A Historical Study of the Mon Region (India) and its Relation with Tibet and Bhutan (16th-17th Century)

Der Fakultät für Geschichte, Kunst- und Orientwissenschaften
der Universität Leipzig
ingereichte

Dissertation
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
Doctor Philosophiae (Dr. phil.)

(A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy)

vorgelegt

von Lobsang Tenpa
geboren am 22.01.1981 in Tawang, Indien


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Abstract

A Historical Study of the Mon Region (India) and its relation with Tibet and Bhutan (16th-17th Century)

Studies in contested areas have received renewed interest among scholars. A case in point is Mon, a region situated between Tibet, Bhutan and India. The region is contested mainly because of the different claims to the region as well as the diverse ethnic and tribal groups living in the area. Only a few works have been published in English as well as in Tibetan on the history of Mon, and a historical study of the region, by paying close attention to present-day districts of Tawang and West Kameng, has so far not received the attention it deserves. The relative paucity of scholarly attention is partly due to lack of access to or unavailability of relevant historical texts, whether they be old Tibetan legal documents or independent textual sources.

Most of the works on the Mon region mainly focus after the late-seventeenth century and secondary sources on the region largely date from the mid-twentieth century onwards. The focus of this dissertation is on the sixteenth and seventeenth century history of Mon. By going back to the earlier period, this research explores the relationship between Tibet, Bhutan, and the Mon region in order to examine how the Mon region was incorporated into Tibet during the late-seventeenth century. Given the current Sino-Indian border disputes, which are particularly concentrated in this region, a detailed historical study of this region is essential and timely.

The dissertation follows a historical-analytical and descriptive method, particularly when it concerns the formation of the region. It first examines the term mon and its usage on a broader scale since a comprehensive analysis of the term is missing. Mon is acknowledged as an exonym and an autonym, but this study shows that its meaning is not specifically defined. Rather, it is used as a vague term that is not restricted to the Mon border region nor to a clan or lineage. In many cases, the term is used to denote an ethnic group but also a region. A major argument I make in this study is that the old Mon region was a specific area, and the Mon was not originally meant to indicate a larger area of the Himalayan region. Tibetan literature maintains distinct ethnic and historical information concerning Mon, Monpa (Mon pa) or Monyul (Mon yul). Additionally, as the region lies to the south of Tibet, I argue that old Mon, including present-day Mon region, refer to the Eastern Himalayas.

Furthermore, following the annexation of the Mon region by the Tibetan government
in 1680, only this region (i.e. present-day districts of Tawang and West Kameng) has been recorded as Mon. The region thus became much more identifiable since then and Tibetan sources on this region are relatively rich, although records relating to the region are available from the late-fifteenth century onwards. At the same time, the region’s crucial period was the late-seventeenth century. To what extent was the Mon area then politically and administratively incorporated into the Tibetan government? As this period of contact history is relatively well documented, it is also a central part of this inquiry. I discuss the interrelations by maintaining that changes of regime led to changes in identity formation and community building, which had a lasting impact on the cultural identity of the research area.

The study also investigates how identities of a peripheral non-state society were influenced by the encounters with political forces and by the cultures of their neighbors. More precisely, it examines the forms of reactions and adaptations these encounters entailed. I highlight also the specific historical relations and cross-contacts between three regions that emerged through migration and the spread of particular religious traditions. In particular, I point out the relevance of the spread of religious traditions that have led to the foundation of Tawang monastery.

I further attempt to reveal one of the striking links among the regions, with the formation of a local ruling dynasty, and their relations with local spiritual leaders whose ancestors arrived in the ninth century. This ruling dynasty is said to be collaterals of the Tibetan dynasty, but traces of the offshoots of these local ruling houses are lost in the sources from the early-eighteenth century onwards. Stating this, historical developments owe much to a number of local rulers, usually referred to as the ‘lord’ (jo bo; rje) and later on to some Tibetan Buddhist masters. The significance of this work also lies in analyzing local Tibetan Buddhist schools who, since the seventeenth century, may had been responsible for the decline of regional chieftains. With the presentation of this thesis by putting forward a number of historical events, which may help us to understand the region better. It is divided into seven chapters, in which the middle five chapters are the core studies of the region, and the remaining two develop into the introduction and the conclusion chapters. Annotated translations of important textual and legal documents are presented in the Appendices.
Table of Contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... iii
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... vii
Notes ............................................................................................................................. ix

Chapter One: Introducing the Study on the Mon Region
1.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 1
1.2 The Religio-Political Context ....................................................................................... 5
1.3 A Brief Note on the Present Mon Region .................................................................... 13
1.4 The Significance of the Study ................................................................................….. 16
1.5 An Overview of the Literature ................................................................................... 19

Chapter Two: Tracing the term Mon in the Tibetan Literature
2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 25
2.2 Interpreting Mon as an Ethnic Group ......................................................................... 30
2.3 Mon as a Region ......................................................................................................... 39
2.3.1 Mon in the Mid-Imperial Period ........................................................................... 46
2.3.2 Mon in the Late-Imperial Period .......................................................................... 54
2.3.3 Mon in the Post-Imperial Period .......................................................................... 58
2.4 Mon as Lho Mon Kha bzhi ....................................................................................... 62

Chapter Three: The Rise of Secular Rulers
3.1 Mythography related to the Early Period ................................................................. 67
3.2 The Foundation of Peripheral ‘Ruler’ (jo bo) and its Succession ............................... 71
3.2.1 The Jo bo of Lha’i Kham pa in Lha’u tsho ............................................................. 73
3.2.2 The Jo bo of Rus po mkhar in Bse r u tsho ............................................................ 77
3.2.3 The Jo bo of Ber mkhar in Shar tsho .................................................................... 80
3.2.3.1 The Dpa’ bo gdung pa in Shar tsho ................................................................. 84
3.2.4 The Jo bo of Shar Sde rang ............................................................................... 87
3.2.5 The Jo bo in Mur shing and Dom kha .................................................................. 91
3.2.5.1 The multiple ‘kings of Mon’ Sprang po dar ................................................... 95
3.2.6 Them spang jo bo and their Ancestors ............................................................... 106

Chapter Four: The Rise of Spiritual Leaders
4.1 The Rise of Local Bka’ brgyud pa Lamas .................................................................. 112
4.2 The Rise of Local Rnying ma pa Lamas ................................................................... 115
4.3 The Rise of Successive Local Dge lugs pa Lamas .................................................... 119
4.3.1 The Origin of the title Merag Lama (Me rag bla ma) ............................................ 120
4.4 The First Merag Lama Bstan pa’i sgan mon ............................................................ 123
4.5 The Second and Third Merag Lamas ....................................................................... 133

Chapter Five: The Critical Stage in the Region’s History in the late 17th Century
5.1 Merag Lama as one of the Five Groups of Mon Lamas ........................................... 138
5.2 Cross-border Conflicts in Shar Mon in the 1650s ................................................... 146
5.3 Merag Lama and his Opponents in the 1660s .......................................................... 151
5.4 The Foundation of Tawang Monastery in 1680-1681 .......................................... 157
5.4 The Rise of Ber mkhar jo bo and thereafter ............................................................ 164
Chapter Six: The Formation and Administration of the Mon Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>The Amended and Annotated translation of the 1680 Edict</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1</td>
<td>A Short Remark on the 1680 Edict and its Limitations</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The 1731 Edict</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1</td>
<td>The Amended and Annotated Translation of the Edict</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2</td>
<td>The 1731 Edict in Facsimile Edition</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.3</td>
<td>A Short Remark to the 1731 Edict</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>The Traditional Administrative System</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1</td>
<td>The Formation of the Thirty-two Tsho Administration</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2</td>
<td>The Fortresses (rdzong) and its Taxation</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Appendices

Appendix I: The Amended and Annotated Translation of the *Me rag mdzad rnam* Text | 213
Appendix II: *Me rag mdzad rnam* in Facsimile editions ([dbu can](#)) and [dbu med](#) scripts | 238
Appendix III: The Amended and Annotated Translation of the *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* Text | 254
Appendix IV: *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* in Facsimile edition (recopied in [dbu med](#) script) | 287
Appendix V: The Amended and Annotated Translation of the 1679 Edict | 297
Appendix VI: The 1679 Edict in Facsimile edition | 300
Appendix VII: The Amended and Annotated Translation of the 1692 Edict | 301
Appendix VIII: The 1692 Edict in Facsimile edition | 303

Bibliography | 304

Tibetan and Non-Tibetan Sources
Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the outcome of my long-standing interest in the region of Mon. While my presentation of the first in-depth study of the political-historic development of the region brings me a certain level of satisfaction - along with a hope it will stimulate further historical research – this dissertation would not have been possible without the compassionate support and guidance from a number of scholars, friends and above all, my family. First of all, I would like to express my immense gratitude to my supervisors Prof. Dr. Per Kjeld Sørensen and Prof. Dr. Eliahu Franco, both of University of Leipzig (Germany) and Dr. habil. Guntram Hazod (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria) with whose inspiration and guidance I was able to finish this work. I remain in debt to them for their immense support and supervision throughout my years of doctoral candidature. They have invested considerable amounts of their valuable time into improving my writing, research techniques and analytical skills, for which I am extremely indebted.

I am also grateful to them for their forbearance towards my writing challenges, and for their input and suggestions which were enriching and inspiring to my knowledge. Although writing this dissertation was a difficult task for me, the knowledge and the experience which I gained, enhanced my writing. This newly acquired knowledge and skill will be retained life-long, or as per the Tibetan Buddhist saying, if not then in this life, this immeasurable knowledge can be transferred to my next life:

One may even study to acquire knowledge at the age of death. Although you may not become scholar at that life time, It is an entrusted wealth for your next life: It will be a precious thing you attained.¹

I am also thankful to Prof. Dr. Toni Huber for initial discussion and proving sources, which are immensely helpful for this work. I would also like to thank Juliane Lochner, Lothar Drechsler, and Lothar Rösinger for their comments of the first draft of this thesis. I would also like to thank my seniors Lesley Branagan and Franz Xaver Erhard for their critical editing and insightful comments. I must also express my debt to my former colleagues (at the University of Vienna), Mathias Fermer and Zsoka Gelle for their valuable advice in formal and informal discussions throughout the doctoral period. At the same time, I am happy to recognise Prof. Dr. Yeshi Choedon (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) who gave me the inspiration to undertake my doctoral study. I am also grateful to Prof. Dr.

¹ In Tibetan, rig pa nang par ’chi yang bslab/ tshe ’dir mkhas par ma gyur kyang/ skye ba phyi mar bcol ba yi/ nor la rang nyid len pa ’dra/ (Sa skya legs bshad 2008 [1251]: 43; 2014 [1251]: 79).
Kazuharu Mizuno (Kyoto University) being inviting me to work along his project, and led to a first-hand comprehensive book on the Mon region. I would like to extend thanks to the rest of my colleagues, staff and students at Leipzig University, whose interactions were helpful in my academic endeavours. At the same time, I must convey my gratitude to the faculty members and library assistants at the various libraries of the university.

I wish to take this opportunity to convey that this dissertation would not have been possible without the generous support and encouragement from a number of gurus and friends in India, particularly in Mon itself. Without naming the individuals, I am particularly indebted to those host and local mentors, who shared their knowledge and resources with me during fieldwork in the region. I also thank the monastic officials of Tawang monastery and appreciate their genuine interest in my dissertation. With an awareness of the current political situation in the region, I have not cited the names of individual informants. But it is due to their immeasurable assistance and resources, that I was able to achieve the finalisation of this dissertation.

This thesis would not have materialised without a number of grants and scholarships, which have immensely helped me in the successful completion of this dissertation. I started my research project initially under the supervision of Dr. habil. Guntran Hazod at the University of Vienna (Austria), then formally commenced my doctoral research at the University of Leipzig with a fellowship granted by the Dalai Lama Trust (www.dalailamatrust.org), based at New York (USA). Moreover, I would not have successfully completed my thesis without the constant support of my parents, despite my long absences from home, and the strong patience and forbearance of my wife Sonam Dolma Pachentsang. Their support is immensely meaningful to me because I could not have imagined that the research process would be such a hugely time-consuming, stressful task that involved enormous hardship. Finally, I have come to the point of realisation that there may not be any end to amendments, additions and corrections that I could have made. However, an end point must be finally drawn, so I therefore present this completed thesis, and I take the full responsibility for any errors.
Notes

Except the commonly known terms and names of places, which are used as per the phonetic spelling, for example Tawang, Lhasa, Thimphu, etc. I have consistently followed transliteration system according to the method of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, which is widely known as the Wylie transliteration in this dissertation. Even then, I must caution that the phonetic spelling transcription of Tibetan terms in the roman letter is not standardized or universal. In the transliteration, I capitalized the initial letter of a word, even if it is a prefix (sngon 'jug), and rather not the radical letter (ming gzhi). Though the capitalization of only the radical letter is followed by a number of studies for the purpose of the pronunciation and reading, it is not followed here.

All the textual names or quoted sentences or passages have been italicized with the initial being capitalized, but the terms including personal pronouns or places are not italicized or without capitalization except at the start of the sentence. Any alternative or correct spellings have been written in brackets, for example Rta dbang (wang) or Sde (rde) rang. While in the case of usages of the original Tibetan sources, the actual text and its orthography are presented without edition, whereas necessary edition is given in the note. In the case of usages of Sanskrit and Hindi terms, I followed the ‘International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration’ (IAST). Any further required information is explained in the note.

Both Tibetan and non-Tibetan references are listed fully in alphabetical order according to the last name of the first author, whereas Tibetan language sources are followed in an abbreviated text title or the first name of the author. The order is followed after the romanized alphabetical list rather than Tibetan consonant. All the photographs or figures are prepared by me except where due reference are given and acknowledged in the citation.
Fig. 01: The Mon Region: Tawang and West Kameng districts (Arunachal Pradesh, India)
Chapter One

Introducing the Study of the Mon Region

Introduction

Studies in contested areas have received renewed interest among scholars. A case in point is a long neglected region situated between great civilizations of Tibetan, Bhutanese and Indian. That region in contest, Mon will be set forth in this study. A historical study of the Mon region, focusing on present-day districts of Tawang and West Kameng, has so far not been adequately conducted. This inadequacy is partly due to the lack of access to or unavailability of relevant historical texts, whether they be old Tibetan legal documents or independent textual sources. The study of the Mon region is also a contested topic because of the different claims to the region as well as the diverse ethnic and tribal groups living in the area. Only a few works have been published on the history of the region in English (Aris 1980, Jampa Samten 1994, Lobsang Tenpa 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016), as well as in Tibetan (Ye shes ’phrin las 1983, Thub bstan chos ’phel 1987, Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009).

As the focus of these works mainly deal after the late-seventeenth century, by using the oldest records of the region, this study centers exclusively on the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Moreover, secondary sources on present-day Mon region largely date from the mid-twentieth century onwards. The present research goes back to the earlier period and explores the relationship between Tibet,¹ Bhutan, and the Mon region in order to examine how the Mon region was incorporated into Tibet during the late-seventeenth century. A detailed historical study of the region is essential and timely, given the current Sino-Indian border disputes, which are particularly concentrated in this region.

¹ In this study Tibet refers to the “traditional” Tibet, consisting of the three traditional provinces of Amdo, Khams and Dbus Gtsang (Bod chol kha gsum or Mdo dbus khams gsum). The official Chinese government’s classification of Tibet as consisting only of the Tibet Autonomous Region (hereafter TAR) relate to a mid-twentieth century political scenario.
A comprehensive analysis of the term *mon* is still missing. This dissertation therefore offers an examination of the term and its usage on a broader scale in the Tibetan sources and in local traditions. The term is acknowledged as an exonym and an autonym, but it’s meaning is not specifically defined. It is historically a rather vague term and is not restricted to the Mon border region nor to a clan or lineage. In many cases, the term is used to denote an ethnic group but also a region. For example, Chab spel (1988: 2), in an attempt to define Mon, states that “Mon is an archaic Tibetan word for a low-lying densely forested region with a narrow valley.”

This explanation of the term corresponds to what is known in Tshangla as *mun*. Although the term can be traced back in textual sources to the earliest time (namely the time of the ancestral figure Gnya’ khri btsan po), it is a rather vague information because written texts were only available from the seventh or eighth century onwards.

In fact, the term *mon* is attested in the sources only from the eighth or early-ninth century onwards (Richardson 1984 [1952]: 110; Dotson 2009: 108). The term is recorded as a region when it is used in the context of the administrative organization

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2 In Tib. Sa bab dma’ zhung ri rong dog pa dang ggod ma ‘i nags tshal stug pos khebs pa’i sa khul la thogs pa’i bod kyi brda rnying zhig yin (Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs 1988: 2).
3 Tshangla is a dialect spoken in Dirang and Kalakhang Circle Areas in the West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh, India and in Eastern Bhutan, where it is known as Shar phyogs kha. It is also known as Padma bkod and spoken in present-day Medog County in Nyingchi prefecture (TAR) and Mechukha, Tuting and the nearby regions of the West and Upper Siang districts, Arunachal Pradesh. See Andvik (1999, 2010).
4 In the Tibetan literature, it is stated that written sources developed since the seventh century. However, Bonpo Tibetan scholars argue that prior to that time, there were scripts and written texts. Dotson (2009: 9) notes that the “Old Tibetan Annals” or the “Old Tibetan Chronicle” are considered the oldest written sources and also the ‘treasure texts’ (*gter ma*) are seen as old textual material. He therefore excludes any translated Buddhist texts prior to the Old Tibetan Annals. Although these sources became foundation for a number of later historical writings, the post-dynastic sources are considered not always reliable. Yet the post-dynastic sources must be given due consideration, keeping in mind that there is little point in dismissing post-dynastic histories as universally corrupted by a veneer of myth (Dotson 2009: 10, Uray 1967: 498-505, van der Kuijp 1991: 94-107). Ardussi (1977: 17) also notes that “it should eventually be possible to better distinguish between obviously mythical elements and those with some claim to historical reliability.” He further states that “both Bhutanese and Tibetan religious scholars have participated in this re-writing of the early history, not probably to consciously deceive or fabricate, but to glorify and embellish for religious and personal reasons. Thus, while the kernel of the stories may contain some truth, everything else is suspect” (Ardussi 1977: 56). Similar observation is followed in Mullard (2009: 4), who states that “the importance of the *gter ma* tradition (in Sikkim) and its history cannot be understated.” As Lincoln (1989: 24-5) argues that myth itself acts as a blueprint for certain social authority, we know that the Dunhang documents, the *Royal Genealogy* (PT 1286) and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (PT 1287) inform us that the mythography of “the Tibetan Empire began even before the collapse of the empire itself” (Dotson 2006: 3). The above mentioned sources are evaluated and extracted for any related historical notes for this study.
of the Tibetan empire. It is also encountered in later Tibetan chronicles, referring primarily to aristocratic lineages of the Tibetan highlands who hailed from the broader Mon area (Hazod 2009: 168). Throughout the Tibetan Plateau, the term is often used to describe prehistoric sites, such as Mon dur sa (Mon graves) and Mon khang (Mon houses), as well as for ancient ruin sites, possibly pointing to proto-Tibetan settlement history of Tibeto-Burman groups (Francke 1907; Bellezza 2010). The history of this ancient Mon presence in the highlands is still largely unexplored. As Stein (1972: 34) observed, in the classical Tibetan historiography, Mon or Monyul (Mon yul) usually refer to the border areas south of Tibet. This brief record constitutes merely a general reference to old Mon, but it does refer to a region in the eastern Himalayas, i.e. the Lho Mon (Southern Mon) region.

As the region lies to the south of Tibet, I argue that old Mon, including the today’s Mon region refer to the Eastern Himalayas, since the Mon region is present-day districts of Tawang and West Kameng. One major argument in this study hence is that the old Mon region was a specific area, and the term Mon was not originally meant to indicate a larger area of the Himalayan region. Tibetan literature maintains distinct ethnic and historical information concerning Mon, Monpa (Mon pa) or Monyul (see Chap. 2). It is also argued here that the specific historical relations and cross-contacts between Tibet, Bhutan, and the Mon region emerged through migration and the spread of particular religious traditions. In particular, I point out the relevance of the spread of religious traditions that have led to the foundation of the central Tawang monastery.

The study further attempts to reveal one of the most striking links with Tibet and Bhutan, with the formation of a local ruling dynasty in the Mon region, whose ancestors arrived in the ninth century. This ruling dynasty is said to be collaterals of the Tibetan dynasty, but traces of the offshoots of these local ruling houses are lost in the sources from the early-eighteenth century onwards (see Chap. 3). Stating this, historical developments owe much to a number of local rulers, usually referred to as the ‘lord’ (jo bo; rje) and later on to some Tibetan Buddhist masters (see Chap. 4,

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5 This specific term old Mon nevertheless includes regions such as Sikkim, Bhutan, and the present-day Mon region as well as some outlying southern districts such as Gro mo (Chumbi valley) and Mtsho sna (Tsona, situated in the TAR). See also note 6.
5). Similarly, the significance of this study lies in analyzing local Tibetan Buddhist schools who, since the seventeenth century, may have been responsible for the decline of regional chieftains. Those peripheral leaders had to manage their specific Mon identities within influences of those schools. The influence of Tibetan traditions that existed along with the different ethnic Monpa culture and language can be observed since the seventeenth century. My argument that institutionalized Buddhist schools were responsible for the decline of these local rulers has also parallels in Tibet proper, where tribal structures gradually disappeared as a consequence of new social organizations.

The region’s crucial period was the late-seventeenth century. To what extent was the Mon area then politically and administratively incorporated into the Tibetan government? As this period of contact history is relatively well documented in the sources, it is also a central part of this inquiry. The interrelations are discussed by maintaining that changes of regime led to changes in identity formation and community building, which had a lasting impact on the cultural identity of the research area. The study investigates how identities of a peripheral non-state society were influenced by the encounters with political forces and cultures of Tibet and Bhutan. More precisely, it examines the forms of reactions and adaptations these encounters entailed.

A fair amount of academic literature is available on the Eastern Himalayas’ regions of Sikkim and Bhutan, but the regions such as the Mon region, Chumbi valley (Gro mo) and Tsona are mostly neglected in academic studies.⁶ Saying this, Chumbi valley and Tsona will not be studied here. The focus is on present-day Mon region, and will cover up to the early-eighteenth century. The region was once called Shar Mon (Eastern Mon, including some districts of Eastern Bhutan). Following the annexation of the Mon region by the Tibetan Dga’ ldan pho brang government in 1680, only the present-day region has been recorded as Mon. The region became much more identifiable since then and Tibetan sources for this region are relatively rich, although records relating to the region are available from the late-fifteenth century

⁶ See e.g. Ardussi (1977), Aris (1979), Dargye (2001), Mullard (2011) and Karma (2013). These authors argue that the formation of these regions are linked and related to the conception of a Buddhist government nation-state in the seventeenth century. See Fig. 01 - 05 for a map of these regions.
onwards. Yet the early accounts mention the term related to a certain place or with whom it was associated.

The study aims at filling the gap left by the lack of sources, a circumstance which can be explained by the remoteness of the region and its political situation. The focus of this dissertation therefore lies in an analysis and the use of primary Tibetan language sources, which also include the local production. All these annotated translations of important textual and legal documents are presented in the Appendices. It also addresses some of the contradictions found in existing publications. However, the study brings forward these sources and discusses them, rather than drawing a conclusion. Yet, it does not intend to claim that it represents an ultimate history of the region, rather the work can be considered as the first comprehensive study on this topic. However, if new historical primary sources surface in the future, a revision may lead to new inquiries. I rather present the case study as trying to understand the past through the sources than attempt to impose a view. It is important to note that the present study has led to an examination of the relationship between societies with different backgrounds, though it can be always argued that historical writings are presented from the writer’s own preferences and ideologies. The dissertation follows the historical-analytical and descriptive method, particularly in the formation of the region. It is divided into seven chapters, in which the middle five chapters are the core studies of the region, and the remaining two develop into the introduction and the conclusion chapters. With the presentation of this dissertation, it shall fulfil an important historical study on the Eastern Himalayas, particularly the Mon region in the field of the Tibetan and Himalayan Studies or the Inner Asian Studies.

The Religio-Political Context

There is no mention of the term Mon in the historical relations between the Mongols and Tibetans in the first half of the thirteenth century when the military campaigns of the Mongols reached until the southern parts of central Tibet. The Mongols were informed of the ecclesiastical and scholastic importance of the Sa skya pa at their court by the mid-thirteenth century. Yet at the same time, we learn from different
sources that the Sa skya pa rulers were constantly encountering threat from the [G]dung clan in the south, who were later pushed down to old Mon region in the mid-fourteenth century (Aris 1979: 120). During the same period, there existed the succession of ‘kings of Mon’ (Mon rgyal po), who were instrumental in securing the patronage of the Bka’ brgyud school in the old Mon region, particularly in the eastern part. Could the latter rulers be traced back to the former [G]dung clan, even though both were acknowledged separately in contemporary historiography?

The patronage of the kings of Mon offered to the Karma Bka’ brgyud pa school might probably be the beginning of the ‘priest and patron’ (mchod yon) relationship in old Mon, even though this kind of relationship was well established between the Mongols and the ’Bri gung Bka’ brgyud pa and Sa skya pa in central Tibet. The association with the Karma Bka’ brgyud pa ends according to the historical records with the last king of Mon, Sprang po dar in the sixteenth century (see Chap. 3), while the latter’s relations with central Tibet continued with other Tibetan Buddhist schools. This priest and patron relationship then developed into a ‘religio-political concept’ or ‘the temporal and spiritual leadership’ (see Chap. 4 and 5). The concept was in existence during the reign of those kings of Mon, who might have provided patronage and stability to the region. The rise of rivalry amongst the monastic institutions within the different schools led to a certain decline of one school and the prominence of another school, even though the religio-political notion was to bring and maintain balance and stability to both systems.

This very concept also proved to be the cause for increasing rivalry between the religious institutions and the secular rulers, which ultimately led to the decline of the secular rulers. The rise of the religious traditions and their spiritual leaders can be traced to the ‘Later Dissemination of Buddhism’ (bstan pa phyi dar) on the Tibetan

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7 See Aris (1979: 115-39) on the development of the gdung clan and its history, which is primarily based on Rgyal rig s I (1986: 32a-40a), published in Aris (2009 [1986]: 47-55) and Rgya bsdus yig tshang (1985 [1434]). Arussi (2004b) gives further insight into the gdung clan and various other clans with the same name in the region. Karma (2013: 120-33) has provided a short summary of this clan based on the former two authors. The notion of clan in this study refers to, in most cases, a number of family lines of local prominence – ruling houses embedded in a dynasty- genealogical framework, but it does not denote a whole society as a clan, based in the sense of a sociality making principle.

8 In Tib. chos srid zung ’brel. See Phuntsog (1975), Ruegg (1991), Cüppers (2004b) for further discussion on this concept.
plateau. A number of Tibetan and Indian Buddhist scholars played a crucial role, as it was customary for a Tibetan master to trace his teachings back to Indian masters from ancient Buddhist universities. These scholars, along with Tibetan translators (lo tswa ba), were often instrumental during the medieval period in the formal interaction between the regions throughout the Himalayas. The Himalayas was a vibrant area of interaction and many scholars travelled to the Indian subcontinent to learn and receive Buddhist teachings. The interaction later developed between the people of the Himalayan region and Tibet, in which Buddhist masters from both sides, even from the old Mon region, were actively engaged.

This led to the establishment of teaching centers, which developed into lineage-based schools on the Tibetan plateau. As a result, a number of Tibetan Buddhist schools flourished during the so-called “hegemonial period” (twelfth to seventeenth century).9 In the present case, it was the rise of the reformed Dge lugs pa school since the late-fourteenth century in Tibet that played a role in the Mon region, particularly from the mid-sixteenth century onwards (see Chap. 3). From this point on, the rise of the institution of the Dalai Lama (with its original seat at Dga’ ldan pho brang in ’Bras spungs monastery, near Lhasa) led to an unique case of the religio-political policy that developed between the region and the Tibetan government in Lhasa, especially in the late-seventeenth century (see Chap. 4 and 5).10 It was local Dge lugs pa monasteries that were crucial for the further development of the Tibeto-Mon relationship, particularly after the foundation of Tawang monastery in 1681.

The relationship between Lhasa and the peripheral Mon reinforced the patronage (mchod yon) relationship in the region. The mchod yon relationship was of great importance for the Tibetan government and its monastic institutions, particularly with respect to the region’s direct engagement with India for trade and a prolonged misconception about the sacred sites of Buddhist India in Assam until early-twentieth century.11 The relationship was directly supported by the Fifth Dalai

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9 The term was introduced by Cuevas 2006.
10 The concerned paragraph is also discussed in Tenpa (2013: 3) and Ardussi (1977: 20).
11 For the misconception about Buddhist holy sites in Assam, see Aris (1979: 112, n. 31), Huber (2008: 125-65) and also note 488.
Lama (1617-1682) to the Fourth Merag Lama (hereafter Merag Lama) Blo gros rgya mtsho (d. 1682), which enhanced the latter Fourth Merag Lama’s contributions in the Mon region. The Fourth Merag Lama is still an acclaimed and acknowledged personality among the religious figures in the region, a legacy which he earned during his life. Besides him, the role of the First Merag Lama, Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, was also an important figure in the region and founded monasteries and propagated Tibetan Buddhism. In particular, he was a proponent of the ‘unbiased’ (ris med) attitude and advocated for a synthesis of the Dge lugs pa with other schools. The synthesis largely contained remnants and influences of the school such as the Rnying ma pa and the undefined indigenous practices as well as the non-institutionalized Bon (Bjerken 2004; Huber 2013).

This amalgamation also led to a new cultural identity which thrived in the region, combining elements of local culture and Buddhism. Those schools, however, had to adopt to the dominant local Dge lugs pa’s, who were supported by the Lhasa government since the late-seventeenth century. The Dge lugs pa’s dominance was strengthened after the son of the local Mon aristocrat Ber mkhar\textsuperscript{12} jo bo, Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho, was enthroned as the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706). This led to the syncretism of one of the oldest monastic institutions in the region, namely Orgyan gling of Rnying ma pa with the Dge lugs pa. The choice of the Sixth Dalai Lama, a native of the region, is a much debated subject in academic literature. The discussion is mostly concerned with the assimilation of the contested region of Mon, in connection with the formation of the kingdoms of Sikkim and Bhutan in the early-seventeenth century. However, in the oral narratives of the region, as mythopoeic descriptions as they be, it is claimed that the birth of the Sixth Dalai Lama was allegedly the fulfillment of the wishes of the late Fifth Dalai Lama, Blo bzang rgya mtsho, to consecrate the newly established Tawang monastery. Similarly, it is considered that the Fifth Dalai Lama visited the region in the form of the Sixth’s reincarnation, as the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho was a former disciple of Fifth Dalai Lama.

\textsuperscript{12} Sher mkhar or She mkhar is spelled differently in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]) and Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (7a, 16b).
Afterwards a number of important edicts were issued during this period and the region became even more visible on the political map. In particular, the 1680 edict enacted by the Fifth Dalai Lama, the 1731 edict by Pho lha nas mi dbang Bsod nams stobs rgyas (1698-1747) for Tawang monastery and its jurisdiction (see Chap. 6), and the 1752 edict to the Ber mkhar family of the Sixth Dalai Lama by the Seventh Dalai Lama Bskal bzang rgya mtsho (1708-1757), which was reaffirmed in 1799 by the Eighth Dalai Lama 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho (1758-1804) (Tenpa 2015). These documents shed light on some of the important historical events of the region.

In Lhasa, the dissemination of Buddhism, particularly of the Dge lugs doctrine in the border areas nourished the concept of forming a ‘pan-Tibetan’ Buddhist world with the principle characteristics of the central Tibetan government’s policy. This pan-Tibetan Buddhist concept could not be put into action following a strong resistance by the non-Dge lugs Tibetan Buddhist schools, especially of the Bka’ brgyud pa. The resistance can be traced back to the pre-1642 period when the Gtsang pa rulers (Sde pa Gtsang pa, 1565-1642) were having the similar notion, but with a Bka’ brgyud pa background, particularly by Karma Bka’ brgyud pa. It was strongly resisted by other schools, including the Dge lugs pa. Moreover, the pan-Tibetan concept of the Sde pa Gtsang pa failed further after the schism of the ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa for the succession of Padma dkar po (1527-1592) as the spiritual head of the Rwa lung monastery. The schism erupted when the candidature between Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594-1651) and his opponent Dpag bsam dbang po (1593-1653), following Zhabs drung flight to what later became Bhutan, caused a number of wars between the followers of Zhabs drung and Sde pa Gtsang pa in the early-seventeenth century.

This caused the aspiring candidate Zhabs drung to go against the Sde pa Gtsang pa, while his opponent was installed as the Fifth Rgyal dbang 'Brug pa. The opposition of Zhabs drung to the Gtsang pa rulers led to the decline of the pan-

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13 The main factor to unite and rule under a single or central authority can be traced back to the Tibetan empire (7th-9th cent. CE), interlinked with cultic concepts, where, for example, the ritual of sku bla was a pious ideal for the ‘pan-Tibetan’ authority during the imperial period. MacDonald (1971: 299-309), Blondeau (1976: 242-3) and Karmay (1998 [1996]), Dotson (2006: 1, n.1) note that “sku bla is a cult based both on mountain deities and the divine emperor.” See Tenpa (2009: 79-87) and Schwieger (2015: 71-111, 146-208) on the ‘Pan-Tibetan’ Buddhist concept.
Tibetan Buddhist concept of the Sde pa Gtsang pa with a particular school dominating the political administration. The disagreement steered friction within the 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa, which was the main reason for the formation of Bhutan ('Brug yul) under the rule of Zhab s drung. However, a specific school’s supremacy was carried forward by the Dga’ ldan pho brang under the principle of the Dge lugs school and led to the annexation of the present Mon region as part of the concept. Yet, the pan-Tibetan model experienced further hindrances after the foundation of the kingdoms of Sikkim ('Bras ljongs), Ladakh (La dwags) and the regional principalities of Spiti (Spyi sti) and Lahaul (Gar zha), where non-Dge lugs schools were able to put up a temporary resistance.

Much later, with the rise of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thub bstan rgya mtsho (1876-1933), and since 1895, the pan-Tibetan Buddhist concept was revived, but it was finally scattered after the division of Tibet into Inner and Outer Tibet in 1914 during the Simla Conference and with the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Following these impediments to the concept, the foundation of those new countries in the mid-seventeenth century has mostly been considered as a state formation (Ardussi 1977; Aris 1979; Mullard 2011). Traditionally, both Tibet and Bhutan were formed as theocratic states. Bhutan proved successful in adapting to a partition of the ruling theocratic heads, minimizing thus the power among the elites. It became later a monarchy, with the king as the head of the state with the foundation of the kingdom in 1907. The central Tibetan government in Lhasa retained its strong influence of theocracy even after a number of setbacks, such as the long gaps of interregnum after the death of the Dalai Lamas at a young age and the strong interferences by the Ambans in the government affairs in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, until the tragedy in mid-twentieth century.

14 These kingdoms were annexed under the Indian princely states of Jammu and Kashmir and the Kingdom of Bashar in the eighteenth century. See e.g. Franck (1907), Petech (1977), Aris (1979), Tobdan (1984), Mullard (2011), Karma (2013).

15 These countries can be arguably defined as feudal states, though they do not directly threaten the central regime (i.e. the Dga’ ldan pho brang government). Gellner (1983: 3) states that usually the feudal kingdoms loom the central rulers.

16 It is also observed that the institution of the Dalai Lama was instrumental in keeping the successive Dalai Lamas intact as a supreme religious figure, regardless of the roles of individual in this regard. A number of scholarly works exist on this topic and I will therefore not go into more detail.
In spite of the establishment of the Tibetan government of the Dga’ ldan pho brang in 1642 by the Fifth Dalai Lama, his successors failed to revive the principles of the government and its concepts, with the exception of the Seventh and Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Those unsuccessful successors held the temporal and spiritual leadership of the government, but the regimes during the period remained strongly influenced by the regent,17 with the help of the ‘council of ministers’ (bka’ shag) for all the practical administration and political affairs of Tibet. After the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1682, the regent (sde srid) Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho single-handedly carried out the administration of Tibet until 1703, a period in which he carefully orchestrated the recognition and enthronement of the Sixth Dalai Lama. In the end, this arrangement led to a situation where Mongols and Manchus started to interfere in the political affairs of Tibet. Ultimately, this caused the tragic events of 1705 and 1706, when sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho was killed and the captive Sixth Dalai Lama died on his way to Beijing.

During those periods, the regent and the Council of Ministers were practically responsible for the thirty-two tsho (an administration units) of the Mon region, more precisely since the eighteenth century. The region’s traditional administration was gradually taken over from local mayors (gtso rgyan) of a tsho (administrative unit) under a lord (jo bo) and replaced by another kind of a mayor who was subject to a district commissioner (rdzong dpon) or lding dpon.18 This new overall structure of the administration for the local affairs was more or less a nexus between monastic institutions and local aristocrats, a nexus which was called the ‘Council of Four, Six, Seven or Nine’ (bzhi/drug/bdun/dgu sbrel) and which administered the thirty-two tsho of the Mon region (see Chap. 6). This council administration, which was headed

17 The Tibetan terms sde srid, srid skyongs and rgyal tshab are usually translated as ‘regent’. See the list of regents in Tenpa (2009: 116-17) and Kolmas (1994). For the function of the regent during different periods, see Petech (1972: 240-42).
18 The terms tsho or lding resemble largely the modern notion of county, circle area or administrative unit, which can be a cluster of valleys or villages in a region (Goldstein 1971: 2; Aris 1979, 1980). The tsho could consist of one to several villages, particularly situated in a certain valley or some valleys together. The lists of tsho are given in Aris (1980: 15), Thub bstan chos ’phel (1988: 26), Norbu (2008: 14-19), Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 132-63) and Du kā la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 396) by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, rendered in a table in Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 37-8) and Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 48-9) (see section 6.4 or Fig. 29). The tsho units can be observed in ancient Bhutan according to the biography of Pha jo ’Brug sgom zhig po (Dargye and Sørensen 2001: 39a).
by the Lhasa-appointed ‘manager of the ecclesiastical office of Tawang’ (Rta dbang bla gnyer) remained in function until February 1951.

We can practically rule out that there was any outside or direct Tibetan government’s interference in the region’s actual administration, even during the last Tibeto-Mongol military campaign against the Rnying ma pa in the early-eighteenth century. Similarly, the renovations of Tawang monastery reflected the region’s close contact with the Lhasa government, while at the same time indicating that the region enjoyed considerable autonomy in terms of administration. This is why it was a blessing in disguise for the local rulers of the Mon region during the periods of weak central regimes in Lhasa, particularly for those hereditary rulers called jo bo or babu (ba spu), who were predominantly from the southern part of the region. We can explain this from a number of treaties and other agreements signed by the local chieftains with British India in the mid-nineteenth century, which became crucial for their further engagement with British India and later also with the Union of Indian States. The engagements were followed by the renewal of one of those treaties in 1853 under the presence and observation of the Tibetan government’s representatives. These treaties represent the first agreements between British India and the (Tibeto-) Mon area.

Both the Lhasa authorities and British India seem to have ignored and played down the importance of these treaties in the following years. The existence of these agreements was not acknowledged in the treaties signed between Tibet and British India, or even between British India and China. The 1914 Simla tripartite conference between British India, Tibet and China makes no mention of those treaties either. The Mon region, however, became legally part of British India in 1914, but the significance of the Monpa region and people to the Tibetan regime in Lhasa was not adequately perceived until the mid-twentieth century, when British Indian troops began to take power over the region from Lhasa’s appointed local official. It was only in February 1951, just three months before the “17 Point Agreement” was signed by Tibetan and Chinese officials, or only four years after Indian independence from the

19 See for details Tenpa (2014, 2016).
British Empire, that the Indian army finally “annexed” the entire Mon region (Tenpa 2014).

Since then the region was included into the two political districts of Tawang and West Kameng. In the Western academic literature, the term “Monyul corridor” is often used instead of Monyul (Aris 1979, 1980; Huber 2008, 2013). The term “corridor” meant to indicate the existence of the corridors of Monyul and Chumbi (= Gro mo) valley with Bhutan located in the middle; however, there is still no mention of a Chumbi corridor.20 Throughout this study, the term Mon region is used instead of “Monyul corridor” or Monyul. In many English sources of the nineteenth century, the region is named as “extra-Bhutia” region or “the Tawang Tract”. And even Mon or Mon yul are used from the early-twentieth century onward (Tenpa 2014). This study offers a perspective on the historical development with particular emphasis on the formation of the region. On this background,21 the present study aims to present the history of the Mon region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and its formation with the strong support of the Tibetan government in Lhasa, in particular by the institution of the Dalai Lama. Both played a critical and decisive role in the formation of the region in the late-seventeenth century against the Bhutanese expansion in the eastern Himalayas. I will first briefly outline the region in its present status, followed by the methodological approach used in this study.

A Brief Note on the Present Mon region

In the current state, the Monpa tribe of Arunachal Pradesh represent the dominant ethnic group of the region.22 The term Monpa, meaning someone from Mon, is used

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20 The term “Monyul corridor” is used in Aris (1979: vii, xiv, xvi, 107, 110), but it only became widely known after his 1980 article. Aris’ understanding of the term corridor is that there were “the valley of Chumbi (Gro mo [corridor]) in the west and the ‘Monyul Corridor’ to the east,” where Bhutan lies in the middle.

21 The outline of the above historical development of the region has been greatly enhanced by the publications of Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]) and Bstan ‘dzin nor bu (2002), as well as a number of other primary sources obtained by the present author, such as Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, Me rag mdzad rnam and the Tibetan legal documents. A thorough examination and analysis of these sources are incorporated and presented here.

22 Throughout the present study, the term “ethnic group” is mainly used instead of “tribe”. However, due to the frequent occurrence of the same term, tribe is also written in place of ethnic in a paragraph. The understanding of the term “tribe” is not meant to say that it consists of unchanging and
either for the people living in the region of Mon or for someone who is of Mon, irrespective of a region. However, the terms Mon or Monpa are used as blanket terms by Tibetans to designate certain neighboring regions or people situated to the south.\(^{23}\) The usage of these terms can be observed even today in Tibet and in the Himalayan regions. In India, the Mon people are categorized as “Scheduled Tribe” Monpa, specifying the people living in the above mentioned districts, while in the TAR (China), they are considered as one of the 56 ethnic groups of the People’s Republic of China, and are identified as the Menba ethnic group living in Tsona (Mtsho sna) and Medog (Me tog) counties of the TAR. A tribe officially recorded as Memba, but referred to as Monpa, is also found in the districts of Upper and West Siangs in Arunachal Pradesh, located on the opposite side of the Medog County.

Today, the people living in the districts of Tawang and West Kameng are culturally and linguistically closely related with eastern Bhutan, rather than with the Tibetans in the north. They are homogeneously known as the people of Monpa (Mizuno and Tenpa 2015; Norbu 2008). The predominant but homogenous character of present-day customs and religious festivals throughout the Monpa districts has been strongly shaped over many centuries by the culture of Buddhist Tibet. This transformation in the customs can be related to a Tibetanization process until the mid-twentieth century, and was later replaced by the Hinduization in the recent times; the latter infusion of culture is similarly observed in the rest of southern Himalayan regions (Ramble 1997: 405-09; Shneiderman 2006: 28). The influence of both cultures in the region is an ongoing process rather than a historical one.

Shneiderman (2006) and Klieger (2006) question whether the people of the southern periphery of the Himalayas are of Tibetan ethnicity, ethnic Tibetan or ethnically Tibetan, though their linguistic, cultural and physical similarities point towards a common Tibetan heritage. The concerned question can be related to an observation in the region that the regional societies usually tend to point out the differences rather than the similarities. Consequently, in “ethnographic Tibet” as

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argued by Samuel (1993), Goldstein (1991), and Huber (1999) and so forth, the concerned ethnic groups in the Himalayan region are not included. This is a challenge to the ethnographic classification, yet it is evidently based on political considerations. In the traditional Tibetan historiography and literature, the Tibetan authors tend to include the various ethnic groups of the periphery by portraying them as having been developed from the ancestral ‘four or six little Tibetan races’ (mi’u rigs bzhi/ drug), even though this “Tibetan anthropogenesis” is considered a myth (Gyalbo et al. 2000: 51, n.40).

Tawang is now the main city of the Mon region, which is both the name of the district as well as the town. Until the early-eighteenth-century, the Tawang-subdivision was called La ’og yul gsum or ‘eastern’ (shar) Nyi ma tsho gsum, whereas Rta wang or Rta dbang (Tawang) was only used for the old site of Tawang monastery. The other district situated on the western side of the river Kameng was named West Kameng. Some of the old names of tsho in the district are Sbrang nang tsho drug, Rong nang tsho bzhi, and so on. In general terms, one can observe that there are more than three different ethnic groups in the area: i.e. the Monpa of Dag pa speakers, Tshangla speakers, ‘Brog pa and Tsona Tibetan dialect speakers, and other minor groups. Generally, the Monpa tribe has been categorized geographically into northern, central and southern branches as Tawang Monpa, Dirang Monpa, and Kalaktang Monpa, respectively.

Linguistically, the latter two, the Monpa of Dirang and Kalakang, belong to the Tshangla speakers and the former, the Monpa of Tawang, are speakers of Dag pa. Besides those languages, there are in the districts the languages of Khowa, Miji

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24 Early-eighteenth century sources, such as O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 75b) and Du kā la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]), by the Sixth Dalai Lama and sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, respectively mention Tsho gsum, shar Nyi ma tsho gsum or La ‘og yul gsum as the former name of Tawang. They can be roughly translated as ‘the three counties below a mountain pass’ (La ’og yul gsum), i.e. Shar tsho, Bse ru tsho and Lha’u tsho (in Tib., shar mtsho/ bse ru/ lha’u sde tsho gsum mam/ la ’og yul gsum du grags pal). These roughly correspond to present day Tawang, Kitpi, Lhou, Mukto and Jang Circle Areas in the district of Tawang. The Circle Areas of Lumla, Dudungar-Bongla, Zeminthang and Thingbu are called separately as Dag pa tsho bryad and Spang chen Iding drug, while Thingbu Circle Area is known as Smag thing lugs gsum and it was not part of the Mon region’s administrative units. See below chapter 6.4 for further details on the formation of the region.

(Sajolang) and Sherdukpen as well as Aka. Aside from the Aka vernacular, the rest of the languages are classified as belonging to the East Bodish language in linguistic studies. Until 1951, Dag pa, the Tawang Monpa language is used as the *lingua franca* across the region, whereas nowadays, Hindi is the medium of communication besides Tibetan, English, Nepali and Assamese. All these groups are officially categorized into five ethnic groups or tribes under the “Scheduled Tribes” status of India: i.e. Aka (Hrusso); Khowa (Bugun); Miji; Monpa and ‘Sherdukpen’ (Gsher stug spen). Among them, the Monpa tribe is in the majority in both districts, comprising ninety percent of the population in Tawang and about seventy percent in West Kameng.

**The Significance of the Study**

The prominence of the study lies in fact that so far there is insufficient investigation of the Eastern Himalayas from a historical and anthropological perspective, in particular of the Mon region of Arunachal Pradesh. As a native of the region, I am privileged to conduct this study, both in terms of language skills and acquisition of primary sources. The study thus presents for the first time some major aspects of the local history of Monyu. The research conducted were particularly challenging due to the limited relevant sources. For this reason, the regional history can only be outlined based on existing historical sources as well as anthropological inquiries. The primary intention is to present an initial study of the history of the Mon region, with a focus on the contacts between Tibet and Mon, but also between Mon and Bhutan.

As said, the analyses are based on indigenous and hitherto little-researched or previously untranslated Tibetan historical texts and consist mainly of archival Tibetan texts which outline the socio-political history of the region. In addition, British and Indian archival materials are consulted, along with further input based

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on fieldwork. The significance of cross-contacts, migration, and ancient trade routes are also discussed. The extent to which the identity of the region is perceived as a peripheral non-state society is also examined. Furthermore, I discuss how the region was influenced by encounters with the cultures of Tibet and Bhutan. Some new insights into the manifold historical and cultural encounters in the Eastern Himalayas area will be analyzed and hence may create an impetus for an increase in historical and anthropological research into this area in the future. Finally, the work hopes to be of benefit to the local communities, who in this way would learn about their rich history and thus better understand the current political situation of the Sino [Tibetan]-Indian border issue.

On the territorialization of the region during the seventeenth century between Tibet and Bhutan, the dissertation focuses exclusively on the peripheral rulers and their roles in the formation of the region. This state of the region is considered from the viewpoint of tributary system, suzerainty or vassal and hegemony (Zhang and Buzan 2012). At the same time, the region is analyzed from the expansionist policy adopted by the Bhutanese regents (’Brug sde srid) against Shar Mon and later the present Mon region, prior to the annexation of the latter area by the Tibetan government. The region’s relations with Bhutan and Tibet are addressed from a transregional point of view as the region served as a borderland between Bhutan, Tibet (China) and India. This transregional issue is one of the primary issues in the current border negotiations.

Taking further note in the research area as a borderland phenomenon, the concepts of “zomia” or “escape zones” are taken into account as discussed in Willem van Schendel (2002) and James Scott (2009). These concepts have been taken up in the Tibetan and Himalayan studies by Shneiderman (2010), Michaud (2010) and Samuel (2015). In the words of Shneiderman (2010: 290, 308), the

27 The contemporary period is not part of this study, however, the concept of the ‘de- and re-territorialization’ can be observed in the region during British India and India reign in the twentieth century, which is examined in Tenpa (2014, 2016). It shows how the region became part of the ‘North-East Frontier Tract’ of British India during the 1914 Simla Convention and later on as part of ‘North-East Frontier Agency’ (since 1972, Arunachal Pradesh).

28 Van Schendel (2002: 653, n.13) pointed out that the term zomia is derived from zomi, meaning highlander in a number of Chin, Mizo and Kuki languages of the Tibeto-Burman family of languages. The term can also be interpreted as zur mi (margin people) in Tibetan language.
concept of zomia “can be of great utility to those working in the Himalayan region, particularly the emphasis on the ethnic, national and religious fluidity of highland communities, and their agency vis-à-vis the states with which they engage”. Samuel (2015: 221) notes that this concept “is in many ways quite contrasting, dealing in large-scale theorising and generalisations.” This virtual geographization of the escape zones or zomia can be related to the ‘hidden valleys’ (sbs yul) in the Tibetan cultural pattern (Samuel 2015: 240-41), which Scott (2009: 156) rightly applied as serving as a zone of refuge.

Can this concept of zomia be applicable to the pre-modern period or is it only relevant for more recent developments? (cf. Samuel 1993: 121-3, 132-6; Pirie 2005a,b; 2006). As Samuel (2015: 241) argues, the people in the “escape zones” or “zomia” are not necessarily rejecting the state – they are, in fact, looking for a more capable ruler to administer the state.29 The implication of this concept also lies in the analysis of the Tibetan cultural regions on the periphery of centralized states, where it played the role of the hidden valleys. The present research area could also be part of this phenomenon. Historically, the Tibetan government in Lhasa and its relations with the peripheral regions were centralized, however, it was not necessarily strong enough to enforce direct administration, which can be seen from the tsho or rdzong administrative system.30

Yet, present-day Mon or Monpa ethnic classification initially seems to be based on narratives, which were written down in texts or were simply impositions by unknown narrators or writers.31 This narrativity in the form of reports or written texts later became authoritative sources to the present classification of Mon without providing any proper analysis. As the oral narratives tend to change or alter with the

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29 Samuel (2015: 241) noted similar patterns for Northeast India and Southeast Asia of the contemporary periods, based on the studies of Karlsson (2013: 329) and Jonsson (2010; 2012: 165).
30 We can probably co-relate tsho administritive units with the Indian subcontinent traditional pāmcāyatrāj administration system. See the analyses by Singh (2003) as well as Hardgrave and Kochanek (2008: 131-34) on the pāmcāyatrāj administration in former and present India.
31 Lincoln (1989) states that it is the narrator’s actual intention to define the status of story, myth, legend and history. Therefore, all these fall into the narratives, irrespective of the audiences’ acceptance of truth or falsehood. Although the theoretical approach is limited here, White (1981: 1-24) argues that the narrativity is an imposition and reporting at the same time. Even then, Mullard (2009: 12) notes that historian needed those narratives and narrativity to articulate and understand the past in the historical studies.
passing of time, one can observe that narrated oral histories are based on written texts or were re-established with intentional or unintentional fabrications in the narratives. In this case, we can take the example of the ‘treasure text’ (gter ma) in Tibetan studies, which inquired into the past to find an answer to the present.

One can find instances of narratives or prophesies in the present research area, but the Monyul historical part is not identical with what Mullard (2009: 12; 2011: 16) observes on Sikkim, a “prophecy, event, and fulfillment of a prophecy.” Yet the ‘Happy Hidden Valley’ (sbas yul skyid mo ljongs) as a prophecy is applied to the region, but it is not promoted and witnessed as in the historical narratives of Sikkim and Bhutan (Ardussi 1977, Aris 1979, Mullard 2011). All sources be it textual or oral are important, but the physical evidence, i.e. the textual sources, are much more important for the present study rather than the oral and religious narratives. This study is thus largely based on textual sources, however, I avoid discussing theoretical approaches in the descriptive analysis.

An Overview of the Literature

With regard to the sources consulted in this study, I include and analyze a number of primary and secondary materials available in Tibetan and non-Tibetan languages. Tibetan literature is primarily used, which can be classified into three genres: the literature on the history of religion, historical works and ‘legal documents’ (khrims yig). The first category includes the chos 'byung genre, the history of abbatial seats (gdan rabs), (auto-) biographies (rang rnam, rnam thar), treasure texts (gter ma),

32 Historical accuracy of all the ‘treasure texts’ (gter ma) is contested and are viewed critical in contemporary Tibetan studies, due to their doubtful historicity nature. However, dismissing them fully as a myth would make any historical elements subject to discussion. It is generally agreed that these texts were not written during the concerned person’s lifetime. As a number of Tibetan texts are critical of gter ma since the earliest time, even Du kū la’i gas bzang by the Fifth Dalai Lama had some critical observations after some gter ma texts were presented to him. He noted that in some there were maledictions written on the Dge legs pa, while in case it is against the non-Dge legs pa school, especially the Bka’ brgyud pa; hence, the Fifth Dalai Lama categorically specified that “I came to realize profoundly how deceitful and false a gter ston [and its gter ma] texts could be” (Du kū la’i gas bzang 255a-b, 256a; Karmay 2014: 379-81). Guenther (1996: 2, n.1) too argues that “from a historical point of view these ‘rediscovered texts’ are of little relevance: there are too many discrepancies, if not to say, blatant contractions in one and the same text.” Similarly, Kapstein (2000: 121-37) cautions that the gter ma tradition is highly contested amongst the Tibetan Buddhist schools.
and guidebooks (gnas yig). The second category – historical literature – consists of royal chronicles (rgyal rabs), historiographies (lo rgyus), annals (deb ther), and lineage accounts (gdung rabs).33 The final category of literature – legal documents – includes official decrees or edicts (bka’ gtan, bka’ shog, gtan tshig), treaties (gros chod, chod don, gan rgya), laws (bka’ khrims), official registers (ma deb), and records (tho deb).

Detailed outlines of the first two genres are discussed in the works of van der Kuijp (1991: 39-56), Martin (1997: 13-16) and Sørensen (2015). Studies of legal documents by Schuh (1981) and Schwieger (2015) are consulted for this research as well. Except for a few sources, most of them refer to texts originating from the period of the Dga’ Idan pho brang government. These primary sources are helpful in drawing out historical events that are widely utilized in Tibetan and Himalayan studies. Some authors divide these writings into Tibetan and Bhutanese categories, but it has to be noted that the Tibetan sources are “literary Tibetan” and do not apply to a political Tibetan understanding. In the traditional pattern of literacy in present Bhutan, old Tibet or in the Tibetan cultural regions, the literary Tibetan is the lingua franca in the monastic institutions as well as in the official writings and textual compositions. This literary Tibetan shows a great degree of uniformity in the writing. The development and transformation of the existing vernacular dialects into a written text in Tibet and Himalayas happen only in the mid-twentieth century.

A number of primary, as well as secondary sources that have been published in the last few decades, have been extensively referred to in this study. One of the primary documents, Rgyal rigs (1728) published by Aris (2009 [1986]), is attributed to either Ngag dbang or possibly to Ngag dbang phun tshogs and Rgyal po (1988) of Beijing edition.34 There are also other unpublished versions of the Rgyal rigs text

33 Schwieger (2015: 2) indirectly rejects Tibetan historical sources and finds these chronological narratives and hagiography unreliable, whereas Ardussi (1977: 11) states that these sources “are of great importance for historical research.” The importance of the historical sources are similarly followed in the present work to highlight historical events of the Mon region. Commenting on one of these textual sources, Aris (1980: 11) too remarks that “strong religious connections developed between Monpa and certain monasteries and schools in Central Tibet, and the link with the Dge lugs pa.”
34 Rgyal rigs I is referred to Aris (2009 [1986]), whereas Rgyal rigs II is in Nga phod Ngag dbang ’jigs med (1988) edited a text, entitled “Mon chos ’byung”. The remaining three are marked as Rgyal rigs III, IV and V. The five texts are slightly different in the list of descendants, particularly the list
and at least three unpublished copies, which are in my possession, have been used when dealing with pre-eighteenth century history. Other relevant primary Tibetan sources, including the biographies or autobiographies of the Second to Sixth Dalai Lamas, as well as other lamas are helpful to reconstruct the region’s history. In particular they include the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama’s Du kū la’i gos bzang (1991 [1681]), the Sixth Dalai Lama’s work O rgyan gling dkar chag (1701), the extended biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud, 1989 [1703]) by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, the short biographical text Me rag mdzad rnam on a sixteenth century monk, and the development of the Dge lugs pa’s school in the Mon region (Dga’ ba’i dpal ster).

The latter two sources can be tentatively dated to the eighteenth or nineteenth century since the texts include references to known persons from the mid-sixteenth to the late-seventeenth century. All of the texts offer important historical aspects of the erstwhile Shar Mon, where present Eastern Bhutan and the current Mon region can be located. These texts are crucial from an emic perspective, as they describe local viewpoints and they are locally developed. Keeping in view of the sources’ direct relation to subaltern studies (Ranajit Guha 1997), they have been utilized as well.

Similarly, some of the texts, particularly legal documents, are helpful and useful to outline the regional history. In addition to the above-mentioned texts, the remaining literature referred to include a number of classical sources. Some significant studies in Tibetan language published in the last decade that deal with the history of Monyul are the works of Bstan ’dzin nor bu (2002) and Rgyal sras sprul

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sku (2009 [1991]). Furthermore, the writings of Ye shes ’phrin las (1983) and Thub bstan chos ’phel (1988) on the administrative system of the Mon region, as well as the works of Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs (1988) and Chab ’gag rta mgrin (1990, 1993, 1995) on Mon and its relationship with Tibet, are important Tibetan literature used in this study.\textsuperscript{36}

Non-Tibetan language sources that address general aspects of Mon and Monyul history include Aris (1980, 1988), Sarkar (2006 [1980], 1981), Sørensen (1990), Jampa Samten (1994), Ardussi (2007b), Bodt (2012), Tenpa (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016), Gohain (2012, 2013) as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015). Except Sarkar and Gohain, the other authors have extensively and explicitly engaged with Tibetan texts, but do not focus on the historical development of the region. Based on Tibetan sources, Hazod (2009) was the first to mention the old Mon region as one of the provinces established in the time of the Tibetan empire. Some writings are only occasionally referred to in this study and are not explicitly discussed, as they focus solely on the contemporary scenario. This relates particularly to the works of Indian authors, which are basically based on Sarkar, such as Nanda (1984), Chowdhury (1990), Duarah (1992) and Dutta (2008) as well native Monpa’s authors, such as Tashi Lama (1999) and Norbu (2008).

Some of the Chinese language material have also been consulted, but not specifically referred to. Mention must be made of the monumental works in Chinese of Sūn et al (1980), Lu (1986) and Menbazu shehui lishi diaocha (1987), etc. These are perhaps the first Chinese language works on Mon and the Monpa, but because it is based on contemporary fieldwork, its content is of little relevance to the present study. Similarly, in relation to local cultures of the Monpa, the writings of Elwin (1957, 1959), Stein (1972), Tashi Lama (1999), Biswal (2006) and Norbu (2008) have been consulted, but these writings focus primarily on present issues. The ethnological studies of Fürer-Haimendorf (1955), Elwin (1957, 1959), Blackburn

\textsuperscript{36} These authors have written their works in Tibet and have thus addressed the region’s annexation or assimilation by British India and later on, the Indian administration.
(2008, 2010) and Huber (2012), etc. are valuable sources on the ethnic groups or the “Scheduled Tribes” and their cultures of Arunachal Pradesh.37

As most literature on the tribes consists of mainly contemporary anthropological studies, they are here of little significance. In literary Tibetan, the conventional Tibetan historical works tend to combine both historical and religious events in order to outline the continuation of the lineages. This study tries to re-establish both events into historical facts, instead of leaving the latter, i.e. religious events, as only myths. Therefore, an extensive use of written and oral sources approach is applied in this historical study. Such an investigation will bring interesting results through the historical-analytical and descriptive method, particularly in relation to the description of the formation of the region as an entity (not as a nation-state). Those primary and secondary sources are the forms of in situ investigations and the analysis of the recorded texts follow the philological methods. Those related important editions are presented with annotated translation in the Appendix.

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The first chapter outlines an overview of the region in terms of its geographical, cultural and linguistic characteristics as well as its peculiarities, including a short note on other ethnic groups living in the districts. It also introduces the

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37 All these ethnic groups are collectively addressed as Lho pa or Klo pa in Tibetan and live in the southeastern part of Tibet or to the east of the Mong region. The ‘aboriginal’ or ‘primitive’ klo pa is a pejorative term used by Tibetan throughout many centuries for a region or people who are not blessed or are out of reach from Buddhist culture. Its equivalent term used in Mon is gidu, which means ‘sword and stone’ (gri rdo) carrying people. The term lopa, i.e. klo pa, blo pa or lho pa are general terms and Klo kha khra (striped-mouthed), Klo nag (black-[colored] mouth) and Klo dkar po (white-[colored] mouth), etc. are sub-Klo pa groups. Among these, Klo nag usually refers to Aka (Hrusso) tribe in West and East Kameng (Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 39; Rgyal rigs I 1986: 20). Huber (2011: 266) notes that the terms Klo nag po and Klo dkar po also refer to the Adi tribal groups in the central Arunachal districts. Aris (1980: 18) states that “it is a standard classification applied to the whole medley of tribal groups in Arunachal Pradesh, who live to the east of Monpa.” See Huber (1999: 254 n.9; 2008: 48, n.29; 2011: 266; 2012) on the different Klo pa groups and their nearest Tibetan terms, based on previous observations by Fuchs (1973: 199), Aris (1976: 628, n.66), Das (1974: 123), Wylie (1962: 36, 178, n.583), and from Tibetan texts (Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]): 1096.15), Rgya bod tshig mdzod (1976.1: 186), “Jigs med gling pa (1991 [1789]: 32a), Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]), etc.). Based on the Old Tibetan sources, Bacot (1956: 141) informs us that in the ancient period, there were “black and whitey Mon pa,” which he considered as a possible origin of the classification of Klo pa tribes by the Tibetan. See also the 1680 edict (line 3). The term Lho pa (Southerner) is commonly written in modern Tibetan literature and is a blanket term used by Tibetans to almost all of the major ethnic groups (of the southern margins of the Tibetan plateau). They all indicate non-Tibetan or non-Monpa people or non-Buddhist ethnic group in the Eastern Himalaya, particularly in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.
historiography of the Tibetan and Himalayan studies’ religio-political history. The second chapter defines the nomenclature of Mon and its references to ethnic groups or to a specific or non-specific region. An overview on the usages of the term Mon yul (the Land of Mon), Lho Mon (Southern Mon), Shar Mon (Eastern Mon) and Lho Mon Kha bzhi (Four dvārs of Southern Mon) are also discussed, considering that in the wider description it refers to a specific region in the Eastern Himalayas.

The third and fourth chapters highlight the rise of the secular and spiritual leaders in the various parts of the region. Those local rulers can be traced to the present descendants. The chapters discuss how spiritual leaders associated themselves with the ruling class and the secular rulers of the region, who relate their ancestors back to the Tibetan imperial period. The fifth and sixth chapters outline the historical relations and cross-contacts between the Mon region and central Tibet as well as with Bhutan, i.e. contacts made through migration, war, and in the course of dispersion to a certain religious tradition. In addition to the founding of Tawang, its immediate antecedents are taken as central part of the critique, not at least because of its lasting impact for the cultural identity of modern Monyul. These chapters also include a number of prominent persons in the specific period and their roles in the formation of the region.

The chapter prior to the conclusion discusses the function of Tawang monastery and the various sub-regional administrative tsho or fortresses (rdzongs). It also highlights the circumstances which led to the integration of the whole region into Tibet in the late-seventeenth century. The chapter also presents an explanation to what extent the Monyul area was politically and administratively incorporated into the Tibetan government of the Dga’ ldan pho brang and its responses to an event in the critical period as well. The rise of the religious institution played a crucial role in the region, in particular, the institution of the Dalai Lama and its disciples, the Merag Lamas in Tibeto-Mon relations. The present work thus aims at deciphering the significant phases of the history of Monpa and the Mon region and its identity.
Chapter Two

Tracing the Term Mon in the Tibetan Literature

This chapter provides an overview of the term Mon from various Tibetan and contemporary sources, including the usages of Mon yul (land of Mon), Lho Mon (southern Mon) and Shar Mon (eastern Mon). A number of sources will also be consulted to obtain an overview of definitions given on Mon. The chapter outlines the various ethnic groups labelled as Mon and describes how the term is also used to refer to a region.

Introduction

The term mon is commonly attached to a region as well as to an ethnic group. As a reference to an ethnic group, who live from the west to the east Himalayas, this term is unspecific, for it refers to an indefinite region of the Himalayan area even though the majority of the consulted sources describe Mon as a region lying to the southeast of Tibet, i.e. the Eastern Himalayan area. This can be understood to the region located to the south of central Tibet, often prefixed with ‘southern’ (lho) to Mon, i.e. ‘southern Mon’ (Lho Mon). In non-Tibetan language sources, the term was first recorded in Portuguese by missionary Father Cabral, in his letter dated 12 November 1633, where it states that “they later heard in Tibet that the proper name for the

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38 I am thankful for the textual studies presented in Ardussi (1977) and Aris (1979), and further in the works of Ardussi (2004a, b), Dargye (2001), Drag shos Sangs rgyas (2008 [1999]) and Karma (2013), etc. These works have immensely enriched and helped me to enlarge my analysis in this chapter.
country was the unspecific term Mon." Although the usual orthography is Mon, there are a few deviating spellings for the same term.

*Old Mon* is largely connected to an area, which includes the whole of Sikkim state, Bhutan and the Mon region, i.e. the Tawang and West Kameng districts in the westernmost part of Arunachal Pradesh. *Old Mon* even included the southernmost counties of Lhokha and Shigatse prefectures, such as Mon Mtsho sna and Mon Gro mo in TAR, which are adjoining border areas to Sikkim, Bhutan and Tawang district. The consideration of the Eastern Himalayas as *old Mon* region is assumed by Aris (1979; 1980: 18) when he states that “I would take the area covered by the term Mon here to extend from Sikkim in the west to the Mon region in the east, taking in the whole of Bhutan.” The region is thus referred to as one of the administrative units of the Tibetan empire (see Fig. 02, 03).

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39 Wessels (1924: 120, 138, 142-3, 323) associated Mon with the “Kingdom of Cambirasi”, denoting Bhutan. For the note on Cambirasi by the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries, Aris (2009 [1986]: 184) thinks that “[it] was presumably a local name for Bhutan used by the people of Cooch Bihar which Cacella learnt from his attendants,” whereas Ardussi (2009: xvii) and Karma (2013: 12) consider that it represents a garbled pronunciation or that it might have been a poor Portuguese rendering of Lho kha bzhi, which the Portuguese picked up after they entered the region, i.e. Bhutan. The term is used only twice in the letter. For details, refer to Wessel (1924: 120-63) or the annotated translation of the letter in Aris (2009 [1986]: 170-186) and Baillie (1999). It is also discussed in Ardussi (1977: 213-16; 2009: xvi-xvii) and Karma (2013: 224-26).

40 Such as *smon pa* (*mon* with a prefixed *sa*) in the biography of *Ba’ ra ba*. After his visit to Lho yul, *'Ba’ ra ba* (1970 [1391]) recorded how he learned that the ‘fortress-man’ (*rdzong pa*) of Stag tshang had trouble with Smon pa of Shangs mthong, i.e. in Mon yul (Aris 1979: 183).


42 See Aris (1980: 15). However, the line “the Eastern, Western, Upper and Lower regions of Lho Mon” in the 1680 edict (line 3) relates only to present Mon region (see note 491). See also Ardussi (1977: 304) and Mullard (2009: 4).

43 See Fig. 02, 03 of Hazod (2009: 166, m2) and Ryavec (2015: 44-5, m11). Refer also to a google-earth of these regions, Fig. 06.
Fig. 02, 03: The Tibetan Imperial regions depicted in Hazod (2009: 221, m2) & Ryavec (2015: 44-5, m11)
The remaining part of Arunachal Pradesh’s ethnic groups can be excluded from old Mon as they are known as ‘Lopa’ (Klo pa) of ‘Loyul’ (Klo yul) in Tibetan sources. Nowadays, instead of ‘Klo pa’, the term ‘Lho pa’ (Southerner) of the Lho yul (Southernland) is used for all the non-Monpa ethnic groups in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet. Lho pa is thus now considered as the new nomenclature. Incidentally, it is a better term than Klo pa, translated as “primitive” or “barbarian” and which does not denote “aboriginal”. This is rightly observed by Aris (1980: 9), who states that klo pa the “traditional spelling carries the pejorative sense of ‘barbarian’ in Tibetan.” Meanwhile, they are called ‘gidu’ (gri rdo) in the local languages of the Tawang and West Kameng districts. This is not much different from the term “Monpa”, because even the term Monpa is heterogeneous and is applied to at least four different ethnic groups in the Mon region.

As the term mon is known as an exonym as well as an autonym, its meaning can be defined as a low-lying densely forested region with a narrow valley. This definition of the word correlates to the 821-822 Lhasa treaty pillar inscription where the term does not denote any negative meaning. However, in a number of contemporary sources, mon has been translated or used within the context of “benighted”, “barbarie”, “wild to varying degrees”, “borderland and uncivilized non-Buddhist”, in contrast to the civilized Buddhists living in a frontier zone. Most of these perceptions, designations and descriptions rely on the result of ethnographic data or secondary sources, including Tibetan texts.

One of the first sources focusing on the negative interpretation is Thomas (1955: 150-55), who is further quoted in Aris (1979: xvi; 1980: 10), Karma (2013: 2), and

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44 Those ethnic groups are officially termed tribal with special status and rights under the “Scheduled Tribes order of 1950” to the whole of the state. See also note 37.
45 See for further information Rgya bod tshig mdzod (1976: 1387), Sūn et al (1980), Lu (1986, 2002), Menbazu (1987), Wo (1989), Li (1990) and Chab ’gig rta mgin (1995). Tshal pa Kun dga’ rdo rje in Deb ther dmar po (1981 [1346]: 36) writes blo instead of klo, referring to the various ethnic groups in the southeast of Tibet and in Arunachal Pradesh. He could be the first Tibetan to note and demarcate the region as ‘Mon and Blo in the south’ (Lho nas Blo dang Mon) from the direction of central Tibet. Although blo was first written in 1346, it is followed by klo in the later Tibetan texts.
46 Aris (1980: 9) considers the possibility that the term may have originated from ‘ghri dho’ [or ‘knife-stone’ (gri rdo)] spelled in the text Giam tshogs theg pa ’i rgya mtsho (ch. 3, f. 32b) by ’Jigs med gling pa. The term gri rdo could also be mean as people who use not iron but (prepared) stones as knife. See Blackburn (2008; 2010) for further information on the nithun cult of the region and note 37 on klo pa.
others. They consider the term originating from the Chinese mân which has later been rendered as “Mon” in Tibetan. This cannot be considered a reasonable method for defining the Mon people. The reason being that not one single Tibetan source shows a negative definition of this term. However, a number of negative connotations were found against the actions of the Mon people by Buddhist-centric thinking Tibetans. On the other hand, the writings of Klong chen pa (1308-1364), the Fourth Pañchen Lama Blo bzang rgyal mtshan (1570-1662), and Gtsang mkhan chen ’Jam dbyangs Dpal ldan rgya mtsho (1610-1684) associate positive adjectives with the term mon. For example, they observed that while they were in Mon, the seasons were pleasant and the region was very beautiful, where people lived happily. They thus concluded that the people of Mon were fortunate to live in such a region.47

Taking further notice of how Chab spel (1988: 2) defined the term mon, Bodt (2012: 5) states that it could relate to mun, which he described as a thick forest or jungle in which sunlight hardly penetrates to the ground in Tshangla language. The word mun literally means “darkness” or “ignorance” in Tibetan, which later seems to coalesce with the meaning of Mon. Karma (2015: 2) notes that it is understood in that sense. He probably based his understanding on Aris (1979: xvi) and Savada (1993: 254) of Lho Mon (literally southern darkness) or Mon yul (dark land), the old name of Bhutan, even though he does not provide any evidence of it. The translation of mon as “dark” therefore may not be correct and should rather be mun, i.e. ‘the dark land’ (mun gling). In Tibetan sources, the reference of mun gling denotes even to Tibet when Buddhism was not yet propagated. One can observe how the ancient Tibet itself was often addressed as a dark (and barbaric) land, which was related to the time before the arrival of Buddhism (cf. for example, Bka’ chens ka khol ma 275; Maṇi bka’ bum 87; Padma bka’ thang 404). There are numerous references in Tibetan Buddhist sources on this dark (i.e. uncivilized / non-Buddhist) image of Tibet.48 However, the term mon or Monpa does not mean “darkness” and in the

47 See Klong chen pa (1991 [1364]: 22b), Blo bzang rgyal mtshan 1990 [1662]: 383) and Gtsang mkhan chen Dpal ldan rgya mtsho (1975 [1684]: 5).
48 “The dark land Tibet” (bod yul mun pa; Bka’ chems ka khol ma 1989 [1989]: 275). “Tibet which is without the Buddhist teaching, is like a dark battle-field,” (bod la чos med pas mun pa’i dmag dang dra’o; Lde’u jo sras 1987 [12th/13th c.]: 105) and “in this wild and savage borderland Tibet, where the Buddhist teaching has not spread” (chos med mtha’ ‘kho bod yul mun gling ‘dir; Padma bka’ thang 1993b [1352]: 404). See also Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (22.5) and Kah thog pa (1979 [1540]: 37b), where mon yul mun pa’i gling or mon yul mtha’ khob are also recorded in reference to a Mon
Tibetan language “uncivilized”, “benighted”, “barbaric”, “wild” (to varying degrees), “borderlands” and “uncivilized” (non-Buddhist) is usually expressed by terms such as kla klo or klo pa, which corresponds to mleccha in Sanskrit.

Interpreting Mon as an Ethnic Group

In contemporary non-Tibetan sources, the orthography mon pa can be found in a number of unspecific phonetic transcriptions: Menba, Monba, Mönba, Mönpa, Mumpa, Moinba and Membba. The transcripts of Monba or Menba in Menbazu (1987) and Wo (1989), etc of Tsona and Metog counties (in the TAR) is commonly used in Chinese sources, while Membba refers to an ethnic group (i.e. Monpa) in the districts of Upper and West Siang(s), Arunachal Pradesh (India). The lexeme mon pa, meaning someone who is from the land of Mon or an ethnic group, is found to refer either to a group of people living in a specific region or to someone who is a Mon pa, irrespective of his/her origin of a specific region.

In Bon and Buddhist textual sources, myths about the origin of human beings differ when considering Mon as one of the first original (Tibetan) races. The well-known Buddhist account of the “Tibetan anthropogenesis” narrates how humans came into existence from a monkey and a she-demon (both were believed to be the emanations of bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and Tārā). Bon mythology, in contrast, states that humans originated from an egg. Interestingly, the myth varies and there is much debate on the number of eggs, the colors, shapes and sizes. Similarly, there is also an argument about how the egg was hatched. Nevertheless, both Bon and Tibetan Buddhist traditions claim that the Tibetan race started with four or six

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49 Although Mon is everywhere used as a term denoting a region, Mon pa or Mon in the sense of somebody from Mon is not an ethnic name and simply describes the regional origin of a person. See note 22.


51 Refer to Sørensen (1994: 125-34) and Gyalbo, Hazod and Sørensen (2000: 51, n.40) on the Tibetan sources’ discussion on the “Tibetan anthropogenesis”. The civilization site is regarded to be either Kong po or Yar lung (or Tsethang (Rtse thang), respectively) in the present-day Lhokha prefecture.
numerical lists on the Tibetan plateau, including the Mon. The account which speaks of the ‘six clans of the little men’ (mi’u gdung drug) or the ‘four clans of little men’ (mi’u rigs bzhi) are mentioned both in Bon and Buddhist traditions.52

With regard to ‘the four clans of little men’, Bka’ chems ka khol ma is considered to be the first of the Tibetan Buddhist sources on human civilization and cosmology of the Tibetan world (Gyalbo, Hazod and Sørensen 2000: 51, n.40). The text describes the human civilization of the Tibetan plateau as “Ldong, Stong, Se, and Smu, [who] are called ‘the four clans of little men’ (mi’u rigs bzhi). These people were the first human civilization in the snowy Tibet.”53 Ngag dbang, the author of Rgyal rigs, however follows the idea of the six clans of the little men, which is similar to the ‘six monkey children’ (spre’u phrug drug).54 Yet, the image of the four clans development is likewise largely observed in the Tibetan Buddhist sources. Dpyid kyi rgyal mo’i glu dbyangs, written in 1643, illustrates this:

The realms which branched off from the four great families [clans] were: firstly, [Ldong-] Ye sang dkar po gnam gyi ’ju thag can (Ye sang the White one, with

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52 In Rlangs kyi po ti (1986 [1364]: 4-7), Rlangs itself traced its lineages to one of ‘the six clans of the little men’ (mi’u gdung drug), but the common subjects have been traced to a big egg (sgo nga chen po gcig) as the Bon mythology has it. The origin has been traced to the four/five/six clans (mi’i rigs bzhi/ rus chen lnga/ mi’u rigs drug). Gyi lung Bkra shis rgya mtsho and Gyi lung Thugs rje rdo rje (1994 [1879]: 2), the authors of Mgo log rus mdzod, state that “with regard to the first development of the race, according to the Bon tradition, there were the lineages of the two- Srid pa’i Mon bu lum lum and Yum chu’i rgyal mo ’bum” in Tibet (in Tib., de dag gi rigs thog mar byung tshul... ni/ de la bon lugsitar na srid pa’i mon bu lum lum dang/ yum chu’i rgyal mo ’bum gnyis kyi brgyud pa). The terms, like rigs/rus/gdung/rigs ras/gdung ras/ku gdi/gdung ras/ mi ras/ cho’brang are considered as synonymous (Rta go and ’Phrin las 1988: 24-51; Mgon po tshe ring 2008: 71). Some Bon texts state that the six clans of the little men were the sons of Khri tho chen po, who appeared from the six delegates of the world, as “the Phyva, the Dmu, the Gtusug, the Gnyan, the Ye and the Ngam,” who were in this world before the six clans of little men by the wishes of the Ye smon rgyal po (the King of Wishes) and other Gods. See Karmay’s (1998b [1986]: 245-281) analysis of the Bonpo sources on the development of Tibetan races. Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1469]: 228b) states that “Bon will have vanished in the land of Mon” (bon snub mon gyi yol du snub), though Mon is recorded among the races. See the studies on the Bon tradition in the Eastern Himalayas in Huber (2013), Mizuno and Tanpa (2015).

