rim* of teacher Y". This seems to indicate that the focus was on the contents of the instruction, rather than on the work as a literary composition. It is therefore sometimes hard to pin down whether a "*blo sbyong* of teacher X" was actually

written down by this teacher, or by a student of the teacher, or after several steps of oral transmission. What matters to the Tibetan tradition is intellectual authorship, i.e. the individual who created the content, rather than literary authorship, i.e. the person who wrote it down. Yet, we also have intriguing vignettes that reflect a growing interest in the written medium. For example, the religious history of Yar lung jo bo Shākya rin chen sde, composed in 1376, describes the origin of the *Blo sbyong don bdun ma* in the following way:

> "While he was staying in 'Gres phu, ['Chad kha ba] was wondering whether he should teach these instructions publicly or not, and he intended to pass them on individually to certain suitable persons. However, he was uncertain for whom this would be beneficial or not beneficial. So he said to those present: "If you have butter, invite the meditation masters. We will hold a feast for the name-giving for these instructions of mine." At this time he had subdivided [the *blo sbyong* instructions] into seven sections and put them down in writing, and therefore it became known as *don bdun ma* ("[*Blo sbyong*] in Seven Points"). From then on, he taught [it] in public..."[58]

According to this testimony, writing the instruction down in a structured literary form, giving a name or title to the text, and passing it on to larger numbers of students go hand in hand. The early Bka' gdams pa masters were thus among those who not only made Buddhism popular by adapting it for their Tibetan audiences, but also experimented with new Tibetan writing styles, blending oral and written forms, and creating new literary genres that remained popular throughout the centuries and across the Buddhist traditions of Tibet.

Review of Literature

While the figure of Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna attracted scholarly curiosity relatively early on, the Bka' gdams pa as a whole have – until recently – largely been neglected in academic scholarship, partly perhaps because they were overshadowed by their successors, the Dge lugs pa. Among the earlier scholarship, mention should be made of Sarat Chandra Das' sketch of Atiśa's life story published in 1893, based on two biographical sections from the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* and on Sum pa mkhan po's 18th century work on the history of Buddhism.[59] It served as a source for Laurence A. Waddell's now outdated book on *The Buddhism of Tibet: or Tibetan Lamaism*, published in 1895. Bell's *Religion of Tibet* (1931) also provides a sketch of Atiśa's life and activities. The first extensive Tibetan historical source available in English was the *Deb ther sngon po* (*The Blue Annals*) by 'Gos lo tsa ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392-1481), translated by G.N. Roerich and published in Calcutta in 1949-1953.[60] Its comprehensive nature

and richness in biographical detail has made it one of the most popular sources until the present day.

With the growth of Tibetan Studies as an academic discipline, scholarship on the Bka' gdams pa masters began to flourish in the second half of the 20th century. The first substantial monograph devoted entirely to Atiśa was published in Calcutta in 1967 by Alaka Chattopadhyaya.[61] The book is unprecedented in its detailed exploration of the subject and provides useful material, in particular in the appendices, but the academic literature as well as the Tibetan sources available to the author were limited. The first systematic collection and analysis of biographical materials related to Atiśa was undertaken by Helmut Eimer in his *Berichte über das Leben des Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna)* (1977), which drew attention to the enormous number of Tibetan sources available, and the broad range of literary genres that need to be considered.[62] It is a pioneering survey of sources that will be indispensable for any scholarly work on this topic. It was followed by Eimer's synoptical edition and German paraphrase of the earliest biographical record, the *Rnam thar rgyas pa (yongs grags)*, in 1979.[63]

It took some time until due scholarly attention was given to the Bka' gdams pa tradition as a whole. David Snellgove's *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (1987) provides an insightful survey of the role of Atiśa and the early Bka' gdams pa masters.[64] However, while the 11th-century revival of Buddhism in Western Tibet, with its royal patronage, high profile scholars, and stunning art and architecture, had triggered scholarly attention already in the 1980s and 1990s,[65] the testimonies of the Bka' gdams pa tradition in Central Tibet have only been studied on a broader scale in more recent years. The first detailed conspectus of the Bka' gdams pa tradition was written by Meenakshi Rai (2006).[66] The monograph provides a useful survey based on a good range of Tibetan sources, using them in a comparative way, but it does not aim to go much beyond the traditional narrative in its analysis of the material. Stella Boussemart wrote an accessible life story of 'Brom ston pa, based on Tibetan sources (1999).[67] Academic studies of individual teachers, works, and historical contexts have increased in recent years, for example through articles on lesser known Bka' gdgams pa masters,[68] studies of the "Book of the Bka' gdams" (*Bka' gdams glegs bam*),[69] translations and discussions of *lam rim* and *blo sbyong* works,[70] a translation and study of Po to ba's *Dpe chos*,[71] Vetturini's presentation and analysis of the Bka' gdams history by Bsod nams lha'i dbang po,[72] Schuman's study of the developments at Snar thang monastery,[73] and Iuchi's work on various Bka' gdams pa institutions and sources.[74] Important works from the Bka' gdams tradition have been made available in translation, for example *The Book of Kadam*; *Wisdom of the Kadampa Masters;*

