

Seven

atra kim prayojanam?

An Essay on the Reception and
Naturalization of *kāvya* in Tibet:
Tracing Texts, Reading Between
the Lines and Other Vanities

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Introduction

Ever since the beginning of Tibetan studies by Alexander Csoma de Kőrös, we have been aware that Daṇḍin's *alaṅkāraśāstra*, the *Kāvyaḍarśa* (KĀ) had been translated into Tibetan, and due to the pioneering work of consequent Tibetanist (mostly contemporary with us) we are aware to some extent of the impact it had on Tibetan monastic (and to a certain extent, on secular) literature. For example, we know that the commencing or even internal verses of later indigenous *śāstras* became more elaborate, ornate

and even ingenious¹, we know of secular writings employing *kāvya*-features, and we do know it rendered the poetic chronicle of the Fifth Dalai Lama practically unreadable, and so on.

In this paper I shall deal with some aspects of the actual reception and naturalization of Indian poetics in the Land of Snows, with special emphasis on some authorities claiming its uselessness and their refutation by the commentators of the KĀ.² The Tibetan commentators and propagators of the KĀ, who were almost exclusively fully ordained monks, harnessed the secular art of Indian *kāvya* into the service of religion. The main reason was obviously the environment it was adapted to. Whereas in India *kāvya* flourished in an urban and / or court environment and its foremost purpose was that of offering aesthetical pleasure (*prīti*) to the receiver, in Tibet it was cultivated primarily in a monastic environment where all elements of the profane world were subjected to religious purposes. Thus, besides generating aesthetical pleasure, *kāvya*, as applied in Tibetan monastic literature, invariably has the additional and chief function of generating faith in the reader. The work (KĀ) had had an impact of some extent on secular writing, but we mustn't forget that the secular cultivators of *kāvya*-style writing (mostly educated aristocrats) also received their education in a monastery or from a monastic person.

¹Tucci 1949:104

²KAPSTEIN 2003:783 n.103. notes: "The reception and use of Indian literary theory in different Tibetan literary subcultures pose a fascinating and difficult question, which I cannot explore here. Its complexities are perhaps seen in the writing of some of the 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries [...]" This paper will not shed light on these aspects either, mostly due to the scarcity of sources available to me and my narrow scale of reading. The *yogin*-type poetry of (mostly) *Bka' brgyud pas*, the secular poetical writings of the Tibetan aristocracy, the influence of *kāvya*-features on Old Tibetan literature and so on are beyond the scope of and the textual material available for this paper. I shall focus almost exclusively on the three great Tibetan commentaries (by *Bod mkhas pa Mi pham Dge legs rnam rgyal*, the Fifth Dalai lama *Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*, and *Khams sprul Chos kyi nyi ma* respectively) written to the KĀ. Thus I shall limit myself to the reception and use of the KĀ in monastic circles.

Sa skya paṇḍita and the ideal of pāṇḍityam

The first, partial and the later, complete translation of the KĀ was prepared in the folds of the *Sa skya pa* order. This was all too natural, for the greatest exponent of this order was *Sa skya paṇḍita Kun dga' Rgyal mtshan*, a fervent advocate and propagator of classical Indian scholarliness (*pāṇḍityam, mkhas pa nyid*). His works are the 'paradigmatic expression of the trend insisting that the study of Buddhism had to be to a large extent enframed within a core curriculum of Indian learning'³. In a comparable way to classical studies in the West, the Indian curriculum became a veritable model for Tibetans. In both cases, poetic excellence was regarded as a touchstone of moral and intellectual refinement.⁴ Poetics and other more or less secular topics were known as the 'five great and five minor sciences (*vidyāsthāna, rig gnas*)'. The five great sciences were grammar (*vyākaraṇa, sgra*), logic (*pramāṇa, tshad ma / rto ge*), medicine (*cikitsā, gso / 'tsho*), technical sciences (*śilpaśāstra, bzo / phyi rig*⁵) and exegesis of the *Abhidharma* (*adhyātmavidyā, nang rig*). Among the five minor sciences, four were subjected to grammar, viz. drama (*nāṭya, zlos gar*⁶), metrics (*chandas, sdeb sbyor*), synonymics (*abhidhāna, mngon brjod*) and poetics (*kāvya, snyan ngag / snyan dngags*⁷). The fifth, astrology (*jyotis, skar rt-sis*) is the odd one out, and there were some controversies indeed whether this 'science' pertains here or not. Although there were other lists and classifications, with *Sa skya paṇḍita*, to whom the

³KAPSTEIN 2003:776

⁴*ibid.* 776-777.

⁵This is the most variegated of the five as it includes iconography, iconometry, chemical compounds, alchemy, the arts of love (represented by one single work in the canon), ethics, etc.

⁶This is not in fact dramaturgy as seen in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata, but dramas proper.

⁷Just as in the case above, Tibetans confuse the guidebooks of an art with the works of that art. Thus, the KĀ and the *Meghadūta* and other poems are all known as '*snyan ngag*'. The only exception I have read so far is *Sa skya paṇḍita*, who maintains the correct differentiation. In India this distinction was carefully maintained, although there were overlappings. For instance, the *Meghadūta* was a *kāvya*, and the KĀ was a *kāvyaśāstra*. However, the *kāvyaśāstras* also contain verses (i.e. *kāvya* proper) that serve as examples. Furthermore, there were *śāstrakāvyas*, *śāstras* written in *kāvya* style.

very establishment of Indian learned sciences was linked⁸, the five plus five model gained overall currency.

On the other hand, the conduct of Sa skya paṇḍita (an ordained Buddhist monk) was not quite *bodhisattva*-like, which later became an issue among the literati when they were trying to link Sa skya's scholar ideal to the generally accepted *bodhisattva*-ideal. His notorious 'Eight Ego [Poem]' (*Nga brgyad ma*) stirred the Tibetan world and Sa skya was forced to write an apologetic commentary:

sgra pa nga yin rtog ge pa nga
smra ba ngan 'joms nga 'dra med |
sdeb sbyor nga mkhas snyan ngag nga nyid
mngon brjod 'chad la 'gran med nga |
dus sbyor ngas shes phyi nang kun rig
rnam dpyod blo gros mtshungs med nga |
de 'dra gang yin Sa skya pa ste
mkhas pa gzhan dag gzugs brnyan yin ||⁹

"I am the grammarian. I am the dialectician.
 Among vanquishers of sophists, peerless am I.
 I am learned in metrics. I stand alone in poetics.
 In explaining synonymics, unrivaled am I.
 I know celestial calculations. In exo and esoteric science
 I have a discerning intellect equalled by none.
 Who can this be? Sakya alone!
 Other scholars are my reflected forms."¹⁰

Sa skya paṇḍita was the first translator of the KĀ. Excerpts from Daṇḍin's work are to be found in the second part of the first chapter of his famous *Mkhas pa la 'jug pa'i sgo*. According to this treatise, the three basic activities of a true scholar are composition (*rtsom pa*), rhetoric (*'chad pa*) and debate (*rtsod pa*).