53 In Tib., ldong dang stong gnyis/se dang rmu gnyis te mi’u rigs bzhi grags te/ bod yul kha ba can gyi mi la snga ba yang de rnuas yin no (Bka’ chems ka khol ma 1989 [1049]: 56). The date of the renowned gter ma literature Bka’ chems ka khol ma is disputed. Smon lam rgya mtsho (1989: 1-3), the editor of the republished text and Dung dkar Blo bzang ’phrin las (2002: 1-2) consider that it was in the eleventh century, i.e. 1049. The date is followed in Sørensen (1994: 15) and van der Kuijp (1996: 48), whereas Davidson (2004: 67, 78-80) places it in the twelfth century. The text is assumed to be written no later than 1049 and is acknowledged as being discovered by Atši Dipamkara Śrījñāna (980-1054) in Lhasa Jo khang temple as a testimony of the Tibetan Emperor Srong btsan sgam po (d. 649). In Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1469]: 50a), the same four races are mentioned.

a rope hanging down from the sky); secondly, [Stong-] Ye smon nag mo khro chu’i pha bong ’dra ba (Ye smon the black woman, like a rock of molten bronze); thirdly, [Se-] Spyang khrig ye shes lha’i sgron me (Spyang khrig, whose knowledge was the lamp of the gods); and fourthly, [Rmu-] Mon rdzu nag po khyi’i rnga ljang can (Mon rju [rdzu] the black one, with a green dog’s tail).55

Accordingly, Chab spel (1988: 2) and Dmu dge bsam gtan (1997: 737) consider the last clan to be Mon nag po or Mon as the clan of Mon living in the Indo-Tibetan border region. All of the above classifications are based on Rgya bod yig tshang, written by Stag tshang Dpal ’byor bzang po in 1434.56 To the four clans, the text however includes even neighboring Chinese and Mongols, i.e. “Gi shang rgya, Gyim ’jang hor, Kha le mon and Spu rgyal bod.”57 From these four clans, the third, Kha le mon, is considered as the origin of Mon, which was “developed into three different groups as ‘the Mon proper’ (Mon rang rgyud pa), ‘Mi nyag in the border region of Tibet and China’ and ‘Rkong po.’”58 Chab spel (1988: 3) and Chab ’gag (1990: 20-1) consider the present Monyul people [and other adjoining neighbors] as belonging to the group of “proper Mon.”59 Yet, both authors are silent on the other two Mon “clans” of Mi nyag and Rkong po.

55 In Tib., rus chen bzhi las gyes pa’i khams/ ye sang dkar po gnam gyi’ju thag can dang gcig ye smon nag po khro chu’i pha bo’dra ba dang gnyis/ spyang khrig ye shes lha’i sgron me dang gsum/ mon rdzun nag po khyi’i rnga inga can dang bzhir dbye ba hyang/ (Dpyid kyi rgyal mo’i glu dbyangs 1993 [1643]). The English translation is rendered from Ahmed’s (2008: 8) revised translation of “The Song of the Queen of Spring or A History of Tibet.” The text is written by Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). The description of the four races is followed by others, such as Dmu dge Bsam gtan rgya mtsho (1997: 735), who states that “in the case of the earliest four great races of Tibet, i.e. Ye sang, Ye smon, Spyang and Mon (in Tib., des na bod kyi thog ma’i rus chen bzhi ni/ ye sang/ ye smon/ spyang/ mon bzhi yin la)/.”


57 In Tib., lho mon gyi khul’di ni mon rang rgyud pa/ bya ba’i khongs su gto gs myin wo. Chab spel (1988: 3) has written the article soon after the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1987-1988. Chab spel
In the earliest Tibetan written record of Mon, beside the pillar inscription, the non-specific mon lexeme is found in the Dunhuang documents as prefixed or suffixed to a person’s name. It is often recorded as referring to a family line or to someone from the region of Mon. In the first instance, although it remains unclear about the term, the Dunhuang document PT_1289 records that “a certain [number of] mdzo mo were sacrificed during the funeral rituals to subjugate Mon rgyab re.” The text merely records the term as being part of a name, which may refer to a spirit or to a person. In the Dunhuang document IOL TIB J 750, the mention of mon clearly refers to at least two officials, probably referring to their respective origin place in the Mon region.

Although the term mon is likely not related to an ethnonym, it is interesting to observe that some Mon officials are recorded alongside the Tibetan emperor in major events. Moreover, the term mon here seems to be part of their family name as Gnubs Khri mon rtsan, Sen go Mon bu, Seng go ’Dring rtsan Mon chung, and Seng go Mon chung. Among them, Gnubs Khri mon rtsan was the highest official to have held a post during the reign of the Tibetan btsan po Khri Lde gtsug rtsan, also known as Mes ag tshoms (r. 704-55). After his death, his descendants “offered the subjects of the Khud pa chen pho [oaths of alliance] to [Dbā’] Khri sum rje rtsang” to continue the alliance (Dotson 2009: 108). Similarly, the Mon aristocrats who were either removed or replaced after death from their position were also recorded. The first instance was Sen go Mon bu, who was replaced after the death of the official Ru young Phyi gseng and after the removal of “the commissioner of Rtsang chen, Zha nga thang rtsan” (Dotson 2009: 111; 118). One can argue that Seng go ’Dring rtsan Mon chung and Seng go Mon chung are the same person because their fates therefore claims that taking note from the above documents (Rgya bod vig tshang), the Mon pa (including Lho pa) ancestor races have been traced to the Tibetan clans, which further developed in the high Tibetan plateau” (in Tib., gong gsal vig tshang de dag las mon pa (lho pa tshud) tsho’i thog ma’i rigs rgyud kyi mes po ni ches gdod ma’i das su bod sa mtho’i gna’ mi las gyes pa zhig yin pa mtshon). See also Sperling’s (2008) notes on the special edition of articles on the region by Chab spel (1988).

60 See Dotson (2009: 108, 111, 114-15, 118). These Mon officials seem to be renowned as the Dunhuang documents only mention important events of one year in a short description. Similarly, in Padma bka’ thang (1993 [1352]; 343) a certain person called Mon bu Rgyal byang chub was recorded as among those to be trained as translator during btsan po Khri srong Lde’u btsan, however, no further information on his is available.
were recorded only as being ‘removed’ (phyung) and ‘exiled’ (spyugs) in the same context (Dotson 2009: 114-15).

Similarly, the term mon is attached to three Mon children (byis pa de gsum mon), known as Lho, Snyags and Myang of Mon in Rgya bod kyi chos ’byung rgyas pa by Mkhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]: 237). The three children were met on their way to Yar lung in Bod by the Tibetan ancestral figure Gnya’ khris btsan po. They were thus accompanied by the btsan po, and travelled together from Spo bo’i yul. Chab spel (1988: 1) states that these three Mon children were sent from Mon for inauspicious signs. They became ancestors respectively of the Lho, Snyags (Gnyags) and Myang lineages, as stated by Hazod (2009: 178).

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61 Prior to foundation of a dynasty by Gnya’ khris btsan po, Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1469]: 70a-70b) states that “eight [different] regimes occurred” on the Tibetan Plateau. However, the descriptions on the eight were more of myths than historical events, where even the information on Gnya’ khris btsan po itself is considered a myth. The text states: “the first [reign] was ruled by the Black Yaksha. That devil country of [Tibet] was called copper mouth with nine-heads. After that, [Tibet] was ruled by the devils and vampires, where the country was called the dark Gu sul. Then it was ruled by the non-human spirits, where the country was called the dark Mang yul. After that, it was ruled by the ghost when the country was called Lang thang lang thang. Thereafter, it was ruled by the naga and btsan spirits, where the country was called the six divisions of Tibet. Afterwards, it was ruled by the nine brothers of Ma sangs, where the country was named six sections of Bod kham’s country. The earliest weapons, like spade, arrow and bow came since then. Then, the six Za ra skye(s) ruled, in which the country was called Eighteen thousand divisions. Riding horses and wearing ornaments happened since then. Finally, it was ruled in twelve different regions, where the country was called Eight So kha. Thus, the earliest symbols and polite [forms of language] occurred since then. In this way the eight rules happened” (in Tib., bod kyi yul ‘di la gnya khris rtsan po ’i gong du dbang mdzad po byung ste/ dang po gnod sbyin nag pos dbang byas te/ yul gyi ming bdad yul kha rag mgo dgu btags/ de nas bdud dang srin pos dbang byas te/ yul gyi ming nag po gu sul zhes ba btags/ de nas ni ma yin gyi dbang byas te/ yul gyi ming mang yul nag po zhäs bya bar btags/ de nas ’dre yis dbangs byas te/ yul gyi ming lang lang thang zer/ de nas klu dang btsan gyi dbang byas nas/ yul gyi ming ni bod kham gling dgu btags/ de nas ma sangs dpun dgu dbang byas te/ yul gyi ming ni bod kham yu druk bya bar btags/ sngar rtag mda’ mdung mthson cha de nas byung/ de nas za ra skye druk dbang byas te/ yul gyi ming ni stong sde bco brgyad bya bar btags/ rta zhon rgyan cha ’dogs pa de nas byun/ de nas rgyal phran bcu gnyis dbang mdzad nas/ yul gyi ming ni so kha brgyad du btags/ sngar rtags phyag dang zhe sa de nas byung/ de ltar dbang mdzad brgyad kyi bdag byas// Bshad mdzod chen mo 2006 [1469]: 70a-b). Among those mythical rulers, Ma sangs brothers were considered to have originated from an undefined Mon region (Me ’od 2013: 147).

62 In Tib., gshags rabs nyi shu rtsa bdan. The line is cited in Chab spel (1988: 1) from Yo ga lha gyes can, in which he notes that it is “one of the earliest parts of recorded history of Tibet” (in Tib., bod kyi lo rgyus yig thog tu ’kchod snga shos su grags pa). This actually refers to the twenty-seven places of Gnya’ khris btsan po’s arrival, after his descent on Mount Bon ri in Kong po (see details in Hazod 2005: 219-221, n.5; Karmay 1988: 300-03). The region Mon in the present context appears to refer to present-day Mon region or the Lho pa area, because Mkhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]: 226, 237) notes that these Mon children were wearing birds feather clothes at Bra la sgo drug, after passing Dwags yul [Dwags pol].

63 In Tib., gnyas’ khris btsan po yar lung du byon pa i gshags rabs nyi shu rtsa bdun’ zhes pa i khrod du lam bar dud kyi gram snar mon gyi byis pa gsum dang ’phrad pa mnyam du khrid pa de dag ni lho snyags myang gsum gyi thogs ma i mes po yin tshul (Mkhas pa Lde’u 1987 [1249]: 237). These
There is otherwise no record of the meeting of these Mon children in any other historical source, even not in *Bshad mdzod chen mo* (2006 [1469]: 79a-80a) and *Rgyal rigs* I (1986 [1728]). The latter is a historical work that deals mainly on the descendants of Mon. In *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 26), Mon or Monpa is also attached to a clan name in central Tibet, but is not necessarily connected to any acclaimed names. It states that being in the southern part of central Tibet, they were influenced by the people from Monyul’s history. This source primarily records that ‘prince’ (*lha sras*) Khri Btsan ma or Gtsang ma even met A mi Don grub rgyal, a chieftain in ancient Bhutan, whose descendants were considered later on became the famous *sde srid* Phag mo gru pa and his lineages.64

*Rgyal rigs* elaborates no further on any clans of *old* Mon, yet the text notes that at least twenty-eight clan names existed in the Shar Mon region.65 Furthermore, the

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64 *Rgyal rigs* introduced the clan of *Rlangs* as Phag mo gru pa, or the clan of Sne gdong gong ma chen mo, who ruled Tibet in the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries, but the origin of the clan in the *old* Mon region is not supported in the genealogical text of *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru* (1986 [1364]: 29-99). Neither of these historical extracts concerning the Tibetan *Rlangs* clan fit with the chronology of Gtsang ma, both in the Tibetan and Bhutanese histories. It is not even supported as a particular clan developed in Mon, in which the future becomes the famous *Rlangs* clan. It is interesting to note that the clan *Rlangs* or A mi from central Tibet pinpoints to *old* Mon, which locates back to central Tibet in the thirteenth century. The credibility of the claim is uncertain as it is not supported in the *Rlangs* clan study by Czaja (2013: 14), who states that “the homeland of the Rlangs Lha gzigs was Eastern Tibet.” In an unknown period, however, *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru* (1986 [1364]: 33) states that Rlangs Seng ge ’dul conquered Lho Mon and the four *dvār* of Mon were subjected by the Rlangs ruler Rlangs Seng ge ’dul (Czaja 2013: 54; in Tib., *rlangs seng ge ’dul gyis lha ru mon lha spyi sgom de mchod nas mon la dmag drangs pas/ mon gyi rgyal khams de cham la phab/ de ’i dpa’ rtags su mon gyi chu stag miزان de bzung nas dpa’ ba ’i mzdod drug de bkol nas ’phru la btsugs/* mon kha bzhi de ’bangs su bkol nas de bas dpa’ ba’i stangs ’phru ’dzugs mi dang/ mon ’bangs su bkol mi yang lha gzigs rlangs yin/ Rlangs kyi po ti 1986 [1364]: 33). See Czaja’s (2013: 54; 25-68) on this Rlangs Seng ge ’dul and his subjugation of Mon and on the *Rlangs* clan. Shakabpa (2010: 250) mentioned Rlangs Seng ge ’dul, who belongs to the Phag mo gru pa. His conquest of Mon Kha bzhi is also stated, which is the usual Tibetan historiographies to record that *old* and present Mon region was ruled by central Tibetan authorities until the early-twentieth century. See Aris (1979: 79, n.27) and Arducci (2007a: 14). *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 26) states that Byar po was the native place of A mi Don grub rgyal, which makes sense to the historical context because Aris (1979: 79, n.26) states that Byar po is a Tibetan district in the north-east of Bhutan, and Bya clan is associated with ancient Yar lung dynasty. Haahr (1969: 210-11) informs us that “the leaders of the clan were generally appointed governors not only of Bya yul but of all the surrounding districts from the time of Sa skya rule down to at least the time of Phag mo gru pa rule in Tibet.” Both Aris and Haahr accredited their information to *’Gos gzhon nu dpal’ s Deb ther sngon po* (1984 [1476]). There are different spellings observed of the term, Byar in Ferrari (1958: 51, 127 n. 261), but Bya yul in Wylie (1962: 93, 174 n.552). They could be called Byar or Bya clan, instead of the Rlangs clan stated in *Rgyal rigs*. The record of A mi Byang chub ’dre bkol, who was a disciple of Padmasambhava, tracing to Rlangs lha gzigs is supported (Czaja 2013: 68), but A mi Don grub rgyal is not recorded.

65 Those were Ngang ri, Skye stod, Yul sbyi sa rib sang, Ba gi gliar ma chur nang, Sha ro, Ra ma, Nya mi, Gnam sa, skom mo, Rog go, Mkhar go, Khu go, Ser go, Brag mo, Sgyis mo, Skyid mo, Seng po,
text says that there are other clans in the three mountain passes of Lho Mon, whose names developed from the local languages. The author decided not to note them down due to the unavailability of any sources to verify.\(^{66}\) Aris (2009 [1986]: 61, n. 107) suggests that the clan names mentioned in \textit{Rgyal rigs} were not remembered nowadays,\(^{67}\) but the record of clans is in contrast with \textit{Rgyal rigs}:

The people of the Lho Mon kha bzhi are the ones, who a long time ago migrated from Tibet to the Lho Mon region and who trace their ‘race’ (\textit{rigs rus}) to the very same clan of those mentioned above. However, in the Lho Mon region, there is no distinction of the clan on the basis of high and low position, as found in the Chinese (/Indian) and Tibetan tradition. Thus, where a clan is not highly observed, it is therefore not noted down in a document and hence not able to authentify (it).\(^{68}\)

This particular statement is not mentioned in other versions of \textit{Rgyal rigs}, particularly in \textit{Rgyal rigs} II (1988: 127). Furthermore, the clan names listed above are not helpful to correlate to present clans in the region. A certain genealogy however exists based on family names or titles, such as the \textit{jo bo} or \textit{babu} (\textit{ba spu}) in the Mon region, but not through \textit{mon} or \textit{mon pa}.

Presently, the people in the Mon region are categorized as a homogenous ethnic group, Mon or Monpa, without any distinction, but as an indigenous tribe or an ethnic group of the region. Similarly, the “Monpa who live there [i.e. TAR] have been accorded the status of a minority nationality equal to that of the Tibetans themselves, a status which affirms their racial and linguistic distinctness from the Tibetans” (Aris 1980: 9). Likewise, Ardussi (1977: 4) reminds us that early records

\textbf{References}

\textit{Bag mo, Gtsang mo, Snyos mo, Shar mo, Nyin mo, Sga ri, Shud mo, Dngul mo, Dkar mo and Rung phu ba.}\(^{66}\)

\textit{In Tib., de bzhin lho mon la gsum lung phyugs gang la 'ang so so'i yul skad dang bstun pa'i rus kyi ming ji snyid yod pa sha stag yin kyang/ 'dir khungs ma chod pas 'di yi ger ma bkod do/ (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 45a).}\(^{67}\)

\textit{The ruling clans’ names are jo bo, rje, byar, yas sde, stung sde, and wang ma. The jo bo referring to bahu is used up to the present period in the region (Tenpa 2015, 2016; Mizuno and Tenpa 2015).}\(^{68}\)

\textit{In Tib., lho mon kha bzhi 'i lung phyugs 'di nyid kyi rnams bod yul nas lho mon la yong nas yun ring po song bas gong du brjod pa'i rigs ras kyi rgyud pa kho na nyid yin 'dug kyang/ lho mon gyi lung phyugs 'dir rgya bod kyi lungs litar rigs ras la mtho dman gyi dbye ba med cing/ mthong bkur che bar mi 'dzin pas yig cha la ma bkod pa dang/ khungs ma chod pa yin 'dug/ (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 45a). The modified translation is based on Aris (2009 [1986]: 61).}
of the region “are virtually a record of settlement and missionizing from the north [Tibet]” to the indigenous people of Mon. Therefore, the current Monpa tribes of the Mon region are considered “more akin to the people of Bhutan than those of Tibet in custom, language, agriculture practices, and method of house building” (Norbu 2008: 23).

Besides the description of the Monpa people of the Mon region as a “Scheduled Tribe” in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, the term mon is also widely used in other parts of the Himalayan regions. Presently, from the Eastern Himalayas to the Western Himalayas, Mon or Monpa is used as an unspecific meaning of an ethnic group. In the case of the Eastern Himalayas, it is used in Bhutan, Sikkim and adjoining districts of the West Bengal state. The trend of differentiating these regions as being not referred to Mon prior to the eighteenth century is strong in contemporary writings from the region. Presently, in Bhutan, Mon refers to an ethnic group known as Monpa living in the south-central districts69 and to a cluster of villages in Monmola Trashthanggyed (Mon mo la Bkra shis thang brgyad), Chiwog of Serthi gewog region in the Samdrup Jongkhar district. In Sikkim and in the adjoining districts, Mon is referred to the region as well as to the Lepcha tribe and other ethnic groups in the region.70

In the Western Himalayas, the regions of Ladakh and Kargil of Jammu and Kashmir as well as Lahaul, Spiti and Kinnaur areas of Himachal Pradesh, Mon and

69 See Dorji (1994: 7), Pommaret (1994; 1999: 53-4), Giri (2004), Chand (2006, 2009) and Karma (2015: 3, 32, 57). Although it is not limited to this classification, oral narratives of central Bhutanese still says that the people of U ra are Mon who have descended from Tibet and the people of Mkhon dying are Tibetans who have descended from Mon (mon bod las chad pa’i u ra pa/ bod mon las chad pa’i mtho mthing pa’); Karma 2013: 29). The refutation of Bhutan being not old Mon goes back to the late-fifteenth century when stating that “Padma gling pa’s native land of Bumthang and other valleys are referred to as Mon, and were certainly perceived as a very different country from Tibet” (Karma 2013: 165). Padma gling pa himself is however always addressed as being from Mon or as a Mon pa bla ma, which is observed same in the biography of’Brug pa kun legs by addressing the Bum thang people as the ‘learned disciples of Mon pa’ (mon pa’i ’thus btsun) (Ardussi 1977: 110, n.115). In a number of texts, therefore, the terms Lho Mon or Mon are written when referring to Bhutan or to the projected regions in Eastern Himalayas as the land of Mon (Karma 2013: 178, 186, 191-2, 196, 199, 202-5). It is followed up to the mid-nineteenth century as “Mon yul in the east” or “Hidden land of Sandalwood” in the collected works of the ‘Jigs med nor bu (1831-1861), the fourth Zhab droung (Thugs sprul reincarnation) (‘Jigs med nor bu 1984 [1861]: 416, 423).

70 Shakabpa (2010: 378) notes that the particular ethnic group, Mon in Kalimpong, are descendants of Mon pa of ancient Sikkim. However, he did not write which of the present ethnic groups in the region are Mon. See also Ardussi (1977: 305-06, 316-17), Aris (1979) and (Mullard 2011: 240, 245).
sometimes Mon pa represent a group of sedentary musicians who are situated low in the social hierarchy. This lower social status of Mon is further recorded in Baltistan of Pakistan. The usage of the term mon is also found in central Himalayan regions, where the upland Hill people called or named their southern valley neighbors Mon. For example, the people in western Tibet call the people of Lahaul and Spiti “Mon”. Similarly, they identify the people of a lower region of the Kullu district as Mon. This can be also observed of the Thakalis in Nepal, who call their southern neighbors “Mon” (Ramble 2003: 78, 86). This observation can also be traced to the hill terrain of the Garhwal and Kumaon regions in the state of Uttarakhand. In the central Himalayas, however, the usage of the term seems more akin to a region rather than to an ethnic group.

Besides understanding Mon as a vague ethnic group in the sources discussed above, Mon is also categorized as a separate undefined language. The ‘language of Mon’ (Mon skad), the ‘languages of Mon pa’ (Mon pa’i skad), and the ‘speech of Mon’ (Mon kha) are commonly recorded. One of the oldest texts to state these differences is Mkhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]: 237). The text notes that due to “not knowing the Mon language” (mon skad ma go nas), these three Mon children were taken along. It is recorded also in Rgyal rigs that when a group of people from the Lho Mon region arrived in Yar lung (Central Tibet) in search of a child who was the reincarnation of their king Gdung grags pa Dbang phyug byung nas, the search group “had to communicate with the child through gesture, when the search team, consisting of five members, found the child.” Likewise, in the classification of the “seven Tibeto-Mon languages on the Tibetan plateau” in Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1469]: 101a), the ‘language of Lho Mon pa’ (lho mon pa’i skad) is one among the languages recorded since ancient periods. The Rgyal rigs text however states

71 My conversations with the people from those regions tend to ignore the lower caste status, but Mon is used. See also Francke (1907: 18-26), Murty (1969: 291-2), Tobdan (1984: 20-1), Pommaret (1999: 52) and Bellezza (2002: 9).
72 In Tib., de dus bod mon gnyis ka’i skad ma go bs mi lnga pos lag brda byas (Rgyal rigs II 1988: 119).
73 The others are Se wa sha, Srang zhang zhung, Stong gsum pa, Ldong mi nyag, Khung phyi leb and Bod thang cig pa. In Tib., dod dang mon gyi skad bdun ni/ se wa sha’i skad dang cig/ sgrang zhang zhung gi skad dang gnyis/ stong gsum pa’i skad dang gsum/ ldong mi nyag gi skad dang bzhi/ khung phyi leb kyi skad dang lnga/ lho mon pa’i skad dang drug/ bod thang cig pa’i skad dang bdun no/ (Bshad mdzod chen mo 2006 [1469]: 101a).
that the languages of Mon and central Tibet were different and were usually classified as *bod skad* and *mon skad*, irrespective of dialects.\(^{74}\)

## Mon as a Region

In many Tibetan writings, Mon, Mon yul, Lho Mon or Shar Mon refer to a region, specifying a location mostly to the south of central Tibet. It is understood as a frontier region by Stein (1972: 34), who remarks that “it is a blanket term used by the Tibetans to designate certain neighboring regions lying to their south, whose inhabitants had not thus far been organized into states were lumped together under the name Mon.” His observation is supported in Bellezza’s (2010) archaeological studies on ‘Upper Tibet’ (Stod Mnga’ ris), where he states that Mon is attached to a number of ancient remains in Upper Tibet.\(^{75}\) Bellezza records terms like ‘Dosham Möngyi Khar’ (Rdo gsham Mon gyi mkhar), ‘Dosham Möngyi Yül’ (Rdo gsham Mon gyi yul), ‘Kamsang Mönkhar’ (Khams bzang Mon mkhar), ‘Riwa Mönkhar’ (Ri ba Mon mkhar), ‘Ronglha Gyeltsen Mönkhang’ (Rong lha rgyal mtshan Mon khang), ‘Arong Mönkhar’ (A rong Mon mkhar) and ‘Shiri Mönkhar’ (Shri ri Mon mkhar), which are considered to be related to the ancient civilization of the Tibetan plateau. He thus claims that the “Mon settlement” could refer to the earliest settlers on the plateau. His observation can be further traced to Francke (1907: 24), who suggested that the ‘castle of the Mon’ (Mon gyi mkhar) and its inhabitants were the first settlers on the Tibetan plateau.

In Tibetan literature, the thirteenth century biography of Mar lung pa states that those aboriginal settlers were Skal and Mon, who were gradually driven southwards

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\(^{74}\) Aris (2009 [1986]: 13, n.1) states that the author of *Rgyal rigs*, Ngag dbang, “seems quite content to regard the area of Bhutan [Mon] as part of Tibet. Elsewhere, he makes a clear distinction between Bod (Central Tibet) and Mon (Bhutan).” This observation is based on *Rgyal rigs* introduction stanza of homage, where it states that “this ignorant and dark land of Tibet, a barbarous border region; having manifested his various visible forms out of the dance of illusion” (in Tib., *mtha’ kho bob kyi ma rig mun gling ’dir/ gang ’dul thabs kyi cir yang skur*/ Rgyal rigs I 1986: 12-13).

by the Hor people. The above argument cannot be ignored because Mgo log rus mdzod records that “Mon bu lum lum” was one of the first two Tibetan races, which is also in accord with the Bon tradition. The notes show that Mon may even be connected to some indigenous people who, during an unknown period, were pushed down from the north, particularly to the western Himalayas. At the same time, the Tibetan pillar inscriptions present a different picture compared to those notes. As noted, the earliest written source to mention Mon is in a pillar inscription of the “Sino-Tibetan Treaty of 821-822,” where it reads ‘Mon [and] India of the South’ (lho phyogs kyi mon rgya gar). It is probably the first written record of Mon of that period, but Richardson translated the term mon simply as borderland, as “India of the borderland in the south.” His translation raises questions about whether Mon is the name of a region, a border, or an unspecific borderland north of India. The term lho phyogs kyi mon rgya gar changed further after Aris (1979: xvi) translated and labeled it as “non-Indian non-Tibetan barbarian” in the south of Tibet, without specifying a region.

The oldest non-Tibetan records of Mon, written in Portuguese and English, define Mon or Mon yul as a low-lying country towards the eastern Himalayas. A number of scholars of contemporary Tibetan studies still state that Mon or Mon yul refer to the whole southern part of Tibet. This generalization of Mon as being located in the southern part of Tibet is not accurate and is also in conflict with

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76 In Tib., skal gyi ri bo brhi/ mon stong sde bcu gsum/ byang gi mi yin pa hor gyis yul ston lho ru slet/ yul so so bhut/ mkhar chen po rtsigs/ skal mon gyi rgyal po g, yu khas dbang lung zhas/ bon khams chen gser ma zhengs/ (Vitali 1996: 200, 220; Bellezza 2010, n. 14; Bodt 2012: 35).
77 It was first described in a non-Tibetan language by Richardson (1985 [1952]: 110). Yet, the description of the Mon region in the south fits with other regions during the Tibetan imperial period: “in the southern direction of Mon [and] Indian, in the western direction of Ta zig, in the northern direction of Gu ne smel” (in Tib., lho phyogs ky-i mon rgya gar dang/ nub phyogs ky-i ta zig dang/ byang phyogs ky-i gu ne smel/ Richardson 1985 [1952]: 110).
79 See Aris (2009 [1986]: 184, n.14) from Wessels (1924: 143) as well as the revised edition of Aitchison (1931 [1929]: 100-101), Bailey (1914a, 1957) and Kingdon-Ward (1941) for the record of Mon in western literature.
80 Based on Bacot (1956: 141) and Richardson (1985 [1952]: 110), Huber (2008: 70) concludes that “travelers reached Gyagar [India] via the Tibetan Buddhist highland regions of the Western Himalayas, which today fall mainly within the modern Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir. The lower hill country of this zone was known as the land of Mon, which extended to the plains where Gyagar began.”
Tibetan sources.\textsuperscript{81} For example, during the reign of btsan po Srong btsan sgam po (605, r. 627-649), the old Mon region is recorded as one of the ‘five/ six administrative zones.’\textsuperscript{82} The other zones were Bod, Zhang zhung, Chibs, Sun pa (missing in Mkhhas pa Lde’u) and Mthong khyab. Bka’ chems ka khol ma (1989 [1049]: 321) informs us that Gnyags Dpal sde Be ku cog was the “administrative chief of ‘Mon and the Indian [border] region’ in the south” (Hazod 2009: 168).\textsuperscript{83}

During the imperial period, Mon was thus a specific region. The records also demonstrate that the region was ‘Mon and Indian [dvār]’ (Mon Rgya gar [las sgo]), an area that was under a single administration and part of imperial Tibet.\textsuperscript{84}

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\textsuperscript{81} This refers to the time of the Tibetan empire, particularly after the division of administrative units.

\textsuperscript{82} In Tib., khod/khoṣ/mkhod/khad. The (six) zones are mentioned in Mkhhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]: 102, 270), Lde’u rjo sras (1987 [13\textsuperscript{th} C.]: 113) and Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1993 [1215]: 398), whereas the (five) administrative zones are recorded in Mkhhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 102, 185). See the discussion in Uray (1972: 18-19, n.3; 22), Yamaguchi (1992: 59), Uebach (1992: 830-31; 2003: 21-7), Vitali (1996: 277), Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger (2000: 94, n.367), Dotson (2006: 25, 42-44, 299, 350) and Dotson and Hazod (2009: 11, n.5; 49, n.68; 167; 257). See the map and notes on these zones in Hazod (2009: 166-170) and Ryavec (2015: m12). Shakabpa (2010: 209) also considers Mon to the south of central Tibet and not to other parts in the Western Himalayas, even not in Nepal (Bal yul).

\textsuperscript{83} In Tib., lho phyogs mon rgya gar gyi khas dpon. Moreover, Mkhhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]: 269), Lde’u rjo sras (1987 [13\textsuperscript{th} C.]: 111) and Mkhhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 102) mention ‘southern Sha ’ug la (stag) sgo’ referring to present Sha ’ug tsho in Legs po tsho of Tsona as one of the sub-administrative region. This subsidiary region was in the “G.yo ru zone [out of the five or six zones (ru chen)], i.e. eastern Rkong yul be’u sna, southern Sha ’ug la (stag) sgo, western Kha rag spyi and northern Sma la la bryug, and in the Centre Yar lung khra ‘brug’ (in Tib., shar skong yul be’u sna/lho sha ’ug la (stag) sgo/nub kha rag spyi (/gangs dkar)/dbus yar lung khra ‘brug). Southern Sha ’ug stag sgo is relatively a small region in Legs po, how it could be the headquarter of Gnyags dpal sde Be ku cog, the chief of the ‘Mon and the Indian border region’ as mentioned in Bka’ chems ka khol ma (1989 [1049]: 321). The record of old Mon as one of the zones overlaps Ardussi’s (1977: 52) remarks, in which he states that “by the 9\textsuperscript{th} century, at least, Tibetans did not yet recognize the existence of any significant political state in the Bhutan region, in contrast with the Kathmandu valley, for example.”

\textsuperscript{84} The Indian in this region of ‘Mon and Indian [dvār]’ territory might be relatively small, including only the dvārs regions at the foothill, because in these zones of the Tibetan imperial period, it certainly did not include the Kingdom of Kāmarupa (Assam). This can be seen in Beal’s translation of the record of Xuanzang, though Mon is not mentioned at all. The dvārs do not refer to the Kingdom of Kāmarupa, because Xuanzang’s notes on the region show that it was a separate Indian kingdom, whose king Kumār Bāhskāra Varman “has no faith in Buddha” (Beal 1884: 195). It helps in some way to note that during the imperial period, old Mon refers to a region along with the ‘dvārs’ (las sgo) as Mon and Indian [dvār] in the Tibetan sources. It is difficult to ascertain whether Bodo/ Kachari or the foothill people of the Cooch Behar and Assam’s Himalayan were subject to the Kingdom of Kāmarupa. If not, those foothill areas may be part of Mon and Indian [dvār] territory, which was administered by Gnyags Dpal sde Be ku cog and his successors. Nevertheless, Xuanzang’s observation on the region and its people in the east of the kingdom is vivid as today. It states that “on the east this country is bounded by a line of hills, so that there is no great city to the kingdom. The frontiers are contiguous to the barbarians of the south-west of China. These tribes are in fact akin to those of the mān people (i.e. the southwest barbarians) in their custom. After a two months journey we reach the south-western frontier of the province of Szechuen” (Beals 1884: 198). Xuanzang’s notes might be partly based on information given to him rather than his actual journey
The classification of the administrative region into five/six zones shows that the region of Mon lies to the south of Bod (central Tibet) and Zhang zhung to the west of Bod. This suggests that the region of Mon lies in present-day Eastern Himalayas. The western and the central Himalayas were not included in the old Mon region because Zhang zhung (West Tibet) and Bal yul (Nepal) were well known during the imperial period. The former, Zhang zhung, lies in western Tibet and the latter, Bal yul, lies to the south of the south-western part of central Tibet. This geographical disposition is recorded by Tshal pa Kun dga’ rdo rje in 1346, whose understanding must be based on the geographical definition of ancient Tibet mentioned in the pillar inscription of the ‘Sino-Tibetan Treaty of 821-822’ and in Bka’ chems ka khol ma.

Tshal pa Kun dga’ rdo rje (1993 [1346]: 36) states that “Tibet is divided into four thousand sections,” where southern Mon and Blo, western Zhang zhung, northern Hor as well as eastern Rtsa mi and Shing mi were brought under the regime.” Tshal pa’s inclusion of Mon and Blo in the south places the location of Mon in the Eastern Himalayas. This also clarifies that Zhang zhung is located in the Western Himalayas. The same is observed in Bka’ chems ka khol ma, where it

to the region, because after his visit to the Kāmarupa kingdom, he travelled back to central India. Xuanzang has also not given any information on the northern side of the Kāmarupa kingdom, where the imperial Tibetan reign lies. The “Mon and Indian [dvār] Region” will be discussed in another paper (see Fig. 04, 05, which could be the earliest record of the dvārs in Map; Pemberton 1839: m1, 2).

85 See Dba’ bzhi (2000: 102) notes on Zhang zhung region and its annexation under Spu rgyal empires. Since the tenth century, Zhang zhung might have been named Stod Mnga’ ris skor gsum. 86 See also note 77.


88 In Tib., bod du bzhi stong sder phyed lho nas blo dang mon/ nur nas zhang zhung/ byang nas hor/ shar rtsa mi shing mi rnams mnga’ ‘og tu bsdus (Deb ther dmar po 1993 [1346]: 36). The same line is quoted by Stag tshang Dpal ’byor bzang po in Rgya bod yig tshang (1985 [1434]: 147): “all the surrounding neighbors, Lho Mon, and Rtsa mi Shing mi etc., all of these were brought under the regime,” (in Tib., mtha’i rgyal phran rnams dang/ lho mon/ rtsa mi shing mi la sogs thams cad mnga’ ‘og tu bsdus/). Furthermore, Stag tshang Dpal ’byor bzang po notes that “Lho Mon Ta la ba ti, who looks like a piece of glass” (in Tib., lho phyogs su mon ta la ba ti shel gyi dun bu ‘dra ba la gtugs) was amongst those kings of the neighbors, who were not governed, but were challenged by the Tibetan emperors during the prime period of the Tibetan empire. The other neighbors were those mentioned in the note of Tshal pa. Lho Mon does denote a region that lies in the southern part of Tibet, but Ta la ba ti seems to be a name of a king. See the similar comparison of other kings of the neighbors in Rgya bod yig tshang (1985 [1434]: 204).
specifies the “upper part of Tibet as Three Circle of Mnga’ ris, the middle part as the Four Horns of Dbus gtsang, and the low section as the Six Ranges of Mdo kham or Three Zones of Mdo kham.” 89 This geographization is worth considering because western Tibet (Bod kyi nub phyogs) refers to Mnga’ ris in the Western Himalayas, whereas southern Tibet lies below the middle part of Tibet (Bod kyi Dbus gtsang), instead of the west of Tibet. 90

This does not include the Mon ethnic groups living in the Western Himalayas, but only the region of old Mon. Similarly, in Du kǎ lā’i gos bzang by the Fifth Dalai Lama, the people of Mi nyag and Rkong po are considered as being part of the Mon ethnic groups, yet these regions are not considered as part of old Mon. This could be because Rgyal rong and Rkong po are recorded in Padma bka’ thang (1352) as being located to the east and southeastern part of Tibet. Rgyal rong of Mi nyag can be excluded from the Mon region because Padma bka’ thang (1993 [1352]: 447-8) records that the king of Rgyal rong, Mdo gzher nag po, asked Be ro tsa na (Vairotsana) why the Tibetan Spur rgyal btsan po likes to “wear Mon clothing from the borderland.” 91 This note from Padma bka’ thang shows that Rgyal rong and Mon were different, but as analyzed in the previous section, they were part of the undefined larger Mon ethnic group. 92 Although Chab spel (1988: 3) and Chab ’gag (1990: 20-1) consider the first ‘Mon proper’ (Mon rang rgyud pa) when describing contemporary Monyul people [and other adjoining neighbors], they do not write anything about the other two Mon clans, i.e. the Mi nyag in the border region of Tibet and China and Rkong po. A border region between Khams (Tibet) and China called as being part of old Mon is thus problematic.

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89 The simplified translation is based on Lama Jabb (2011: 15), who also relies on Bka’ chems ka khol ma (1989 [1049]).
90 See also note 88.
91 In Tib., bod kyi rgyal po spur rgyal btsan po ‘di/...gos su gyon na mtha’ yi mon gos gyon/ (Padma bka’ thang 1993 [1352]: 447). Moreover, the expulsion of Be ro tsa na (Vairotsana) to the ‘tropical valley of Rgyal mo’ (Rgyal mo tsha ba’i rong; Rgyal rong) by the Tibetan btsan po Khri srong lde’u btsan under strong opposition from the ministers who were against the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet do not show that the region was called Mon.
92 As discussed in Rgya bod yig tshang, the consideration of Mon clan developing into three different groups cannot be ignored, yet Rgyal rong pa and Rkong po ba are not explained here.
Fig. 04, 05: Maps showing the dvārs (Pemberton 1839: m1, m2)
Bka’ thang sde lnga (1990 [14th c.]: 184-5) states that there were two parts of Mon stong sde in Tibet’s sixteen stong sde. However, one part of Mon stong sde was considered to be located in the ‘lower part of Mdo khams’ (Mdo Khams smad), around the border region of China and Tibet. This description of the region refers particularly to Mi nyag, but the other part of the Mon stong sde is not mentioned. The omitted part likely refers to the actual old Mon region. If this is the case, this then refers to the Eastern Himalayas. This can be observed in Mkhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]: 237), in which one can understand that the geographic location of Mon is close to the southeast of Tibet. His work is also the only source to record Mon as far back as during the time of the first Tibetan btsan po Gnya’ khri btsan po. The author did not relate Mon to a kingdom called Mon rtse rgyal, even though the kingdom is mentioned in his own later work and in the writings of Lde’u jo sras (1987 [13th c.]: 113) and Mkhas pa ‘i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 102).

Although all of them state that Mon rtse rgyal was a separate kingdom, only Dpa’ bo gtsug lag, author of Mkhas pa ‘i dga’ ston, offers further information about the kingdom. He notes that “the kings of the four directions: Nam pa lde rgyal, Bal po li rgyal, (G)sum pa leags rgyal and Mon rtse rgyal collected taxes and offered [their] subjects to become parts [of the empire].” These kingdoms were “later on under the command of Tibet during Mes dbon rnam gsum.” Based on the above record of Mkhas pa ‘i dga’ ston, O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 74b) thus suggests that the present Mon region was one of those kingdoms, i.e. referring to Mon rtse rgyal. In O rgyan gling dkar chag, it further states that the ‘hidden land’ (sbas yul) Skyid mo ljongs is none other than Monyul. The argument in O rgyan

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93 In Tib., mdo khams smad kyi stong sde ru pa rnam/s bka’ la btags nas la stod lung par bzhag/rgya bod mtshams kyi stong sde’i so s rngs rnam/s sum pa’i mi sde bka’ la btags nas ni/ mi nyag yul du so mtshams gnyer la bsksos (Bka’ thang sde lnga 1990 [14th c.: 184-5]. Martin (1997: 53) considers the date of the text as either 1347 or 1368, whereas Lama Jabb (2015: 72, n.56) recorded 1285, which is not correct considering O rgyan gling pa’s birth year as 1323. See note 87.

94 In Tib., nam pa lde rgyal/ bal po li rgyal/ sum pa leags rgyal/ mon rtse rgyal zhes phyogs kyi rgyal po bzhis dpya bs dus nas ’bul has ’bangs la gtogs so (Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston 2006 [1564]: 102).

95 Quoted in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 41) and in Tib., mes dbon rnam yan bod kyi bkar gtogs pa. Here, Mes dbon rnam gsum usually refers to the three btsan po of imperial Tibet- btsan po Srong btsan sgam po (r. 605-649), btsan po Khri srong sde btsan (r. 755-804) and btsan po Khri ral pa can (r. 817-838). The text is dkar chag ’khor ba’i rgya mtho sgrol ba’i gru rdzings as recorded in Chab spel (1988: 1).

96 In Tib., bsam yas ’di nas bong lam bco bryad sar/ mon bod gnis bar gnam mtho gung rgyal rtse/ nga nyid chen po padma’i bzhugs khris dang/ rigs gsum mgon po’i sku ni rang byon bzhugs/ o rgyan lung btsan sbas yul skyid mo ljongs/ gnas chen khor pau stangs zhes bya ba yodl/ (from Gter lung).
gling dkar chag is repeated by Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 43), but he identifies Mon rtse rgyal as a name of another kingdom.97

Although Mon is one of the six administrative zones, Hazod (2009: 178) suggests that a king called Mon Shing khri rgyal po could have settled in the Tsa ri area, and that his kingdom could be Mon rtse rgyal.98 Chab ’gag (1993: 72), relying on the Gling Ge sar literature,99 argues that Mon Shing khri rgyal po is a contemporary to Gling Ge sar rgyal po. However, he does not elaborate whether the vast ancient region of Mon is located in the Eastern Himalayas.

Mon in the Mid-Imperial Period

During the same Tibetan imperial period, the old Mon region can be identified with various temples and princes. The records of the two temples (lha khang), Mon Spa gror Skyer chu lha khang and Mon Bum thang Byams pa lha khang are the clearest references connecting Mon with a specific region (Sørensen and Hazod 2005: 54, n. 56, 202-12). The temples were among the twelve temples built for the successful

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97 Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 43) wrongly notes that Mon rtse rgyal is not elaborated or identified in any other Tibetan source, hence, I assume that during the imperial Tibet, the King Bka’ la dbang po and his kingdom, [Rta nag mandal sgang] must have been known as Mon rtse rgyal (in Tib., "the Story about the Changes from Fifth to the Sixth” (Lnga pa drug par’ phos pa’i gtam rna ba’i bcud len) in 1698 and Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud in 1703, are written by sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mthos. 98 Was the ‘queen of Mon’ (Mon Khi lcam) one of the queen of Srong btsan sgam po and the daughter of Mon Shing khri rgyal po? This Mon queen is said to have “caused a temple to be built” at Brag yer pa, a nearby hill to the northeast of Lhasa (Ferrari 1958: 43, n.95 based on Klong rdol 1991 [1794]). 99 The text “Gling Ge sar rgyal po taming the king of Mon Shing khri rgyal po” (gling ge sar rgyal pos [mon] shing khri rgyal po btul ba) is the primary source in this regard. See Ge sar lho shing (Anon, [ND]), in contrast to the usual narratives of the Gling Ge sar story, which is usually considered an epic story, T’ai situ Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302-1373), in his Rlangs kyi po ti (1986 [1364]: 45-56), presented Gling Ge sar rgyal po as a historical person of the tenth century. Yet in the text Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru, T’ai situ did not state anything about Mon Shing khri rgyal po.
construction of the Gtsug lag khang of Lhasa and are considered to have been commissioned by btsan po Srong btsan sgam po. Based on Dunhuang documents and the Skar chung inscription, Bacot (1940: 114) and Richardson (1949: 54) argue that it was actually “btsan po Khri srong lde btsan (r. 755-804), who built temples in all the regions at the center as well as on the border.”

The argument is also discussed in Tibetan historiography, where ’Gos gzhon nu dpal (1392-1481), in his Deb ther sngon po (1476), states that “during the reign of king Khri srong lde btsan, twelve great monastic colleges were established in as far as in Khams province.” Whoever the btsan pos were, it is widely accepted that the locations of the temples were based “on the ogress lying upon her back” (srin mo gan rkyal du nyal ba), in accordance with Tibetan geomantic tradition and in order to suppress bad elements. Skyer chu iha khang and Byams pa iha khang are included among them and were built at the position of the left palm of the Srin mo gan rkyal du nyal ba.

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100 See the discussion in Sørensen and Hazod (2005) and Aris (1979: 3-41). These temple were considered to have been built during the emperor Srong btsan sgam po (r. 627-649) and were renovated during Khri srong sde btsan’s time (r. 754-797). See Bka’ chems ka khol ma (1989 [1049]), Mani bka’ ’bum (1976 [13th c.]: 137a, 199b), Bka’ thang sde lnga (1990 [14th c.]: 147). The modified translation is from Reorich and Choepel (1998 [1949]: 44). Aris (1979: 22) follows Bacot (1940: 114) and Richardson (1949: 54) and states that it is “an easier matter to argue in favour of the scheme’s historicity if it were credited to Khri Srong btsan sgam po. Based on Dunhuang documents Bacot (1940: 114) and Richardson (1949: 54) and states that it is “an easier matter to argue in favour of the scheme’s historicity if it were credited to Khri Srong lde btsan.” Kapstein (2006: 66-7) suggests that the pillar inscription of these temples were founded by Srong btsan sgam po, “during the time of the magically sagacious and divine Emperor, the ancestor Khri Srong btsan [sgam po], as an enactment of the Buddha’s doctrine, the temple of Ra sa (Lhasa) and others were built, and the shrines of the Three Precious Jewels were established.”

101 In Tib., Ru gnon bzhi (the subjugation of Four Horns), Mtha’ ’dal bzhi (the subjugation of Four Borderlands) and Yang ’dal bzhi (the four subjugation of Outer Borderlands) are stated as being suppressed (Bka’ chems ka khol ma 1989 [1049]: 235, 262; Bsdod nams rgyal mtshan 1996 [1368]: 163; Sørensen 1994: 251-63; Aris 1979: 15-17; Sørensen and Hazod 2005: 179). Refer to Manjì bka’ ’bum (1976 [13th c.]: 137a, 199b) with a figure in Sørensen and Hazod (2005: 202-212).

102 A local saying goes that it is Byams pa iha khang in Bumthang and Skyer chu iha khang in Paro (Aris 1979: 5; Karma 2013: 79-84). Probably based on Bka’ chems ka khol ma (1989 [1049]: 262, 305-6, 309), where Bum thang iha khang is mentioned as founded in the period, but not recorded as iha khang of Byams pa or Skyer chu. Yet, the Skyer chu iha khang in Bum thang is stated in Bsdod nams rgyal mtshan (1996 [1368]: 165), Dpa’ bo gtsug lag’s Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]), Blo bzang rgya mtsho’s Dpyid kyi rgyal mo’i glu dbyangs (1991/2008 [1643]) and Sum pa mkhan po’s Dpag bsdam ljon bzang (1992 [1788]). The record of Mon Skyer chu iha khang in Spa gro is observed in Mani bka’’ bum (1976 [13th c.]: 137a), Bu ston rin chen grub’s Bu ston chos ’byung (1991 [1322]), Stag thang Dpal ’byor bzang po’s Rgya bod yig tshang (1985 [1434]), Padma dkar po’s ‘Brug pa’i chos ’byung (1992 [1581]) and Klong rdol (1991 [1794]). In Sørensen and Hazod (2005: 202-12), only the Mon Skyer chu iha khang in Spa gro is marked on the left leg. Aris (1979: 5-6) states that the present architecture of the Skyer chu iha khang in Paro (Spa gro) must have developed later in the ’Brug pa’s period (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries). He continues that “Skyer chu jo bo (south
During the period of btsan po Khri srong sde btsan (r. 755-804), the old Mon region as referring to a specific region is further recorded in the biography of Padmasambhava, the supposed founder of Tibetan Buddhism. Although Padma bka’ thang is a highly disputed work, the biography records Padmasambhava’s activities and visits to old Mon, which are recounted with the term mon, prefixed or suffixed to a place or to a person. Moreover, we learn in Padma bka’ thang (1993 [1352]: 607) that Padmasambhava stayed for a number of years in the Eastern Himalayas. In the mythographic representation, Padmasambhava visited a number of sites and the following regions in Mon were considered to have been blessed by him: Mon Sgom brag phug, Mon Bkra shis khye ’dren, Mon Sha ’ug stag sgo, Mon Dom tshang rong, Mon gzig tshang rong, Mon kha Bum thang, and Mon kha Spa gro, and so forth.
Similarly, the old Mon region is also said to be a source for paper used for religious purposes in central Tibet. For example, “the btsan po [Khri srong lde’u btsan] sent [his officials] to collect paper from Mon” in order to spread Buddhism. Furthermore, old Mon as a region lying in the Eastern Himalayas can be gleaned from the ‘Mon noble lady’ (Mon gyi bu mo) Bkra shis khye ’dren, who was introduced to Padmasambhava as a consort. She counts as one of the important historical figures recorded in Padma bka’ thang (1993 [1352]: 646) and was one of the three noble ladies, who invited Padmasambhava to bestow on them oral teachings at ‘Yar klungs crystal cave’ (Yar klungs shel gyi brag phug). Although Padma bka’ thang does not provide any information about her parents, Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]), in the early-sixteenth century, states that she was the daughter of King Sin dha ra dza’.

In another highly debated text titled “the biography of King Sindha ra dza,” the old Mon region can also be traced. In there, it states that Padmasambhava gave zhag drug bzhugs/ mkha’ gro phug par zla ba bzhi/ lha rtse’i brag la zla ba bzhi/). Based on Padma bka’ thang, Ardussi (1977: 58) also presented a similar list. Among the mentioned areas, the following regions are considered as being located in the present-day Mon region, Sha ‘ug stag sgo, Mkha’ gro’i phug pa, Mon Sgom brag, Dom tshang rong, Stag tshang rong and Gzhig tshang rong (Tenpa and Tempa 2013: 6). These are also mentioned in Du kā la’i’ phro ‘thud (1989 [1703]: 489).

In Tib., rgyal pos mon la shog bus du dbang/ (Padma bka’ thang 1993 [1352]: 489-90). Ardussi (1977: 57-8) notes that even Sindha ra dza’ was involved in this Mon paper production, denoting old Mon to Bhutan. This ancient paper production process is still in continuation in modern Bhutan and in Mon, but it is known as ‘Tibetan paper’ (Bod shog) rather than ‘Mon paper’ (Mon shog). During the same btsan po, the gter ma literature Bka’ thang sde luga (1990 [14th c.]: 118) of O rgyan gling pa recorded that some displaced people of Ge sar gru gu (i.e. Western Turks, in Hazod 2009: 166) were forced to migrate to a region of Mon by the red-faced Tibetan armies of btsan po Khri srong lde’u btsan after the conquest (in Tib., byang phyogs ge sar gru gu bzhugs pa yang/ bar du bka’ khyin mkhar mon gyi sa la bskyal/ khyim mkhar mon gyi sa la bskyal/). This latter Mon region is difficult to identify.

Ardussi (1977: 59-61) notes that the “earliest significant information on her come from Stag sham Nus ldan rdo rje’s 17th century biography of Ye shes mtsho rgyal.” Similarly, Sarkar (1975a: 1975b: 1980), with the help of oral sources, points out that Bkra shis khye ’dren is a well-acknowledged figure in present-day Mon region. His sources of oral narratives are well established and the story is recounted up to the present period, as observed during fieldwork. Probably based on oral sources, Bodt (2012: 59) states that she was daughter of King Ham ra of Mon Tsha ’og. There are various written notes and oral traditions that narrate her being from this and that region of Mon.

Aris (1979: 43, 276) remarks that the “full narrative of the king’s story, however, does not appear to be contained in the standard collected works of Padma gling pa, but rather in a short text having a quite independent existence.” The text is titled Rgyal po sindha ra dza’i rnam thar in Dargye (2009) and in Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]). For English, see Ardussi (1977: 61-3, n.31), Aris (1979: 43-47) and Karma (2013: 92-99). The author of the text is partly attributed to Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]) or O rgyan bzang po in Aris (1979: 158, n.45), but only to O rgyan bzang po (1267-1326) in Karma (2013: 92, 99-101; 2015: 5). Dge ’dun rin chen (1976) based his on the writing of ‘Jam mgon kong sprul (2003 [1900]). According to Aris (1979: 52), the king’s name is considered to have evolved from Se ’dar kha, Sen mda’ kha, Sindha to Sindhurāja, and particularly suggested that from...
a prophecy to King Sindha ra dza’ concerning people from Dbus gtsang coming to Mon in the near future (Olschak 1979: 24). King Sindha ra dza’ has been given national significance in Bhutanese history and is depicted as a king who fled from India. He is also acknowledged as the founder of a short-lived kingdom called Lcags mkhar in Mon Bumthang valley. In the same biography, there is mention of another Indian king, Sna’u che, who is said to have invited Padmasambhava to mediate between him and Sindha ra dza’.

The identification of the old Mon region can be further observed in the case of Padmasambhava being witness to the oath taking ceremony between King Sindha ra dza’ with an unknown Indian king, Sna bo che, in the Eastern Himalayas. The story tells us that “troops of India must not ‘trespass’ (’gal) beyond this pillar towards Mon and troops of Mon must not trespass in the direction of India” (Aris 1979: 43-59; Karma 2013: 96). The troops of India and Mon might relate to the conflict

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111 “Se ’dar (-kha) in 11th-12th [sic] centuries to Sindhu in 18th [sic] century up to the present.” Ra dza’ refers to rāja in Sanskrit, however, the ra dza’ orthography is retained throughout the text.

112 In Tib., dbus gtsang phal che mar du bros pa’i dus/ nga bzang thams cad mon la bros pa’i dus/.

113 Aris (1979: 45) notes that it was recorded only once about the king being known as Prince Kun ’dzoms in the text. See Ardussi (1977: 61-2), Karma (2013: 72, 92-99) and Aris (1979: 45, n.5) on the castle. Padma gling pa may have confused the Indian king Sna’u che (big nose), who was a contemporary to Sindha (Se ’dar) ra dza’ and King Khyi kha ra thod. However, another king known as Mol mi ’khyil is also figured during the same time. Those kings’ biographies or narratives have more or less the same content. For a different observation of these kings, refer to Aris (1979: 43-59) and Dargye (2009). Interestingly, Drag shos Bstan 'dzin (1988: 4-8) notes that Eastern Bhutanese traced their links to imperial Tibet much earlier, i.e. ca. first century BC, particularly to the Tibetan prince Nya khri, the middle son of king Gri gum btsan po. His younger brother Bya khri (Spu lde gung rgyal) took over the reign (Karma 2013: 76). See for further details about Gri gum btsan po in Sørensen (1994: 141-44).

113 With regard to King Sna’u che, Ura Dgon po tshe ring (2003: 139) states that he was a native of Sna bo che ’phel (Snang shel ’phel) in Chu med valley, whereas King Sindha ra dza’ was a runaway Indian prince from Ser skyā (Kapilavastu?) to Bum thang (Karma 2013: 93). However, Aris (1979: 51) argues that “far from being a refugee, the king is Sindha ra dza’, who was probably hereditary ruler of Bumthang” and he continues that “considerable interest for it is an open affirmation of the central Tibetan origins of the Western Bhutanese.” Aris’ (1979: 58) observation is based on Tibetan texts of Bstan ’dzin chos rgyal (1759) and Rgyal rigs (1728). King Sindha ra dza’ being an Indian refugee prince leads to a hypothesis that indigenous people of old Mon (= Bhutan etc.) were Indian and “Tehpoo”. This term first came up in the writings of British colonial reports from Bhutan to remind that it was once part of India (Aris 1979: 58). This assumption is first reported in Kishenkant Bose (1865), whose fieldwork observation published in “Political Missions 1865” is extensively quoted by later authors, such as Das (1974: 2), Mehra (1974: 81) and Lamb (1966: 4). Conversely, it is not entirely Bose’s fabrication, because Ardussi (1977: 63-4) and Karma (2013: 70-75) discuss possible Indian settlers in Bhutan, who were mainly slave descendants of Indian origin. This leads to an assumption that the indigenous people of old Mon were Indian and that those proto-Tibetan speakers pushed the indigenous old Mon people down from the northern Himalayas.
between “Bhutias or Bhotae”\(^\text{114}\) and the Assamese foothill people around the eight
to ninth century, as recorded by Gait (1906: 38). In that conflict the “Bhutias raided
and carried off a number of people, including the son of Chandubar,” who was the
best among the “seven families of Brāhmans and seven families of Kāyasths to
Durlabh,\(^\text{115}\) [and they] settled down at the frontier, as wardens of the marches” after
a peace agreement was reached with “a Rāja of Kāmatāpur named Durlabh
Nārāyan.”\(^\text{116}\) However, chronologically, all the mentioned names of the Assamese
kings correspond to the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, and Gait’s observation thus
rather remains vague.

The historical account of a banished prince called Khyi kha ra thod in the
Tibetan sources is also helpful to refer to old Mon region, which is often indicated
to a region in the Eastern Himalayas.\(^\text{117}\) The prince is said to have lived around the

\(^{114}\) It is a common term used for the people of the homogenous Tibetan Buddhist people in the
Himalayas during the period of British India. Until the early-twentieth century, almost all the English
sources recorded of Bhutia, Bhotia or Bootea as referring to Bhutanese, Tibeto-Mon as Monpa and
Sherdukpen, Sikkimese and to some extent also to Tibetan. The Monpa and Sherdukpen were also
called “extra-Bhutia,” “Towang Bhutia,” “Bhutia of Kurripara,” “Bhutia of Charduar,” and
“Thebhangia Bhutia” and “Towang Deba Rājas.” The term \textit{Bhutia} now officially refers to the
“Scheduled Tribe” (ST) Bhutia of Sikkim and West Bengal states and Bhotiya in the hilly region of
Uttarakhand. In Nepal, with a different spelling of \textit{Bhote}, but in the same sense, the term tends to have
a negative meaning such as beef eaters by the local non-beef eaters. See Karma (2013: 13-14) on the
usages of Bhutan and Tibetan as the name of the countries in European languages. Refer also to Tenpa
(2016: 73, n.4).

\(^{115}\) The record of seven chief in Gait (1906: 38) along with Chandubar in North Bengal gives us the
references to an oldest record of the term \textit{Sātṛājas}, the seven chieftains. The mention of the seven
families to safeguard the frontier resembles that title, which was used by the chieftains of Mon and
Sherdukpen (Aitchison 1931 [1929]; Tenpa 2016).

\(^{116}\) See Gait (1906: 38-9) on the king; however, the Rāja Durlabh Nārāyan (r. 1330-1350) was
recorded as the king of the Khen dynasty in the fourteenth century. Although the king is not among
the Khen dynasty, Gait (1906: 41-2) remarks that he may have lived at the end of the thirteenth
century. Only three kings in the Khen dynasty rulers, i.e. Niladhwaj (1440–1460) the founder, his son
Chakradhwaj (1460–1480) and the last Nilambhar (1480–1498) were recorded. Their kingdom,
Kāmata (13\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th} c.) succeeded t
the Kingdom of Kāmātapur (7\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} c.), and which was considered
parallel to the Kingdom of Kāmarupa. Refer to Debnath (2010) and Gait (1906: 40-43) on the
Kingdom of Kāmata.

\(^{117}\) Khyi kha ra thod is not given as much national significance as Sindha ra dza’ (Aris 1979: 43, 60,
78; Karma 2013: 101). He is regarded as the Prince Mu rum(/g) btsan po, the son of queen Dmar
rgyan (Tshes pong dza’) of \textit{btsan po Khri srong lde btsan} (r. 755-797), upon illegitimate “paternity
with beasts” (Aris 1979: 66; Karma 2013: 102, 106-08). Aris considers that he was not Mu tig btsan
po, commonly known as Khri lde srong btsan (/Sad na legs; 790–815), who was the throneholder after
the death of Mu ne btsan po (r. 797-799). Shakabpa (1967: 47) considers that Khyi kha ra thod was
Mu tig btsan po and says that he was banished to Lho brag after murdering a minister. In 1976,
however, Shakabpa (1976: 199-200) called him Mu rum btsan po, probably basing on Karmay’s
(1972: 102-03) writing. In the classical Tibetan sources, \textit{Bka’ thang sde lnga} (1990 [14\textsuperscript{th} c.]), \textit{Mkhas
pa’ dga’ ston} (2006 [1654]) and Blo bzang rgya mtsbo (2008 [1643]) state that Mu rum btsan po
was expelled to the north of Tibet. Aris (1979: 73) mentioned four sons to Khri srong Ide btsan,
namely Mu khri btsan po, Mu ne btsan po, Mu rum btsan po and Mu tig btsan po. He further notes
late-eighth century, but his identity is debated in several writings. He is identified as Mu tig btsan po or Mu rum btsan po and is associated with a ‘hidden land’ (sbas yul)\(^{118}\) known as Mkhan pa lung/ljongs as his kingdom.\(^{119}\) A historical prince Khyi kha ra thod became a legendary figure in the later historical writings, with Bkra shis snam rdzong being considered as his castle. Karma (2013: 107) therefore states that the “fantastical accounts and demonization of Khyi kha ra thod started only during or slightly before Padma gling pa’s time.”

Those accounts record that he was subdued by Padmasambhava, either under the order of btsan po Khri srong lde btsan after Khyi kha ra thod attacked central Tibet or after a requisition by king Sindha ra dza’ to tame him in Bumthang in order to

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118 Why sbas yul became a source of inspiration to Tibetan elites and monks in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries is worth observing. Many scholars describe sbas yul as “millenarism”, a kind of paradise on earth where one could escape from the political crisis in Tibet (Brauen-Dolma 1985: 245-56; Diemberger 1997: 292). It is an uniquely Tibetan concept as understood by Sadar-Afkhami (2001: 6-7) and he states that “neither entirely psychological nor geographical, but a dimension that can only manifest between the two, when mind and landscape become transparent to each other in non-dual space” Therefore, Tucci (1949: 112) rightly recorded it “expresses the trouble of a stormy epoch, and are the voice of Tibet’s political and religious consciousness, which amidst the turmoil of unrest and under the menace of foreign rule, came back to its primitive traditions, to times when the reigning dynasty was firmly established, the country internally unified, external enemies vanquished, and Tibet prospered, blessed by the great masters of its faith. Indeed this searches for gter ma, the multiplication of their discoveries, passionate love for documents of the past, all coincide and are a sign of the yearning for a restoration of ancient times, a proof of national revival.” See also Ardussi (1977: 63-4), Gyatso (1986; 1993), Childs (1999), etc.

119 It is written as Mkhan pa lung/ Mkhan pa ljongs/ Mkhan pa gling in Deb ther sngon po (1984 [1476]) and Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]). For details on sbas yul and the king Khyi kha ra thod, see Aris (1979: 63-70) and Karma (2013: 103-08). It is a summary on the Padma gling pa’s texts known as Shas yul ‘bras mo gshong dan mkhan pa lung gi gnas yig and Shas yul mkhan pa ljongs kyi gnas yig padma gling pa’i gter ma. See also Diemberger’s (1997: 287-344) article on the hidden land Mkhan pa lung in Eastern Nepal, which is based on a treasure text revealed by Rig ’dzin rgod ldem (2003 [1409]). With regard to Rig ’dzin rgod ldem, Stein (1959: 346) considers that he revealed his treasure text in the sixteenth century, whereas in Bdzud ’joms rin po che’s (1991 [1967]: 175-6) Rnying ma chos ’byung, it records that Rig ’dzin rgod ldem lived in the fourteenth century (1377-1409). This means that prior to Padma gling pa (1450-1521), Rig ’dzin rgod ldem founded the ‘northern treasure’ (byang gter) tradition and revealed seven major hidden lands. Diemberger left the question of Mkhan pa lung/ ljongs in Nepal or Bhutan open by following Aris (1979; 82); however, Karma (2013: 103) thinks that there are two possible regions following central Tibet’s Mkhan pa lung (Bod kyi Mkhan po lung) of Rig ’dzin rgod ldem (2003 [1409]: 8-9) and southern Tibet’s Mkhan pa lung (Lho brag rgya[I] gyi Mkhan pa lung) in the text of Sindha ra dza’. See also Wangchuk and Dorji (2007) on Mkhan po ljongs.
consolidate his kingdom. The unknown border areas, such as Yang re lung, Byedkar lung and Ku re lung in Mon were places where king Khyi kha ra thod and his subjects settled. These places were actually considered the home of Indians, whose houses were made of bamboo, grass and wood and were thought to be in Bumthang (Aris 1979: 66). A small number of people followed king Khyi kha ra thod and were quarrelling with other ruling clans in the region. We can also observe that they later faced opposition from the Gdung lineage of Bumthang. Thus, in comparing the two kings, king Sindhu Ra dza’ and Khyi kha ro thod, they both became legends as well as a historic figures of old Mon. However, the former is nottraceable in any other sources except in the gter ma biography, whereas Khyi kha ro thod, as Mu tig btsan po or Mu rum btsan po with his descendants, is mentioned in several sources.

Yet, Khyi kha ro thod, who can be traced in several records, became a more mythical person than Sindhu Ra dza’, who is only mentioned in one gter ma text. Moreover, interestingly Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653-1705) in his Du kā la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 149) considered the successive descendants of the Ber mkhar’s lineage to Khyi kha ra thod and not to Gtsang ma. However, Sde srid’s attribution of the Ber mkhar descendants to Khyi kha ra thod is not discussed or stated in Rgyal rigs. In fact, Rgyal rigs avoids mentioning the different sources of the lineages, even though it was written in 1668 and not in 1728 (Tenpa 2015: 489, 493). Similarly, Du kā la’i ’phro ’thud does not mention anything about Gtsang ma and him being the root of the descendants. Saying this, the record of Sde srid is not

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120 See Ura Dgon po tshe ring (2003: 136-8) and Wangchuk (2004: 48) for further observation on the former and the latter in Olschak (1979: 76) and Dargye (2009) on Sindha ra dza’. Although these sources note that king Khyi kha ra thod invited Padmasambhava to Mkhan pa ljongs, Ardussi (1977: 64-9) states that Padmasambhava came in disguise to tame Khyi kha ra thod.
123 An extensive study is needed for a better picture of those periods, particularly on the two kings to ascertain old Mon.
124 Although Pommaret (2010: 51) does not prove any sources, she states that “the story of the exile of the Tibetan royal scion Khyi kha rva thod in the valleys of Stang and Chos ‘khor, Bumthang is till alive in the oral as well as written traditions.” The biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama notes that the Ber mkhar family, to which his mother belonged to, traces the descendants of that exiled Tibetan prince. See for further in Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 26; II 1988: 98).
Mon in the Late-Imperial Period

In the late Tibetan imperial period, one of the most important historical figures related to old Mon was prince Gtsang ma, son of Sad na legs Khri lde srong btsan (r. 804-815). Historical records state that btsan po Ral pa can (r. 815-836) banished his brother, Gtsang ma, under the influence of his other brother, Glang dar ma ('U dum btsan po; r. 836-842), who, as we know, is traditionally depicted as an anti-Buddhist. This version is confirmed by almost every other Tibetan historical text. For example in Rgyal rigs, it states “may my younger brother Gtsang ma depart this year in order to remove our obstacles and in order to see what the subjects and communities in Lho Mon are like and to investigate their livelihood.” Although Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 43-44) generally follows the Gtsang ma narratives of Rgyal rigs, he placed Gtsang ma among the seventh incomers of the

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125 Gtsang ma was the eldest among the four other princes: Ral pa can (Khri gtsug lde btsan; 806-838), Glang dar ma (807-842) and two others (died in young age, Vitali 1990: 17). Ral pa can was the second last or the 41th btsan po, who succeeded Sad na legs, but he was assassinated by his brother, the last or the 42nd btsan po Glang dar ma. There is also a different birth order recorded in sources such as Lde’u jo sras (1987 [13th c.]: 134), Chab spel Tshe bhtan phun tshogs (1993: 542-43) and Sørensen (1994: 410). Different spellings, such as Rtsan ma (in Tucci 1947: 314) or Btsan ma (in Aris 1979: 84) are also found. Although Ardussi (1977: 72; 2007a: 6) writes that Gtsang ma “a clean one, may be tied to the legend of his Buddhist convictions,” he being a monk is not traced in the early Tibetan sources. He was rather addressed as ‘the Enthroned’ (khri) Btsan ma or ‘the Enthroned Ruler’ (mnga’ bdag khri) Rtsang ma, instead of the usual orthography of Gtsang ma in Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1993 [1215]: 394) and in Bshad mdzod chen mo (1976 [1469]: 84a, 8b). However, the younger enthroned prince is called Gtsang ma or only Gtsang ma in the republished Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1469]: 91a, 124b). Aris (1979: 84) missed both the spelling written in these later texts. He quoted from the works of Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1565]) and Dpyid kyi rgyal mo’i glu dbyangs (2008 [1643]: 53). These texts inform us that Gtsang ma became a monk, after he was expelled to Mon, whereas Haarh (1969: 339) speculates that “Gtsang ma, as a Buddhist monk, waived his right to the throne, but took the actual government into his hands on behalf of his younger brother Ral pa can, who was, or became, incapable of exercising it.” Haarh’s (1969) observation cannot be ignored because Lde’u jo sras (1987 [13th c.]: 133-34) mentioned that Gtsang ma was younger as Ral pa can and Glang dar ma and was also among the five princes to Sad na legs, instead of the generally accepted four or three sons. For a detailed reading on Gtsang ma and his life, refer to Aris (1979: 83-114), Ardussi (1977: 69-70; 2007a: 5-26), Sørensen (1994: 425, n.1498) and Karma (2013: 111-15).

126 In Tib., gcung gtsang ma rang da lo nged rang ruams kyi sku chags bsangs pa dang/ lho mon gyi mnga’ ’bangs mi ide ruams kyi yul khams ji ltar yod dang bde sugs ci ’dra yod dzigs pa la phebs pas chog zer ba/ (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 20-21). The Rgyal rigs text considers that Ral pa can had either ordered him to leave or to be banished. The modified English translation is from Aris (2009 [1986]: 20-21).
seven successive groups of migrations that took place in old Mon. However, the identities of the remaining six groups of incomers are not provided except the names of the areas where they settled down. Moreover, Rgyal sras sprul sku writes nothing about Mu tig btsan po or prince Khyi kha ra thod, who campaigned against the migration of prince Sindha ra dza’ to old Mon.

In the case of Gtsang ma and his successors in old Mon region, the picture of the region is incomplete without an investigation of this exiled prince, who is said to have migrated to the region in 836 CE. Gtsang ma and his descendants then became heads of several family lines in the Mon area. In this regard, Aris (1979: 83) states that “it was from him that all their ruling clans claimed direct and uninterrupted descent.” Keeping the present geopolitics of the region in view, Ardussi (2007a: 5) cautiously states that he “became the legendary progenitor of numerous petty rulers in Eastern Bhutan and Tibetan Mon yul.” As to the question of which text was the first to record Gtsang ma in Mon Spa gro or Lho Bum

127 The first settlement was in Sbam sbag rong, the second in Khri mo gnyen gdong khar, and the third in Lha’u brag gdong khar. The fourth, fifth and sixth were in Ngam mdong 'phred lam, Hro gdong 'bum and Nyang shang spang rgyan. All the regions are not identified, but the names of the mentioned regions are identical to modern-day village names in the present Mon region. To those six migrations, Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 43) does not give any sources for further examination. Their identities are not given except of the names of the regions, where these migrants are said to have settled. It is merely a list of migrations to different regions, who were unidentified and unknown to the author himself. It becomes rather a mythical than an actual historic migration. Although the author does not outline his assumption of Mon, whether he considers the whole of the Eastern Himalayas or only the present Mon region, it is clear from his study that his understanding of old Mon is limited only to the present Mon region with some adjoining region of Eastern Bhutan.

128 The date of expulsion remains unclear in a number of Tibetan sources, where some authors argue that it was in 830 by Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 45), in 840 by Aris (1979: 86), or 841 in Dge 'dun rin chen (1976: 68a). According to Bu ston chos 'byung (1999 [1322]: 130b), it was in 836.

129 Ardussi’s note of “Eastern Bhutan” and “Tibetan Mon yul” implies that these two regions are not parts of old Mon and were separate regions. The regions are however once called Shar Mon, which means within old Mon. His notion of “Tibetan Mon yul” refers only to the present Mon Region, but as it is not recorded in any primary text, it should be only Mon or Mon yul, not “Tibetan Mon yul”. Prior to the present geopolitical and strategic problem, the region is not observed from the imperialist or the nation-state concept; it was rather considered for its important trade-routes. Moreover, the native people do not like to be identified as Tibetan or any other ethnic group, but rather as Monpa, who live in Mon yul.

130 The record Mon Spa gro is followed similarly in later texts, such as Spa gro Mon or Dpa’ gror in Nyang ral chos 'byung (1988 [1192]: 436); Mon Dpa’ gror in Mkhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]: 366), Dpal gro Mon in Bsdod manams rgyal mtshan (1993 [1368]: 233; Sørensen (1994: 425) and Lho Mon or Lho Spa gro in Rgyal rigs (1986: 20, 24). Ardussi (2007a: 9-10) therefore considers the Sha’ bzhex as the “earliest Tibetan history tying Gtsang ma to Paro [i.e. Mon Spa gro]” besides the Nyang ral chos 'byung (1988 [1192]: 436) text. The writings of Mkhas pa Lde’u and Lde’u jo sras (in the early-twelfth century?) were also among the first to mention Gtsang ma in old Mon. In Chab spel (1987: 1-9) edited Rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa of Mkhas pa Lde’u (1987 [1249]), the editor assumes that the author lived in the early-twelfth century. Similarly, he considers that the other text
thang, I would argue that it was either Sba’ bzhes (1961: 76-77) or Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1993 [1215]: 394) which were probably the earliest sources to record these regions where khri Btsan ma or Gtsang ma was exiled.

Furthermore, the Sba’ bzhes text is the first Tibetan source to mention Mon Spa gro instead of Bum thang, which is commonly recorded as Gtsang ma’s first arrival in the region. Besides these regions, even Gro mo (Chumbi valley) is mentioned in Bu ston chos ’byung (1999 [1322]: 191). The records of the regions as Mon Spa gro, Mon/ Lho Bum thang and Gro mo clearly points to an undefined Mon region in present day Eastern Himalayas, yet some sources record other regions as the first place where Gtsang ma arrived. It was Ne’u Paṇḍita (1989 [1283]: 9) who states for the first time that “I have heard it is said that his [Khri Gtsang ma] sons’ descendants were the kings of Ya tse in western Nepal.” Yet, the record of Ne’u Paṇḍita is

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131 Aris (1979: 84) claims that Bod kyi rgyal rabs, written by Sa skya historian Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147-1216) in 1215, was the first who mentioned Gtsang ma and Bum thang. The record of Bum thang is followed in other texts, such as Lho brag Bum thang in Ne’u Paṇḍita (1989 [1283]: 9), Lho brag kho thing in Monyul or Shar Mon in Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 548-9), Lho brag Mon in Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1649]: 85a) and Mon yul Bum thang in Dpyid kyi rgyal mo’i glu dbyangs (2008 [1643]).

132 Stein’s (1961: 76-77) edited Shab’ bzhes zhabz tagz ma recorded ninety-one classified ethnics barbarians, among them Spa gro Mon is mentioned as the last barbarian region. There are at least four versions of the D/sha’ bzhes text. In the annotated translation of Dha’ bzhes (2000) by Wangdu and Diemberger, which is considered to have been compiled in the ninth century, nothing is stated on the last three emperors, hence also not on Gtsang ma.

133 Although Aris (1979: 87) remarks that it was a simple misreading of Gro mo instead of Spa gro by Bu ston, it is widely followed in Deb ther dmar po (1993 [1346]: 39) by Tshal pa Kun dga’ rdo rje (1981 [1346]) and Rgya bod yig tshang (1985 [1438]: 126) by Stag tshang Dpal ’byor bzang po. It is also written in Shakabpa (1976: 448).

134 In Tib., khri lde srong btsan rgyis rgyal sa bzang/ de’i sras gsam gyi che ba khri gtsang ma lho mon gyi phyogs su gcugs/ ’bro gza’ legs rje pa’ gnan nam pas dug gi bkrom/ ’de’i sras rgyud ni ya rtse rgyal po yin po shes thos so’ (Ne’u Paṇḍita 1989 [1283]: 7). The English translation is rendered from Arducci (2007a: 8). The record of Ne’u Paṇḍita’s Mon Ya tse ’dzum lang [Jumla] challenges the assumption of old Mon referring only to the Eastern Himalayas because it changes the structure of the assumed areas. Ne’u Paṇḍita is the only source where the descendants of Gtsang ma were recorded also in Mon Ya tse (Arducci 2007a: 8, n.6; Petech 1988: 374). Moreover, there is no other source that states that Gtsang ma’s descendants migrated. In addition, this relates to a Mon in the mid-Himalayas. Citing Petech (1988: 374), Arducci (2007a: 8, n.6) therefore states that “the rumor trying Gtsang ma to Ya rtse may have arisen from the fact that, like proto-Bhutan, Ya rtse was also occasionally known in Tibetan as Lho Mon, i.e. a part of the amorphous, primitive southern zone.” Arducci has not given any sources of Tibetan texts that record Mon as being located in the mid-Himalayas and why Tibetans consider it a primitive southern zone. As Ne’u Paṇḍita records that khri Gtsang ma was exiled to Lho Mon, probably his descendants later migrated to Mon Ya tse. Tucci
not supported in other Tibetan texts. As the expulsion of Gtsang ma “appears only in late texts and finds no mention in the Tibetan records found at Tun huang - or in the T’ang histories (Aris 1979: 83)” a question arises on the reliability of Tibetan religious historical work since the eleventh century. Nevertheless, almost all post-dynastic sources write that Gtsang ma was a sibling of the last two emperors.

As the record of Gtsang ma having lived in old Mon is based on written narrative sources of those times, the note in Rgyal rigs on the successive descendants of Gtsang ma primarily relied on the “remains of his lineage” or “his still residing ruling line” (Aris 1979: 84). Ngag dbang, the author of Rgyal rigs, does not mention that one of the sources is the work of Grags pa rgyal mtshan. His argument is nonetheless strengthened by Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1469]: 85b), where it states that “the Mon kings in Lho Mon were the successive descendants of the ‘ruler’ Rtsang ma.”

The account in Bshad mdzod chen mo can be related further back to Klong chen’s description of U ra valley in Bumthang: “an excellent place due to the fact that the line of descendants of the lord Dharmarajas [still] reside there and that the Tibet[an] people of Gtsang ma live there.” In his “introduction” to [Bye brag] Bshad mdzod chen mo, Gene Smith (1969: 28) states that “the author Don dam smra ba’i seng ge was himself a descendant of Gtsang ma in the princely family of Gru shul, or else possibly a household priest to this family.” However, Don dam smra ba’i seng ge himself is not described as a descendant of Gtsang ma. Except the Rgyal rigs text, all other sources provide a similar narrative stating that after the expulsion of Gtsang ma to old Mon, he was poisoned to death.

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(1956: 112) and Petech (1988: 370) consider Ya rtse/ Ya tshe to be Semja in Western Nepal, but the royal descendants were rather traced to Skyid Ide Nyi ma mgon, a lineage to 'Od srung, the son of the last emperor Glang dar ma.

135 See early and later Arducci’s remarks on Gtsang ma in 1977 (pp. 68-75) and in 2007 (a, b).

136 In Tib., lho phyogs mon gyi rgyal po rnams/ mnga’ bdag rtsang ma/i gdung rgyud yinl (Bshad mdzod chen mo 2006 [1469]: 85b). See also Arducci (1977: 100-01). Yet as mentioned before, two centuries later Du kū la'i 'phro 'thud (1989 [1703]: 149) recorded the existence of those successive descendants in Mon, but traced them to prince Khyi kha ra thod.

137 In Tib., chos rgyal rje yi gdung rabs bzhugs pa dang/ gtsang ma/i bod rnams gnas pas khyad par 'phags/ Klong chen pa (1991 [1364]: 23b). Aris (1979: 86, n.3) translated the latter part of the text as “people from the pure Tibet live there.”

138 See Chandra’s (1969) edition of the text. Smith does not provide any sources for further information or examination of the possibility that Gru shul family is a descendant of Gtsang ma.