and *Essential Mind Training: Tibetan Wisdom for Daily Life*, translated and introduced by Thubten Jinpa.[75]

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Many of the Tibetan sources mentioned in this article can be accessed online at www.tbrc.org. A flood of Tibetan original sources has become available through two monumental series published by the Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang: the *Bka' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs* (120 vols) and the *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* (120 vols), both listed below. For the issues addressed here, the following primary sources are of particular relevance:

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[1] Gianpaolo Vetturini, "The bKa' gdams pa School of Tibetan Buddhism" (PhD Dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 2007), 165. See also Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan. *Bka' gdams kyi rnam par thar pa bka' gdams chos 'byung gsal ba'i sgron me* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 3-5.

[2] The Bka' gdams pa, Bka' brgyud pa, Sa skya pa, and Rnying ma pa all emerged as distinct traditions during the 11th century, even if the Rnying ma pa trace themselves back to an earlier period. On Tibetan Buddhism in this period see for example David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists & their Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), chapter V.3, and Ronald M. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[3] See Karl-Heinz Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog, Tibet's Earliest Monastic School (1073): Reflections on the Rise of its Grva tshang bcu gsum and Bla khag bcu," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 38 (2009), 137–154; Pascale Hugon, "Enclaves of Learning, Religious and Intellectual Communities in Tibet: The Monastery of gSang phu Ne'u thog in the Early Centuries of the Later Diffusion of Buddhism," in E. Hovden, Ch. Lutter & W. Pohl, eds., *Meanings of Community Across Medieval Eurasia* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 289–308; Leonard van der Kuijp, "The Monastery of Gsang-phu ne'u-thog and its abbatial succession from ca. 1073 to 1250," *Berliner Indologische Studien* 3 (1987), 103–127.

[4] Michael D. Schuman, "Building Place and Shaping Lives: Nartang Monastery from the 12th through 15th Centuries" (PhD Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2016).

[5] Franz-Karl Ehrhard, "The Transmission of the *Thig-le bcu-drug* and the *bKa' gdams glegs bam*." In *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. by Helmut Eimer and David Germano (Leiden: Brill, 2002): 29-56; Marta Sernesi, "Bibliography and Cultural History: Remarks on the Bka' gdams glegs bam," in *The Illuminating Mirror: Tibetan Studies in Honour of Per K. Sørensen on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. by Olaf Czaja and Guntram Hazod (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2015), 411-444. (see also fn. 17 below)

[6] For a brief survey of *lam rim* works from other traditions the see David Seyfort Ruegg in Tsong kha pa, *The Great Treatise in the Stages of the Path to Englightenment*, vol. 1 (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2000), 26.

[7] For more details see Ulrike Roesler, "On the History of Histories: the Case of the bKa' gdams pas," in: *Contributions to Tibetan Buddhist Literature. Proceedings of the 11th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006*, ed. by Orna Almogi (Halle: IITBS, 2008), 393-413.

[8] As Eimer has shown, in its transmitted form the eulogy is a composite text containing verses by Nag tsho lo tsa ba and verses composed by Atiśa's student Kṣitigarbha, see Helmut Eimer, *Testimonia for the* Bstod-pa brgyad-cu-pa*: An Early Hymn Praising Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (Atiśa)* (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2003).

[9] Helmut Eimer, "Hymns and Stanzas Praising Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna," in *Glimpses of the Sanskrit Buddhist Literature*, ed. by K.N. Mishra (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1997), 9–32.

[10] These are Ye shes rgyal mtshan's biographies of the Bka' gdams tradition (*Byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam par thar pa rgyal mtshan mdzes pa'i rgyan mchog tu phul byung nor bu'i phreng ba*) and Sum pa mkhan po's history of Buddhism (*Dpag bsam ljon bzang*). On both works see Andrej I.Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical* Literature, transl. by Harish Chandra Gupta (Calcutta, 1970).

[11] Helmut Eimer, *Berichte über das Leben des Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna): Eine Untersuchung der Quellen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1977), 279-292.