⁸By the Fifth Dalai lama at any rate (v. KAPSTEIN 2003:776). Other sources attribute this most honourable title to Shong ston and Dpang lo. (v. ROERICHI 1953:786)

⁹*Nga brgyad ma'i 'grel pa* in SA SKYA BKA' 'BUM (TOYO BUNKO ED.) vol. 4. (148-3-1 – 154-4-6).

¹⁰Tr. by W.S. Gilbert as reproduced in KAPSTEIN 2003:777.

The study of *kāvya* is an indispensable prerequisite for composition, therefore he treats it right after grammar. The question may arise: why did he not undertake a complete translation of the KĀ, if he considered it that important? The answer probably lies in the colophon, which is worth reproducing since it contains *kāvya*-features as well:

snyigs ma'i dus kyi sems can bsod nams chung |
de phyir mkhas pa slob pa'i skal ba med |
bdag gis 'bad kyang gzhan gyis 'dzin pa nyung |
des na gzhan la phan pa'i go skabs dka' ||

da dung bdag la legs spyad yod mod kyi |
snyigs ma'i dus kyi 'gro ba'i spyod yul min |
mkhas pa 'dod pa'i skye bo nyung bas na |
phyed pa chung phyir rgyas pa 'dir ma sgros || [...]

deng sang Shā kya seng ge'i bstan pa 'di |
'bab chu zad pa'i rdzing bzhin nyin re 'bri |
blo gsal rnams kyis tshul 'di legs rtogs la |
thar pa 'dod pa dag gis 'bad dgos so ||¹¹

“Slight is the merit of beings in this degenerate era,
hence they do not attain the good fortune to become
scholars.

Although I have tried, little did others understand.
It is hard indeed to find opportunity to work for others’
benefit!

Although I possess now this excellent practice,
it is not the domain of beings of the degenerate age.
There are few persons desiring to become scholars,
and since they are the minority, I have written no
more. [...]

Nowadays, the teaching of the lion of Śākyas
decreases day by day like a pond with a waterfall.

¹¹MKIIAS’JUG:111-2-4 – 111-3-6.

The intelligent should understand this [work] well,
those desirous of liberation should exert themselves.”

Although Sa skya pa’s complaints about the degenerate era are a common topos in Buddhistic writing, they served well the great *paṇḍita* to present the actual situation in which he was trying to work. Furthermore, the last lines of the first and the third verses contain two well placed *arthāntaranyāsas* (apodixis, tib. *don gzhan bkod pa*) and the third verse contains an apt *upamā* (simile, tib. *dpe*): the decreasing of the Buddha’s teaching is compared to a lake from which water is gradually being carried away by a waterfall.

Sa skya paṇḍita’s legacy continued. His nephew, ’Phags pa bla ma ordered that the complete translation of the KĀ be made along with the translation of several other relevant specimens of Indian literature. The man for the job was the greatest Sanskrit scholar of the time, Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan. As Kapstein points out, ‘these works left an enormous legacy in Tibet, and from the fourteenth century onwards virtually every Tibetan author of note, whether monk or layman, tried his hand at some *kāvya*.’¹² Studying the ‘science of words’ (of which, as we have seen, poetics was a significant part) was of paramount importance. In Dpa’ bo’s chronicle we find the following punning statement on grammar, the cornerstone of all learning:

*de ltar skad rigs thams cad kyi gtso bo yin zhing yul
Dbus na ya rabs rnams skad rigs gzhan la ngo tshar
byed pa’i phyir dang sgra mi shes na ba lang dang ’dra
bar grags pa’i phyir mkhas pa’i ’jug bya gcig po yin
no||¹³*

“Thus, the science of grammar / *correct speech* is the chief of all. In the Middle country [i.e. Gangetic India] / *the province of Ü* [i.e. Central Tibet] the nobility is ashamed to speak in any other language [than Sanskrit] / *other dialect* [than the established one] and considers that he, who does not know not grammar, is

¹²KAPSTEIN 2003:782. and *ibid.* n. 102.

¹³MKHAŠTON:853

just like an ox. Therefore, it is the sole [science] which introduces someone to [scholarly] proficiency.”

Even with the gradually eclipsing political influence of the *Sa skyas*, their *paṇḍita*’s ideal of scholarliness was firmly established as a Tibetan cultural ideal.

‘*nanu*’: objections

Or was it? Browsing the commentarial tradition to the KĀ and other scattered accounts, we notice that the special portion of these *śāstras*, namely, the explanation of its purpose (in the spirit of the Indic “*atra kim prayojanam?*”) takes a little longer than it usually does. We see lengthy justifying quotations on seemingly unrelated matters. The opposing *pūrvapakṣas* are intriguing and the matter gets even more exciting when we get the impression that these were living voices rather than the usual imaginary opponents objecting in the name of common sense. The commentaries hasten to prove the utility of poetry and the need to study it. Of course, it is not unusual to find such lines at the beginning of a *śāstra*, yet we feel that the insistence of the commentators did have a well defined aim, besides merely fulfilling formal requirements. Evidence shows that there were parties that viewed *kāvya* and its basic text with some suspicion. All these facts indicate that the naturalization of *kāvya* (which equals the naturalization of the KĀ) did not go smoothly.