139 With only a variation on who poisoned Gtsang ma, the rest of the sources seem to confirm that Gtsang ma was expelled to the southern part of Tibet.
The author of *Rgyal rigs* seems to consider that the *old* Mon region is more or less the same, where *old* Mon or Lho Mon are consistently quoted in connection with Gtsang ma and his descendants. This has been crucial for the identification of *old* Mon, with a variation of Mon, Lho Mon or Mon yul, as the area of the historic exile of Gtsang ma. The different sources on Mon about where Gtsang ma was thought to be expelled leads to the conclusion that the Mon region is located in the Eastern Himalayas. *Rgyal rigs* thus states that “from the direction of Phag ri in Gtsang, he went to Gnam thong dkar po in Spa gro”, which, according to Bsod nams rgyal mtshan, is probably in Dpal gro Mon.\(^{140}\) The author of *Rgyal rigs* seems to know of the conflicting accounts concerning the place of Gtsang ma’s exile. However, except the work of Bsod nams rgyal mtshan, no other text is mentioned in *Rgyal rigs*.\(^{141}\) Yet, Aris (1979: 88) claims that the author of *Rgyal rigs* had “access to the Bshad mdzod [chen mo] text, written by Don dam smra ba’i seng ge.”

### Mon in the Post-Imperial Period

In the ‘period of fragmentation’ (*sil bu’i dus*), between the disintegration of the Tibetan Empire and the ‘Later Dissemination of Buddhism’ (*bstan pa phyi dar*) in the ninth to the tenth century,\(^{142}\) *old* Mon remains practically unrecorded. Only the *Rgyal rigs* text on Gtsang ma and his successive four to five generations and the religious brothers of Lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje in *old* Mon are mentioned as historical events of this period.\(^{143}\) Similarly, writing in the nineteenth century, ‘Jam mgon kong

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\(^{140}\) See Sørensen (1994: 425, n.1498), while Lho Mon and Lho Spa gro are also recorded in *Rgyal rigs* (I 1986: 20, 24; II 1988: 96, 97). See also note 103 and 130.


\(^{142}\) See Cuevas (2006) on the periodizations of Tibetan history.

\(^{143}\) It is worth outlining the migration of the six *vajrā* (*rdo rje*) brothers of Lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje to *old* Mon immediately after the assassination of the last *btsan po* Glang dar ma. Almost all the Tibetan sources report that Lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje fled to the Amdo region. However, Lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje’s brothers and their migration to *old* Mon is discussed only in *Rgyal rigs* and in the secondary sources, which is based on *Rgyal rigs* (I 1986: 56-58; II 1988: 124-126). It is important to explain that the migration of the *vajrā* brothers to *old* Mon because *Rgyal rigs* (I 1986: 56; II 1988: 124) states that a clan named ‘Zhal ngo kheng po and Bumthang chos ’khor dpon po traced their origins back to the six brothers. *Rgyal rigs* II (1988: 125) informs us nothing about the first three brothers, whereas *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 56) mentions both groups of the six brothers, but their migration to Mon is stated separately. The information on the three brothers in *Rgyal rigs* II (1988: 125) is completely different from *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 56). The former mentions only Stobs ldan tshang pa and Dbang phyug chen po, but they were associated with certain legendary narratives (*Rgyal rigs* II 1988: 125). *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 56) continues with the first three brothers: Stobs ldan la ba rdo rje,
sprul Blo gros mtha’ yas (1813-1900) states that some ‘treasure revealers’ (gter ston pa) were either born or visited old Mon in search of gter ma texts, also during the early part of the second diffusion of Buddhism on the Tibetan plateau. From an historical point of view, ‘Jam mgon kong sprul’’s notes on this particular period can be disputed. The same storyline is followed by the Bhutanese scholar Dge ’dun rin chen, who remarks that these events happened in Bhutan and does not consider the location as old Mon.

Rgyal rigs therefore is the only source for the successive historical events in Mon during the period which followed immediately the disintegration of the Tibetan empire. Following these considerations, it is clear that the Eastern Himalayas is the

Mgar ba khye’u rdo rje and G.yang rtsal spre’u rdo rje, who “arrived in Bum thang in stages by way of Spa gro from the direction of Gtsang pha ri” whereas the other three brothers, Kha rtsing las kyi rdo rje, Pho mtshar grags pa rdo rje and Smras mkhas spyang rig rdo rje “arrived in Ku ri lung from the direction of Lho brag” (in Tib., ku ri lung da sleb/lho brag pyhogs las yong ba: Rgyal rigs I 1986: 59). Furthermore, Rgyal rigs I (1986: 57-8) records that Stobs ldan la ba rdo rje and his descendants became chieftains of Stang district, while G.yang rtsal spre’u rdo rje and Mgar ba khye’u rdo rje and their descendants were the Chos ’khor dpon po of Bum thang and Mtshaps pa dpon po of the pasture-land on the Tibet-Mon border. Similarly, the other three brothers were traced to the successive clans of dpon chen, dpon chen zhal ngo and kheng po. The dpon chen of Tshi rab stong phu zhang tshan and Mu hung shes ro sgar mpanying were traced as descendants of Kha rtsing las kyi rdo rje. They were considered chieftains who took over the chieftainship of the region after the decline of the rje clan, King Yong la phan, who was a direct descendant of Thongs legs can, the youngest son of Gtsang ma (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 58; II 1988: 125). The dpon chen zhal ngo of Ku ri lung descendants were traced to Pho mtshar Grags pa rdo rje, while Kheng pa of Gzhong sgar mol ba lung pa in Gzhong sgar, Tog ka ri, The mung, Phya li and Nya rtsis were considered descendants of Smras mkhas spyang rig rdo rje (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 58; II 1988: 126). Among these clans, “the [Bum thang] Chos ’khor dpon po is almost the only one of the hereditary offices mentioned in this section known from other sources and still remembered today in local [Bumthang] traditions” and traced their lineage back to the Tibetan imperial period (Aris 2009 [1986]: 83, n.103, 118-9; Pommaret 2010: 53). Ardussi (1977: 67) however mentioned only three Rdo rje siblings, but to a descendant as the ruler of Lho brag, La yags chos rgyal Lde chung don grub, who was a royal descendant traced to ‘a bastard son’ (sras zur pa) of Khri strong lde bsan. The siblings, La ba rdo rje, Spreu’u rdo rje and Khyeu’u rdo rje “rose to great prominence in Bhutan during the 17th and 18th centuries” after alliance marriages (Ardussi 1977: 67-8). Besides Rdo rje brothers, Ardussi (1977: 76-8) records of ‘non-returners’ (mi log), who migrated as part of a massive Tibetan army during the reign of Ral pa can. Other possible migrations considered were in old Mon, i.e. Bhutan etc. As the context of the history is related to old Mon, a brief outlined is mentioned here. See the details in Ardussi (1977), Aris (1979: 43-155) and Karma (2013: 76-118).

144 Read further in Barron’s (2003) translation of the autobiography of ‘Jam mgon kong sprul. It refers to Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo and Shes bya kun la khyah pa’i mdzod, which are related to the gter ma traditions. Most other texts of ‘Jam mgon kong sprul are related to Buddhism. See also Aris’ (1979: 156-64) observation.

145 The lack of written sources on Bhutan during the period is also observed by Ardussi (1977: 51), when he states that “the written history of Bhutan commences only from the 7th century A.D. [but] there is not a single event or date before the end of the twelfth century to be known from unequivocably reliable historical documents. Our information about his six-hundred year period comes from oral traditions, committed to writing somewhat later, and from apocryphal treaties of the gter-ma genre appearing principally from the 13th century onwards.” See Aris (1979) on further observation on the two authors’ writings, i.e. ‘Jam mgon kong sprul and Dge ’dun rin chen.
area where Gtsang ma might have finally settled down. Similarly, there are various descriptions of his fate and activities after he settled down in old Mon. Most of the sources mention that Gtsang ma was a monk prior to his expulsion, however Sba’ bzhad (1961: 89b) maintains that he became a monk only after btsan po Ral pa can was killed by the last btsan po Glang dar ma and prior to his expulsion. Similarly, the dates of his expulsion and his poisoning by the Queen ’Bro bza’ legs rje pa and Sna nam pa are also not clear. Despite conflicting information from the historical sources, only Rgyal rigs continues the biography of Gtsang ma. It is therefore the only authoritative source on his descendants in old Mon. The author of Rgyal rigs however simply omitted a contradictory description of Gtsang ma’s life as a monk or about his assassination in old Mon. As Rgyal rigs does not mention other sources than the work of Bsod nams rgyal mtshan, it leads us to suspect that Rgyal rigs was compiled from a number of unknown textual sources or was perhaps based on oral narratives of that time as there are different narratives regarding the arrival of Gtsang ma.

Nyang ral’s chos ’byung (1988 [1192]: 459) states that there are descendants of Glang dar ma in old Mon. However, he does not mention anything of Gtsang ma’s offsprings. Gtsang ma is considered to be buried in a rock cave called Spyal ka (bcal), where many religious treasures and various royal documents were also

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146 The inconsistent biography of Gtsang ma and his advent to old Mon is further complicated by Ye shes dngos grub, stating that “Gtsang ma was dispatched not as an exile but rather as a general” (Aris 1979: 90). Aris does not elaborate on Ye shes dngos grub and his sources, though in his own writing, he quoted a number of times from that source. The unknown Ye shes dngos grub’s information is further twisted by slob dpon Gnag mdog (1986: 3), who asserts that Gtsang ma and other Tibetan officials were invited to old Mon to assist native people against the migrant southerner, i.e. Bodo-Kachari Indians. Slob dpon Gnag mdog’s assumption can not be ignored because the region was one of the ‘administrative zones’ (khod/khos) during the Tibetan imperial period. One can assume that the imperial subjects might be moving freely up and down during those periods. Ardussi (2007a: 9-10, n.14) highlights another event related to Gtsang ma, stating “a small history booklet published in Dzongkha in 1969 [revised ed. 1974] with the title History of Deb Rājas of Bhutan, curiously attributes Gtsang ma’s expulsion from Tibet to his commitment to Bon, not to Buddhism.” This is a new or a different observation on Gtsang ma’s expulsion from Tibet, because almost all Tibetan historians marked his expulsion to his adherence to Buddhism or to him being a monk, but not because he was a Bon follower. It therefore seems that we are discussing two distinct individuals or multiple figures of the same period (Aris 1979: 90).

147 This very cave is associated with a Bon treasure revealer, Khu tsha zla ’od, as mentioned in Karmay (1972: 145-8) as well as Karmay and Nagano (2001: 311). Ardussi (2007a: 10-11) considers that this site is Spa gro phug gcal and states that none of the two caves has revealed anything, or it means “(any) sacred sites or sites of historical significance” to modern Bhutanese. Both of them, he argues, “echo the Bon sources” description mentioned in Karmay. See Dargye and Sørensen (2001) as well as Ardussi (2007a) on Spyal ka rock cave.
said to be hidden. Nevertheless, in *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 24) Gtsang ma’s first destination was Gnam thang dkar po in Spa gro,\(^{148}\) which suggests that it is indeed *old* Mon where Gtsang ma finally settled in the mid-ninth century. Gtsang ma’s activities after his arrival in Gnam thang dkar po of *old* Mon region is presented as follow:

While residing there for some days, he lived together with an extremely beautiful young girl. When the Divine Prince himself proceeded on his way, the girl later gave birth to an unclaimed son. Some people said that he was probably the illegitimate son of the Divine Prince Gtsang ma. Nowadays some legends are still told of how the important clans of the so-called *Rgyal gdung* of Spa gro and of the *Gdung ’brog* of Thim phu are the descendants of that son.\(^{149}\)

Furthermore, we are told that Gtsang ma advanced towards Shar Mon, which lies east of *old* Mon, consisting of the present Mon region and Eastern Bhutan. This is understandable when looking at Gtsang ma’s journey towards Dpal mkhar, a village in the district of La ’og yul gsum, which is the old name of present-day Tawang district.\(^{150}\) Upon reaching a place called Wang ser kung,\(^{151}\) *Rgyal rigs* writes that

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\(^{148}\) Ardussi (2007a: 13) claims that it was in Gnam mthong dkar po. He also considers that Gnam thang dkar po is more related to a *gter ma* literature of *Padma bka’ thang* (1993 [1352]). The defeat of the Sog, Mongol armies at Spa gro, Gnam thang dkar po (*spa gro gnam thang dkar po sog dmag ’joms*) is observed up to the present period, in a temple called Snang dkar lha khang. This is in tune with the Bhutanese “victory over invading Tibetan armies,” and is not related to Gtsang ma. In his (2007) preliminary research, Ardussi also notes that Gtsang ma may have established his castle, by mentioning the ruin of castles and caves as evidence. Ardussi (2007a: 13) thus states that “the cave (Gnam mthong dkar po) and temple described here are the sites relating to the story of Gtsang ma’s activities in the Paro valley presented in seventeenth century *Rgyal rigs* and further back in history to the obscure passage cited above from the *Padma thang yig*.”


\(^{150}\) Ardussi (2007a: 13) wrongly remarks that “La ’og yul gsum [is] near Tawang” instead of saying that it is the old name of Tawang itself. See *Rgyal rigs* (I 1986: 26; II 1988: 98) and Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 57). The regions of Dag pa nang, Spang chen and Smag thing lug gsum or the present day Zemethang, Lumla, Dudunghar and Thingbu Circle Areas of the Tawang district are not part of La ’og yul gsum.

\(^{151}\) Aris (2009 [1986]: 78, n.20) has not identified this valley but he gives another possible name for the valley, Wang seng. Bodt (2012: 68) notes that it is Wang phu, Tshong tshong ma la between Phongs med and Ya lang in Trashiyangtse, Bhutan and Mokto, Tawang, which was once called Wangsheng lungpa. His observation is based on ‘the Fir tree valley’ (wang shing lung pa), which is interesting because *shing* is pronounced as *sheng* in the Dag pa dialect.
Gtsang ma was not happy with the few inhabitants of the valley. He therefore asked local people, “where a lot people and many settlements are and where a good land is? The people replied, Dpal mkhar in La ’og yul gsum is good.” Interestingly, Rgyal rigs records that, during the period of disintegration, the Shar Mon region was far more populated than the rest of old Mon. However, after learning that La ’og yul gsum is in close proximity to central Tibet and considering Mon and Tibet as separate regions, Gtsang ma moved back to the inner part of Shar Mon and settled in a region called Btsan mkhar in ’Brong mdo gsum.  

The above discussion is helpful to draw a picture of the old Mon region in the Eastern Himalayas. Although it does not refers to a specific kingdom, it nevertheless provides an overview of old Mon during different periods. At the same time, old

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152 In Tib., *de nas lha sras nyid kyis mi rnams la mi dang yul grong gang la mang dang/ sa bzhi gang la bzang zer bas/ mi rnams kyis la ’og yul gsum dpal mkhar bzang zer/* (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 26; II 1988: 98). The English translation is from Aris (2009 [1986]: 27). In the case of Dpal mkhar, it has been observed as a valley or a village within La ’og yul gsum, probably referred to Padma mkhar (Pamkhar) village, situated between present day Tawang and Lumla towns. Yet, only through archeological studies, this village historical status can be proven because the modern geography do not support any historical sites.  

153 ’Brong mdo gsum is what Ardussi (2007a: 13) considers present-day Trashigang district, which Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 56) indicated as “it is in Bhutan” (’Brug gi sa yin). Ardussi (2007a: 15) hence assumes that the ruined castle in Btsan mkhar, near Trashigang, could be Mi zim pa because the ‘pass’ (la) is located “on a high ridge above the Kho long river, about ten miles northwest of Tashigang.” It is written as Min zin pa in Rgyal rigs II (1988: 98, 99, 110), whereas it is Mi zim pa in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 51, 56, 66), Aris (2009 [1986]: 27, 29) and Ardussi (2007a: 13-7). Ardussi (2007a: 16) and Bodt (2012: 69) consider and assume that a small village far below the river known as Doksum could also be ’Brog mdo gsum. Since Btsan mkhar is located “strategically along a high ridge overlooking three valleys, including that of the main river flowing out of Tawang, which at the time was a frontier area of Tibet,” Ardussi (2007a: 16) reasons that it could be Mi zim pa. He argues that the ruins of the castles are not contemporary to Gtsang ma, i.e. the ninth century; it is rather close to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries as estimated through the C14 dating methods. The dating fits with the visit of Thang stong rgyal po (1385-1464) to the region and the downfall of the Phag mo gru pa of Rlangs clan (1321-1435) in Tibet. However, Ardussi (2007a: 17) has “not ruled out the possibility that an older, ninth century bastion may still lie beneath the ruins of Btsan mkhar, awaiting future archaeological discovery.” The identification of castle, Mi zim pa in Btsan mkhar or Doksum is based on the narrative left by Rgyal rigs as “he [Gtsang ma] went to Btsan mkhar in ’Brog mdo gsum. Looking around for a suitable place to take for a royal castle, he thought that the land of Mi zim pa is surrounded by water and rocks, the valley is rich and the site is strong.” (in Tib., ’brong mdo gsum btsan mkhar la phebs nas/ rgyal mkhar gzung ba’i ’og gan la ’dug gzigs pas/ mi zim pa’i sa cha de chu brag gis kor zhing lung pa’i ’dus che la sa btsan pa’ ’dug dgongs nas der phebs/ (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 26; II 1988: 98). However, a different track is taken by Du kū la’i ’phro ’thad (1989 [1703]: 149), where it is recorded that it was king Khyi kha ra lhod, who built the castle, Btsan mkhar of Mi zim pa, in short Mi zim mkhar.
Mon can also be referred to as a region with the name of Lho Mon kha bzhi (Four Approaches to the Southern Mon), which approximately was the earlier name of 'Brug gzhung or 'Brug yul. One can say that the record of “Mon kha bzhi” in Rlang kyi po ti (1986 [1364]: 33) is the oldest record so far. However, in a discussion of a source about this archaic name, Aris (1995: 17, n.12) suggests that the year 1431 is the earliest record of Lho kha bzhi. Unfortunately, he does not provide any sources for the term. Aris further states that it may be traced to Thed thin spa gsum (Aris 1979: 32), yet he assumes that the term was later “expanded into a square having four gates, Lho Mon kha bzhi.” He rules out that it had anything to do with the record of Mon dbral kha bzhi in Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]), which dates back to the reign of Khri Srong Ide btsan (r. 755-804). Besides these terms, in a number of text, “Lho Mon kha bzhi” or “Lho kha bzhi” are also found written, without specifying further details.

However, Ardussi (1977: 52, 103) cautiously states that “Lho kha bzhi, along with its variants Lho Mon kha bzhi, Kha bzhi lho and Kha bzhi lho’i rgyal khams terms did not become common until perhaps the 13th or 14th centuries later.” Although the origin of the term is disputed, Lho Mon kha bzhi, at least referred to the Eastern Himalayas, can be traced back in the written sources. The record of Lho kha bzhi (Southern of Four Approaches) without Mon can be traced back in the biography of Pha jo ‘Brug sgom zhig po (1184-1251), but Dargye and Sørensen (2001: XII-XIV) argue that the text “went through two stages in its compilatory

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154 Ardussi (2004a: 15, n.xvi) translated the term Lho Mon kha bzhi as “Southern Mon Land of Four Doors” instead of “Four Approaches to the Southern Mon” or “Southern Mon of Four Approaches”. Ardussi insertion of “land” in the translation does not match with the Tibetan phrase. See also Karma (2013: 4, 255).

155 He even claims that that “I am now inclined to believe it may originally have been coined by the Mongol/ Sa skya Government of Tibet in an attempt to extend its influence in this area.” He also states that “connection with Lho mon kha bzhi is improbable” (Aris 1979: 289, n.7). Aris does not give any clarification for why it is improbable to relate to it.


157 See Ardussi (1977: 18, 120-24), Dargye and Sørensen (2001: X-XII) on “the Dates of Pha jo” and Dargye and Sørensen (2001: I: 16-18; 46-8) for details on the term and it regions. With regard to the hagiography, Aris states that it was discovered by Ngag dbang bstan ’dzin, the son of ’Brug pa kun legs (1455-1529).
process” to serve and strengthen political ties at the time, particularly in the seventeenth century.

The Pha jo text has however given a different location of the four gates for the region in comparison to 'Jigs med gling pa, but it falls within the geography of Bhutan. 'Jigs med gling pa attributes these ‘four approaches’ (kha bzhi) to the frontier ‘trade marts’ (las sgo) in the Eastern Himalayas, i.e. the “Spungs thang [Spun na kha] in the centre; Gdung bsam kha in the east; Dpag bsam kha in the south, Rda gling kha in the west; and Stag rtse kha in the north.”158 The note on the four trade-marts is however not the same because O rgyan gling dkar chag recorded complete different regions and does not even include one single place from the previous list. This note consists of broader regions such as “Gro mo trade-mart in Gtsang; Brag gi trade-mart in Kong po; Sha’u stag sgo trade-mart and 'Grin thang trade-mart in Gnyal [rong].”159

From the textual analysis above, we can say or conclude that the Mon region indeed refers more or less to the present Eastern Himalayas, with Lho Mon, Shar Mon, Mon yul or Mon as denoting old Mon. Within the old Mon region, even the dvārs, i.e. Indian dvārs, as ‘Mon and Indian [dvārs]’ (Mon Rgya gar [las sgo]) region are included.160 The description clarifies the Mon region as being located in a particular part of the Eastern Himalayas, with the direction of Shar Mon or Lho Mon.

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158 In Tib., las sgo ni/ ‘di lta ste/ spungs thang dbus su byas pa ‘i shar gdung bsam kha/ lho dpag bsam kha/ nub rda gling kha/ byang stag rtse kha bzhi/ (’Jigs med gling pa (1991 [1789]: 16). The list is recorded also in Arussi (1977: 103, n.17), Aris (1995: 17), Dargye and Sørensen (2001: 16, n.37) and Karma (2013: 4). ’Jigs med gling pa even deputed his four sons to guide the ‘Four Approaches’: Gar ston was appointed to Gdung, Ha and Sdong, and to control the eastern passes (shar las sgo); Nyima was sent to Dgung and Lcang (in Thim phu) to control the outer passes (phyi’i las sgo); Dhang phyug was sent to control the passes of Thed lung (Spun na kha) and ‘O’ dus (dbus[?] las sgo) and Dam pa inherited his father’s seat at Rta mgo and established two further foundations at Nam mkha’i (or Snang dkar) lha khang in Spa gro and Bde chen phug in Thim phu. See the translation of the passage in Aris (1979: 174) as well as Dargye and Sørensen (2001: 40-50).

159 In Tib., gtsang la gro mo las sgo yod/ kong po brag gi las sgo yod/ mon la sha ’ug stag sgo yod/ gnyal la ’grin thang las sgo yod/ (O rgyan gling dkar chag 1979 [1701]: 75a).

160 The old Mon region, which can be accessed by ‘approaches’ or ‘doors’ (sans. dvār/ Tib. sgo) is also related to historical sources of Assamese and Bengali dvārs. See note 84.
It is understood from Tibetan literary sources that Lho Mon is the same as Mon or Mon yul, while Shar Mon is part of that Mon region.\textsuperscript{161}

Although the picture of the region since the mid-seventeenth century is clear, the 'Brug pa [Bhutanese] were eager to get rid of the term Mon attached to their country. The newly founded Bhutan and Sikkim states therefore started to apply their own religious or social identities to their places, such as 'Brug pa in 'Brug yul (the land of Dragon) or 'Bras ljongs (the Rice Valley).\textsuperscript{162} However, it is not known when Sikkim was called 'Bras ljong. Karma (2013: 10) argues that 'Brug pa of 'Brug yul or Lho 'brug was first used only in the biography of Pho lha nas (Mdo mkhar 2002 [1733]: 541-49), instead of Pha jo 'brug sgom zhig po’s mission in the thirteenth century or after the arrival of Zhabs drung in the early-seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{163} Since 1675, 'Jam dbyangs rgya mtsho, a Tibetan scholar of 'Brug pa lineages came up with a new term for the region, Lho Sman ljongs (Southern Land of Medicinal Plants).\textsuperscript{164} Albeit the replacement of Mon to Sman is not widespread, 'Jigs med gling pa (1730-98), in 1789, reiterated the term Lho Mon kha bzhi, the so-called Lho Mon country of Four Approaches on the borders of India and Tibet as the ancient name and emphasized it as being Bhutan.\textsuperscript{165} Since the eighteenth century, 'Brug yul successfully replaced the name Mon yul.

\textsuperscript{161} Since 1971, the official language of Bhutan is Dzongkha (Rdzong kha). On the other hand, we observe that after the thirteenth century, old Mon is also referred to Mid or Western Himalayan regions.

\textsuperscript{162} See Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]), Padma dkar po (1992 [1581]: 424, 439), Rgyal rigs etc. Even the earliest edict of Zhabs drung, with his famous emblem of nga bcu drug ma declaration, stated the term Lho Mon kha bzhi as referring to Bhutan (Dpal ldan rgya mtsho 1974 [1674]: 493; Drag shos Sangs rgyas 2008 [1999]: 188).

\textsuperscript{163} See Dargye and Sørensen (2001) and Karma (2013: 8-11) on the biography of Pha jo.

\textsuperscript{164} See Aris (1979: xxiv-xxv) in the session “names for Bhutan”, Ardussi (2004b: 11) also highlighted the term, but does not analyse why the term the "Southern Land of Medicine Plants” is used instead of Lho Mon. Karma (2013: 6-8, n.6, 8) notes that Lho Mon Ljongs and the land of Himalayan Cypress Tree (Tsan dan bkd pa’i ljong) can be traced back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries according to the biographies of Pha jo 'Brug sgom zhib po and Rdo rje gling pa. See also Dargye and Sørensen (2001: 25). It seems these authors are concerned with the negative implication of the term, rather than referring it to the Eastern Himalayas. Mon, probably an aboriginal people of the Tibetan plateau, as suggested by Franke (1907), Vitali (1996) and Bellazza (2002, 2008, 2010) is not given due consideration. See also Aris (1979) and Ardussi (2008) on the Rgya clan and their relation with pre-seventeenth century Bhutan, particularly the activities of various Tibetan Buddhist schools in the region, in which the term Mon is constantly used for the region.

\textsuperscript{165} In Tib., rgya bod kyi mtshams na lho mon kha bzhir grags pa. See Aris (1995: 17) and Karma (2013: 4-5, 255).
Since the late-seventeenth century, the usage of the term Mon is thus pushed towards the eastern side of Bhutan, i.e. Eastern Bhutan and present-day Mon region, which were then called Shar Mon together. Shar Mon subsequently dissolved into Mon of Bhutan and Tibet. Only Shar Mon of Tibet was called Mon or Monyul, which is the current Mon region, while Shar Mon of Bhutan gradually merged into 'Brug yul,\(^{166}\) i.e. Bhutan. Since then, the term Mon was not used in reference to any region of Bhutan, though they tend to use Mon in reference to an ethnic group living deep in the forest.\(^{167}\)

Fig. 06. Google Earth depicting the present Eastern Himalayas

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\(^{166}\) See Lo rgyus (1986: 1a-24b), which recorded how the western part of the Shar Mon region or present-day Eastern Bhutan was incorporated in the late-seventeenth century. Based on Lo rgyus, it is also discussed in Ardussi (1977: 303), Aris (1979) and Bodt (2012: 115-28).

\(^{167}\) See note 69.
Chapter Three

The Rise of Secular Rulers

This chapter deals with the rise of the secular rulers within the history of present Mon region. The rulers are prefixed with the title of jo bo, but some of the southern area’s chieftains are also called ‘babu’ (ba spu). Most of the secular rulers trace their origins to a single ancestor, i.e. prince Gtsang ma. Descendants from him were the rulers or lords (rje; jo bo) of Sde rang, Lha’i Khams pa, Rus po mkhar, Ber mkhar, Dpa’ bo gdung pa, Dom kha, Mur shing and Them sbang. The outline of these descendants is based primarily on the Rgyal rigs text, with further information from other related texts, in particular Du kū la’i ‘phro ’thud on the Ber mkhar jo bo. Prior to discussing the rise of the secular rulers, I briefly outline the mythographical mention of the region in question.

Mythography related to the Early Period

The history of present-day Mon region is based on a number of mythic events, which are specifically related to the Tibetan imperial period, but based on texts written centuries later. Legendary events dating back to the mid-seventh century is based on a text called the biography of ḍākinī ‘Gro ba bzang mo and involves king Ka la dbang po and his queen ḍākinī ‘Gro ma bzang mo’.168 Unfortunately, we do not know when the text was written. The text places the events during the reign of emperor Srong btsan sgam po.

168 In Tib., mkha’ ‘gro ma ‘gro ba bzang mo ’i rnam thar, translated in English by Josayma (1990). The same historical argument is discussed in Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 134), Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 43) and Bstan ’dzin nor bu (2002). However, as older the historical narratives, the more mythical it becomes. At present, hence, the legendary king has become a native cultural figure. Yet, the narratives of the ḍākinī ‘Gro ba bzang mo are widely accepted in the Tibetan cultural tradition to have occurred in Mon, i.e. the Mon region. It is also a popular opera performance in the Tibetan folk tradition, said to have founded after Thang stong rgyal po’s initiative in the fifteenth century. Due to the lack of a clear composition date, it is very difficult to define which components of the text are historical facts.
Local narratives consider the name of Tawang (Rta dbang/ wang) as a corrupted spelling of Rta nag mandal sgang, the kingdom of King Ka la dbang po. However, the place is more likely to be Mon Rtse rgyal, considering the fact that the latter kingdom was part of the territorial claim ascribed to Srong btsan sgam po. However, the dating of the kingdom is questionable: the text writes that it was “one thousand and five hundred years after the Buddha’s passing away.” This corresponds roughly to the tenth or eleventh century. The suggestion of the date, pointing towards the seventh century, is primarily based on the mentioning of Om maṇi padme hum, the six-syllable Buddhist mantra, which the dākinī is said to have uttered in her mother’s womb. The Brāhmaṇa (‘bram ze) father of the dākinī ’Gro ma bzang mo interpreted the uttering of the mantra as a good omen, which then gaining popularity across the Tibetan plateau in the seventh century.

Secondly, a local narrative, which is also highly mythographic, concerns the foundation of shrines in a number of temples along the southern border. Besides the two temples of Spa ’gro Skyer chu lha khang and Bum thang Byams pa lha khang (in Bhutan), the ‘Legs po demoness temple’ (Legs po srin mo lha khang) is also considered to have been founded during the imperial period. Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 137) states that it was one of the srin mo suppressing temples built in the region. The third legend concerns the visit of Padmasambhava in the region. Although the biographies of Padmasambhava are considered to be Buddhist apocryphic writings, certain information contained in these works are given due consideration as they relate to the region.

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171 See further in Francke (1915) and Studholme (2002) on the mantra.
172 The centre of this temple scheme is the Lhasa Jokhang, which was credited either to Srong btsan sgam po or Khri srong sde btsan. A number of other temples throughout the empire to suppress ‘the demoness lying on her back’ were built, which were depicted through a visual representation of conquering the Tibetan highlands. See a figure Sørensen and Hazod (2005: 171-216). Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 137) does not provide any sources for further examination of this Lha khang. His source is probably based on oral narratives. Legs po (in the TAR) is situated across the border from Pangchen valley (Zemithang Circle Area, Tawang) and was among the thirty-two tsho of the Mon region (see section 5.3 in chap. 5). The classification of Legs po srin mo lha khang is a highly political issue in the current Sino/Tibetan-Indian relation. However, the information is given due consideration here because a number of other temples in Bhutan, such as A nu lha khang and Nam mka’i lha khang in Tang, Dge snyen lha khang in Chume, and Lha khang dkar po and Lha khang nag po in Haa are also said to have been built during the imperial period. These temples are listed among the hundred and eight temples, besides the twelve temples projects. See also note 102-104.
Padma bka’ thang, a treasure text of O rgyan gling pa (1323-1367), might be the earliest and the oldest written record to mention the Mon region. This apocryphic text contains some historical data, such as Padmasambhava having “stayed for one year in Sha ’ug stag sgo, four months in Mkha’ ’gro’i phug pa, five days each in Mon Sgom brag and Dom Tshang rong, seven days in Stag tshang rong, and nine days in Gzhig tshang rong.” Based on this account and in order to re-establish the historical link, O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 75b-76a) has categorized these sites into a Buddhist maṇḍala of the “Five Gates of the [Sense]-sites” (sgo lnga’i gnas).

Fig. 07: The annual Tshes bcu prayer being conducted at Mon Sgom brag site (25.03.2010)

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174 The five sites are “the Northern Dom tshang is the Physical site, the Eastern Gzig tshang is the Speech site, the Western Stag tshang is the Heart site, the Southern Sgom pa phug is the Wisdom site, and the Sgrub phug chen mo is the Activities site” (in Tib., sku’i gnas byang dom tshang/ gzung gi gnas shar gzig tshang/ thugs kyi gnas nub stag tshang/ yon tan gyi gnas lho sgam pa phug/ ’phrin las kyi gnas dbus gu ru’i sgrub phug chen.) Mkhas mchog blo ldan (1998: 328) recorded these pilgrims sites in the different directions, such as the Dom tshang site in the eastern instead of northern, the Gzig tshang site in the southern instead of eastern, the Stag tshang site as in the western, but the Sgom pa phug site in the northern instead of southern (in Tib., shar na sku’i gnas dom tshang/ lho na gzung gi gnas gzig tshang/ nub na thugs kyi gnas stag tshang/ byang na yon tan gyi gnas sgom pa phug).
In addition to the sites recorded in *Padma bka’ thang*, a number of other pilgrimage sites are also regarded to have been blessed by Padmasambhava. They include the cave of Manda *la phu gdung*, the lakes Stag mo and Tha nga ’phel in Mthong legs, Khrom steng and a number of ‘soul lakes’ (*bla mtsho*), such as the soul lakes of Rdo rje ’phags mo, Lha mo and Rigs gsum mgon po at Bha ga byang sites,\(^\text{175}\) and so on. Although these places are still intact, these additional sites are not mentioned in *Padma bka’ thang*. Nevertheless, the above mentioned sites are located in the Mon region and are believed to be blessed or visited by Padmasambhava, either directly by him or through a manifestation.\(^\text{176}\)

All the above mentioned information are recorded in textual sources and are also orally narrated, mainly by non-literate natives of the region. From a historical perspective, these stories must be classified as mythology, but with nevertheless significant information on place names and also of historical elements of the concerned period. In post-imperial accounts and up to the late-fifteenth century, information about the region is mostly based on the *Rgyal rigs* text. The following sections provide an overview of the successive descendants of the first son of prince Gtsang ma, Lha’i dbang phyug, in the Tawang district of the Mon region. It also includes information about the migration of the descendants of Gtsang ma’s distant cousin Dzo ki, a sixth generation successor of the younger brother Mthong legs can, the second son of Gtsang ma, in the West Kameng district of the Mon region (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 42; II 1988). *Rgyal rigs* (1728) is the only text which describes this

\(^\text{175}\) The guidebook *Bha ga byang gnas chen*, written in c. 1810 by Rig ’dzin phrin las bde chen ’gyur med, says that the site is among the oldest one in the region. This text also records that the Bha ga byang site is known as the second Tsari (the famous mountain sanctuary in southern Tibet). The site is first believed to be blessed and revealed by Padmasambhava during his three-month stay at the mountain pass of Mon Ze la (in Tib., *lho phyogs mon gyi sa’i gnas chen khyad par can/ ts’a ri gnas pa bha ga byang zhes pa’i gnas sgo thog ma slob dpon chen po padma ’byung gnas kyi phyes/ mon gyi ze lar lza bag sum bzhugs zhes pa ltar zhab s kyis bcags shing hyin gyis brlhabs/ gnyis pa pha dam pa sangs rgyas kyi gsal bar mdzad/ gsum pa bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyal gyi yi ger spei zhi/ gzhan yang rje btsun mi la ras pa dang/ karma pa rang byung rdo rje/ rje blo bcangs grags pa sogs grub thob skyes chen du ma dngos dang rdu’i ’phral gyi sgo nas phebs nas hyin gyis brlhabs/ Quoted in *Rgyal sras sprul sku* (2009 [1991]: 336) from *Bha ga byang gnas yig* text. See Huber (1997, 1999) for Tsa ri pilgrimage. The importance of the legends are even today accepted (Tenpa and Tempa 2013: 7).

\(^\text{176}\) These pilgrim sites related to Padmasambhava are quoted in contemporary works, such as Bstan ’dzin nor bu (2002), *Rgyal sras sprul sku* (2009 [1991]) as well as Tenpa and Tempa (2013). They follow after the oral narratives as well as *Padma bka’ thang* in this regard, while Sarkar (1980) is dependent on the oral narratives.
successive generation from the late-ninth to the seventeenth centuries. Based on this
text, the history of the Mon region since the late-ninth century will be illustrated.

The Foundation of Peripheral ‘Ruler’ (jo bo) and its Succession

As we know from Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 26; II 1988: 98), Gtsang ma initially planned
to settle in Dpal mkhar nearby La ’og yul gsum, but he eventually decided not to do
so when he discovered the region’s closeness to central Tibet. He then settled instead
at Mi zim mkhar in Btsan mkhar, ’Brong mdo gsum. Only his eldest son, ‘the
Enthroned One’ (khri mi), Lha’i dbang phyug, later migrated and settled in La ’og
yul gsum. The reason for the eldest son to move to this area was the invitation “by
the officers and subjects from La ’og yul gsum as their chief.” Reasons why he
accepted the position of a chief in a region with close proximity to central Tibet is
not known. The area was said to be a good place to settle and he may have planned
to go back to central Tibet, once the political situation improved there. Yet, all the
versions of Rgyal rigs do not elaborate on this issue.

Thereafter only the names of the first six generations of Lha’i dbang phyug are
mentioned. After the sixth generation of his descendants, Rgyal rigs states that the
family became known as the Lha’i khams pa or Khams pa jo bo clan. In the tenth
generation from Lha’i dbang phyug, or two or three generations after Lha’i khams
pa, a number of prominent descendants emerged, known as Ber mkhar jo bo, Rus
po’i mkhar jo bo and Dpa’ bo gdung jo bo. The author of Rgyal rigs must have been
aware of the genuineness of these descendants and thus states:

Since a more extended version containing a full account of how the successive
jo bo have gained power over the officers and subjects, taken control of a royal
site, and enjoyed great strength and domination due to their far-ranging

177 See note 153.
178 In Tib., khri mi lha’i dbang phyug/ la ’og yul gsum nas blon ’bangs rnams kyis rje dpon spyan
drangs.../ (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 14a, 27).
179 Khams pa or Khams does not mean the province of Khams in eastern Tibet, but a ruling family’s
name in Lha’u tsho of present-day Tawang district.
endeavours has been clarified in the personal documented records of the jo bo descendants, [the details of these records] are not included here.\footnote{In Tib., de las yang rgyas pa ni jo bo na rim gyis blon 'bangs la dbang snguer zhiig rgyal sa bzung nas mdzad khyon rlab chen gis stobs mnga’ thang che bar byung ba’i gleng gям rgyas pa ni/ jo bo sras brgyud mkhyen dpyod che ba rnams kyi phyag gi deh ther yig cha la gsal bas ’dir ma bkod (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 42; II 1988: 112). The modified English translation is rendered from Aris (2009 [1986]: 43).}

Although these “personal documented records” are unknown or have yet to be verified, it leads us to assume that there were different texts of the jo bo clan of La 'og yul gsum or of the rest of the old Mon region. Du kā la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]) does not mention the founder head of the jo bo. If one considers, however, the dating of Rgyal rigs to 1668 as by Ardussi (2007, 2009), one can assume that sde srid Sans rgyas rgya mtsho must have relied on Rgyal rigs. Conversely, if we take the date as 1728, as did Aris (1979, 1986), then it is unlikely that sde srid was relying on Rgyal rigs to outline the lineages. It is more likely to be the latter, because if sde srid was in the possession of Rgyal rigs, he would not have attributed the lineages and the castle Mi zam mkhar to prince Khyi kha ra thod. Instead, he might have attributed it to Gtsang ma, as stated in Rgyal rigs, or he would have at least mentioned the conflicting sources.

Similarly, the author of Rgyal rigs does not mention the different lineages of the descendants. Even so, since Rgyal rigs is the only authoritative text of that time, the list of descendants is based on it. Therefore, while khri mi Lha’i dbang phyug was invited to La ’og yul gsum, his younger sibling, ‘the beloved son’ (gces bu) Mthong legs can, stayed at Mi zim mkhar.\footnote{Read further on the younger sibling, Mthong legs can and his descendants, in Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 29-43; II 1988: 98-110) and in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 66-82). As his descendants were primarily settled in Eastern Bhutan, they are not included here, except the late descendants who migrated to Thimphu, Murshing/ Domkho and Sherdukpen regions. They are discussed and analyzed in the subsequent sections. The inheritance of the castle by the younger sibling is contrary to the usual hereditary line of kingship, where the elder son is usually promoted to rule the kingdom. However, this is not unusual in the Himalayan societies. Aris observes that “the principle of primogeniture does not provide the norm for all periods and areas in the Bodic-speaking world.” (Aris 2009 [1986]: 79 n.29 from Allen 1976: 267). It is interesting to observe that up to the present period, in the Eastern Himalayas, particularly in the region of the research area, the elder sibling usually moves out from their parents’ home and leaves the younger sibling/s to look after their parents and their ancestors’ home.} Lha’i dbang phyug was invited to La ’og yul gsum, his younger sibling, ‘the beloved son’ (gces bu) Mthong legs can, stayed at Mi zim mkhar. Subsequently, for the eldest son, Lha’i dbang phyug, Rgyal rigs records that his descendant was Lha dgon, who was the only son of Lha’i dbang phyug. After him, Bkra shis bsod nams,\footnote{He is not mentioned in Rgyal rigs II (1988: 110).} [Bkra shis cha], Tshe...
dbang rnam rgyal, Dpal 'byor bzang po and Nam mkha’ bsod nams are mentioned as the successive generations of Lha dgon. Besides their names, no information is given about them. These descendants lived during the period between the ninth and eleventh century. The sixth generation of Lha’i dbang phyug, Nam mkha’ bsod nams, is recorded with having seven sons, although only Gong dkar rje and the unnamed ‘jo bo of Shar Sde rang’ (Shar Sde rang jo bo) are recorded as his sons (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 30b).

With regard to Gong dkar rje, it states that he had “gone to Lha’i Khams pa, where he took control of a royal site. It is from that place where the widely renowned name of Khams pa jo bo arose.” (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 29a). It is also stated that since his descendants resided in the realm of gods, they were called Lha’i Khams pa. Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud also mentions that Gong dkar rje migrated to La ’og yul gsum, but does not state from where he came (it must be within the region, not far from Eastern Bhutan). Although he was considered as one of the seven sons of an unnamed father, Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud does not mention the ancestor of Gong dkar rje as tracing to Lha’i dbang phyug (as in Rgyal rigs). All the versions of Rgyal rigs and Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud record the two sons of Gong dkar rje as ’Dzo ki and Btsun chung. Btsun chung was the younger son, who inherited the ruling reign of Lha’i Khams pa, but in Rgyal rigs II (1988: 112), it states that ’Dzo ki was the jo bo of Shar Sde rang. This would be the unnamed jo bo in Rgyal rigs I. In the following sections, Gong dkar rje’s descendants and their foundation of various castles are outlined, starting with the Lha’i Khams pa jo bo.

The Jo bo of Lha’i Khams pa in Lha’u tsho

The younger son of Gong dkar rje, Jo bo Btsun chung, inherited the castle at Lha’i Khams pa. This is recorded in all the sources. The inheritance of the castle is similar to Mthong legs can, who inherited the castle Mi zhim pa’i mkhar, while the

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183 Rgyal rigs I (1986: 14a). However, it is written Lha’u Khams pa after the village’s name Lha’u in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 149) instead of Lha’i khams pa.
eldest brother of Mthong legs can, Lha’i dbang phyug, had to migrate to La ’og yul gsum. The immediate son of Jo bo Btsun chung was Rgyal mtshan grags pa, who married Stung sde min Bla ma skyid from Bu rig yang phu or Bu ri rgyang bu.\(^{185}\) Rgyal po dar, Lhun grub, and Ku nu are recorded as their sons. Keeping with local customs, the elder sons are said to have moved out from the castle of Lha’i Khams pa, whereas the youngest sibling, Ku nu, inherited and “took control of the royal site of his father and acted as the lord-chief of Lha’u.”\(^{186}\)

After Ku nu, no further descendants are mentioned. We can thus assume that the descendants died out or did not see a copy of *Rgyal rigs* to update their own progenies.\(^{187}\) Nevertheless, *Rgyal rigs* (II 1988; V 2012) records a lineage called Lha’u Gdung mkhar pa, which flourished in Slis yul (and also in Sde rang) and who is considered as an offspring. They were not known as Lha’i Khams pa, but as Gdung mkhar pa because Lha’u Gdung mkhar pa married one of the ‘sibling ladies’ (a ya spun) of Nam shu. The Nam shu lady decided to return back to her home after her husband passed away. On her way back home, she gave birth to Spo dwa’u rgyal mtshan at the home of her sister’s husband, A mi stag nu in Slis yul.

Thereafter, Lha’u Gdung mkhar pa was known as Gdung mkhar pa in the region. His son was ’O de, who was succeeded by his son ’O gcung. Several generations later, Don grub and Stag nu are recorded as being the Upper and Lower Gdung mkhar pa *jo bo*.\(^{188}\) However, in all the texts, the lineages of Gdung mkhar pa in Slis yul (or in Sde rang) are not considered as successive descendants of Lha’i Khams pa. This may be due to the fact that Lha’u Gdung mkhar pa was the only remaining descendant of Lha’i Khams pa and that he took the title of Lha’u Gdung mkhar pa after a marriage alliance to a Gdung mkhar pa clan from Dirang. Based on oral traditions, descendants of Gdung mkhar pa in Dirang claim that they migrated from

\(^{185}\) Stong sde bu mo is written in *Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud* (1989 [1703]: 150), while the second orthography Bu ri rgyang bu is written in *Rgyal rigs* II (1988: 115).


\(^{187}\) See note 521 in Appendix II, which states that the present of the Khams pa *jo bo* lineages in the late-seventeenth century, but this is not helpful to construct the family tree.

\(^{188}\) See for further in *Rgyal rigs* (II 1988: 113; V 2012: 30b).
Eastern Bhutan and that they were among the ruling clans of Dirang. This is however not supported in *Rgyal rigs*.

Presently, the castle of Lha’i Khams pa jo bo is situated in Lha’u tsho, which corresponds to present day Lhou Circle Area (in the Tawang district). However, no oral tradition can be connected with the present ruin site at the Lhou village. Most of the old narratives related to that site are based on what is recorded in *Rgyal rigs*. People hardly mention about the history of the area after the eighteenth century or anything related to it. It is most likely that the authority and dominance of the rdzong dpon posted at Rgyang mkhar rdzong since the eighteenth century had greatly diminished the influence of the Khams pa jo bo. The decline of the Khams pa jo bo could have possibly led to their association with the ’Brug pa Bka’ brgyud sect and Brag dkar monastery.\(^{189}\) They were also constantly opposing one of the descendant of the Lower Ber mkhar house as the candidate of a reincarnated Lama, who was the Sixth Dalai Lama.\(^{190}\)

Presently, no one in the Lhou village or its vicinity claim to be descendants of Lha’i Khams pa jo bo. The same fate happened to the other grandson of Btsun chung, namely Rus po mkhar, whose lineage died out after some generations. However, the middle grandson, Lhun grub and his descendants were the most successful among the royal descendants in the Mon region, after founding their own castle. In the following sections, after a short discussion on the first grandson of Btsun chung, Rgyal po dar as the jo bo of Rus po mkhar, I will look at the descendants of the jo bo of Ber mkhar.

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\(^{189}\) See note 386, Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 9) as well as Aris (2009 [1986]: 117). See also Ardussi (1977: 108-9, 116-137) and Aris (1979: 172-81) on the development of ‘middle’ (bar) ’Brug pa Bka’ rgyud pa in Tibet and particular in old Mon (= Bhutan, etc.).

\(^{190}\) See *Du kū la’i phro ‘thud* (1989 [1703]) and Tenpa (2015) as well as section 5.
Fig. 08. Genealogy of the Lord of Lha’i Khams pa (Lha’i Khams pa jo bo) of Lha’u tsho, after Du kū la’i phro ‘thud (1703: 149f.), Rgyal rigs (I: 28b–31a; II: 115f.), Aris (1979: 99; 1988: 116).
The fate of the jo bo of Rus po mkhar in Bse ru tsho, Rgyal po dar, is the same as that of the jo bo of Lha’i Khams pa. In the case of the latter, at least three generations are recorded in Rgyal rigs, whereas for the former only the founder is listed, i.e. the first jo bo Rgyal po dar. After jo bo Rgyal po dar, no further descendants are mentioned in Rgyal rigs, but according to Me rag mdzad rnam and the autobiography of Padma gling pa, it seems that his lineage lasted for several generations. Those sources however record only one single generation of jo bo without mentioning further references. While Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]: 114a-b) recorded the name of the jo bo of Rus po mkhar as Don grub, Me rag mdzad rnam does not mention any name and only states a “jo bo of Rus po mkhar”.

The unnamed jo bo of Rus po mkhar in Me rag mdzad rnam (2b-3b) is recorded as a contemporary of Thang stong rgyal po (1385-1464), as the latter was begging for alms to the unnamed jo bo of Rus po mkhar. The text further states that the jo bo was most prosperous in the region, but no further information is revealed beyond that. The focus of the text is on the meeting between Thang stong rgyal po and Jo bo Dar rgyas of Ber mkhar in Shar tsho. The following description shows the meeting between the jo bo of Rus po mkhar and Thang stong rgyal po in Me rag mdzad rnam (2b-3b). However, it has to be noted that this meeting is not supported in any other texts:

Thang stong rgyal po arrived at Shar Mon contemplating of who could be a patron to his doctrine. At the time, the jo bo of Rus pa mkhar was the most wealthy, etc. and the jo bo and his subjects (leaders and servants) were gathered

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191 Thang stong rgyal po’s date is recorded differently in many sources. Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 94-5) considers the date mentioned in ‘Gyur med bde chen of Thang stong rgyal po, i.e. he lived for 125 years (from 1361 to 1485; in Tib., dgung grang drug cu skor gnyis dang/ lo rkyang lnga). However, Stearns’ (2007) study on the biographies of Thang stong rgyal po does not agree with the number and his writing includes all the available biographies on Thang stong rgyal po. He states that there were at least three biographers, who were direct-disciples of Thang stong rgyal po. Among them, Stearns considers Dkon mchog dpal bzang to be the first biographer, whose work was later enlarged by Bde ba bzang po, a disciple of Thang stong rgyal po. Stearns suggests that the text is likely to be “written after 1485, but before 1517.” The next biographer was Shes rab dpal ldan, whose text is extended and rewritten by his son, Kun dga’ bsod nams grags pa dpal bzang. Lastly, it was ’Gyur med bde chen (1540-1615), who compiled all the biographies and published a coherent story in 1609. For details, see Stearns (2007: 2-11) and Gerner (2007).

192 See Me rag mdzad rnam (2b-3b) and Tenpa (2013: 6-7; 2015) as well as section 4.
together to eat and drink. *Grub thob* [Thang stong rgyal po], in order to check for any auspicious sign [to find a patron], went to the gathering and said, “I, the Yogi, need some *chang*” and he held out a skull [-cup].” They replied [however] “you are a beggar whom we do not know from where you are from. A yogi carrying a human skull, don’t come here, go away!” Thang stong rgyal po was thus driven out. As the sign was not a good one, [he] then went to Ber mkhar.\(^{193}\)

Similarly, Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]: 114a-b) identifies a *jo bo* as Jo bo Don grub of Rus po mkhar and his daughter as Rdo rje ’dzoms pa,\(^{194}\) but no further descendants are mentioned. The note of Padma gling pa focuses primarily on the marriage of Padma gling pa’s youngest brother O rgyan bzang po to Rdo rje ’dzoms pa in 1489.\(^ {195}\) The information on Jo bo don grub is important, but it is not recorded in any other writing. Likewise, the successive descendants of the *jo bo* of Rus po mkhar are also not listed.

Based upon oral narratives,\(^ {196}\) a certain family and a local castle in Bse ru village is traced to a certain chieftain.\(^ {197}\) Although the family claims to be able to trace their lineage back to the *jo bo* of Rus po mkhar, the list of descendants are the same as that of *Rgyal rigs*. Moreover, for at least three hundred years after the record of *Rgyal rigs* on the *jo bo* of Rus po mkhar, there are no written sources on them. The incumbent descendants however cannot be ruled out, because they were called the

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\(^{193}\) In Tib., ‘di phyogs su yang dge lungs kyi bstan pa dar tshul/ dgong ba’i sbyin bdag sus byas yong snyam thugs dam brta’gs pa mdzad gin ’byon pas/ de dus jo bo ras pa mkhar pa gra rgyas che dus kho pa rje ’hangs dpon q.yog ’khor bcas lto za chang ’thung byed pa’i gral du grub thob kyi ’byon nas rten ’brel gyi chos nyid rta’gs phyir du’ rnal ’byor pa bdag la chang gcig dgos zhes ka pa li bzad pas kho pa rnam kyi sprang po rnal ’byor pa ga nas yin mi shes pa’i mi thod ’khyer ba de tshur ma yong phar song zer nas phyir ’bud byas [de ra]rten ’brel ma ’grig parl de nas ber mkhar du ’byon pas. See the amended the text Me rag mdzad rnam 2b-3b in Appendix I.

\(^{194}\) Instead of recording Rdo rje ’dzoms pa being once engaged to Hrog mkhar pa, the chief of Bya sde pa (Bya pa khris dpon) Bkra shis dar rgyas (rnam rgyal) in Bya rdzong or Sbyor ra rdzong, Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 133) mentions that she was the daughter of Hrog mkhar pa. However, she was a bride to Hrog mkhar pa in the records of Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]), O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 66a-b) and Rna ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]: 95b). See also Aris (1979, 1986; 1988: 112, n.6).

\(^{195}\) O rgyan bzang po was the “ninth youngest brother” of gter chen Padma gling pa from same parents (in Tib., gter chen padma gling pa dang yab yum gcig pa’i sku mched dgu’i tha chang dpon po o rgyan bzang po; O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 65a-b). This information is based on Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]: 113a-114b), Raa ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]: 93a, 94b), Dga’ ldan chos ’byung (1989 [1698]) and Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]).

\(^{196}\) The booklet is published in 2009 by the family of Karma Wangchuk, the former ‘Member of Legislative Assembly’ (MLA) of the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly.

\(^{197}\) Bse ru tsho presently corresponds to the Seru valley in the Tawang Circle Area, Tawang district.
‘rulers’ (dpon po) prior to the complete annexation of the Mon region in 1951 by India. It remains unclear why Rgyal rigs recorded only one or some generations after the founder of the Lha’i Khams pa and Rus po mkhar. Even Jo bo Don grub of Rus po mkhar, who is recorded in Padma gling pa, is not recorded, whereas the jo bos of Ber mkhar and Shar Dirang (as will be further discussed below) are recorded until the early-eighteenth century. The descendants of Ber mkhar jo bo trace their origin to Jo bo Lhun grub in Shar tsho, who was a sibling of Rgyal po dar and Ku nu. His successive descendants are discussed further in the following section.

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**Fig. 09.** Genealogy of the Lord of Rus po mkhar (Rus po mkhar jo bo) of Bse ru, after Rgyal rigs (I: 28b–31a; II: 115f.), Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]: 114b), Aris (1979: 99; 1988: 116).

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The Jo bo of Ber mkhar in Shar tsho

With regard to the Ber mkhar jo bo in Shar tsho, his line is traced to Jo bo Lhun grub, the middle son of Rgyal mtshan grags pa and founder of the royal lineage of Ber mkhar. The jo bo of Shar tsho and his descendants were most successful among the jo bos in the Mon region. Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 150) records therefore only Lhun grub among the three sons of Rgyal mtshan grags pa, considering him thus the most important figure of the descendants. The text does not state anything about the other two siblings, who were the chiefs of Rus po mkhar and Lha’i Khams pa. The immediate descendant of Jo bo Lhun grub was Jo bo Sangs cung and he is recorded in all the different versions of the Rgyal rigs text as having four sons: Sangs rdo rje, La kra, Dge shes, and Khra’u (skyā’u). While Sangs rdo rje continued the lineage of Ber mkhar, nothing is mentioned about La kra and Dge shes.

The last son Jo bo Khra’u is identified as Skya’u la rgya mtsho, who is recorded as the jo bo of Sgam ri lung pa in Ra ti (nyi). He was succeeded by his son, Bla ma. After that, only eight subsequent generations are mentioned in Rgyal rigs. However, Rgyal rigs also states that his descendants were Kham pa jo bo, whose “descendants of the paternal siblings spread in different directions. Those said to be of the Khams pa jo bo families are now in Ra ti sgam ri, who are all descendants of Skya’u la rgya mtsho” (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 31b; II 1988: 119). This is in contradiction to Skya’u la rgya mtsho being Khams pa jo bo or vice versa to jo bo of Ra ti sgam ri, who can be traced in Rgyal rigs to Ber mkhar jo bo. As discussed above, the lineage of Khams pa jo bo was founded by Gong dkar rje, which was continued by his great-grandson Ku nu, the brother of Lhun grub. Thereafter, the descendants

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199 An earlier version of this jo bo descendants is published in Tenpa (2015: 483-507). The present section is based on the article, where additional sources and inputs have been added.

200 Shar tsho corresponds to current Kitpi Circle Area, which used to be one of the major old administrative centres of the Mon region. It consists of one ‘mayor’ (gtso rgyan) position and was one of the three prime tshos of La ’og yul gsum (Tawang), out of thirty-two tshos. The other two tshos were Lha’u tsho and Bse ru tsho. See the fifth chapter for the list of tshos, which is based on Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 37-8) as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 48-9).

201 See Tenpa (2015) on the family tree of Ber mkhar jo bo, which is reproduced here as Fig. 10.

202 Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 59) simply mentions that the region is in Eastern Bhutan, which it is likely to be present gewogs of Merag and Sakteng in the Trashigang district.
might have died out because nothing is mentioned about them in Rgyal rigs.\textsuperscript{203} Similarly, Du kū la ’i ’phro ’thud is silent on any of the other lineages, except those relating to Ber mkhar jo bo. The primary concern of these texts therefore seem to be the maternal ancestors of the Sixth Dalai Lama.\textsuperscript{204}

Jo bo Sangs [rgyas] rdo rje and his descendants were therefore central to the record of lineages in Rgyal rigs as well as in Du kū la ’i ’phro ’thud. Jo bo Dar rgyas was the immediate descendant of Jo bo Sangs rdo rje. When he, Jo bo Dar rgyas, was married to Queen Au sen of Kra’u Ram gengs ra region, Thang stong rgyal po witnessed and blessed the ceremony.\textsuperscript{205} Rgyal rigs I (1986: 30a) and Me rag mdzad rnam (2b) state that Thang stong rgyal po reached Ber mkhar house during the “welcoming and drinking ceremony of the bride of Jo bo Dar rgyas.”\textsuperscript{206} The meeting of a jo bo in La ’og yul gsum is however neither stated in Du kū la ’i ’phro ’thud, Dga’ ba’i dpal ster nor in the biographies of Thang stong rgyal po. The description recorded in Rgyal rigs and Me rag mdzad rnam regarding the visit of Thang stong rgyal po and his prophesy to Jo bo Dar rgyas that he will have seven sons after drinking seven cups of chang is similar.\textsuperscript{207} Among the seven sons born to Jo bo Dar rgyas, the eldest one, Bkra shis dar rgyas, is recorded of having inherited the Ber mkhar house, while the rest of the siblings are portrayed as founders of other ‘castle’ (mkhar) or lineages in different valleys.\textsuperscript{208}

Bkra shis dar rgyas was succeeded by his only son Bkra shis bzang po, whose son was Sa ’dzin. Sa ’dzin was succeeded by Sangs rgyas grags pa, Chos mdzad and Dar rgyas. Taking clues from the unnamed middle son, Chos mdzad is more of a
title than a name, and he might have been a monk. Apart from the title, nothing is mentioned about him in Rgyal rigs. It is interesting why nothing is written about him because the conflicts between his two siblings, Sangs rgyas grags pa and Dar rgyas, led to the division of Ber mkhar into the Upper and Lower houses. This division took place during the seventh generation after the founding of Ber mkhar house by Lhun grub, most likely in the mid-seventeenth century. Sangs rgyas grags pa and his son Jo bo Kar ma thus belong to the ‘Lower Ber mkhar’ (Ber mkhar ’og ma) and Dar rgyas and his sons, Kar ma rdo rje and Jo bo sde pa, retained the ‘Upper Ber mkhar’ (Ber mkhar gong ma).

It remains unclear whether the upper and lower houses indicate the location of the houses or whether it reflects a ranking. Rgyal rigs states that the eldest son, Sangs rgyas grags pa, held the Lower Ber mkhar and the Upper Ber mkhar house was held by his youngest brother, Dar rgyas. Sangs rgyas grags pa’s successor Jo bo Kar ma continued the Lower Ber mkhar and was succeeded by Phun tshogs and ’Dzom pa dbang. The eldest son, Phun tshogs, retained the Lower Ber mkhar, which was continued by his descendants, while the younger ’Dzom pa dbang moved to A’u gdung and became the jo bo of the region. With regard to the Upper Ber mkhar, Dar rgyas was succeeded by his sons, Kar ma rdo rje and Jo bo sde pa. Jo bo Kar ma rdo rje was the maternal grandfather of the Sixth Dalai Lama and was married to A ’bu dhi from Mu ran shing [Mur shing] village. As the period enters the late-seventeenth century, it is important to discuss the period of the Sixth Dalai Lama’s maternal family, which is further explained in section 5.5. In the following
section, the noble families, offshoots from the Ber mkhar jo bo, are described with a primary focus on the descendants of Dpa’ bo gdung pa. Descendants of other families are not listed.

Lha sras Gtsang ma / Khyi kha ra thod (after Du kā la ’i ’phro ’thud)

Khri mi Lha’i dbang phyug (after six generations)
Gong dkar rje (founded Khams pa jo bo of Lha’u tsho)

’Dzo ki (Shar Sde rang jo bo) Btsun chung (five unnamed children)

Rgyal mtsan grags pa

Ku nu Lhun grub Rgyal po dar
(Lha’u tsho Khams pa jo bo) (Shar tsho Ber mkhar jo bo) (Bse ru tsho Rus po mkhar jo bo)

Sangs cung

La kra Sangs [rgyas] rdo rje (15th c.) dge bshes Khra’u

Jo bo Dar rgyas

Bsod bzang Sum pa Rgyal po dar Bkra shis dar rgyas Sangs rdo rje Dgos cung Tha cung
(Bstan pa’i sgron me)

Bkra shis bzang po

Sa ’dzin

Sangs rgyas grags pa (Lower Ber mkhar) Chos mchad Dar rgyas (Upper Ber mkhar)

Jo bo Kar ma ’Jam dbyangs rdo rje

Phun tshogs ’Dzom pa dbang (Jo bo Na ’dzon) Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho Bsod nams ’dzom pa Bsam gtan
(Bchos mchad Rdor grags) The VI Dalai Lama (1683–1706)

BSod nams don grub
(Bstsan ’dzin)

Chos mchad

Bskal bzang don grub Lha dbang rgyal po
(Don grub rin chen)

Chos mchad

Bskal bzang bde legs Tshe dbang don grub (rgyal po)

Bskal bzang (bsod nams) ’gyur med

Bskal bzang don grub

BSod nams don grub

Bskal bzang (in Lhasa) Ye shes chos ’phel Dbang po Dge sldng Tshogs gnyis
(Phun tshogs Pho sangs (b. 1950s)
(79 years old) (Tawang monastery)

Fig. 10. Genealogy of the Lord of Ber mkhar (Ber mkhar jo bo) of Shar tsho, after Rgyal rigs (I: 28b–31a; II: 115f.), Du kā la ’i ’phro ’thud (1703: 149f.), Aris (979: 99; 1988: 116).
The Dpa’ bo gdung pa in Shar tsho

To the other sons of Jo bo Dar rgyas, a number of offshoot lineages originated from the jo bo of Ber mkhar. These were Dpa’ bo gdung (/Dpa’u gdung), Byams mkhar, Shar nub and Sgreng mkhar, whose lineages are attributed to Bsod bzang, Rgyal po dar, Sangs rdo rje, and Dgos gcung as the second, fourth, fifth, and sixth children of Jo bo Dar rgyas.

The seventh son’s name is not mentioned in Rgyal rigs I, whereas the name of Tha chung is recorded in Rgyal rigs II (1988: 116) and Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 59). Among those siblings, the ‘third [son]’ (gsum pa/bha) became a monk and was well known as rgyal sras Bstan pa’i sgron me or Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me. Surprisingly, Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 150) completely ignored the rest of the six sons of Jo bo Dar rgyas, even the famous one among them, Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, the third son.

Among the newly founded lineages, none of them are further elaborated in Rgyal rigs or in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud. With the help of other sources, such as Dga’ ba’i dpal ster and some legal documents, a number of descendants of Dpa’ bo gdung pa are recorded, but they are not helpful to reconstruct the family-tree. Even so, a descendant family with the name of Dga’ bo gdung pa still exists in the region. Moreover, among the descendants of Dpa’ bo gdung pa, three became famous over the period as Lamas. Their titles were Merag Lamas or Dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje. Among them, Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer was probably the son of the first Dpa’ bo gdung pa Bsod bzang and the successive next two generations of Merag Lama or Dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje were his grandson and great grandson.

The third and fourth cousins, who held the title of Merag Lama, were Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan and Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho (d. 1682). The lineage of monks from Dpa’ bo gdung pa is based on the edicts of 1679, 1680, 1692, 216 See for further Rgyal rigs I (1986: 31a), Tenpa (2013: 12; 2015). The name of these castle are primarily mentioned in Me rag mdzad rnam (6a, 8a-9b).

217 See section 4.4 in the fourth chapter or Tenpa (2013).

218 See for further in Tenpa (2013: 12), Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 101-103), Bstan ’dzin nor bu (2002: 242-50) and Sarkar (2006 [1980]; 1981). Sarkar’s information is solely based on Dga’ ba’i dpal ster or from oral tradition of the Merag Lama. He has not written anything about the sources. See the annotated and amended translation of the primary texts Dga’ ba’i dpal ster and Me rag mdzad rnam in the appendices.
and Dga’ ba’i dpal ster. These sources record that they were Dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje and due to uncertainty about the family origin, a document even state that Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho traced his ‘family lineage’ (skya rtsa) back to Dpa’ bo gdung pa family.219

Fig. 11: The Shar tsho Valley in autumn

The present Dpa’ bo gdung pa Bkra shis mkha’ ’gro (d. 2015) - the former MLA of Arunachal Pradesh from the Kitpi village (Kitpi Circle Area), Tawang - is the most recent descendant. During my interview with him in 2011, we were unfortunately not able to draw a family tree for the last three hundred years.220 Moreover, in the last three generations of the Dpa’ bo gdung pa, they had not held the post of gtso rgan (mayor)221 of the Shar tsho valley, though the post was usually held or won by the ruling classes or landlord families of the valley.

219 In Tib., me rag blo gros rgya mtsho ’i skya rtsa dpa’ bo gdung pal. See Merag Lamas and the discussion on the title in the next chapter. Refer to the edicts of 1679 and 1692 in the Appendices and the 1680 edict in section 6.2 of the sixth chapter. See also Tenpa (2013: 12).
220 Interview conducted on 03 October 2011 with Bkra shis mkha’ ’gro (d. 2015).
221 Gtso rgan, the head of the council of the elders or simply a mayor is still used in the Mon region and is written in Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 34; II 1988: 104), Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 74), etc. Aris (2009 [1986]: 35) translated the term as headman or mayor of a village or a county (tsho). In the present situation, it is refered to as the headman of the county. Nowadays, it is often replaced by ‘Goambura’ (gāṃva būḍā) in the region.
The sections above focused on the secular rulers in the Tawang district. In the following, I will outline the secular rulers in the West Kameng district, focusing mainly on the ruling clans known as jo bo of Shar Sde rang and the ‘babus’ (ba spu) of the Thembang (Them spang), Domkho (Dom kha) and Murshing (Mur shing).  

Fig. 12. Genealogy of the Lord Dpa’ bo (/Dpa’u) gdung pa of Shar tsho, after Rgyal rigs (I: 28b–31a; II: 115f), Aris (1979: 99; 1988: 116).

222 The chieftains and the region of Sherdukpen (Gsher stug spen) are excluded here, owing to a lack of sources and conflicting narratives, though they are said to be from the same family-root. See Elwin (1958: 243), Paul (1958: 22-4), Aris (2009 [1986]: 51, n.96; 123), Sharma (1988 [1961]), Bodt (2012: 332-33), Dollfus and Jacquesson (2013) and Urgen Jatso (ND) for a short description of Sherdukpen.
The Jo bo of Shar Sde rang

The ‘jo bo of Shar Sde rang’ (Shar Sde rang jo bo) was founded by ’Dzo ki or Btso ri. The latter name Btso ri is recorded as rgyal po Btso ri in Rgyal rigs II (1988: 112) and is further documented in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 60-62), while in Rgyal rigs I, he is simply mentioned as ’Dzo ki. The name of ’Dzo ki is no other than Btso ri, who was the sibling or the eldest son of jo bo Gong dkar rje. ’Dzo ki left Lha’i Khams pa and settled in Sde rang and started the jo bo of Sde rang. There is no mention of whether any other chieftains were ruling Sde rang prior to the foundation of a new castle. Moreover, the list of this lineage of jo bo is completely missing in Rgyal rigs I.\(^\text{223}\) This lineage continued up to thirty-two generations and falls between the periods of the eleventh to early-eighteenth centuries. Rgyal po Btso ri or ’Dzo ki was succeeded by Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan. The latter was succeeded by Rgyal mtshan grags la, Sbyi mig, Nam mkha’ dbang, Sa ’dzin dbang, Nor rgyal, Rgyal ’dzoms, Bstan pa dbang, Rab brtan dbang po, Rnam rgyal bstan ’dzin, Rdo rje dbang phyug, Khri dar rgyal, Grags pa rgyal po, Kun dga’ grags pa, Nyi ma ’od zer, Btsan mdung, Lo pa’i, Rin chen, Khri btsan, Bkra shis bzang po, Sprang gcung, Ser spa ti, and Rin chen.

Until Rin chen, who is recorded as having two sons, the rest of them are mentioned as father and son without giving any further details.\(^\text{224}\) The father of Rin chen, Ser spa ti, is briefly introduced as being married to A yang lo btsun or Skyid lde, the daughter of babu Don grub of Dom kha.\(^\text{225}\) The two sons of Rin chen, Lo pa’i and Ser lde, are further elaborated in Rgyal rigs II (1988: 113) and Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 62-3). The information may have likely been copied in Rgyal rigs without basing on written or oral sources. If the compiler had conducted research on babu Don grub, who was the grandfather of Sprang po dar and his immediate son, Jo ’bag dar ma, they were recorded in Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]) and Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]). See further about them in section 3.8.1.

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\(^{223}\) In his note to jo bo of Shar Sde rang, Aris (2009 [1986]: 42, n.75) mentiones that “this must surely have been a disappointment to Jo bo A bzang [contemporary to the author, Ngag dbang], King of Sde rang, who was among those who encouraged the composition of this work.” However, Aris (1979: 106) does not discuss on his observation on the record of Padma gling pa’s (2013 [1521]) meeting of an unnamed King of Sde rang. The particular Jo bo A bzang is recorded as the son of Ru ser, a twenty-seventh generation in Rgyal rigs II. Rgyal rigs I (1986: 42) author states that “[I] have not seen or heard the written records and oral traditions, they are not included here” (in Tib., zhib par ni yig cha dang gtam rgyun mthong thos med pa las ’dir ma bkod). However, this particular line is not written in the works of Rgyal rigs II, III and IV, and also not in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]). All the texts have continued the narration of jo bo of Shar Sde rang, descendent from rgyal po Btso ri or ’Dzo ki.


\(^{225}\) The information may have likely been copied in Rgyal rigs without basing on written or oral sources. If the compiler had conducted research on babu Don grub, who was the grandfather of Sprang po dar and his immediate son, Jo ’bag dar ma, they were recorded in Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]) and Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]). See further about them in section 3.8.1.
sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 63), with Shis gu (ru), Ru ser (yang rgyal) and Bsod nams as the immediate sons of Lo pa’i. However, no information is given on Shis Gu (ru), the eldest son of Lo pa’i, whereas A bzang, Srid dar, and Dar rgyas are recorded as sons of Ru ser (yang rgyal) and Rgyal mtshan and Nu bo as children of Bsod nams in the successive generation. Rgyal mtshan is further recorded as having twelve sons from his four wives. The sons were Snga tshang ba, Nor bu rgyal po, Padma rgyal po, Bstan gcung, Nor bzang, Sa ri, Bde ba, Nor bu, Glang dar, Dar ma dbang, Nag seng, and Lhun grub.

In *Rgyal Rigs* II (1988: 113), Rgyal mtshan is written as their clan name, whereas Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 63) states Rgyam btsan as the eldest son of Bsod nams, besides Rgyal mtshan and Sngo ri (nu bo). The twelve sons were acknowledged as the sons of Rgyam btsan, instead of Rgyal mtshan. Rgyal sras sprul sku further states that both ‘the younger’ (nu bo) siblings, Rgyal mtshan and Sngo ri, were without descendants. One can assume thus that they were contemporaries of the author of *Rgyal rigs*, because the term ‘now’ (da lta) is often used and much detail is provided about them, such as Rgyal mtshan or Rgyam btsan as their family name.

In the case of Ser lde or Ser mi khri, the sibling of Lo pa’i, *Rgyal rigs* states that Bsam grub, Rgyal po and Grags pa were the immediate sons of Ser lde. All three descendants were followed by immediate sons - Tshe thar rgyal po and Lha’i bu as sons of Bsam grub, Lama nor bu as the son of Mkha’ ‘gro and Rgyal po as son of Au rgyan, as well as Tshe ring, Bstan pa and Bsam bu as sons of Grags pa. This list of names mentioned in *Rgyal rigs* are not helpful for further analysis. However, the

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226 See note 223.
227 The tenth son, Nag seng, is similar to the one mentioned, Nag seng Lama, in *Lo rgyus* (1986: 107). *Rgyal rigs* does not elaborate on him, the spelling Nag seng is written in the same way. If he was the same Nag seng Lama, he could then be Merag Lama, who ran away to central Tibet and later on played a crucial role in the foundation of Tawang monastery. However, based on *Lo rgyus*, Aris (2009 [1986]: 108) considers that Nag seng Lama or Merag Lama are the same person, though it is firmly established that Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho belongs to the Dpa’ bo gdung pa family in Shar tshe valley, Tawang. See further in Dpa’ bo gdung pa section of this chapter and Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho of the fifth chapter. See also note 391.
family of Jo bo Ser lde in the third generation descendants were supposed to be contemporaries of the author of *Rgyal rigs*.

![Fig. 13: The house of Kho che lugs pa/ Bho kha kho che, Dirang (19.09.2011)](image)

Presently, local descendants call themselves Kho che lugs pa or Bho kha kho che and their castle as Kho che lugs pa’i mkhar, even though they were supposed to be an old ruler of Dirang region with the title of jo bo of Shar Sde rang. The Kho che lugs pa are likely the descendants of the jo bo of Shar Sde rang, because one of their forefathers called Bho kha kho che Ngag dbang tshe thar was among the signators of the 1853 treaty. 228 Besides Kho che lugs pa, the other clans (in the Dirang Circle Area) such as Gdung mkhar pa, Shar phyogs pa, Me rag pa, Ser Ti pa, 229 Ba brgya pa, and Byams sems pa are acknowledged among the ruling clans prior to the foundation of Sde rang rdzong. 230 According to oral traditions, their ancestors were a ruling clan prior to the foundation of the Sde rang rdzong dpon

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228 See Aitschison (1931 [1929]) and Tenpa (2016) on the 1853 Treaty.

229 Could this clan name derive from Ser lde, whose three sons might have used his name as their clan name for the successive generations?

230 See for further in Mizuno and Tenpa (2015).
administration since the 1680s, which is well remembered, but without any written sources.\(^{231}\)

\[^{231}\text{Interview conducted in 2012 with the descendants and local scholars. I also base on local oral narratives. The listed family names in } Rgyal rigs \text{ are of limited help when carrying out my fieldwork as I am not able to correlate with the oral narratives or with any descendents.}\]
Unlike all the previously mentioned jo bo, who can been traced as descendants of Lha’i dbang phyug, the following jo bo were commonly known as the babu of the regions of Thembang, Domkho and Murshing. They traced their ancestry to the younger son of Gtsang ma, gces bu Mthong legs can.\(^{232}\) As discussed above, Mthong legs can inherited the castle Mi zim pa at Btsan mkhar (near Trashigang, Eastern Bhutan) and reportedly stayed with his father, the prince Gtsang ma. Among the successive descendants of him, sbyar Gong dkar rgyal and Sprang po dar can be traced to him, with the latter being recorded as having moved to Shar Dom kha, presently known as Domkho. A number of descendants in Domkho and Murshing

\(^{232}\) See Rgyal rigs I (1986: 14b-28b) or Aris (2009 [1986]: 29-43) for the detailed list of the descendants of Mthongs legs can. Only those descendants who were recorded as having migrated to the Mon region are explained and included here.
villages as well as in the Thembang regions in the West Kameng district were originally linked to them.

Prior to discussing details about the multiple figures of Sprang po dar, I will outline his predecessors based on the *Rgyal rigs* text. In there, he is recorded as being a sibling of Bstan ’dus la and ’Ong ma. Their father was Ngam bzang la. Ngam bzang la’s father was Rgyal gdung dar, who was the son of Mthong legs dpal, the eldest successor to Gong dkar rgyal. Mthong legs dpal and Gong dkar rgyal were great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather of Sprang po dar, respectively. The latter, Gong dkar rgyal, was the son of gces bu Mthong legs can or the grandson of Gtsang ma. Gong dkar rgyal was called a ‘joined’ (sbyar) clan because he was born as a twin, with his brother called Dpal skies dar. Their eldest brother Khri brtan dpal, who continued to live in the castle Mi zim mkhar did not belong to the sbyar clan. His clan was called ‘rje’ (lord), whose descendants preserved the name in Eastern Bhutan (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 14b-15a). All the versions of *Rgyal rigs* say nothing about sbyar Dpal skies dar, whereas Gong dkar rgyal had been “invited as the lord chief of Kho long stod and went there” from Mi zim mkhar (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 15a).

His successful reign in the region was short-lived due to a conflict within the family, in particular with the senior consort, Dpal ’dren skyid. Due to the senior queen, Dpal ’dren skyid was proud and vied even with the king after the birth of

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233 Btsan ’dus la immediate sons were Btsan gong la and Lag sdum pa. His descendants were called “the Byar pa [clan] families, who are at Tsha se, Yu rung, Khang pa phyi mung and Zla gor” (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 38; II 1988: 107).

234 The descendants of ’Ong ma or Aong la were traced to U dza rong. His sons were Dpal [la] ’bum, Bzang dar and Lu btsan, who were later on settled in Gtor ma gzhong, Yong ka la, Lcags mkhar bzung, Ku ri smad, Rgya ras zur, Byog kang ngang la, Khom shar, Ne to la, Kheng rigs ram gsum and U dza rong as Byar pa families. Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 77) does not record anything on the descendants. Similarly, nothing is mentioned about Bzang dar and Lu btsan. However, Dpal [la] ’bum was traced to Gser ’bum, Gngos ’bum and Dar ’bum as his sons. The latter’s younger sons were without any descendants, but Gser ’bum was followed by his immediate sons, Thur skye and Rdo rje grags pa. Rdo rje grags pa was succeeded by one son, Las kyi dbang in *Rgyal rigs* II (1988: 107), but by two sons, Las kyi dbang and Padma dbang in *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 38). Las kyi dbang was followed by Bstan ’dzin bsod nams and Bstan ’dzin grags pa, and the descendants in U dza rong (Bhutan) are considered their successives descendants.