[12] Ralf Kramer, *The Great Tibetan Translator: Life and Works of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109)* (München: Indus Verlag 2007).

[13] There are two monumental series of relevant materials: the *Bka' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs* (120 vols) and the *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* (120 vols), both published by the Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, see above under "Primary Sources".

[14] The earliest source for the life of Po to ba Rin chen gsal, for example, is found in the 12th century commentary on the *Be'u bum sgnon po*, a collection of his oral instructions written by his disciple Dol pa Rin po che, and further information is given in a commentary on his *Dpe chos* written in the 14th century by 'Grom mgon dpal ldan ye shes, see Roesler, "History of Histories," 399-403.

[15] *Legs par bshad pa bka' gdams rin po che'i gsung gi gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod* (Zi ling: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1996). The author is Tho yon Ye shes don grub bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1792-1855).

[16] Mchims Nam mkha' grags, *Snar thang gi gdan rabs gser phreng* (Lha sa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2015; see above, "Primary Sources" for further editions).

[17] A partial translation in found in Thupten Jinpa, *The Book of Kadam: The Core Texts* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008). See also Amy Sims Miller, "Jewelled Dialogues: The Role of The Book in the Formation of the Kadam Tradition within Tibet." PhD Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2004.

[18] On the transmission of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* see Ehrhard and Sernesi as in note 5 above.

[19] Title: *Bka' gdams rin po che'i bstan 'dzin rnams kyi byung khungs.* This work has only recently become available, see Maho IUCHI, "The Bka' gdams chos 'byung Genre and the Newly Published Ye shes rtse mo's Bka' gdams chos 'byung," in *The Historical Development of Tibeto-Himalayan Civilization*, ed. by IWAO Kazushi and IKEDA Takumi (Kyoto: Rinsen Books, 2018), 338-355.

[20] Title: *Bka' gdams rin po che'i chos byung rnam thar nyin mor byed pa'i 'od stong.* For an analysis and translation see Vetturini, "The Bka' gdams pa School".

[21] Title: *Bka' gdams kyi rnam par thar pa bka' gdams chos 'byung gsal ba'i sgron me.* See note 1.

[22] Title: *Bka' gdams gsar rnying gi chos 'byung yid kyi mdzes rgyan*, in *Two Histories of the bKa'-gdams-pa Tradition from the Library of Burmiok Athing* (Gangtok, Gonpo Tseten, 1977), 1-206.

[23] See Dan Martin in collaboration with Y. Bentor, *Tibetan Histories: a Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works* (London: Serindia, 1997), no. 216; Vetturini, *The Bka' gdams pa School*, 3. The title of A myes zhabs' work is *Dge ba'i bshes gnyen bka' gdams pa rnams kyi dam pa'i chos byung ba'i tshul legs par bshad pa nga mtshar rgya mtsho*.

[24] These are the *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar pad ma dkar po'i phreng ba* by Paṇ chen bla ma Blo bzang ye shes (1663-1737) and the *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* by Tshe mchog gling yongs 'dzin Ye shes rgyal mtshan (see note 10).

[25] Published in Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa.* The *Rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags* version was produced in the 13th century by Mchims Nam mkha' grags, the seventh abbot of Snar thang, and is included in his *Snar thang gser phreng* and in the *Bka' gdams glegs bam*.

[26] Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, episodes 129, 334.

[27] See the appendices in Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Atīśa and Tibet: Life and Works of Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna in relation to the History and Religion of Tibet with Tibetan Sources translated under Professor Lama Chimpa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967).

[28] Hubert Decleer, "Master Atiśa in Nepal: The Tham Bahīl and Five Stūpas' Foundations according to the *'Brom ston Itinerary*." *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* X (1996), 27-54.

[29] *Bka' chems ka khol ma*, ed. by Smon lam rgya mtsho ([Lanzhou]: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989). See Martin, *Tibetan Histories*, 24, no. 4. According to later biographies the text was retrieved from a pillar, but the early biographies describe how a beggar woman indicated a place in the ground of the Jo khang temple where Atiśa was to find the text. The protective deity guarding the treasure text allowed them to copy as much as they could within one day, see Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, episode 337; George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), 258.

[30] Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa*, episodes 410f.

[31] Roberto Vitali, "Bka' gdams pa Religious Politics in Dbus: The One Hundred Years after A ti sha's Death, in O. Czaja & G. Hazod, *The Illuminating Mirror: Tibetan Studies in Honour of Per K. Sørensen on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2015), 511–525.