Celibate monks, lustful speech and other frivolities

One of the opposing groups must have been those monks who strictly observed the *Vinaya* code. Although I have not found any clear reference to the fact that someone would have objected in the name of the Buddha himself who had forbidden monks to attend artistic performances, there are traces of Tibetans keeping this precept in mind.¹⁴ In this context the brief account of Dpa’ bo, the historian is extremely suggestive. Having proved that there

¹⁴Note that the Buddha’s tenet was already obsolete in classical India. Thus, there were Buddhist dramas and the earliest proper *kāvya* that has survived is Aśvaghōṣa’s *Buddhacarita*, the popularity of which is shown by

are canonical references for the cultivation of secular sciences (a problem we shall consider later), he cites an objection:

*'o na mdo Dran nye¹⁵ las snyan ngag gtso bor byed pa
rnams lha yul gyi bya gzhan la tshigs bcad kyis bskul
zhing rang bag med du sdod par skye ba dang | des na
dge slong gis thos pa ngan pa snyan ngag sdeb par mi
bya'o zhes gsungs pa ma yin nam zhe na | de ni 'dod
pa'i gtam gyi snyan ngag mi bya bar dgongs pa ste |
de ma thag du sangs rgyas dang chos dang dge 'dun la
bstod pa dang bstan pa gsal bar 'gyur ba'i snyan ngag
bya'o zhes gsungs so || des na Snyan ngag me long gi
mjug dgos pas don sdu ba'i skabs su |*

*de ltar skyon bral skal ba bzang ldan pa yi |
snyan ngag bzang pos dkon mchog rnam gsum
gyi |
yon tan tshul bzhin rab tu bsngags byas na |
grags dang 'byor dang rgyal mchog thob par
'gyur ||*

*zhes mkhas pa la 'os pa'i don sdu bdag gis kha bkang
pa yin no ||¹⁶*

“Well then [someone may object:] isn’t the *Saddharma-smṛtyupasthāna* valid when it claims that those who place *kāvya* foremost, exhort others to ‘divine’ deeds¹⁷ with verses and live heedlessly; [and] consequently, it is considered wrong for a monk to listen to [poetry] or to compose verses? [The answer is:] that refers to the prohibition of composing poetry of lustful speech (*'dod pa'i gtam*). Immediately after [this passage the following] is stated: “[However,] that kind of poetry which

the fact that its manuscripts have been found even outside the Indian sub-continent.

¹⁵ *Dam pa'i chos dran pa nye bar bzhag pa (Tōh. 287.) Bka' Mdo (4 vols.)*

¹⁶ MKHASSTON:854 855

¹⁷ *lha yul gyi bya gzhan la* is obscure to me. It might be a euphemism. ‘Divine’ deeds in this case would might simply refer to living in the *carpe diem* style.

praises the Buddha, the doctrine and the congregation or elucidates the teaching, should be composed.” Furthermore, the concluding verse of the *Kāvyaḍarśa* that shows the need of poetry says:

‘In this way, if one praises properly
the virtues of the three jewels by means
of faultless, worthy, beautiful verses,
he will attain fame, wealth and supreme roy-
alty.’

Hence, it teaches the need [of studying and cultivating poetry] as something worthy of a wise man. And I will shut my mouth here (*sic*).”

If ‘poetry of lustful speech’ is not recommended, how should one treat Daṇḍin’s verses illustrating his definitions? Some of them are quite plainly of an erotic nature, shameful for a monk even to read, and probably this was the reason Dpa’Bo uses the idiom “*dod pa’i gtam*” (‘lustful speech’). Tibetan commentators of the KĀ carefully avoided imitating Daṇḍin’s ‘frivolous’ themes. Let us see a few examples:

valgitabhru galadgharmajalam ālohitekṣaṇam |
vivṛṇoti madāvasthām idaṃ vadanapañkajam || KĀ
II:73 ||¹⁸

gdong pa’i ’dam skyes smin ’khyog cing |
rngul gyi chu ni zags pa dang |
mig dag kun tu dmar ba ’dis |
myos pa’i gnas skabs gsal bar byed ||¹⁹

“The lotus of her face betrays intoxication with its
fluttering brows, dripping beads of sweat, and inviting
glances”²⁰

¹⁸Example for *avayavirūpaka* (tib. *cha shas can gyi gzugs can*) cf. GEROW 1971:244.

¹⁹RNAMBSHAD:169

²⁰Tr. GEROW 1971:244. ‘inviting glances’ goes a bit beyond the literal meaning of ‘slightly reddened eyes [from intoxication]’.

The lustful intoxication of the lovely woman will be quickly transformed into the praise of Mañjuśrī, the patron of the arts, when the Fifth Dalai lama illustrates the same figure with the following verse:

*'Jam dbyangs bzhin ras li khri'i thig le'i ngos |
shes bya thams cad gzigs pa'i spyan dkyus dang |
ji snyed legs bshad sgrog pa'i zhal gyi sgo |
'dzum pas skal bzang skye rgu'i ngal bso ster ||²¹*

“The face of Mañjughoṣa—a drop of vermilion,
his oblong eyes see everything there is to be known.
All that issues from his mouth are elegant sayings,
he brings refreshment to the fortunate with his smile.”

Or, into a veritable exhortation for the disciple ready to meditate. Mi pham’s illustrating verse:

*khyod thugs zag pa med pa'i me long la |
sgrib pa'i tshogs kun gzhar yang mi gnas pa'i |
rnam rtog med las skyes pa'i ting 'dzin gyi |
rnam par dpag tu med la ldang zhing 'jug ||²²*

“In the spotless mirror of your heart,
manifest and enter that meditation which is
born from non discursive thought,
forever free of defilements and utterly unfathomable.”

In Daṇḍin’s verse illustrating the *bhaviṣyadākṣepa* (*'byung 'gyur 'gog pa*, ‘objection about the future’)²³, we find an insulted damsel vehemently denying any future *rendezvous*, since his lover’s eyes bear traces of lac from some other woman’s lips:

*satyaṃ bravīmi na tvaṃ māṃ draṣṭuṃ vallabha la-
psyase |
anyacumbanasamkrāntalākṣāraktena cakṣuṣā ||KĀ II:125||*

²¹DGYESGLU:93; DPERBJOD:91. There are slight differences between the two editions: *pada b* - dang] shing; *pada d* - skye rgu] skye dgu, ngal bso] ngal gso.

²²DPERBJOD:91

²³Cf. GEROW 1971:126

jo bo bden par smra'o bdag |
 gzhan dang tsum ba nas 'phos pa'i |
 rgya skyegs kyis dmar mig gis ni |
 nam yang mthong bar 'gyur ma lags ||²⁴

“I’m telling you the truth! My ‘lord’! you will not see
 me anymore
 with your eyes red with lac, smeared on by by another
 woman’s kisses.”