236 *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 29) states that both Gong dkar rgyal and Dpal bskyed dar were known by the clan-name of sbyar since they were born as twins attached to each other (in Tib., gong khar rgyal dang dpal bskyed dar gnyis sras mtshe ma gnyis mnyam por sbyar nas ’khrungs pas na ras kyi ming la sbyar zer cig guungs). *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 15a).
Mthong legs dpal and Btsun gong (/Btsan go) rgyal. The other three queens, Rdor 'dzoms pa, A thung skyid and G.yang dpal mo had to secretly name their sons and raise them with the help of gtso rgan Stong 'dus dar. The following lines show this:

The son whom Rdor 'dzom pa had given birth to was raised secretly inside a g.yas trough. The son of A thung skyid was raised hidden inside a stung panier. The son of G.yang dpal mo was raised concealed in a wang pit. [The king said], ‘it is necessary to give individual names and clan names to the three sons. Since the son of Rdor ’dzom pa was raised secretly (gsang) in a yas vessel, name him Gsang sde btsan and call his clan name yas sde. Since the son of Athung skyid was raised hidden (sbas) inside a stung vessel, name him Sbas sde btsan and call his clan name stung sde. Since the son of G.yang dpal mo was raised concealed (’gab) in a wang pit, name him ’Gab sde btsan and call his clan name wang ma.238

Gong dkar rgyal’s golden age at Kho long did not last long and Rgyal rigs records that he and his sons were soon expelled from the royal castle by officers and were subjected to heavy taxation.239 His expulsion led him to return to his father’s territory, Mi zim pa. After that, except of his eldest son Mthong legs dpal, the rest of the siblings were invited to become chiefs of Sa gling rgyan mtshams, Zang lung

237 In Tib., mo nga rgyal langs nas rgyal po la 'ang zlo (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 34; II 1988: 104). There is no record of the second son, btsun Gong rgyal from the senior most consort, Dpal ’dren skyid. He could be well have become a monk, given the fact that name is spelled as ‘ordained’ (btsun) Gong rgyal (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 34). This assumption is not supported in Rgyal rigs II (1988:104), where it is written as btsan Gong rgyal.

238 In Tib., rdor ’dzom pas btsas pa’i sras po de/ zo ba gyas kyi nang gsang nas gsos/ a thung skyid kyi sras po de gzeb ma stung gi nang du shas nas gsos/ g.yang dpal mo’i sras po de/ sa dong wang gi nang du ’bab nas gsos pas/…. mtshan ma’i ming dang rus kyi ming so sor btags dgos gsungs nas/ rdor ’dzom pa’i bu snod yas kyi nang du gsang nas gsos ba yin pas na/ ming gsang sde btsan du btags/ rus kyi ming la stung sde zer/ a thung skyid kyi bu snod stung gi nang du shas nas gsos pa yin pas na/ ming shas sde btsan du btags/ rus kyi ming la stung sde zer/ g.yang dpal mo’i bu sa dong wang ma’i ming du ‘gab nas gsos pa yin pas na/ ming ’bab sde btsan du btags/ rus kyi ming la wang ma zer cig/ (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 21a-22b; II 1988: 104-5). Aris’s (2009 [1986]: 37) translation is simplified here.

pa and upper Gang zur, with the clan names as *Yas sde* Gsang sde btsan, 240 *Stung sde* Sbas sde btsan, 241 and *Wang ma* 'Gab sde btsan, respectively. 242

Moreover, *Rgyal rigs* states that “Gong dkar rgyal, father and sons, all three went to a pasture at Ri gzhung and founded a settlement there. [This was in the mind of [his nephew] Gnam bsksos lde, who since old times acted as the castellan of Mi zim pa” (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 38; II 1988: 106). It is not possible to locate yet a pasture region with the name of Ri gzhung, but a fourth generation descendant of Gong dkar rgyal, or the great grandson of Mthong legs dpal, Sprang po dar, is recorded to have moved to Shar Dom kha (see next section). In *Rgyal rigs*, this Sprang po dar lineage is traced to the eldest son of Gong dkar rgyal, Mthong legs dpal, who was succeeded

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240 *Yas sde* Gsang sde btsan is recorded with a son, *Yas sde* Su na. He settled on both sides of river Sgam ri (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 38; II 1988: 107) and he further built a “royal castle at Bu na” (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 40; II 1988: 108). *Rgyal rigs* records that the *Yas sde* clans at Sa gling rgyan mtshams, Dga’ gling mkhar mi, ‘Phong mi, Ra ma geng ra, Khre phu and Stag tshang were descendants of *Yas sde* Su na. *Yas sde* Yang phan or Bsrung ma dar of ‘Phong mi is recorded as one of the greatest descendants of *Yas sde* Su na, but not as an immediate son of Su na himself. Bsod nams rgyal po, Sa’/pa na, ‘Tsheng rgyal po and Rgyal bu don grub were the immediate sons of *Yas sde* Yan phan/ Bsrung ma dar. Only the descendants of ‘Tsheng rgyal po have been recorded in *Rgyal rigs* and the rest three were identified as the royal *Yas sde* families of Glang khyim, [Zer khyim] and Breng khyim to Bsod nams rgyal po, Sa na and Rgyal bu don grub, respectively. Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 79) has not recorded any further on these descendants, whereas in *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 40) ‘Tsheng rgyal po is traced to the *Yas sde* clan of Khang pa mkhar and his immediate son was Som bzang. He was blessed with three sons: Som rgyal, Karma rgyas (Nyang ma rgyal) and Rdor tshe ring. Only Rdor tshe ring is further traced with Sgo nu and his son was Sog bu, who is not recorded in *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 40). The next is Dag pa and his sons were Lug dkar and Dkon dbang or Dkon mchog mang, who were the last recorded sons of the *Yas sde* clan in *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 40; II 1988: 108). The elder son, “Chos mdzad Lug dkar of the royal family of the *Yas sde* clan of Phong mi, who was skilled in the dexterous use of magical means” was likely to be a contemporary of Ngag dbang and was the one who requested him for the composition of *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 66).

241 Among the clan name of *Stung sde*, *Stong sde* or *Ltong sde*, the foremost name was *Stung sde* Sbas sde btsan, one of the son of Gong dkar rgyal. He moved to (B)Zang lung pa in ‘Dus stung mkhar and was succeeded by his sons Thon pa and Som dar. Bde stong mkhar, referring to ‘Dus stung mkhar, is recorded in the biography of Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]: 164b), where he mentions that he was received by *Stong sde* Rgyas pa dar. This particular *Stong sde* clan’s chief is not recorded in *Rgyal rigs*. Although *Rgyal rigs* has not recorded any descendants of both Thon pa and Som dar, it does mention the clans in Ngam gрог, Gyang sa chen po, Brags zer tog, Sa ri, Khyi nyil, Kham tshang, Bu ri, Gyang phu, Zangs lung pa, Kha ‘thor and Be mi in Dag pa rdzong as the descendants of *Stung sde* A smang or A sa lang (*Rgyal rigs* II 1988: 108-9), tracing back in particular of *Stung sde* Thon pa. See for further in the invitation of those sons in *Rgyal rigs* (I 1986: 27a-b; II 1988: 106). With regard to the region, Aris (1979: 106) regards this Zang lung pa in the present “Sanglung in the Survey of India map of 1920, just inside the present border of Bhutan, north-east of Trashigang Dzong (Bkra shis sgang rdzong).” Bodt (2012: 74) considers that it refers to the present Dudinghar and Lamula Circle Areas of the Tawang district, taking note of Dag pa rdzong recorded in *Rgyal rigs*. This descendant is excluded here because of conflicting references.

242 Among these siblings, the youngest *Wang ma* ‘Gab sde btsan and his descendants were regarded as the origin of the descendants of Thembang babu. The lineages were traced to his son *Wang ma* Dpal la dar, who is said to have settled in Thembang on his return journey from a pilgrimage to Lhasa and Samye (Bsam yas). See *Wang ma* ‘Gab sde btsan as the founder of Thembang babu in section 3.9 as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 14-29).
by Rgyal gdung dar. The latter’s son was Ngam bzang la, who is recorded with three
descendants, Sprang po dar, Bstan ’dus la, and 'Ong ma. In the next section, I will
analyse Sprang po dar as he is recorded in multiple sources with different historical
backgrounds.

In the next section, I will analyse Sprang po dar as he is recorded in multiple sources with different historical
backgrounds.

![Genealogy Diagram]

Fig. 15. Genealogy of the Lord of Mur shing and Dom kha,
(2006 [1564]: 548-9), Deb ther sngon po (1996 [1476]), Me rag mdzad rnams (ND)

**The multiple kings of Mon Sprang po dar**

As discussed above, all the Rgyal rigs versions agree that Sprang po dar moved to
Shar Dom kha. His descendants were recorded as the babu of Dom kha and Mur
shing in the following line:

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243 See note 233 and 234 for a brief description about the latter two siblings.

244 Aris’ (1979: 101-02; 1986: 39, n.67) groundwork on the king of Mon (Mon rgyal po) Sprang po
dar and his various historical figures have made my analysis of this king much easier. However, I
have introduced two more Sprang po dars in this section.
Sprang po dar, taking with him all his patrimony and his most precious possessions, went to Shar Dom kha, subjugated all the communities with great energy in the manner of a Mahāsiddha, and gained power over the Indian dvārs. His descendants, whose strength and domination became great, are the babu (ba spu) who are at Shar Dom kha and at Mur shing.\(^{245}\)

The above passage shows that the descendants of Sprang pa dar became well known under the title of babu. As there are several sources which record Sprang po dar of Domkha, a number of families today claim to be his descendants. Those families’ assertion are based on *Me rag mdzad rnam* (15a), where it records at least three of his descendants:

Although my Lama had given all [the territorial rights of] Skye ra spa ra [Kuriapara dvār] to Sprang po dar on a duty-charity, there were three descendants: the upper, lower [and middle] descendants of Sprang po dar. However, after internal friction among father and sons, whatever land revenue they had [received] was offered to Tawang monastery.\(^{246}\)

As the text shows, there were three descendants who can be traced to the lineage of Sprang po dar, but due to internal friction, their means of *posa*, i.e. land revenue, was taken away and offered to Tawang monastery, who then forwarded it to Lhasa. The internal friction could be the main reason behind the fact that most of the contemporary descendants are unknown, even though treaties with British India in 1844 and in 1853 show that their forefathers signed them.\(^{247}\) This could also be the result of not receiving any *posa* directly to them since the mid-nineteenth century.

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\(^{246}\) In Tib., *de nas skye [ske] ra spa ra thams cad chos shyin bdag gi bla mas sprang po dar la gnang ba yin kyang/ sprang po dar gyi mi bryjyd stod smad gsum yin/ rjes su kho rang pha spun nang khrug gi sa khrul gang yod rta dbang du phul (Me rag mdzad rnam* (14b-15a). See the amended text in Appendix I.

\(^{247}\) See Aitchitson (1931 [1929]). A detailed note on the treaties with an introduction of a Tibetan copy of the 1853 treaty is presented in Tenpa (2016). See Mackenzie (1884: 28), Reid (1942), Chakraverty (1977) and Mumtaza (1997) for a short note on *posa*. 96
The development of the descendants of Spang po dar into a number of lineages seem to have happened prior or during the early-seventeenth century. Rgyal riggs is not helpful when determining the identities of his descendants, as the text implies that he and his descendants were babu of Mur shing and Dom kha. However, all Rgyal riggs versions recorded at least six generations of ’Ong la, the sibling of Sprang po dar under the clan name of [s]byar pa. This leads us to assume that the author of Rgyal riggs, Ngag dbang, has either left out or did not know at least five to six descendants of Sprang po dar (from the seventeenth to early-eighteenth century). Aris (1979: 106) thus assumes that “Ngag dbang was absolutely mistaken in supposing that Sprang po dar was the founder of the lineage.” He also states that in the lineage of Sprang po dar, there “existed a long line of ancestors before him stretching back at least to the twelfth century and probably further still, of which Ngag dbang was quite ignorant.” In this case, Sprang po dar was most likely not traced to the descendants of prince Gtsang ma.

In addition to the studies on the different lineage of Sprang po dar by Aris (1979: 102), we should add two more Sprang po dar who are recorded in Me rag mdzad rnam, i.e. the ‘other’ ([g]zhan) Sprang po dar and [s]byar Sprang po dar. The two names cause further complications in the lineages of Sprang po dar. In Me rag mdzad rnam (9b.2), [s]byar Sprang po dar is introduced as one of the local chiefs of Mur shing and Dom kha who requested Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me to establish a monastery in the area. The text states “while he [Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me] was staying [at Stag lung, he] was visited by the babu of Mur shing, [s]byar Sprang po dar, along with all the other babu of upper and lower Dom kha. They requested him to found a monastery.” The quoted [s]byar Sprang po dar refers to Sprang po dar as recorded in Rgyal riggs. The “other” Sprang po dar is introduced as the “youngest child of parents with nine children, [who] ran away and arrived before the Lama [Bstan pa’i sgron me].” He was therefore called “the other” Sprang po dar because he was from another region.

249 See the quoted passage in Me rag mdzad rnam (9a-b).
250 In Tib., stag lung rtser bzhus dus/ mur shing ba sbya byar sprang po dar gyi gtsos/ dom kha stod smad pa sbya rnam/ kyi mjal du yong zhu ba gsol bar/ dgon pa deha dgos zhus mthun skyen gyi sbyin bdag byed zhus mkhas blangs/ nub che leng gdung du pha ma gnyis la bu ’phrug [spun] dgu yod pa
Me rag mdzam rnam thereafter records the activities of Bstan pa’i sgron me with only the “other” Sprang po dar, albeit both Sprang po dars had the rights and the inheritance of the dvār, as mentioned in Me rag mdzad rnam (14a). Both Sprang po dars are missing in Aris’ studies. The latter, the “other” Sprang po dar of Shar Dom kha is neither traced to the lineages of jo bo in Rgyal rigs nor to the king of Mon, which dates back at least to the twelfth century. Me rag mdzad rnam suggests him to be the source of the ruling clan babu of Mur shing and Dom kha, instead of [s]byar Sprang po dar in Rgyal rigs:

[After the subjugation], the three, the Lama, [the leader and] his assistants held a discussion where Mes mes Rgyab bsten was asked to give this Indian Skye ra spa ra [as his territorial rights] for the credit of subjugating the eastern ogre. The Lama however said that “You, Mes mes Rgyab bsten of Gsher stug span, arrived later and are therefore considered as the younger brother. It is therefore predicted that the Indian Li du gar territory is yours, whereas you, the ‘other’ (gzhan) Sprang po dar, who arrived earlier became the elder brother. It is thus foretold that the three-upper, lower [and middle] of Skye ra spa ra are yours.”

The paragraph above shows that the “other” Sprang po dar is identical in name, but identified as a namesake who lived during the same period. The records of the four Sprang po dars, belonging to different lineages in various works, assures us that at least one well-known king emerged in the region, even though the sources are not very clear about it.

Among the sources, Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 548) is however a most reliable source and confirms that Sprang po dar was an historical figure in the sixteenth century.252 The ancestor of Sprang po dar is further recorded in Mkhas pa’i

250 sprang po dar zer zhus/ (Me rag mdzad rnam 9b; 12a.). See Tenpa and Tempa (2013), Tenpa (2013) and Dondrup (1988a, 2002) on the monastery, the Stag lung rdzong dgon pa.
251 In Tib., bla ma [ngo] g.yog gsung gsung mol mdzad par mes mes rgyab bsten sher [shar] phyogs srin po brtal ba’i ngo chen du rgya skye [kye] ra spa ra dgos zhus par/ bla mas gsungs par/ khyed rjes su yong ba’i nu bo yin par gsher stug span rgya sa li du gar rams khyod [khyed] rang la lung bstan yod/ khyod sngon la yong ba’i jo jo yin pa stod smad gsun skye ra spa ra [gzhan sprang po dar la lung bstan yod] (Me rag mdzad rnam 14a). See the amended text in Appendix I.
252 Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 77) wrongly states that it might be around 1728, which is written in brackets.
\[dga'\text{ ston} \ \text{(2006 [1564])}, \text{ which is probably based on} \ Der \ \text{ther sngon po} \ \text{(1996 [1476])} \text{ or} \ Lho \ \text{rong chos 'byung} \ \text{(1994 [1460])}. \text{ At the same time, the record of} \ Me \ \text{rag mdzad rnam} \text{ cannot be ignored with regard to Sprang po dar as a historical figure and of course the} \ Rgyal \ \text{rigs} \text{ text, as discussed above. In addition, the autobiography of Padma gling pa} \ (2013 [1521]: 162b) \text{ mentions that he met Jo 'phag dar ma, the father of Sprang po dar. Although he did not mention Sprang po dar himself, there is mention of a son being born to Jo 'phag dar ma, who indeed might have been Sprang po dar. All the sources therefore record a single historical person in multiple figures, who was famous among the descendants of the kings of Mon. This might be the reason why the majority of the well-known religious leaders tried to associate with him being a close disciple or a patron.}

The author of \textit{Mkhas pa'i dga' ston} \ (2006 [1564]: 548), Dpa’ bo gtsug lag, states that Sprang po dar was the patron of the Eighth Karmapa Mi skyod rdo rje (1507-1554). At the same time, the consideration of Sprang po dar in \textit{Me rag mdzad rnam} as being the patron of Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me is questionable because it contradicts the sources, i.e. Padma gling pa and \textit{Mkhas pa'i dga’ ston}\textsuperscript{253} In particular, an important historical event held between a priest and a patron presented in \textit{Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston} cannot be ignored:

\begin{quote}
\text{The person known by the affectionate nickname of Sprang po dar was the son of Jo 'bag, who was the descendant of Gwa thung King of Mon. He arrived with four ministers and myriachs to see [Mi skyod rdo rje] and even offered to shave off his hair. He was given [the seal of] the Go’i shri las kha and made infinite offerings. The minister Sin ti ka also made a special gift.}\textsuperscript{254}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{253} The text does not provide the given name of him, but states that Sprang po dar (Flourishing Beggars) as his affectionate nickname. This term as a nickname is however not stated in other text; if it was so, then we do not know the given name of him. In the native area of Sprang po dar, Murshing and Domkho as well as in the whole Mon region, the oral narrative is followed according to the information given in \textit{Me rag mdzad rnam}. In a number of interviews conducted in 2011 and 2012, I observed that Sprang po dar and Blo bsang bstan pa’i sgron me are one of the primary historical names, which tend to be mentioned by local historians as well as by the eldest living people in a village. See section 4.3 on Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me or the amended and annotated translation of the text in Appendix I. See also Tenpa (2013).

\textsuperscript{254} In Tib., 'di las ches sngon tsam du mon rgyal po gwa thung gi bryad pa jo 'bag gi sras gces ming sprang po dar zer ba de blon po khti dpon bshi dang bcas pas njal du sleb ste kho rang gi skra yang phul/ go’i shri'i las kha gnang/ 'bul na mi thma’ yas par byas cing blon po sin ta kas kyang phar du mchod (\textit{Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston} 2006 [1564]: 548). Aris's (1979: 102) translation is simplified.
Although Dpa’ bo gtsug lag was a contemporary of Sprang po dar, he records only this information about him. Nevertheless, it is an important source for tracing the lineage of Sprang po dar to Jo ’bag and then to Don grub. Both Jo ’bag and his father Don grub, as the kings of Mon, were recorded as patrons of the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506):

There [in Kong po] Jo ’bag, King of Shar Mon, came with a large party of attendants to visit [Chos grags rgya mtsho]. Infinite offerings were made and he offered to shave off his hair and requested [Chos grags rgya mtsho] to establish the teachings [in Mon]. Don grub, the King of Mon, arrived to pay a visit. He was the descendant of Gwa thung, King of Mon, who in ancient times had been a patron to Lord Dus [gsum] mkhyen [pa] while he was meditating at Dom tshang in Mon. [He, Don grub] was the head of myriarchies, one among each [group of the] Mon, Tsang mi, Ka tsa ra, and Indians. He made limitless offerings. He gave a son [to Chos grags rgyas mtsho] and requested him to found a monastery in Mon. He declared that he would act as the patron of the great shrine of Dom tshang rong and an abbot (vajradhāra) was appointed there. The shrine then flourished.255

Similarly, Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]: 163a) states that he was a priest of the Mon kings, yet he does not elaborate further on these kings. In this regard, however, Deb ther sngon po (1984 [1476]: 478) by ’Gos gzhun nu dpal mentions the king Gwa thung and in particular his relation and patronage of the First Karmapa Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-1193):

Dus gsum mkhyen pa had many excellent visions at Mu dpon. After Sgam po pa had made a prophecy, he took with him five measures of salt and went to the

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255 In Tib., der shar mon gyi rgyal po jo ’bag dpon g.yog mang po mjal bar sleb/ ’bul ba mtha ’yas/ khong rang yang gtsug phud phul zhnig gtskan pa ’dzugs par zhus/ snyon rje dus mkyen mon dom tshang du sgrub pa mdzad dus kyi sbyin bdag mon gyi rgyal po gwa thung gi rgyud pa mon/ tsang mi/ ka tsa ra/ rgyar ger ste re la khri tsho re yod pa ’i bdag po mon ryal po don grub mdzal du sleb/ ’bul zhabs dpag med byas/ sras po gcig phul stem on du dgon gnas ’debs par zhus/ gnas chen dom tshang rong gi sbyin bdag hgyin par byas te rdor ’dar ’dzin bskos pas gnas dar rgyas su gyur (Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston 2006 [1564]: 548-9). Aris’s (1979: 102) translation is modified.
place of Ga thung, King of Mon. After he [i.e. the king] had become his patron, [Dus gsum mkhyen pa] went to Sha 'ug stag sgo and resided there.256

We are thus able to link here the historical figure of Sprang po dar to Jo 'bag, from Jo 'bag to Don grub and then finally to Gwa thung. However, all the authors do not state their sources.257 *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* might have relied on other writings about these kings’ lineages, however nothing is mentioned. Similarly, the information in *Deb ther sngon po* (1984 [1476]: 478) about the king of Mon Gwa thung is also recorded in *Lho rongchos 'byung* (1994 [1460]: 230), whereas the former does not mention the latter as the primary source and does not refer to it at all.

All the texts, i.e. *Lho rongchos 'byung* (1460), *Deb ther sngon po* (1476), *Mkhas pa'i dga' sgon* (1564), and Padma gling pa (1521) agree that these kings of Mon were patrons of the successive Karmapas until the incumbent Eighth Karmapa. This information suggests that the Kam tshang Bka’ brgyud pa had spread earlier in old Mon, instead of or at the same time of Lha nang pa Bka’ brgyud pa in the twelfth century, but was institutionalized only in the late-fifteenth century (Aris 1979: 168; Karma 2013: 139, 186). On the other hand, the cause of the decline of those kings of Mon is not known. Aris (1979: 97-114; 1980: 10) however suggests that the decline took place “before the external forces descended on the region in the seventeenth century, the local rulers seem to have been defeated when they invaded Tibet in the middle years of the fourteenth century. Five campaigns were organized by the Sa skya government of Tibet, between 1340 to 1354 against a people called the Dung.”


257 It is not typical to write in Tibetan texts that way, usually one observes that a majority of Tibetan historical writings and Buddhist religious texts identify their sources, but with an unclear references.
Although the military campaigns of the Sa skya pa did happen against the [G]dung, the overall downfall of the kings during that period does not fit with historical events. The king of Mon, Sprang po dar, was active even in the later part of the sixteenth century. Their ultimate decline therefore might be related to internal factions after the death of Sprang po dar in the late-sixteenth century as all the subsequent sources refer to him for his reputation and not as a contemporary ruler as stated in Rgyal rigs and Me rag mdzad rnam. As to Sprang po dar and his lineages, Aris (1979: 103) suspects that Ngag dbang, the author of the Rgyal rigs text, might have misread or interpreted it in a different way. Aris himself is not quite sure whether these kings of Mon were different persons and states the following:

The Bhutanese [Ngag dbang] records not only contradict these interpretations but serve to put the whole subject on firm ground. The four Kings of Mon (Ga thung, Don grub, Jo ’bag and Sprang po dar) all belong to a single historical lineage stretching from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries and all of them were patrons of the Karma-pa incarnations of their day. Dpa’ bo gtsug lag may well have met Sprang po dar on the occasion of his visit to Mi skyod rdo rje who was his own teacher. He was quite aware of the traditional links between these kings and the Karmapa; twice he recalls the figure of Ga thung who had
forged the link with the first incarnation, presenting him not as the legendary ancestor of the kings of Mon but as their historical forebear who had initiated the special relationship with his own school. He was also perfectly aware of the true location of the area ruled by these kings; Shar Mon (or the Mon to the East) was situated east of proto-Bhutan (i.e. Mon proper) and not in eastern Tibet.

Based on the above note, the question remains why the recorded descendants with references to Sprang po dar in Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 38; II 1988: 107) differ from the other texts. Aris (1979: 100) states that “Ngag dbang’s abiding aim is to give them a corporate existence, in a single structural principle and a single mythological scheme served to account for the heterogeneity that existed among the clans and lineages.” His suggestion might be the best answer as this must have been the only option left for the author of Rgyal rigs. Another reason might have to do with an intense power struggle between the authorities of Lhasa and Thimphu since the mid-seventeenth century.

Apart from the conflicting records on the kings, Padma gling pa mentions in 1504 that the king of Mon, Jo ’phag [’bag] dar ma of Shar Dong kha [sic] “took refuge with the Black Hat Incarnation who protected him for a period of three years.” Thereafter, the king met Padma gling pa after meeting with the Seventh Karmapa in Bumthang.²⁵⁸ Padma gling pa himself visited him in Dom kha in 1507 and the king received teachings from Padma gling pa. Padma gling pa claims that under his guidance, Jo ’phag dar ma abstained for thirty-nine years from blood sacrifices. The life span of the king however does not match with Padma gling pa’s own period, because the latter’s life span dates from 1450 to 1521 and the meeting with Jo ’phag dar ma supposedly took place in 1507.²⁵⁹ This follows that the year of death of Padma gling pa is 1543, considering that Jo ’phag dar ma was his disciple for thirty-nine years. If Padma gling pa passed away in the 1540s, he should have known the name of the son of King Jo ’phag dar ma, i.e. Sprang po dar, as he states that a son

²⁵⁸ Padma gling pa’s autobiography states that at first he refused to meet the king of Mon according to the following reason: “I have this temple [of Tamshing] in Mon which I am in the course of building. I have to leave for there tomorrow, just as soon as I can” (quoted in Aris 1988: 78, 103).
²⁵⁹ Padma gling pa’s visit to the court of Jo ’phag [%bag] dar ma coincided with his meeting with an Indian king, who is identified as Nilambhar, the last ‘Rāja of Kāmatā’ (modern Cooch Bihar, West Bengal).
was born to the King without specifying whether it is Sprang po dar or somebody else.

However, *Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston’s* (2006 [1564]: 548-9) statement of Sprang po dar being the son of Jo ’bag, whose descendants can be traced to king of Mon Gwa thung, is contrary to the description by Padma gling pa of the king of Mon Jo ’phag dar ma and his court religion. *Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston* (2006 [1564]) and *Deb ther sngon po* (1984 [1476]) even record that the kings of Mon were followers of the Karmapas, however, Padma gling pa describes in the following paragraph that they were shamanist:

From the time of that king’s ancestor, they killed about five hundred human beings, goats and an enormous number of cows and bulls. These blood offerings were to supplicate the great Siva, to suppress a demon who prevented them from reaching the age of twenty-five and as offerings for a ceremony for times of illness. Fearful of the karmic punishment for killing and [other such acts of] evil, he [king Jo ’phag dar ma] took refuge with the Black Hat incarnation, who protected him for a period of three years. Subsequently, from the time I arrived at the palace, I was able to protect him and so far, he was able [to refrain himself from blood sacrifices] for thirty-nine years. During that period, a son was born to him and there was no occasion for him to commit any further acts of evil.260

According to the passage above, Padma gling pa was the one who brought changes of belief to the kings of Mon, a statement which contradicts with other writings. Similarly, *Me rag mdzad rnam* also differs from the other three former sources, when it states that Sprang po dar and the “other” Sprang po dar were associates and followers of Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me. Both becoming his patrons are mentioned, especially that of the “other” Sprang po dar who successfully subjugated a demon in the border region. Mention of the “other” Sprang po dar then

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260 In Tib., *de nas pho brang du slehs pa ’i dus nas bzung ste/ rgyal po de’i yab mes nas lo nyi shu rtsa Inga tshun las mi thub pa ’i sri dang /smyung [=snyung] dus rim gro la yang/ mi dang ra Inga brgya tsam dang/ ba glang glos che ba bsad nas khrag mchod kyis dbang phyug chen po gsol dgos pa la/ srog gcod dang sdiq pa ’i nyes dmigs kyis ’jigs te/ sprul sku zhwa nag pa la skyabs zhus dus lo gsum gyi skyabs mdzad/ de rjes dbdag gis bskyabs pas lo so dgur thub cing/ de dus sras yang ’khrungs/ sdiq pa rnam sbyed ma dgos so* (Padma gling pa 2013 [1521]: 162b). The English translation is rendered from Aris (1979: 104).
gaining rights to collect levy from the Indian dvārs is also made, while Rgyal rigs states that this right to collect levy is only given to sbyar Sprang po dar.

Although the descriptions by the two most contemporary figures (Padma gling pa and Dpa’ bo gtsug lag) are conflicting, the dates of Sprang po dar are clear in their accounts. This is further supported with the records of the father of Sprang po dar, Jo ’bag dar ma, as patron of the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506). Even the undated text Me rag mdzad rnam speaks of two Sprang po dars, but it states the period as being the late-fifteenth and sixteenth century. The sequence on Sprang po dar is however confusing in the record of Rgyal rigs as he is situated as the sixth generation after Gtsang ma, which roughly corresponds to him having lived in the eleventh to twelfth centuries.

Interestingly, the forefather of Sprang po dar, Rgyal po dar (in Rgyal rigs), who was the king of Mon Gwa thung (in Lho rong chos ’byung, Deb ther sngon po and Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston), falls in the twelfth century. Rgyal po dar as the patron of the First Karmapa in the twelfth century roughly matches with the former, who was a fourth generation descendant of Gtsang ma from his second son Mthong legs can. This means that he lived in the tenth to eleventh centuries. It is therefore possible that the two names, i.e. Gwa thung and Rgyal gdung dar refer to a single person. The latter name could be rendered into [Mon] rgyal [po] gdung [=thung] [dar], i.e. rgyal to gwa and gdung to thung, although the dating does not match.

Currently, there are many families who trace their predecessors to jo bo Sprang po dar (tranpodar transcription is written as their family name), but not a single source mentions an immediate son of Sprang po dar. They are usually addressed as or call themselves babu in the villages or in official settings. Although they are

261 Rgyal rigs’ record of Sprang po dar as the son of Ngam bzang la of the sixth generation to prince Gtsang ma is either wrong or a certain generation is missing in between. In other words, there could be another person called Sprang po dar in that period, as discussed by two people: [s]byar and the gzhan Sprang po dar in the record of Me rag mdzad rnam, though the descriptions do not match with other works. The historical authenticity of a person is further complicated by the different records in both textual and oral traditions, which indicate that certain families are contesting to be the actual Sprang po dar’s descendant.

262 This is observed in particular in the villages of Murshing and Domkho, under the Kalatang Circle Area of the West Kameng distict. Many households in the region have Sprang po dar as their surname. The families of Padma bkra shis and his paternal uncle Bskal bzang don grub in Murshing and their distant relatives in Domkho (also called Me long mkhar pa) of Thub bstan chos grub are descendants.
respected local community leaders, we miss at least three hundred years of their written records. Due to the lack of written sources on the descendants, we are solely dependent on oral narratives. The dependence on oral traditions is similarly observed on the descendants of Them spang ba spu. They even claim that the “other” Sprang po dar’s descendants were their relatives. Rgyal rigs however does not mention anything about it. This Thembang babu descendant is discussed in the next section.

**Them spang jo bo and their Ancestors**

As discussed above, out of five sons of Gong dkar rgyal from his four wives, the youngest three were Yas sde Gsang sde btsan, Stung sde Sbas sde btsan and Wang ma ’Gab sde btsan, who were asked to become chiefs of Sa gling rgyan mtshams, Zang lung pa and Upper Sgang zur, respectively. Among them, the youngest son, Wang ma ’Gab sde btsan, was succeeded by Wang ma Dpal la dar, who became babu of the Thembang region. Except the initial descendants mentioned in Rgyal rigs, no written record exist about the rest and we therefore have to rely on oral narratives. Initially, Wang ma ’Gab sde btsan and his two sons settled at Upper Sgang zur in their newly founded castle called Wang ma mkhar. Thereafter, the younger son, Dpal la dar, with three meditators, who came from Lhasa and Samye, went on pilgrimage to see Lhasa and Samye by taking a couple of menials with him. Then, together with two Tibetan meditators, they returned back by way of Lo ro pass. When they reached Shar Them spang, the two meditators addressed Wang ma Dpal la dar in most respectful terms.

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The interview was recorded and held with Padma bkra shis and Thub bstan chos grub on 21 October 2011, with Bkal bzang don grub on 16 October 2011. During fieldwork, in addition to the listed Sprang po dar, another lineage called Shrang tsi dar was also observed. They argue that it is Shrang tsi dar and his clan, who traces his origin to Sprang po dar. Their claims are without substantial written sources and rely on a short oral tradition.

263 See for further in Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 36; II 1988: 105) or note 241 and 242 in the previous section. We le is also written instead of Wang ma in Rgyal rigs II (1988: 105), but for only once. After this, it is written as Wang ma (Rgyal rigs II 1988: 109-110).

264 Rgyal rigs I (1986: 28a-b) records that “Wang ma ’Gab sde btsan, both father and eldest son, Gung la rgyal also abandoned the royal castle of Wang ma mkhar and went to the district of Man chod at the lower end of the Khaling district (in Eastern Bhutan). When they delivered an account of their great clan, few people honoured them and they gained power over the dvārs and their wealth enlarged. All the Wang ma families who are in Man chod and elsewhere are descendants of Wang ma Gung la rgyal.” See Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 43; II 1988: 110).
The three Thembang village elders, Chos rgyal, Rdo rje de ba and A grags or A rgyal, who were mayors (gtso rgan) of the region, asked the group “‘what are the reasons for calling him Lha btsun (monk of noble birth)?’ The elder meditator replied ‘as for the form of address lha btsun chos rje, he is called so because he is a descendant of the ancient king of Samye, Khri Srong lde btsan.” The Thembang elders then requested Dpal la dar to become “a lord-chief to suppress the Klo- kha dkar and kha nag” and then he “gained power over the Indian dvārā.” For that reason, he was given the Indian title babu. Rgyal rigs thus maintains that the babus of Shar Them spang are descendants of Wang ma Dpal la dar, even though “some say that the ba spu of Them spang claim their origin from Samye.”

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265 Klo kha dkar and Klo kha nag refer to Aka (Hrusso) tribal in the Circle Areas of Jamiri and Thirozina in the district of West Kameng, and Nyishi in the East Kameng district. See Aris (2009 [1986]: 43, n.70) as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015) on the Thembang rdzong. See also note 37.

266 All the quotations in the passages are from Rgyal rigs I (1986: 43). In Tib., chung ba dpal la dar/ lha sa bsam yas nas yong ba’i sgoms chen gsum dang bcas lha sa bsam yas mjal ba la song nas bod kyi sgoms chen gnyis dang bcas lo ra nas log ste/shar them spang la slehs pa dang/ sgoms chen gnyis kyiis wang ma dpal la dar la/ zhe sa ched brjod byas nas lha btsun zer nas bod pas/chos rgyal dang/rdo rje de ba/ a grags a rgyal zer bas lha btsun zer ba’i ming gi rgyu mtshan ci yin zer ba la/ sgoms chen rgyan pa na re/ lha btsun cos ndzad zer ba de/ sgong bsam yas kyi rgyal po khri srong lde btsan gyi sras rgyud yin pas na/ lha btsun zer ba yin pas/ khong gsum yid ches nas ’o na de ltar yin na/ nged rang gi rje dpun gyu glo(do) kha dkar kha nag gi kha gnon la bzhugs dgos pa ’dug zer nas blon ’bangs rnam s kyis bkur zding/ rgya’i las sgo la dang bsgyur nas ba spu zer ba de rgya skad kyi ming btags pa yin (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 27b-28a; II 1988: 109-10). The first two names of Thembang’s elders are not mentioned in Rgyal rigs I (1986: 42).
According to *Rgyal rigs*, Wang ma Dpal la dar was the fifth generation descendant of prince Gtsang ma, which places Dpal la dar in the eleventh to twelfth centuries.\(^\text{267}\) His successive descendants are not recorded in *Rgyal rigs*. As briefly mentioned above, this is a serious challenge to the authority of *Rgyal rigs*, because some descendants were recorded up to the seventeenth or early-eighteenth century, i.e. *jo bo* of Sde rang and Ber mkhar, etc., while some are documented merely for four to five generations, such as the Thembang *babu*.

In an interview conducted in 2011, A’u tsa Blo bzang dar rgyas bde skyid pa stated that Wang ma Dpal la dar was succeeded by Lama Wang and Be si ri rgyan. He was however uncertain about whether the successors were immediate or after some generations of descendants. From them, the present clans such as Kho chi lugs pa,\(^\text{268}\) Shar phyogs pa, A ta rje bu and Bde skyid pa are considered to have developed.\(^\text{269}\)

Among the clans, A’u tsa bde skyid pa considers only Bde skyid pa as the ruling clan among them. The power gained by Bde skyid pa seems to have happened some generations later because oral traditions recount fierce rivalries among the Bde skyid pa siblings called Jo sras pa a ‘dir, Lama wang and Be si ri rgyang. These contentions led to the killing of Jo sras pa a ’dhir.\(^\text{270}\) These descendants, who are recorded as offsprings of Thembang *babu* are however not recorded in *Rgyal rigs* and only exist in oral narratives. The author of *Rgyal rigs* probably learned about all of the chieftains discussed in the various sections through their fame and might not have based it on written records of those descendants, who trace their origins back to the Tibetan imperial roots. As mentioned above, the aim of *Rgyal rigs* was to remind the people during the conflict between the authorities of Lhasa and Thimphu that

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\(^{267}\) Wang ma Dpal la dar was the son of Wang ma ‘Gab sde btsan and his father was Gong dkar rgyal. The father of Gong dkar rgyal was Mthong legs can, whose father was Gtsang ma.

\(^{268}\) See note 228 and Tenpa (2016).

\(^{269}\) Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 17-18) record that these four clans were immediate descendants of Wang ma Dpal la dar.

\(^{270}\) The place of killing is still marked in the region with a small mound of stones. See for further details on the Bde skyid *rdzong* in Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 19-23).
they were from the same root. This is was Aris (1979: 110) means when he states “abiding aim is to give them a corporate existence.”

Interestingly, no less than twenty-four ‘castles’ (mkhar) are recorded in Rgyal rigs, which were located in Eastern Bhutan and the present Mon region. These castles are considered to be founded by those secular rulers. It is believed that the founders of the castles and their descendants trace their origins to prince Gtsang ma. Aris (1979: 110) suggests that such a castle was

nine or ten stories and are sometimes octogonol, sometimes square, with very thick walls, [since] the seventh century onwards Chinese historians associate these people [the Ch’iang] with monumental stone structures, like towers or fortresses, which are still found among them, but are also to be seen in Kongpo and Lhotrak (in south-eastern Tibet), and are apparently the prototypes of Tibetan architecture in general.

The description is followed by Ardussi (2007a), who states that “those who have seen the ruins describe them as square stone towers.” Only an archaeological study in Eastern Bhutan and the present Mon region would be able to determine the historical significance of those ruined castles.

The list of castles recorded in Rgyal rigs are Skya sa mkhar, Skyed mkhar, Kha gling mkhar, Khas mkhar, Gcen mkhar, Nya mkhar, (Was chur) Thum nang mkhar, ’Dus stung mkhar, Sdom mkhar, (Be tsha) Nang mkhar, Dpal mkhar, Phang mkhar, Beng mkhar, Ber mkhar, Byas mkhar, Sbis mkhar, Mug ltang mkhar, Sman mkhar, Btsan mkhar, Wang ma mkhar, Rus po mkhar, Shing mkhar and Bse ba mkhar. It is hoped that with the help of C14 dating, the ruined castles may highlight further

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271 Aris notes that the territory “extends far beyond the Tshangla speaking districts: to the west as far as Nya mkhar in the Kheng district of Mang sde lung, to the east as far as Dpal mkhar(?) in Arunachal Pradesh, and to the north across the main watershed to a place called Mtsho sna bse ba mkhar(?)”. The latter probably represents the uppermost reached of the so-called Mon Region” (Aris 1979: 110). The geographical composition consist of the whole of Eastern Bhutan and the present Mon region, while this study is concerned only with the latter area.

272 Aris (1979: 110) added these five mkhar from his own sources. Those are Lcags mkhar, Gsham mkhar, Lcam mkhar, Rgyal mkhar and Gong mkhar in Chos ’khor valley, Bumthang.

273 Quoted in Aris (1979) from Stein (1972: 29; 1959: 80-81, n.222, 120).

274 The list of mkhar is also recorded in Aris (1979: 311, n.27), but with an additional description that “place names, such as Lcags mkhar bzung, Dga’ gling mkhar mi and so on, which do not preserve quite the same pattern have been omitted from the list.”
historical information to determine the date of those castles, but among the listed castles, only some, i.e. Beng mkhar, Ber mkhar, Dpal mkhar, ’Dus stung mkhar and Rus po mkhar can be related to the Mon region. The rest of the mkhar are supposedly located in Eastern Bhutan. Unfortunately, Bde skyid (mkhar/) rdzong, Me long mkhar, and so on from the Mon region are not figured among the list, which is supposed to be included. The former, the Bde skyid rdzong, dates back to the fifteenth century according to C14 dating (Mizuno and Tenpa 2015: 23).

In this chapter, I have listed the lineages of the secular rulers of the region who traced their common ancestor’s origin, Gtsang ma, back to the Tibetan imperial period. In the next chapter, I will focus on the spiritual leaders who associated themselves with the ruling descendants. Aris (1979:107) cautions that “unlike ruling families of Eastern Bhutan who did not survive the imposition of ’Brug pa rule, those of the Mon region seem to have outlasted the Dge lugs pa regime that trusts upon them.” The decline could have occurred due to the supremacy of the religious leader, who gained leadership roles in the region, particularly since the seventeenth century. The rise of religious schools and their spiritual leaders will be explained before delving into the mid-seventeenth century. The spiritual leaders were not directly related to the decline of the secular rulers, but the rise of the religious figures, in particular the successive Merag Lamas, had gradually taken over the changes of the period.
Fig. 18. Genealogy of the Lord of Them sbang (Them sbang jo bo), after Rgyal rigs (I: 28b–31a; II: 115f.), Aris (1979: 99; 1988: 116), Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 15)
This chapter outlines the rise of spiritual leaders in the Mon region, focusing in particular on the Merag Lamas and their contribution to local historical events and institutions. The Merag Lamas came to prominence as part of the rise of the Dge lugs school and became dominant in 1680-1681 after the foundation of Tawang monastery, Dga’ Idan rnam rgyal lha rtse dgon pa. The chapter begins with a brief account of some of the pre-existing Tibetan Buddhist schools that were thriving in the region before the rise of the Merag Lamas, such as the schools of the Rnying ma pa and the Bka’ brgyud pa.

The Rise of Local Bka’ brgyud Lamas

The various sub-schools of the Bka’ brgyud pa were probably the first to establish a monastic complex. This includes the Kam tshang and 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa schools. The Karmapa lineages of the Kam tshang Bka’ brgyud pa’s ties to the Mon region date back to the First Karma pa Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-1193). Aris (1979: 113) was probably the first to bring this to attention by stating that “the First Karmapa incarnation came closest to the area, to Dom tshang in [Tawang, subdivisional at then of West] Kameng.” The First Karmapa’s visit to the upper part of the Mon region in the twelfth century is probably the earliest historical information on the region. This information can be deduced from textual sources, such as Deb ther sngon po (1984 [1476]: 478), where it states that the first Karmapa “resided in Sha ’ug Stag sgo.” Mkhas pa’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 548-9) records that “in ancient times, Grwa Thung, King of Mon served as a patron to rje Dus gsum mkhyen

275 See the overview of the development of various Buddhist schools in the region in Tenpa and Tempa (2013) and Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 89-103). Due to the nonexistence of an established monastic seat in the region, the Bon School is not addressed here, which is supposed to have thrived in the region at that time. See the practices of the ancient Bon ritual in Huber (2013) as well as in Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 94-106).
pa [i.e. the First Karmapa] while he was meditating at Dom tshang in Mon.”276 The king’s patronage underlines the great esteem held for the Karmapa and which eventually laid the foundation for the establishment of the Bka’ brgyud School in the region.

The patronage of the school was continued by the descendants of Dom tshang pa in the region, whose were probably a direct disciples of the First Karmapa.277 The Dom tshang pa, however, claim that they are the successive lineage-holders of the disciples of the Third Karmapa Rang ’byung rdo rje (1284-1339) who supposedly visited the region.278 The descendants of Dom tshang pa were not disciples of the Third Karmapa as there are no records of the Third Karmapa having visited the region, neither in Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston nor in Rang ’byung rdo rje (1a-11b) short autobiography.279 However, Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 466-482) does mention the Third Karmapa’s visit to Western Bhutan, i.e. “Phung po ri bo che in Mon spa gro and in other places, where he accomplished the highest siddhi, after practices of meditative realization.”280

Taking a clue from Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston (2006 [1564]: 549), we may say that the Seventh Karmapa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506), is an alternative founder of Skyid gnas monastery. The text records that Don grub, the King of Mon, requested permission from the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgyas mtsho to found a monastery in Mon and that he declared himself as the patron of the great shrine of Dom tshang rong. This information thus points to the Seventh Karmapa as the actual founder of the monastery. The text further states that an abbot was appointed to support the

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276 In Tib., sngon rje dus mkhyen mon dom tshang du sgrub pa mdzad dus kyi sbyin bdag mon gyi rgyal po grwa thung (Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston 2006 [1565]: 548-9); sha ’ug stag sgor byon nas bzhugs (Deb ther sngon po 1984 [1476]: 478). See also Aris (1979: 101-3).
277 The present family of Upper and Lower Dbon dnas dgon chung of Gnas gsar ’byung dgon pa, located in the Hro Byang dag valley, is the throne-holder of the Dom tshang pa (Bstan ’dzin nor bu 2002: 204). The late Thirteenth Mtsho sna Dgon pa rtse rin po che (1969-2014) was born in the family of Dom tsang pa’s lineage. No other sources mention that Dom tshang pa family had spiritually dominated the region.
278 The centre of this school of tradition was Skyid gnas monastery in Byang valley. However, the foundation of the monastery is attributed to the Third Karmapa, but the monastery might have been established by the descendants of Dom tshang pa (Bstan ’dzin nor bu 2002: 204; Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 93). They provide no sources for their information. See also Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 8).
279 See Rang byung rdo rje (2012: 1a-11b) in Karmapa Rang byung rdo rje’i gsung ’bum.
280 In Tib., phug po ri bo che mon spa gro sogs su sgrub pa gtso bor mdzad pas mchog gi grub par brnyes (Mkhas pa ’i dga’ ston 2006 [1564]: 482).
flourishing of the shrine. The monastery was thus built in the fifteenth century under the patronage of the king of Mon, with the spiritual guidance of the Seventh Karmapa.

Similarly, there is no record of the sixteenth century established 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa monastery Brag dkar dgon pa, said to have dominated the region.\textsuperscript{281} Although one of their spiritual leader, Pha jo 'Brug sgom zhig po, visited old Mon (Bhutan) in the early-thirteenth century, there is no indication that he also visited the present Mon region.\textsuperscript{282} In Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (12-20), it states that the jo bo of Lha’i Kham pa of Lha’u tsho and a certain Ber mkhar lord of Shar tsho established a religious alliance with the 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa. However, the change of religious alliance occurred after the victory of the Dga’ ldan pho brang (1642-1959) against the 'Brug pa government (1632-1910) in 1680. Since 1680, the jo bo of Ber mkhar in Shar tsho had an exclusive spiritual commitment with the spiritual master, i.e. a Dalai Lama of the Dge lugs school, an arrangement that prevailed up to the present period. At that time, the Dge lugs school lost its dominance in Eastern Bhutan, in particular in Me rag and Sag stengs regions (Bkra shis sgang district),\textsuperscript{283} which was the school’s principal area in the Eastern Himalayas.

In addition to these monastic seats in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many other Tibetan Buddhist masters were active in establishing cross-regional relations in the area. None of these masters or their seats developed into a dominant power. Among the masters, Thang stong rgyal po (1385-1464),\textsuperscript{284} Bo dong Phyogs las nam rgyal (1376-1451),\textsuperscript{285} Padma gling pa (1450-1521),\textsuperscript{286} and so on were partly successful in establishing relations, however, their institutions did not become

\textsuperscript{281} See note 502. Presently, Byang Skyid gnas monastery is reviving with the foundation of new building and the recruitment of monks in the Jang Circle Area, Tawang.

\textsuperscript{282} His visits to any part of the region is not mentioned in his biography. See Ardussi (1977: 18) as well as Sørensen and Dargye (2001) on the life of Pha jo 'Brug sgom zhig po.

\textsuperscript{283} Presently, Me rag and Sag stengs are ‘gewog’ (rged ’og) in the Trashigang (Bkra shis sgang) district in Eastern Bhutan, where they are known as Merak gewog (Me rag rged ’og) or Sakteng gewog (Sag stengs rged ’og). Gewog is an administrative unit, such as a Circle Area or a county within a district. Rizal (2002) says that it is a block of villages and he simply translated it as a “village block”. See for further write up on the region and its local custom in Pelgen (2007) and Karma (2013: 38-9). See also Gdung rdo rje (2003: 172-235) on the history of Bkra shis sgang rdzong.

\textsuperscript{284} See note 191.

\textsuperscript{285} See ’Jigs med dbang po (1991) and Rechung (1984) for the biography of Bo dong ba.

dominant religious centers. Thang stong rgyal po was commonly known in the local language as Lama Lcags zam dbang po and was highly revered for having built the iron-bridge in 1434 across the Tawang River, which is situated between the Mogtok and Khasnang valleys. No monastic institutions are known to have been founded by him. His contemporary, Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, is credited as the founder of a number of monasteries, such as Khri mo Mthong smon dgon pa, Gtsang bu dgon pa, and Bkra shis chos gling dgon pa, commonly known as Rlung la dgon pa. Among the non-Dge lugs schools, the Rnying ma pa, the school to which Padma gling pa belonged to, was the most influential in terms of followers.

The Rise of Local Rnying ma pa Lamas

The Rnying ma pa school was quite successful in the late-fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, particularly after the ‘treasure revealer’ (gter ston pa) Padma gling pa visited La ’og yul gsum (Tawang) in 1489, when his brother O rgyan bzang po married Rdo rje ’dzoms pa, the daughter of Rus po mkhar Jo bo Don grub. The religious activities of Padma gling pa were well received in the region and thereafter, three main centres of the Rnying ma pa school emerged in the region. These were O rgyan gling, Tsho rgyal gling, and Sangs rgyas gling.

287 Although this bridge is not mentioned in any of the biographies of Thang stong rgyal po, Kalmus (2015: 29-30) states that “the preponderance of data seems to indicate that it was the father, [Thang stong rgyal po], who was the builder of that bridge.” It is based on Wangchuk (2004: 7-8) and his own fieldwork.

288 Based on ’Khrom steng gnas yig (ND), Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 334) states that it was founded either by Bodong Phyogs las rnam rgyal or Lama Rigs gsum gsum mgon po.

289 The oral narratives recount that the foundation of this Bo dong seat in the region was founded by “the teacher and the three spiritual disciples of Bo dong” (Bo dong yab sras gsum), in which the teacher was Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, and his disciples were Sbyor ra rin po che, Mi ’phrul rin po che and ’Gro mgon rin po che (Tenpa and Tempa 2013).

290 See note 194. Rnying ma school is the oldest of all schools in Tibetan Buddhism, but there was in the region no dominant head of the Rnying ma school as compared to the Merag Lamas of the Dge lugs pa. See Dutta and Tripathy (2002) note on the school in the region.

291 O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 66b) mentions that “gter chen Padma gling pa came twice [to the region]. He was happy that it was accomplished in accordance with his prophesy. He performed many activities, such as consecration of monasteries, in particular bestowing initiations and blessing sites.” (in Tib., gter chen chos kyi rgyal po padma gling pa came twice ’phags pa dgon pa dang mthun pa byung ’dug ces dgon par rab gnas dang/ sger du bka’ ’djang/ gnang byin brlab stong so/ sgs du ma gnang/).
The first two seats were founded by O rgyan bzang po, but it is not clear who founded the third monastery. Padma gling pa claims that he visited the monastery of Sangs rgyas gling and that he was hosted by Lama sprul sku Rdo rje (Padma gling pa 2013 [1521]: 114a). The record of Lama sprul sku Rdo rje and his seat is further confirmed in the writing of sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in his Du kū la'i 'phro 'thod (1989 [1703]: 138). In there, it states that the monastery existed prior to O rgyan bzang po’s arrival in the region. Yet, two other texts, the O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 66a) and Rna ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]: 95b), state that all three monasteries were established by O rgyan bzang po.292 Given the fact that it was a first-hand account (in 1521), Padma gling pa’s (2013 [1521]: 114a) record is likely to be more reliable than the mentioned texts as they were written at least two hundred years later. This concerns in particular the attribution of Sangs rgyas gling monastery to O rgyan bzang po.

O rgyan bzang po settled in the region after his visit to Dom tshang rong in 1486 with Padma gling pa, but there is a lack of information about Lama sprul sku Rdo rje, who is recorded in Padma gling pa’s biography. However, O rgyan bzang po is not mentioned again in Padma gling pa’s biography, when Padma gling pa visited again the lower Mon region of Shar Dom kha in 1507 by the invitation of King Jo 'phag.293 Rna ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]: 96a) however mentions that Padma gling pa visited O rgyan gling at least three times.294

292 O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 66a) states that after O rgyan bzang po “arrives in La ’og yul gsum, he observes the sites of Rti li and Gor po dungen. He then founded in the northeastern direction O rgyan gling, on a site that resembled a facing-down tortoise. In the northern direction, on the mountain site resembling a neck of an elephant, he established Sangs rgyas gling and in the southern direction, on the lumpy site, he established Mtsho rgyal gling. He became the head of three gling in La ’og yul gsum” (in Tib., la ’og yul gsum du phehs/ rti li dang gor po dungen ya nas gzi gnis pas/ byang shar gyi mtshams su rus shal kha spuhs pa lla bu’i dpyad ‘dug par o rgyan gling/ nub phyogs su ri glang po che ’dra ba’i mjing par sangs rgyas gling/ lho’i mdun ’bur khang mtsho rgyal gling ste gling gsum btab/ la ’og ces bur gling gsum gyi bdag pol). This is similarly stated in Rna ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]: 94b-95b), which means the former text is based on the latter text, because the former was written in 1700 and the latter in 1697. This narrative is followed in contemporary writings and also in oral traditions (Ye shes ’phrin las 1983: 134; Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]; Bstan ’dzin nor bu 2002). See TBRC: W1KG16449 for the copy of the Sangs rgyas’ manuscript of the Rnying ma’i rgyud ’bum.

293 Padma gling pa visited the place upon the invitation of King Jo ’phag.

294 In Tib., gter ston padma gling pa o rgyan gling du thengs gsum tsam phehs (Rna ba’i bcud len 2007 [1697]: 96a). The visit is mentioned only twice in O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 66b).
The Rnying ma pa school continued to build in the region during the sixteenth century, mainly with the efforts of Ban dkar ba sku mdun Sangs rgyas ye shes (16th c.), the direct disciple of Padma gling pa. This is explained in the history of Khyi nyal gnas (ma) dgon pa or the Khyi nyal gnas gsang sngags chos 'khor gling, which he founded in the sixteenth century. Rna ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]: 95b) is one of the few sources which states that “generally for the people of La ’og yul gsum and particularly for the lineage holders of the Pad gling teaching, Ban dkar ba Sangs rgyas ye shes was the foremost patron of Rta wang temple (Rta wang gi dgon pa), which he established at an open-pit site already blessed [by Padma gling pa]. The tradition of annual offerings by the respective patrons at the yearly flower festival meant that here too the old Vajrayāna school will flourish.”

We can therefore deduce that the two monasteries were successful in preserving and promoting the Rnying ma pa school in the region.

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In Tib., la ’og yul gsum pa spyi dang khyad par pad gling chos bdag gi gras ban dkar ba sangs rgyas ye shes zhes pas sbyin bdag gi mthil mdzad nas sngar dhang grub gnyang ba’i sa stongs der rta wang gi dgon pa btab nas sbyin bdag so sos lo dus su me tog tu grags pa’i bsod snyoms ’char can ’bul ba’i srol bthod pa sogs phyogs der snga ’gyur rdo rje theg pa dar rgyas su byang/ (Rna ba’i bcud len 2007 [1697]: 96b).
The Rnying ma pa went on to establish a long-standing lineage of Khyi nyal gnas or Theg rtse rin po che with many successively reincarnated Lamas over the centuries. Despite the long-standing embrace of the Rnying ma doctrine in the region, none of the fourteen successive Lamas of this school have played a role in regional religious leadership. The exception being Ban dkar ba Sangs rgyas ye shes. It is possible that Ban dkar ba’s successors were not supported by the jo bo of the region, which may have hindered them in attracting followers and political supporters. However, since O rgyan bzang po, and most likely his descendants, were under the patronage of one of the jo bos, the lack of support by the jo bo might have other reasons.

The line of Ban dkar ba was not successful, but they still maintained a healthy priest-patron relationship with the successors of O rgyan bzang po. This greatly helped the Rnying ma school to prevail in the region. However, the last (fourth) descendant of O rgyan bzang po was Lama rig ’dzin Bkra shis bstan ’dzin, who married Tshe dbang lha mo, the daughter of the Ber mkhar jo bo. He proved to be decisive in the decline of the dominance and influence of the Rnying ma school. The family into which he married were namely patrons of the Dge lugs school and established teachings in the regions of Me rag, Sag stengs, Stag lung rdzong, and Ar rgya gdung (Lha’u). It is also said that ‘the third [son]’ (gsun pa/bha) of Ber mkhar, known as ‘jinaputra’ (rgyal sras) Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, was the founder of these monasteries in the area. The Dge lugs therefore dominated the spiritual leadership of the region.

296 See note 540 in Appendix II or Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (15), where an unnamed Khyi nyal ma’i Lama was involved in a conflict with other local lamas against Merag Lama Blo gros rgyal mtsho in the late-seventeenth century.

297 See Tenpa (2013) and the following sections in this chapter for further details about the successive Merag Lamas. See also the development of the Dge lugs school in Western Bhutan by Dge ’dun rin chen (1976: 176a-177b), whose writing is further quoted in Karma (2013: 185-6) and Padma tshe dbang (1994: 109-10).
The Rise of the Successive Local Dge lugs Lamas

The rise of the local Dge lugs lamas can be traced to the Merag lamas. The use of this title started when the third son, Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, was posthumously called the “first Me rag bla ma.” The same title was also used for at least three other subsequent lamas. The records of the ‘succession of Lamas’ (bla rabs) in the 1680 edict do not necessarily refer to reincarnated lineages, but they were also called the ‘successive uncles and nephews’ (khu dbon po na rim) of the Dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje. The texts reveal that ‘the uncle and nephew’ relationship is actually a teacher-disciple relationship between the successive Lamas.

As the document highlights the successive uncles and nephews instead of ‘reincarnation’ (sprul sku/ sku skyes), the definition of the latter term is called into question. The line of successive clerics bearing the title of Merag Lamas were Blo

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298 See the Dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje in the documents of 1679, 1680 and 1692, as well as in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster.

299 See Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (7), Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 101-3) and Aris (1980: 15, n. 6). Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 6-13) mentions that a sequence of reincarnations in which the present Lama is recorded as the ninth reincarnation. This differs from the written sources, such as Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, Me rag mdzad rnam, and the legal documents. The successive Merag Lama’s reincarnations list is recently updated and does not differ from Sarkar’s (1980) note. Both works seem to rely on the same unnamed sources or oral narratives (Tenpa and Tempa 2013: 9). The present succession of Merag Lama is also known as Gu ru sprul sku, the title has been in use since the mid-nineteenth century. Based on local narratives, Aris (1980) states that it was named after he was called a guru by Aka (Hrusso) and the foothills Bodo Assamese. The status of reincarnation became a constant issue due to certain historical events. See Tenpa and Tempa (2013), Aris (1980), Sarkar (1980) and the Fourth Merag Lama’s biography and his activities in the next chapter. Refer also to note 425.

300 In Tib., dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje ksu dbon na rim bzhin (the 1680 Edict, 4; Aris 1980: 13).

301 Ardussi states that since the second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet, the religious institutions “acquired a corporate character of its own and in many instances considerable wealth and religious prestige, which transcended mere local boundaries. Where the Lama and his principal patrons were of the same family, a variety of systems evolved to link succession to the headship of the religious corporation with the descendants in the lay branch of the lineage. If the Lamas was expected to remain celibate, succession was usually through a nephew (dbon po), but if celibacy was not insisted upon, spiritual authority could be invested in the Lama’s own son, giving rise to a king of incipient ecclesiastic hereditary monarchy.” With the rise of reincarnation lineages since the thirteenth century, the latter concept had lessened the above mentioned structure of sociopolitical dominance through religious institutions, but certain traditions are still in continuation or do not longer exist, such as “Khon of Sa skya, the Ga zi of Byang Stag lung, the Rlangs of Phag mo gru, separate branches of the Rgya clan at Rwa lung, Gnas rnying and 'Ba' ra Don grub sdings, the Skyu ra of 'Bri gung, and the Gnyos of Kha rag and Lha nang, and later of Gye re” (Ardussi 1977: 97). For details about the socio-political developments, see Stein (1972: 70-77), Snellgrove and Richardson (2003 [1968]: 112-15, 129-39) and Shakabpa (1967: 54-60).
bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, who was succeeded by Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer and
Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, and followed by Blo gros rgya mtsho. They
constitute the first, second, third and the fourth Merag Lamas. All of them are
mentioned in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (7-11), but no information is provided on the three
successors in Me rag mdzad rnam or Rgyal rigs.302 The four successive lamas will
be described in the following sections, after an analysis of the origin of the term
Merag Lama.

The Origin of the title Merag Lama (me rag bla ma)

In the local oral tradition and in a number of texts, only the Fourth Merag Lama Blo
gros rgya mtsho is commonly acknowledged and identified as the Merag Lama (d.
1682?). Du kū la’i gos bzang is one of the texts303 where this title is recorded – in
the form of Me rag bla ma Ngag dbang Blo gros rgya mtsho. As to how the title of
Merag Lama was formally applied to the four successive monks from La ’og yul
gsum remains unclear. It is likely that it was introduced after the foundation of Dga’
Idan chos gling monastery in the Me rag region. The monastery was founded by Blo
bzang bstan pa’i ’od ser, who was the second Merag Lama. The title was probably
introduced and applied to him during his lifetime and the monastery he founded
became known as Mon Dga’ Idan pho brang, as indicated in Dngos grub rgya
mtsho’i shing rta, the biography of the Third Dalai Lama Bsod nams rgya mtsho
(1543-1588). The text states that the Third Dalai Lama was invited to Tsona, where
he was the head of the consecration of Mon Dga’ Idan pho brang monastery.304 The
successful visit of the Third Dalai Lama meant that the Me rag region and its
monastery gained importance. This might have been the reason behind the usage and
introduction of the title Merag Lama. Of course, the title refers to the successive
abbots of Mon Dga’ Idan pho brang monastery, who were called Merag Lama since
the time of the Second Merag Lama. The visit of the Third Dalai Lama to Me rag is

302 The records in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 101-3), Bstan ’dzin nor bu (2002: 242-50) and
Sarkar (2006 [1980]; 1981) are based on the above mentioned sources and oral narratives.
303 The text is the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama, which was compiled and edited by sde srid
Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (d. 1705).
304 See Dngos grub rgya mtsho’i shing rta (1991 [1646]: 75b), Dga’ Idan chos ’byung (1989 [1698]:
215) or note 345.
also mentioned in *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster*, yet the text does not cite the name of the monastery as Mon Dga’ Idan pho brang.

In *Du kū la’i gos bzang*, the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the conferment in 1655 of two successive ‘bhikṣu ordinations’ (*dge slong*) within six months on the third and fourth Merag Lama demonstrates that the title of Merag Lama was increasingly used during this period. The first Mon Merag Lama could have been the Third Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, and the latter Mon Merag Lama was the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho in his twentieth. The Third Merag Lama is mentioned only as “Merag Lama” in the autobiography, while the Fourth Merag Lama is referred to with a specific additional term “can”, i.e. Me rag Bla ma can. *Du kū la’i gos bzang* records some specifics of the two ordination ceremonies: the Third Merag Lama was among the eleven monks to take the *dge slong* vows on the fifth to seventh days of the third month and the Fourth Merag Lama can took the *dge slong* vows with three others on the seventh month.306

The Third Merag Lama was most likely quite aged at the time of taking the *dge slong* vows because his contemporary, the Fourth Dalai Lama, passed away in his early twenties.307 This might explain why he took his *dge slong* vows from the Fifth Dalai Lama. Merag Lama ‘can’ (the near) refers only to the Fourth Merag Lama as he was one of the main disciples of the Fifth Dalai Lama and also an important figure from Shar Mon who counteracted the Bhutanese expansion in Shar Mon. He was thus referred to in his youth with this additional term in order to avoid confusing him

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305 See the amended and the annotated translation of the text in Appendix II. Similarly, Rgyal rsas sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 102) mentioned the visit as well as the name of the monastery Mon Dga’ Idan pho brang.

306 In Tib., *mon me rag bla ma/ hor a mdo brgya mtsho skor/ ’phrin las sog sogs po gsar ’grul gyyi rigs mang bar phyag drug pa’i dbang bzhi byin rlabs kyi tshul du bskur/ bsnyen rdzogs bcu gcig dang dge tshul bsgrub/ (Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992a: 238b). Karmay (2014: 351) translated it as “I presented the four types of wang of Chagdrugpa in the form of blessings to various newly arrived, such as Merag Lama from Mon, Gyatsho from Hor in Amdo and Trinle Lama from Mongolia. I conducted the nyendzog ordination ceremony for 11 monks and getshul for 18 novices.” Within those eleven monks, I understand Merag Lama was one among them. In the case of the Merag Lama can in Tibetan texts, I understand the term can as near, i.e. near to the Fifth Dalai Lama, but Karmay (2014: 351, 357) translated it as “Me rag lama and his men.” See Karmay (2014: 357): “I conducted the nyendzog ordination ceremony for the Merag Lama and his men [in three] and getshul for 40 novices” (me rag bla ma can bsnyen rdzogs gsun dang dge tshul bzhi bcu tsam bsgrub/ Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992a: 243a). Ardussi (1977: 315) also considers that it was only the Fourth Merag Lama, who had twice audience with the Dalai Lama in that year. The date Wood-Sheep is recorded on f. 235a, which falls in 1655. See the 1679 edict in Appendix III, where the term can is also used.

307 See Nor bu’i ’phreng ba (1991 [1653-4]), the biography of the Fourth Dalai Lama.
with the older Merag Lama. This is my speculation, but *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* does not provide any information in this regard. Even some of the oldest legal documents which recorded all the Merag Lamas mention nothing on this, but some sources, such as *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster*, even address them as Dpa’ bo gdung pa *chos rje*.

In some of these edicts, no individual names are recorded, except the one of the Fourth Merag Lama, Blo gros rgya mtsho. These edicts confirm that Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me was the First Merag Lama, even though he was called so posthumously, while Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer, Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan and Blo gros rgya mtsho were considered in the edicts as the second, third and fourth Merag Lamas. This can be gleaned further from a document dated 1692, which states that “until the Fourth successive Merag Lamas, they had rights” to conduct religious activities in the region. The 1692 document was also issued to reaffirm the Lamas’ rights for religious and socio-political activities over the region, rights that were broken by the constant Tibeto-Bhutanese wars in the region. The 1692 document confirms that these rights should be re-established and that the power of the monastic estates of the successive Merag Lamas should be strengthened. This document also endorses that the title was used posthumously for the First Merag Lama as the title came into use only after or during the life of the Second Merag Lama and his founding of Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang in Me rag region.

The 1680 edict was issued by the Fifth Dalai Lama. The 1679 and 1692 documents issued from the Potala Palace also record the relationship between the Fourth Merag Lama and the preceding Lamas. The 1680 edict states that “the successive uncles and nephews of the Dpa’ bo gdung pa *chos rje*” were the lamas who “upheld the Dge lugs teachings in the eastern region of Mon.” The record of these lamas refers to the successive Merag Lamas, especially to Blo gros rgya mtsho, the Fourth Merag Lama. Similarly, the 1692 document states that “Merag [Lama] Blo gros rgya mtsho’s ‘family lineage’ (*skya rtsa*) can be traced to Dpa’ bo gdung

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308 See the 1679 and 1680 edicts in Appendix III and section 6.2 in annotated translations. The documents are affixed with a square-red seal of the Potala Palace and was issued under the authorization of the Fifth Dalai Lama Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682).

309 See the 1692 document in Appendix IV.

310 In Tib., *dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje khu dbon na rim bzhin* (Aris 1980: 7; 13 or section 6.2).
Further on, the document confirms the connection of the Dpa’ bo gdung pa lineage with all the Merag Lamas.

In the oral traditions, however, all of the successive Lamas are thought to have belonged to the Dpa’ bo gdung pa lineage. The three works, *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 30b), *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* and *Me rag mdzad rnam* (3a), show that the First Merag Lama came from the Ber mkhar house, while the rest of the Lamas were of the Dpa’ bo gdung family. The Dpa’ bo gdung (/dpa’u gdung) house can be traced back to Bsod bzang (first Dpa’ bo gdung pa), who was the second brother of the First Merag Lama. In *Me rag mdzad rnam*, the First Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me is addressed as the Merag Lama, but the title must have been added later on because *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 30b) records only his name, leaving us to conclude that he received the title posthumously. Similarly, the title Merag Lama is not mentioned in the story of Thang stong rgyal po (1361-1485) and his divination of *gsum pa/bha*, which is otherwise identical to the narration of the story in *Rgyal rigs*. Examination of these sources show that the title Merag Lama is used alongside the title *Dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje* in which the former became a term commonly used to address the successive Lamas.

The First Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me

The First Merag Lama was one of the most influential historical figures in the Mon region in the sixteenth century. His childhood name was Gsum pa and he became known as *rgyal sras* Bstan pa’i sgron me, or the First Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me. All the sources, such as *Rgyal rigs*, *Me rag mdzad rnam* and *Dga’

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311 In Tib., *me rag blo gros rgya mtsho’i skya rtsa dpa’ bo gdung pa* See Appendix IV for the document.

312 See *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 31a). Aris (1980: 18, n.6) states that the “monastery of Spa’u gdung was founded by the Dpa’ gdung pa *chos rje* Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer, disciple of Bstan pa’i sgron me.” It seems Aris has wrongly attributed the foundation of Dpa’ gdung pa House to Spa’u gdung monastery. Moreover, in *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* such a monastery is not stated.

313 This section is partly based on Tenpa (2013) and the note about him in Sarkar (2006 [1980] 1981) and Aris (2009 [1986]: 45, n.81, 83; 1988: 113, n.10). These writings are the earliest sources on the historical studies of the region. The primary source is *Me rag mdzad rnam* (Appendix I). Interested readers are requested to read the amended text and its annotated translation in the appendices to get first-hand information about him, which is the only text focusing especially on him. In addition, sources related to the First Merag Lama are *Rgyal rigs*, *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster*, the books of Rgyal sras.
record that Gsum pa was the son of Jo bo Dar rgyas. However, the prophecy made by Thang stong rgyal po that he would become a famous monk is recorded only in Rgyal rigs and Me rag mdzad rnam. Though Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 150) mentions the meeting between Thang stong rgyal po and Jo bo Dar rgyas, it does not refer to the aforementioned three sources. Of all the sources, the most significant historical reference to the First Merag Lama is the autobiography of the Second Dalai Lama, where the former is referred to as “Bstan pa’i sgron me of ‘frontier’ (mtha’ khob).” In there, he is also acknowledged as one of the disciples of the Second Dalai Lama.

The prophesy made by Thang stong rgyal po to Jo bo Dar rgyas concerning his son Gsum pa is not documented in the biographies of Thang stong rgyal po. Rgyal rigs narrates how the meeting took place between Jo bo Dar rgyas of Ber mkhar and Thang stong rgyal po in Shar tsho:

Jo bo Dar rgyas invited the Mahāsiddha Thang stong rgyal po, who was going around begging for alms, to his home. He performed great acts of veneration. After he [i.e. Thang stong rgyal po] consumed some rice-beer served to him to his full satisfaction, he filled a skull-cup with some rice-beer and threw it into the sky. He gave Jo bo Dar rgyas the beer, which fell into his hands without spilling and said: “Drink as much beer as you can and a special sign of omen will come forth.” Jo bo Dar rgyas drank six skull-cups of beer. When half of the beer remained in the cup, the mahāsiddha declared: “It seems you will have seven sons, but one will be of no use. Of the [remaining] six sons, one will be a bodhisattva of the tenth stage, who will uphold the teachings pertaining to the explanations of the doctrines and their realization and who will be of infinite benefit to sentient beings.” Filling the skull-cup with rice-beer, he said: “Oh, Great Jo bo! Since this skull-cup is the cranium of the dākini ’Gro ba bzang mo,
it is extremely valuable. I leave it with you as a support of your faith” and he gave it to him.314

As this particular story is not mentioned in any biographies of Thang stong rgyal po, the question arises as to what could be the source of this particular story in Rgyal rigs. It might be the text Me rag mdzad rnam, whose composition date is unknown. The reason is that Ngag dbang, the author of Rgyal rigs, states that there exists “personal documented records, [hence he] will speak briefly [with regard to the] ancestral origins of the jo bo who are the royal families of La’ og yol gsum.” Rgyal rigs thus elaborates:

A more extended version containing a full account of how the successive jo bo have gained power over the officers and subjects, how they have taken control of a royal site, and how they came to enjoy great strength and domination due to their far-ranging endeavors has been clarified in the personal documented records of the jo bo descendants.315

The aforementioned story in Rgyal rigs can be found in more detail in Me rag mdzad rnam. This in a way shows how constructed narratives become accepted traditions in a later period. Yet Me rag mdzad rnam is not likely to be the single “extended version containing a full account” of the successive jo bo history as Me rag mdzad rnam provides details only on the activities of the First Merag Lama and some further information prior to the meeting of Thang stong rgyal po with Jo bo Dar rgyas. Similarly, the other text, Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, is also not likely to be the

314 In Tib., grub thob thang stong rgyal po bsod snyoms la byon pa dang drangs nas bshyen bkar phun sum tshogs par mdzad cing/ ’bras chang tshim par drangs pa gsol ba’i rjes la ’bras chang gis ka’ pa li bkang nas grub thob kyis nam mkha’ la ’phangs pas/ chang ma ’bor bar grub thob kyi phyag la babs pa jo bo dar rgyas la gnang ste/ chang ’thung thang thub gyis dang rten ’brel gyi rtags khyad par can yong gsungs pas/ jo bo dar rgyas kyis chang ka’ pa li drung rdzogs par ’thung/ geig las phe kha las pa dang grub thob kyi zhal nas/ khyod la bu bdun yong ba ’dag ste geig gis phan mi thog/ bu drug pa las geig sa bcu’i byang chub sens dpa’ bshad grub kyi bstan pa’ dzin zhing sens can gyi ’gro don dpug tu med pa zhig ’ong ba ’dag gsungs nas/ ka’ pa li chang gi bkang nas/ ’o jo bo chen po ka’ pa li ’di ni mkha’ ’gro ma ’gro ba bzang mo’i dbu thod yin pas/ shin tu ’gangs che khyod la dad pa’i rten du bsag go gsungs nas gnang (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 29ba-31b). Aris’s (2009 [1986]: 45) translation is modified.

315 In Tib., ’dir yang ’phros las/ la’ og yol gsum rgyal rigs jo bo rnam kyi brgyud khangs kyang cung zad brjod par bya’o/ de las yang rgyas pa ni jo bo na rim gyis blon ’bangs la dbang skyar zhing rgyal sa bsag nas mdzad khyon rlangs chen gyis stobs mnga’ ’thang che bar hyung ba’i gleng gtam rgyas pa ni’ jo bo sras brgyud mkhyen dpod/ che ba rnam kyi phyay gi deb ther yig cha la gsol has ’dir ma bkod/ (Rgyal rigs I 1986: 28b). Based on Aris’s (2009 [1986]: 43) translation.
extended version because it contains only detailed accounts of the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho (d. 1682) and then of the other three Merag Lamas. This shows that Dga’ ba’i dpal stér was probably written in the eighteenth century and not necessarily before the composition of Rgyal rigs in 1728.316

In Me rag mdzad rnam, it records that Thang stong rgyal po met a jo bo of Rus po mkhar prior to him meeting Ber mkhar jo bo. As the proper name of the jo bo of Rus po mkhar is not provided, this unknown jo bo is most probably the grandson or great-grandson of Jo bo Rgyal po dar. Jo bo Sangs rgyas rdo rje and his son Jo bo Dar rgyas were grandson and great-grandson to Jo bo Lhun grub, who was the sibling of Jo bo Rgyal po dar.317 The meeting between jo bo of Rus po mkhar and Thang stong rgyal po is not mentioned in Rgyal rigs, while Me rag mdzad rnam states that the latter first visited the former’s castle, but was rejected as a beggar.318 Me rag mdzad rnam (3b) then continues stating that Thang stong rgyal po reached out to Ber mkhar jo bo, which occurred during “the welcoming and drinking ceremony for the bride of Jo bo Dar rgyas.”319

In Rgyal rigs, the biography of the First Merag Lama is summarized in a short paragraph, which describes him as a successful monk:

Jo bo Gsum pa received his ordination from the omniscient Dge ’dun rgya mtsho dpal bzang. He pursued the study of the sūtras and mantras and attained perfection. He therefore received the name of Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me. Upholding the teachings of explanation and realization and in a behavior that of a mahāsiddha, he founded many monasteries in places such as Shar Stag lung,

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316 Bshad mdzod chen mo (2006 [1469]) statement of concerning “the kings of Mon in the southern direction, who are the descendants of the ruler Gtsang ma, but look to their own historical records” means that there were sources, which are not yet known or available (in Tib., lho phyogs mon gi rgyal po rnams/ mnga’ bdag gtsang ma’i gdung rgyud yin/ ’on kyang rang gi yig tshang gzigs/). The modified English translation is based on Aris (1979: 87, n.7).
317 See Rgyal rigs I (1986: 29b-30a). Refer to the family tree in Tenpa (2015: 494) or section 3.7 in the previous chapter.
318 See the passage in Me rag mdzad rnam (3a.4) in Appendix I.
319 The name of the bride is recognized as queen U sen from Ram geng ra in Rgyal rigs I (1986: 30a). We do not know who this queen U sen is, while Bodt (2012) regards that Rama geng ra is the present-day village Ramjar in Eastern Bhutan, based on the clan of rama and gengra.
Me rag, Sag stengs, Ar rgya gdung and so on, accomplishing thus extensive benefit to the beings.\(^{320}\)

In the *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (8) text, there is no mention of Thang stong rgyal po meeting *jo bo* and describes him as giving a prophecy to Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje instead to the First Merag Lama. The text leads us to Gsum pa as *rgyal sras* Bstan pa’i sgron me (with Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun) taking the first novice vows from Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje, prior to their departure to central Tibet (*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* 8).\(^{321}\) The latter information is however not recorded in *Me rag mdzad rnam* or in *Rgyal rigs*. All the texts agree that while he was in Central Tibet, he received his *dge slong* vows from the Second Dalai Lama Dge ’dun rgya mtsho (1475-1542) and was named Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me.\(^{322}\) The vows he received from the Second Dalai Lama must have been after their meeting in Dwags po monastery, because the autobiography of the Second Dalai Lama states the following:

\(^{320}\) In Tib., *jo bo gsum pa thams cad mkhyen pa dge’ dun rgya mtsho dpal bzang po las/ rab tu byung zding mdo snga la shyang pa mdzad cing phul du phyin pas/ mthang yang blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me gso nas bshad sgrub kyi bstan pa’i dzin zding/ grub thob kyi spyod pa lla bus/ shar stag lung/ me rag sag stengs/ ar rgya gdung la sogs par dgon gnas mang po btaa cing ‘gro don rgyas par byung bal* (*Rgyal rigs* I 1986: 30b). The English translation is based on Aris (2009 [1986]: 45). This short paragraph is likely a summary of the *Me rag mdzad rnam* text, particularly the first eight folios because the rest of the text record his other activities, such as meeting and collecting taxes from trade-marts at the border region and subduing an ogre/demon in the Kalaktang valley in the West Kameng district. See the annotated and translation of the text in Appendix I.