[32] The biography is included in Mchim Nam mkha' grags' *Snar thang gser phreng* (see above under Primary Sources). See Helmut Eimer, "Sources for the *Vita* of 'Brom ston," in *Contributions to Tibetan Buddhist Literature*, ed. by Orna Almogi (Halle: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2008), 337-392. Parallel sections are found within the early biographies of Atiśa mentioned above, the *Rnam thar rgyas pa (yongs grags)*, as well as a work by 'Brom Shes rab me lce composed around the beginning of the 14th cent., see Maho IUCHI, *An Early Text on the History of Rwa sgreng Monastery: the* Rgyal ba'i dben gnas rwa sgreng gi bshad pa nyi ma'i 'od zer *of 'Brom shes rab me lce* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), 7–12.

[33] See Stella Boussemart, *Dromteunpa, l'humble yogi* (Marzens: Editions Vajra Yogini, 1999); Meenakshi Rai, *Kadampa School in Tibetan Buddhism* (Delhi: Saujanya 2006), 28–38; Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 251–265.

[34] Rai, *Kadampa School*, 33.

[35] Iuchi, *An Early Text*, 33; image in Michael Henss, *The Cultural Monuments of Tibet, vol. I: The Central Regions/ The Central Tibetan Province of Ü* (Munich: Prestel, 2014), 285.

[36] Ulrike Roesler, "A palace for those who have eyes to see: preliminary remarks on the sacred geography of Reting (Rwa-sgreṅ)," *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia* 8,1 (2007), 123–144.

[37] For a brief survey see Ulrike Roesler, *Frühe Quellen zum buddhistischen Stufenweg in Tibet: Indische und tibetische Traditionen im* dPe chos *des Po-to-ba Rin-chen-gsal* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2011), 107–115. For an alternative outline see Rai, *Kadampa School*, 133.

[38] The "*Blo sbyong* in Eight Verses" is translated in Rai, *Kadampa School*, 151-152. On the *Blo sbyong don bdun ma* see Michael J. Sweet, "Mental Purification (Blo sbyong): A Native Tibetan Genre of Religious Literature," in J.I. Cabezón and R.R. Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Snowlion, 1996), 249-250.

[39] For Spyan snga ba's biography see Vetturini, *The Bka' gdams pa School*, 109–114; Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 284–285. The designation of his tradition is not entirely fixed; the term *gdams ngag pa* seems the most common, but the term *man ngag pa* is also occasionally found, see Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer's *Chos 'byung me tog snying* po, 434 and the *Bka' gdams gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod*, 285.

[40] Iuchi, Maho (井内真帆). "Lo ji: shyoki kadamuha ji'in no hensen. [The History of Lo dgon pa: the Vicissitudes of an Early bKa' gdams pa Monastery.]" *Ōtani daigaku kenhyū nenpō/Annual Report of Researchers of Otani University* 62 (2010), 37-77.

[41] On Phu chung ba see Vetturini, *The Bka' gdams pa School*, 105–107; Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 267–268; on his role in the transmission of the *Bka' gdams glegs bam* see Ehrhard, "The Transmission", esp. 38–41.

[42] Ulrike Roesler & Hans-Ulrich Roesler, *Kadampa Sites of Phempo: A Guide to Some Early Buddhist Monasteries in Central Tibet* (Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2004), 50.

[43] Sketches of their lives can be found in Rai, *Kadampa School*; Roerich, *Blue Annals*; Vetturini, "The Bka' gdams pa School".

[44] David Jackson, "The bsTan rim ("Stages of the Doctrine") and Similar Graded Path Expositions of the Bodhisattva's Path," in J.I. Cabezón and R.R. Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Snowlion, 1996), 229-243. The distinction between *lam rim* and *bstan rim* is not very clearcut; the colophon of Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo*, for example, names Gro lung pa's *Bstan rim chen mo* as a model for this work, which shows that the grenres were perceived as similar. Similarly, Las chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's discussion suggests that he was not trying to draw clear borderlines (Las chen, as in note 1, 5-6).

[45] *Bodhipathapradīpa stanzas 2-5.* Richard Sherburne (transl.), *The Complete Works of Atiśa, Śrī Dīpaṃkara Jñāna, Jo-bo-rje: the Lamp for the Path and the Commentary, together with the newly translated Twenty-five Key Texts* (Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2000), 4-5.

[46] Sherburne, *The Complete Works*, 439-465; Roesler, *Frühe Quellen*, 44-45. On the collection *Jo bo'i chos chung* see also Kaie Mochizuki, "Some Remarks on the Small Texts Attributed to Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna", *Sŭngga* (僧伽) / *Joong-ang Saṅgha University Magazine* 20 (2004), 61-74.