Note that the word ‘kissing’ (*cumbana*) is timidly left in the original (*tsum ba na*, in all editions I have seen), although there is a word in Tibetan for kissing (*kha sprad cing 'o bya ba*²⁵). The Fifth Dalai lama in his illustration of the same *alamkāra* just won’t miss the opportunity to flog his ‘favourite’ hermit-meditators (see below) once again. Obviously, there was no love lost in his case:

tshul 'chos sgom chen rgan po'i rdzu bag gis |
 tha snyad gtsug lag sbyor bar mi byed pas |
 mi shes blun po tshogs pa'i gral khrod du |
 mgo skyes dkar po'i thor cog 'ching bar nges ||²⁶

“Those not applying²⁷ the sciences of conventional terms
 will surely tie their grizzled hair in a top-knot
 and join the crowd of ignorant fools, [deluded]
 by the ‘miracles’ of old charlatan meditators.”

Finally, let us see some verses that illustrate the blaming aspect of the *tulyayogitālamkāra*.²⁸ Daṇḍin’s example runs as follows:

saṅgatāni mṛgākṣīṇāṃ tadidvilasitāni ca |
 kṣaṇadvayaṃ na tiṣṭhanti ghanārabdhāny api svayam
 || KĀ II:332 ||

²⁴RNAMBSHAD:200

²⁵DBYANGSROL:305, although 'o bya ba alone would have sufficed.

²⁶DGYESGLU:110.; DPERBRJOD:166. *pada a* - om. rgan; *pada b* - sbyor bar] sbyong bar

²⁷Or: “Those not trained in...” acc. to DPERBRJOD:loc.cit.

²⁸cf. GEROW 1971:192

ri dwags mig dang 'grogs pa dang |
glog gi rtse dga' dag dang ni |
sprin gyi rtsom pa'ang rang bzhin gyis |
*skad cig gnyis par mi gnas so ||*²⁹

“Neither affairs with young ladies, nor the fleeting bolts
of lightning
last for more than two seconds—though they started
in the clouds / *in a deep felt way.*”³⁰

Although Daṅḍin’s verse is not entirely devoid of the idea that life is transitory, a favoured topic in Buddhist writings, no ladies are mentioned in the verses of the Tibetan *ālaṃkārikas*. Thus, Mi pham writes:

skye bo'i mig sngar 'khyer legs tshul 'chos khrims |
las 'bras mi bsam kha bshad skam po'i chos |
stong pa'i tshon gyis legs bris dbang po'i gzhu |
*mdzes kyang nam zhig snying po'i rang mtshang ston||*³¹

“Hypocrite customs brought to the presence of men,
meager empty talk with no respect to deed and con-
sequence,
the bow of Indra [i.e. the rainbow] painted with a thou-
sand colours:
however pleasing these may be, in time their essential
fault will show.”

The above verses were chosen more or less randomly. One might quote further examples to show that the verses follow Daṅḍin’s technique but not his themes. The Tibetan verses are purged of all erotic content and other secular themes will always be replaced with religious or ethical ones. Most frequently, they are hymns, praises to different deities, the Buddha, sages of the past, etc. Therefore, celibate monks may have rested assured that no

²⁹RNAMBSHAD:324. completely missing out on the double meaning of *ghana*.

³⁰Tr. CROW 1971:192.

³¹DPERBJOD:386. The verse is not entirely devoid of double entendre, as *'chos khrims* sound exactly like *chos khrims* ‘religious law’ in pronunciation.

indecent poetry would stir up their emotions. But let us look again at the *Kāvyaḍarśa*-passage in Dpa' bo's great historical work.

“In this way, if one praises properly
the virtues of the three jewels by means
of faultless, worthy, beautiful verses,
he will attain fame, wealth and supreme royalty.”

If we try to trace this verse, to our greatest surprise we'll find a very different original. This is the last sentence from Daṇḍin's work, summarizing his view on the use of *kāvya*:

*vyutpannabudhir amunā vidhidarśitena
mārgena doṣaguṇayor vaśavartinībhiḥ |
vāgbhiḥ kṛtābhisaraṇo madirekṣaṇābhir
dhanyo yuveva ramate labhate ca kīrtim ||KĀ III:187||³²*

*sgrub byed bstan pa'i lam 'dis skyon dang yon tan dag|
rab tu rtogs pa'i blo can skal bzang dbang gyur pa'i |
tshig dang mngon par 'grogs byas chang mig ma dag
dang|
lang tsho can bzhin dga' dang grags pa thob par 'gyur||³³*

“Someone who has acquired knowledge in the excellences and the shortcomings with the help of this path taught appropriately and is approached by words that are in his control, is delighted and obtains fame, just as a fortunate youth *who is approached* by wine eyed ladies *enchanted by him*.”

One might have two kinds of assumptions at this point. Either we are reading an aging Dpa' bo (he wrote his monumental chronicle for 20 years) just at the end of his work, tired to bother about quoting precisely on a side issue, or, he is deliberately altering the verse, hoping he'll get away with it on account of his authority and readers being equally tired to trace the original. Knowing Dpa' bo to be an otherwise extraordinarily precise and therefore very reliable historian, most probably the verse was meant to be a

³²cf. RATNAŚRĪ:276-277

³³RNAMBSHAD:527-8

paraphrase of the concluding part of the KĀ. Note that the idiom *dkon mchog rnam gsum* [‘the three jewels’, i.e. the Buddha, the Teaching and the congregation] is especially dubious. Daṇḍin was known to have been non-Buddhist, therefore it is really strange that the old historian would fill out some of the words already shrouded in the mists of forgetfulness with such commonplace Buddhist expressions. If we consider it a paraphrase, and it was meant to be Dpa’ bo’s own verse, than we have a genuine Tibetan monastic *ars poetica* in front of us.

Making sure that the ‘wine-eyed ladies’ of this last verse will not give birth to further improper thinking, having explained KĀ III:187, the commentator *Khams sprul* quickly cites well-known Buddhist legends on the usage of *kāvya* even around the person of the Buddha:

*gzhan yang ’Dul ba’i gzhi³⁴ | bram ze zhig gi sangs
rgyas bcom ldan ’das la | gser gyi mdog can mig tu
sdug pa dang || sogs tshigs su bcad pa’i snyan ngag
gis bstod pas | dge ba’i rtsa ba ’dis bskal pa nyi shur
log par ltung bar ’gro bar mi ’gyur te | ’on kyang lha
dang mi rnams su nying mtshams sbyar zhing ’khor
nas srid pa phyi ma | skye gnas phyi ma dang | lus
phyi ma dang | bdag gi ngo bo thob pa phyi ma la rang
sangs rgyas Bstod ’os zhes bya bar ’gyur ro | zhes lung
bstan pas dge slong rnams the tshom skyes nas slar
yang de’i rgyu zhus pas | da ltar ’ba’ zhig tu ma zad
kyi ji ltar ’das pa’i dus na yang | Bā rā ṇa sī’i rgyal
po Tshangs sbyin zhes bya ba snyan ngag la lhag par
dga’ ba zhig gi bzhon pa glang po cher nga nyid gyur
pa’i tshe na’ang | ’di bram ze snyan ngag mkhan zhig
tu gyur pas | Sa srung bu yi lus kyi sha tshugs ltar ||
sogs tshigs su bcad pas bzhon pa glang po’i dam pa la
mngon par bstod par gyur to | de’i tshe de’i dus kyi
glang po che dam pa gang yin pa de ni nga nyid yin
no | bram ze gang yin pa de ni bram ze ’di nyid yin te
| rgyal pos grong khyer gyi mchog lnga yang de’i tshe
de la byin par gyur to | zhes ’byung ba [...]’³⁵*