\(^{321}\) Blo bzang mkhas btsun became the seventh son of Jo bo Dar rgyas or the youngest sibling of Bstan pa’i sgron me (*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* 8.2). This is unlikely because in all the versions of *Rgyal rigs*, the seventh child passed away at a tender age. Although the child is nameless in *Rgyal rigs* (1 I 1986: 44; II 1988: 116; V 2012: 35a), *Rgyal sras sprul sku* (2009 [1991]: 59) recorded the seventh child was called Tha chung. If we agree with *Rgyal sras sprul sku* (2009 [1991]: 97), he was either from a region named Gtsang or was a distant relative of Jo bo Dar rgyas. Similarly, in the case of Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje, we are dependent on the same sources, which are not helpful in developing a clear picture of him. According to *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (7.2), he was a disciple of the First Dalai Lama. Based on an omen, he founded the Ar yag gdung monastery while residing at the Brag dkar site of O rgyan, the cave of Padmasambhava in upper Lhou village (*Rgyal sras sprul sku* 2009 [1991]: 96). Although his name is not recorded in *Rgyal rigs*, according to *Me rag mdzad rnam* (5b.4), he was also the teacher and fellow of Bstan pa’i sgron me. *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (6.6-7) listed a number of monasteries: the Mon rab monastery at Tsona, Sha’u di khung monastery at Sha’, and Che mchog temple at Dom tshang’s pilgrim site, which are considered to be founded by Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje, prior to his visits to the Mon region. Neither Ye shes rtse mo (2013 [d. 1510]) nor Kun dga’ rgyal mthshan (2013 [d. 1506]) mentioned him. See Aris (1989: 113, n.10) and Sarkar (2006 [1980, 1981]) and note 384 for the foundation of Brag dkar monastery and the ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud, founded by Thugs dam pad dkar in the sixteenth century in Tawang.

\(^{322}\) See *Rgyal rigs* I (1986: 30b) and *Me rag mdzad rnam* (4a). *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (9) had no record of a naming ceremony.
While I was, upon invitation by the Lha rgya ri’s family, at E region, I was persistently invited by ‘frontier’ (mtha’ khob) Bstan pa’i sgron me, slob dpon Chos dpal ba and all the teachers and disciples of [Dwags po monastery] to come to Dwags po. In Dwags po, after crossing over from Spur ltang la (pass), I first reached the place called Gong sde brgyad.323

![Image](image1.png)

Fig. 21, 22: Bstan pa’i sgron me (date unknown) and the ruined site of Stag lung rdzong dgon

The previous statement shows that the First Merag Lama met the Second Dalai Lama in Dwags po, probably for the first time. The above passage also displays that he was holding a significant position lower than the ‘spiritual preceptor’ (slob dpon) of Dwags po monastery. It is clear that Bstan pa’i sgron me was quite mature of age when he met the Second Dalai Lama, but we do not know anything about his childhood and youth. Local oral narratives, as well as the written sources, such as Me rag mdzad rnam, Rgyal rigs, and Dga’ ba’i dpal ster are not useful in this regard. One can assume that Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me was in his thirties when he met the Second Dalai Lama. Prior to that, he was a disciple, a ‘novice monk’ (dge tshul; 323

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323 In Tib., lha rgya ri bas gdan drangs e phyogs su sleb pa la mtha’ ‘khob bstan pa’i sgron me slob dpon chos dpal ba dpon slob rnams kyis dwags po phyogs su dgos pa’i gdan ’dren nan chen byung ba la brten spur ltang la la byas thog mar dwags po la gong sde brgyad du grags par slebs (Dge’ dun rgya mtsho 1979 [1542]: 36a). For the Lha rgya ri history, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1993a [1682]: 19) or the translation of the Fifth Dalai Lama’s “A History of Tibet” by Ahmad (2008: 147-8) and Rnam rgyal rgya mtsho (1999).
śrāmaṇera) under the First Dalai Lama (1391-1474). This is stated by the biographers Ye shes rtse mo (1510: 35a) and Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1506: 21a) who write that the artist monk lha btsun Bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan (i.e. Bstan pa’i sgron me) was among the disciples of the First Dalai Lama.  

With regard to him being an artist, Ye shes rtse mo writes that “during the making [of a statue] by the so-called artist lha btsun Bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan and others, the ‘lord’ (rje) himself [Dge ’dun grub] was reciting the Mani bka’ ’bum transmission.” As his name is listed last among the disciples, it means he was a relatively young and new disciple. At the same time, one can assume that the First Dalai Lama was quite old when the First Merag Lama became his disciple. This might be also the reason why the First Merag Lama went back to Dwags po monastery after the passing away of the First Dalai Lama in 1474. He was however recorded only once in the autobiography as a frontier monk, though the Second Dalai Lama visited Dwags po several times. Besides the fact that his initial studies took place in Se ra byes monastic college of Se ra monastery and that he obtained his dge slong vows from the Second Dalai Lama, we do not know much about his early life. Dga’ ba’i dpal ster however reminds us that “until [Merag Lama] Ngag

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324 Although Karma (2013: 186) does not provide sources, he states that “in far eastern Bhutan, Lobzang Tanpai Dronme, a student of the First Dalai Lama, established a few centres.” See Ye shes rtse mo (1433-1510) and Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1432-1506) in TBRC, who were the direct disciples as well as the biographers of the First Dalai Lama.

325 In Tib. ri mo ba lha btsun bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan zhes bya ba dang bzo po rnams kyis bzo/i rtsom pa byas/ de’i skabs su rje nyid kyis khong rnams la Mani bka’ gsung gi ’dug/ (Ye shes rtse mo 1510: 35a, 37a, 46b).

326 Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (d. 1506]: 21a) listed him among the last of the disciples. The text contains only four folios (19b to 21a).

327 Even though Bstan pa’i sgron me was one of the prominent figures to invite the Second Dalai Lama to Dwags po, he was not able to invite him further down to the southern part of Dwags po.

328 See Me rag mdzad rnam (4b), and also Cabezón (2008) for Se ra monastic University.

329 We may assume that in his late thirties, he was in central Tibet for further studies and became a disciple of the Second Dalai Lama. An identical name, Blo bzang bstan pa ba becoming a ‘dharma master’ (chor rje) and chos rje lha btsun at the Bkra shis lhun po monastery is also recorded, who was unanimously appointed as ‘spiritual preceptor’ (slob dpon) at the suggestion of his name by the Second Dalai Lama (in Tib., chos rje lha btsun blo bzang bstan pa ba mthun grub kyis (slob dpon) bsko bzlag byas/; Dge ’dun rgya mtsho 1979 [1542]: 55a). However, what makes us assume that all the different names are the same person? It might be that Gsum bha was his childhood or a nickname and Bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan was his real name. Lha btsun was added when he became a novice monk and the affix dge slong when he was called Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me. Finally, he was called chos rje lha btsun Blo bzang bstan pa ba after he took the positions of the dharma master and later spiritual preceptor at Bkra shis lhun po monastery. According to Tibetan tradition, one can be called with several different names or titles in one’s spiritual life. Read further in English about the Second Dalai Lama in Mullin (2005).
The primary spiritual transmission was after the Gtsang [Bkra shis lhun po] tradition.\(^{330}\)

After he “studied the sūtra at Se ra byes monastic college, he studied the tantra at [Upper or Lower] Rgyud monastery. He came back again to Se ra byes [monastery]. While meditating there, he had a vision of the ‘protector deity’ (mgon po). Thereafter, the omniscient Dge ’dun rgya mtsho instructed him to “find a monastery in Mon and to establish a relation with the king of Assam. Therefore, you must go back to Mon, he said.” (Me rag mdzad rnam 5a). Although this is not stated in other sources, his return journey to Shar Mon probably happened in his late age, considering what Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho states about him in Dga’ ldan chos ‘byung:

Along with ‘the master and disciples’ of Dwags po and Sgar pa college (grwa tshang), ‘the Easterner’ (shar phyogs pa) Bstan pa’i sgron me spread the teaching in ’Ol, Dwags po, and E every year in order to disseminate the doctrine of ’Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po [rje Tsong kha pa] in the region of Dwags po.\(^{331}\)

His activities in Dwags po and surrounding areas are not recorded in Me rag mdzad rnam, however, his accomplishments in Mon will be detailed in the following.

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The First Merag Lama might have been in his late sixties or seventies when he came back to the region after his successful career in Southeastern Tibet. He was well received in the region, where within a short period, he was able to establish a number of religious institutions. His advanced age can be further determined by the records of Me rag mdzad rnam (5a.4) which states that he was accompanied by Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun. The latter is credited as the founder of the monasteries of Rta gdung dgon pa in Upper Mthong leng and Zhur chung or Khur cung dgon pa in

\(^{330}\) In Tib., ngag dbang blo gros rgya mtsho’i bar chos rgyun gtsang lugs gtso bor mdzad pa yin/ (Dga’ ba’i dpal ster 23). Certainly, his further studies in Buddhism took place at Bkra shis lhun po monastery as the First Dalai Lama and later also the Second Dalai Lama were primarily based there instead of Lhasa and the surrounding monasteries.

\(^{331}\) In Tib., ’jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po’i bstan pa djang phyogs su dar tshul ni/ shar phyogs pas bstan pa’i sgron me djang po grwa tshang dang/ sgar pa grwa tshang dgon slob rnams kyis ’ol djang e gsum gyis char lo re bzhi phibs tel (Dga’ ldan chos ’byung 1989 [1698]: 200). The text is also called Vaidurya ser po, compiled by sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho.
Upper Rlung la (Dga’ ba`i dpal ster 8). This contradicts however with the statement in Me rag mdzad rnam (7a-b) that they were founded by the First Merag Lama.  

While back in Monyul, the First Merag Lama met Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje at Brag dkar site and consulted him. Because the latter was the teacher as well as older than the First Merag Lama, they jointly established the Ar yag gdung monastery (Me rag mdzad rnam 5a.1). The foundation of the monastery by the First Merag Lama, Bstan pa’i sgron me, is also mentioned in the different versions of Rgyal rigs, but it is spelled as Ar rgya gdung. Dga’ ba`i dpal ster (6) states the name of the founder of Ar yag gdung monastery only as Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje. The text spells the monastery as “Ar yag gdung” and not Ar rgya gdung, as written by Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 96) according to the account of Dga’ ba`i dpal ster.  

Me rag mdzad rnam (6a-7b, 9a, 12a) thereafter chronologically lists Sla nga steng, Stag gdung, Mthong legs, Zhur chung, and Stag lung monasteries in the Mon region and a monastery in the Sag stengs region (Trashigang, Eastern Bhutan) as being founded by the First Merag Lama.  

Based on the list of Me rag mdzad rnam, Dga` ba`i dpal ster (8) also states that Sla snga steng, Gsang lam ’phel, Stag gdung, Stag lung, and a monastery called Ding sam were founded by the First Merag Lama. Additionally, in Me rag mdzad rnam (9a.1), another monastery is attributed to him, but it is identified only with a place called Sag stengs. This monastery is named as Bkra shis chos gling monastery in Dga’ ba`i dpal ster (8). The text further states that it was jointly founded by the

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332 The listed monasteries are also recorded as being founded by him according to Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 101), but the author does not mention his sources.  
333 See the full passage on Ar yag/ rgya gdung monastery in line five in Appendix I. Although Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 6; 1981: 4) has not given reference to his sources, he mentions Ariakdun [= Ar brgya gdung] as being founded by Bstan pa’i sgron me.  
334 For a description of the above mentioned monasteries, refer to the lines six, seven, and eight in Appendix I. Among these monasteries, Stag lung rdzong dpon pa became well known. In the later period, it became the resident of Stag lung rdzong dpon, where one or two rdzong dpon, who were also apparently the caretaker of the monastery, resided there. See for further in “An Account of the Taklung Gonpa” written by Dondrup (1988a; 2002) as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 35-42). The date of however the nearby Lha rgyal lo monastery is unknown (Dondrup 1997; 2002; Tenpa and Tempa 2013: 15).  
335 Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 7) states that it is Tashi Tselling (Bkra shis brtse gling) monastery, but Bodt (2012: 129) has wrongly attributed this monastery and other monasteries, such as Dga’ ldan gsung rab gling or Dga’ ldan rite gling, to the Third and Fourth Merag Lamas. He even wrongly states that Bstan pa’i ‘od zer was a student of Blo gros rgya mtsho. It seems that he misunderstood Sarkar’s (1975a, b) description of First Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me as referring to the Fourth
First Merag Lama and Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun. It further describes them as having a teacher-disciple relationship. This was only the monastery which they jointly founded, while both texts state the founders of Mthong legs and Zhur chung as being founded by different individuals. In Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (8), both monasteries are credited to Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun instead to the First Merag Lama, as attributed in Me rag mdzad rnam (6a).336

The First Merag Lama most probably founded the above-mentioned monasteries after the completion of his studies. As an accomplished Buddhist master, he was well received by the local people who called him rgyal sras Bstan pa’i sgron me. Although various accounts of his activities are well documented, his later age and issues of successions are problematic. Me rag mdzad rnam (11b) records that “he passed away at the age of ninety-seven.” Aris (2009 [1986]: 45, n.81), basing on Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 6), states that “Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me is said to have died in the latter [Me rag] place at the age of ninety-nine.”338 Yet, with regard to the lifetime of the First Merag Lama, Aris (1988: 113) provides the year as 1475-1542, which corresponds exactly with the period of the Second Dalai Lama.339 However, as he was mentioned in the autobiography of the Second Dalai Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho or to the same person. However, he correctly mentioned that Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer was his student, who was the Second Merag Lama.340

336 See note 324. In Rgyal rigs I (1986: 30b), the monasteries in Shar Stag lung, Me rag and Sag stengs, Ar rgya gdung as well as other designated only by their location were mentioned as being founded by the First Merag Lama, without giving any further detail. The information given in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 96-101) and Bstan ’dzin nor bu (2002) came either from Rgyal rigs, Me rag mdzad rnam or Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, but Nam shu’i monastery as being founded by Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me is not mentioned in all the three sources (Mizuno and Tenpa 2015: 68). Even Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 6; 1981: 4; 1975a, b; 34) states that the monasteries of Dga’ ldan rtse gling and Dungsham (Gdung gsham) in Me rag and Tashi Tselling (Bkra shis brtse gling) in the Sag stengs region were founded by Bstan pa’i sgron me. However, Bodt (2012: 129) wrongly attributed Stag lung rdzong and Ar rgya gdung monasteries to the Fourth Merag Lama. Nevertheless, a better account of these monasteries could be narrated only if a ‘manual book’ (ma deb) of the monasteries come to light.

337 In the case of his other activities, particularly his journey to the borderland of Assam and the subjugation of demons and demonesses, and his relation with a sbyar Sprang po dar and the ‘other’ (gzhan) Sprang po dar are not extensively discussed here.

338 It remains unclear how Sarkar has drawn that figure, which is followed and quoted as ninety-nine years old in Bodt (2012: 111; 467). See Tenpa (2013) as well as Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 8, n.17).

339 The date is based on what Aris (1988: 113, n.10) has provided, as 1475-1542. Aris’ dating requires examination because in 1986 (p. 45, n.81) he says Bstan pa’i sgron me lived for ninety-nine years. It was only sixty-seven years in 1988 (pp. 113). The Me rag mdzad rnam text however mentions that he died at the age of ninety-seven. Aris’ 1988 dating of Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me is followed by Huber (2008). As the construction of ‘reliquary stūpa’ (sku gdung mchod rten) in the Buddhist traditions is observed in the Eastern Himalayan regions, in the oral traditions, it is said that a reliquary stūpa of Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me was also build. But the Fourth Merag Lama Blo
Lama as a contemporary, he might have passed away earlier or later than the Second Dalai Lama.

In the examination of the life and activities of *rgyal sras* Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, we can say that he contributed greatly to the development of Tibetan Buddhism in the region, in particular of the Dge lugs school. The above discussion shows that he successfully established a number of monasteries, but there are no indication of his scholarly activities during this period. Even though it is difficult to establish the exact dates of founding of these monasteries, the autobiography of the Second Dalai Lama, *Dga’ ldan chos ‘byung* (1989 [1697]) and the *Rgyal rigs* text confirm that Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me was a historical person and that he was a contemporary of the Second Dalai Lama.

### The Second and Third Merag Lamas

As stated in *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (9), the First Merag’s activities were continued by his immediate disciple, Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer, and after him by Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan and Blo gros rgya mtsho. The successive disciples, particularly the second and third Merag Lamas, are mentioned solely in *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (9-10). The Second Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer is recorded as the immediate disciple of the First Merag Lama (*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* 9).[^340]

*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* simply states that he received full monastic ordinations from the Third Dalai Lama Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1543-1588)[^341] and that he returned back to Shar Mon after his initial studies in central Tibet (which is most probably Bkra shis lhun po monastery). It further states that once back, he established Dga’ ldan chos gling.

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[^340]: Merag mdzad rnam (6a.3) states that the chieftain of Sla nga steng region, Bstan pa’i ’od zer, was the chief patron of the Sla nga steng monastery when the monastery was founded. The text does not record that he became his disciple and that he was named Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer, who was the Second Merag Lama. One may assume that the chief of Sla nga steng, Bstan pa’i ’od zer did become disciple of Bstan pa’i sgron me, though it does not correspond with the various sources on the records of the successive uncles and nephews.

[^341]: See Dngos grub rgya mtsho’i shing rta (1991 [1646]) about the Third Dalai Lama. The biography was compiled and edited by the Fifth Dalai Lama. See also Adams (2008).
However, Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 102) records the name of the monastery as Dga’ ldan gsung rab gling.\textsuperscript{342}

Irrespective of the name, \textit{Dga’ ba’i dpal ster} (9) continues stating that he had secretly invited the Third Dalai Lama in Me rag for the consecration of the monastery,\textsuperscript{343} which is also confirmed in the biography of the Third Dalai Lama. In there, it is however not recorded as a secret visit, but as a well-planned journey. The biography narrates how he went to the region after his religious activities in Bya yul:

[The Third Dalai Lama] was invited to Mtsho sna, where he was heading the consecration of Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang monastery of the ‘uncle and nephew lamas’ (\textit{bla ma khu mtshan}). He therefore fulfilled the wishes of the ordained and common people. He bestowed religious teachings to the visiting dignitaries of Mon pa, such as Bla ma Phyogs las rnam rgyal and jo bo Bstan pa tshe ring, and so on. After that, he also bestowed the ‘recitation transmission’ (\textit{bzlas lung}) of ‘Maṇi recitation’ (\textit{yig drug}), ‘temporary precepts of abstinence’ (\textit{bsnyen gnas; upavāsa}), and so on to many devotees at Mon wab [region].\textsuperscript{344}

In the biography, it only states the title as ‘uncle and nephew lamas’ (\textit{bla ma khu mtshan}), which actually refers to the First and Second Merag Lamas. Although the passage does not directly state that they invited the Third Dalai Lama, it does however mention the monastery of Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang as being that of the uncle and nephew lamas. The name of the monastery was supposedly taken after Dga’ ldan pho brang palace of ‘Bras spung monastery and was thus named Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang by the Third Dalai Lama. Although \textit{Dga’ ldan chos ‘byung} (1989 [1697]: 215) also mentions the name of Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang monastery, \textit{Sde srid} Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, the author of the text, states that the monastery was

\textsuperscript{342}Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 7) and Bodt (2012: 129) wrongly attributed this monastery to the First Merag Lama with different spelling as Dga’ ldan gsung rab gling or Dga’ ldan rtses gling. They attributed it also to the Second and Fourth Merag Lamas.

\textsuperscript{343}In Tib., \textit{rgyal ba bsod nams rgya mtsho me rag la gsang ba’i sgo nas gdan drangs te dgon par rab gnas mdzad tshul} (Dga’ ba’i dpal ster 9.6).

\textsuperscript{344}In Tib., \textit{de nas mtsho sna phyogs su gdan drangs/ mon dga’ ldan pho drang gi bla ma khu mtshan gyis thog drangs phyogs de’i skya ser thams cad kyi re ba yongs su tshim par mdzad/ bla ma phyogs las rnam rgyal dang jo bo bstan pa tshe ring sogs mon pa’i mjal mi mang du byung bar chos kyi bka’ drin tsal/ mon wah/war tu’ng skye bo’i tshogs du ma la yig drug gi bzlas lung/ rab byung bsnyen gnas sogs stsal te dge ba’i lam rgya chen por bkod pa} (Dngos grub rgya mtsho’i shing rta 1991 [1646]: 75b). See also note 305.
founded by Lama Legs pa rgyal mtshan, instead of the Second Merag Lama. He also records the monastery as being located in Sag stengs of Mon Mtsho sna, instead of in Me rag as mentioned in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (9). The conflicting statements are confusing, but we may consider the biography of the Third Dalai Lama as being more reliable as it is a biography compiled not long after the death of the Third Dalai Lama and published in the name of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1646.

With regard to the Third Merag Lama, the only reference to him besides Dga’ ba’i dpal ster is Dga’ ldan chos ’byung 1989 [1698]: 215), where he is mentioned as the second abbot of the Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang monastery. This abbot cannot be other than the Third Merag Lama, who is mentioned in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (10) as the disciple as well as a nephew of the Second Merag Lama. He was supposedly ordained by the Fourth Dalai Lama Yon tan rgya mtsho (1589-1616). However, this is not mentioned in Nor bu’i ’phreng ba (1991 [1653-4]), the biography of the Fourth Dalai Lama. Nonetheless, Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (10) continues stating that after his, i.e. after Third Merag Lama’s initial studies in central Tibet, he took over the supervision of the established monasteries in Shar Mon. Besides this, he has been credited for being the first to implement the ‘obligatory monkhood’ (ban khral), an obligation in which the middle son (of the third or fifth in the family) has to go to central Tibet for further Buddhist studies.\(^\text{345}\)

Similarly, there is a Jo rdzong Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, a disciple of the Fourth Paṇchen Lama Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570-1662), who bears the same name as him. Although the period is the same, this identically named person cannot be the Third Merag Lama, because Jo rdzong Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan was the fourteenth ‘succession of Lamas [to throne holder]’ (bla rabs) of the Dkyil khang ‘college’ (grwa tshang)\(^\text{346}\) and the first ‘vajrācārya’ (rdo rje slob dpon) of the newly-founded Rgyud pa grwa tshang of Bkra shis lhun po monastery. If they were the

\(^{345}\) Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 103) recorded as it is in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster.

\(^{346}\) One of the three monastic colleges of Bkra shis lhun po monastery. If Jo rdzong refers to Jo mo rdzong in Kong po, then it is not likely that the name refers to a single person. But if Jo rdzong is Rbyor ra rdzong, which is adjacent to Tsona rdzong, they might be same person. It is very unlikely that he went to Bkra shis lhun po after his tenure as the second abbot of Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang.
same person, he could not have gone unnoticed in the writings of the Fifth Dalai Lama and Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho.

His abbacy was succeeded by at least three monks, but the usual successor, the Fourth Merag Lama, is not recorded in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster. Dga’ ldan chos ’byung 1989 [1698]: 215) mentions Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse’i dbang phyug, Blo bzang bstan pa rgya mtsho, and Blo bzang dpal ’byor as his successors. The last abbot, Blo bzang dpal ’byor, is recorded as being a contemporary of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and sde srid thus states that this “rje Lama [Blo bzang dpal ’byor] conferred the name of Dga’ ldan rab rgyas gling monastery later on to Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang, the name given after the visit of the Omniscient Bsod nams rgya mtsho.”347 The change of name to Dga’ ldan gsung rab gling is recorded again in 1653, where an agreement to maintain mutual friendship during the troubled period was signed between the Fourth Merag Lama and Pha jo khra.348

From its name or the amount of monks residing at the monastery, one can thus assume that it was an influential monastery in the region. In Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (9), it states that the monastery housed more than two hundred monks, whereas Dga’ ldan chos ’byung (1989 [1697]: 215) states the number as eighty.349 Both Me rag as well as Sag stengs have been recorded as the location of the monastery. Either Me rag or Sag stengs must be one of them (the region). This can be observed in the writings of Fifth Dalai Lama and Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, which is also reasserted or quoted in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster.

Corresponding to the list of the three abbots of Dga’ ldan rab rgyas gling or Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang monastery, the next abbot should have been the Fourth Merag

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347 In Tib., mon mtsho sna’i sa steng ni/ bla ma legs pa rgyal mtshan gyis btab/ thams cad mkhyen pa bsod nams rgya mtsho phyogs der phebs shing ming dga’ ldan pho brang du ’dogs pa gnang/ de rjes mkhan po blo bzang bstan pa ’i rgyal mtshan/ ngag dbang mkhyen brtse’i dbang phyug/ blo bzang bstan pa rgya mtsho/ da lu blo bzang dpal ’byor gyis skyong zhing/ phyis rje bla ma mchog nas dgon ming dga’ ldan rab rgyas gling du btsal (Dga’ ldan chos ’byung 1989 [1697]: 215).

348 See the details of the agreement in Tibetan in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 114-15) and the page 143.

349 Likewise, one may assume that all these names refer to a single monastery, but were recorded differently, i.e. Dga’ ldan rtse gling founded by the First Merag Lama (Sarkar 1975: 34; 2006 [1980]: 6), Dga’ ldan chos gling or Dga’ ldan gsung rab gling by the Second Merag Lama (Dga’ ba’i dpal ster 10.5: Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 102) or the changing the name of Mon Dga’ ldan pho brang to Dga’ ldan rab rgyas gling by Lama Legs pa rgyal mtshan.
Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho, had he not moved to Tawang during the conflict in Eastern Bhutan. Although he was a contemporary to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, the latter makes no mention of him, who played an “important role on the Dge lugs pa side during the war with the ’Brug pa authorities of Western Bhutan” (Aris 2009 [1986]: 45, n.83).

Fig. 23: Old chang in a new bottle: Non-functional road-side Mani-wheel, Dirang
Chapter Five

A Crucial Stage in the Region’s History in the late 17th century

This chapter focuses on the historical development of the Mon region in the time around the foundation of the central monastic seat of Tawang (Rta dbang/wang) by the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho. His active participation in the formation of the Mon region and his involvement in the sectarian conflicts in Bhutan, as well as with other schools of Tibetan Buddhism, will be particularly highlighted. The direct involvement of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the region’s establishment and foundation of Tawang monastery is also outlined. Focus is also on the period after 1681, on the reemergence of the Ber mkhar lineage of the Sixth Dalai Lama, up to the early-eighteenth century.

Merag Lama as one the Five Groups of Mon Lamas

The term ‘five groups of Mon lamas’ (mon bla khag lnga) is crucial in understanding the history of the Mon region in the seventeenth century. As mentioned earlier, Merag Lama was famously known as the title of (the Fourth) Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho, who came from the Dpa’ bo gdung family. His family’s lineage in Tsho gsum, which refers to present-day Tawang, is well supported in the textual sources of 1679, 1680, 1692, and in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster.350 Yet there are also (the less convincing) arguments that he was “born in Merag Sag stengs” or that he “might have been born and brought up in Merag because of his title Merag Lama.”351 He was also known as Bla ma Nag seng in the Lo rgyus text,352 where he is called Ngag

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350 To understand the discussion and analysis of the biography of the Fourth Merag Lama, it is helpful to read the amended and annotated translation of Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, introduced in Appendix II.
351 See the edicts of 1679 and 1680, the 1692 document, Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (18) and Thub bstan chos phel (1988: 27) and Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 104) for the latter quotations.
352 The text Lo rgyus is also written by Wag Indra [Ngag dbang], the author of Rgyal rigs. The full name is Dpal ’brag par lung lha’i gdung brgyud kyi bstan pa’i ring lungs/ lho mon kha bzhi las ngyi ma shar phyogs su byung zhiang rgyas pa’i lo rgyus gsal ba’i me long. The text highlights the troublesome period in Shar Mon. See Aris’ (2009 [1986]; 87-120) annotated translation for details, where he states that Lo rgyas was written after 1678, whereas Ardussi (2009: xiii) states that it can be “tentatively date the work to the period [of] 1680-1690.”
dbang blo bzang Blo gros rgya mtsho, after receiving his ‘full monastic ordination’ (*dge s珑; bhikṣu*) in 1655.353

His crucial role in the formation of the Mon region is sometimes listed and sometimes excluded in different sources in relation to the five groups of Mon lamas. Understanding the relationship between these five groups of Mon lamas and *Zhabs drung* Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594-1651) and his ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa sect is important as it helps us to understand the development of the relationship between Tibet and Bhutan of that time. The term the ‘five groups of lamas’ (*bla ma khag lnga*) is mentioned primarily in Bhutanese historical texts,354 whereas the ‘five groups of Mon lamas’ (*mon bla khag lnga*) is recorded in the Fifth Dalai Lama’s autobiography (*Du kū la'i gos bzang* 1992: 111a). The five groups consist of the following of lamas: Gnas rnying Lama, Lha pa Lama, ‘Ba’ ra ba Lama and two Kaḥ thog Lamas. They were however not united in their opposition against *Zhabs drung* and operated separately.355

Besides the above list, not a single Dge lugs Lama is recorded in the biographies of *Zhabs drung*, but ‘Ba’ ra ba Bka’ brgyud is replaced by Lcags zam pa.356 However, Dge ’dun rin chen (1976: 220; 1987: 200-08) excluded the two Kaḥ thog Lamas.

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353 In *Du kū la'i gos bzang* (1992c: 142b), his name, Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho, is used only after the year Earth-Sheep [1679]. The year Earth-Sheep [1679] is mentioned in 104b (p. 212).

354 The first text, *Zhabs drung rnam thar rgyas pa*, is an extended biography of *Zhabs drung* Ngag dbang rnam rgyal. It was written by Gtsang mkhan chen ’Jam dbyangs rgya mtsho (1610-1684) in 1674. See also Sonam Kinga’s (2008) English translation of the biography of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal: Pal Drukpa Rinpoche which is written in *Rdzong kha* by Drag shos Sangs rgyas (2008 [1999]). Se ba la Ngag dbang pad dkar’s (2004) composition of *Zhabs drung* biography is also a major source for the studies on the life of the founder of the Bhutan state. The other two texts, *Lho'i chos 'byung* and *Lho phyogs nags mo'i ljongs kyi chos 'byung*, are written by Bstan ’dzin chos rgyal (1700-1767) in 1759 and Dge ’dun rin chen in 1972. See also Ardussi (1977: 191-249), Aris (1979: 203-33) and Karma (2013: 212-73) on the life of *Zhabs drung*.

355 Although *Du kū la'i gos bzang* (1992a: 111a) records the term ‘the five lamas’ (*bla ma khag lnga*), Karma (2013: 236) considers that “the terminology of five Lamaist factions as a standard list covering all groups of dissenting lamas is perhaps a later development.” Karma (2013: 227) also states that “these lamas joined hands” to combat against the dominance of *Zhabs drung*. It remains unclear why Aris (1979: 218) states that “so called” in front of the group. See also Ardussi (1977: 209, 211) and Karma (2013: 227-38).

Lamas\textsuperscript{357} and substituted them with Dge lugs Lamas and that of the 'Ba’ ra ba Bka’ brgyud.\textsuperscript{358} Moreover, some modern scholars suggest that the five groups were only Dge lugs pa monks, which means conflict was only between Zhabs drung and the Dga’ ldan pho brang governments, i.e. the 'Brug pa and Dge lugs schools.\textsuperscript{359} The actual list includes mainly non 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud Lamas and no references are made of Dge lugs Lamas, not even of Merag Lama. The discrepancy on the identities of the group, as well as on the region, is found in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 126), who based himself on Shakabpa (1976a: 428).\textsuperscript{360}

The reconstructed list is not similar to the actual list and consists only of Dge lugs lamas of the seventeenth century (Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 126), but

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\textsuperscript{357} Kah thog Lamas had to give up their possession of the famous Spa gro Stag tshang hermitage to Zhabs drung by 1644 (Karma 2013: 243). Probably these Kah thog Lamas left for Sikkim, where one of them, Kah thog Lama Kun tu bzang po with the other two lamas, facilitated the enthronement ceremony of the First chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal of Sikkim. Among the three lamas, the other two lamas were lhla btsun Nam mkha’ ‘jigs med and mnga’ bdag Phun tshogs rig ’dzin in the company of Kah thog Lama. If these Mon Kah thog Lamas were the same individuals, the fleeing lamas, probably one of them had been to Lhasa and met the Fifth Dalai Lama. The meeting of a Mon Kah thog Lama with the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1669 was close to the period of the military campaign of the Third 'Brug sde sril Mi ’gyur bstan pa, who was successful in occupying southern Sikkim in 1668-9. See Ardussi (2004a) and Mullard (2009, 2011) on the foundation of Sikkim. For further details on Mon Kah thog Lamas and their sects, see Ardussi (1977: 21, 109-15), Aris (1979: 153-54, 181-84), Ehrhard (2003), Karma (2013: 176-77, 182-84, 229, 243), etc.

\textsuperscript{358} Besides these schools, a number of others schools are listed or excluded in the groups. In the case of 'Bri gung Bka’ brgyud (in ancient Bhutan), it is not among the groups, but its independent authority ended when Ngag dbang rnam rgyal captured Dar dkar rdzong circa 1647 and merged it within the 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa (Ardussi 1979: 138; Karma 2013: 187-88). With regard to Kam tshang Bka’ brgyud, Ardussi (1977: 139-40) claims that their initial “missionary activity [was confined] to the south of Tibet and historically concentrated on the Klo pa and [present] Mon territories near Mtsho sna [or in Eastern Bhutan].” For the Sa skya pa and Rnying ma pa schools, the former is regarded to have an “early pledge of submission to the authority of Zhabs drung” in 1616, and the latter is understood as being coexistent along with the 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa of Bhutan (Ardussi 1977: 141-50; Aris 1979: 195-97, 153-65; Karma 2013: 184-5, 150-77). See for further discussion on the secular rulers and schools, who resisted the initial Zhabs drung supremacy in Ardussi (1977, 2004a), Aris (1979), Padma tsho dbang (1994: 171-87), Drag shos Sangs rgyas (2008 [1999]: 83-4), and Karma (2013: 201, 235-7), etc.

\textsuperscript{359} This list of the five groups of Mon lamas, however, does not support the conclusion (Drag shos Sangs rgyas 2008 [1999]: 157-82; Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 126). This is similarly observed in the biographies of Zhabs drung, and in Du kā la’i gos bzang.

\textsuperscript{360} Shakabpa wrongly assumes that old Mon region in the seventeenth century refers only to the present-day Mon region and states that “due to the non-corporation between the five groups of Mon lamas and the Southern 'Brug, in the Wood-Monkey (1644) year, patron [Gushri Khan] and his retinue were already in Lho brag, a Mongol army of seven hundred soldiers was dispatched to the direction of 'Brug (Bhutan) from the remaining troops” (in Tib., mon pa bla khag lnga dang/ lho 'brug pa ma mthun pa’i rkyen las/ shing spre 1644 lo mchod yon lhan rgyas lho brag phyogs yod mus dmag khongs nas sog dmag bdun bregya skor ’brug phyogs btang/ Zhwa sgb pa 1976a: 428). Ardussi (1977: 230-33) suggests that the initial 1644 military campaign was not against 'Brug gzhung, but “an extension of the expedition against rebellious Karmapa troops in Lho brag,” which became a full-fledged war against Bhutan.

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359 This list of the five groups of Mon lamas, however, does not support the conclusion (Drag shos Sangs rgyas 2008 [1999]: 157-82; Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 126). This is similarly observed in the biographies of Zhabs drung, and in Du kā la’i gos bzang.

360 Shakabpa wrongly assumes that old Mon region in the seventeenth century refers only to the present-day Mon region and states that “due to the non-corporation between the five groups of Mon lamas and the Southern 'Brug, in the Wood-Monkey (1644) year, patron [Gushri Khan] and his retinue were already in Lho brag, a Mongol army of seven hundred soldiers was dispatched to the direction of 'Brug (Bhutan) from the remaining troops” (in Tib., mon pa bla khag lnga dang/ lho 'brug pa ma mthun pa’i rkyen las/ shing spre 1644 lo mchod yon lhan rgyas lho brag phyogs yod mus dmag khongs nas sog dmag bdun bregya skor ’brug phyogs btang/ Zhwa sgb pa 1976a: 428). Ardussi (1977: 230-33) suggests that the initial 1644 military campaign was not against 'Brug gzhung, but “an extension of the expedition against rebellious Karmapa troops in Lho brag,” which became a full-fledged war against Bhutan.
Merag Lama figures prominently among the groups, which is also the earliest reference of him according to Rgyal sras sprul sku. The reconstructed five groups of lamas are: Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho, Tsona mkhan po Ngag dbang tshul khrims, Merag sku skye Chos nyid bstan ’dzin, Sag bkras sprul sku Blo bzang ’phrin las, and Sgom pa sku skye Blo bzang bstan ’dzin. The identification of the Dge lugs Lama in the reconstructed list by Rgyal sras sprul sku is certainly not correct because a number of other Tibetan Buddhist schools were active and well established in Bhutan prior to the formation of Bhutan.\footnote{The foundation of the Bhutanese government was observed since 1616, or precisely after 1625, when Zhabz drung resumed his role after the end of retreat (Ardussi 1977: 12,119,206,212-13). The state was largely created by exiled Tibetans of the ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa, who were helped by the native people of ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa. They were predominantly involved in the sectarian conflicts since then, particularly against the other local non ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud sects. It was the bar ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa from ’Obs mtsho ba family that Zhabz drung received full assistance in his struggle against the governments of Tibet of the Sde srid Gtsang pa and the Dga’ ldan pho brang, to establish a centralized regime of ‘Brug pa in Bhutan (Ardussi 1977: 116-20; 2000: 1-30). Although Sde srid Gtsang pa formally accepted the authority of Zhabz drung in 1640 after the foundation of Spungs thang bde ba chen po’dpo brang of the Pu na rdo rje in 1638, one can assume that he was eager to return back to Rwa lung monastery and resume his leadership until the non-withdrawal of his representative at the Rwa lung monastery in 1647. It was changed after the recognition of Mi ’pham dbang po (1641-1717) as the Sixth Rgyal dbang ’brug chen by the Tibetan government in 1646 as a reincarnation of Dpal dbang po in 1641 (Karma 2013: 243-44). For further details refer to Aris (1979: 147-97), Ardussi (2004a), Drag shos Sangs rgyas (2008 [1999]: 138-9, 144), Karma (2013: 235), etc. on the formation of the state of Bhutan.} Although it is not directly recorded as a conflict between the two schools, certain Dge lugs pa representatives were involved. In this case, Ardussi (2004a: 17) states that Merag Lama of Eastern Mon was among the expelled lamas, whereas Karma (2013: 235) maintains that it was a certain Shing rta pa Dge lugs pa and not Merag Lama.\footnote{Ardussi (1977: 315) states that “the Merag monks were probably Rnying ma pas” without providing further discussion. His note on Tawang is based on Aris’ (1980) article, in which Tawang in Kameng district was based on the pre-1984 administrative structure (Ardussi 2002: 30, n.29, 35), because since 1984 West Kameng is divided into Tawang and West Kameng districts and the erstwhile Kameng was divided into East and West Kameng in 1980. See Tenpa (2014: 74).}

On the other hand, in the 1650s, Shar Mon, including Eastern Bhutan and the Mon Region, was yet to be involved in the conflict, particularly in the sectarian conflicts, which means Merag Lama was yet not involved. In this regard, the Merag Lama therefore emerged as an opponent against ’Brug pa only after the death of Zhabz drung in 1651. He became a key person after the eastward expansionist policy adopted by the ‘Trongs a Governor’ (Krong gsar dpon slob) Mi ’gyur brtan pa (r.
1651-1667) and the first 'Brug sde srid Bstan 'dzin 'brug rgyas (d. 1656) in the early 1650s, or at least since 1656, as recorded in the 1680 edict. In the beginning, the groups were non 'Brug pa Bka’ brcyud pa, who struggled against the 'Brug pa Bka’ brcyud pa (i.e. only Western Bhutanese at that time). They petitioned to the Fifth Dalai Lama for support, which can be dated back to 1642 (Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992a: 111a), is discussed below.

Historically, after the arrival of Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal in 1616, the struggle emerged between those groups and the followers of Zhabs drung, which became more fierce after 1630. The reason why Zhabs drung left Tibet and his seat in Rwa lung had to do with him wanting to achieve the position of Rgyal dbang 'brug chen. This political ambition was the first problem within the 'Brug pa Bka’ brcyud sect. The five groups of lamas were supported at the beginning by Gtsang sde srid Phun tshogs rnam rgyal (d. 1621) and his successor, Karma bstan skyong dbang po (1606, r. 1621-1642). The support of Gtsang sde srid was extended after the groups were defeated by the followers of Zhabs drung in 1617-18. This led to a further formation of a group by the lamas aiming at counteracting the rapid mobilization of the 'Brug pa school, particularly after the skillful dealings by Zhabs drung with the king of Cooch Bihar, Raja Padma (Nār) Nārāyan and with the

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363 The third 'Brug sde srid Mi 'gyur brtan pa or Damchos lhun grub (r. 1667-1680) was the Krong gsar dpon slob or ‘monastic superintendent of Chos rtse’ (Chos rtse spyi bla) since 1651, prior to becoming 'Brug sde srid from 1667. His incorporation or “annexation of Eastern Bhutan (Shar phyogs) is always regarded as his personal achievement” (Aris 2009 [1986]: 116; Ardussi 1977: 300; Karma 2013: 248). See the details about the former Tibetan monk, Mi ‘gyur brtan pa in Bstan ‘dzin ‘brug rgyas (1759: 94b-96a), Ngag dbang lhun grub (1720: 68b-70a), Lo rgyus (1986 [17th c.]: 91), Bkra's shis gyang rtse rdzong became known as Krong gsar rdzong, from there six to eight rdzongs of Eastern Bhutan were governed, i.e. Krong gsar rdzong, Bkra shis gyang rdzong, Bhutan rtse rdzong, Bkra shis gyang rtse rdzong, Ghongs dka’ rdzong, Ghalsal mdg sgang rdzong and Gdung mthams mkhar (Ardussi 1977: 300, n.66).

364 See the 1680 edict in section 6.2 in the next chapter.

365 As Padma Nārāyan is not listed among the Cooch Bihar kings, he could be Prān Nārāyan (r. 1627-1665) (Ardussi 1977: 307, n.82). Interestingly, Zhabs drung mentions in his letter to the Sde pa Gtsang pa as early as in 1616 that the people of Lho kha bzhi ('Brug yul) and Cooch Bihar were with him if the king declared war against him (Aris 1977: 208). Moreover, Zhabs drung had been credited for taking back some of the Bhutanese region, lost to the kings of Cooch Bihar since 1619, primarily after the renewal of the friendship, which was built by Bstan pa’i nyi ma, the father of Zhabs drung with Prān Nārāyan (Ardussi 1977: 306, n.81, 307, n.82).
Jesuit missionary (Cacella and Cabral in the 1620-30s). This was the reason why the group initially requested the support of the Gtsang sde srid against Zhabs drung in 1634 and in 1639. In 1642, they requested the assistance of the Dga’ ldan pho brang government of Tibet (1642-1959).

The hostility between the five groups and Zhabs drung in 1629 escalated when Zhabs drung was building his first major palace called Gsang sngags zab don pho brang. Aris (1979: 191-5, 218) considers that this undertaking was directed against Lama Dpal ldan of Wang glang ma lung, a local Lama of the Gnas rnying pa School. As a consequence, the unknown Lama of Gnas rnying pa was killed. Other conflicts and decisive defeats of the remaining groups of lamas came after the submission of Lha pa, the unofficial head of the five groups of lamas in 1641. This group hailed from the Lha pa Bka’ brgyud pa and the “final submission had taken place just before they handed over their former fortress of Rdo rong/ snyug rdzong in Thimphu in 1641.” The information about the defeat of the five groups reached central Tibet, when “the younger Lha pa family’s descendant arrived to urge for help in the war between the five groups of the Mon lamas and the 'Brug pa in Mon” [to which the Fifth Dalai Lama states] that “if the fire is not extinguished when it is small, there will be nothing but charcoal and the crotch [of a tree].”

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367 Zhabs drung’s hospitality was rewarded with “guns, cannons and gun powder” from the Jesuit missionary (Ardussi 1977: 216; Aris 1979: xxxiii, n.14; 217-8; 2009 [1986]: 170-86; Karma 2013: 224-7).
369 The last unnamed Gnas rnying rje btsun of Bhutan died in 1657 under imprisonment (Karma 2013: 313). With regard to the Gnas rnying pa School, it traces or claims to date back to the Tibetan imperial period, but dissolves into 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa and Dge lugs pa in Bhutan and Tibet, after the mid-seventeenth century conflicts. See for further about the school in Aris (1979: 191-95), Vitali (2004: 6-20) and Karma (2013: 180-2). Ardussi (1977: 138) however considers that Gnas rnying pa is a “minor Bka’ brgyud pa sect”, who were traced to the Rgya clan and who were among the first to oppose Zhabs drung (Ardussi 1977: 218-19; Karma 2013: 227).
371 In Tib., me chung ring du ma bsad pas sor dang 'dom gyi dper song zhing/ [and] mon du bla khag lnga dang 'brug pa thug pa'i dmag bskul la lha pa'i gdung brgyud sku gzhon pa byon/ (Du kū la'i gos bzang 1992a: 111a). The modified translation is based on Karmay (2014: 170).
It seems that besides the younger Lha pa gdung rgyud pa, no one of the other heads of the five groups of Mon lamas personally reached in front of the Dalai Lama in 1642. Most likely, their representatives petitioned or informed him. Nonetheless, when the petition was presented to the Fifth Dalai Lama, within a short time, sde srid Bsod nams chos ’phel dispatched armed forces of seven hundred Mongols and Tibetans to Bhutan in 1644. This became what is known as the first Tibeto-Bhutanese war of 1644-1646, after the foundation of the Dga’ ldan pho brang government of Tibet. However, the war caused heavy loss to the joint Mongol-Tibetan campaign and they had to retreat in the middle of the war. The war also caused the expulsion or fleeing of many rival lamas on both sides. This gave a good reason for the Tibetan government (Sde srid Gtsang pa as well as later on the Dga’ ldan pho brang) to be further involved in the recognition of the reincarnation of kun mkhyen Padma dkar po (1527-1592) of the Rwa lung monastery.

In the rivalry between Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594-1651) and Dpag bsam dbang po (1592-1641) as a candidate for the reincarnation of Padma dkar

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372 After the foundation of Bkra shis chos rdzong in the place of old Rdo sngon rdzong of Lha pa Bka’ brgyud in 1641, Ardussi (1977: 226) suspects that any remaining leaders of Lha pa and Gnas rnying must have left Lho Mon (’Brug yul) for Tibet. Thereafter, in 1642, Lha pa gdung brgyud pa petitioned and personally showed respect to the Fifth Dalai Lama. He was one of the first sectarian heads [among the Five lamas] to do so, according to Ardussi (1977: 230) and Karma (2013: 239) who based their argument on Du kū la’i gos bzang (1992: 111a). Besides the above mentioned rdzong, five more rdzong were later founded. Pu na kha rdzong, Dbang ’dus pho brang rdzong, Spa gro ’Brug rgyal rdzong and Bkra shis gsang rdzong, where a rdzong dpon, rdzong ’dzin or rdzong bdag was appointed successively. Among the rdzong, Pu na kha rdzong, Bkra shis chos rdzong and Dbang ’dus pho brang rdzong became the main centres for the administration. The dpon slob positions at Spa gro, Krong gsar and Dar dkar na (Dagana) were at the outer level, but either of Spa gro and Krong gsar positions became the central line for the succession to the throne in the later period.

373 It is likely a report which was received on the fourth or fifth month of the Water-Horse [1642] year at Zha lu, while the Fifth Dalai Lama and his officials were on the way back to Lhasa after the official ceremony in Gtsang Bkra shis lhun po monastery. The Water-Horse year is recorded in the p. 104a of the Vol. 5 (published in the 1992). See also Shakabpa (1976a: 428). The second and third war between Sde pa Gtsang pa and ’Brug gzungs of Zhab drung were fought in 1634 and 1639, in which any strategic attacks launched by the former Sde pa Gtsang pa did not go well (Ardussi 1977: 219-20, 222-3; Karma 2013: 227-38, 240). Ardussi (1977: 236-37) argues that as “the [Fifth] Dalai Lama offers no motives for the episode [of the second war] and I am inclined to view it as inspired mainly out of a desire for revenge and to regain face after earlier defeats [of 1644].” Karma (2013: 244-47) simply recorded the war, but no cause of the war is stated. Aris (1979: 224) attributes it to the support of ’Brug pa for the “unsuccessful revolt of the Sgar pa family” from Lho kha, whereas Tucci (1949: 68) and Petech (1972: 204) consider that it was the second war, in 1648-49, where ’Brug pa supported Sgar pa family against Dga’ ldan pho brang.

374 The reincarnation lineage is called Rgyal dbang ’brug chen, where the present-one is the Twelfth Rgyal dbang ’brug chen in succession. See also Ardussi (1997: 65).
po,\textsuperscript{375} Lhasa installed and supported in 1646 the latter’s reincarnation Mi pham dbang po (1642-1717) as the actual successive lineage holder. This ended the candidature of Zhabdruṅ as the reincarnation of Padma dkar po, but a new lineage of Zhabdruṅ rin po che came into existence in Bhutan. The root of this conflict continued to affect the Tibetan-Bhutanese relation and was “one of the chief causes” for further clashes between Tibet and Bhutan.\textsuperscript{376} From the above discussion, one can conclude that Merag Lama was not among the expelled or fleeing lamas. Even if he was, it was not so before 1655 because prior to this episode, his presence in the region can be confirmed from the 1653 mutual friendship agreement signed between him and Pha jo khra.

Besides that agreement, a number of other settlements were reached between him and other monastic institutions in Shar Mon, (i.e. Eastern Bhutan and present Mon), signed in 1644, 1650, 1651 and 1652 (Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 114). These agreements indicate that Merag Lama was active in the region during 1644 and the 1648-1649 wars between Bhutan and Tibet. Another indication that he left the Merag region after 1655 is that the Fifth Dalai Lama’s Du kū la’i gos bzang (1992a: 142b) records him having received the dge slong vows in Lhasa in 1655. Otherwise, his departure from the region is more likely after the third war between Bhutan and Tibet in 1656 because it chronologically fits with the tense situation in the region after the war.

\textsuperscript{375} Dpag bsam dbang po was the Fifth Rgyal dbang ’brug chen and was one of the candidate after the death of kun mkhyen Padma dkar po (1527-1592). He was supported by Gtsang sde srid, whereas his opponent Zhabdruṅ Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594-1653) run away to Lho yul (Southern Land), i.e. Mon, and founded Bhutan. See about him in ’Phrin las rgya mtsho (2009 [1845]), Aris (1979: 206-07, 223-24, 326) and Karma Phuntsho (2013: 212-17). Refer to TBRC: P877 for Dpag bsam dbang po.

\textsuperscript{376} See Ardussi’s (1997) observation, where he states that “on seven occasions between 1616 and 1679, the central Tibetan Government launched war against Bhutan, first under the banner of the Gtsang pa kings, and after 1642, under that of the Dge lugs pa [sic] establishment. On each occasion the Tibetans came out the worst. As the new Tibetan and Bhutanese political entities grew in strength, the struggle evolved from a purely sectarian origin into a serious conflict over territory and national prestige, along their common Himalayan border and beyond” (Ardussi 1997: 65). The reconciliation or reapprochement attempts in the eighteenth century by the thirteenth ’Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa and Dga’ ldang pho brang were based on the sectarian policy in central Tibet and Gtsang, where the former was formed with their own strength, while the latter was dependend on the outsider, particularly on the Mongols.
Cross-border Conflicts in Shar Mon in the 1650s

What we know from the Fifth Dalai Lama’s biography is that the bestowing of the dge slong vows to Merag Lama took place in Lhasa in 1655. This confirms that Merag Lama was around that time already in central Tibet and not in Shar Mon. After receiving his vows, Merag Lama came back to the Merag region and successfully conducted his religious activities. However, after Krong gsar dpon slob Mi ’gyur brtan pa (d. 1680) and the first ’Brug sde srid Bstan ’dzin ’brug rgyas (d. 1656) adopted the expansionist policy in Shar Mon, Merag Lama left the region. This probably dates after the war between the Tibetan and Bhutanese in 1656-1657, which was the first war following the supposed retreat or passing away of Zhabs drung in 1651.

However, a number of modern Bhutanese historical works state that the majority of Eastern Bhutan (Shar Mon) had already been annexed by the 1640s.\textsuperscript{377} The annexation however was not before 1655-1656 because Bumthang was conquered after the defeat of Chos ’khor sde pa in 1651, Lhun rtse rdzong was formally constructed in 1654, and Bkra shis sgang rdzong was completed in 1659 after the military campaign of Krong gsar dpon slob Mi ’gyur bstan pa.\textsuperscript{378} After this successful development, Lo rgyus (1986: 101) informs us that the expansionist campaign was counteracted by those who were under the close mentorship of the rulers of the Dga’ ldan pa, i.e. the Tibetan government. These groups were now trusted as allies of the Dga’ ldan pa in their support for Shar Mon. It thus becomes clear that in the late 1650s or probably in the early 1660s, Merag Lama, known as


\textsuperscript{378} Ardussi (1977: 286, n.16) and Aris (1979) consider that the region ‘Eastern Bhutan’ (’Brug shar phyogs) was already subjugated by 1655, whereas Karma (2013: 251-5) states that it was only at the end of the 1650s. These dates are followed by Namgyel (2003), Gdung rdo rje (2003) and Drag shos Sangs rgyas (2008 [1999]). By 1655 Kha gling and other regions in Eastern Bhutan were annexed under the stronghold of ’Brug pa. Probably their argument is based on Ardussi (1977: 303), who states that “control of the trade corridor [referring to the present Mon Region] connecting Tibet with the plains, now known as the Tawang Tract and located roughly along with the eastern Bhutanese frontier carved out by 1655.” The record of this year is also followed in Bodt (2012: 124). However, he wrongly states that the 1680 edict, issued by the Fifth Dalai Lama, “formally proclaimed Tibetan suzerainty over [present] Monyul” was in 1656.
Lama Nag seng of Merag, refused with his allies to capitulate due to the support of the Dga’ Idan pa.

The 1656-1657 war proved fatal to the Tibetan government, but the Tibetan influence did not fade away in Shar Mon. At the same time, in reading the Lo rgyus text, it seems evident that the Krong gsar dpon slob and the first ’Brug sde srid Bstan ’dzin ’brug rgyas (r. 1650-1656) were not interested or did not find it strategically necessary to incorporate Shar Mon into the territory of western ’Brug yul because the initial conflicts between the local leaders of Shar Mon involved some mediation by the officials of the Tibetan government.379 According to Lo rgyus (1986: 89), the initial disputes of these rulers in Shar Mon happened after the break-down of the mediation by Tibetan officials between the kings of Kha ling, Bde ba and ’Brug rgyal. We may assume that this conflict happened in the early 1660s.380 Both local chieftains decided to ask the “Sde srid of the ri bo Dga’ Idan pa381 and to submit the case over the question of the land and subjects of the Indian dvārs, as they were unable to agree on the basis issues.”382

The Tibetan mediators were accompanied by an ‘interpreter’ (lo tswa ba) for both Bde ba and ’Brug rgyal. These were Bla ma Rnam sras Rdo rje,383 a son of a

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379 Ardussi (1977: 304) too argues that the Tibetan government did not have any major interests in the region because the present region was acquired only “after 1680, [when] consequently Bhutanese expansionism as far as Tashigang was not directly countered by any significant state powers.”

380 The event was considered in the 1650s (Karma 2013: 248-9, 250-3).

381 Ri bo Dga’ Idan pa refers to Dge lugs school, but sometime in context it refers also to the Dga’ Idan pho brang government of Tibet.

382 In Tib., kha ling rgyal po bde ba dang/ ’brug rgyal gnyis rgya’i las sgo’i sa cha dang mnga’ ‘hangs kyi rtsa ba las ma cham par/ ri bo dga’ Idan pa’i sde srid la zhu bar phyin pasi (Lo rgyus 1986: 2b). The translation of Aris is edited here.

383 Lama Rnam sras (d. 1657?/ d. 1678) and his father Thugs dam (/Thub bstan) pad dkar were prominent ’Brug pa Bka’ bryud pa from the Tawang region in the seventeenth century. They, grandson and son, can be traced back to the descendants of ’Brug pa master Bstan pa’i nyi ma (1567-1619) from central Tibet. Thugs dam pad dkar was credited with founding the Brag dkar monastery in Lha’u, Tawang. Lama Chos skyong, the stepbrother of Lama Rnam sras (also a son of Thub bstan pad dkar), was another ’Brug pa from the region. All of them were born at Brag dkar, Tawang, but moved and settled in Bkra shis sgang in Eastern Bhutan during the conflict (Ardussi 1977: 423). They joined the Bhutanese to fight against the Tibetan forces in the 1660s-70s. They were probably well received in Bhutan because the second ’Brug sde srid Bstan ’dzin ’brug sgra was the half-brother of Zhab srong and was considered another illegitimate son of Bstan pa’i nyi ma (1567-1619), who was their paternal uncle (Ardussi 1977: 294-5, 423; Chos ten nor bu 2003: 57; Drag shos Sangs rgyas 2008 [1999]: 46; Karma 2013: 261). However, the information of Lama Rnam sras as an illegitimate son of Btsan pa’i nyi ma is based on the late-eighteenth century text, i.e. the biography of Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1689-1714), written in 1753 by the ninth abbot Shakya Rin chen (r. 1744–1755). Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan was the son of dbon po Rdo rje, and was brought to Spu na kha and recognized as the first reincarnation of Jam dpal rdo rje (1631-81), the son of Zhab srong, whereas dbon po Rdo
Both were from La’og yul gsum (Lo rgyus 1986: 2b-3a). The mediation process did not begin well after the killing of a Tibetan ‘lieutenant’ (lding dpon) called Bstan srung by Lama Rnam sras. After this incident, Lama Rnam sras escaped, met the Krong gsar dpon slob, and had an audience with Zhabs drung (Lo rgyus 1986: 5a-b). His supposed meeting with Zhabs drung was unlikely, but he might have met the second ‘Brug sde srid. As both were ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa, Mi ‘gyur brtan pa was ready to help the ‘Brug pa followers in the east.

Due to the struggle among the various chieftains in Shar Mon and the defection of Lama Rnam sras, Krong gsar dpon slob Mi ‘gyur brtan pa reorganized his expansionist policy. The initial strategy was based only on oral and written oaths whereby the chieftains in the region assured loyalty after the interventionist campaign stopped for some months. This could not have taken place earlier than the foundation of Bkra shis sgang rdzong by Mi ‘gyur bstan pa. When the loyalty of

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384 Tawang (Rta wang) Lama Chos dbyings rgya mtsho was son of Lama Chos dbyings, the distant uncle of Lama Bkra shis bstan ’dzin (1651-1697) - the father of the Sixth Dalai Lama. He was the Lama of Rta wang temple, prior to the foundation of the present Tawang monastery in 1681. As Tawang Lama Chos dbyings rgya mtsho was a distant uncle of Lama Bkra shis bstan ’dzin, the former was the fifth generation and the latter was the sixth generation’s descendant of O rgyan bzang po, the brother of Padma gling pa (1450-1521). With the death of these persons, the Smyos/gnyos clan descendants in Tawang died out. It continued however in Bumthang from the descendants of Lama Sangs nor bu and Lama Sangs srid mthar, the other two sons from Lama Bstan ’dzin bka shis, the third generation descendants of O rgyan bzang po, who stayed back in Bumthang (Bhutan). See also Aris (1988: 116) and O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]).

385 See for further details on the incident in Lo rgyus (1986: 2b-6b). Based on Lo rgyus, Aris (1979: 246), Bodt (2012: 115-17) and Karma (2013:248-9) also discussed the incident.

386 See Lo rgyus (1986: 21b) where an interesting oath states that “‘as from today onwards we cast behind us the Dga’ ldan pho brang pa as our lords and receive before us the Hierarchs of the ‘Brug pa. We shall fulfill whatever commands are given to us and whatever we are told to do.’ [‘As nothing else can be done’, having said that (line missing)]; thus, they took the oath and pronounced it.” (in Tib., dus ’di ring nas bzang/ dpon dga’ idan pho brang pa rgyab skyur zhing/ chos rje ‘brug pa mdun du len nas/ bka’ gang gnang gsung ci grub byed rang mi byed re zer nas mna’ bkal zhing mna’ bor]). The English translation is from Aris (2009 [1986]: 111).
the chieftain started to fade away, Lama Rnam sras forcefully incorporated a number of local chieftains under the authority of the Krong gsar dpon slob. Lo rgyus states that during this annexation period, the seats of the Dge lugs pa in Merag and Sag stengs were not affected by the military campaign because Lama Rnam sras was eager to meet and consult Merag Lama for a new approach.

Merag Lama was crucial in ending the conflict in the 1660s. What concerned Lama Rnam sras was Merag Lama’s views on “the officials and subjects of the Sgam ri district [and nearby districts of Merag and Sag stengs].” As Merag Lama had already left the regions of Merag and Stag stengs, Lo rgyus (1986: 107) states that the reasons were due to a fear of likely subjugation:

Lama Nag seng of Merag is the clerical brother of the Dga’ ldan Lama, so I shall see what he is up to. Together with a detachment of soldiers, I [Lama Rnam sras] set off, proceeding directly towards Merag, but Lama Nag seng was not there and had left his home, together with his monk disciples. He went to La ’og yul gsum.

After the subsequent escape of Merag Lama and his disciples to La ’og yul gsum (modern Tawang), also recorded in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, Mi ’gyur bstan pa adopted a more fierce policy towards the eastern and western parts of Bhutan. He continued his strategy and received further encouragement when he came to know about the death of Zhabs drung after he was enthroned as the third ’Brug sde srid in 1667.

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387 See for further details on Lama Rnam sras in note 383.
388 In Tib., me rag bla ma nag seng dga’ ldan bla ma dbu mched yin pas ji liar byed lta’o snyam nas/ dmag dum zhi g dang bcas me rag phyogs la kha gtag nas phyin pas bla ma nag seng grwa bu slob dang bcas yul ’thong nas la ’og yul gsum la song nas mi ’dug/ (Lo rgyus 1986: 17b).
389 Although it is without any clear date in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, it is recorded that he moved to La ’og yul gsum after the fierce military campaign by Krong gsar dpon slob. Bodt (2012: 129) states that “[Merag] Lama was ousted from his seat in Merag by the Drukpa [’Brug pa] forces and moved to Sanglanghe Gonpa [Gsang lam phel dgon pa] in Tshoksum [Tsho gsum] [in 1655].” The period of 1655 does not match because Merag Lama was at that time in Lhasa to receive the dge srong vows. Moreover, Bodt does not provide any sources for his notes.
390 It is recorded that his appointment was forged in the name of Zhabs drung. See the observations and remarks on the regency during the crucial period after the death of Zhabs drung, particularly the skillful administration of the regime by the first four ’Brug sde srid in Ardussi (1977: 279-366), Aris (1979: 243-54) and Karma (2013: 256-92).
This indicates that the conflict in Shar Mon caused him to move to the Mon region in the early 1660s and subsequently to central Tibet in 1667 (Ardussi 1977: 316). Thereafter, the conflict changed to one between the Dge lugs pa and the 'Brug pa as well as the Kam tshang Bka’ brgyud pa, in which Shar Mon was partitioned into Shar Mon of Bhutan and Tibet. Only Shar Mon of Tibet was named Mon or Monyul, while Shar Mon of Bhutan gradually merged into 'Brug yul.\footnote{Lo rgyus (1986: 1a-24b) writes how the incorporation of the western part of the Shar Mon region or the present-day Eastern Bhutan took place in the later part of the seventeenth century. It is quoted also in Bodt (2012: 115-28). Since then the term mon tends to be not used or avoided in reference to any region of Bhutan, but only to the present Mon region. Even if it is used, Mon denotes an ethnic group called Monpa living deep in the forest, or some remote villages in the Eastern Bhutan regions. See note 69.} However, the arrival of Merag Lama in the Mon region is contrary to the assertion of Karma (2013: 265) who states that “there was also perhaps a strong Dge lugs pa presence in some areas [in Tawang].” According to Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (12-19), however, there were a number of different groups, who were constantly challenging Merag Lama and his followers in the Mon region.
Merag Lama and his Opponents in the 1660s

The first among the opposing groups was Lama Sangs grags of Shes pa ti’i, who was supported by Dom tshangs pa.\(^{392}\) The second group was the alliance of 'Brogs dgon pa and Bo dong Sbyor ra ba.\(^{393}\) The third group was the alliance of rdzogs chen po Kun bzang rnam rgyal, 'Brug sgra bzang po, and Lama Kong po, who were supported by Khyi nyal ma’i Lama and the four people of Shar tsho. The fourth group consisted of the alliance of elder brothers of chos mdzad Dar rgyas and chos mdzad Nor bu rgyal po, who were supported by Jo bo Bstan nor, Jo bo Gying gis, and the people of Shar tsho.\(^{394}\) From these groups, the third group successfully expelled Merag Lama from Gsang lam ’phel, where Merag Lama and his followers had temporarily settled. The same group was also successful in establishing about forty temporary bamboo huts at Gsang lam ’phel, which caused Merag Lama and his disciples to take refuge under the Tsona lding dpon Nam mkha’’brug.\(^{395}\) The lding dpon forwarded Merag Lama’s plea for help to Lhasa, upon which Merag Lama and his followers started to receive support. After consulting the Tibetan government in Lhasa, lding dpon Nam mkha’’brug ordered Dga’ mo gshong to lead a retribution team (Dga’ ba’i dpal ster 16). In that retaliation campaign, the team destroyed the newly established bamboo huts by setting them on fire.

The struggle continued between Merag Lama and the other lamas in the region until 1680, in which the fourth group emerged as the next opposition. This group was successful in their efforts and even made preparation to confiscate both Gsang lam ’phel and Stag gdung monasteries by saying that they had brought with them an

\(^{392}\) See note 277 and 278.

\(^{393}\) See note 285 and 289.

\(^{394}\) See the respective groups in line 12 to 19 in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (Appendix II). The last group was probably from the Lower Ber mkhar family, which was opposing the selection of the Sixth Dalai Lama.

\(^{395}\) Du kū la’i gos bzang states that lding dpon Nam mkha’’brug was a learned Rnying ma pa master and they were also acquainted with one another already since 1632. Their friendship resulted into Rnying ma pa Lama Nam mkha’’brug being appointed to the post of Tsona lding dpon, which was one of the main trade route transit through the district of Tsona rdzong to the Mon Region and further down to Assam and other parts of India. His appointment to the post of Tsona lding dpon seems to be a strategic step as well as a gesture of friendship. As his name is not mentioned as the Tsona rdzong dpon in Du kū la’i gos bzang, Aris (1980: 18, n.8) assumes that “he appears to have died or retired before the date of this [1680] edict since reference is made below to the time when he had control of the [Monyul] region.”
edict issued by *rgyal ba Dpag bsam dbang po* (1593-1653). The dispute was mediated by *Dpon slob rin po che* of Mtsho na dgon pa rtse and an oath was pledged by both parties to maintain the status quo of the region. Thereafter, *dge slong* Bkra bu was appointed as the joint-manager of both the temporary monasteries at Gsang lam 'phel and Stag gdung. *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (18) states that a permanent monastery was not allowed, which caused Merag Lama to migrate to Gtsang bu *dgon pa*, near Tawang. The monastery was initially run by *chos mdzad* Dar rgyas, with his elder brother Jo bo Bstan nor as the caretaker. However, the estate of Gtsang bu *dgon pa* was owned by Sgang dkar gdung Bsod nams, who adhered to the Rnying ma school of the local Gsang snags chos gling monastery.

Meanwhile, *chos mdzad* Dar rgyas was removed from Gtsang bu monastery on the ground that he had a “relationship with his own sister” (*rang gi sring mo snol byas*). His removal was blamed on Merag Lama as being a tainted Lama and Merag Lama was forced to acknowledge the problem (*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* 19). The incident renewed the conflict between the various lamas, with Sgang dkar gdung, the Gsang snags chos gling *pa*, and some people of Tsho gsum playing a crucial role in halting the financial support to Merag Lama and his groups. Although Merag Lama and his followers were allowed to stay there, the offerings from the people of Tsho gsum were in favor of Karmapa and 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa (*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* 18). Merag Lama challenged the Karmapa and 'Brug pa followers and the people of Tsho gsum by asking to invite someone else from Lhasa to safeguard the teaching of Dge lugs pa. If this was done, he was willing to move away from Gtsang bu monastery, he said (*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* 19).

As the conflicts did not stop, the *Dga’ Idan pho brang* also became more involved as a supporter of Merag Lama. However, the influence of the third 'Brug sde srid Mi ’gyur brtan pa, who assumed the regency from 1667 after the long tenure of the Krong gsar *dpon slop*, had intensified the conflict in the Tsho gsum region when he supported the cause of the Karmapa and 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa in Tsho.

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396 In Tib., *rgyal ba dpag bsam dbang po’i bka’ shog yin zer ba zhig khyer nas gsang [lam]’ phel dang stag gdung gnyis kyi gdan sa ’phrog grabs byas* (*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* 16).
397 See the successive abbots of Gsang lam ‘phel and Stag gdung monasteries in lines 13 and 14 in *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* text (App. II). See line 14 (App.II), where *Dge slong* Bkra bu is mentioned as the fifth throne holde of the Stag gdung monastery.
gsum. On the other hand, the westward expansions by 'Brug sde srid Mi 'gyur brtan pa had caused a relatively intolerable situation for the Karmapa and 'Brug pa followers at the eastern border,398 and particularly in Tsho gsum. This gave the opponent an opportunity to review the policy after the end of the first Sikkim-Bhutanese war in 1668-1669. Prior to that and after their last meeting in 1655, the Fifth Dalai Lama mentioned again Merag Lama in 1667 stating that he met “Mon Merag Lama and his monks” on the fifth day of the eighth and again in the ninth month of the year Fire-sheep [1667] (Du kā la’i gos bzang 1992b: 27b). In the following years, from 1668 to 1669, the Dalai Lama met twice with Mon pa Merag Lama, on the fifth and sixth months, in order to have a formal discussion with other lamas. He was then dispatched to Tsho gsum on the eight month of the Iron-Dog year [1670].399 This crucial decision might have been taken in view of the arrival of the king of Lepcha, Mon pa A chog, who was in Lhasa to seek support for his opposition against the Bhutanese.400 Although there is no clear picture of Merag Lama’s activities during this period,401 the opposition led by the king of Lepcha continued, which then led to the second Sikkimese-Bhutanese war in 1675-1676.402

This once again gave ample reason for the Tibetan government and enough time for Merag Lama to prepare the ground and challenge the stronghold of the Bhutanese in Sikkim.403 In one way, the westward expansionist policy of the third 'Brug sde srid Mi 'gyur bstan pa was a much-needed opportunity for Merag Lama and his followers to gain a stronghold in the Mon region. It began with the biggest onslaught

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398 See Ardussi (1977: 303-66) and Aris (1979: 241-45, 247-50) on the further expansion in the west of Bhutan.
399 In Tib., mon pa me rag bla ma rdzong bda’ byas (Du kā la’i gos bzang 1992b: 101b). The year lcags khyil Iron-dog [1670] is mentioned on 91a.
400 Shakabpa (2010 [1976]: 363) states that the Tibetan commander Blo bzang tshe brtan attacked the eastern side in the 1668 war from Tsona, while the other commanders Me chag pa, 'Bum pa nas, Mig pa nas, and Khra ru ba Nam sgang led it from Bumthang and Paro from the central and western side. See also Ardussi (1977: 316-17, n.117) and Karma (2013: 267).
401 There are no information however to judge the activities of Merag Lama in Tsho gsum from 1670 to 1676, but 'Brug sde srid busy schedule in maintaining his influence in Sikkim had left him incapable in Shar Mon. His eagerness to maintain the much gained territory in Sikkim caused his distraction from the Mon region.
402 After his audience with the Fifth Dalai Lama, he came back to Sikkim, but the king of Lepcha, Mon pa A chog, was captured in 1676 and killed. See also Shakabpa (1976: 448; 2010 [1976]: 377-8, n.65), Ardussi (1977: 316-18, 322-23) and Mullard (2009: 217, n.48, 218, n.52; 2011). Refer also to Ardussi (2014) on other Lepcha chieftains during the periods.
403 It seems the officials of the Dga’ ldan pho brang in Tsona and Lhasa were constantly observing the development of the conflicts in the region, but kept away or did nothing to interfere in the strife of the local lamas of Mon.
by the Tibetan army in the Eastern Himalayas, particularly on Bhutan, from five
directions in late 1676. Although Lo rgyus (1986: 107) does not mention any date,
the text records that the retribution arrived “with Lama Nag seng of Merag then
acting as a guide of the two commanders, the 'Phan yul drung 'tsho and Sde pa
'Dzam lha of the Tibetan army and the forces of the Monpa tribes.”

_Dbu mdzad_ Dam chos rab rgyas of Beng mkhar was one of the narrators or the
source for the author of _Lo rgyus_, who decided to take the side of 'Brug pa. _Dbu
mdzad_ managed to report to the third 'Brug sde srid Mi 'gyur brtan pa about the
development in Shar M. Although Mi 'gyur brtan pa and his probable successor
Bstan 'dzin rab rgyas had toured together in Eastern Bhutan a year earlier, i.e. in
1674-1675, it was already too late for the third 'Brug _sde srid_ to prepare for the
war. However, the 1675-1676 war between Tibet and Bhutan, authorised by _sde srid_
Blo bzang sbyin pa (r. 1675-1679) of the Tibetan government, proved itself to be
futile, even with a massive Tibetan military campaign from five directions. The
date of the war however is stated as 1657, but the dissident Lama Rnam sras, who
was a crucial person in the region, was captured and taken as prisoner to Lhasa. It
remains unclear whether Lama Rnam sras, the son of Thugs dam pad dkar, is Mon

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404 In Tib., _me rag bla ma nag seng gis sna bo byas nas dmag dpon phan yul drung 'tsho dang/ sde pa 'dzam lha gnyis kyis khrid pa'i bod kyi dmag dpung dang mon pa'i rigs kyi dmag thams cad yongs nas_ (Lo rgyus 1986: 18a). This group could have passed through the regions of Tawang and Me rag Sag stengs because the only entry to Bkra shis sgang and further to Eastern Bhutan is this region. The troop was under the joint-command of Lha rgya ras pa, Rta gdong nas, and Sde pa Bya pa (Ardussi 1977: 325). Among the list of Tibetan commanders, which entered from the five routes, none of their names or titles are close to Phan yul drung 'tsho and _Sde pa_ 'Dzam lha, as mentioned in the _Lo rgyus_ text.

405 See the description about the last trip of the third 'Brug _sde srid_ to Eastern Bhutan in Ardussi (1977: 323-24).

406 Bodt (2012: 125) claims that it was during the 1656 war between Bhutan and Tibet. He does not provide any sources for his conclusion.

407 Aris (1979: 246) claims that the entire event corresponds to the 1657 war between Tibet and Bhutan, whereas Shakabpa (1976a: 443) mentions that Tibetan armies reached up to 'Bum thang in 1657, but does not write anything about Merag Lama and the further expansionist policy of the Krong _gsar dpon slob_. He simply states that the 1657 war between the Tibetan and Bhutanese was due to “the killing of around twenty family members of _chos rje_ Nam mkha’ rin chen, who was suspected of having a special relationship with Tibet” during the reign of the first 'Brug _sde srid_ Bstan ‘dzin 'brug rgyas. Conversely, the first 'Brug _sde srid_ was supposed to have passed away in 1656 after his retirement that year (Aris 1979: 246). The war and its events corresponding to the 1657 war is less likely because it was only in 1655 that Merag Lama became _dge slong_ and he was in Shar Mon until early 1660s. Moreover, the conflict started after the failure of the internal conflict in Shar Mon in the 1660s. Cf. the line in Shakabpa (2010: 380), which is translated from Tibetan into English by Maher (2010). Karmay (2014: 374-5) translated _Du kū la’i gos bzang_ records of what happened to the Tibeto-Mongols army and how it ended poorly for the Tibetan troops, but nothing is mentioned about Merag Lama.
Bla ma Rnam sras or Rnam sras gling pa seem to be the same person because Du kū la’i gos bzang (1992c: 94a-b) states that the Fifth Dalai Lama met “the Shar Mon captain Rnam sras gling pa” along with many other officials in 1678 in Lhasa. He could not have been therefore imprisoned for such a long time, because Du kū la’i gos bzang would then not have mentioned the year as 1678. Karma (2013: 248-9) however describes the conflict as an event prior to the death of Zhabs drung in 1651. Nevertheless, the captive Lama Rnam sras gling pa, the captain of Shar Mon, who was brought to Lhasa, corresponds more to the war of 1675-1676 than to the war of 1657 or 1651. When he tried to flee, he was caught and killed by his pursuers (Lo rgyus 1986: 19b).

Moreover, the period of the war having taken place between 1675 and 1676 can be argued from the presence of Merag Lama as the guide, who led the war from the eastern front. He was however not able to keep any stronghold in Tsho gsum after the war. Merag Lama was among the officials who returned to Lhasa with the captive Lama Rnam sras. This is confirmed with the mentioning of his name in the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1678, as he was personally seen off by the Fifth Dalai Lama and was expected to settle himself in the Shar Mon region. While in Lhasa in 1678, he participated with three Tibetan mediators in a great council of peace, convened at Phag ri. The three mediators lead by a head Lama of the Sa skya

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408 See Du kū la’i gos bzang (1992/a: 125a) as mon mkhar rnam sras gling pa. The date is mentioned on page 124b as shing bya (wood-bird) i.e. 1645.

409 In Tib., rwa sgrel mkhan po/...shar mon dngag dpon rnam sras gling pa/ gnam bde legs pa/...dzo ge dpon po blo bzang/ dge stong bkra shis rgya mtsho sogs dang phrul/ shar mon dngag dpon rnam sras gling pa (Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992c: 94a-b). The date eighth month of sa rta (earth/hore) i.e. 1678 is mentioned on 64a.

410 In Tib., bla ma rnam sras lha sa la khrid nas/ btsan khang du bzhag pa las bros pas bdom/ rjes bshnyags khyin nas bbrongs ‘dug (Lo rgyus 1986: 19b). Ardussi (1977: 300, n.65) suggests that “Bla ma Rnam sras is said to have died during the Tibet war following the conquest of Shar phyogs, probably in 1657,” which does not fit with the chronology. This is followed in Karma (2013: 253). However, Ardussi (1977: 324-28) also considers that the dates of the war corresponds to 1676 instead of 1657. Although it was a tragic end to Lama Rnam sras, it shows that internal conflict in Shar Mon turned into an ugly sectarian conflict after Lama Rnam sras or Mon mkhar Snam sras gling pa joined the Krong gsar dpon slob Mi ’gyur bston pa, whose expansionist policy expanded after he became the third ‘Brug sde srid in 1667.
The peace agreement was thus signed by two Tibetan negotiators, *sku tshab Skyid shod sde pa* and the Gong dkar drung yig Tsha gur ba, whereas the Bhutanese were represented by Spung *rdzong Dge ’dunchos ’phel and Spa gro spyi bla Ngag dbangchos grags*. During the negotiation, they agreed to exchange prisoners and to stop with further battles. The council was witnessed by Sa skya *zhab druns Kun dga’ bkra shis*. It is not known however what kind of role Merag Lama played to bring a peaceful negotiation. The reason for his visit to Lhasa was to discuss, with the help of Tibet, the strategic and military standoff against Bhutan from Tsho gsum and ’Bras ljongs. What we know is that the meeting between the Fifth Dalai Lama, Merag Lama and ‘captain’ (*mda’ dpon*) Gnas gsar pa resulted in the dispatch of Don grub dbang rgyal as the representative to Phag ri.

The above observation indicates that Merag Lama himself was not directly involved in the negotiations, but the multiple occurrences of his name from 1678 to 1679 show that he had played a crucial role in the decision-making. While staying in the background, we can acknowledge contribution of Merag Lama to the successful capture of Rnam sras gling pa during the 1675-1676 war and to the 1679 peaceful agreement. Yet, the definite control over the Mon region came only in 1680, after the passing of the third ‘Brug sde srid Mi ’gyur bstan pa, whose influence in Shar Mon was present for quite some time. The role of Merag Lama hence in the many battles against the Bhutanese since 1656 to safeguard and promote the teaching

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411 Aris (1979: 248, 329), Ardussi (1997: 67) and Karma (2013:) state that it was marked by the peace treaty of 1679 and that the same peace treaty of 1679 left Bhutan in control of a tract of territory basically conforming to the country’s modern shape. Similarly, by the effect of the treaty and the 1680 edict, Shar Mon was limited to the present Mon region.

412 See also Shakabpa (1976a: 448) and Ardussi (1977: 327).

413 In Tib., *ne rag bla ma dang mda’ dpon gnas gsar pa dang phrad cing don grub dbang rgyal phag rid don gcod la brdzungs* (1992.7: 98a). The date, twenty-third of the ninth month, is mentioned on 98a and the year Earth-horse [1678] is mentioned on 64a. Representation of Don grub dbang rgyal among the delegates might have been the outcome of the meeting and discussion with Merag Lama. The identity of Don grub dbang rgyal is unknown; he might have been ‘the governor of the Lhasa district’ or the *sku tshab Skyid shod sde pa* or *sde pa* Skyid shod pa, as recorded in the writings of Shakabpa and Ngag dbang lhun grub (1720: 107b), the biographer of the fourth ‘Brug sde srid Bstan ’dzin rab rgyas.