[47] Jackson, "The bsTan rim"; Roesler, *Frühe Quellen,* 37-44.

[48] Roesler, *Frühe Quellen,* 389.

[49] See note 6 above.

[50] *Bka' gdams gces btus nor bu'i bang mdzod*, 8.

[51] The collection is known as the *Blo sbyong glegs bam*. See Thupten Jinpa, *Mind Training: The Great Collection* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006).

[52] Roesler, *Frühe Quellen,* 13-14.

[53] Chattopadhyaya, *Atīśa and Tibet*, chapter 2, emphasizes this point in defence against possible accusations against the Indian master. On the issue of antinomian practices see also Mark Tatz, "*Maitri-pa and Atiśa*," in: *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 4th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, ed. by H. Uebach and J.L. Panglung (München: Kommission für Zentralasiatische Studien Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), 473–482.

[54] Roesler & Roesler, *Kadampa Sites*, esp. 8-9 and images; examples of the cylindrical type of *stūpa*s can be found in Henss, *Cultural Monuments*, vol. 1, 269, 274, 290, 291.

[55] See Ehrhard, "The Transmission," 53-56.

[56] *Rwa sgreng dgon pa'i nyams bzhes chos spyod kyi brjed byang chen mo,* ed. by Gzigs pa sprul sku Blo bzang bzod pa and Phun tshogs rab rgyas (Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2006), 82-106 and 672-717.

[57] Ehrhard, "The Transmission"; Miller, "Jewelled Dialogues".

[58] Śākya rin chen sde, *Yar klungs jo bo'i chos 'byung* (Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1987), 103.

[59] Das, Sarat Chandra. "Indian Pandits in Tibet." *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India*, vol. I, pt. I (1893), 1-31 and *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*, ed. by Nobin Chandra Das (Calcutta, The Baptist Mission Press, 1893); see also Helmut Eimer, "The sources for Sarat Chandra Das' Life of Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna). *Zentralasiatische Studien* 28 (1998), 7-10.

[60] Roerich, *Blue Annals*.

[61] Chattopadhyaya, *Atīśa and Tibet*.

[62] In addition to his *Berichte* (1977), Helmut Eimer has published a wide range of articles on aspects of Bka' gdams pa sources which are too numerous to be listed here.

[63] Eimer, *Rnam thar rgyas pa*.

[64] Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, 470-484. Insightful as this presentation is, Snellgrove seems to overstate the impact of the Bka' gdams pa on monasticism when he writes: "It would therefore seem that Atiśa and 'Brom ston pa in founding the Bka' gdams pa order were in effect the founders of the whole later Tibetan monastic tradition." (Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, 493.) A similar statement regarding 'Brom ston pa is found in *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, 508. However, as pointed out above, neither Atiśa nor 'Brom ston pa had taken the monks' vows in the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition and could therefore not ordain monks in Tibet.

[65] See for example Roberto Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu-ge Pu-hrang: according to the mNga'-ris rgyal-rabs by Gu-ge mkhan-chen Ngag-dbang grags-pa* (Dharamsala: Mtho-gliṅ gtsug lag khaṅ, 1996); Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter et al., *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya* (Milan: Skira, 1997); Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 108-116 with further references. It should be mentioned that the cultural heritage of Ladakh was explored much earlier, for example through the pioneering work of August Hermann Francke, and Giuseppe Tucci's work on the famous translator Rin chen bzang po.

[66] Rai, *Kadampa School*.

[67] Boussemart, *Dromteunpa*.

[68] For example Per K. Sørensen, "The Prolific Ascetic lCe-sgom Śes-rab rdo-rje alias lCe-sgom źig-po: Allusive, but Elusive," *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 11 (1999), 175-200; Per K. Sørensen, Per K. "An XIth Century Ascetic of Buddhist Eclecticism: Kha-rag sgom-chuṅ," in *Tractata Tibetica et Mongolica. Festschrift für Klaus Sagaster zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz and Christian Peter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 241-253.

[69] See note 5 above.

[70] Jackson, "The bsTan rim"; Sweet, "Mental Purification".

[71] Roesler, *Frühe Quellen.*

[72] Vetturini, "The Bka' gdams pa School".

[73] Schuman, "Building Place and Shaping Lives".

[74] Maho Iuchi, see bibliography under "History of the Bka' gdams Tradition and its Institutions".

[75] Thupten Jinpa, see bibliography under "Bka' gdams pa Doctrines and Doctrinal Literature".