³⁴Dul ba gzhi (Tōh. 1.) Bka’ ’Dul

³⁵DGYMSROL:701-702

Furthermore, in the *Vinayavastu* [we read]: “One *brāhmaṇa* praised the glorious Buddha with verse-*kāvya*: ‘Of golden complexion, pleasing to the eye’ etc. By virtue of this merit he will not fall into damnation³⁶ for twenty eons (*kalpa*). Moreover, he will be born as a god or a human, and it was prophecized that in his last existence, his last womb, last incarnation, last identity, he will be the *pratyekabuddha*³⁷ called ‘Worthy of Praise’. The monks had nurtured some doubt and asked for the reason again. [The Buddha then answered:] ‘It was not for the first time [that he had praised me with verses]. Long ago, in Benares, there was a king called Brahma’s Boon (Brahmadatta) who found great pleasure in [listening to] poetry and I was born as his riding elephant. There was this *brāhmaṇa*, skilled in poetry, and he praised the holy elephant with the verses: “Thy shape is like that of Sārvabhauma³⁸” etc. Who was that holy elephant? It was I. Who was the *brāhmaṇa*? It was this very *brāhmaṇa*. The king at that time presented him with five excellent towns [as a reward].’ ”

‘Great meditators’ and the futility of sciences dealing with worldly conventions

There were several ways to accomodate *kāvya* into Tibetan Buddhist doctrine. Usually its utility and the need to study it was treated together with grammar, logic and the other major or minor sciences. These sciences, as they dealt with more or less secular topics, were termed *tha snyad rig pa*, i.e. sciences of the conventional terms. As most Tibetan buddhists were followers of the *madhyamaka*, we will present the problem from this viewpoint. This philosophical system differentiates between ‘conventional’ and ‘supreme’ truth, ‘conventional’ and ‘transcendental’

³⁶I.e. he will not be reborn in the hells, the realms of the hungry ghosts or as an animal.

³⁷A ‘solitary buddha’ who, although he had reached buddha-hood, will not teach.

³⁸One of the eight mythical elephants that guard the quarters.

existence and so forth. While the true purport of human existence is to penetrate and recognize the ‘supreme’ mode of being, it cannot ignore the truths of the everyday world, causality of phenomena, universal suffering, etc. To navigate somehow in this mess of delusion, beings are forced to fabricate conventions (e.g. discursive thought), which are useful in a sense, but they also have a binding factor. Deluded as we are, the ‘conventional truth’ is pretty much all we have and recognize, therefore it must be harnessed and used intelligently to show the way towards transcendence. For instance, in *Dge lugs pa* and *Sa skya pa* circles, the complete mastery of logic is believed to have the result that the rational, discursive mind will eventually become aware of its own boundaries, will ‘quiet down’ and let the unspeakable penetrate the heart of the meditator. There are some however, who prefer to shorten this path and jump to meditation immediately. Eager to shut out the conventional mode of being, they consider everything that has to do with it, futile. It is their objection that is voiced as a *prima facie* view throughout all three major commentaries I have consulted. The most interesting is the Fifth Dalai lama’s peculiar manner of doing away with this objection, hence, he will be cited first.

*phyag rgya pa sogs gangs khrod kyi sgom chen rnams
kyis | tha snyad rig pa 'di rnams phyi rol pas kyang
thos bsam du bya bas na snying po med do snyam na
| khyod rang rnams kyis nyams su len pa'i phyag rgya
chen po de'i lthag mthong gi rten gzhir gyur pa'i zhi
gnas de la goms pa'i phyi rol pa ji snyed cig 'byung
bas | khyod rang rnams kyi zhi gnas de yang spang
byar mi 'gyur ram | nged kyi zhi gnas la skyabs 'gro
dang sems bskyed sogs kyi khyad par yod do zhes smra
na | nged cag tha snyad mkhan po rnams kyi tha snyad
rig pa la'ang theg pa chen po'i sems bskyed kyi rtsis zin
pa'i bla na med pa'i byang chub kyi rgyur 'gro'o zhes
smra na ci skad zer |*

*'jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po Tsong kha pa chen pos
| Tshad ma rnam 'grel gyis thar pa dang thams cad
mkhyen pa'i lam bstan par bzhed pa la | Stag tshang
lo tsā bas | Rig gnas kun shes kyi rtsa 'grel du dgag*

pa mdzad pa ni | lo tsā ba mkhas pa chen po yin pas
 *dgongs³⁹ pa can gyi gsung yin mchi | de ltar min na
 | Sa paṇ gyis | Chos kyi grags pa'i gsung rab dri ma
 med |⁴⁰ ces 'gyur byang du mdzad pas | gsung rab yin
 phyin sde snod dang | de'i dgongs 'grel gang rung las
 ma 'das shing | de gang rung yin phyin thar pa dang
 thams cad mkhyen pa'i lam brjod byar mi byed pa mi
 srid pas don med kyi dgag pa mi mdzad pa zhu | gzhan
 yang Dpang los | mngon pa la lung gi mngon pa dang |
 rigs pa'i mngon pa gnyis su bzhed pas kyang | Rje bla
 ma'i dgongs pa'i rgyab skyor du 'gro'o ||

Dwags rgyud pa ci rigs kyis Stag tshang pa'i gsung de
 dag la brten nas | Rje bla ma la zur za bar 'dod pa'i
 tshig gi sbyor ba byed pa ni | Sa Dge'i mkhas pa lung
 rigs kyi lus stobs rdzogs pa'i Stag seng kha 'thab pa'i
 bar du Bka' brgyud pa'i sgom chen wa skyes lta bu dag
 rgyu ba ni shin tu 'tshang che bas bag yod par byos shig
 ||⁴¹