414 See the details in *Du kū la’i gos bzang* (1992c: 111b, 142b, 145a, 148b). Numbers of others related to meetings or notes were also recorded by the Fifth Dalai Lama on the religious teaching.
of the Dge lugs school in Shar Mon can be seen by the special recognitions attributed to him.

Firstly, the Fifth Dalai Lama specifically issued to the Merag Lama an edict dated 1679. The edict became necessary for Merag Lama to hold his foot in the region and to set his required support in the encampments for teaching and religious encampment. The edict firmly states that “I, [the Fifth Dalai Lama] will perform auspicious prayers of virtuous for whatever assistance needed for those people, who are dedicated in spreading the propitious tradition of mine in this direction, the tradition which is the foundational source of benefit.” Secondly, prior to the foundation of Tawang monastery, Merag Lama received the ‘ceremony for longevity’ (brtan bzhugs) offering in 1680 by the Tibetan government, which was “officially initiated by the Dalai Lama along with Gter bdag gling pa, while the other necessities were arranged by 'Brom gyi sngags 'chang [ba], Dbang grags rgya mtsho” on the second day of the third month of 1680 (Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992c: 178a).

The Foundation of Tawang monastery in 1680-1681

The year 1680 was a turning point. After the death or removal of the third 'Brug sde srid Mi ’gyur brtan pa, the Tibetan government decided to take over the Mon region

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415 See the annotated translation of the 1679 edict in Appendix III.
416 In Tib., khyad par phan bde’i ‘byung gnas kho bo’i lugs bzung bzang po de phyogs su bsam shyor dag pas spel mi rnam la rogs su gang ‘gyur bas nas ‘di phyir dge ba’i smon lam bzang po kho bos bgyid cing (the 1679 edict, Appendix III).
417 In Tib., 'brom gyi sngags 'chang dbang grags rgya mtshos dgos tshul byung ba’i nged rang dang gter bdag gling pa thun mong dang/me rag bla ma blo gros rgya mtsho’i ngor sde pa’i brtan bzhugs/ (Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992c: 178a). The year Iron-monkey [1680] is mentioned on 170a.
418 For details see: des bskul ba’i mgon po phyag bzhi pa’i gtor chog/ legs ldan dgyes pa’i mchod sprin/ dud sol lha mo’i gtor chog/ ’khyer bde’i jag pa me len gyi gtor chog/ isa ri’i gnas bdag cig car dmar po’i gtor chog/ rab ’byams pa blo bzang ngag dbang gi ‘dod pa ltar rje drung dge ‘dun bstan pa rgya mtsho’i sprul sku dge ’dun chos rgyal dbang phyag gi ’khrungs rabs gsol ‘debs/ brgyad gtor dus chen skabs/ ’bul rgyu dang/ dhu mdzad khyis ‘phral snang/ ra mo che’/ bsam yas/ khra ‘brug/ yum bu rnam su dbul ba’i snyan shal kha yig/ dga’/ idan bstan ’dzin sgo shog thu khang gis dpal ldan ’bras sungs su dugul rgyun bec dgu phul ba’i kha byang rnam bris (Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992c: 178a).
and took the pivotal decision against the Bhutanese government.\textsuperscript{419} Even though the conflict started already in 1656, the Tibetan government was not able to establish a firm position until 1680. Yet, Ardussi (1977: 304) argues that the government did not yet have major interests in Tawang. They were to acquire it after 1680. However, the following developments show that there was a plan to secure the region, which was: the evaluation of the position of Merag Lama, the issue of the 1680 edict to form the Mon region (see chap. 6) and lastly, the appointment of a number of new ‘tantra master’ (rgyud dbu mdzad) at Tawang Dga’ lha rtse (monastery).\textsuperscript{420}

With regard to the last event, the appointment of a tantra master happened prior to the order of the Fifth Dalai Lama to found a new ‘monastic institution’ (chos sde). The event was marked with “the presence of about seventy people, such as a [newly appointed] lama, Bla ma Blo gros rgya mtsho, the previous Lama’s reincarnation, ’Ol sna spyi sa, Sang chal gong mkhan po, the four Mon pa, the father A ’dzin and his sons, A mdo Rta ’bul ba Chos ’phel, Klu ’bum Bsam grub can, Bya bral Rab ’byams pa, and Ra mgo Rgya mtsho, and so on.”\textsuperscript{421} The new chos sde was named Rta dbang Dga’ ldn rnam rgyal lha rtse chos sde, of which ‘the victorious’ (rnam rgyal) and ‘monastic institution’ (chos sde) are added to the old name.\textsuperscript{422} Rta dbang Dga’ ldn lha rtse temple.

It is difficult to verify whether the old monastery or temple was called Tawang Dga’ ldn lha rtse, but it is certain that prior to Tawang Dga’ ldn rnam rgyal lha rtse dgon pa, there existed a temple, if not a monastery.\textsuperscript{423} Both the texts and the oral

\textsuperscript{419} In Tibetan, the governments were known as the Bod gzhung dga’ ldan pho brang phyogs las rnam rgyal and the ‘Brug gzhung phyogs las rnam rgyal. In the same year, the passing away of Ngag dbang rab brtan (1630-80), the nephew of the first ‘Brug sde srid, who was pioneering person in the 1675-1676 war against Tibet, and ’Jam dpal rdo rje, the only son of Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, after a long illness were fatal blows to Bhutanese long held strategies of human resources against Dga’ ldn pho brang government (Ardussi 1977: 284-85, n.13; 287).

\textsuperscript{420} See the next note in Tibetan.

\textsuperscript{421} In Tib., rta dbang dga’ ldan lha rtse rgyud dbu mdzad rnam gsar ’khod bla ma/ me rag bla ma blo gros rgya mtsho/ bla ma sngon ma/ sbyi ba/ ’ol sna spyi sa/ sang chal gong mkhan po/ mon pa a ’dzin pbu hu bzhin/ a mdo rta/ ’bul ba chos’ phel/ klu/ ’bum bsam grub can/ bya bral Rab/ byams pa/ ra mgo rgya mtsho sogs ngos bo bcas bdun cu skor! (Du kū la’i gos bzang 1992c: 179b). The year Iron-monkey [1680] is mentioned on 170a. The previous Lama’s reincarnation (bla ma sngon ma/ sakyi ba) might be referred to the successive reincarnation of the First Merag Lama. In that case the presence of the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho in the event suggest that he was not counted in the list.

\textsuperscript{422} It is recorded as a given name by the Fifth Dalai Lama on the second month of the year 1861.

\textsuperscript{423} Ardussi (1977: 99) informs us that “many of the administrative centres of modern times, almost all rdzongs founded in the 17th century by Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, were originally
narratives mention a small temple or a monastery prior to the foundation of the *chos sde*. In the former case, *Rna ba’i bcud len* (2007 [1697]: 96b) and *Dga’ ldan chos ‘byung* (1989 [1698]: 458) state that ‘*Rta wang monastery*’ (*Rta wang gi dgon pa*) was founded by *Ban dkar ba Sangs rgyas ye shes* (16\textsuperscript{th} c.), who also founded some other Rnying ma pa monasteries in the Ban dkar region.\textsuperscript{424} The origin of this temple, as well as that of the Rnying ma pa school, is mentioned only in *Rna ba’i bcud len*.\textsuperscript{425} The existence of a temple or monastery is also confirmed in *Lo rgyus* (1986: 89) with the mention of a monk called Tawang Lama Chos dbyings rgya mtsho of La ’og yul.\textsuperscript{426}

![Fig. 25: Rta dbang (/wang) Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse Monastery (2002 Renovated)](image)

located on the sites of pre-existing chapels and hermitages [in Bhutan]. To a lesser extent, a similar effect on the pattern of rural settlement can be documented.” This replacement happened in almost all parts of Tibet and Bhutan in the seventeenth century after the foundation of new regimes.\textsuperscript{424} See note 295 and 296 or see the section 4.2 of the fourth chapter.

\textsuperscript{425} Ardussi (1977: 328) regards that “the old Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse hermitage at Rta wang (/Rta dbang) was enlarged to accommodate 112 monks and placed under the regional administration of the Mtsho sna and Lhun rtse fortresses. Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho was installed as its first abbot and a charter was issued authorizing the collection of taxes and *corvee* labor from peasants along the eastern frontier of Bhutan, [and from the present Mon region].”

\textsuperscript{426} This Lama could also be of Tshogs rgyas gling temple instead of a *chos sde* at the present site of the Tawang monastery. He was one of the interpreters during the failed mediation, which was prior to the start of the conflicts of Shar Mon, between the chiefains Bde ba and ’Brug rgyal, as recorded in *Lo rgyus* (1986: 89). See note 384 or see the section 5.3 of this chapter.
For the foundation of the new monastic institution (or for the enlargement of the existing one), an edict was issued, dated the twenty-eighth day of the ninth month of the year 1680.\(^{427}\) It was two months after the last meeting between the Fifth Dalai Lama and Merag Lama which happened on the twenty-sixth day of the seventh month of the year of Iron-Monkey [1680]. It remains unclear whether Merag Lama was in Lhasa until the ninth month and whether he brought the edict along with him or not. Whatever the date, it indicates that until the seventh month of 1680, he was in Lhasa and only then moved to La ’og yul gsum, i.e. Tawang. The edict does not show any line or statement which orders the construction of a monastery or the name of a monastery.

The edict does however say something about the strengthening and the spread of the teaching of the Dge lugs school in the region.\(^{428}\) Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 128) however considers the following lines in the edict as representing the foundation of Tawang monastery:

> Plans for causing the Dge lugs teachings of the dual tradition to spread and flourish in that region will be put into effect by the fort commissioner, by the representatives of the various officers commissioned from here, and by Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho. It is essential that all laymen and monks, whether mighty or weak, do not deviate from the instructions of the Lama and should turn to the service of the teachings. We shall then make virtuous rewards and offer good prayers continually during this and to future lives. Let everyone understand this.\(^{429}\)


\(^{428}\) It seems that Merag Lama was given a verbal order to construct or enlarge the monastery, which he desired since his expulsion from the Merag region, after he was not allowed to build one at Gsa ng lam ‘phel in 1660s.

\(^{429}\) In Tib., phyogs der lugs gnyis dge lugs kyi bstan pa ’phel rgyas kyi bkod pa/ rdzong sdod dang ’di ga nas mngags rigs kyi ngo tshab dang/ me rag bla ma blo gros rgya mtsho rang gis byed rgyu yin pas/skya ser drag gzhan mtha’ dag gis bla ma’i ngag bkod las ma g.yos pa byed gal che zhing/ de bstan gyi bstan pa’i zhaabs ’degs su ’gyur ba byung phyin/ ’di phyir gian du dge ba’i bdag rkyen dang smon lam bzang po kho bos byed pa yin pas so so nas go ba gyis/ (Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 128-9; Aris 1980: 14, 16). See the 1680 edict (line 6) section 6.2 in the next chapter.

\(Du kū la’i gos bzang\) (1992c: 226a) records that the monastery was completed in the second month of the Iron-bird year [1681] and was named Tawang Dga’ ldan rnam
rgyal lha rtse,\textsuperscript{430} but Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 129) considers that it was completed in the eighth month of 1681, called Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse by Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho. Even \textit{Dga’ ba’i dpal ster} (21), without stating a date, records that the monastery was founded by Blo gros rgya mtsho, and he received an edict for that. The following passage shows the foundation of the monastery in \textit{Du kū la’i gos bzang} 1992c: 226a):

Since it appears to be good to establish in a border region an institution based on our own tradition,\textsuperscript{431} on the [occasion of the] newly founded ‘monastic community’ (chos sde) [called] Tawang Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse, five times of pure monastic feast offerings were made. Religious gatherings for eight months expenses have been given to one hundred and twelve monks, compromising of the chief and his deputy (bla slob gnyis), the steward (gnyer gnas), and the common monks. A number of monthly rituals and prayers are listed to be performed by the monks. All these monastic feasts amount to the expenditures of about five thousand two hundred and forty \textit{khal} of grains and to about two hundred and twenty-five \textit{khal} of cheese.\textsuperscript{432} All these expenses will be met by the ‘district’ (rdzong) of Lhun rtse and Mtsho sna alternatively, while the tea, brocades, [and] clothes etc. will be provided by Lhasa. A new department (ru khag) has been established [to meet these provisions].\textsuperscript{433}

\textsuperscript{430} The year Iron-bird [1681] is mentioned on 218b and the second month is mentioned on 225b of \textit{Du kū la’i gos bzang}. See also Ardussi (1977: 328, n.150). Schiewiger (2015: 68) follows Rgyal sras sprul sku and states that the foundation of the monastery was laid prior to the issuing of the edict on July 31, 1680 and completed in September 1681.

\textsuperscript{431} The term \textit{rang bstan gyi gzhi ma tshugs na legs par shar bas} can be translated as ‘since it appears to be good to establish an institution which is not based on our tradition’. In that case, it is interesting to note that \textit{Du kū la’i gos bzang} must have considered a strategic location of the region. It seems thus that the foundation of Tawang monastery is aimed to include other major schools of the region, given that a small Tawang temple existed before 1681.

\textsuperscript{432} \textit{Khal} is an old Tibetan term for the load or package for an animal, which is a standard measured volume equal to about twenty-five to thirty pounds. See also note 94 of Appendices.

\textsuperscript{433} In Tib., \textit{sa mtshams su rang bstan gyi gzhi ma tshugs na legs par shar bas rta wang dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse chos sde gsar btsugs la gtong sgo dri gtsang du mchod pa lnga tshar/ bla slob gnyis/ gnyer pa/ nyer gnas/ gra dmangs bcas khyon brya dang bcu gnyis skor la chos thog zla ba bryayd kyi bar phogs/ ja thug gnyis re/ chos mtshams zla ba bzhir ja thug re/ zla ba dang po’i tshes gcig la lo gsar/ cho ’phral chen mo’i smon lam nyin bryagd/ lnga mchod sogs sku mchod nyin lnga/ zla ba byung ngo cog gi tshes bcur dpal ldan lha mo’i bskang ba/ tshes beo lngar gsang b’afus pa’i cho ga/ zla ba bcu gcig pa’i nyer bdun/ bryagd/ dgu gsum la lha mo gtsu gyur gyi bskang gso dang gtong ’phen/ de phyin zla ba byung ngo cog gi nyer dgu byung ris kyi bskang gso rnam b’afur bcas mchod chas sogs gtong sgo khyon bsgril/ bru khal lnga stong nyis brya bzhis bcu/ phyur khal
As stated in the above paragraph and in the 1680 edict, the enormous provisions were covered by the central Tibetan government and its districts. These provisions were followed by the instruction to keep the strategic reason in view for the people of the Mon region. All the tasks went smoothly because after the death of the third ‘Brug sde srid Mi ’gyur bstan pa in 1680, his successor, the fourth ‘Brug sde srid Bstan ’dzin rab rgyas (r. 1680-1694), involved himself in consolidating the geographical boundary rather than expanding or waging war.

The fate of Merag Lama after the foundation of Tawang monastery in 1681 is unknown as he is considered to have been passed away in 1682, the same year when the Fifth Dalai Lama passed away. However, it is unlikely that he died in 1682, if we consider the foundation of Byang chub chos gling or Byang dgon, the nunnery attributed to him and which is acknowledged as being founded after the foundation of Tawang monastery in 1681 (Dga’ ba’i dpal ster 21). The text states that it was initially a retreat site of Merag Lama, which later turned into a nunnery. The nunnery, which started with sixteen nuns, was led by an unnamed sister of Merag Lama. It is not known whether it was after the end of his retreat or after his death, but Merag Lama himself is acknowledged as the founder of the nunnery.

434 Mi ’gyur brtan pa, “a monk ill-disposed by nature or habit to passive administration” had a sad ending of his life (Ardussi 1977: 302), when he was forced to retire after the civil war within the ruling families of ‘Obs mtsho and Dkar sbis. The victories of the latter led to the execution of the ‘Obs mtsho family and the rise of Dkar sbis family. See for further about him in Ardussi (1977: 336-68). Aris (1979: 249-50) and Karma (2013: 264-78). In Lhasa, the news of the death of Mi ’gyur bstan pa was celebrated for three days and a special prayer was held for the protective deities (Du kā la’i gos bzang (1992c: 197a-b).

435 At the same time, it can be observed that he was diplomatically much more successful, as he broadened his political and religious ties to neighboring kingdoms except with central Tibet. Based on the texts of Bstan ’dzin chos rgyal (1759: 54b-61b), Lho’i chos ‘byung and the biography of the fourth ’Brug sde srid Bstan ’dzin rab rgyas (written by the sixth Rje mkhan po Ngag dbang lhun grub 1720), Ardussi (1999: 67-8) however states that after the death of Bstan ’dzin rab rgyas, Bhutan was involved into long internal disputes, particularly for the post of ‘regent’ (sde srid). It started after the force retirement of the fourth ’Brug sde srid Bstan ’dzin rab rgyas in 1696 and his successor Dkar sbis Dge ’dun chos ’phel persecutions of the Rnying ma pa of Padma gling pa’s descendants, even though the persecutions discontinued after a year (Ardussi 1997: 401-03; Karma 2013: 298). For further details on the Rgya clan of this fourth ’Brug sde srid, see Ardussi (1997: 331-8, 367-418; 2008a, b), Aris (1979: 250-52) and Karma (2013: 278-91). For the period following the death of Zhabs drung in 1651, upto 1680 and the political scenarios in ancient Bhutan, see Ardussi (1977: 279-366), Aris (1979: 243-54) and Karma (2013: 249-73, 290-331).

436 Ardussi (1977: 328) states that “a Dge lugs pa nunnery, Dga’ ldan Bkra shis gling and the Sngags pa monastery of Dga’ ldan ’gro don gling were also founded in Mtsho sna district at this time [1680]” besides Tawang Dga’ ldan rnam lha rtse monastery. Is Dga’ ldan Bkra shis gling nunnery that of Byang chub chos gling? If the nunnery was founded after the end of his retreat, then it should be after
Additionally, it is not likely that Merag Lama passed away immediately after the foundation of Tawang monastery, because the 1692 document (reiterated in 1731) from the Potala Palace was issued to reaffirm his ‘family origin’ (skya rtsa) to Dpa’ bo gdung pa.

The document could have been intended to protect his family lineage from taxation. It thus indicates that Merag Lama might have passed away in the late 1680s and the 1692 document became hence necessary to reiterate the Tibetan government’s support to the descendants of the Dpa’ bo gdung pa lineage. The lack of any direct written works ascribed to him or his biography makes it difficult to exactly determine when Merag Lama died. He certainly did pass away before 1699, because ‘the [1699] Tawang [monastery] Charter’ (henceforth the 1699 Rta wang bca’ yig) records that “the yearly funeral offering” (sku mchod) of Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho falls on the eighth day of the seventh month [of the year?). Based on his studies on the documents in the Tawang monastery, Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 140) considers the year as 1682, but the author does not provide specific sources.

As the region Monyul was a corridor to Ahom Kingdom (Assam), India and Bhutan, it was particularly important to maintain the strategic advantages of the region. As teshes brgyad la bla ma blo gros rgya mtsho’i sku mchod (Rta wang bca’ yig 1699).

In Tib., bla ma blo gros rgya mtsho’i mdzad pa mthar pyin nas phyi lo 1682 chu khyi bod zla 7 tshes brgyad nyin sku gshegs! His relics-stupa is among the Sku gdung ’bum pa lha khang situated on the circumambulation path of the monastery (in Tib. sku gdung ’bum pa lha khang dang bcas pa dgon pa’i gling gseb tu bzugs pa ‘di yin). Aris (1980: 15, n.9) too stated that “his remains are contained within a large sku gdung mchod rten, within a side temple of the rTa-wang monastery, his most lasting achievement.”
The records of Jo bo Ko dpal in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thod,442 who was a descendant of Merag Lama’s family in assisting the Tawang Lama Ngag dbang [tshul khrims] in naming a new child as a reincarnation, gives us a clue that Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho had passed away in 1682. In the end, however, it seems the year 1682 is the only option for his passing date as the two contemporary sources, Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1703) and Rna ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]), state nothing about the Fourth Merag Lama and his involvement in the search of a child born in 1683, who was going to be recognized as the Sixth Dalai Lama.443

The Rise of Ber mkhar jo bo and thereafter444

The death of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682) is described as being withheld for around fifteen years by his ‘regent’ (sde srid) Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653-1705), while his trusted attendee searched for the next Dalai Lama.445 In the initial period of 1683, after the foundation of Tawang monastery, the reports of the reincarnation of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the region reached sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. He accordingly planned his next action, in which the search committee arrived in the Mon region and the region once again became the focus of the Tibetan government. Based on the initial findings of the search committee and its reports (on the seventeenth day of the eleventh month of 1685), the selected child was recognised as a reincarnation of a lama, but not the next Dalai Lama. Tawang Lama Ngag dbang tshul khrims, along with Jo bo Ko

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444 A part of this section is presented in the section 3.2.4, with additional information; see also Tenpa (2015: 483-507).
445 The trusted attendee or the search committee was led by chos rje Mkha’ reg pa Zil gnon rdo rje and Rdo pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan. See also Aris (1988: 107-212).
dpal\textsuperscript{46} and Ar yags gdung Lama Sangs rgyas played an important role in recognizing the young Sixth Dalai Lama, but the child and all of his family were soon relocated to Tsona and until the fourth month of 1697, they were kept under constant surveillance by the Tsona resident commissioners Rgya yags pa and Pu shod pa.

The Sixth Dalai Lama was then moved to Sna dkar rtse at Ya 'brog g.yu mtsho in the late days of the same month and was enthroned on eighth November 1697 in Lhasa. The child born on the first day of the third month of 1683 as Gsang sngags bstan 'dzin or Ngag dbang nor bu, to a Gnyos/ Smyos father, rigs 'dzin Bkra shis bstan 'dzin and the noble mother, Ber mkhar ba Tshe dbang lha mo in O rgyan gling temple, was to be enthroned as the Sixth Dalai Lama Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho (1683-1706) in 1697.\textsuperscript{47} Although his father was not fortunate enough to have witnessed the enthronement,\textsuperscript{48} his mother, the Ber mkhar ‘queen’ (rgyal yum) Tshe dbang lha mo and his maternal relatives received a noble rank in 1698. Subsequently, the mother was offered the estate of Lhun grub rdzong as part of the many privileges and social distinctions given to the Ber mkhar family, while her other Ber mkhar descendants were exempted from taxation and benefited from other social rights in their native land (Tenpa 2015). Since then, the descendants of the ‘lord of Ber mkhar’ (Ber mkhar jo bo) of Tawang were addressed as the ‘maternal uncle lord of

\textsuperscript{46} Lama Ngag dbang tshul khrims, probably a native of Tawang, was the second abbot of Tawang monastery. He was succeeded by Lama Ngag dbang nor bu, who was followed by Phyongs rgyas ba Ngag dbang nam rgyal, whose contribution is also discussed in this section.

\textsuperscript{47} Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho records that the childhood name, Gsang sngags bstan 'dzin, was given to him by the grandfather, but was changed to Ngag dbang nor bu by the father due to some prophecy (in Tib., btsas nas zhag gsum song ba'i nyi ma dgung ma zin du mes pos gsang sngags bstan 'dzin zhes ming btags/mig 'byed mi thub pa'i mig dang gdong spos par mo mar mo btah pas ma'i bang grib dang/ 'dir o rgyan gling gi chos skyong gis bdaq mi byed par gzhan gyis byed 'dug pas chu sna'i khru dang/ ming brjes na phan zer ba ltar ming ngag dbang nor bur phas btags shing khru byas pas nad las drag/ Du kā la'i 'phro 'thod 1989 [1703]: 189; Rna ba'i bchad len 2007 [1697]: 78a). The Gnyos/ Smyos clan, Lama rig 'dzin Bkra shis bstan 'dzin (1651-1697) traced as a fourth generation’s descendant of O rgyan bzang po, the brother of the famous Smyos Padma gling pa (1450-1521). See O rgyan gling dkar chag (1701), Du kā la'i 'phro 'thod 1989 [1703], Aris (1989: 111-22) as well as Svendsen and Hazod (2007: 385-91) for further details on the Smyos clan and particularly Aris (1988) for the two famous Smyos descendants, Padma gling pa and Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho. Refer also to a short note on Tshe dbang lha mo by Sarkar (1975c).

\textsuperscript{48} The father rigs 'dzin Bkra shis bstan 'dzin (1651-1697) passed away in 1697 and in the early 1699, (on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month of the Earth-Tiger) his reincarnation along with two female nobles had an audience and were given new names by the Sixth Dalai Lama after tonsure (in Tib., yab kyi sku skye dang dpon mo gnyis kyis skra phud brzes shing so sor ming yang gna! Du kā la'i 'phro 'thod 1989 [1703]: 568). His death anniversary falls on the eighth month (between 23rd-30th, i.e. the Fire-Ox 1697) (in Tib. zla ba brigyad pa'i nyer gsum nas gnam gang gi bar rig 'dzin bkra shis bstan 'dzin gyi sku mchod la cched dmigs zhi khrus na rag gi bskong bshags; O rgyan gling dkar chag 1979 [1701]: 83b-84a).
Ber mkhar’ (Ber mkhar *sku zhang jo bo/ jo bo sde pa*),\(^{449}\) known in short as the ‘Kushangnang’ (*sku zhang nang*) family.

In the meantime, the news of a young child as a reincarnated lama had once more nearly inflamed a geostrategic and sectarian conflict between the Bhutanese and Tibetans in Shar Mon. But it did not lead to a full-blown war as it happened in the pre-1680 period. The tension remained within the houses of the upper and lower Ber mkhar families and primarily concerned the mother of the Sixth Dalai Lama and him coming from the Upper Ber mkhar family, which was constantly opposed to the Lower Ber mkhar family. It is not known, however, whether the opposition was due to the sudden social upgrade of the Upper Ber mkhar family or whether it was related with to the sectarian view of the respective religious school.

In this new scenario, the siblings, i.e. Jo bo Na ’dzom pa aka ’Dzom pa dbang and Phun tshogs, who were third-grade maternal uncles of the Sixth Dalai Lama, played a decisive role and confronted the officials who were considering Tshangs

\(^{449}\) Ber mkhar *sku zhang jo bo* or *sku zhang jo bo* or simply *sku zhang* is recorded several times in *Du kā la'i 'phre 'tshod* (1989 [1703]) and some the legal documents, whereas *Jo bo sde pa* is recorded in *Rgyal rigs* (I 1986: 31a; III 2011a: 55b; V 2012: 35a), but not in the other two *Rgyal rigs* II and IV versions.
dbyangs rgya mtsho as the Sixth Dalai Lama (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud 1989 [1703]: 197-8). They were acknowledged as being ‘maternal uncle’ (sku zhang), but were also the main problem-makers for the Sixth Dalai Lama and his family. They were the grandsons of Sangs rgyas grags pa, the founder of the Lower Ber mkhar, whereas Tshe dbang lha mo and the Sixth Dalai Lama from the Upper Ber mkhar were their second and third-grade cousins. The rivalry between the Ber mkhar houses could thus be the main underlying cause behind the death of sku zhang jo bo Bkra shis bzang po, who decided to side with the Sixth Dalai Lama and his mother.

Sku zhang jo bo Bkra shis bzang po can be identified as Jo bo sde pa in Rgyal rigs. The text states that Jo bo sde pa was the son of Jo bo Dar rgyas, the younger brother of jo bo Karma rdo rje, though no further information is recorded about him thereafter. This means Jo bo sde pa was the paternal uncle of Tshe dbang lha mo or the maternal granduncle of the Sixth Dalai Lama. As previously stated, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho recorded that “sku zhang jo bo Bkra shis bzang po was [the sibling] of the [Sixth Dalai Lama’s] mother [Tshe dbang lha mo] from the same parents and came with the servants to offer in the evening a ‘ceremonial scarf’ (kha btags).” In the next lines, he mentions that “sku zhang jo bo Bkra shis bzang po died by his own weapon” during a stopover at Sha ’ug. After further examination, sde srid states that “sku zhang jo bo was killed” (jo bo bkra bzang bsad pa). He also states

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450 In Tib., sku zhang du gtogs pa jo bo na ’dzom pa dang phun tshogs can gyis bzos pa ’i yum phyogs dang kha mchu rim par rgya bu gnyis kyi bar gtug sbyangs mdzad bzhiin du yod! (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud 1989 [1703]: 180). They were frequently mentioned in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 180-81; 188-90). The former jo bo Na ’dzom pa, aka ’Dzom pa dbang is mentioned once in Me rag mdzad rnam (10a.4). See also section 3.7. of the third chapter and note 211.

451 Jo bo sde pa is recorded only in Rgyal rigs (I 1986: 31a; III 2011a: 55b; V 2012: 35a) and not in the other two Rgyal rigs versions.

452 In Tib., khong mtsho’i g yog gras su yum dang yah yum gcig pa ’i mchud sku zhang jo bo bka shis bzang po yod’ dug gshis dgong mo kha btags shig khyer nas mjal du byungl! (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud 1989 [1703]: 195).

453 See Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 198). It is also mentioned in Rna ba’i bcud len (2007 [1697]: 78b) as “a relative called Jo bo Bkra shis killed himself by his own knife” (sku gnyer gtogs pa’i jo bo bka shis zer ba rang gri brygab nas shi ba).

454 In Tib., rdzong sdod dang kong rang rnam pas jo bo bka bzang bsad pa ’tshub kyi shi rdzun sgrigs bshad pa bzhiin/ (pp. 198, 616). Sde srid regards that sku zhang jo bo was killed in conspiracy by Jo bo Na ’dzom with Rgya yags pa, the Tsona commissioner. Sde srid further states that they heavily restricted the movement and rations for the Sixth Dalai Lama and his family in Tsona (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud 1989 [1703]: 204-6).
that Orgyan gling Lama Ngag dbang and his cousin Bsod nams rgyal mtshan were wrongly accused by Jo bo Na ’dzom.455

As Bkra shis bzang po was part of the descendants from the Upper Ber mkhar, he was probably the first posthumous holder of the title of the maternal uncle lord456 and was thus addressed as sku zhang jo bo in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud or Jo bo sde pa in Rgyal rigs. The Upper Ber mkhar lineage died out in the early-eighteenth century with the death of sku zhang jo bo Bkra shis bzang po in 1695-1696457 and with the passing away of Tshe dbang lha mo on an unknown date. Her only male child, the Sixth Dalai Lama, passed away in 1706. The death of the Sixth Dalai Lama led to the extinction of the Smyos family in Tawang. It remains unclear whether the Sixth Dalai Lama was the only male child or whether there were other male children born to the Smyos bla ma Bkra shis bstan ’dzin. It is confirmed that the Sixth Dalai Lama had two younger sisters, who were called Bsod nams ’dzom pa and Bsam gtan as recorded by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thod (1989 [1703]: 205).458 They moved out of La ’og yul gsum after Jo bo Na ’dzom began to threaten villagers

455 With regard to Lama Ngag dbang of Orgyan gling and his ‘cousin’ (sku tshan) Bsod nams rgyal mtshan, who accompanied the Sixth Dalai Lama to Lhasa, they had often been recorded as participating in meetings and prayer sessions. The former was later promoted as chos rje Ngag dbang or simply chos rje (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud 1989 [1703]: 399, 404, 414-5, 420, 429, 434, 498, 528). However, we have to differentiate him from Rta wang Lama Ngag dbang [shul khrims] to whom Sde srid in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 178, 181, 185, 187-9, 196) states that he along with Jo bo Ko dpal, the descendants of Merag Lama’s family were among the local lamas to play an important role in recognising the young Sixth Dalai Lama. It is sometimes unclear who is addressed as chos rje. One may suggest that it is more likely O rgyan gling Lama Ngag dbang, the brother-in-law of Tshe dbang lha mo. This is because he was often accompanied in the religious gathering by Tshe dbang lha mo, chos mdzad Rdor grags and an unnamed Ber mkhar jo bo.

456 See Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 180) for the source of Jo bo sde pa being sku zhang jo bo Bkra shis bzang po from the Upper Ber mkhar house.

457 It is also assumed that the Sixth Dalai Lama was the last in the lineage of the Upper Ber mkhar of Jo bo Karma rdo rje.

458 The elder sister, Bsod nams ’dzom pa, was married to ’Bog gong Sbyor ra ba in 1700, as recorded in Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 705). The fate of the younger sister Bsam gtan is not known. However, the names of these two sisters should not be confused with two younger sisters of the father Lama rigs ’dzin Bkra shis bstan ’dzin called Bsod nams and Bsam gtan (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud 1989 [1703]: 205, 269). Based on oral traditions, Rta dbang bstan don tshogs pa (2003: 35, 41) writes that there was one elder sister called Chos sgron and an (unnamed) younger brother to the Sixth Dalai Lama. The latter is considered as the reincarnation of Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho (d. 1681), but passed away at childhood. This is interesting to observe that Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1979 [1703]: 390) writes about a presence of Merag’s reincarnation (Me rag sku skye) among the attendants at the enthronement of the Sixth Dalai Lama, although he states nothing beyond that. Rta dbang bstan don’s booklet is about the childhood of the Sixth Dalai Lama and contains a number of pictures and descriptions.
who kept contact with O rgyan gling temple as well as nearly villages and its residents.459

No further references to the Ber mkhar lineage are recorded in Rgyal rigs, except the lineages of ‘Dzom pa dbang, also known as Jo bo Na ’dzom, who is also listed as the founder of A’u gdung house. This could be due to the passing away of all the senior descendants of the Ber mkhar house, or to the fact that the other descendants did not record the other lineages, particularly that of the Upper Ber mkhar. The recorded two generations were third-grade cousins or a distant maternal uncle (in Tibetan culture) of the Sixth Dalai Lama. This also means that the descendant of Jo bo Na ’dzom pa, also known as ’Dzom pa dbang, received a copy of Rgyal rigs or that he had a better relationship with the compiler of the text in order to record two more generations of his own.460 Nevertheless, according to the 1752 edict, Don grub, the second son of Jo bo Srid thar, is identified with Don grub rin chen, the successor of the maternal uncle lord’s title holder.461

Aris (1979: 162) argues that the Sixth “Dalai Lama was born at Ber mkhar, but [his] clan is never held to have been the jo bo, albeit instead the non-existent Gnyos

459 See Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1989 [1703]: 205, 617-21). O rgyan gling monastery was founded by O rgyan bzang po and is recorded in Padma gling pa (2013 [1521]) and O rgyan gling dkar chag (1979 [1701]: 66a/131, 76b-77a/152-3). It is quoted in Aris (1989: 111-212) as well as Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 11). See O rgyan gling dkar chag for the description of O rgyan gling after restoration in 1701. The information that the present-day residents of the village surrounding the O rgyan gling temple are considered as descendants of the Sixth Dalai Lama’s family require further examination. If there is any descendant, they could be from the two sisters of Lama rigs ’dzin Bkra shis and Bsam gtan (Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud 1989 [1703]: 205, 269). If not, they descended from the Sixth Dalai Lama’s family and would be the descendants of the Smyos clan, following the father-to-son’s descendants of the Sixth Dalai Lama (and not following the mother’s side, who belongs to the Upper Ber mkhar lineage). The present residents at the village could be descendants of O rgyan bzang po’s sisters, but this is largely based on oral narratives. Works of the early-eighteenth century, such as O rgyan gling dkar chag (1701) by Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho, Rna ba’i bcud len (1697) and Du kū la’i ’phro ’thud (1703), written by sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, are not helpful in reaching a conclusion in this regard.

460 All the different versions of Rgyal rigs contents are not exactly the same. See note 34 and further in Ardussi (2006: 19; 2007a: 9; 2007b: 7–9; 2009: ix–xii). See also Fig. 10.

461 See the amended and annotated translation of the 1752 edict in Tenpa (2015: 493-96). Don grub rin chen could have been middle-aged when the edict was issued on his name. Likewise Don grub rin chen could not be any other than Don grub in Rgyal rigs because jo bo Bkra shis bzang po was recorded as being killed and Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho did not state that he had descendants, even though he was the immediate maternal uncle lord. Don grub could also not be the son of the two maternal aunts or the younger sisters of the Sixth Dalai Lama of same names, as stated above, because Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho records nothing about the aunts or sisters having children.
He also traced the lineage to Padma gling pa, who had helped to arrange the marriage of Orgyan bzang po, his nephew, to the daughter of one Jo bo Don grub. There is no doubt however that the lineage of the Sixth Dalai Lama’s mother is that of Ber mkhar, which is mentioned in Du kū la’i phro thud, Rna ba’i bcud len of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, and in a number of private documents in the possession of the maternal uncle lord’s descendants. Aris (1980: 12-13) rightly observes that “the [Sixth] Dalai Lama’s descendants who still occupy his mother’s beautiful house at Ber mkhar say it was the Seventh Dalai Lama who accorded to their family many rights and privileges in the region, though they were never ranked among the yab gzhis.” The Ber mkhar lineage continued however not as the descendants of the father-to-son, but through a maternal relative or distant cousin’s descendants.

Thereafter, we can trace the history of the region through the abbacy of the monastery, where Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho was succeeded (but without the record of the date) by Lama Ngag dbang tshul khrims, Lama Ngag dbang nor bu, and ’Phyongs rgyas ba Ngag dbang rnam rgyal. The last abbot, ’Phyongs rgyal ba,
was credited for his contribution to the final written monastic charter (bca’ yig) of Tawang monastery in 1698, after sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho had asked him to write one in 1694. It is however not clear who was on the throne of the monastery in 1694. Nevertheless, while there was a constant focus on the Sixth Dalai Lama and his education, as well as enthronement at the period, less has been recorded on the region Mon and of its centre, Tawang monastery. In the meantime, the Tawang charter was finally submitted to sde srid for his confirmation and was approved in 1699:

A confirmation conferred according to the regent’s (sde srid) seal. The purpose of this [document] is to remain effective until any alteration occurs due to temporal influence. It is written on the date/ month of the year 1699 [Earth-Rabbit].\footnote{In Tib., sde pa’i tham ka’i byjod don bzhin rgyab gnon byas pa yin/ ’di don dus dbang gis bsgyur ba bkod ma dgos phyin sor ngas bgyis/ 1699 sa yos zla tshes la bris/ (Rta wang bca’ yig 1699). See note 438.}

The above confirmation given by sde srid is based on the charter submitted by the fourth abbot ’Phyongs rgyas ba Ngag dbang rnam rgyal in 1698. As the whole text of the monastic charter can be accessed online, only the summarizing part of the colophon is quoted here:

It can be easily comprehended from the monastic charter of Tawang monastery Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse, written on the tenth month of the Wood-Dog [1694] year, and after the precious direction by the protector of the earth and ruler of the people, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, who said that “if there is not any written charter before, there must be a new charter which must be shown to me.” This was thus proclaimed to the general assembly on the fifth day of the first Hor month of the Wood-Pig [1695] year. As until now, the general regulation and manners have been [well conducted], like a flow of the river. Thus, based upon the guidelines, it starts with the prayer of eulogy, aspiration, requisition, and benediction. This text is composed on the auspicious twenty-first stars day of Monday of the seventh day of the tenth Hor month of the Earth-Tiger [1698] year by the [current] abbot ’Phyong rgyas Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, at the front
door of the ‘Lama-residence’ (bla brang) of Tawang monastery, Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha tse. May [the proclamation of this charter] spread benefit and happiness and assure it to be everlasting for the Buddhist doctrine and well-being of the sentient beings.466

A year after the 1699 charter confirmation, the renovation of the O rgyan gling temple, at the birthplace of the Sixth Dalai Lama, was completed within one year under the supervision of ‘Phyongs rgyas Mgon po rab rtan. This was to commemorate the wishes of the father of the Sixth Dalai Lama, Lama Bkra shis bstan ’dzin (1651-1697). The renovation was sanctioned by the Dalai Lama and sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. The former himself wrote the catalogue of the renovated temple, titled O rgyan gling dkar chag. The text was not written under his real name and the Sixth Dalai Lama used a pseudonym called Smyros rigs Blo bzang ’jigs rten dbang phyug dpal ’bar.467

The introductory part of the text states that the renovation was carried out to fulfill the wishes of his late father: “O rgyan gling dkar chag is written primarily to fulfill the last will of my late father, rig ’dzin Bkra shis bstan ’dzin and is at the same time a merit for myself, sde pa Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and my old mother Tshe dbang lha mo.”468 However, the turmoil struck back very soon at him and his

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466 In Tib., rta dbang dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse’i bca’ yig mdor bsdu go bder bkod pa ’di shing khyi hor zla bcu pa ’i nang/ sa skyong mi ’i dbang po sangs rgyas rgya mtshos sna sor bca’ yig med na sa bon gsar du bzo s i sku zhabs su ’bul dgos kyi sloh ston rin po che phebs pa ltar zhus shing/shing phag hor zla dang po ’i tshes lnga nas tshogs su bsgrags pas da lta bar ’di don gyi sgrigs lam kun spyod chu lam rgyug yod pa bzhi shag bshag ’go ’dzugs gi mchod brjod dang/ smon lam ’dod gso/ shis brjod brtams bsgrigs byed pa ’di yang bla ma ’i go sa ’dzin pa ’phuyong rgyas nqag dbang rnam rgyal gyis sa stag 1698 hor zla bcu pa ’i tshe bdun/ res gsa’ zla ba/ skar ma nzer gcig legs ’dzoms nyin rta dbang dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse’i bla brang gi sgo ’phyor steng du bsnyis pa ’di yang bstan ’gro ’i phan bde dar zhing rgyas la yun ring du gnas par gyur cig’. The same passage is quoted in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 141), and see also note 438.

467 The authorship of the text is doubtful regardless of the detailed contents of the O rgyan gling temple (Aris 1988: 250). The text full name is O rgyan gling rten brten pa gsar bkrun nges gsang zung ’jug bsgrub pa ’i ’dus sde tshugs pa ’i dkar chag ’khor ba ’i rgya mtsho sgrol ha ’i gru chen (Guide to the Reconstructed Temple of Ugyenling called the Large Boat, the Liberator from the Great Ocean of Samsara).

468 In Tib., gtso bor nged rang gi pha bskyed byed rig ’dzin bka’ shis bstan ’dzin gyi zhal chems yal bar mi dor zhing dgongs pa ma las pa bde blag tu rdzogs pa dang zhur du nged rang dang/ gsang chen snga ’gyur theg pa ’i rig lugs spyi dang bye brag rgyal ba ri rab mar me ’i rgyal mtshan dang ’dul gyi ’dren par lhongs pa ’i gter chen padma gling pa ’i chos rgyun bzang po mi nyams par spel has skal ldan gdul bya gang dag smin grol gyi lam sgo yangs por ’byed pa dang/ nged rang dang sde pa ma ryan sogs spyi sgo kyi phyin bde rnam dkar rlas chen gong ’phel gyi ched lung dang mthun pa ’i gnas chen khyad du ’phags pa gang der gsang snags a t’i lta ba khyad par du ’phags pa la nges par ’jug pa ’i sgo o rgyan gling du rten brten pa gsar bkrun dang/ ’dus gra’i spyi bye brag dang
family’s social status and privileges were disrupted for a long time. The circumstance of the enthronement of the Sixth Dalai Lama took place after a prolonged concealment of the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama. With the ongoing power-struggle between sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and the Qosot Mongol Lha bzang khan (d. 1717), the Sixth Dalai Lama hardly had a chance to establish his own dominance or authority. In this drastic situation, sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho had to abdicate his regency in 1703. With the support of the Manchu Emperor Kangxi (r. 1661-1722), Lha bzang khan attacked Lhasa in 1705, which finally led to the execution of the sde srid.

Even though the biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama (left unfinished in 1703) by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho suggest that it was more of a power struggle between the elites, the rebellious behaviour of the Dalai Lama led to his dethronement in 1706. A circumstance that served as a prime excuse for Lha bzang khan, who claimed to have been offended by the behaviour of the Dalai Lama. After the expulsion and disappearance of the Sixth Dalai Lama in the Kokonor (Mtsho sngon) region, Amdo, Lha bzang khan enthroned his own candidate, Ngag dbang ye shes rgya mtsho as the true Dalai Lama in 1706. Nonetheless, the change of regime in Lhasa brought an unknown fate to the newly ennobled mother of the Dalai Lama, Tshe dbang lha mo, and other relatives. It is not known what happened to them, in particular to the mother, until the issue of the 1752 edict.469

The assumption of the kingship of Lha bzang khan in Lhasa did not go well with Mon and he went particularly against the ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa school of Bhutan, and the Smyos family’s Rnying ma pa lineage of the Sixth Dalai Lama’s father. In his military campaign against the Bhutanese in 1714, in which one division of his troops was led by “Baring Taiji and the ruler of Lharik”, Lha bzang khan’s army

entered Bkra shis sgang by way of Tawang. Although the destruction of the various Rnying ma pa institutions all over Tibet was primarily caused by the military expedition of the Dzungar Mongols in 1717 (Petech 1972, J. Samten 1994: 393), the initiator of the destruction of the O rgyan gling temple was no other than Lha bzang khan, precisely because of his antagonism against the Sixth Dalai Lama. Besides the O rgyan gling temple, other temples of Tshogs rgyas gling and Thegs rtse were also destroyed. After the destruction of O rgyan gling temple and the rapid regime change in central Tibet, there are few sources available about the region until the 1731 edict issued to Tawang monastery.

Meanwhile, after the assumption of full authority in Lhasa by ‘the ruler’ (mi dbang) Pho lha ba Bsod nams stobs rgyas (r. 1689-1747) in 1728, a Tibeto-Bhutanese war broke out again in 1729-1730, which proved to be the final conflict between the two nations. This interventionist military expedition entered from the western part of Bhutan, even though mi dbang Pho lha ba was well informed about the development in eastern and later in western Bhutan. His informants were the Twelfth Karmapa Lama and the Eighth Zhwa dmar pa Lama, as well as Pho lha ba, his own officials in Rgyal rtse and later on in Spa gro. As these two lamas had

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471 In the local oral narratives, “Sokpa Junghar” referring to Dzungar Mongols were held responsible for the destruction of the monasteries of Rnying ma pa and its lamas and for their critical prophecies against the Mongol rulers. A territorial expansion over Tawang was also considered the cause of the 1714 war, after the eighth ‘Brug sde srid ’Brug rab rgyas (r. 1707-1719) allegedly attempted to reassert territorial expansion (Ardussi 1977: 433, n.58, 59). Lha bzang khan himself led a force, which entered into western Bhutan from Paro, but was not successful (Karma 2013: 310-11). Shakabpa (2010: 413-14) informs that however the war was caused after “a dispute within two monasteries of Mon Tawang Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse [and unknown monastery], etc” (in Tib., shing rta 1714 lor mon rta dbang dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse sogs dgon pa gu yis ’khon rtsod kyi rkyen las; Shakabpa 1986 [1976]: 502). Though it is not mentioned in any other sources, the unnamed monastery could not be other than the O rgyan gling temple. Maher (2010: 413) wrongly translated the passage from Tibetan to “a dispute between Mon Tawang and Dga’ ldan mam rgyal lha rtse monastery” because the region and the monastery both are located in the same place, Mon Tawang or simply Tawang.
472 Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 11) consider that “the present Ugyanling Gompa [sic] was [likely] restored after the 1752 edict issued by the Seventh Dalai Lama Bskal bzang rgya mtsho (1708-1757), which was reaffirmed in 1799 by the Eighth Dalai Lama ’Jam dpal rgya mtsho (1758-1804).” The other two monasteries are also in Tawang.
473 It was more of mi dbang Pho lha ba’s intervention in the successive two Bhutanese internal divisions, upon which hostages from both factions were taken to Lhasa. The mediation did not last long. The Tibetan troops entered Bhutan again in 1732, but they were not of much help for the decisive succession to the Bhutanese throne or the head of the temporal and spiritual leader since the death of Zhabs drung in 1651 (Ardussi 1977: 439-49, 450-51; Karma 2013: 319-24). Thereafter, Bhutan had better diplomatic relations with Tibet, which was enhanced after the visit of the second
briefly visited the kingdoms of Koch Hajo and Kamrupa in the winter of 1729, under
the misconception of Assam being the ancient Holy Buddhist site of India, they
passed through Bkra shis sgang rdzong in return, but did not enter the present-day
Mon region.

Although they did not mention anything about the region, it was probably under
the backdrop of the Bhutanese internal affairs that they were not allowed to travel
there. It is likely that they had informed mi dbang Pho lha ba about the region, which
might have brought the attention of mi dbang to the far eastern region. Besides
that, the resident Bhutanese representative since 1730 in Lhasa (might) have
discussed the situation of the Mon region and the existence of the 1680 edict with
mi dbang Pho lha ba, which could have led to the issue of the 1731 edict.477

Khri sprul Mi pham dbang po (1709-38) in Lhasa in 1736, who was the tenth 'Brug sde srid. His
visit was the first between the two countries after the formal foundation of the two separate states in
the mid-seventeenth century. See the biography of Pho lha nas and the historical scenario of the
period by Mdo mkhar Tshe ring dbang rgyal (2002 [1733]).

474 See note 11 and 487.
475 Ardussi (1977: 441, n.95) states that the “mission was at least partially political” at any stage by
the two lamas.
476 Tshe ring dbang chen was the first to hold the post after the 1730 treaty. Thereafter, until 1959, a
representative of the Bhutanese government served in Lhasa with an ‘annual tribute’ (lo phyag)
mission (Ardussi 1977: 462). From 1751, for the restoration and the regular prayer services at the
two ancient temples (lha khang) of Spa gro Kyer chu and Bum thang Byams pa, the Tibetan
government was paying annual contribution until 1959 (Ardussi 1977: 523, n.63, 64).
477 Thereafter, there was complete silence until 1809, when the monastery was renovated for the first
time since 1681. See the autobiography of Blo bzang thabs mkhas (1826) and his role in the first
renovation of the Tawang monastery, which is briefly mentioned in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 146-51) and Huber (2008: 141-42).
Chapter Six

The Formation and Administration of the Mon Region

This chapter discusses the formation of the Mon region based on the 1680 edict and the 1731 edict. The edicts will show that the regional administration was strengthened until the end of the traditional administration system. The annotated translation of the edicts and critical remarks on the edicts constitute the major part of this chapter.

Introduction

The formation of the Mon region did not take place without political and socio-religious conflicts in the late-seventeenth century. As discussed earlier, Shar Mon region consists of roughly present-day Eastern Bhutan and the present Mon region. The formation of this geographical place is based on the 1679 agreement reached between the ruling elites of Bhutan and its neighbors Sikkim, Tibet, and the Mon region. The Mon region is addressed as the remaining Shar Mon part, i.e. the present-day Mon region when the western part of Shar Mon was merged into Eastern Bhutan after 1679. Prior to the formation of Mon, the two districts were known by various names, such as La ’og yul gsum or Shar Nyi ma tsho gsum, Spang chen, Dag pa nang, Shar Sde rang, Shar Them spang, Sthug spen, Shar Dom kha, and so on.478

The formation of Mon was further enhanced after the issuance of the 1680 edict, which is the earliest source to define the Mon region. As stated before, the 1680 edict was issued by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1680 and led to the formation of present-day Tawang and West Kameng districts in the late-seventeenth century, since then known as the Mon region, i.e. Monyul. The edict was first introduced to the western audience by Aris (1980), with the publication of an annotated English translation.

478 These regions roughly correspond to the present-day Circle Areas of Zemithang, Lumla, Tawang, Dirang, Thembang, Rupa, and Kalaktang. They currently comprise the geographical zone of the Tawang and West Kameng districts, Arunachal Pradesh, India.
Aside from a transliteration of the edict, a prose translation of the document was already published in 1961 in the “Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People’s Republic of China on the Boundary Question.” The edict was also part of the documents used by the Chinese government to lay claim over the region.

In this section, the translation is consulted along with the prose translation of the edict in the “report”. I also compare the edict’s Tibetan reproduction with quoted passages in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]). Although Aris (1980: 13) states that “none of these documents have been made public yet, it is one of the thirty documents in Chinese and Tibetan dating from the period 1680 to 1953 cited by the Chinese in support of their claim to the Monyul Corridor [sic].” [He continues that] by chance a copy of the first of those cited, the Fifth Dalai Lama’s edict, came into my hands while I was in Rta wang [sic].” However, the existence of a copy in the possession of Tawang monastery is not confirmed. As I was not able to locate a facsimile of the edict or the original, the reproduction of the edict is therefore based on the article by Aris (1980). Here, I have made additional annotations of the 1680 edict while maintaining and presenting an edited version of Aris’ translation.

The translation pattern of the Tibetan legal document follows after Schuh (1981, 1985), Schwieger (2015), Cüppers (2015, 2004a), and others. Based on the studies of Schuh (in German), Schwieger (2015: 4-6) clarifies that almost every document is divided into “three major parts: the protocol, the context, and the eschatocol or the closing protocol”. This division is further subdivided: the protocol is identified as the intitulatio, the title, while the context is divided into several parts, publicatio,

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479 The text consists of compiled reports of both nations, which are published by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (GOI) in 1961 and is a book containing 594 pages (Report 1961a, b). Some pages are summary of the reports, which were written by the respective representatives and include two maps. It also contains the joint-statement of the signed agreement of 12 December 1960, which was agreed in Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar) and a single page of “Agreed Agenda,” prior to the start of the GOI report of 342 pages. The report of the Peoples’ Republic China (PRC) begins as CR, referring to the “Chinese Report” and consists of 213 pages.

480 It seems Aris ignored (or did not see) the report CR-44-45 because the concerned translation of the edict as CR-44-45 is also mentioned in Ardussi (1977: 328, n.151). One may assume that the translation of the edict is based on the above report. Interestingly, his publication of the article, with a new name of the region, falls exactly on the three hundredth anniversary of the formation of the region.
Inscriptio, narratio, dispositio and sactio. The eschatocol is the closing part. In the following, the edicts are presented according to this division.

The Amended and Annotated translation of the 1680 Edict

(1.) རྒྱལ་མཆོག་ལྔ་པ་ཆེན་པོས་སྩལ་བའི་ཤེ་བམ་གི་ཞལ་ཞུས་ཧེ་མེད་དགེ་བ།

The virtuous exact copy of the edict bestowed by the Great Fifth, ‘the supreme Victor, [i.e. the Dalai Lama]’ (rgyal mchog).

(2.) གོང་མ་ཧོང་དེའི་ལུང་གིས། སྒྲོ། རི་རི་བོ། ཚོ་ཙོ་འི་ཕོ། བཱ་ཞི། དེའི་ཆི་ཀིང་གང་། དེའི་ཁཱེའི། རྣག་ཝུའི་ཐེན་ཞ། སྙི་ཀོའུ་ཡི་ཐུང་།

[Intitulatio:] Statement of the one who is called the immutable vajradhāra, the Ocean Lama [Dalai Lama], on the behest of the Emperor, residing in the most virtuous happiness of the western sphere, the Lord of the entire doctrine of the Buddha on earth after bringing all sentient beings under one religion.
The following is proclaimed to all, to the broad nations of the world in general and [in particular] to the large and small districts of the Snowy Land within the sphere of Tibet and Great Tibet, the sacred land of India, the Eastern, Western, Upper and Lower regions of Lho Mon, the Klo [-pa] of the White-[colored] mouth, Black-[colored] mouth, and Striped-mouthed, to the monastic and secular communities, the fort-governors, the stewards and officials, those commissioned with civil and military duties, the elders and common subjects etc., who [all] dwell in the districts under the sun!

\[Publicatio:\] kū la’i gos bzang states that he accepted the seal as part of the gift and returned a similar gift to the emperor. In the edict, lung and gtam terms denote the relationship between the imperial and the Tibetan ruler, where lung is the source of the title, hence lung gis is often translated as “at the behest”, “by the order”, “order of”, “is called”, and gtam as “speech” or “statement” (Schwieger 2015: 5, 64, 148, 206, 208).

The lines one to three are not recorded in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]).

It is interesting that Tibet is here classified into “Tibet and Great Tibet” because a number of Tibetan and Chinese studies scholars currently think that Great[er] Tibet is a new term in the political scenario.

Inclusion of “the sacred land of India” in the edict was a misconception by the Tibetans Buddhists world of the sacred Buddhist pilgrims site in Ahom (=Assam). See Aris (1979: 112-14, n. 31) and Huber (2008: 125-65) about the misconception.

Aris (1980: 15, n.2) states that “I would take the area covered by the term Mon here to extend from Sikkim in the west to the Mon region in the east, taking in the whole of Bhutan.” One can suggest however that the term Mon here covers only the present Monyul and the eastern Bhutan regions, such as Me rag and Sag stengs.

Aris (1980: 15, n.3) states that “is a standard classification applied to the whole medley of tribal groups in Arunachal Pradesh, who live to the east of Monpa.” The recorded Klo pa in the edict might refer only to those in the districts of West and East Kamengs, namely Aka (Hrusso), Miji (Sajolong) and Buguns. See also note 37.

Aris’ (1980: 15) translation of “the divine communities and human communities” has been changed into “the monastic and secular communities.” In the monastic communities, even lay communities who were subjected to the monastic estates are included, while in the secular communities, only those are covered who were directly controlled by the government.

The translation of the passage in the “Report of the PRC Boundary Question” (1961b: CR-44) says “Hark all ye nations of the world, big and small areas of the snow abode of Tibet and Great Tibet, the sacred land of India, the places east and west, above and below the Mon area in the south, Kagar, Kanga and Kakra of Lopa, and so on, all the monasteries, villages, Dzongpens, officers, civilian and military chiefs, headmen and common subjects bathing in the sun.”
[Inscriptio followed by the narratio:] From the time of the Victor, the Omniscent One, Dge ’dun rgya mtsho (1475-1542), just as the patriarchal lords succeeded each other in turn, so every one of the successive uncles and nephews of the Dpa’ bo gdung pa chos rje were the disciples who upheld the Dge lugs teachings in the Shar Mon region. In particular, it was in accordance with a command from here,

492 Recte: brtsams.
493 The spelling rgyag is also written.
494 Recte: bsdus pa.
495 Up to this line is also quoted in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 111-13).
496 It is written lhu’i ’brug da dung gis in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 119). Refer also to note 515.
497 This paragraph is also quoted in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 119-20).
498 The ‘teacher-disciple’ or the ‘priest-disciple’ (dge slob) is similarly recorded in the 1731 edict issued by Pho lha ba Bsod nams stob rgyas (see the 1731 edict in section 6.7 of this chapter).
499 See Rgyal rigs I (1986: 30b), Me rgyad mdzad rnam (5b-7b, 9a), Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (9, 10), Aris (1980: 18, n.5, 6) and Tenpa (2013: 7, 10, 13) on the seats of Dge lugs in the erstwhile Shar Mon region. See Tenpa (2013), Me rgyad mdzad rnam on the biography of the Ber mkhar monk and his successors, who were considered as the successive disciples of the third to fifth Dalai Lamas in Me rgyad mdzad rnam and Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (Appendices I and II).
when the establishment of the authority of the priest-patron was introduced to Mon.\footnote{Here, the priest-patron relationship refers only to the teacher and disciple relationship between the Central Dge lugs hierarch figures, such as the Dalai Lamas and the disciple, Merag Lamas. For more on the priest-patron relationship, see Ruegg (1991).} It was declared that military measures, such as an invasion, would not be required and so on the basis of a counsel held between the devotee Nam mkha’ \textquoteleft brug and Merag Lama,\footnote{For further details about him, see note 395.} it became possible to establish authority through skillful means.\footnote{Merag Lama refers only to Blo gros rgya mtsho. See also Aris’ (1980: 18-19, n.9) short biography about him.} [Stretching] down from Snying sangs [la] and up to the Indian border at Dga’ gling\footnote{Dga’ gling [mkhar] means Khaling dvār in Eastern Bhutan and is currently located in the district of Samdrup Jongkha. This must not be confused with Khaling town in the Trashigang district, which is also located in Eastern Bhutan.} and from A li,\footnote{Aris (1980: 19, n.12) rightly states that “A li may be an abbreviation for Amratulla, a village in the foothills due north of Odalguri [district, Assam].” It is currently known under the name of Balemu, in the Balemu Circle Area in the district of West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh.} a binding oath was taken in all parts of Eastern, Western, Upper and Lower Mon [region]. Not only among the patrons and ecclesiastical estates of the Me rag community, it became possible to establish authority through skillful means.\footnote{Merag is presently as Merak gewog, which Aris (1980: 19, n.13) rightly considered as “Me rag… lies up the Sgam ri Chu valley within Bhutanese territory.” Together with Sakteng gewog, they formed into a Dungkhag (sub-district) within Trashigang district, which was traditionally called the regions of Me rag and Sag stengs. Both Me rag and Sag stengs people speak the Tibetan dialect of Sbyor ra rdzong, which is also spoken in the regions of Seng-ge rdzong and Snyug ma gdung in the Dirang Circle Area and Mago-Thingbhu Circle Area in the West Kameng and Tawang districts. Locally, their language is called Brokpa (’Brog pa), referring to a nomadic dialect.} Not only among the patrons and ecclesiastical estates of the Me rag community,\footnote{With regard to monks’ levy, it was one of the three or five sons from the entire Mon region, while one among the five sons levy applied only to the Spang chen nang valley (Rgyal sras sprul sku 2009 [1991]: 138).} its main and subsidiary religious institutions;\footnote{Aris’ (1980: 15) translation of the “mother and daughter houses” is replaced with “its main and subsidiary religious institutions.” See also note 527.} [1.] the collection of monk levy to enable some communities to be founded.\footnote{Although Aris (1980: 15, n.15) states that “this [grain taxation] is still collected today” it is largely a contribution to the monastery offered by the respective villages or the individual subjects to maintain the century old tradition.} [2.] the collection of oblation of grains from every household brought under authority consisting of an offering of faith of just ten measures of grain
every summer and autumn. [3.] The petitioning of the Sangha for virtuous rites at birth and death, lest these should be adulterated with evil and [4. finally.] the permission to impose [requisitions for transport by] stages down from Mtsho sna with ready compliance.

Accordingly, the gentle order [was imposed] by means of the purest designs on the part of me and my monks. And so deeds were performed on a broad scale which subjugated to the king of Tibet, [the whole region stretching] from Smag sgo,[512] [and] Them spang in the East,[513] as far as Ku ri in the West[514] and upwards from Gdung zam.[515] Even though [the whole region] was brought under the beneficial and happy dominion of us, the priest and patron, and while the teachings of the Dge legs in the region of Mon were thus caused to prosper as best as possible, in particular, the entire welfare of Shar Mon was gradually destroyed by the evil plans of the various temples. Since 1977, there is a special funding for the successful functioning of the modern cum traditional academic institution called “Central Buddhist Cultural Studies”, which is commonly known as Tawang Monastic School.

In the “Report of the PRC Boundary Question” (1961b: CR-44-45), this passage is translated as “not only can the patron's estates of the monastery and sub-monasteries of Merag Lama below Nyensam and above Dgra hallingiamatsams and Ali be secured, but some more monasteries can be built and monk services exacted in the places east and west, above and below the Mon area; offering grain about 10 dzes each in summer and autumn, to be paid by each household in view of faith where the order reaches, shall be collected: the contribution given to the local monks as a reward for the service they do for the living and the dead shall be acquired and transportation ula be exacted from those in view of faith in the area below Tsona.”

Mago (Smag sgo) is presently under the Thingbu Circle Area of the Tawang district, which was once the valleys of Mago, Thingbu, and Lug dgu thang in the present day Mon region.

Although Them spang in the east is recorded in the edict, it is not the “most easterly of the Monpa villages” as stated in Aris (1980: 15, n.18). Sangti valley is the most eastern region in the newly formed Thembang Circle Area of the West Kameng district. See the description of old Thembang rdzong in Kingdon-Ward (1941: 267-8), Aris (1980: 15, n.18) as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 24-9).

The records of Kuri River in the western border relies on the erstwhile Shar Mon geography, whereas Aris (1980: 15, n.19) remarks that “[this] edict was not only a statement of deeds accomplished, but also one of future policy and intention” to conquer further in the west, i.e. Eastern Bhutan, which did not occur at all. The Kuri valley and its Kuri River are located in the Lhuentse district. The river is also known in Tibet as Lho ‘brag River in Tibet, which flows through Lhuentsé to Monggar and Samdrup Jongkha districts in Eastern Bhutan. The river is merged with Drangme (Ldang ma’) Chu flowing from Tawang in Pemagatshel district, prior to entering Assam, India. After this, the Kuri Chu changes its name to Manas River (in India).

With regard to Gdung zam, Aris (1980: 15, n.20) draws a blank village “near the south-east border with India,” whereas Karma (2013: 512) considers it as the old name of present-day Pema Gatsel (Padma dga’ tshal). One assumes that the region could be referred either to Dongshoom village in the Dongshoom Pangkhang Chiwog, Narang gewog in the Mongar district, or to Doongsam village in the Pakaling Chiwog, Radi gewog in the Trashigang District.
barbarian army of the Southern demons.\textsuperscript{516} At that time, it proved difficult to forcibly expel these evil impediments, both external and internal.\textsuperscript{517}

However, from the Fire-Monkey [1656] year onward, some twenty-five years have now passed,\textsuperscript{518} during which they [Merag Lama and his monks] have applied themselves solely to the cause of the teachings, without in any way looking to the welfare of the laymen and monks [of Monyul?].\textsuperscript{519} And so [at the end, the following districts] were brought under dominion: La chen Tsho gsum, Dag pa Tsho lnga, shar Ba mo nu bzhi, Rong mdo gsum, etc.\textsuperscript{520} The minor groups of Mon subjects, along

\begin{itemize}
\item[bibitem]\textsuperscript{516} Although Aris (1980: 15, n.21) states that the “barbarian army of the southern demons’ can only refer to the Bhutanese” it is written as “the southerner Bhutanese were still” (lho’i brag da dung gis) in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 119), discarding thus the negative adjectives ascribed to the Bhutanese by Aris.
\item[bibitem]\textsuperscript{517} Schwieger (2015: 66) quoted the latter part of this passage, but the last sentence is translated differently as “at that time, due to external and internal evil impediments, it was difficult for [from our side] great force to arise.” The whole passage is roughly or not fully translated in the “Report of the PRC Boundary Question” (1961b: CR-45) as “when pledge has thus been obtained, peaceful means has been faithfully applied to carry through the order together with the local monks, so that areas including Mago and Timbu in the east, upto Kure to the west and all parts above Daonsam have all been brought into the territory of the Deba of Tibet, and great meritorious service has been made.”
\item[bibitem]\textsuperscript{518} For the significance of the year 1656, see Chapter 5 and Aris (1980: 15, n.22).
\item[bibitem]\textsuperscript{519} Aris (1980: 15) wrote “of central Tibet” in bracket, but it is replaced with “of Monyul” as the context and situation are clearly refer to the Mon region and not to Central Tibet. Schwieger (2015: 66-67) translated this sentence as “nevertheless, from [the year of] the Fire-Monkey [1656] year onward, some twenty-five years have now passed during which I and [my] monks have applied ourselves solely to the cause of the teachings regardless, however, of the joys and sorrows [respectively the ups and downs] of the laymen and monks [experienced during this period].” Here, the translation of “I and my monks” is replaced with third person in parenthesis as [Merag Lama and his monks], considering that the edict was written by the Fifth Dalai Lama.
\item[bibitem]\textsuperscript{520} See note 18 on tsho or lding. See also Fig. 29 or Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 37-8) as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 48-9) for the list, which is based on Thub bstan chos 'phel (1988: 24-43) and Ye shes 'phrin las (1983: 132-63). The primary sources for the list are the 1680 edict and the 1699 Rta wang bca' yig. Aris (1980: 15, n.23) states that “in the 1962 Report (CR-91), the Chinese [Govt.] have provided a detailed enumeration of the thirty-two units (tsho or lding) which they claim were gradually developed to cover the whole [Monyul] region.” See section 6.4 on the thirty-two Tsheo and its administration.
\end{itemize}
the course of the Nyang shang chu [river],[521] and those Indians and inhabitants of the Klo country, have also been turned to our own government.[522]

(5.) རེ་འདེན་དཔུང་འཇིག་ཆིང་[523]སོ་འཛིན་དཔུང་འཇིག་ཆིང་སྔ་ཕིར་རང་ཕོགས་སུ་ཕན་པའི་བྱེད་ལུགས་ནི། ཁོད་རང་བོད་མོན་ས་སེར་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀི་མངོན་སུམ་དུ་གསལ་བ་ལྟར་དང་། ད་ཕིན་ཀང་སྣར་ལས་མ་གཡོས་པས་ལུགས་གཉིས་ཀི་བསྟན་པ་འཛིན་སོང་སྤེལ་བ་སོགས་ལ་བསམ་སོར་རྣམ་པར་དག་པ་ཞུས་ཕིན། ཆོས་སེ་གསར་རིང་གི་དགོན་མ་ལག ཆོས་གཞིས། རྩ་ཁ། གསོན་གཤིན་གི་དགེ་རྩའི་དཀོར་ས། དད་འབུལ་གི་འབྲུ་ཕུད། དང་བླངས་ས་རིམ་ཡོང་འབབ་ཀི་རིགས་རྣམས་དང་། བླིང་དཔོན་ནམ་འབྲུག་གི་དུས་བཞིན་ལས་བསྟན་དོན་ལར་རྒྱ་སོགས་རོང་ནས་དམིགས་གསལ་དགོས་པ་བྱུང་ན་མ་གཏོགས། འུལ་ཚོ་སོ་སོའི་དགོན་པ་ཆེ་ཆུང་ཀུན་ལ་ཁྲལ་འུལ་དམག་སོགས་གསར་འགེལ་མེད་པར་བྱས་པ་རྣམས། གོང་ཚིག་ཁས་ལེན་ལས་མི་དམན་པའི་ལུགས་གཉིས་ཐད་ནས་དོན་མཐུན་གི་བདག་རེན་བཟང་པོ་འདི་ག་ནས་བྱེད་རྒྱུ་ཡིན་པས། རྒྱ་མོན་ཀོ་གསུམ་དུ་ཕན་བདེའི་པད་ཚལ་མ་རྒྱས་བར་དུ། ལྭ་སེར་འཆང་བའི་བསྟན་པ་དང་གཞུང་གི་མཚོ་ས་རོང་ལ་གནོད་པ་དང་། མི་སེར་རླག་པའི་འགལ་རེན་དུ་འགོ་བའི་ཐམ་ཀ་དམར་ནག་སོགས་སྔ་ཕིར་ཐལ་བའི་ཡིག་རིགས་གསར་རིང་མ་ལུས་པ་ཁ་གཅོད་ལས་[Dispositio:] The whole manner in which our side has enjoyed benefit at earlier and later times, by guarding or invading, is openly manifested to you all, the laymen and monks of Tibet and Mon.[525] Henceforth, if the purest plans are implemented for the upholding, guarding and diffusing of the teachings of the ‘dual tradition’ (lugs gnyis),[526] without diverting from previous practice, then the integrity of the teachings’ cause [will be achieved] as it was during the time of Iding dpon Nam

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521 See the remark in section 6.2.1, where one can consider that the “minor groups of Mon subjects along the course of the Nyang shang chu (river)” refer to Legs po and Spang chen valleys and its people. Aris (1980: 15, n.24) states that “the Nyamjang River has its source near Mtsho sna before flowing south and west of Rta wang and crossing into Bhutan. It becomes the Drangme (Ldang ma’i) Chu, which flows into India as the Manas [after merging with Kuri Chu in Pemagatshel district, Bhutan].” See also note 513. The whole passage is roughly translated in the “Report of the PRC Boundary Question” (1961b: CR-45) as “since Fire Monkey Year, all monks and laymen, including the local monks, not caring for their personal security whole-hearted and actively, maintained the religious cause for about 25 years, thus bringing under our rule the remaining parts of the Mon area of the Nyanshang Chu valley such as Lachen tso Sum, Dagspa tso Lnya, Bamonushi in the east, Rongmdosum, etc. which were not yet under our rule and the Loyuls etc.”

522 Aris (1980: 15, n.25 and 26) remarks that the Indian and Klo refer to Bodo- Kachari and Aka (Hrusso), Miji (Sajolang) and Buguns tribes in the West Kameng district. See also note 37.

523 Recte: cing.

524 Up to this line, the whole paragraph is also quoted in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 128).

525 In this sentence, “(all this and)” is removed and “been benefited” is replaced by “enjoyed benefit.”

526 There are different terms written for the dual tradition, such as lugs gnyis, tshul gnyis, khrims gnyis, gsug lag gnyis, chos srid zung ’brel, chos srid gnyis ldan, chos lugs dang ’jig rten gyi lugs gnyis, etc. See e.g. Dung dkar (1993), Cüppers (2004b) on the term and its significance in Tibetan historiography. See similar intitulatio and its translation in Schwieger (2015: 5).
[mkha’] 'brug [in respect of]: [i.] the monasteries of the new and old religious communities, their main and subsidiary religious institutions; [ii.] the ecclesiastical estates; [iii.] the grazing grounds; [iv.] the land property donated for the performance of virtuous rituals at times of birth and death; [v.] the oblations of grain offered out of faith; [vi.] the [transportation of government loads over] stages with ready compliance and [vii.] the various sources of revenue.

Except in cases when special requirements arise in the rdzong, new impositions of tax, corvée and military service are not to be made on all the monasteries, great or small, of the various districts. Good rewards, which are compatible with the purpose of the dual tradition, will be made from here for those who show nothing less than acceptance of the above words. Until the lotus garden of beneficial happiness comes to spread in India, Mon, and Klo [yul], these three, the various documents promulgated in earlier and later times, with red and black seals, are without exception [hereby] invalidated since they injure the teachings upheld by the Yellow Hats and the government fortress of Mtsho sna [sic] and since they constitute an obstacle which destroys the subjects.528

[Sactio:] Plans for causing the Dge lugs teachings of the dual tradition to spread and flourish in that region will be put into effect by the fort commissioner,530 by the representatives of those various officers commissioned from here and by Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho himself. It is essential that all laymen and monks, whether mighty or weak, do not deviate from the instructions of the Lama and, if in

527 See note 508.
528 The latter part of the passage is slightly changed in Schwieger (2015: 67): “the various documents promulgated in earlier and later times with red and black seals are without exception invalidated since they inflict damage on the teachings upheld by the Yellow Hats [i.e., the Gelukpa] and on the government fortress of Tsona, and since they constitute an obstacle which destroys the subjects.”
529 This whole paragraph is also mentioned in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 128-9).
530 The translation of “fort governor” is changed here to “fort commissioner”.

185
accordance with them, should turn to the service of the teachings, then we shall make virtuous rewards and offer good prayers continually during this and future lives. Let everyone understand this!

(7.) མཐོང་ནུས་པ་པོས་གསལ་བོ་བོད་ཀྱི་མེད་པོ་ཐུབ་དང་ཡོན་ཏན་བསོད་ནམས་ལོ་གསུམ་ེས་སྱུན་ནི་བོད་ཀྱིས་ཡོན་ཏན་མེད་པོ་ཐུབ་དང་ལོ་གསུམ་ེས་སྱུན་ནི་བོད་ཀྱིས་ཡོན་ཏན་མེད་པོ་ཐུབ་དང་ལོ་གསུམ་ེས་སྱུན་ནི་བོད་ཀྱིས་ཡོན་ཏན་མེད་པོ་ཐུབ་དང་ལོ་གསུམ་ེས་སྱུན་ནི་བོད་ཀྱིས་ཡོན་ཏན་མེད་པོ་ཐུབ་

[Eschatocol:] Written at the virtuous time when the Đaki were assembled, in the mansion of Sagittarius, in the iron-male-monkey year [1680], known in the sacred land of India as Rgyu tri ka, at the Red Hill, the great self-created Palace of Ārya Trilokanātha.\textsuperscript{531} Seal of the Dalai Lama, the perfect and peaceful Buddha of the Western region, the Ruler of Buddha’s religion on the broad surface [of the world], the Omniscient One, the Vajradhāra.\textsuperscript{532}

A Short Remark on the 1680 Edict and its Limitations

One of the most important aspects of the edict is its mentioning of the areas and the various ethnic groups living in the region. This clearly corresponds to present-day Tawang and West Kameng districts and its inhabitants. The edict thus geographically outlines the region known as Shar Mon. Line four mentions how the initial Shar Mon region was: From a vertical line, it stretches “down from [north] Snying sangs [la] and up from [south] the Indian border at Dga’ gling [kha gling]

\textsuperscript{531} Aris translated the term ‘jig rten gsum mgon as Trilokeśvara.

\textsuperscript{532} The “seal appears to be a simplified version of the title given at the head of the edict” (Aris 1980: 15, n.32), which is translated as above in the second paragraph of the edict. See also Aris (1980: 6), Richardson (1980), and Schuh (1981: 3). This seal is one among the thirteen different official seals used by the successive Dalai Lamas and probably, it could be “Siegel E1” in Schuh (1981: 3) and one of the two ‘golden seals’ (\textit{gser tham}) “granted” by the fourteen year old Qing Emperor Shunzhi (r. 1644-1661) to the Fifth Dalai Lama Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682) in 1653. See also the ID185 and ID226 in “the seals” section in the online archive of the University of Bonn.
and from A li to Me rag.”533 While horizontally, it extends “from Smag sgo [and] Them spang in the east to as far as Ku ri till Gdung zam (/bsam) in the west.”534

Accordingly, the region of Mon extends from the northern Snying sangs la, a mountain pass between present-day Bhutan and the southwest of Tawang, down to the Indian dvār A li (Amratulla), renamed as Balemu in the West Kameng district. This geographical location is similar to the present-day boundary line, except that the Indian dvār Dga’ gling, (Kha ling) dvār is located in Bhutan. In the east westward direction, there was a big shift in the late-seventeenth century in the line drawn from Smag sgo to Them spang in the east535 and from Kuri and Gdung zam valleys in the west.536 It has to be noted that the 1680 edict record of Shar Mon as reaching from Ku ri and Gdung zam valleys in the west to Smag sgo and Them spang in the east is the only written source concerning the geographical border of Shar Mon.537

The edict thus shows that half of what was once called the Shar Mon region was later incorporated into the Eastern Bhutan section. This roughly corresponds to the present-day districts (rdzong khag), such as part of Lhuentse, Mongar, Pemagatshel, the whole districts of Trashiyangtse, Trashigang, and Samdrup Jongkha.538 The remaining Shar Mon, narrowed down to a region as recorded in the later part of the edict, refers only to the present Mon region. As the remaining part of Shar Mon became Monyul, it had been under the joint administration of the Tsona ‘district commissioner’ (rdzong dpon) and the Tawang ‘manager of the Ecclesiastical Office’ (bla gnyer) until 1951.

From then on administration was conducted by the ‘Council of Four’ (bzhi sbrel). As stated in the 1680 edict, the three Tsho of La chen, five Tsho of Dag pa, four Eastern Ba mo nu, three Rong mdo, etc., including the minor groups of Mon

533 In Tib., snying sangs man chod/ dga’ gling rgya mtshams dang a li yan gyi me rag (the 1680 edict, line 4). See also the 1731 edict (line 2) in section 6.6 of this chapter.
534 In Tib., shar rmag sgo them spang nas nub ku ri tshun gdung zam yan (the 1680 edict, line 4).
535 See note 513.
536 See note 514.
537 Although the term Shar Mon is frequently used in Rgyal rigs, the geographical site is not drawn or shown and only the records of those place names are given. Those recorded place names nearly fall into what is drawn in this edict.
538 The annexation or incorporation of these regions happened during the third ’Brug sde srid Mi ’gyur brtan pa’s (r. 1667-1680) tenure.
subjects along the course of the Nyang shang River and the inhabitants of the Indians \( dvār \) and the Klo country, were ruled by the Lhasa government.\(^{539}\) The list of administrative units was further enlarged in the 1699 Rta wang \( bca' \ yig \), which was brought to our notice by Aris.\(^{540}\) He suggests that “the list of the administrative units into which Mon-yul was divided may be compared with that provided in the Rta wang \( bca' \ yig \)” (Aris 1980: 15, n.23).

In a comparative examination of the list, the 1699 Rta wang \( bca yig \), which was written about two decades after the 1680 edict, we can observe that considerable new units or some break-up units were added to the Mon region. Besides the units of La ’og yul gsum, Dag pa tsho Inga, Rong mdo gsum, and Shar Ba mo nu bzhi, three more units were added to the list: Legs spang, Mu khab shag gsum, and Sreb la sgang gsum. It can be further observed that in the course of reterritorialization (a broad term used in the 1680 edict and the 1699 Rta wang \( bca' \ yig \)), some regions were further enlarged or renamed in the later period. For example, ‘the three Tsho of La chen’ (La chen tsho gsum) became ‘the three eastern Tsho of Nyi ma’ (shar Nyi ma tsho gsum). Both terms basically refer to La ’og yul gsum, a term frequently used prior to the replacement of Rta wang/ dbang, i.e. Tawang as the name of the region. Prior to that it is observed that initially, the term \( rta \) wang is used to refer only to the peak of the mountain where the present Tawang monastery was built or expanded in the late-seventeenth century.

Similarly, ‘the five Tsho of Dag pa’ (Dag pa tsho Inga) became ‘the eight western Tsho of Dag pa’ (Nub dag pa tsho brgyad), with the addition of ‘the three Mu khab shag’ (Mu khab shag gsum) mentioned in the 1699 Charter. And ‘the three Rong mdo’ (Rong mdo gsum) is formed into ‘the four Tsho of Rong nang chu’ (Rong nang chu rgyud tsho bzhi). However, ‘the four Eastern Ba mo nu’ (Ba Bmo nu bzhi) term is not retained in the reterritorialization and was changed into ‘the six Tsho of Sbrang nang’ (Sbrang nang tsho drug) with an additional attachment of ‘the

\(^{539}\) In Tib., \( la \) chen tsho gsum/ dag pa tsho Inga/ shar ba mo nu bzhi/ rong mdo gsum sogs nyang shang chu brgyud gyi mon zhabs phran bu mnga’ ’og tu ’dus pa rgya gar dang klo yul pa rams rang srid du ’gyur ba sogs/ (see the 1680 edict, line 4). Aris (1980: 15, n.1) highlights that in the translated documents submitted by the CCP government to the Indian government after the Sino-Indian border war in 1962, the claim on the ‘Indian [\( dvār \)] and’ (Rgya gar dang) words are omitted. See Schwieger (2015: 66-7) for quotation of the passage.

\(^{540}\) See note 438 for a note on the Rta wang \( bca' \ yig \).
three Sreb la sgang’ (Sreb la sgang gsum), as recorded in the 1699 Rta wang bca yig.\footnote{All the unmarked quotations are from the 1680 edict and the 1699 Rta wang bca yig.}

In drafting the 1680 edict, the person behind the edict thus might have had considerable knowledge of the region and he might have been an assistant of the Dga’ ldan pho brang of the Fifth Dalai Lama. When it concerned a specific valley or region, such as ‘the six Lding of Spang chen’ (Spang chen lding drug) and ‘the four Tsho of Legs po’ (Legs po tsho bzhi),\footnote{The latter region is presently part of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), with a distinct ethnic group classified as “Monba of Cona” (i.e. Mtsho sna). See also Nishida (1988).} the author simply recorded it as “the minor groups of Mon subjects along the course of the Nyang shang River.” This inaccuracy is corrected in the 1699 Rta wang bca yig and written as Legs Spang. Gradually, the term Legs was used to refer to Legs po tsho bzhi, which is currently located in Tsona county (TAR). The term Spang became known as Spang chen lding drug or Sbe mi spang chen.\footnote{All the unmarked quotations in this paragraph are from the 1680 edict and the 1699 Rta wang bca yig.}

As caution was exercised regarding the Legs Spang region in the 1680 edict, names of a region and valley that were unknown were also written with due care, such as “those Indians [dvār] and the Klo country’s inhabitants who have been turned to our own government.” The two inhabitants, the Indian dvār and the inhabitants of the Klo country, refer to the foothill people of the Kuriapara dvār and Charduar and the tribes of Aka (Hrusso), Miji (Sajolang) and Buguns in the district of West Kameng.\footnote{A separate paper will discuss Mon and Indian [dvār]. See also Aitchison (1931 [1929]) and Tenpa (2016) on the dvār and above note 84.} It is not known why the Indian [dvārs] and the inhabitants of the Klo country, as well as the Smag sgo and Thing bu regions, which forms the Thingbu Circle Area, are excluded in the 1699 Rta wang bca’ yig. These regions are not even included among the thirty-two tsho of the Mon region.\footnote{The classification of the thirty-two tsho was probably formed in the early-eighteenth century (Fig. 29 in the following section, where the different tsho and its status are classified). This is also highlighted in Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 37-8), as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 48-9).}

It is important to note, however, that Smag sgo, Thing phu, Lug dgu thang, and the adjacent valleys were excluded from the administrative units and recorded as
being not under the jurisdiction of Tawang bla gnyer or Rgyang mkhar rdzong dpon. Instead, they were under the jurisdiction of Tsona rdzong. Although the region was a principle part of the Mon region according to the 1680 edict, a number of authors state that it was under the control of Sbyor rwa rdzong and that it became the private estate of the Skyid gshong sde pa or yab gzhis Bsam grub pho brang, the aristocratic family who were the descendants of the Seventh Dalai Lama.\footnote{See Bailey (1914: 12-13), Aris (1980: 15, n.17), Adak (2001), and Rta rmig ’che med bstan rgyas (2005: 255-59). The former three discussed the region, while Rta rmig briefly recorded his father and himself being the tax collectors in the region is mentioned. The region lies in the north-east of Tawang district. Petech (1973: 32-9) has not listed this district as part of the estates of the Bsam grub pho brang. See also note 513.} As the salient points of the 1680 edict are also contained in the 1731 edict, the next section will elaborate on this particular edict.

The 1731 Edict

The issuance of the 1731 edict is a reaffirmation of the 1680 edict.\footnote{In the Reports of the PRC Boundary Question (1961b: CR-45), it records that it “reiterated in the mandate of the Seventh Dalai Lama issued to the Tawang monastery in 1725” and it also states that “the monastery is responsible for the guarding our frontiers and cannot be compared with other monasteries, therefore this mandate is conferred.” As no edict was issued by the Seventh Dalai Lama to the monastery in 1725, one may refer it to the year of 1731. The reference of the Seventh Dalai Lama in the report is referred to no other than Pho lha ba. Moreover, if there was an edict issued in 1725, it could not have been issued by the Seventh because he took his dge slong vows only in 1726 and took the temporal role only in 1751. See also Ardussi (1977: 328, n.151) and Petech (1972: 74-121, 216-35).} The edict depicts the Mon region not just as an important border region, but also suggests that the monastic community is also a primary concern of Lhasa. The edict also presents an overview of the general administration of the region. It does, however, not mention the status of the relatives of the Sixth Dalai Lama, known as Sku zhang nang. What it shows is that during the political chaos happening in central Tibet in the first three decades of the eighteenth century, the region was practically not disturbed. This can be observed in the edict from the number of monk communities, which increased considerably within the last fifty years since its foundation in 1681. The increase is recorded to range between more than two hundred to about five hundred monks in 1731, the time when the edict was issued.\footnote{The text Rgyal rigs was also compiled in this period after the stable situation of the political situation.}

\footnote{The text Rgyal rigs was also compiled in this period after the stable situation of the political situation.}
The edict is measured 36cm x 68cm and written on a yellow brocade of fine silk in cursive 'bru tsha' script running into eighteen lines, including two lines of the title on a yellow brocade of fine silk. In the next section, the amended and annotated translation of the 1731 edict is presented and compared with the 1680 edict.

The Amended and Annotated Translation of the 1731 Edict

[Inditulatio:] Statement of the one who is called Mi dbang, ‘the prince’, ‘the universal ruler’ (cakravartin) of the firm expanded earth [Tibet], [who rules] on the behest of the heavenly appointed Mañjughoṣa - the Emperor, and who holds sway as the executor of the laws of the dual tradition [Red-squared Seal].

(1.) རྒན་བཅུ་མི་དམངས་སོགས་སེར་ས་དྲག་གཞན་མཐའ་དག་ལ་སིངས་པ།

(2.) བྱེ་བག་ལྷ་ལྡན་སྤྲུལ་པའི་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་ཆེན་པོ་ནས།

(3.) རོང་སོད་གཞིས་གཉེར།

See ID 1477 or LTWA_719 in the online archive of the University of Bonn, where two pages of typed copy of the edict can be referred to. The contents of the edict is compared with the facsimile edict.

The Tibetan term bas ser is assumed and understood as the Manchu term pe’i le or beile. See Schwieger (2015: 5, n.10).

This official seal of Pho lha ba Bsod nams stobs rgyas (r. 1728-1747) in 'phags pa script roughly corresponds to “Siegel G”, which in Schuh (1981: 68) says “pho lha tha’i jib sod nams stobs rgyas kyi tham kal don kun grub ba!” It is translated as “the seal of Pho lha tha’i dzi bsod nams stobs rgyas, which fulfills all wishes” (Siegel des Pho lha tha’i jib sod nams stobs rgyas, das, welches alle Wünsche erfüllt). See for further Schuh’s (1981: 68-73) studies on the five seals, out of the seven different seals used by Pho lha ba. The study of Tibetan official seals is first observed in Long ba’i dmigs ba (1981 [ND]), which is observed by Petech (1972). See also Nor rgyas nang pa and Dbang ’dus tsher ring (1991) and Bertsch (2004) on their studies on Tibetan seals.

It is wrongly typed as rngo rong in ID 1477.
[Publication:] [This statement] is generally addressed to all the sentient beings on the auspicious supremely-ornamented earth, and especially, to all the monks and lay people. Be they superior or inferior, etc., whether they be the ‘head of ten [unit]’ (rgan bcu), the ‘chieftain of Iding’ (lding dpon), the ‘lord’ (jo bo), the manager of the ecclesiastical office, the estate manager, the fortress commissioner and his deputy, the monastic communities, the secular communities, [all] living under the sun such as the various nomad communities, etc., from the great or small regions of Darrang Assam of Eastern India to the Great Jokhang Temple of Lhasa.

In Tib., ‘dzam bu brakShis mngon par mtshan pa’i nor ‘dzin. BrakShis is not understandable.

Lding dpon refers to a head of lding, which consists of several villages but is smaller than rdzong. In the regulation of the armed forces, the lding dpon can be close to a lieutenant position, commanding twenty-five to fifty soldiers.

This refers to the Rgyang mkhar rdzong and its ‘district commissioner’ (rdzong dpon).

The name of the Fifth Dalai Lama Blo bzang rgya mtsho is better fitting than the Second Dalai Lama.

If the name of the Second Dalai Lama is meant here, than the First Merag Lama Bstan pa’i sgrom me would fit in better than the Fourth Merag Lama.

It is wrongly typed as zla thon in ID 1477.

It is wrongly typed as gshan in ID 1477.
During the period of the Omniscient One Dge ’dun rgya mtsho, the Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho, along with his monks, struggled for many years against the enemy of the Dharma. Until now they brought the subjects of Mon under their firm authority etc. and rendered direct service to the dual tradition. Since the Tawang [monastic] centre Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse was purposely established against the many dealings of our opponents, the Southern Bhutanese, who are like the brainless butcher, [we] on our side remain here at ease (lhun chags) with a specific mindset. Although we, the subjects of Mon, are far away from Tibet, you have until now rendered your service without any deception, even to the extent of being ready to sacrifice one’s own life in the successive fight [against the enemy].

During the peaceful times, in terms of confession, you have been pure according to the vinaya rules. This privileged karmic connection is worthy to be protected, along with the diligent service for the dharma practices and the long life perpetuation of the ‘founding masters and his disciples’ (rgyal ba yab sras). Among the various righteous actions [that must be performed] for the main [Tawang monastery] Dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse and its subsidiary monasteries are: Hundreds of religious rites of Tsona, collection of grass and woods, the hay taxation of the three [things]: horses, cattle and sheep, the [offering of the] finest

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561 It is also written as gshor ’debs, which can be translated as a vessel or container about the size of a bag.
562 Merag Lama in this case should be no other than Bstan pa’i sgron me, but it is written as Blo gros rgya mtsho here. See the Remark Section 6.7.1 and also section 4.4 for further discussion as well as note 557 and 558.
563 Due to constant disputes for the area and also from sectarian conflicts, it probably refers to the Bhutanese.
564 The term rgyal ba yab sras here refers only to Tsong kha pa and his disciples.
565 “Hundreds of religious rites of Tsona” is not understandable. It could mean the summer and winter exchange between Tawang and Tsona monasteries, which was discontinued in the nineteenth century.
summer and winter harvest products of Mon-Tibet to the bursar office of Lhasa, and bags of barley from the [rdzong] of Lhun rtse and Bzang bshongs, as well as some bags of meat, butter, and cheese from Tsona according to the taxation records.

(10.) གཉེར་པས་ཁྲིམས་མཐུན་གི་ཁ་མཆུ་གཅོད་རྒྱ་དང་། རྒྱ་ལས་སོ་སོགས་ཚོང་འཁོར་འདས་ཀི་དོས་ས་རིམས། 566

(11.) མིན་པར་ 568

(12.) མིན་སོགས་བཀའ་གཏན་རིམ་ཅན་ད་ལྟ་ཕན་གནས་བཞིན་ཡིན་འདུག་བར་བཙན་གནས་ཀི་ 570

[Dispositio:] The steward [of Tawang monastery] must act according to the legal documents, [collecting taxes] for loads as corvée labor in turn after the completion of the annual trades at Indian dvār, etc., 572 [but] an exemption of taxation of the religious community and [must perform] the necessary renovation of the inner and outer boundary walls of the monastery, etc. [All of these] must be based on the precious edict [issued by] the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, 573 which is reaffirmed by the successive regents. The objectives of all the previous seals, the document, the travel permits and exception is given to the taxation, etc. [and] are kept well until now. Hence this great endorsement is given in order to securely continue all the successive edicts.

566 Recte: sa rim.
567 Recte: tshugs yang. The term is not commonly used in Tibetan legal documents. It is found only in three documents, ID 1612, ID 1616, ID 1629 in the online archive of the University of Bonn and Tenpa (2015: 496).
568 It is wrongly typed as zhig bos in the ID 1477.
569 Recte: rgyab snon.
570 Recte: tshugs yang.
571 Recte: rgyab snon.
572 See note 84.
573 See the 1680 edict in section 6.2, or Aris (1980: 13-16).
Sanctio:] The seal [of this edict] must thus be kept in perfect [condition] as long as the precious teachings of the Buddha prevail. In the meantime, according to the monastic record, there were previously only two hundred and twelve monks, but presently, there are about five hundred monks.\textsuperscript{574} This made it difficult to manage the gtong sgo.\textsuperscript{575} However, in this case, the development of the monastic community is the most important and utmost methods are required to increase the number of monks. For the glory and the cause of Buddhism, all the recipients [of the edict] are certainly not to pass beyond the damages, but rather be on the right side after the investigation, such as not to be mistaken for the mother and the demonness. Therefore, everyone must act properly on what to accept or reject.

Eschatocol:] This easily comprehensible edict is written from the newly opened four door-bolts of the ‘victorious Tushita celestial castle in every direction’,\textsuperscript{576} a

\textsuperscript{574} See the Remark Section 6.6.1.
\textsuperscript{575} The term gtong sgo can be translated as ‘monastic feast’ offered by a monk who is appointed on a new position or a feast offered after completion of dge gshes or mkhan po degree by a monk candidate at a monastic institute. An “expenditures for ritual” can also be rendered.
\textsuperscript{576} In Tib., dga’ ldan phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba’i khang bzang, in short it is Dga’ ldan khang gsar: the official seat of Pho lha ba Bsod nams stobs rgyal.
meeting place of the ‘Hundred Traditions’, on the auspicious fourth day of the third month of the Iron-Pig [1731] year [Red-squared seal].

The 1731 Edict in Facsimile Edition

577 This official seal of Pho lha ba Bsod nams stobs rgyas (r. 1728-1747) in ’phags pa script roughly says “seal of Pho lha tha’i dzi bsod nams stobs rgyas, which fulfills all wishes. It may be victorious in all directions of heaven and may at all opportunities covered by the Holy Shine of glory.” See Schuh (1981: 68-73). Due to poor resolution of the present seal, it remains unclear, which seal is among those seals of “Siegel G”, “Siegel H”, “Siegel I” and “Siegel J” discussed in Schuh. Refer also to ID135 in the online archive of University of Bonn. Petech (1972: 167) states that the first seal granted to him was in the late 1728.
A Short Remark to the 1731 Edict

The edict is primarily issued to the Tawang monastic institution and in a larger context to the administrative system. The primary statement in the edict is the twofold increase in the number of monks. The edict thus records that by 1731, the monastic community increased to “about five hundred”. In 1680, the number of monks had been two hundred and twelve, although Du kū la’i gos bzang (1992c: 226a) records it as consisting of “one hundred and twelve”. Since the second month of the Iron-Bird [1681] year, Tawang monastery was given patronage for eight months as the monastery was located in the border region. The 1731 edict thus proclaims to continue with offering supports from Lhasa with a note that the “development of the monastic community is the most important issue in this case, and utmost methods are to be taken.”

The discrepancy in the number of monks between the 1680 edict and in the Fifth Dalai Lama’s Du kū la’i gos bzang (i.e. two hundred and twelve monks and one hundred and twelve) might be due to a misspelling in the quotation. It seems however that the recorded number of “one hundred and twelve monks” in Du kū la’i gos bzang actually means “fully-ordained” monks, for in a petition forwarded to the Fifth Dalai Lama for patronage and in an edict to establish the monastery in 1680, the number of monks and those soon to become monks were listed as “two hundred and forty-four.” As the number of monks had dramatically increased (see lines eight to twelve), a list of patronage is recorded for this purpose. These lines thus highlight the importance of the monastery as the centre at the border region of India and Bhutan.

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578 In Tib., sa mtshams su rang bstan gyi gzhi ma tshugs na legs par shar bas rta wang dga’ ldan rnam rgyal lha rtse chos sde gsar btsugs la gtong sgo dri gtsang du mchod pa lnga tshar/ bla slob gnyis/ nyer pa/ nyer gnas/ gra dmangs bcas klyon brgya dang bcu gnyis skor la chos thog zla ba brgyad kyi bar phogs/ (Du kū la’i gos bzang [1992c [1681]: 226a).

579 The list is mentioned in Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 125-6), though it is difficult to ascertain as the original source is not yet accessed. The actual figure, however, can be clarified only with the ‘Manual of the [Tawang] monastery’ (dgon deb) which Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 144) also agreed. As for this statistic, Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 144) remarks that probably “one hundred and twelve” is misspelled in Du kū la’i gos bzang and “two hundred and twelve monks” is correct, which is as same as the 1731 edict.
In the same paragraph, the importance of the annual trade at the Indian *dvār*, as well as maintaining the law and order are especially mentioned. As to the contents of the period of the Omniscient One Dge 'dun rgya mtsho, with the [Fourth] Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho (lines three and four), the record is inaccurate. The mentioning of Merag Lama and his followers having struggled for many years against the opponents, i.e. the 'Brug pa school, indicates the mid-seventeenth century. However, there were no conflicts recorded during the time when the Second Dalai Lama was in the region. The mentioned “Omniscient” thus in the edict is no other than the Fifth Dalai Lama Blo bzang rgya mtsho and his close disciple, who is no other than the Fourth Merag Lama.

If however it was during the period of the Second Dalai Lama, the concerned disciple must be the First Merag Lama, Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, and not the Fourth Merag Lama. As the conflict refers to the mid-seventeenth century, the record in the 1731 edict notes the same period. Beyond this information no further substantial account are noted in the edict. The 1731 edict thus shows that the region was relatively undisturbed and not affected during the troublesome period between 1681 to 1728 and the constant power struggle in central Tibet. This fortunate circumstance played an important part in the growth of the number of monks in Tawang monastery.

580 The lines four to seven outline the importance of Tawang monastery during the conflicts and the peaceful periods; otherwise it follows the *vinaya* procedure and also performs the sanctification.
581 On the First Merag Lama, see section 4.4 in the fourth chapter and Tenpa (2013).
582 Until the death of *sde srid* Pho lha ba Bsdod nams stobs rgyal in 1747 and his successor, the son *sde srid* Pho lha ba ’Gyur med mam rgyal’s (d. 1750) tragic death in 1750, it seems that the region had little contact with Lhasa.
The Traditional Administrative System

The formation of the thirty-two *tsho* and their administration is discussed in the following sections. As there was already an administration that used the term *tsho* in the region, one can assume that the administrative structure of the Mon region was organized in the late-seventeenth century (Petech 1972). Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 138) however considers that it was reformed in the mid-eighteenth century. He might have based this observation with the knowledge that Pho lha ba/nas reconstructed the central administration in Lhasa, such as creating ‘the council of ministers’ (*bka’ shag*), since 1722 or 1728. However, the re-organisation of Mon’s administrative structure might have occurred also after the reformation of the *bka’ shag* in 1751 and after the reinstatement of the Seventh Dalai Lama Bskal bzang rgya mtsho (1708-1757) as the temporal and spiritual head of the Tibetan government.
The Formation of the Thirty-two Tsho Administration\textsuperscript{583}

With the formation of the Mon region in 1680, the Dga’ ldan pho brang government of Tibet gradually started to enforce its administrative system. As the 1680 edict shows, it was initially left to Tawang monastery to implement and collect tributes from the various regions. Steadily, the successive lineages of jo bo, or ‘babu’ (ba spu) and ‘sātrājas’ in Tawang, Dirang, Thembang, Khalaktang, and Sherdukpen of Shergoan and the Rupa regions had been incorporated under the tsho administration. These regional chieftains either became ‘mayors’ (gtso r gan) or maintained their chieftainship’s authority along with the ‘district commissioner’ (rdzong dpon or zhal ngo).\textsuperscript{584} Rdzong dpon were appointed for the Rgyang mkhar rdzong as well as Seng ge rdzong, Sde rang rdzong and Stag lung rdzong, whereas lding dpon or zhal ngos were passed down through the hereditary system, such as the chieftain in lding/tsho of Spang chen, Legs po, and Dag pa. This administrative system was called the ‘thirty-two [administrative] units’ (tsho so gnyis), where each ‘unit’ (tsho) was under a chief,\textsuperscript{585} gtso r gan and his ‘assistant’ (mthu mi; sgo mi). The mayor and his deputy of a respective tsho were answerable to the relevant ‘fortress’ (rdzong) and thereafter to the various ‘councils’ (sbrel). The councils were directly administered by Lhasa-appointed ‘manager of the ecclesiastical office’ (bla gnyer).

The council was formed or expanded into ‘the Council of Four/ Six/ Seven or Nine’ (bzhi/drug/bdun/dgu sbrel). Among those, the core council was ‘the Council of Four’ (bzhi sbrel), which constituted of ‘lay and ordained manager(s) of the Ecclesiastical office of Tawang’ (Rta dbang bla gnyer ser skya), the ‘abbot of Tawang monastery’ (Rta dbang dgon pa’i mkhan po),\textsuperscript{586} and the ‘governing council

\textsuperscript{583} See note 18 for a shot explanation on tsho.
\textsuperscript{584} Although the secular rulers within the various parts of old Tibet in the districts or provincials levels were addressed as rdzong dpon, sde pa, nang so, sde dpon or blon po, it remains unclear when the term rdzong dpon was first used. The term rdzong is used along with other terms since the ruling period of the Phag mo gru pa (1358-1497).
\textsuperscript{585} This tsho administration resembled the decentralized pancāyatārāj administration, which is one of the oldest public administration systems on the Indian subcontinent (Singh 2003; Hardgrave and Kochanek 2008: 131-34).
\textsuperscript{586} This is not precisely stated in the 1680 edict and other documents. However, Thub bstan chos 'phel (1988: 27) considers that Tawang monastery was a branch monastery of ‘Bras spungs Blo gsal gling grwa tshang. Until 1950s, the abbot was always appointed by ‘Bras spungs Blo gsal gling or Se ra byes grwa tshang.
of Tawang monastery’ (Rta dbang dgon pa’i bla spyi). With the addition of the two, the ‘lay and ordained rdzong dpon of Tsona’ (Mtsho sna rdzong dpon ser skya), the council became known as ‘the Council of Six’ (drug sbrel). ‘The Council of Seven’ (bdun sbrel) was formed with the addition of the ‘Tsona Rice-official’ (Mtsho sna ‘bras sgrub pa) of the Council of Six. Finally, ‘the Council of Nine’ (dgus sbrel) was formed with the inclusion of the three mayors of Bse ru tsho, Lha’u tsho, and Shar tsho. The rest of the gtso rgan from the Mon region was represented by the rdzong dpon of Sde rang rdzong and Stag lung rdzong and deputized by the lding dpon or zhal ngo of a tsho for the regions of Dag pa, Legs po, and Spang chen.

The whole administration of the thirty-two tsho was therefore managed through a rdzong or lding and they were accountable to the core council, i.e. the Council of Four. It was therefore also a joint Tibeto-Mon administration in which the primary administration of the region was under the core council, which was headed by the manager of the ecclesiastical office. The headquarters of the councils and the administrations was always based at Tawang monastery, but the rdzong dpon and the zhal ngo administration were based at the respective rdzong. The district commissioners were appointed directly by the councils, except the rdzong dpon of Rgyang mkhar rdzong. The rdzong dpon of Sde rang rdzong and Stag lung rdzong were usually appointed among the monks of Tawang monastery or sometimes were former gtso rgan of the respective region. With the exception of the Tawang bla

587 For details on the council, see Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 132-63) and Thub bstan chos ’phel (1988: 24-43).
588 In some of the travel accounts and reports of British India and India, Rgyang mkhar rdzong and Tsona rdzong were considered to be held jointly by the Tsona rdzong dpon, though the account of Ye shes ’phrin las (1983), other Indian officials’ records, and particularly by Thub bstan chos ’phel (1988), who was the Tibetan official in the region, had not supported this account (Tenpa 2014). Tsona rdzong dpon visiting the Rgyang mkhar rdzong to collect summer and winter tributes can be deduced from the writings of Mkhas mchod blo ldan (1998: 332-33), who states that at the end of the eleventh month of the Tibetan lunar calendar, the Tsona rdzong dpon, the Tsona Rice officials and their staff will go down to Tawang for the winter residence until the mid-fourth month of the lunar calendar and they will at the same time collect tax.
590 This joint Tibeto-Mon administration functioned under the Council in Tawang until 1951. In his history of the Tawang region, Tenpa (2014) states that the Council was dissolved in 1951.
591 See Amundsen (2001: 8-41; 2003) for the structure of the rdzong and its rdzong dpon’s administration in old Tibet, Bhutan and in the Himalayas. Historically, the rdzong and its rdzong dpon administrative system is considered to have been introduced by Ta’i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan of Phag mo gru pa (1302, r. 1354-1364). See Shakabpa (1981), van der Kuijp (2003) and Czaja (2013) on the life of Phag mo gru pa Ta’i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan.
592 It is not clear how the zhal ngo or lding dpon (occasionally equivalent to rdzong dpon) of Dag pa, Legs po and Spang chen valleys were appointed.
gnyer and Rgyang mkhar rdzong dpon, who were usually Tibetan, the rest of the officials were native Monpa.

Initially, the post was established with ‘lay and ordained officials’ (skya ser) in order to have a counterpart in administration, but usually only the lay official, the rdzong dpon or sometimes only their deputies were actually running the administration. The cases were selected, decided and finally accepted by the councils. It must be pointed out that this tsho administration was in function during the issuance of the 1680 edict, even though Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 138) claims that the “Tibetan [i.e. Dga’ ldan pho brang] government had again divided the region into thirty-two tsho in the eighteenth century.”593 One may thus tentatively conclude that the reformation of the administration, i.e. the old tsho administrative system under the district commissioner, the rdzong and rdzong dpon, began in the mid-eighteenth century, which would mean since 1722-1728 or since 1751.594

Based on the 1680 edict and the 1699 Rta wang bca’ yig, the thirty-two tsho are thus divided into seven sections, which are the “three Eastern Tsho of Nyi ma, eight Western Tsho of Dag pa, six Lding of Spang chen, four Tsho of Legs po, one Tsho of Sha’u hro byang dag, six Tsho of Sbrang nang and four Tsho of Rong nang chu.”595 These seven sections came under the respective administration of the rdzong dpon, zhal ngo, or lding dpon. Under the Rgyang mkhar rdzong dpon of Rgyang mkhar rdzong, including Seng ge rdzong,596 who was appointed by the Tsona rdzong dpon and the core council, the following tsho are included: three tsho of Shar Nyi ma, also known as La ’og yul gsum, i.e. Bse ru tsho, Lha’u tsho and Shar tsho; one

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593 In Tib. bod srid gzhung gis star yang mon yul de tsho dang lding khag sum cu so gnyis la dbye ba ma zadr. See Ye shes ’phrin las (1983: 138).
594 With regard to the years 1722-1728 and 1751, they respectively fall into the period of Pho lha ba Bsod nams stabs rgyal (r. 1728-1747) and the Seventh Dalai Lama (r. 1751-1758) and their rise to the heads of the government of Tibet. See Petech (1972) for further details.
596 See Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 45-52; 53-54) for further details on Rgyang mkhar rdzong and Seng ge rdzong. Nothing of any historical significant part of the Rgyang mkhar rdzong has remained. This historical fort has been completely dismantled for the construction of the Nehru Gompa (dgon pa) after the Sino-Indian border war in 1962. See also Tenpa (2014: 57-102). A neglected Seng ge rdzong can be seen nowadays.
tsho of Sha’u hro byang dag and one tsho of Seng ge rdzong, Smyug ma gdung and its adjoining valleys.

As these tshos are located close to Tawang monastery, the Tawang bla gnyer usually controlled the administration, along with the Rgyang mkhar rdzong dpon. In the case of the rdzong dpon of Sde rang rdzong and Stag lung rdzong, they were appointed directly by the core council under the direction of the manager of the ecclesiastical office. The following tshos were administered by them: six tsho of Sbrang nang under the Sde rang rdzong and four tsho of Rong nang chu by Stag lung rdzong. The former six tsho were Phyug tsho, Rlis tsho, Sang rdi tsho, Sde rang tsho, and Nam shu/ them spang tsho, but Seng smyug tsho was part of Rgyang mkhar rdzong. The latter four tsho were Stod tsho, Smad tsho, Gsher stug tsho, and Ra khul tsho.

Under Sde rang rdzong, there were two other rdzong, which were without any official and were administered by the rdzong dpon. The rdzong were Them spang rdzong and Bde skyid rdzong. While the latter is completely ruined, the former is presently in poor condition. These are the oldest fortresses in the region, but the non-functional Bde skyid rdzong was destroyed during conflicts with the neighboring tribes and was abandoned in favor of Them spang rdzong, probably in the sixteenth century. Until the foundation of Sde rang rdzong, Them spang rdzong thus became the administrative centre of the Them spang and Nam shu regions.

With regard to the zhal ngo and the lding dpon, eight tsho of western Dag pa, six lding of Spang chen and four tsho of Legs po were under the zhal ngo or lding dpon administration, who were mostly hereditary rulers. They had to report directly

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597 See Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 35-44) on Sde rang rdzong and Stag lung rdzong.
598 For further details about the Bde skyid rdzong and Them spang rdzong, see Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 19-29).
599 This was particularly with the tribes of Aka (Hrusso) and Miji. See Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 19-29) for a description of the last two fortresses.
600 With the formation of the Sde rang rdzong and the jurisdiction of its rdzong dpon, gradually the Them spang rdzong lost its significance, but the Them spang babu maintained their local dominion until 1951. All of these regions are currently part of the various administrative units called Circle Area in the district of West Kameng. The Them spang ba spu lineage is discussed in the third chapter, section 3.9.
to the Tawang bla gnyer or the core council.\(^{601}\) Under the Dag pa zhal ngo, Mu kho shag gsum tsho, 'Ong la tsho, Bzang lung tsho, Kha bong tsho, Khri lam tsho, Thong legs (/len) tsho, Padma mkhar tsho, and Sag bkras tsho were governed as the eight Dag pa tsho. The lding dpon of Spang chen ruled Spang chen shog tshan bar (/ngas skor) lding, Spang chen shog tshan stod lding, Spang chen smad lding, Klu 'bum (/lhun po) lding, Rmuchos lding, and La rtse mkhar sman lding as the six Spang chen lding.

However, it is not clear whether the four tsho of Legs po, i.e. Srin mo tsho, Gom ri tsho, Skyid (/gyid) pa tsho, and Zhan slang tsho were governed under a separate lding dpon or under the zhal ngo of Spang chen. Nor is it clear whether there was a Legs po lding dpon.\(^{602}\) Each of these listed tsho or lding was ruled by a selected or appointed gtso rgan and represented at the councils along with rdzong dpon, lding dpon, or zhal ngo.\(^{603}\) Besides managing civil or criminal cases, the primary administrative work of the rdzong dpon consisted of collecting ‘the summer and winter tributes’ (dbyar khral dgun khral). The daily administration was handled by the corresponding gtso rgan. Based on this model of the tsho administrative system, the following enlarged table shows how these tsho were divided into rdzong and other administrative units.\(^{604}\)

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\(^{601}\) Ye shes 'phrin las (1983: 143) and Thub bstan chos 'phel (1988: 27) recorded the case of Dag pa zhal ngo, but nothing is mentioned about the zhal ngo or lding dpon of Spang chen and Legs po. Both authors were related to pre-1951 Monyul history, the former was a native and settled in Lhasa, while the latter was the last bla gnyer who served in Tawang until February 1951. See Nga phod Ngag dbang’s (1991) note on the Rta dbang bla gnyer.

\(^{602}\) Except the last four tsho of Legs po, which are currently administered under the Tsona rdzong (Cuônà xiàn) in the Lhokha (Shannan) prefecture (TAR), the rest of the tshos were incorporated in the districts of Tawang and West Kameng.

\(^{603}\) The most serious issues were referred to the Tsona rdzong dpon or sometimes returned back to the Council of Four. Thub bstan chos 'phel (1988: 29) gives two examples of civil cases, which were referred back to the Council of Four after unsuccessful litigation at Tsona.

\(^{604}\) The table is based on the 1680 edict, with additional inputs from the 1699 Rta wang bca ’yig. The list of tsho is further based on two important articles written in Tibetan by Ye shes 'phrin las (1983: 132-63) and Thub bstan chos 'phel (1988: 24-43). The notes on the region recorded by Chag 'gag (1990: 23), Norbu (2008: 18-19) and Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]) were also helpful. See also Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 37-8) as well as Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 48-9).
The above outlined *tsho* administrative system remained functional until Major R. Khating took over the region’s administrative centre, Tawang monastery, in February 1951 (Khating 1952, Tenpa 2014).
The Fortresses (rdzong) and its Taxation

Taxes were collected twice a year, but the taxation was not uniform in the whole region. It was divided into different taxation parts. One was the taxation of the various tsho in the present-day Tawang district, which was directly collected and transferred to the Tawang monastery. The other was collected by Rgyang mkhar rdzong as well as by Tsona rdzong, and which were partially transferred to Lhasa. Besides the usual taxation, the valleys of Spang chen lding drug and Legs po tsho bzhi had to pay the nine nyag of butter, which they had to bring to Tawang monastery in lieu of the corvée performed by the people of Legs po tsho bzhi.

Legs po tsho bzhi also had to bring every three year the ‘wood-ceiling’ (thog pang) needed for Tawang monastery, whereas the Tsho gsum population had to maintain the monastic complex and its quarter, as well as the borders. The valleys of the Dag pa tsho brgyad had to pay obligatory tax on certain fruits, such as for ‘banana’ (glam ‘bras), ‘sugarcane’ (bur shing), and ‘orange’ (tsha lu ma). Also, medicinal herbs from the Mon region were liable for taxation. Taxation in the valleys of the Rong nang tsho bzhi and Sbrang nang (chu rgyud) tsho drug was collected by the rdzong dpon of Stag lung rdzong and Sde rang rdzong. The partial grain taxation of the rdzong was delivered to Tawang monastery, whereas the taxation of some fruits were used for official ceremonies in Lhasa.

Another important tax to be delivered for the ceremonies was that of rice, which was meant to meet the demand for the official ceremonies of Lhasa and its surrounding monasteries. The rice taxation was not subject to the local officials, rather, it was a monopoly of the ‘Tsona rice-official’ (Mtsho sna ‘bras sgrub pa), who was directly responsible to and appointed by Lhasa (Mkhas mchog blo ldan 1998: 332). The Tsona rice-official managed the rice taxation throughout the Mon region, i.e. he was responsible for the cultivation as well as for the sale of rice at the annual Udalguri trade fair, held by (Tibeto-) Mon traders at Udalguri, Assam or

As the larger picture has been explained in Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 19-54) with regard to the respective rdzong and its taxation system, this sub-chapter gives only an overview of the taxation and highlights some of the technical terms.

One nyag is about 700 grams. See also note 94 in Appendices.

See Tsepak Rigzin (1993) and Aris (1993) for the ceremonies in Tibet.
Balemu (Amratulla). For a successful annual trade fair, the population of the Stag lung rdzong and Sde rang rdzong had to offer a corvée service to the Tawang bla gnyer and other official traders from Lhasa or Tsona. This service was the main hardship faced by the people of the respective rdzongs, in particular by the subjects of the Stag lung rdzong.

Fig. 30: The Seng ge rdzong valley and its transit fortress on a hill

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608 See a short note on the trade fairs in Hopkinson (1869), Sikdar (1997b) and Dutta and Jha (1999).
Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This study is an in-depth study of the local history of Monyul and redresses the shortage of historical surveys on the Eastern Himalaya. In doing so, it offers new insights into the manifold historical events and cultural encounters of the area. Despite the challenges of limited resources and fragmentary historical research, this is the first historical study which thoroughly investigates the Mon region’s critical periods of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. This research brings to light important new historical facts regarding the cross-border and religio-political relationships between Tibet, Bhutan, and the Mon region. Ultimately, it is a study of how a region was formed within the larger state-centric nation. Saying this, the research does not argue that the Mon region was an independent state.

The potential impact of a study regarding the region’s historical process is large, considering that the region is currently being contested by China and India. Particular emphasis was placed on the formation of the region in the late-seventeenth century. By providing new information and interpretation on this period, it is hoped that the Mon people will have a deeper understanding of their own history. At the same time, the study attempts to offer them a possibility of using it as a tool to shape a Mon identity. Yet, the main hope is that this study becomes a source for further historical examinations of the region and thus provide an impetus for greater historical and anthropological research in this area.

This study has tried to carefully avoid the trap of interpreting local myths as history and was crafted through a rigorous analysis of new primary sources obtained by the author. It was also enhanced by the use of secondary sources, particularly those in Tibetan language. As the main source, I thoroughly consulted the different versions (including three unpublished accounts) of Rgyal rigs (1728) and some other related texts. These texts were comparatively studied in order to highlight and understand the pre-seventeenth century history of the region. Other primary texts
including the *Me rag mdzad rnam, Dga’ ba’i dpal ster*, and official documents that were examined to outline the region’s history.

The study highlights the Tibetan depiction of the *old* Mon region as a specifically located area and not as a generalized observation of the whole of the southern region. At the same time, the literature also mentions distinct ethnic and historical information concerning the Mon, Monpa or Monyul people and the regions. This thesis argues that institutionalized Tibetan Buddhist schools were responsible for the decline of the regional chieftains, even though they were able to keep their specific Mon identities. From that time onwards, the chieftains’ ethnic Monpa culture and language became influenced by the Tibetan culture from the northern side of the region.

The central issues hence taken up in this study can be summarized as follows: The study begins with a brief outline of the historical background of the Tibeto-Mon relations. It also discusses the state of affairs between various Tibetan Buddhist schools prior to the establishment of the Dga’ ldan pho brang government of Tibet, along with related historical events in the relevant area. Particular focus was paid to the discussion of the state of their relations during the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, with a question of whether there existed a ‘priest-disciple’ (*bla slob*) relation between the peripheral/local elites and spiritual leaders. The chapter also provides a short literature review and a statement concerning the significance of the study, as well as a methodological analysis of the history and historical narratives of the Tibetan religio-politics and Tibetan historiography.

The next chapter contains an analysis of the early history of Mon and of the Monyul-Tibet relationship, based on the available Tibetan language sources. It focuses primarily on Tibetan literature on Mon, Monyul and Monpa by examining how Mon and Monpa are used as ethnonyms in the Tibetan history and in the Tibetan historiographical tradition. A number of Tibetan primary texts are utilized to determine the meaning of Mon and its usage in Tibetan texts. I use these primary sources to refute the negative meanings and observations of Mon in the secondary sources. This chapter also uses the sources to determine Mon as the name of the
region to the south of Tibet proper and provides a historical-geographical definition of what is known as Mon or Monyul today.

The chapter also focuses on the relationship between Tibet and Mon, outlining how old Mon region was perceived as a province during the Tibetan imperial period. It also explains how the term Mon is utilized and how it can be reanalyzed through the various periods of the Tibetan imperial era. This is done by analyzing the texts concerning the royal princes dispatched to the Mon regions and who then settled in the region. It also outlines the various ethnic groups that are labeled as Mon, even though the term predominantly refers to a region. The chapter thus summarizes the information given in various annals, chronicles and published hagiographical texts, which note the various possibilities of the old Mon region in the various sources of the different periods. I conclude by stating that since the late-seventeenth century, the term Mon and the region was assigned to relate to present-day Mon region – Tawang and West Kameng districts of present-day Arunachal Pradesh. However, it is also observed that in the Himalayan region, the terms Mon or Mon pa are still widely used to denote an ethnic group.

The next two sections of chapter three and four primarily discuss the rise of secular and spiritual rulers in present-day Mon region. It begins with an examination of related historical events as indicated in Tibetan texts and outlines the rise of various peripheral rulers of the region and their successors. It also focuses on the status of present descendants and their knowledge of and claims to the lineages. The chapter concludes with an outline of the rise in prominence of one of those rulers, Ber mkhar jo bo and his descendants who were significantly influenced by the spiritual leaders. The chapter three is followed by the rise of religious leaders, in particular the first three spiritual leaders of Merag Lamas (Me rag bla ma), who can be traced back to Dge lugs pa school. This historical outline is based on a short but important text, the Merag mdzad rnam. An annotated translation is included in the appendix. The chapter examines the origin of the title “Merag Lama” and outlines the biography of the First Merag Lama and his contribution to the rise of religious institutions in the region and in present-day Eastern Bhutan. The biographies of the second and third Merag Lamas are only briefly illustrated due to the lack of sources on these two figures. Other schools and lamas are also addressed in this chapter.
The critical period of the Mon region is examined in the fifth chapter, which centers on the life and activities of the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho. It is based on a short but important Tibetan text, *Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* (an annotated translation is included in the appendix), along with a number of other primary sources from Tibet and Bhutan, as well as English sources on Bhutan. Here, I discuss the socio-political scenario of the later part of the seventeenth century and argue that it was with the help of the government in Lhasa that the local Dge lugs pa’s in Mon were able to rise in that period. The chapter also illustrates the internal conflicts in Eastern Bhutan, which led to the formation of the present Mon region. The outline of the region’s formation includes a history of how the Fifth Dalai Lama, in 1680, was directly involved in the establishment and enlargement of present-day Tawang monastery. The 1680 edict related to this event is discussed in the following chapter. The period immediately after the year 1681 is analyzed in the context of the rise of the Ber mkhar family’s lineages of the Sixth Dalai Lama, as well as the early-eighteenth century historical events that were connected to the 1731 edict.

The chapter six of the thesis, deals with the formation of the Mon region and its administrative system, as illustrated in two important edicts issued in 1680 and in 1731. As both edicts were issued by the Lhasa regime to Tawang monastery and concerned the monastery’s administration of the region, the contents of the edicts are discussed to show how regional rule was finally established. I demonstrate the significance of the edicts for the region’s unique administration against the backdrop of other districts in ancient Tibet and briefly outline the unique traditional administrative system called *tsho*, which was strengthened by the two edicts issued to Tawang monastery. This administration remained significance for about two and a half centuries (i.e. until 1951) in the region.

To summarize, this study outlines the history of the Mon region in Arunachal Pradesh and covers the most significant phases of the history of the Monpa and the Mon region. I relate this history to the wider context of Tibetan and Himalayan studies. The research provides for the first time a thorough insight into the rich and multifarious Mon/Tibet history during the significant period of the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. In doing so, I have used sources which have not been translated so far or which have so far not been subjected to any scholarly
examination. The study thus provides an overview of the political and cultural history of the region, which helps illuminate issues concerning the present status of the region as a borderland between India and Tibet (China). The sources also illustrate the manner in which Mon and other small regions were shaken up in the seventeenth century and how Mon was separated from the larger region and identified as a separate self-governing region. In order to be mobile and to survive, the Mon people were for the first time required to declare their identity and adhere to a group. Of lasting importance for the Mon region and for the Monpa identity is the question of how far the geographical boundaries of a distinct peripheral non-state region were influenced or dissolved by the encounters with the superordinate political forces and cultures of Tibet and Bhutan.

Fig. 31: Grandpa Passang (1920?-17.09.2016) eagerly waited for this thesis

“He searches for words as he tries to remember what happened, [while] he warms his hands over a fire in his little home in Tawang” (Majumder, Sanjoy 10.11.2009, BBC)
Appendices

Appendix I: The Amended and Annotated Translation of the

\textit{Me rag mdzad rnam} Text\(^1\)

A Brief Record of Tribute from the Assamese [Bodo] kings and the Territorial Rights [in Assamese dvārs], the Establishment of Monasteries, as well as the Biography of Merag Lama [Blo bzang] Bstan pa’i sgron me.

(1) རྒྱལ་རིགས་(1)ཐོ་བྱ་ཐོ་མདོར་བསྲུས་པ་ཤེས་པ་5བུད་ཆུ་ཤིང་བུད་ཤིང་བུད་མདོར་བསྲུས་པ་ཤེས་པ་(1b)ཐོ་བྱ་ཐོ་མདོར་བསྲུས་པ་ཤེས་པ་6བུད་ཆུ་ཤིང་བུད་ཤིང་བུད་མདོར་བསྲུས་པ་ཤེས་པ་7

\(^1\) This amended Text A is based on the \textit{dbu can} script copy, which is copied from a \textit{khyugs yig (dbu med)} script version, i.e. Text B. The varied orthography from the texts is marked with the Text A and B. The facsimile editions are attached herewith. The \textit{Me rag mdzad rnam} text is likely compiled in the eighteenth century, because it contains information of the late-seventeenth century figures such as the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho. It could be the source for some part of the \textit{Rgyal rigs} text, because the text is a supplementary note or a petition forwarded to the Potala Palace. The petition is written to justify the historical background of the monasteries and their privileges, which remained intact with the succession of the Lamas. The context of the text, particularly concerning the biography of Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me and his activities in the region seem to be copied from another unavailable text. The text narrates the history of the local monasteries and Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me as the founder. The story of Thang stong rgyal po and his divination of a son, ‘the third [son]’ (\textit{gsum pa\'bha}), is identical to what is mentioned in \textit{Rgyal rigs I} (1986: 30b). This text, \textit{Me rag mdzad rnam}, could be the oldest source on the history of the region, dating back to the sixteenth century, while the text \textit{Dga’ ba\'i dpal ster}, which is introduced in the next appendix, gives a short description on the First Merag Lama, but mainly covers the Fourth Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho (d. 1682) as well as the social and political situation of his time. One can assume that both texts were written not earlier than the late-seventeenth or eighteenth century. Both texts outline the development of the Dge lugs pa school in the region. Refer to Rgyal sras sprul sku (2009 [1991]: 96-101) and Bstan ’dzin nor bu (2002: 210) for the passage to passage reproduction of this text.

\(^2\) Recte: ལུན་པའི་

\(^3\) Recte: འཁྲོད་ུན་

\(^4\) Text B: འཁྲོད་པའྲི།. Recte: འཁྲོད་པའྲི།

\(^5\) Text B: ལུན་ Recte: ལུན་དབང་

\(^6\) Recte: ལུན་ཐར་

\(^7\) Text B: འཁྲོད་
An address in the presence of the ‘precious supreme sovereign’. To whomever at the highest authorities of the supreme hearing, this is a necessary petition for the reason behind the Ar gya gdung monastery (1b) as the seat of the successive Merag Lamas. In the southeastern direction of Bkra shis gling, near the five stories [castle] called Gtsan po sgo in La ’og yul gsum of Mon, the Iron-chained bridge was subsequently fixed on a heighten site (bong bong) by ‘siddha’ (grub thob) Thang stong rgyal po (1385-1464). This is until now in possession of Jo bo Ta’ la. Grub thob was a contemporary of the Omniscient One, Dge ’dun grub pa (1391-1474), and they were close teacher and disciple as well as dharma friends. Grub thob’s arrival in the region even coincided with the foundation of the Gtsang Bkra shis lhun po monastery, established by Dge ’dun grub pa. This auspicious

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8 Recte: འཁ. Text B: མཁར་བཞི་བཅོས་
9 Recte: སྒྲུབ་ས་རི་ཡང་ས་
10 Recte: གཉིས་
11 Recte: གཉིས་
12 Recte: བཞེ་
13 The term gong ma khrims bdag rin po che is translated as the “precious supreme sovereign”, which can be literally translated as the “precious master of the law”. In the studies of Tibetan legal documents, gong ma has been translated as “emperor”, but here it is understood as referring to the “lord of the law” or the Dalai Lama, taking the example of gong sa, a synonym of gong ma. Both gong sa and gong ma refer also to a Dalai Lama. The term could be alluded then to a regent (sde srid or rgyal tshab).
14 See the sections 4.3-4.5 and 5.1-5.3 in the main text.
15 Although the foundation of this bridge is not supported in the biographies of Thang stong rgyal po, Kalmus (2015: 29-30) considers that it was built at that period. See note 191 in the main text.
16 Among the successive descendants recorded in Rgyal rigs, Jo bo Ta’ la is not figured. As the text is likely written in the eighteenth century, he must be a contemporary of the anonymous author of this text. His ancestors might be traced back to Ber mkhar jo bo or Dpa’ bo gdung pa.
17 Although both these famous Tibetans of the fifteenth century were contemporary, there is not any literature except this, which highlights the meeting between them. Thang stong rgyal po was attached to Bka’ brgyud sect of Tibetan Buddhism, whereas Dge ’dun grub belongs to the Dge lugs sect. One can assume that the author of this text was well aware of the circumstances, but he tried to imply that Thang stong rgyal po practiced Tibetan Buddhism, rather than a particular sect.
coincidence etc., proclaimed in the four cardinal directions, was an auspicious portent for the occurrence of the four ‘trade-marts’ (dvār; las sgo).  

(2) बिंबिसर्स्वाति लोक्स्यान्तिकार्यास्तेन्द्रियाः प्रकटात क्रमः प्रतिध्वादिकाः।
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<tr>
<th>प्रकराणं च</th>
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<tr>
<td>दक्षिणायां लोकाः प्रगटोऽधिकरणं आयनं ज्ञातवाय।</td>
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<td>वर्णस्य दक्षिणायां लोकाः प्रगटोऽधिकरणं आयनं ज्ञातवाय।</td>
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<td>वर्णस्य दक्षिणायां लोकाः प्रगटोऽधिकरणं आयनं ज्ञातवाय।</td>
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<td>वर्णस्य दक्षिणायां लोकाः प्रगटोऽधिकरणं आयनं ज्ञातवाय।</td>
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With regard to the advent of the doctrine of the Dge lugs in the [Mon] region: while [Thang stong rgyal po] was contemplating as to who could be the sponsor of his thought, he arrived in [Mon] by making a divination.(2b) During that period, the jo bo of Rus pa mkhar was wealthiest and greatest, where they, the jo bo and his subjects (leaders and retinue), were having a ‘feast’ (lto za chang 'thung). Grub thob, in order to check any auspicious sign [for a sponsorship], went among the gathering and said, “I, yogi need some chang,” and held-up a skull [-cup]. They replied [however] that “You are a beggar whom we do not know where you come from and a yogi carrying a human skull. Do not come here, go away” and he was ousted.

(3) ཨེ་ཟོ་གཞི་ཟོ། རེན་འབེལ་མ་འགིག་པར།
<table>
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<tr>
<th>རེན་འབེལ་མ་འགིག་པར།</th>
<th>རེན་འབེལ་མ་འགིག་པར།</th>
<th>རེན་འབེལ་མ་འགིག་པར།</th>
<th>རེན་འབེལ་མ་འགིག་པར།</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>དེ་ནས་བེར་(3a) མཁར་དུ་འབྲོན་པས།</td>
<td>ཇྒྲོ་བྒྲོ་སངས་རྒྱས་རྒྲོ་རེའི་བུ་དར་རྒྱས་ལ་བག་མ་</td>
<td>ལྷོན་གྲུབ་</td>
<td>བོད་སྔོམ་པ་བར་མ་ཡུམ་ལ་འབྲེལ་བང་།</td>
</tr>
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</table>
As the portent was not successful, [he] then arrived at Ber mkhar. (3a) [His arrival at Ber mkhar] corresponds to the welcoming and drinking ceremony of a bride to Jo
bo Dar rgyas, the son of Jo bo Sangs rgyas rdo rje.\textsuperscript{45} Here too, \textit{grub thob} [Thang stong rgyal po] in order to check a good portent, asked “Oh! King, I need \textit{chang}.” And held up a skull-[cup]. Immediately seeing the self-assured \textit{yogi}, [both] the father and son \textit{jo bos} [jokingly] asked, “are you thinking of becoming a bridegroom?” They invited the \textit{yogi} and urged him to be seated, and he was offered \textit{chang}. The \textit{yogi} thought here is the auspicious coincidence; without any doubt he held his skull-[cup], which was filled by a ladle of \textit{chang} up to the lid.\textsuperscript{(3b)} Thereafter, he offered many prayers to the Triple Gems\textsuperscript{46} and manifested his accomplishment by throwing the skull [-cup] into the air, where [the cup] touched the ceiling of the roof and then fell down to the floor, shaking but not damaged, [and] not even a single drop of \textit{chang} was spoilt.\textsuperscript{47}

The skull [-cup filled with] \textit{chang} was given to the father and son \textit{jo bos}, who prayed a lot, and said “drink as much as you can.” After drinking six and half skull [-cups] of \textit{chang} and leaving a half [of the seventh portion] by the \textit{jo bo}, \textit{grub thob} [Thang stong rgyal po] prophesied that “Jo bo Dar rgyas, you will have seven children, among which one will not be useful and one will become perfect in the practice of the Buddhist doctrine in the region.” He [then] gave the skull [-cup] to keep it as an inner receptacle (i.e. a religious object).\textsuperscript{(4a)} To accept it with bare hands [from Thang stong rgyal po] is not the right manner, the father [Sangs rgyas rdo rje] thought. Hence, he asked his son [Jo bo Dar rgyas] to get a scarf. The skull-[cup] was then draped in a scarf brought in a box by the son. This is a brief explanation about why the skull [-cup] is the head of the ‘ḍākinī’ (\textit{mkha’ ‘gro ma}) ‘Gro ba bzang mo.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} One can thus assume that the father and son, Sangs rdo rje and Dar rgyas of Ber mkhar, were living in the fifteenth century, keeping in view their meeting with Thang stong rgyal po.

\textsuperscript{46} This \textit{mchog gsum} terminology refers to ‘the Three Gems’ (\textit{dkon mchod gsum; triratna}): the Buddha (\textit{sangs rgyas}), the Dharma (\textit{chos}) and the Sangha (\textit{dge ’dun}).

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Thog ka lang} is translated as “ceiling of the roof” and \textit{spang kha} means “meadow”, but here it is translated as “floor”. Here \textit{lang} is considered a vernacular word of the Mon region.

\textsuperscript{48} The skull being of \textit{mkha’ ‘gro ma} ‘Gro ba bzang mo is not consistent to the text \textit{Mkha’ ‘gro ma ‘gro ba bzang mo nram thar}, because she is mentioned as a dākinī who has ascended to heaven. See note 168 and 171 in the main text.
During the time of the Omniscient Dge ’dun rgya mtsho (1475-1542), jinaputra (rgyal sras) Bstan pa’i sgron me was the First Merag Lama who bowed down to the feet of the ‘Victor’ (rgyal ba) Dge ’dun rgya mtsho. He was named Bstan pa’i sgron me at the time of his hair-cutting ceremony. He requested for a number of ‘empowerment and authorisation’ (abhiseka, āgama) from him.

(4b) He studied sūtra at the Se ra byes monastery and then studied mantra at the [Upper or Lower] Tantric (Rgyud) monastery. He then came back to Se ra byes monastery. While meditating there, he had a vision of the ‘protector deity’ (mgon po; mahākāla?). Subsequently, the Omniscient Dge ’dun rgya mtsho issued a command to him saying: “You should find a monastery in Mon and establish a relation with Assam’s king. Therefore, you must go back to Mon.” On the way back to Mon, he was accompanied by Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun.

(5) Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (25.8) mentions that the successive Merag Lamas studied and were affiliated both to Bkra shis lhun po monastery in Shigatse, Gtsang, and to an unnamed monastery, i.e. Se ra monastery in central Tibet.

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51 Text B: བཟས་
52 Recte: བཟས་
53 Text B: བཟས་
54 Text B: བཟས་
55 Recte: བཟས་
56 Recte: ཟླ་བདེན་
57 Although Bstan pa’i sgron me is mentioned in the autobiography of Dge ’dun rgya mtsho (1979 [1542]: 36a), the concerned information is not recorded. See also the autobiography or Mullin (2005).
58 See note 328 in the main text. Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (25.8) mentions that the successive Merag Lamas studied and were affiliated both to Bkra shis lhun po monastery in Shigatse, Gtsang, and to an unnamed monastery, i.e. Se ra monastery in central Tibet.
59 See note 321 in the main text.
60 Recte: བཟས་
61 Recte: བཟས་
62 Text B: བཟས་
63 Recte: བཟས་
In the mid-seventeenth century, Thugs dam dpal/pad dkar, the son of Bstan pa’i nyi ma (1567-1619) established a monastery at the site. Since then, it is known as Brag dkar dgon pa. Thugs dam dpal dkar had to move to Bhutan (‘Brug yul) in the late-seventeenth century after the sectarian conflict in the region (Aris 2009 [1986]: 117; Dargye 2001: 91). See also note 383 in the main text.

77 See note 18 in the main text.
78 Except this text and Dga’ ba’i dpal ster, Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje is not mentioned in other texts. See also Tenpa (2013).
79 Bstan pa’i sgron me, as the founder of the Ar yags/gya gdung monastery, is mentioned in Rgyal rigs I (1986: 30b), whereas in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (7) it states that it was founded by Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje.
80 Although the patron name is not mentioned, the Khams pa jo bo of Lha’u tsho could be the patron as they were mentioned as the local chieftain in Rgyal rigs I (1986: 30a).
Lama offered Buddhist teachings and bestowed empowerments. This is the first monastic seat of Merag Lama, where Bstan pa’i sgron me himself was the first Lama [of the seat].

The second monastic seat [Sla nga steng]: Lama Bstan pa’i sgron me founded Sla nga steng monastery, where a two-storied stone-house was constructed. During his residency at that place, each of these, the chief of the [Sla nga steng] region Bstan pa’i ‘od zer, the Jo bo of Ber mkhar, Dpa’ bo gdung, Byams mkhar, Shar nub, Grang mkhar, and Mkhar gdung presented a khal of ‘offering grains’ (‘bru phud’). The wealthier and less wealthy subjects of Lha ri sgang and Zer rgyud etc. also offered five to ten bre.

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81 What happen to Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje is not stated.
82 Text B: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
83 Recte: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
84 Text B: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
85 Recte: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
86 Text B: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
87 Recte: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
88 Text B: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
89 Recte: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
90 Text B: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
91 Text B: བློ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེའི་འྒྲོད་ཟེར
92 The chief of Sla sna steng Bstan pa’i ’od zer may have become the disciple of Bstan pa’i sgron me and was named Blo bzang Bstan pa’i ’od zer, though this is not supported in Dga’ ba’i dpel ster.
93 The last jo bo of Mkhar gdung is not mentioned in Rgyal rigs I (1986: 31a). The rest of the jo bo and their castles were established by the siblings of Bstan pa’i sgron me. See the details in Rgyal rigs or section 3.2.3.1. See also Tenpa (2015).
94 In the old Tibetan and Himalayan regions, the weight measurement is divided into bre and khal. A bre volume is measured to an equivalent of about a kilo, a litre or two pints. The bre is the smallest unit and twenty bre equals one khal. One khal weighs about twenty kilograms. A khal was a standard measure for a porter or caravan load. There were two types of khal, a ru’i khal and a ‘degs khal, of which two ‘bo or twenty bre make one ru’i khal. The half of the ru’i khal is measured as one ‘degs khal. Or twenty nya ga or srang makes one ‘degs khal.
95 See the note on khal to understand the measurement of bre.
administered the monastery. Like rainfall, they held sermons of Buddhist teachings and bestowed empowerments to the male and female patrons. As the monastic site resembles a bottom of a pan, it was named ‘Upon the Pan’ (Sla nga steng) monastery, where even today [the successive Merag Lamas] are the chief monastic masters.

(7) མི་ནི་ཤིག་བྱེད་ལུགས་ཀྱི་པོ་མོ་ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་96 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་97 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་98 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་99 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་100 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་101 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་102 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་103 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་104 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་105 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་106 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད། འབུམ་སེང་གི་སིན་བདག་རྣམས་ཀི་107 ཐོན་ཕྲུལ་དང་བྱ་བུར་དུ་མ་པའི་བོད་སྐད།

The third monastic seat [Stag gdung]: While residing at Stag gdung in Upper Shar tsho, 108 the benefactors of Sbom pa and 'Bum steng villages built a two-storied stone-house. Motivated by their immense faith, [they] even donated ‘offering grains’ (bru phud) [according to their] financial capacities. Here too, he [Bstan pa’i sgron me] offered Buddhist sermons and bestowed empowerments to the male and female patrons. Since there was no progress in his meditative commitment due to many visitors, he therefore secretly left and stayed in the nearby thick bamboo groves. (6b) That is the reason why the place is called Gsam lam ’phel (the Progress of the Secret Path), as he progressed there in his meditative commitments. According to the


108 Shar tsho roughly corresponds to present-day Kitpi Circle Area under Tawang district. Shar tsho was once one of the three primary tshos in the former administrative division of the thirty-two tshos of the Mon region. See for further in section 6.4 of the sixth chapter.
aspirations of the mind [by Merag Lama?], the mutual relationship between the monasteries of Stag gdung and Rta dbang was hence established.\(^{109}\)

(8) མྲེས་པའི་སྟེགས་དཔོན་པོ་དཔོན་པོ་པ་\(^{110}\)སྟིག་ཅིང་མོ་\(^{111}\)མོ་མྱི་བཟླ་འདུ་མོ་མཛད་ཅིང་\(^{112}\)ཐོབ་ཐོན་བསྐོལ་ཐོག་མུ་\(^{113}\)མོ་མྱི་དུ་\(^{114}\)མངའ་ཞི་བཟླ་འདུ་མོ་མཛད་ཅིང་\(^{115}\)མོ་མྱི་དུ་\(^{116}\)སྟེགས་དཔོན་པོ་\(^{117}\)སྟིག་ཅིང་མོ་\(^{118}\)

The fourth monastic seat [Mthong legs]: With motivation, the sponsor of Mthong leng village built a stone-house at Rta’i drung,\(^{120}\) near Upper Mthong leng in Dag pa. As before, they also donated ‘offering grains’ (’bru phud). Both Shang stong chen po\(^{121}\) and rgyal sras Bstan pa’i sgron me safeguarded and developed the monastery and stayed there to practice ‘meditative realization’ (sgrub pa).

[The fifth monastic seat Shur chung dgon pa]: While staying at the monastery, [Bstan pa’i sgron me] went to the upper part of Rlung la in Dag pa\(^{122}\) and founded a hermitage to practice meditative realization, where he stayed for several years.(7a) As the hermitage site is a little ravine area, the name of the monastery was also called Shur chung dgon pa, which became the fifth monastic seat.

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\(^{109}\) This last line is not clear about the mentioning of contact between the Stag gdung and Tawang monasteries. If there was a relationship, it must have developed after the late-seventeenth century, because the enlarged Tawang monastery was founded only in 1680-81.

\(^{110}\) དགས་པ་ is also written.

\(^{111}\) Text B: ཕེགས་པ་

\(^{112}\) Text B: བསྐྱེད་པ་

\(^{113}\) Recte: ཉུན་

\(^{114}\) Recte: ཉུན་རབས་གཞན་གཉེན་

\(^{115}\) Text B: བསྟན་པ་

\(^{116}\) Recte: བསྟན་

\(^{117}\) Recte: དྲུག་རློབ་

\(^{118}\) Recte: དྲུག་

\(^{119}\) Recte: ཁྲ་གཅོད་

\(^{120}\) Thongleg (Mthong leng) is a village under the Lumla Circle Area, Tawang district. Rta drung dgon pa is a small monastery above present-day Lumla town.

\(^{121}\) From the context of the text, Shang stong chen po refers to Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun.

\(^{122}\) Rlung la is also written as Snun la, which refers to present Lumla town of the Lumla Circle Area in the district of Tawang.
We have presented the complete historical background to the former Dalai Lamas and regents on how these small monasteries in Upper [Mon] region came under the administration of the successive Merag Lamas in both Tsho gsum and Dag pa. It is said that in a special case, Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho individually requested and forwarded to the Supreme Omniscent [the Fifth Dalai Lama] a strong and detailed petition on all aspects of the merits and demerits of both the main and branch monasteries of the border region. Having heard about the background of the reason [of this petition], the manager (gnyer pa) (7b) Blo bzang tshul khrims of [Mtsho sna]...
Dgon pa rtse, prepared a counterfeit copy of the edict issued by the Sde srid (?).\textsuperscript{138} When it was realized that Merag Lama [Blo gros rgya mtsho] had already arrived at Ching of Mon Phag ri [on his way to Lhasa], [the manager] informed Sde srid rin po che that it would be not good to issue an additional edict [to Merag Lama, who is on his way to Lhasa]. [He, the manager] petitioned that “all these monasteries come under my administration.” Hence, this is the reason why we did not receive an edict at the time.\textsuperscript{139} This is an essence of the archived documents and a brief oral account of the successive [Merag] Lamas.

\textsuperscript{(10)} The 1680 edict issued to Tawang monastery by the Fifth Dalai Lama recorded the rights and jurisdiction of Tawang monastery, though the particular edict seems to refer to another edict issued to the other monasteries of Merag Lamas or to Tawang monastery only. See the 1680 edict in the sixth chapter and Aris (1980).

\textsuperscript{138} Thub bstan chos 'phel (1988) states also that when he went back (i.e. escaped) to Lhasa in 1951, after the arrival of the Indian army led by Major Khating, he took some important documents of the monastery. He was the last Tawang bla gnyer in office from 1949-51. See Tenpa (2014).

\textsuperscript{139} It could be རྒྱ་ཆེ་བ་འབུལ or Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{140} Recte: རྒྱ་ཆེ་བ

\textsuperscript{141} Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{142} Text B: བརྒྱ་འབུལ. Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{143} Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{144} Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{145} Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{146} Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{147} Text B: བརྒྱ་འབུལ. Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{148} Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{149} Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ

\textsuperscript{150} Text B: བརྒྱ་འབུལ. Recte: བརྒྱ་འབུལ
After the establishment of the monasteries in the Upper Mon region, *rgyal sras* Bstan pa’i sgron me gradually went to Sag stengs,154 Me rag,155 Sgom ri mdo bzhi,156 Kha gling,157 etc. (8a) Once, while he was giving teachings, empowerments, and long-life practices to the *jo bos* of Gdung bsam mkhar in a dilapidated stone-house,158 a strong earthquake happened. All the new stone-houses collapsed, [however, due to the] Lama’s benevolence, the dilapidated stone-house did not tumble. As this was observed by the *jo bos* and his subjects, [they] developed an uncommon faith [in him] and made *brgya ’bul* offering, etc.159 Headed by Bkra shis legs pa, the *chos mdzad* of Ag pa gling,160 a number of monks had their ‘hair-cutting ceremony’ (*skra bcad*) and stayed at the monasteries in the different parts of Tsho gsum to study together. Thereupon, (8b) the Lama [along with others] proceeded to Sag stengs and founded there the [sixth] monastery.161 He then went to Sgom ri mdo bzhi and became the ‘chief spiritual master’ (*dbu bla*) of Pha jo mdo bzhi.162 He conducted the hair-cutting ceremony and gave ‘ordained names’ (*chos ming*) to twenty-two monks of Sgom ri mdo bzhi. He had [another] hair-cutting ceremony and gave ordained names to eight monks from Phong mi mtshan gsum.163 Thereafter he again

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151 Recte: རྒྱལ་སྒྲུབ
152 Recte: རྒྱལ་སྒྲུབ
153 Recte: རྒྱལ་སྒྲུབ
154 Presently, it is Sakteng Gewog (Sag stengs *rged ’og*) in the Trashigang district in Eastern Bhutan. See also note 283 in the main text.
155 See note 283 and 507 in the main text.
156 Present Gomdar Gewog (Sgom dar *rged ’og*) in the Samdrup Jongkhar (Bsam grub ljongs mkhar) district in Eastern Bhutan is the closest name matching to Sgom ri rdo bzhi.
157 Presently, it is Khaling Gewog (Kha gling *rged ’og*) in the Trashigang district in Eastern Bhutan.
158 Present Samkhar Gewog (Bsam mkhar *rged ’og*) in the Trashigang district of Eastern Bhutan is the closest match to Gdung bsam mkhar.
159 ‘Hundred offerings’ (*brgya ’bul*) is an extensive offering consisting of hundred different items, which is meant to be an immeasurable offering.
160 See note 209 in the main text or note 476 and 562 in appendices.
161 The monastery name is Bkra shis chos gling in Dga’ ba’i dpal ster or Tashi Tselling (Bkra shis rtse gling) monastery in Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 7). See note 335, 336 in the main text.
162 Pha jo mdo bzhi monastery or temple is yet to be identified. It is interesting to observe that a number of Pha jo were listed as his disciples. The term *pha jo* may refers to a ‘shaman’ (*pha jo*) in a vernacular language of Eastern Bhutan (Karma 2013: 306-7). It can also be translated as “patriarch”. The Pha jo mdo bzhi region must be in Eastern Bhutan.
163 Present Tomzhangsa Gewog (Stong mi gzhang sa) in the Trashiyangtse (Bkra shis dbyang rtse) district in Eastern Bhutan is closest to Phong mi mtshan gsum, because prior to Stong mi zhang sa, it was called Stong mi zhang tshan. In Tibetan, *zhang tshan* means maternal relative, while it simply means relative in Dag pa dialect of Tawang Monpa and Trashiyangtse of Eastern Bhutanese.
carried out the hair-cutting ceremony and gave ordained names to seven monks from Pha jo mdo bzhi.

(11) བླ་མ་བསན་པའི་སྒྲོན་མེ་ཐང་པྒྲོ་ཆེར་ཇྒྲོ་བྒྲོ་བཀའ་དམ་ཟེར་བའི་གནས་རི་དབན་པ་

Thereafter, Lama Bstan pa’i sgron me was practicing meditative realization in a secluded pilgrim peak called Jo bo bka’ dam at Thang po che. He had a visualization of [the deity] Lha mo (Śrī Devī), who prophesied to him: “Lama, [you] must go to the eastern [Mon] direction.” (9a) Accompanied by the above monks, they took the direction of a new route from the Sa lor skyabs pass and then through

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164 Recte: བཏུན་པ
165 Text B: ཁྲོད Recte: ཁྲོད
166 Recte: བོད་
167 Recte: བོད་
168 Text B: རོང Recte: རོང
169 Recte: རོང
170 Option: སྟུག་སྤན། སྟུག་པཎ།
171 Recte: བུ་
172 Recte: བུ་
173 Recte: བུ་
174 This extra line is inserted in the main text by the compiler to note that some pages are corrupted in the Text A. In Tib., དེ་བར་མ་དཔེ་ནང་ཤྒྲོག་ལེབ་ག་ཞིག་མི་ཚང་བ་ལྟ་བུ་མཆིས་པས་ཐ་དྡོན་ཡིག་ཆུང་དུ་ཡིག་འབིས་རང་གི་ཟུར་ཞུས་ལགས་ན་དྒྲོར་འཁྲུལ་མཆི་ན་

175 Text B: བས་ Recte: བས་
176 Recte: རོང
177 Text B: རོང Recte: རོང
178 Recte: རོང
179 Recte: རོང

176 Recte: རོང but རོང as suppress could also be possible.
177 Recte: རོང
178 Recte: རོང
179 Text B: རོང Recte: རོང

180 Not yet identified of this place.
the passes of Mdo gsum, Rtsing gi, Snar bum, and Jo mo la, [until they finally reached] Stag lung rtse in Upper Dom kha. While staying there, [the Lama and his retinue were] visited by the *babu (ba spu)* of Upper and Lower Dom kha, headed by the *babu* of Mur shing [called] sbyar Sprang po dar. They requested [Lama Bstan pa’i sgron me] to establish the [seventh] monastery in order not to experience harm and suppression from Sde rang, Them spang, Stug pan, etc. They promised to sponsor [the building of the monastery] and so the priest and patron [together] agreed to build a monastic-fortress. (In due to build the fort; (…; 9b), each of them donated ‘offering grains’ (*bru phud*). Accordingly, based upon the above reasons, we the ‘teachers and disciples’ (dpon slob) had until now looked after [the monastic fortress].

(12) དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་དཔའ་དར་སངས་རྒྱས་བསན་འཛིན་ལ་བསྐུར་ནས་འབེལ་རགས་པ་རེན་ནས་

181 Dom kha is presently written as Domkho, which is located in the Kalaktang Circle Area of the West Kameng district. The *jo bo* from this region is recorded only in *Rgyal rigs* and in the biography of Padma gling pa. See section 3.2.5 on the *jo bo.*

182 The ‘*babu* (ba spu)’ of Mur shing, Sbyar Sprang po dar is mentioned in *Rgyal rigs.* Presently, his descendant in Murshing and Domkho villages in the Kalaktang Circle Areas of the West Kameng district write ‘Trangpodar’ (Sprang po dar) as their surname. This text also introduces an ‘other’ (*g*zhvan) Sprang po dar. This variation is still observed in the Murshing and Domkho villages, where a number of families claim to be descendants of Sprang po dar. My fieldwork in 2012 also led to a descendant called Sbrang rtsis dar. See the discussion on Sprang po dar from the major historical sources of Tibetan in section 3.2.5.1.

183 The internal struggle among the groups of these regions to gain supremacy over each other is still part of the oral tradition. It is narrated more as a story by the narrator rather than an old enmity, which brings humour to the different events and stories, as well as amusing the listeners.

184 This monastic fortress is known as Stag lung *rdzong dgon pa.* It is one of the oldest monastic complexes in the Mon region. However, the original monastic complex was damaged during the 1950 earthquake.

185 Text B: གདོད་ Recte: ག

186 Recte: ང་མ་. Both spellings are written in the text.

187 Text B: བི་ཁ་ Recte: ཐྲ་ཁ་

188 Text B: བི་ཁ་ Recte: ཐྲ་ཁ་

189 Text B: བི་ Recte: ཐྲ་

190 Text B: བི་ Recte: ཐྲ་

191 Text B: ང་(ཐ་) Recte: ཐ་

192 Recte: ཐ་
བྱུང་བའི་ལས་སྒྲོ་ཡིན་པའི་རྒྱ་མཚན་ནི་གཞུང་སར་སན་འབུལ་ཞུས་ཚར་བའི་
193གཞུང་ས་ཆེན་པྒྲོ་ནས་ཀང་གཏྒྲོང་དེབ་

With regard to A mar ta la ‘trade-mart’ (las sgo; dvār),
194 [it came into existence] upon consultation with Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho,
195 Dge ’dun chos grags, Dpa’ dar Sangs bstan ’dzin and babu ’Dzoms pa dbang,
196 with the need of building a relationship with the two kings of A sam [Assam] and Ga bu ra dza (rāja),
197 according to the saying of the previous ‘Victors’ (rgyal ba), [the Dalai Lamas]. [To
establish the relationship, they] dispatched Dpa’ dar Sangs rgyas bstan ’dzin, along
with horses, [yak]-tails, musk, gold, silks, and cloths, (10a) animals’ food and ‘a roll
of woolen clothes’ (snam bu). Due to the establishment of this relationship, the
reason for the appearance of this trade-mart was duly notified to the new
government, which is even recorded in the ‘great monastic allowances register’
gtong deb chen mo) of the esteemed government.

193 Text B: དངོས་
194 It is written as Amratulla, which is located in the Balemu Circle Area of the West Kameng district.
195 The mentioning of Blo gros rgya mtsho in the list shows that the text was composed in the late-
seventeenth or in the eighteenth century. It also seems that the author of this text is confused about
the period of Bstan pa’i sgron me and Blo gros rgya mtsho. The former lived in the sixteenth century
and the latter lived until the late-seventeenth century, or one has to consider that there were two
persons with the same name of Blo gros rgya mtsho. Besides ’Dzom pa dbang, the other names
recorded along with Blo gros rgya mtsho are not helpful to identify the concern period.
196 See note 211 and 450 in the main text or section 5.4 or Tenpa (2015).
197 These rājas probably refer to the kings of Koch kingdom or Darrang kingdom, but not to Ahom
kingdom. The Koch kingdom was a vassal kingdom of the Ahom kingdom until British India annexed
the kingdom in the mid-nineteenth century. See Gait (1906).
198 Recte: གཞི་
199 Recte: གཞི་
200 Text B: གཞི་
201 Recte: གཞི་
202 Recte: གཞི་
203 It could be གསུང་གྲོས (instructions or conversation).
204 Recte: གཞི་
205 Recte: གཞི་
206 Recte: གཞི་
Although we, the old monks were not familiar with the trade-marts, you might be aware that it is attached as an endowment for the ‘periodic offerings’ (dus mchod) to the previous ‘Victors’ [the Dalai Lamas]. It is not appropriate to discontinue all the secret teachings of the Lama because the essence of the teachings can be transmitted, like the great son as the direct disciple [of his master, and] for you, the chief, it is like the father and his son, i.e. the youngest think like the eldest. How is it therefore possible for you to argue on the monasteries and trade-marts established by the Lama? It is simply that you were preventing [the revenue of trade-marts, (10b) you must know that] they are for the periodic offerings to the previous Victors. Otherwise, how are you trying to own the rights of the monastery while at

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207 Recte: བཀྲོད་དབང་
208 Recte: བཀྲོད་
209 Recte: བཀག་
210 Recte: རྣམས་ཀྱི་མདུན་མཆོད་
211 Text B: ཕེད་
212 Recte: མ་གཏྲོགས་
213 Recte: གཤེགས་
214 Text B: གྲོད་ཀིས་
215 Recte: བཀའ་ཤྲོག་ལེ་མཚན་
216 Recte: ཁྲུད་ཀྱུ་ཡིན་ན་མ་རྒྲོགས།
217 Recte: རྡོ་རྗེའི་སྐྱེས་སྐྱོང་
218 Recte: བཀག་
219 Recte: བཀའ་མདུན་རྒྱུ་
220 Text B: བླ་མ་གྲོང་མའི་ཡིག་
221 Text B: སྐྱོད་མཚོ་བྲག་པ་འདུག་པ་
222 Text B: བླ་མ་བསན་(11a) འདི་ལ་འགྲོ་ཚོད་
223 Recte: སོགས་
224 As the text is likely composed after the late-seventeenth century, the four previous rgyal ba were likely the first four Dalai Lamas, excluding the Fifth Dalai Lama.
225 This is a rough translation of this complicated Tibetan sentence, dngos slob bu chen dpon po'i khyod pha bu'i che shos bsam pa'i chang shos.

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229
the same time being deceitful about the ownership, [after] the passing of the Lama.\textsuperscript{226}

Even if you owned the monastery, after the death of Lama [Merag Lama?], there are documents and sanctioned decrees of the previous Lamas [in the hands of] Tsho pa,\textsuperscript{227} as well as a narrative tradition that can be heard [which shows that you are not the rightful owner of it]. You, a ‘deceiver’ (\textit{dor mkhan}) of the four generations of the monk-lineage of the ‘successive Lamas’ (\textit{bla thog}), there is no need for you to hover on your self-made confidence. This is in accordance with an illustration, which says ‘except for the turquoise, you do not care for the mother.’\textsuperscript{228} One can inquire [on this] in the main text [of the monastery], whether you need to stay at this monastery.”(11a) [After all] Lama Bstan pa’i sgron me passed away at the age of ninety-seven.\textsuperscript{229}

\textsuperscript{226} It is not clear whether the death of the Lama refers to Bstan pa’i sgron me or Blo gros rgya mtsho. As the text is the biography of Bstan pa’i sgron me, it should refer to him, though the conflict for the ownership of the monasteries started only in the mid-seventeenth century. Moreover, the record of the four \textit{rgyal ba}, referring to the four previous Dalai Lamas, writes Blo gros rgya mtsho instead of Bstan pa’i sgron me. That was the reason why the petition was written in the biography of Bstan pa’i sgron me so as to explain and trace the historical evidence.

\textsuperscript{227} It is referred to the three ‘mayors’ or ‘the heads’ (\textit{gtso rgyan}) of the three ‘counties’ (\textit{tsho}) in the thirty-two \textit{tshos} of the Mon region. There were the \textit{gtso rgyan} of Bse ru \textit{tsho}, Lha’u \textit{tsho} and Shar \textit{tsho}. See section 6.4 of the sixth chapter.

\textsuperscript{228} This analogy can be understood as ‘one is more obsessed with the turquoise than with the mother’. This is a tentative translation.

\textsuperscript{229} See also Tenpa (2013: 11) or the discussion on the age in section 4.4.