“Now, if someone were to think that [it is true what] the practitioners of *mahāmudrā* and other great meditators of cave-hermitages say, viz.: ‘Even non-Buddhists⁴² study and reflect upon these sciences dealing with conventional terms, therefore they have no [genuine] essence’, [we would reply: ‘Well then,] if some non-Buddhist were to meditate upon calming the mind (*zhi gnas*, *śamathā*) which forms the basis of the discernment (*lhag mthong*, *vipaśyanā*) of your *mahāmudrā* practice, wouldn’t your *śamathā* become something useless as well?’ [Then] they would say: ‘Our *śamathā* practice is distinguished by the generation of the thought of enlightenment (*sems bskyed*, *bodhicittotpāda*) and seeking refuge (*skyabs 'gro*, *śaraṇagamana*).’ [We would

³⁹em. : *dgos ed.*

⁴⁰The actual words were not found in the edition of the Tibetan translation of the *Pramāṇavārttika* I have consulted.

⁴¹DGYESGLU:10-13

⁴²Lit. “outsiders” (*phyi pa*) as opposed to “insiders” (*nang pa*), the Buddhists.

reply again:] ‘Our sciences dealing with the conventional terms are [viewed] as causes to attain unsurpassable enlightenment, which [of course] contain generating the thought of enlightenment.’ What will they say then?

His eminence, the lord of the faith, the great *Tsong kha pa* maintained the view that the *Pramāṇavārttika* teaches the way to liberation and omniscience.⁴³ The translator Stag tshang, in his *Rig gnas kun shes kyi rtsa ’grel*, [seemingly] refuted this. [Now,] the translator is a great scholar, therefore he must have said that using his words in an intentional way⁴⁴. If it weren’t so [i.e. the work would not teach the path for complete liberation and omniscience, how can it be that] Sa skya paṇḍita in the addenda to the translation said: ‘The scripture of Dharmakīrti is spotless.’ It is a ‘scripture’, thus it naturally follows that it does not deviate from any scripture of the *[Tri-]piṭaka* [i.e. the *Bka’ ’gyur*] or of the commentarial works [i.e. the *Bstan ’gyur*]. It is acceptable, therefore it follows that it cannot possibly teach [another] path [than that of] liberation and omniscience. Therefore, we beg that there be no more meaningless refutations. Dpang’s [statement] that there are two *abhidharmas*, one of authority [of scripture] and one of reason, further strengthens the idea of the Lord, the master [Tsong kha pa].

Some of the *Dwags* order used this statement to criticize the Lord, the master. [We say unto them:] up to the time that the scholars of *Sa skya* and the *Dge lugs* order will fight *Stag seng* who bears the perfect ‘bodily’ strength of scripture and reasoning, the ‘great meditators’ of the *Bka’ brgyud pa*, sneaking as young

⁴³It must be noted however, that this viewpoint was not quite in tune with the general opinion even in India. Mi pham cites Diināga claiming that logic is for refutation of erroneous views, heretical opponents, but the ultimate teaching of the Buddha may not be grasped solely by it, for that is beyond conceptions. DGONGSRGYAN:7b.

⁴⁴*abhiprāya*: tr. *ex em*.

foxes, should be ashamed of themselves for they are completely mistaken!

We have already seen that the ‘Great Fifth’ never misses an opportunity to wage war on the *Bka’ brgyud pa* and their practices. Apart from this, however, he touches on sensitive issues: scriptural authority, adaptation of worldly and ‘heretic’ sciences into the Buddhist curriculum, and so on. We shall deal with these later. Other commentators strike a more charitable tone with the ‘transcendentalists’. Thus, Mi pham promotes a balanced spiritual program with equal emphasis on meditation leading to transcendental wisdom on one hand and lexical knowledge on the other.

*deng sang thos sgom gnyis ’gal ba ltag sprod du bzung
nas | thos pa med pa’i bsgom pa ni | lag sdum brag la
’dzeg pa ’dra | zhes (8a)sogs kyi lung drangs nas sgom
chen la ’dzer | la las kha bshad stong pa’i ’phyor mgron
des | rkyen nyon mongs thul bar dka’ mor gda’ | zhes
sogs lung ’dren dang bcas thos bsam pa la kha zer mod
kyi | phyogs gnyis kas kyang Mdo sde rgyan gyi |*

*de ltar bde bar gshegs pa’i bstan pa gang yin
de yang don med min |
de ltar rnal ’byor can gyi sgom pa gang yin
de yang don med min |
gal te thos pa tsam gyis don mthong ’gyur
na sgom pa don med ’gyur |
gal te ma thos par yang sgom ’jug ’gyur na
bstan pa don med ’gyur ||⁴⁵*

*zhes gsungs pa’i don la ji mi snyam pa’i blo gros ’chal
bar song ’dug | de bas na | sangs rgyas Dbyig gnyen
zhabs kyis Mngon pa mdzod du |*

tshul gnas thos dang bsam ldan pas |

⁴⁵MAHĀYĀNASŪTRĀLAṂKĀRA 12.3: *tasmān naiva nirārthikā bhavati sā yā bhāvanā yogināṇi tasmān naiva nirārthikā bhavati yā sā deśanā saugatī | dṛṣṭo ’rthaḥ śrutamātrakād yadi bhavet syād bhāvanāpārthikā aśrutvāt yadi bhāvanām anuwiśet syād deśanāpārthikā ||*

sgom pa la ni rab tu sbyor ||⁴⁶

*zhes gsungs pa'i tshig don 'di nyid snying gi thig ler
bzung nas thos bsam sgom gsum 'gal med du nyams su
len pa ni mkhas pa yin te* ||⁴⁷

“Nowadays, there [are] some great meditators [who] claim that listening [i.e. study] and meditation are each other’s opposite. In accordance with the authoritative statement: ‘Meditation without study is like [someone] climbing a rock with his hands folded together’, we say [the following] unto them. Some have said, even citing ‘authoritative quotations’ that ‘riding on glamorous, idle chit-chat, it is indeed hard to subdue the obscurations (*nyon mongs, kleśa*), the very reasons [of the transmigratory world]’, and thus made false accusations towards [those] studying and pondering [upon what they heard].⁴⁸ How is it that [these accusers] have entirely lost their mind and do not ponder on the meaning of the passage in the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* that [teaches] both?

‘Nothing is futile what the Sugata has taught

and none of the *yogins*’ meditations are futile either.

If the ultimate meaning could be realized merely by listening, meditation would become useless.