\textsuperscript{230} Text B: \textit{ཡབ} Recte: \textit{ཡང}

\textsuperscript{231} Recte: སོག་

\textsuperscript{232} It could be ཕྱན་ also.

\textsuperscript{233} The name of this lake is not written in the \textit{dbu med} script version of the text.

\textsuperscript{234} Recte: ཀིས་

\textsuperscript{235} It could be ཕྱིས་པར་

\textsuperscript{236} Recte: ཡུལ་

\textsuperscript{237} Recte: མི་

\textsuperscript{238} Text B: བན་

\textsuperscript{239} Text B: བོ་
Again, during the [auspicious] eon, while Lama Bstan pa’i sgron me was on an expedition to a region called Mtsho lung at the upper river of Phu gdung [valley], he went there in order to pacify a lake called Mig dmar, which did not stop harming after having eaten a number of people. By oath he bound the lake and due to that he acquired the region up to Huna peak. He then passed through the mountain ranges and arrived at Slab sha dgul. He looked [down the mountains] and saw the whole country of India [from the Slab sha dgul peak]. His observation of an auspicious sign were better than the expectation on the Indian [dvār] from Slab sha dgul(11b). He then arrived at the peak of Lha rgyal, where, according to the prophesy of the gods, he must build the Stag lung fortress. It is for this reason that it is called ‘May the gods be victorious’ (Lha rgyal [lo]).

Phu gdung is situated between Dirang (Sde rang) and Domkho/ Murshing regions of the Dirang Circle Area and is commonly known as Mandala Phudung.

A lake named Mars (Mig dmar) is not identified.

Is Sbom la peak called Huna peak in the old time?

Slab sha dgul, a valley peak above the Balemu (Am ra tulla) region.

This is a tentative translation of this sentence. The travelling of Bstan pa’i sgron me to Assam is not mentioned in the text, but Sarkar (2006 [1980]: 34-45) records that “from there [Stag lung] he [Bstan pa’i sgron me] went to Assam and met the King. The king received him cordially, promised him all help and donated him land in the plains in Odalguri and Amratola [sic] areas.” Sarkar did not mention his sources and even does not refer to any Assamese history who could be the Assamese king.

Lha rgyal peak is considered above the present Lha rgyal lo monastery. This led me to assume that there is not any monastery built or established at that time. At same time, there is not any document or text to determine the date of the monastery. The Lha rgyal lo monastery above the Mur shing valley traces it foundation to an unknown Bka’ chen Ye shes rgyal mtshan or the First Lha rgyal lo rin po che in the sixteenth century (Tenpa and Tempa 2013: 15).
[Meanwhile,] the youngest child of a couple with nine children run away from Nub che leng gdung and arrived in front of the Lama [Bstan pa’i sgron me]. As he was from another region, he was called the ‘other’ ([g]zhan) Sprang po dar. Later on, the ‘grandfather’ (mes mes) Rgyab brten from Bun tho long area [also] came in front of the Lama, as he was not allowed to stay [in his village] by the ‘barbarians’ (klo pa). Thereafter upon consultation between the three: the Lama, the leader, and the [two] stewards, they all promised [to do as the Lama said]: “you two sons will be sponsors and I will act as the Lama.” As prophesied by Lama [Bstan pa’i sgron me], (12a) the grandfather Rgyab brten killed and subjugated those demons that could be observed among some of the non-human demons in [the villages] called Li lding pa and Li seng pa in the eastern direction. Similarly, it was the [subjugation] of the eastern babu Mthong la thong btsan. (16)

254 Text B: བར། 255 Text B: དགྲ 256 Text B: ཐེ། 257 Recte: འི། 258 Recte: རི། 259 Nub che leng gdung is described in the oral traditions of the region as a vanished village in Thembang region. They consider that Sprang po dar was from this region, which corresponds roughly to gzhon Sprang po dar. 260 See section 3.2.5.1 of the third chapter on Sprang po dar. 261 In the oral traditions of the region, the ‘grandfather’ (mes mes) Rgyab brten is considered the forefather of the Sherdukpen tribe. In this case, Bun tho long must be an old name of the Sherdukpen region. However, the Sherdukpen refuted this kind of narratives and have their own historical narratives of their origin. See also note 222 in the main text and note 296 in appendices. 262 See note 37 in the main text. 263 The two stewards were the gzhon Sprang po dar and mes mes Rgyab brten. 264 The identity of babu is not clear and it is also not clear in the text for what the subjugation was. 265 Recte: རི། 266 Text B: དགྲ 267 ོ་ is not written in the dbu med script text.
Afterwards, all three went to Kha lag steng, where a girl, a manifestation of Tārā (rje btsun Sgrol ma) sitting on the left-hand side of Lama was crying. He asked [her], “why are you crying like that?” The girl replied that “there is a non-human ogre called Rtsing and Mkhar, who is collecting human-tax by eating human flesh and drinking human blood. According to the order, my mother must go tomorrow as a human-tax, (12b) as the ogre’s subject.” The Lama said, “you girl, you do not have to be worried. We three, the leader and the assistants will subdue [the ogre].” All the leader and assistants went [to subdue him], but the ogre escaped and stayed hiding in a cave at Sbam thang. Even today, the mark [on the cave where the ogre stayed] is there. He was arrested from there.

268 This line བ་དེ་ལབ་པ་དེར་སྲིན་པྒྲོའི་མི་སེ་ is tentatively translated as ‘the ogre’s subject’ and ‘to that order’.
269 Text B: སྲིན་པྒྲོ་འབྲིད་པས་གེ་. Recte: རྟོི་
270 Recte: རྟོི་
271 Text B: སྲིན་པྒྲོ་པའི་གསུངས་པའི་དཔྒྲོན་གཡྒྲོག་ཁྲལ་. Recte: སྲིན་པྒྲོ་པའི་གསུངས་པའི་དཔྒྲོན་གཡྒྲོག་ཁྲལ་
272 Text B: སྲིན་པྒྲོ་པའི་གསུངས་པའི་དཔྒྲོན་གཡྒྲོག་ཁྲལ་. Recte: སྲིན་པྒྲོ་པའི་གསུངས་པའི་དཔྒྲོན་གཡྒྲོག་ཁྲལ་
273 Recte: སྲིན་པྒྲོ་བསད་པའི་རེས་གསལ་ཡྒྲོད་།
274 Recte: སྲིན་པྒྲོའི་མགྲོ་ལག་ཕི་ར་རྩེར་བཞག་ནས་ཨ་མ་ཇྒྲོ་མྒྲོར་ཕུལ་བའི་ལ་རྩེར་དམིགས་གསལ་ཡྒྲོད་།
275 Text B: སྲིན་པྒྲོའི་མགྲོ་ལག་ཕི་ར་རྩེར་བཞག་ནས་ཨ་མ་ཇྒྲོ་མྒྲོར་ཕུལ་བའི་ལ་རྩེར་དམིགས་གསལ་ཡྒྲོད་།
276 Text B: སྲིན་པྒྲོའི་མགྲོ་ལག་ཕི་ར་རྩེར་བཞག་ནས་ཨ་མ་ཇྒྲོ་མྒྲོར་ཕུལ་བའི་ལ་རྩེར་དམིགས་གསལ་ཡྒྲོད་།
277 Text B: སྲིན་པྒྲོའི་མགྲོ་ལག་ཕི་ར་རྩེར་བཞག་ནས་ཨ་མ་ཇྒྲོ་མྒྲོར་ཕུལ་བའི་ལ་རྩེར་དམིགས་གསལ་ཡྒྲོད་།
278 Presently, it is a town and headquarter of the Khalaktang Circle Area, West Kameng district.
279 In the local narratives of the Kalaktang area, it is still believed that some imprints in the caves of the region are from the ogre.
On their way upward, they saw a rice hull/husk on the neck of a pigeon and thought that a village with rice is not far away from here. Thereafter, the ogre requested [the Lama] “Please! Do not kill me!”(13a) [And he said], “You! Lama, please, you can take the regions called Li du gar and Skyra sba ra,283 where I own territorial rights as well as human-taxation, [and] I will thus not harm anybody’s life [from now on].” After having lunch at Ngam tsha bu,284 while the Lama was taking a rest, a sound of the prophesy of Khams gsum A ma jo mo occurred, saying “it is possible you three, the Lama, the leader, and the assistants will be eaten by the ogre while escorting him. Therefore, it is better to kill him.” The ogre was thus killed. The head and hands of the ogre were left at the cairn of Phi ra,286 which was offered to A mo jo mo and can still be seen there.

At first, when the ogres were subjugated there was no difference between the stronger and weaker [assistants].(13b) The Stag lung [monastic fortress] was built

282 It could either refer to Mazbat or old Missamari town in the Dhekiajulia Sub-district of Sonitpur district, Assam.
283 Skyra ra sba ra is Kuriapara dvâr, which is now Bhairabkunda in the district of Udalguri, Assam.
284 Not yet identified of this place.
285 A ma jo mo, the mother deity of ‘three realms’ (khams gsum) is widely regarded as the main titular deity in the Eastern Himalayas. The belief in A ma jo mo is quite strong among the so called ’Brog pa speaking communities in the region, i.e. Me rag and Sag stengs in Eastern Bhutan, and Mtsho sna and Sbyor ra rdzongs in Tibet and in the valleys of Seng ge rdzong and Smyug ma gdung in the Dirang Circle Areas (West Kameng). See Pelgen (2007) on the rituals of A ma jo mo in the Eastern Himalayas, who focused particularly on the regions of Me rag and Sag stengs.
286 The peak is not identified.
287 Text B: བཾ་བོ་
288 Text B: བོ་
289 Text B: བོ་
290 Text B: བོ་
291 Text B: བོ་
292 Text B: བོ་
293 Text B: བོ་
294 Text B: བོ་
295 Text B: བོ་
and Lo med mkhar was [also] constructed at Stug span. The three, the Lama, [the leader and] his assistants held a discussion, where mes mes Rgyab bsten asked to be given the Indian Skye ra spa ra [as his territorial rights] for the credit of his subjugation of the eastern ogre. The Lama however said that “you, mes mes Rgyab bsten of Gsher stug span, who arrived later, are considered as the younger brother; henceforth, it is predicted that the Indian Li du gar territory is for you, whereas you, the other (gshen) Sprang po dar, who arrived earlier, became the elder brother; it is thus foretold that the three-upper, lower [and middle regions] of Skye ra spa ra are for you.”

Thereafter when Sprang po dar was on his way to Indian [dvārs] to collect revenue, while arriving at jo mo Nags steng, one had to offer two ‘mother chicken and one

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296 Lo med mkhar, a castle in Rupa (Ru spre sgang), the region of Stug spen is not mentioned in other sources. The local narratives discuss about an old castle, but it is no more to be seen. According to this text and the oral narratives, mes mes Rgyab bstan was the founder of the castle as well as one of the ancestors of Gsher and Stug span people.

297 Recte: སྤྲིན་པོ་དམེ་
298 Recte: རྐྟེ་པོ་དམེ་
299 Recte: བཀྲད་
300 དཀར as stain is much better here.
301 Text B: སྤྲིན
302 Text B: རྐྟེ
303 Recte: བཀྲད
304 Recte: བཀྲན
305 Recte: བཀྲན
306 Recte: བཀྲན
307 Recte: བཀྲན
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309 Recte: བཀྲན
310 Recte: བཀྲན
311 Recte: བཀྲན
312 Recte: བཀྲན
baby chicken (bya ma bu) to the ‘eastern’ (shar) A ma as thanksgiving (btang rag).(14a) According to an order for being the ogre’s subject, this was the reason why offerings were necessary by whoever was born in the region of shar A ma. [The route] was called ‘Indian rāja route’ (A tsa’ ras dpad ra dzu) because Indians (A tsa’ ra; ācārya) came to welcome [him]. They even resurfaced all the road with stone-stairs by saying that our leader’s foot might get dirty by dust. The revenue was then taken from whoever at Skye ra spa ra [was], [however, the place] was called A li, as requested by the [g]zan Sprang po dar.313 This [place] can be seen even today.

(19) དེ་ནས་སེ་314 ར་སྤ་ར་ཐམས་ཅད་ཆོས་སིན་བདག་གི་བླ་མས་སྤྲང་པྒྲོ་དར་ལ་གནང་བ་ཡིན་ཀང་།

Then my Lama had given all [the territorial rights of] Skye ra spa ra [Kureapara dvār] to Sprang po dar as religious donations.(14b) However, after the internal friction among ‘the father and his siblings’ (pha spun), the Sprang po dar’s descendants formed into three: upper, lower [and middle].320 Hence, whatever land revenues they had [received] were offered to the Tawang monastery.321 This is the reason why, in the present-day, there is a land-taxation from the [Tawang] monastery.322 In this way, the ‘fortress commissioner’ (rdzong dpon) also arrived

313 The note indicates that both Sprang po dar were collecting revenues from the dvār, though sbyar Sprang po dar gained the actual authority over the dvār. See section 3.2.5.1 on Sprang po dar.
314 Text B: ར་སྤ་
315 Text B: ར་སྤ་
316 Text B: ར་སྤ་. Recte: ར་སྤ་
317 Text B: ར་སྤ་
318 Text B: ར་སྤ་
319 Recte: ར་སྤ་
320 This must refer to sbyar Sprang po dar.
321 The collection of revenue or posa from Kuriapara dvār by the chieftains was later taken over by Tawang monastery and forwarded to Lhasa since the 1852-3 incident. The incident can be related to the 1844 and 1853 agreements signed with British India. See Mackenzie (1884), Aitchison (1931 [1929]), Lamb (1966) and Tenpa (2016).
322 This line denotes that the text could have been updated or composed after 1853, because Tawang monastery gained the rights to receive a posa of Rs. 5000 thereupon. See Tenpa (2016).
after the establishment of Stag lung rdzong. With regard to the arrival of the ‘teacher’ (dge rdan), some A tsa’ ra (i.e. ācārya) households were offered [in commitment] to the [Tawang] monastery after the extinction of some generation of the Murshing’s household. Similarly, the necessities of traders became due to the growth of dramatic strength of [the number of] monks in the ‘precious Lama [Tawang] monastery’ (bla ma rin po che’i grwa tshang). Aforementioned is a brief outline of the history [of the region].

On the clear star-day of Thursday, of the seventeenth-day of the seventh month of the royal Female Fire-Snake [1977] year, the ‘compiler’ (bris mkhan) Ye shes rdo rje of Ko ma glang chen at Upper Kha legs steng copied [from a manuscript] the above hagiography of Merag Lama Bstan pa’i sgron me, [including his] founding of monasteries as well as the subjugation of demons. Without any deprivation, [it is copied] how the children related to their mother. Due to the very old condition of

323 Stag lung rdzong monastery was founded by Bstan pa’i sgron me, which is also recorded in Rgyal rigs (1728). The monastery later turned into a fortress-cum-monastery after 1681. See Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 19-55) and section 6.4 of the sixth chapter.
324 It is difficult to ascertain any Bodo/ Kachari of Assam becoming monks at Tawang monastery since its foundation in 1681.
325 It is well-known from the 1680 edict that Tawang monastery was established in the year 1681.
326 Recte: ཕྱག་སྤྱི་
327 Recte: ཀྱུབ་
328 Recte: རླུས་
329 Recte: བསན་
330 Recte: མངོན་
331 I personally did not meet the compiler of the text, but I came to know from the informants who provided me these two versions of the texts that Ye shes rdo rje is a Bhutanese, who is interested in compiling the historical texts of Eastern Bhutan and the Mon region. His name in the colophon is somehow misleading due to the non-existent of the original author of the document, though he clearly mentions that he copied or compiled (yi ge bris mkhan) the text from a manuscript.
the original document and because there were some unclear syllables, the scholars are requested to make corrections if there were any mistakes [in the recopied text]. (15b)

With these prayers and anticipates, [I] hope that it will greatly benefit the followers of the tradition. It was propitiously finished at the writing place of Snar sgom thang, Kha legs steng. Auspicious Goodness! May virtuous goodness be increased! As the writer is not skilled enough [in writing], please do not be annoyed [about any mistakes]. 332 On the thirty-first August 1977 of Nong ga bi ri ba’n gi la le(?). An auspicious greeting [to all]! A favorable benediction [to all]. (16a)

Appendix II:
Me rag mdzad rnam in Facsimile editions (dbu can and dbu med scripts)

332 This is a rough translation of a hybrid-Tibetan sentence of Tibetan and Tshangla languages.
Appendix III

The Amended and Annotated Translation of the Dga’ ba’i dpal ster Text\textsuperscript{333}

A history of how the tradition of the Yellow Hat was disseminated in a part of Mon area called ‘the Spender of Glorious Joy’ (Dga’ ba’i dpal ster ma).\textsuperscript{335}

Homage to the Guru!

\textsuperscript{333} The Dga’ ba’i dpal ster text provides a biography of Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho (d. 1682) and the social and political issues at the time. Except the first eleven paragraphs, the rest of the passages is related to Blo gros rgya mtsho. The text is not marked with any date, except the colophon remarks by the compiler, who called himself the ‘poor monk of Amdo’ (mdo smad pa sprang bhikṣu) Ye shes lung bstan pa. He recalls that he copied and compiled it from a document, which he “found nearby the Zhwa dkar dge bsnyen Palace.” The compiler states that it was written after being constantly requested by dge slong Rdo rje rgya mtsho, who was the former Tawang monastery’s ‘spiritual preceptor’ (slob dpon). Unfortunately, the compiler added only the day and month, but not the year. According to the tradition of the ‘vajrācārya’ (rdo rje slob dpon) or the spiritual preceptor developed at Tawang monastery, the date of the text can be assumed to the mid-eighteenth to the nineteenth century. All the quotation in this passage is derived from the colophon of the Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (31, 34) text. Aris did not provide any date nor published this text in any form. According to Aris, the original text is written in dbu can script and measured ms 54x107cms, but without the mentioning of a date. I am thankful to Prof. Dr. Toni Huber for providing me the photocopy of Aris through Dr. habil. Guntram Hazad. The copy presented here is also in dbu med script, but is recopied by Rgyal sras sprul sku, the former abbot of Tawang monastery and the author of Rta wang dgon pa’i lo rgyus mon yul gsal ba’i me long (2009 [1991]).

\textsuperscript{334} The orthography in bracket refers to Aris’s (ND) transliteration of the syllable/word, ex. Text A: (di) ’di ltar, which is followed hereafter. The five chapterized sections’ titles in the texts are same in comparison between the copies of Aris (1980: 11) and Rgyal sras sprul sku. Two slight different titles are recorded in Aris’ (ND; 1980: 11) transliterations: Mon phyogs ‘dzin ma yang pa’i gzhir zhwa ser ring lugs kyi me tog gsar du doms [ngoms] pa’i tshul gsal bal or Mon yul ’dzin ma’i char zhwa ser ring lugs kyi me tog gsar du doms pa’i tshul tsal ba gda’ ba’i dpal gter ma.

\textsuperscript{335} Dpal ster ma or Rnam sras is Vaisravana, the king of the mountain deities, who guards the northern quarter or who is the god of wealth. The deity Rnam sras is one of the three main protectors of the Dge lugs pa school. See the Rnam sras diagram in Rmad byung zhung gi ’bri rtsal (2001: 96, 116) and the short description on the Rnam sras deities in Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1996 [1956]: 68-74).

\textsuperscript{336} Recte: བྲིས

\textsuperscript{337} Text A: བྲིས་
Merely recalling the continuum cluster of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

Like a frost touched by the sun.\textsuperscript{338}

You are the Supreme Refugee who pacified in a moment.

[U]ntil then I prostrate to the feet of the incomparable Guru.

The eye of intelligence reading all the (Buddhist) writings!

The weapon of wisdom destroying all the defiled battles!

The Best Lamp that illuminates all the darkness of ignorance,

[I] prostrate to the generous master, Mañjuśrī.

The Lotus Garden of authority and realization of the Fourth Guide (Śākyamuni),\textsuperscript{342}

To those who brought [this teaching] for the blessing of the land of Mon,\textsuperscript{343}

[I] bow down to the successive masters with respect.

\textsuperscript{338} \textit{Padma’i gnyen} (friend of the lotus) is a Tibetan etymology meaning the sun.

\textsuperscript{339} Text A: ཞུབས་

\textsuperscript{340} Text A: བདེ་ནོར། Recte: བདེ་ནོར།

\textsuperscript{341} Text A: བདེ་ནོར།

\textsuperscript{342} Here authority (āgama) refers to \textit{āgama} and realization (abhirāma) means \textit{āgama}.

\textsuperscript{343} This refers to those Tibetan masters who disseminated the teaching of Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1347-1519): the Dge lugs doctrine in Monyul. See Thurman (2006 [1982]), Tillemans (1998) and Cabezón (2005) on the biography of Tsong kha pa in English.
Due to the condition of the affection to the sentient beings of Monyul, that too in order to enter the realm of Nirvāṇa (rnam grol gling); who made effort to bestow the best jewels’ tradition of the ‘Yellow Hat’!

I will narrate the brief biography of those great nobles.

In the Snowy Land, which is known as the ‘Thirteen Myriarchies’ (khri skor bu gsum): there are the three ‘provinces’ (chol kha) of Tibet, i.e. the province of Mdo smad [A mdo] of people, the province of Mdo stod [Khams] of horses, and the Dbus

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gtsang [Central and Western Tibet] province of Dharma. Within the province of Dbus and Gtsang, it consists of ‘four Horns’ (Ru bzhi), i.e. ‘Central Horn’ (Dbus ru) and ‘Left Horn’ (G.yon ru) of Dbus region as well as the ‘Right Horn’ (G.yas ru) and Left Horn of Gtsang region. In these four Horns of Dbus and Gtsang province, around the southern part of the Left Horn of the Dbus region, there is a place called Southern Monyul. In this part of the region, although the universal jewel of Buddhism is common, there exists difference in the individual jewels’ doctrine, where the two sects of Karmapa and 'Brug pa [of Bka’ bryud School] had already spread here long time ago. At first [I will] hence explain how the precious teaching of the union of the sūtra and mantra, which is called Dge lugs pa, like the refinement of gold through the rigorous practices of hundred of eons, for an improvement by the white banner who stirred the three realms, the Lama of Eastern [Tibet] of the three realm’s sentient beings, the great victorious Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa. Firstly, how the origin of Dge lugs School [in Mon] took place; secondly, the arrival of successive great persons; thirdly, the development of the School; fourthly, the dispute with the Karmapa and 'Brug pa sects [of Bka’ bryud School] and fifthly, the activities in particular of Blo gros rgya mtsho are described.

See the short description of the three traditional provinces in Powers and Templeman (2012: 147).
See Dotson and Hazod (2009: 197-211) on the “Four Horns” classification and how it was formed during the Tibetan imperial period.

Text A: བགྲོ་མྒྲོན་ཕྲོགས་འདིར་ཞྭ་སེར་གི་བསན་པའི་བྱུང་ཁུང་ས་ནི། བྱུང་ཁུང་ས་ནི་དངྒྲོས་སྒྲོབ་ཀི་དངྒྲོས་སྒྲོབས་གདུལ་བ་ཡིན་པ་དང་། བསན་པ་དར་བའི་སྐལ་བ་ཡྒྲོད་པར་ལུང་བསན་པ་བཞིན་ཐྲོག་མར་མཚོ་སྣ་ལ་ཕེབས་ཏེ་མྒྲོན་རབ་དགྲོན་པ་ཆག་བཏབ་ནས་སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་རེན་བཞེངས་པ་དང་། དགེ་འདུན་འདུ་བ་སྒྲོགས་ཀི་སྒྲོ་ནས་འགྲོ་དྒྲོན་རྒྱ་ཆེར་མཛད། དེ་ནས་ཤའུ་ལ་ཕེབས་ནས་ཤའུ་དི་ཁུང་དགྲོན་པ་བཏབས་ནས་འཕིན་ལས་རྒྱ་ཆེར་སྤེལ་བར་གནང་། དེ་ནས་དྒྲོམ་པ་རྫུ་འཕྲུལ་དང་ལན་པ་ཞིག་ཡྒྲོད་པ་ལ། ལམ་པ་རྫུ་འཕྲུལ་དང་ལན་པ་ཞིག་ཡྒྲོད་པ་ལ། དགེ་འདུན་འདུ་བ་སྒྲོགས་ཀི་སྒྲོ་ནས་འགྲོ་དྒྲོན་རྒྱ་ཆེར་མཛད།
Firstly, concerning the origin of the diffusion of the Yellow Hat doctrine in the region of Mon, [he] was the so called Gtsang ston rin po che Rol pa’i rdo rje, who was a direct disciple of the Victor [the First Dalai Lama] Dge ’dun grub (1391-1474). He was a noble man accumulated with magic, through the affluent three qualities of erudition, discipline, and nobility. According to prophesy made by siddha Thang stong rgyal po, claiming that you possessed the fortune to spread the teaching of Buddhism and have your trainees in the direction of Mon, he arrived at first in Mtsho sna. [He] benefitted extensively the sentient beings by founding the Mon rab monastery, by building the statues, scriptures and stupas, as well as recruiting monks. Then, he arrived at Sha’u and built the Sha’u di khung monastery and unfolded great activity.

369 Text A: (ཅུན་)
370 Text A: མདོ་
371 Text A: (ཟླ་)
372 Recte: ལྟོགས་བྱོན་
373 Text A: ངོ་
374 Recte: ལྔ་
375 Text A: ཭ུན་
376 Recte: གྱུ་
377 Text A: བྱོ་
378 Text A: བཛྭ་
379 Text A: བྱོ་
380 Though Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje is mentioned in Me rag mdzad rnam (3b), his meeting with Thang stong rgyal po is not stated in the text. The prophesy was related to Jo bo Dar rgyas, the father of Bstan pa’i sgron me that his son would become famous. See also section 4.4.
381 The translation of sku gsung thugs rten is usually the ‘sacred symbolic objects of enlightened body’ (sangs rgyas kyi sku ’dra), the ‘representation of the enlightened speech’ (gsung rab glegs bjam) and the ‘representation of the mind’ (mchod rten).
Afterwards, he went to Dom tshang and built the Che mchod ‘palace’ (*pho brang*), where he prayed immensely for the benefit of the sentient beings. Then, he went to Mon Brag dkar monastery,\(^{382}\) where like a rainfall, he fulfilled the Buddhist teachings to many ordained and lay patrons of Lha’u, etc. from the Mon region. There he thought to build a monastery for the benefit of Buddhism and for all the sentient beings. He prayed intensely to ‘the Three Gems’ (*dkon mchog [gsum]*) and threw the ‘dough offering’ (*gtor cha*) filled with water into the air to check the sublime place to build a monastery. As it felt on a peak of a hill in the Upper Lha’u [valley], he said that ‘auspicious portent’ (*ar bzang*) occurred well; there he thus built a monastery. Nowadays, the name of the monastery is the so-called Ar gya gdung, but instead of Ar gya gdung, it should rather be called Ar yag gdung.\(^{383}\) This is the first chapter as to the origin and foundation of the Yellow Hat doctrine in Monyul.\(^{384}\)

Secondly, the narration of the successive great persons’ arrival [in the region]: Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje was the principal spiritual disciple of ‘lord’ (*rje*) Dge ‘dun grub, who himself was the direct disciple of *rgyal ba* [Tsong kha pa] Blo bzang grags pa. His two primary disciples were *rgyal sras* Bstan pa’i sgron me and Gtsang ston Blo bzang mkhas btsun. His [Bstan pa’i sgron me] disciple was his nephew, the ‘dharma master’ (*chos rje*) Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer, and his disciple was his nephew, the dharma master Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan. His disciple was [his

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\(^{382}\) See note 383 in the main text.

\(^{383}\) It could be translated as an auspicious lineage. However, there is no claimant for descendancy.

\(^{384}\) See the details of this particular line in sections 4.3—5.4 of the fourth chapter.

\(^{385}\) Text A: བོད་ཀྱི

\(^{386}\) Text A: བོད་ཀྱི
nephew] Lama Ngag dbang blo gros rgya mtsho. This is how the successive noble persons of the Yellow Hat tradition’s holders arrived in the direction of Mon.

Thirdly, the description of how the Yellow Hat doctrine spread [in the region]: Rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me and Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun were the

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387 The last Merag Lama Ngag dbang Blo gros rgya mtsho is discussed in the fifth chapter, the others are addressed in the fourth chapter. See also Dondrup (1988a; 2002), Tenpa (2013: 3-20) and Mizuno and Tenpa (2015: 35-42).

388 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

389 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

390 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

391 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

392 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

393 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

394 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

395 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

396 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

397 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

398 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

399 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

400 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

401 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.

402 Text A: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་་ Recte: ཉོ་ཁ་ཟིན་ whereabouts are also written.
third and seventh out of seven sons born to Jo bo Dar rgyas of Ber mkhar House. At first, both of them completed their ‘pravrajyā ordination’ (rab byung) as monk from Gtsang ston rin po che Rol pa’i rdo rje at Ar yag gdung. They studied and reflected greatly upon requesting many teachings on sūtra and mantra. They became [his] primary disciples as prophesied by the siddha Thang stong [rgyal po]. Afterwards, they were dispatched to [central] Tibet and requested their bhikṣu ordination in the presence of the ‘unique God of the Snowy Land’ [Tibet], the Victor, the Omniscient One [Second Dalai Lama] Dge ’dun rgya mtsho (1475-1542). They relied on those ‘threefold kindness Lamas’ by experiencing limitlessness of the ambrosia teachings of empowerment, authorisation and oral precepts, etc.

Having complete overcome any exaggeration, after studying and contemplating on the various treaties of the scriptures [as well as] sūtra and mantra, [they] came back to Monyul. Thereafter, they founded the two monasteries of Sla nga steng and Stag gdung and stayed for retreat at the monastery of Gsang lam ’phel. Then rgyal sras Bstan pa’i sgron me further established the two monasteries of Stag lung [and another unnamed] at Shar ’Dom khog. [On the other hand], Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun founded the monasteries of Rta’i gdung in Upper Mthong leng of Dag pa and Zhur chung in Upper Rlung Ia. Thereafter, both the master and his disciple founded Bkra shis chos gling monastery of Sag stengs.
They had thus immensely benefited the doctrine and the sentient beings with the foundation of these institutions in the ‘three great trainings’.411

The dharma master Dpa'bo gdung pa Blo bzang bstan pa'i 'od zer completed his pravrajyā ordination in the presence of rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan pa'i sgron me and requested many teachings of sūtra and mantra [from him]. He went back to

411 In Tib., bslab gsum rnam par dag pa. The ‘three trainings’ (bslab pa gsum) are ‘self-discipline’ (tshul khrims; śīla), ‘contemplation’ (ting nge ’dzin; samādhi) and ‘wisdom’ (shes rab; prajñā).

412 Text A: ལྟོག་པ། Recte: ལྟོག་པ།

413 Text A: བསྟན་པ། Recte: བསྟན་པ།

414 Text A: རྒྱལ་བ། Recte: རྒྱལ་བ།

415 Text A: རྒྱལ་བ། Recte: རྒྱལ་བ།

416 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

417 Text A: རྒྱལ་བ། Recte: རྒྱལ་བ།

418 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

419 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

420 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

421 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

422 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

423 Text A: སྲུང་། Recte: སྲུང་།

424 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

425 Text A: བསྲུང་། Recte: བསྲུང་།

426 Only this passage of historical information is available on the Second Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa'i 'od zer. See for further the fourth chapter.
and obtained his ‘bhikṣu ordination’ (dge slong) from the Victor, the Omniscient One [Third Dalai Lama] Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1543-1588). He listened to many ambrosia teachings on the empowerment, authorisation and oral precepts, etc. as well as becoming master after [being] experienced in study, reflection and meditation on the teachings of sūtra and mantra, whereafter he went back to Monyul.

He founded Merag monastery, Dga’ ldan chos gling, as prophesied by the Victor, the Omniscient One Bsod nams rgya mtsho and erected statues, scriptures, and stūpas. Then, as he invited the Victor Bsod nams rgya mtsho for the consecration [of the monastery], he [the Third Dalai Lama] secretly came and consecrated [the monastery], whereabout two hundred monks also gathered. Having administered all the monasteries in upper and lower Mon, he became a firm benefactor of Buddhism through assisting, protecting and disseminating the doctrine of the dual tradition to the sentient beings. At that time, the ‘great upāsaka of White Hat’ became the leading ‘protector deity’ (srung ma) of the Victor Bsod nams rgya mtsho. Rgyal mchog Bsod nams rgya mtsho had thus enthroned [this protector deity] of Buddhism in general and in particular of the Yellow Hat doctrine. After the vajra vows were proclaimed to [the protector deity’s] heart and the ambrosia was placed on the tongue, [the Third Dalai Lama] ordered and committed him [to serve as a protector deity].

427 However, no where in the text is stated that he was in central Tibet and that he came back to Monyul.
428 In Tib., lugs gnyis and 'dzin skyongs spel gsum, respectively. The dual tradition refer to temporal and spiritual traditions. See the note 526 in the main text.
430 Recte: དབྱོན་པྲོ།
431 Text A: དབྱོན་པལ།
432 Text A: དབྱོན་པ།
433 Text A: དབྱོན་པ།
434 Text A: དབྱོན་པ།
435 Text A: དབྱོན་པ།
Concerning the nephew dharma master Dpa’ bo gdung pa Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, he completed his ‘śrāmaṇera ordination’ (dge tshul) in the presence of rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer. He then purified his mind perfectly through honing the meaning of the scriptures. He thereafter went to Lha ldan [Lhasa] and completed his bhikṣu ordination in the presence of the Victor, the Omniscent One [Fourth Dalai Lama] Yon tan rgya mtsho (1589-1617). He requested numerous teachings of sūtra and mantra from [the Fourth Dalai Lama] and became master in his studies. He returned to Monyul again to assist and protect those monasteries and in particular served as the ‘chief lama’ (spyi bla) of the great Dharma Community of Me rag, etc. He collected a ‘monk levy’ (ban khral) from the eastern and western Mon region and dispatched them to [central] Tibet for studies, etc. In that way, he had significantly served the doctrine of the dual tradition.

436 Text A: ཆུ
437 In Text A the word ཆུ is missing.
438 Text A: (ཚུ་)ཁ་(ས་)
439 Text A: (དང་)
440 Text A: (འདོད་)དེ་(འདོད་)
441 Text A: (འདོད་)
442 Text A: (འདོད་)
443 Text A: (འདོད་)
444 Text A: (དང་)
445 Text A: (འདོད་)
446 Text A: (འདོད་)
447 Text A: (འདོད་)
448 Text A: (འདོད་)

436 Text A: ཇི་
437 In Text A the word ཇི་ is missing.
438 Text A: (ཅི་)འ(ས་)
439 Text A: (ཛོ་)
440 Text A: (དོན་)ཐོ་(ལེགས་)འ(ས་)
441 Text A: (བ(ས་)
442 Text A: (བ(ས་)
443 Text A: (བ(ས་)
444 Text A: (བ(ས་)
445 Text A: (བ(ས་)
446 Text A: (བ(ས་)
447 Text A: (བ(ས་)
448 Text A: (བ(ས་)

436 Text A: ཁུ
437 In Text A the word ཁུ is missing.
438 Text A: (ཐུ་)བ(ས་)
439 Text A: (བས་)
440 Text A: (བས་)བ(ལེགས་)
441 Text A: (བས་)
442 Text A: (བས་)
443 Text A: (བས་)
444 Text A: (བས་)
445 Text A: (བས་)
446 Text A: (བས་)
447 Text A: (བས་)
448 Text A: (བས་)
Concerning Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho. He requested his prawrajyā ordination in the presence of the dharma master Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan. He thereafter heard many teachings and acquired a good comprehension of the scriptures. Thereupon, he went to [central] Tibet. He completed his bhikṣu ordination in the presence of the Omniscient Fifth [Dalai Lama], Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho (on the seventh month of the Wood-Sheep [1655] year). He [became a scholar] after his mind was filled up with knowledge through requesting ‘the pith instruction’ (man ngag; upadeśa), the empowerment, authorisation, and oral precepts of the profound treaties’ tradition as well as sūtra and mantra. He then came to Mon and [started] to take possession of all the Yellow Hat Dga’ ldan pa monasteries in the region and in particular of Me rag monastery, where his [spiritual] activities equalled that of space. He became a fine foundation of Buddhism and the sentient beings by serving immeasurably for the welfare of the sentient beings, etc. (in the region) through assisting, protecting and disseminating the precious teaching of authorization and realization by way of his pure views and conduct. This is the explanation of an abbreviated history of how the Teaching [Buddhism] spread, which is [taken] from the biography of activities of noble beings, for whom it is highly difficult by us to pay back the immeasurable gratitudes as the dharma lamp lightens the gloomy land of Monyul.

451 Text A: (concerning Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho)
Fourthly, how disputes took place with other doctrine [holders]. It was during the time that an immense hostility, in particular towards the Yellow Hat Dge lugs pa’s doctrine, when Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho was acting as the Merag Lama [of the monasteries in Merag and Sag stengs] by the well spread and thrived Karma[pa] and

454 Text A: གཤིས
455 Text A: བསན་པ་དྲ་རྒྱས་
456 Text A: (བསན་པ་དྲ་རྒྱས་)
457 Text A: (བསན་པ་དྲ་རྒྱས་)
458 Text A: ཞྡོགས་པ་ནས།
459 Text A: ཙིན་བདག་འབྲུག་ཀྲོང་གསར་སྒྲོགས་ཀིས་བས་དེའི་
460 Text A: (སབས་ཀིས་
461 Text A: ལུགས་ཀི་བསན་པ་ལ་ཧ་ཅང་གནག་པའི་
462 Text A: ཀརྨ་པ་
463 Text A: དངེ་ལུགས་ཀི་བསན་པ་ལ་ཧ་ཅང་
464 Text A: བདག་འབྲུག་ཀྲོང་གསར་སྒྲོགས་ཀིས་བས་དེའི་
465 Text A: (སབས་ཀིས་
466 Text A: ལུགས་ཀི་
467 Text A: (ལག་པར་ཞྭ་སེར་
468 Text A: (གནག་)
469 Text A: བསན་པའི་
470 Text A: གྱུད་བསྐུ།
471 In his very brief introduction to the text, Aris (1980: 11) notes that the section four is the longest and the “climax of the work in Ch. 4 centres on the sectarian squabbles with embroiled Mon yul in the conflict between the two emerging theocracies of Bhutan and Tibet.”

472 In his very brief introduction to the text, Aris (1980: 11) notes that the section four is the longest and the “climax of the work in Ch. 4 centres on the sectarian squabbles with embroiled Mon yul in the conflict between the two emerging theocracies of Bhutan and Tibet.”
Although both Karmapa and 'Brug Sangs sngags chos gling were under the patronage of the 'Krong sa [dpon slob] of Bhutan' ('Brug Krong gsar) etc., the spread of the Me rag Sag stengs monasteries of the Dge lugs, however, could not find a place in their eyes [i.e. could not stand them]. Thereupon, in jealousy, a number of 'Brug pa [Bka’ brgyud] had instigated and caused an immense damage to the various monasteries in Me rag and Sag stengs. Moreover, there was near death threat to Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho’s life. As the monastic lands were owned by the 'Brug pa, there was nothing to do, thus [after they moved out] both monasteries collapsed and were scattered.

Afterwards, while Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho, along with his disciples, were staying at Gsang lam 'phel, Lama Sangs grags of Shes pa ti, with the support of Dom tshang pa, who was the elaborated Karmapa [Bka’ brgyud] at the time, said that “this Gsang lam 'phel has long time back been given to me by chos mdzad 'Dzom pa dar rgyas” and thus built a thatched hut in Gsang lam 'phel. Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho however said that “if you want to stay at our Dga’ ldan pa monasteries, you have to convert [your own] traditional doctrine to Dge lugs. If not, [you are] not allowed to stay at the monasteries of Dga’ ldan pa.”

(13) བེ་བཅུ་ནས། བེ་བཞིའི་བར་སྒྲོན་ཕྱུགས་ལེགས་ཉེས་ལ་བལྟས་ནས་བསྡུས་ཤིང་། ལྔ་མཆོད་ཆེན་མྒྲོ་དང་མ་ཎི་འཛུགས་

473 See note 281, 365, 384 for the 'Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa sect in the present region in the main text.
474 Here, 'Brug Krong gsar refers to the Krong gsar dpon slob Mi 'gyur brtan pa (r. 1651-1667), who started to reinforce his expansionist policy more rigorously after becoming the third 'Brug sde srid (r. 1667-1680). The whole period of conflicts could be dated from 1651-1680.
475 The family of Dom tshang pa’s lineages in Tawang claims that they are the direct descendants of the First or Third Karmapa, who visited Dom tshang rong and founded the Byang Skyid gnas monastery (Bstan ’dzin nor bu 2002; Tenpa and Tempa 2013: 8). See also note 278 in the main text.
476 Probably chos mdzad 'Dzom pa dar rgyas could be the unnamed chos mdzad in Rgyal rigs, who was the middle brother of the founder of the Upper and Lower Ber mkhar houses, or the great-granduncle of the Sixth Dalai Lama (Tenpa 2015).
477 Recte: བེ་བཅུ་ནས།
478 Text A: ལེགས་
479 Text A: བསྡུ (ས་)
480 Text A: འཛིན་ (ས་)
Concerning the ownership of the [monasteries] of Gsang lam 'phel and Stag gdung by us, the Dge lugs [pa], it was first established by Ber mkhar ba rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me and Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun. Lama Sman rtse ba chos mdzad ‘Dzom pa dar of Rgyang mkhar acted as the second abbot of the seat until the age of eighty-seven of his life. He collected tributes of four to ten bre of ‘grain offerings’ (bru phud), after checking how well or poor the [harvest and] livestock of the autumn [season] were. His establishment [of prayer festivals], such as the ‘Anniversary of Tsong kha pa’s death’ (nga mchod chen mo) and Maṇi recitation, etc. was even principally sponsored by the eldest brother [Jo bo] Bkra
shis cung, [who was] the uncle of Jo bo Lcags bu of Rgyang mkhar,502 Sman rtse’s oldest brother Nyag pa’i, Ka ling lha dar, the wealthy Rgyang mkhar Grandpa and the wealthy Yul stod Nag ’dig, etc.

At the time of dge slong Bstan nyi of Gzhi ka [village] of Tsona, as the third ‘succession of Lama’ (bla rabs), his principal patrons, who sponsored [the religious festivals] were Jo bo Lcags bu of Rgyang mkhar, Bkra shis rgyal po of Rgyang mkhar, gtso rgan Nyi ma bzang po of Rgyang mkhar,503 dge shes Pa’u of ‘Upper valley’ (yul stod), the wealthy So’i and Chos skyong nor bu of Upper village, and the eldest brother Tshe g.yang dar of Gser rdi rkang, etc. For several years, the ‘lead chanter’ (dbu mdzad) Bstan ’dzin sangs dag of ’Od mkhar performed as the fourth succession of Lama [as abbot]. The fifth succession of Lama is the present lead chanter Rgya nag pa.

(14)ནུས་དངུལ་བྲལ་ིས་བཅོས504དང་དཔེ་བོ་དྲི་བོས་དིང་བོས་དབུགས་པའི་ཐོས་བོད་ཆེན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཟེར། འབྲིང་པོ་ཨ་ཐོན་ཐུན། བསོད་ནམས་མི་མཐོང་། འབྲིང་པོ་ཨ་ཐོན་ཐུན། བསོད་ནམས་མི་མཐོང་། འབྲིང་པོ་ཨ་ཐོན་ཐུན། བསོད་ནམས་མི་མཐོང་། འབྲིང་པོ་ཨ་ཐོན་ཐུན། བསོད་ནམས་མི་མཐོང་།

502 A lineage of Jo bo of Rgyang mkhar is not recorded in Rgyal rigs, however, this Jo bo lineage could have derived from the Jo bo of Lha’i khams pa.

503 A number of Rgyang mkhar families have been recorded, who were among the chief patrons of Tawang monastery and other Dge lugs institutions in the region, which continued up to 1951 (Tenpa 2014).

504 Recte: ནུས་དངུལ་

505 Text A: ཅང་དཀར་

506 Text A: ཉང་

507 Text A: བོ་

508 Text A: (འཐོད་དཀར་)

509 Recte: བོ་

510 Text A: (ཞུ་)

511 Text A: (ཅོ་)

512 Text A: བཞིན་པའི་

513 Text A: ཆེ་ས་

514 Text A: མི་ཁྲེལ་

515 Text A: (འཐོད་)
The first succession of Lama of Stag gdung monastery was Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun, the second was dge slong Sgom chen, the third was dge slong Lnga cung of Ljon mkhar, the fourth was dge slong Rgyan ra dbang, the fifth was dge slong Bkra bu, and the sixth was the lead chanter Sithu.

After having narrated them as the successive Lamas, they [Shes pa ti Lama Sangs grags and his followers] had to leave Gsang lam 'phel for not being able to challenge this true statement. Afterwards, during the progressing period of 'Brog gong pa, who collaborated with Bo dong Sbyor ra ba, they came to take away the monasteries of Gsang lam 'phel and Stag gdung; we united together all the brothers of Khams pa jo bo as well as the lay and ordained people to explain [to them] in detail that these two institutions belong to us, the Dga’ ldan pa. They were asked, “What are the facts that these were traditionally owned by you, the Karmapa [Bka’ brgyud pa and Bo dong ba].” They had to go back [to their respective monasteries] after having spoiled themselves by not having any truth.

(15) དེ་བོགས་པོགས་ཐེ་བོག་པོ་བོད་པ་གསུམ་གིས་གཡཱ་འཕྲུལ་ཆེན་པོས།

516 Recte: ལྷོག་པ།
517 Text A: (བསལ་བ།)
518 In the previous passage (14), the founder of Stag gdung monastery is attributed jointly to Merag Lama Blo bzang bstan pa'i sgron and Gtsang pa Blo bzang mkhas btsun.
519 Due to the lack of written sources, the listed names are not identified.
520 See the list of Gsang lam 'phel abbacy in the previous passage.
521 The Bo dong Sbyor ra ba monastery in Rlung la is presently known as ‘Lumla Gompa’ (Rlung la dgon pa). The Bo dong Sbyor ra ba in the text could probably be from this monastery. See the short description of the Lumla Gompa in Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 9).
522 Khams pa jo bo of Lha'u is the title recorded in Rgyal rigs (1728). They were one of the three Jo bos of La'og yul gsum in the present Tawang Subdivisional. The other two are Bse ru jo bo and Ber mkhar jo bo. See for further on the rise of secular rulers in the region in the third chapter.
Afterwards, with great deception by the three groups [together], the two [people] known as the great Kun bzang mam rgyal and 'Brug sgra bzang po, along with Khyi nyal ma’i Lama and the lding [dpon] of Shar tsho, those four increased remarkably their wealth due to constantly relying [on each other]. Also, someone called Lama Kong po had collaborated with some of the malicious people of Shar tsho and requested the ‘regent of Gtsang pa’ (Sde pa Gtsang pa) to issue a decree for a wasteland, pretending that it is ‘an unowned empty land’ (sa stong bdag med).

They thereafter built more than forty bamboo huts at this site and then said “this area has been given to us by the landlord and [we will] establish here a great hermitage.” When they were thus prepared to deprive [the land], Merag Lama told them through whatever means how this land is owned by the Dge lugs [pa], but they argued badly with their reckless behaviour and did not listen. Due to the fact that no one was supporting him, Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho was left alone; along with few of his

530 Text A: (ཁུན་)
531 Recte: ཀདྲ་
532 Text A: (ཁུན་)ཏྲེ་ཏིན
533 Text A: (ཁུན་)
534 Text A: (ཁུན་)
535 Text A: (ཁུན་)
536 Text A: མི་ྡེ་(ཁུན་)
537 Text A: མི་ཤེས་(ཁུན་)
538 Text A: བན།
539 Text A: འོ།
540 The identities of these named individuals and unnamed Khyi nyal ma’i Lama as well as lding [dpon] of Shar tsho remain unconfirmed. The latter two can be related to present Khyi nyal gnas monastery and Kitpa Circle Area. See note 296 in the main text.
541 After the fall of Karma Bstan skyong dbang po (r. 1620-1642) in 1642, Sde pa Gtsang pa (1565-1642) or the Gtsang sde srid dynasty died out in central Tibet. The statement of having an edict issued by the Sde pa Gtsang pa is thus not accurate. Moreover, the expansionist policy of the third 'Brug sde srid Mi 'gyur brtan pa towards Eastern Bhutan started only after his assumption of Krong gsar dpon slob’s authority in the 1651.
disciples, [he] thus went and petitioned to the resident Tsona iding [dpön] Nam mkha’ 'brug.542

(16) ते कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि न आत्मिकी मा ते रहितता तेजस नित्यता कुमारिता कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि न कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि नातिएति। ।

545 ते अभिशष्टि फलेकर बाध्यकृत तर्कात्मक। ।

546 ते रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

547 ते रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

548 ते रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

549 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

550 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

551 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

552 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

553 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

554 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

555 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

556 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

557 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

558 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

559 रहितता आत्मिकी नातिएति। ।

He [Merag Lama] was an [ordained] monk of the ‘precious Victor’ (Rgyal ba rin po che) [the Dalai Lama?], who is true to his word [and] had not left himself to be under the influence of someone’s wealth. As he pursued sincerely the order with twofold, he was not able to win [his] truthfulness against Lama Rdzogs chen pa and Lama Kong po.560 Due to that, a representative called Dga’ mo gshong was thus sent to the area from [Tsona] rdzong and within a day all the [bamboo] houses built at Gsam lam 'phel were burnt down and were without any trace. Even though it was the

542 See note 395 in the main text.

543 Text A: ते

544 Text A: ते

545 Recte: बैठा

546 Text A: दुरे(अ)

547 Recte: नातिएति। आत्मिकी

548 Text A: (कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

549 Text A: आत्मिकी

550 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

551 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

552 Text A: जिन्नहेतु

553 Text A: जिन्नहेतु

554 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

555 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

556 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

557 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

558 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

559 Text A: कृत्रिम अभिशष्टि

560 In these sentences, the third person personal pronouns, he or him, refer only to Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho.
period when the power of the law of the Victor, the priest-patron relationship had expanded fully, headed by the two, chos mdzad Dar rgyas, the older brother of jo bo Bstan nor bu and chos mdzad Nor bu rgyal po, the older brother of Jo bo Gyid, having collaborated with most of the ordained and lay people of Shar tsho, tried in their immense greed to confiscate both [monasteries of] Gsang lam 'phel and Stag gdung. They even brought an edict claiming to be issued by rgyal ba Dpag bsam dbang po (1593-1641).  

(17) འཕེལ་བྱེད་ཚུལ་གུ་སྦྱིན་པོ་པའི་དྲིན་པོ་སྣ་ཚོགས་པོ་སོགས་འཁྲུངས་སུ་བཅོས་ལེན་གྱུར་བྱུང་བ་བོད་པ་དང་། ཟགས་པ་དད་བྱོས་རྗེ་དཔོན་ཟེར་ཆེ་སྟེད་གཉིས་འབེལ་གི་དཀར་པོ་གནང་སིན། དེ་ནས་གསང་འཕེལ་དུ་སྙུག་ཁིམ་གཅིག་བཟྒྲོས་ནས་དགེ་སྒྲོང་བཀྲ་བུ་ལ་སག་གདུང་གསང་འཕེལ་གཉིས་འབེལ་གི་གདན་དི་དཀྲོར་ཆ་སྒྲོགས་གནང་སིན་མཛད་ནས་བཞག་ཡིན། ས་སེར་རྣམས་ནས་གསང་འཕེལ་དུ་དགྲོན་པ་རྒྱབ་ཐབས་མ་བྱུང་ནས། སང་དཀར་བསྒྲོད་ནམས་ཀི་སི་ས་གཙང་བུ་ལ་ཐབས་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀིས་དགྲོན་པ་བཏབ་ནས། ཞྒྲོ་བྲོ་བསན་ནྒྲོར་གི་བཀའ་དྲིན་ཚད་མེད་བསངས་པ་ཡིན།
The extremely grateful, the ‘precious teacher’ (dpon slob rin po che)\(^{581}\) of Tsona Dgon pa rtse himself arrived at Tsho gsum,\(^{582}\) thereafter, he blessed all of the leading jo bo by taking the ‘vow of beef’ (mna’ sha glang).\(^{583}\) He then explained to all common people the virtuous deeds and [how] to abstain from the sinful deeds. He was thus respected by all. Henceforth, in order not to have any further quarrel, [they] felt an immeasurable gratitude [to him] for providing this auspicious support by leading [the people] and breaking a stone and placing it on the [Mani cairn with] the successive hands, etc. Then, a bamboo hut was built at Gsang lam ’phel, where dge slong Bkra bu was [given the responsibility] for ‘the religious offerings’ (dkor cha) etc. of both the seats of Stag gdung and Gsang lam ’phel, and he took up seat there. There were however no means for building a monastery at Gsang lam ’phel by the ordained and lay [disciples], but through various other means, a monastery was yet able to be build at Gtsang bu,\(^{584}\) in the public land of Sgang dkar gdung Bsod nams. Chos mdzad Dar rgyas,\(^{585}\) the older brother of Jo bo Bstan nor was appointed the Lama [of the monastery]. He was expelled [from the monastery] by the patrons and monks due to having a relationship with his sister without any shame and modesty. (18) \(^{586}\) Three tshos were: Lha’u tsho, Bse ru tsho, and Shar tsho, which are roughly the present-day Circle Areas of Tawang, Kitpi, Lhou, Mukto and Jang in the Tawang district. See section 6.4.\(^{587}\) Taking vows to abstain from eating beef by the jo bo is probably related to a traditional custom of the jo bo, who are not supposed to eat beef. This custom is still widely observed in the jo bo family in the Mon region (Mizuno and Tenpa 2015: 144). Refer to nearby present-day Gtsang bu monastery.\(^{588}\) He was among the chos mdzad, who were opposing and trying to confiscate Gsang lam ’phel monastery. \(^{589}\) Text A: མཁྲིལ་དེབ།
Gsang snags chos gling at Sgang dkar gdung is one of the oldest Rnying ma pa monastery founded in Shar tsho. It was probably completely destroyed during the Dzungar Mongol military campaign in Tibet; the monastery is however attributed to ‘Brug pa and Karma Bka’ brgyud in the text. See also Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 14).
skor bsod snyoms) to the teacher Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho and his disciples. On the contrary, however, much reverence and service, etc. and spreading as well as flourishing at the best possibilities were provided to the monasteries of Gsang sngags chos gling of 'Brug pa and the Karmapa [Bka’ brgyud]. 'Brug pa [Bka’ brgyud pa] in particular acted like a semi-god by fearing the damage to Gtsang bu monastery and fearing the spread as well as flourish of the Dga’ ldan pa monastery. Although it is well known that Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho was completely pure in the three trainings and was not tainted with any transgressions and degradation, he was labelled as the dark-spotted enemy etc. and named differently innumerable times in many ways in the past and later. Still Blo gros rgya mtsho did his best to remain patient because in particular the Lamas and the ancestries of parents of Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho originated from the Tsho gsum [region].606

He therefore said that “it is rather that we, Merag Lama have our residency here and not that we disrespect the Omniscient One, the Victor Lord [the Dalai Lama] and spread our own doctrine. It is also not that we wish to damage the pastures, bamboos, and trees. It is also not that we wish to have an income through teaching encampment and alms that someone may offer us a bre of grains in Tsho gsum. It is also not that we intend to damage the monastery of Gtsang bu. Especially, it is also not that we plan to establish an aimless spying on how many times the lawless Karmapa and 'Brug pa [Bka’ brgyud pa] have travelled or not with the support of Dga’ ldan pho brang pa. Why we intend to stay here is because we do not want this taintless, perfect, and pure teaching of the Yellow Hat to diminish, which is a source of happiness to the sentient beings.” Having said this he shed lots of tears.

(19) ད་ཁྲོད་འཚོ་607 ལས་གནས་608 མི་ཐེས་ཁྲོད་པ་ཆེ་མོ་འགོད་གཞུང་པ་ཞིག་མི་ངེད་ལུགས་ཀི་བསན་པ་ལ་ཕག་དྲོག་བས་པ་དངྲེལ་བའོ། །610

606 See section 4.3.1 for the origin of the title of the Merag Lama and Tenpa (2013: 12).
607 Recte: ད་ཁྲོད་འཚོ་
608 Recte: ལས་གནས་
609 Recte: མི་ཐེས་ཁྲོད་པ་ཆེ་མོ་འགོད་
610 Text A: ཕོ་མོ་
611 Text A: བས་པ་དངྲེལ་བའོ།
Now, if this is not real envy by you against the doctrine of Dge lugs pa, the lay and ordained people of Tsho gsum, you, the people of Tsho gsum can request another Lama to the Sde pa government [of Tibet]. Thereafter, the teaching of the dual ‘priest and patron’ (mchod yon) of the Yellow Hat of the lord Lama Tsong kha pa and the sovereign emperor named Dalai [Lamas] occurred in the ‘land of barbarian’ (mun pa’i gling) of Monyul, just like a sun shining. [I, Merag Lama] can hand over not only the upper and lower monasteries of Gsang lam ’phel,629 but all the monasteries of Dga’ ldan pa and its monks to your hands, the people of Tsho pa. I [Merag Lama] can also make an agreement not to take a single step and hope to get some income through offering of bre grains from the territory owned by me and [also from]

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612 Text A: བོད།
613 Recte: ཁ།
614 Text A: ལུ།
615 Recte: ཁ།
616 Text A: (སངས་སུ་)།
617 Text A: རིང་།
618 Recte: ཁ།
619 Text A: བཟི།
620 Recte: ཁ།
621 Text A: ཀྭ།
622 Text A: སྣང་།
623 Text A: རྒྱ་།
624 Text A: བཟི།
625 Text A: ཨ་།
626 Text A: བཟི།
627 Text A: ཁ།
628 Text A: ཁ།
629 The upper and lower monasteries of Gsang lam ’phel refer to the Gsang lam ’phel and Stag gdung monastery. See Me rag mdzad rnam (5a.5) and Dga’ ba’i dpal ster (13).
whoever the patrons in east and western Mon upto Snying sang [region] are.\(^{630}\) Similarly, you, [the people of] Tsho pa must also make a strong agreement headed by you, Jo bo Ka cung, in this case.\(^{631}\) Hereafter, if these agreements come into effect, “I [Merag Lama] will move out, where it will be more pleasant for me.” None of them were able to answer to words that were as decisive as diamonds, which [indicates] that for the sake of Buddhism he did not even care for his own life.

For that reason, although you were just saying Merag Lama to me, in reality you were not even respecting the Victor, the Omnipotent One [the Dalai Lama]. Those who do not like the doctrine of Dga’ ldan pa in particular are only some lay and ordained people, who in the name of the Karmapa and the 'Brug pa [Bka’ brgyud pa] tried all times, earlier and later, a strong hostile plan.\(^{642}\) Due to that I thus became impatient for the sake of Buddhism because when we, the teacher and the disciples, built a bamboo hut in the territory of the Dga’ ldan pa and practiced our Dharma, [I,

\(^{630}\) Snying sang la as a border area is also mentioned in the 1680 edict. See for further the sixth chapter. See also note 504 in the main text.

\(^{631}\) Probably from the Khams pa jo bo of Lha’u tsho or the opponent Ber mkhar jo bo.

\(^{632}\) Text A: མར་

\(^{633}\) Text A: བྱུག་ཆེ

\(^{634}\) Text A: བྱུག་ཆེ (ར་)

\(^{635}\) Text A: བཤད་པའོ༎

\(^{636}\) Recte: ཐུབ་ཚོད་

\(^{637}\) Text A: ཀྲུང་

\(^{638}\) In Text A the word ཀྲུང་ is missing.

\(^{639}\) Text A: བ

\(^{640}\) Text A: བར་

\(^{641}\) Text A: རྫམ་

\(^{642}\) This sentence tries to state that the real confrontation was not based on the doctrine of Buddhism, but on the name of the different schools or the name of someone else’s school.
i.e. Merag Lama] however realised that if [we] are not able to defend the esteemed pure [faith] against the bullying enemy, why not do something in that case to disseminate the doctrine before I pass away? Thereafter [when] I thought that it was difficult to spread the doctrine of Dge lugs, I was dressed with the strong armour of Bodhisattva’s courage. This is the explanation of an abbreviated history of how the contenions with the other doctrines had [taken] from the biography of activities of noble beings.

(21) Due to the more powerful strength of malicious persons in Monyul, one may forge about the new spread of the doctrine of the Yellow Hat; even those earlier developed ones had reached a state of decay. [We] requested the great visioner, the Victor, the

Fifthly, the specific description of the activities of Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho: Due to the more powerful strength of malicious persons in Monyul, one may forget about the new spread of the doctrine of the Yellow Hat; even those earlier developed ones had reached a state of decay. [We] requested the great visioner, the Victor, the
Omniscient One, the Fifth Ngag dbang [Blo bzang rgya mtsho] for the [help to] disseminate the precious Yellow Hat doctrine; [we thus] immediately received in response an edict for the right of one’s own doctrine. Due to that [we] became the owner of all the monasteries in Mon and in particular of the Tawang Dga’ Idan rnam rgyal lha rtse monastery to be established. Accordingly, we [Merag Lama and his disciples] by way of fully pure marvelous life, through erecting [the receptacle of] the body, speech, and mind and a gathering of qualified monks in the three trainings, etc., the core doctrine of the Yellow Hat of the precious joint doctrine of *sūtra* and *mantra* was spread and developed, like a shining sun. [Furthermore,] after the establishment of a nunnery [called] Byang chub chos gling Monastery, it became the path leading to the level of Buddhahood to all the sentient beings and in particular all the living male and female people of Monyul.  

655 See section 6.4, the amended and annotated translation of the 1680 edict of the sixth chapter and section 5.5 of the fifth chapter on the foundation of the monastery.  
656 See a short note on the monastery in Tenpa and Tempa (2013: 14) and also note 436 in the main text.
Only the doctrine of this stainless tradition, i.e. the doctrine of Dga’ ldan was promulgated through the brilliant and impressive benefits to the sentient beings, because the previously disseminated Karmapa and ’Brug pa [Bka’ brgyud pa] of the so-called ‘great practitioner’ (sgrub chen), the lineage of Chos mdzad, who holds the name of lion, [but] was [only] an old dog that vanished without any trace in the whole Monyul, like a thief who felt guilty or like a rainbow in the sky. [Theracfter.] Lama Blo gro rgya mtsho in particular and the saffron dressed ‘successive Lamas’ in general, were the most gracious to all those roaming beings in the ‘barbarian land’ (mun pa’i gling) of Monyul, because until now only the Yellow Hat teaching was disseminated and developed solely due to complete matchless grace shown by the noble protectors, the embodiment of all the compassionate Victors, the highest leader of the sentient beings in this degenerated era. We have to repay every single bit of our gratitude to those previous nobles [Lamas] by reflecting and understanding their grace through observing pure conduct and attitude. Otherwise there cannot be seen any difference between an animal and us, if we cannot remember the act [i.e. gratefulness] after having obtained a human life.

(23) The lamas are probably meant to be the successive Dalai Lamas.
With regard to the ‘dharma lineages’ (chos brgyud) of the doctrine [of Dge lugs in Mon], it was [as follows]: rgyal ba Rdo rje ‘chang (Vajradhāra), rje btsun ’Jam dpal dbyangs (Mañjuśrī), slob dpon Dpa’ bo rdo rje (Dakavajra), rje btsun Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419), rje Dge ’dun grub (1391-1474), Gtsang ston Rol pa’i rdo rje (15th-16th c.), rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me (16th c.), Gtsang ston Blo bzang mkhas btsun (16th c.), chos rje Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer (16th-17th c.), chos rje Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan (17th c.) and Lama Ngag dbang Blo gros rgya mtsho (17th c.). Until [this lineage] the ‘blessed direct transmission’ (byin rlabs nye brgyud) was primarily followed after the tradition of Gtsang [Bkra shis lhun po Monastery]. At the same time, it happened in the way of the great dharma lineage traditions of both Dbus and Gtsang, in an integrated form through the Omniscient Ones, Dge ’dun rgya mtsho (1475-1542), Bsod nam rgya mtsho (1543-1588), Yon tan rgya mtsho (1589-1617), the Fifth Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682) to rgyal sras Blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, Gtsang ston Blo bzang mkhas btsun, chos rje Blo bzang bstan pa’i ’od zer, chos rje Blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan and until Ngag dbang blo gros rgya mtsho.

673 Text A: ཕྲིག་པ།

674 The central tradition refers to the three main seats of the Dge lugs monasteries, i.e. 'Bras spungs, Se ra and Dga’ ldan.

675 In Text A the word ཕྲིག་པ་ is missing.

676 Text A: རྒྱལ་

677 Recte: རྒྱལ་

678 Text A: རྒྱལ་

679 Text A: རྒྱལ་

680 Text A: རྒྱལ་

681 Text A: རྒྱལ་

682 Text A: རྒྱལ་

683 Text A: རྒྱལ་
Particularly until Ngag dbang Blo gros rgya mtsho, the primary dharma lineages were following the tradition of Gtsang [Bkra shis lhun po Monastery]. They have followed the good custom, specifically the tradition of Gtsang, such as the ritual of the *saptasugata*, which is the king of all wishful-gems, who is highly benevolent to the sentient beings in the extreme degenerated era and the *guhyasamāja* of the ‘father tantra’. This act of how Blo gros rgya mtsho held, as the specific jewel among the general Victorious Jewels [local Lamas of Dge lugs pa], [was one] who paid no heed to his own life [when it came] to show the auspicious path of liberation to the sentient beings. This is the end of the brief explanation of how the specific activities of Blo gros rgya mtsho and the dharma transmission [of the Dge lugs] are taken from the biographies [of the great beings].

**Epilogue**

(25) དབེན་པ།


Performed by the Sons of the Victor (Jinaputra) like a precious jewel.

The chain of great biographies of the representatives of the Victor [Buddha].

[I have briefly propagated for the happiness of the Sons of the Victor."

(26) གཉིས་ལན་དམ་པར་མཁྲོ་བའི་ཆ་རེན་མིན།།

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684 Text A: གཏོང་པོ

685 Literally translated as ‘father tantra’ (*pha rgyud; pit tantra*), part of *anuttarayoga*. Its deity is *guhyasamāja* and belongs to the tradition of the ‘New School’ (Gsar ma) tantra.

686 Text A: བཟོ།

687 Text A: ལྷོན་པ།

688 Text A: འཁྲོ།

689 Text A: ཁྲོ།
It is not a prerequisite for the needs of those having the firm duality.
It is not for the needs of those holding any doctrine of duality.
It is for those of the beginners’ faith of non-duality.

[1] I have briefly written for the sake of benefit by a mind of non-duality.

In the space of mind, the cloud of altruism is gathered,
The subhāṣita is proclaimed by the voice of the secret drum of compassion.
The loving words are falling through the rainy cloud.
If there is the tree of clear mind [readers], one must drink [read] now.

One who exceed without mixing the restricted youth,
After having heartily confessed as a spiritual son of the sugata Lama,
May the act of merits [by writing the text] become a ladder,
For all the sentient beings to lead to the stage of Bodhi, i.e. Enlightenment!

Colophon

The term gnyis is translated here as ‘dual tradition’ (lugs gnyis) of the Dge lugs pa, but it can also refer to the ‘two truths’ (bden gnyis).

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690 The term gnyis is translated here as ‘dual tradition’ (lugs gnyis) of the Dge lugs pa, but it can also refer to the ‘two truths’ (bden gnyis).
691 Text A: ལྷའི
692 Text A: ལོག
693 Text A: ལོག
694 Text A: ལོག
དར་ཚུལ།
གྲུབ་མཐའ་ངན་པས་རྩྡོད་པ་བྱུང་ཚུལ།
མཛད་པ་བེ་བག་ཏུ་བཤད་པའི་
མདྲོར་ཙམ་འདི་ནི།
ཆྲོས་ཀི་སན་ཡངས་པ་ར་དབང་
སྒྲོབ་དཔྲོན་ཟུར་ཕེབས་དགེ་སྒྲོང་རྒྲོར་རྒྱ་མཚོ་མཆྲོག་ནས་བཀའ་མྒྲོལ་གི་དབག་ཞིག་ནས་
གསུང་གིས་ནན་ཆེར་བསྐུལ་བར་བརེན།
ཆྲོས་ཀི་དེ་ཉིད་ཀི་ནྒྲོར་དང་བལ་བའི་མདྲོ་སད་པ་སྤྲང་བི་ཀྵུ་པས།
ཞྭ་དཀར་
དགེ་བསེན་ཕྒྲོ་བང་གི་ཉེ་འདབས་གསེབ་
ཞིག་ནས་འདི་སྐྲོར་གི་གནས་ཚུལ་ཕན་བུ་
གསལ་བ་ཙམ་ལས་ཕལ་ཆེར་

This brief [description of] how the doctrine of the Yellow Hat initially arrived; how the noble personages arrived; how the teaching disseminated; how disputes with bad philosophical system [other Schools] happened; and specifically the exposition of [how their] activities took place in the direction of Mon [is written] being strongly motivated in one of the discussions with the poor dge slong of A mdo ba (Mdo smad pa), who is without any jewels of Dharma by the exalted dge slong Rdo rje rgya mtsho, the former (zur phebs) Tawang ‘spiritual preceptor’ (slob dpon), a person with a wide view of Dharma. Whatever is unclear in my presentation, I have supplemented with logic, but with regard to the rest, I have based myself on what I could find of scattered information, which is mostly a little more than clear about the condition of the text found nearby Zhwa dkar dge bsnyen Palace. I have written the text on the third day of the auspicious sixth (smin) month [of the year] at the retreat site in Dga’ ldan chos lung of the Khrom steng hermitage.

695 Text A: ར་དབང་
696 Text A: དཀར་རྒྱུས་
697 Text A: རྒྱ་མཚོ
698 Text A: བསྡུས་
699 Text A: རྫོང་
700 Text A: ཤེས་
701 Text A: ལྟོག་
702 Text A: བསྡུས་
703 Text A: རྒྱུས་
704 Text A: བསྡུས་
705 Text A: ལྟོག་
706 Text A: རྒྱུས་
707 Here Aris (1980: 11) wrongly refers Mdo smad to Khams and translated it as “the begger monk from Khams.”

285
Oh! The great dge bsnyen deity, do not be distracted of [your] mind.\(^{708}\)

When [you] were relied on, do not be unreachable.

Having been introduced to the gods and humans,

I, the yogi will not be disloyal.

The Yogi is weakened if [you] slumber during the cultivation;

[You] are not a great deity if [you] forget the activities;

Thus, whatever I have entrusted upon [you],

Oh! [You] must now accomplish all the four activities.\(^{711}\)

The text is written by Ye shes lung bstan pa, a name given by dge bsnyen Zhwa dkar pa. Auspiciousness to all (sárvamaṅgalal dge’o).

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\(^{708}\) See note 335, 429 on dge bsnyen deity in this appendix.

\(^{709}\) Text A: ཉེན་ཁབ་

\(^{710}\) Recte: ཀྲུང་

\(^{711}\) The four activities are pacifying, increasing, mastering, and wrathful subjugation (in Tib. zhi ba/rgyas pa/dbang/drag po).

\(^{712}\) Text A: མཁྲེས་

\(^{713}\) Text A: ནག་པ་
Appendix IV

*Dga’ ba’i dpal ster* in Facsimile edition (recopied in *dbu med* script)
Անչափաչափ վիրավոր են էջերի տարբեր շարքերի և հատկանույթների պատճառով և դառնում տարբեր շարքերի և հատկանույթների պատճառով և դառնում տարբեր շարքերի և հատկանույթների պատճառով և դառնում տարբեր շարքերի և հատկանույթների պատճառով և դառնում տարբեր շարքերի և հատկանույթների պատճառով և դառնում տարբեր շարքերի և հատկանույթների պատճառով և դառ

288
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Appendix V

The Amended and Annotated Translation of the 1679 Edict

No Institulatio.

(1) བརྟན་པོ་སྐྱོང་། ཆེ་ཨ་ ལྟ་མ་ གཙོ་རྒན་ཆོས་ སྐྱེལ་ངེས་ མངའ་འགྲོག་མི་ཐོན་ ནསེར་སྟེར། མངའ་འགྲོག་ཀྱི་ གཙོ་རྒན་དྲེ་དུང་་བརྒྱད། མཚོ་སྣ་ རྒྱུན་འྒྲོག་ཏུ་འཁྲོད་བའི་ཇྒྲོ་བྒྲོ་(2)

(2) མི་ངན་བསམ་ཆུང་(3)

[Publicatio:] This is proclaimed to all, the common subjects, the mayors and jo bos under the Tsona fortress and the commissioned civilian, as well as military [officials] at the borders, the manager of the ecclesiastical office, the fortress commissioners and his deputy, the lay communities, and the monastic communities under the jurisdiction of [i.e. the government of Tibet].

(3) འབྲུ་ཕུད་བསྡུད་བཞིན་པ་ཡིན་འདུག་པ་ལ་དཔགས་ན།

(4) ནི་ནོར་བཞིའི་བརྒྱད་པའི་ཐོན་མོ་རྒྱུ་སྟེ་རྤེ་པ་བསྡུ་བཞིན་པ་ཡིན་འདུག་པ་ལ་དཔགས་ན།

(5) ནི་ཐོན་མོ་རྒྱུ་སྟེ་བསྡུ་བཞིན་པ་ཡིན་འདུག་པ་ལ་དཔགས་ན།

714 The edict is marked with the Earth-sheep (sa lug) year, i.e. 1679. It is written in the script of ’bru tsha running into ten lines. The document is fully covered and folded in yellow silk and measures 59x41 cm. It is issued from the Potala Palace, but it is not mentioned who issued the edict. The red-squared seal belongs to one of the prominent seals used by the Fifth Dalai Lama.
715 Abb. of བཟོ་ཁྲོག
716 Recte: ཁེས་ཆུང་།
717 Recte: བསད་བསད་
Inscriptio followed by the narratio:] Formerly, until the fourth successive Merag Lamas (*me rag bla ma can*),\(^{718}\) they were entitled to the teaching encampment, the initiation encampment, the alms [begging] and [to receive] grain offering in every corner in Mon, of east to west or north to south. However, some coward rogue due to their benefitted [i.e. inherited] power, stopped [these privileges of Merag Lamas] from Lcang gling. Even then, until now, if one may estimate the teaching encampment, the initiation encampment, the alms [begging] and collecting the grain offering by all the different great or small Lamas, it could be the right basis from a view point for the dual tradition to spread.

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\(^{6}\) གིན་པོ་པ་མེ་རག་བླ་མ་ཅན་ལ་སར་སྐྲོར།

\(^{7}\) བསྒྲོད་སྒྲོམས།

\(^{8}\) འབྲུ་ཕུད།

\(^{6}\) བཟུང་སྒྲོར།

\(^{6}\) བླ་ཁག་གཞན་མི་ཞན་ཙམ་གི་དད་པས་གང་ལྕྒྲོགས་གུས་འབུལ་བེད་པ་

\(^{7}\) བཟུང་པོ་དེ་ཕྒྲོགས་སུ་བསམ་སྒྲོར་དག་པས་སྤེལ་མི་རྣམས་ལ...\(^{7}\)

[Dispositio:] I [the Fifth Dalai Lama]\(^{719}\) have faithfully offered whatever was in my capacities to him [Merag Lama] that [he may] not be a little inferior to the other monastic estates, according to earlier customs of the teaching encampment, the initiation encampment, the alms [begging], [collecting] the grain offering and voluntarily faithful supports, etc. to him, i.e. Merag Lama *can*. I [the Fifth Dalai Lama] will perform auspicious and virtuous prayers by giving whatever assistance for those people, who are spreading dedicately the propitious tradition of mine in this direction, in particular, the tradition which is the foundational source of benefit.

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\(^{718}\) See note 306 in the main text on the usages of the term *can* after the title of Merag Lama.

\(^{719}\) The name of the issuer is not written, however, the component of the text shows that it was written or issued by the Fifth Dalai Lama.

\(^{720}\) Recte: ལྷ

298
[Sanctio:] It is important that the Tsona fortress [commissioner] must also get a way to support it.

[Eschatocol:] This is written from the Great Potala Palace, a meeting place of the dual tradition, on the auspicious ninth date of the eleventh month of the Earth-sheep [1679] year.

[Additional Remark:] One must follow as mentioned above so that it may not become an enmity, rather this may inspire other to a voluntary devotion. [The Red Seal]721

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721 The red-squared seal is one among bka’ rgya dam phrug or in short rgya dam seals of the thirteen different official seals used by the successive Dalai Lamas since the Third Dalai Lama (Schuh 1981: 2–15). Schuh (1981:13) listed the seal as “Siegel E7c” and states that the five columns in Chinese inscription is copied directly from the “Siegel E1”, where it is written in only four languages. In a note to this seal in the ID240 of the online archive of the University of Bonn, it states that “this seal was not used by any other Dalai Lama” than the Fifth Dalai Lama. However, Schuh (1981: 13) considers that this seal was probably prepared for the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama after the end of the regency of the Ninth Bde mo rin po che Blo bzang ’phrin las (r. 1886–1895). Schwieger (2015: 129) highlights that this seal was one of the Fifth Dalai Lama by providing the example of KD1106 document issued in 1660 by the Fifth. Therefore, I too have considered that this document with the red-squared seal in Chinese inscription was issued in 1679 by the Fifth Dalai Lama and not in the year of 1919 during the Thirteenth Dalai Lama or in any other alternative year of 1739, 1799 or 1859, because the language of the text is directly addressed by the Dalai Lama to the Merag Lama. See also Nor rgyas nang pa and Dbang ’dus tshe ring (1991: 33–83). See ID226, ID240, ID185, ID226, etc. in “the seals” section on the online archive of the University of Bonn. See also note 484, 532, 551 and 577 in the main text for a discussion on the content of the seal.
Appendix VI

The 1679 Edict in Facsimile edition
Appendix VII
The Amended and Annotated Translation of the 1692 Edict

No *Institulatio*.

(1) ༼ོ། རྡོ་དོན་ལྡེབས་པར་བཀག་པའི་སྒྲ་ཞིག་དང་། རྡོ་རྗེ་ནི་ོ་སྒྲ་མི་ནི་གཞག་གི་མི་བཞིན་མི་བཞིན་མི་

(2) འདྲི་བུ་ོ་ཁྲོང་པ་གཉེར་ལས་འཛིན་

(3) ཡོན་ཏན་པར་བདེ་བས་བསོད་ནམས་གཉིས་

*Publicatio:* [This statement] is proclaimed to all the monks and lay people, be they superior, inferior or interior, in particular an ordered covered to the extent of the common subjects, the mayors, the nomads owner, etc., the estate manager, the Tshugs pa of North and East [Tshugs khang], the manager of the ecclesiastical office, the lay communities and the monastic communities, Rta dbang, the Tsona fortress commissioner and his deputy, in general to all the sentient beings on this extensive earth.

(4) མཆོད་ལ་མོང་སོན་པོ་དེ་ོ་བཞིན་བཞིན་པའི་སྒྲོན་པར་སོན་པོ་དེ་མོང་སོན་པོ་དེ་མོང་སོན་པོ་

(5) རྒྱུ་སྟོན་འགལ་དེ་ཕ་དམིགས་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་

(6) དཔལ་བུ་སོགས་ཅན་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་

(7) དེ་ོ་ོ་ོ་ོ་

*Inscriptio* followed by the *narratio:* Until now, [the privileges] exist without doubt in accordance with the meaning of the various successive edicts, such as the estates’ sources; the previous origin of farmlands and subjects; an exception to taxation on the confirmed unadulterated individual goods and dairy products as well as a toll on

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722 Abb. of སྐད་ནམས་
saddled animals; horses, cattle [and] sheeps to be allowed to send standardly on the grassland below Tsona, Thing bu [and] Dmag sgo of Dpa’ bo gdung pa, the family root of Merag Lama Blo gros rgya mtsho, the person who founded Tawang Dga’ Idan nam rgyal lha rtse monastery.

[Sancio:] One must assure that it is not acceptable if anyone tries to make inconvenient taxation, oppression, accusation, and harm; rather, it should be the highest benefits by the great or less persons as of what is mentioned above.

[Eschatocol:] Written on the 23rd day of the 11th Month of the Water-monkey [1692] year. [This decree] must be reached by the officials of the government to maintain the policy which is in accordance with the legitimate result of the related edict and one must not [act] against the foremost proclamation. [The Red-squared Seal]723

[Additional Reaffirmation:]

[I] did this service in order to maintain and carry on the existing state of the tradition, according to the proclamation of the above precious seal [of the Dalai Lama]. It was

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723 The Red-squared seal is identical to the official seal of the Second De mo no min han Blo bzang thub bstan ’jig med rgya mtsho, the regent (1811-19). See Schuh (1981: 110) for further details about the seal.

Appendix VIII:

The 1692 Edict in Facsimile edition
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