If meditation could be entered without listening [first], the teaching would become useless.’

⁴⁶ABHIHĪHARMAKOŚAKĀRIKĀ 6.5ab: *vṛttasthaḥ śruticintāwān bhāvanāyāṃ prayujyate* |

⁴⁷DGONGSRGYAN:7b-8a

⁴⁸This is a reference to the three basic modes of integrating the Buddhist doctrine: listening / studying (*śruti, thos*), pondering upon that which has been heard (*cintā, bsam*) and meditating on that (*bhāvanā, sgom*).

Consequently, the very words of the buddha⁴⁹ Vasubandhu from his *Abhidharmakośakārikā*:

‘One who dwells [in the] right [ethical norms],
has listened to and pondered upon [the teaching], enters meditation’,

should be held as the very essence of one’s mind. He, who [has done accordingly and] understands that listening, pondering and meditation do not present any contradiction, is considered wise.”⁵⁰

Khams sprul strikes an ever milder tone, as the allegations of the Fifth Dalai lama touched his own order, the *Bka’ brgyud pa*. He, however (along the lines of Mi pham, even quoting him verbatim for entire passages), also rejects the assertion that lexical, conventional knowledge is useless. Here he is already touching on the ‘*bodhisattva*-argument’ which will be discussed in the last chapter of this paper. First, he will defend his point by means of a quote from the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of the Indian master Śāntideva, universally acknowledged as one of the basic Buddhist texts. Then, he reproduces a quote already found in Mi pham’s commentary, from a work written by the founder of his own order, who was also famed to be a *Bka’ brgyud pa* great meditator. I believe this passage was—for political reasons not openly—meant to silence the criticism of the Fifth Dalai lama.

*’di la kha cig ’di snyam du sems te | zab mo’i don la
rtse gcig tu mnyam par bzhag nas bsgom pa ’thad kyi
shes bya’i mtha’ rgya gcod dka’ | chod kyang dgos pa
med do zhe na | [...] Spyod ’jug las |*

*rgyal sras rnam kyis mi slob pa |
de ni gang yang yod min te |
de ltar gnas pa’i mkhas pa la |*

⁴⁹This is an interesting epithet for Vasubandhu.

⁵⁰Mi pham’s extreme care in choosing his authoritative citations should be appreciated. First he cites a basic scripture of the *yogācāra* school, then *Vasubandhu* of the “*śrāvaka*” school, and a few lines further he will also cite Nāgārjuna, the foremost exponent of the *madhyamaka*.

*bsod nams mi 'gyur gang yang med ||*⁵¹

[...] *'gro ba'i mgon po Gtsang pa Rgya ras pa'i zhal
snga nas Rten 'brel gyi chos skor du*⁵² |

*thos pa rgya cher bya long med pa'i sgom
chen pas kyang shes bya dang shes par byed
mkhan kun la mos par bya | rjes su yi rangs
par byed | tha na mgar ba yan chad la kho'i
tho ba sogs lag par bzung | 'di lta bu la'ang*⁵³
*mkhas par gyur cig ces smon lam 'debs | des
rten 'brel 'grig pa yin gsungs | gzhan yang |*

*rgyu 'bras bsku ba med pa 'di |
thams cad mkhyen pa'i khyad chos
yin |
ma bslab pa las kun mkhyen du |
'gro na rgyu 'bras ga la bden ||*

‘Now, some might think: ‘It is better if one sits in equipoised meditation, fixed on the profound meaning alone. It is hard to reach the end of all that is to be known, and even if one does, it is useless.’ [...] The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* says:

‘There is nothing that should not be learned by the Sons of Conquerors [i.e. *bodhisattvas*]. For one with mastery therein, there is nothing destitute of merit.’

The defender of men, Gtsang pa Rgya ras pa in his Cycle of Teachings Concerning Interdependent Causation (*pratītyasamutpāda*) had said:

‘Listening should be done extensively, even

⁵¹BODHICARYĀVATĀRA 5.100: *na hi tad vidyate kiñcid yan na śikṣyaṃ jñātmajaiḥ | na tad asti na yat puṇyam evaṃ viharataḥ sataḥ ||*

⁵²This following passage is taken from Mi pham’s commentary, DGONGS-RGYAN:7a-7b.

⁵³ang] om. DGONGSRGYAN

by the great meditators [who are] “in a hurry”.⁵⁴ They should also cherish and be delighted in the disciplines [of study] and anything that acts as cause to attain mastery over them. Even a blacksmith when he takes hold of his hammer or any other [instrument], utters the prayer: “may I become accomplished by this.” This is said to be in tune with [the law of] interdependent causation. Furthermore:

This infallible [law] of cause and effect
is the distinctive sign of omniscience.

If omniscience would arise from not
studying,
how could [the law] of cause and effect
be true?” ’

Fear of infidels, opportunists and ‘buddhicising’ the *Kāvyaḍarśa*

A further, rather sensible objection that the commentators of the KĀ had to face was that they were defending the *sāstra* of an outsider (*phyi pa*), i.e. the non-Buddhist Daṇḍin. We have already seen that it was one of the worries the Fifth Dalai lama’s ‘great meditators’ had.

Before we can present Khams sprul’s account of this problem, a short digression has to be made. In the introduction to his commentary⁵⁵, Khams sprul claims that he used two com-

⁵⁴I.e. “not having any free time for wordly leisures but meditate incessantly”. Khams sprul records a further objection from the *sgom chen* type of practitioners, namely that there simply isn’t enough time to acquire the vastness of conventional teachings: *de lla na shes bya’i mtha’ la thug pa med pa’i phyir de kun bstab nas ma lus par shes pa’i dus mi srid pa dang | rgyu mtshan des na ’bras bu rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa thob pa’ang mi srid par ’gyur ro* (DBYANGSROL:9) “[Objection:] Even so, things that are to be known are limitless; it is impossible to learn and acquire them in their entirety. By this reason, the omniscience [you are talking about] is also impossible to attain.”

⁵⁵DBYANGSROL:17

mentaries in the original Sanskrit to the KĀ. The manuscripts were presented to him by his master, Si tu Ka rma Bstan pa'i nyin byed. One of these is a work by a Sinhalese Buddhist called Ratnaśrī, which is easily identifiable. It survives in Sanskrit (almost complete), it has been edited, and other manuscripts are beginning to surface (at least one up to this day). The work, although never translated, circulated in Tibet as early as the late XIII. – early XIV.c., when Dpang lo made his revision on the basis of this text. The second commentary was written by (allegedly) another Buddhist, called Ngag gi Dbang phyug Grags pa. It was tempting to identify this with another, well known Indian commentator, *Taruṇavācaspati*, as the first four syllables of the Indian name translated into Tibetan may be reconstructed as **Vācaspati*. The—seemingly minor—problems are that *Grags pa* has to be reconstructed as **kīrti*, which does not figure in the Indian name, nor does *Taruṇa* in the Tibetan. Prof. Yogeśvaradattaśarmā, a recent editor of the KĀ and four of its major commentaries edits *Taruṇavācaspati*'s commentary (*vivṛtti*) and identifies the author as the father of one Keśavabhāṭṭāraka, the royal preceptor (*rājaguru*) of king Nareśarāmanātha of the Hoysala dynasty, whose rule began in 1255 A.D.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he records another commentary by one *Vācaspati* (or *Dharmavācaspati*) and identifies it with that of *Taruṇavācaspati*.⁵⁷ It is not plausible (yet not impossible) that the father of a royal preceptor at a Hindu court might have been a Buddhist, whereas the alternate name of the second *Vācaspati* (*Dharmavācaspati*) does sound more Buddhist. Even if the two authors are identical, then there must be two very different recensions of the same text, as Khams sprul quotes *his* **Vācaspati* extensively (see below). These quotations cannot be identified with passages in the *Vivṛtti* published by Prof. Yogeśvaradattaśarmā. I think that we may safely postulate a **Vācaspati* II or a third person with a similar name (perhaps **Vāgīśvarakīrti*?) and a different, Buddhist commentary which Khams sprul read and reproduced in his own translation. Unfortunately, Khams sprul was not so sure himself who the nebulous Ngag dbang Grags pa was, and cautiously notes that it should be

⁵⁶KĀ (D) I:xxiii

⁵⁷KĀ (D) I:xxiv

investigated whether he is identical with the Vāgīśvarakīrti of the ‘Six Gates’ (*sgo drug*), a well-known Tantric commentator of the eleventh-century Nālandā college-monastery.

The problem under scrutiny here is that *his* Ngag dbang Grags pa demonstrated with an exegetical *tour de force* that the benedictory verse of the KĀ⁵⁸, praising Sarasvatī, may also refer to the Buddha.⁵⁹ Needless to say, this is quite untenable and there were some sensible—probably only imaginary—objections, which, however do indicate the fact that there were people who viewed Daṇḍin as a heretic (see below) and as such, to be treated with suspicion.

*de la kha cig 'di snyam du | gzhung mdzad pa po'i slob
dpon yang nang pa ma yin zhing 'chad bya'i bstan bcos
kyang thun mong ba'i rig gnas yin pas sangs rgyas
la mchod par brjod pa'i 'grel tshul 'di ni gzhung gi
dgongs pa ma yin zhing skabs dang mi 'brel lo zhe na
| de'i phyir slob dpon Ngag dbang Dbang phyug Grags
pa nyid kyis sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das ni lha dang
mi'i bla mar rab tu grags pa'i phyir sogs dang | gzhung
mdzad pa po slob dpon Daṇḍi 'di yang med pa ba ste
chad par lta bas sangs rgyas la mi gus pa ma yin pa'i
phyir | 'di ltar bkral ba gzhung gi dgongs pa ma yin
pa'i skyon du mi 'gyur bar dgongs pa'o | de'i phyir
'dir sangs rgyas dran par byed par sbyar te de ni dge
legs thams cad 'byung bar byed pa yin pas so ||⁶⁰*

‘Now, concerning this [i.e. the interpretation of the *maṅgala*-verse as referring to the Buddha also], some have thought: ‘The author of this text is not an insider [i.e. Buddhist] and the *sāstra* about to be explained pertains to common science, hence, commenting the verse in this way, viz. that it praises the Buddha, was not the [original] intention of the text, and is therefore irrelevant.’ For the reason that [1.] the master

⁵⁸KĀ I.1. *caturmukhamukhāmbhōjavanahaṃsavadhūr mama | mānase ramatāṃ nityaṃ sarvasūklā Sarasvatī ||*

⁵⁹For the sake of no further digressions, the reader should consult DBY-ANGSROI:35ff.

⁶⁰DBYANGSROI:37-38

Ngag dbang Dbang phyug Grags pa himself said that ‘since the Buddha is famous for being the master of gods and men’ etc.⁶¹ and for the reason that [2.] it is [therefore] not the case that Daṇḍin, as a nihilist, i.e. a believer of annihilation, does not respect the Buddha, [the commentator] thought that it is not erroneous to expound that the text has such an intention [as well]. Furthermore, since it calls to mind the Buddha, it is the generator of all merits.”

It is quite striking that we are here—indirectly—observing an Indian Buddhist commentator ‘forcing’ the *maṅgala*-verse so that it becomes Buddhistic, when Sarasvatī was well established in the Buddhist pantheon as well. What was the need for such an interpretation? Was *Vācaspati II merely parading his exegetical skills and knowledge of synonymics or did he have the intention of demonstrating that Daṇḍin was a Buddhist?

We have already seen with Dpa’ bo that there were authorities in Tibet trying to make a Buddhist out of Daṇḍin. Whether Dpa’ bo has done it on purpose or by forgetfulness is irrelevant. In either case, it seems that the mindframe to integrate the KĀ in the doctrine by buddhicizing it, was present. Khams sprul does not claim that Daṇḍin was an all-out Buddhist, but tacitly asserts that (just like his verse) he had hidden inclinations towards the doctrine. In fact, in two paragraphs he convincingly refutes all claims considering Daṇḍin as an ‘insider’. Of the two passages we will here present the latter, as it raises further interesting issues.⁶²

gzhan yang ’di dang ’chad tshul cung mi mthun pa ni
| *Dmangs Do ha las* |

dbyu gu dbyug gsum legs ldan gzugs |
’chang zhing dus su mchod pa dang |
zhes ’byung ba ltar ro | ’dir slob dpon Dbyug pa can
grub mtha’ nang par ’dod pa dang | slob dpon Dpa’

⁶¹These are the first words of the alternative interpretation of the benedictory verse referred to above.

⁶²The first is a lengthy presentation of the *āśramas* a *brāhmaṇa* passes through during his lifetime and proves that the later phase of their life may be designated as ‘one walking with a stick’ i.e. *daṇḍin*.

bo dang gcig par 'dod pa sogs kyi 'khrul gzhi | slob
 dpon Dpa' bo yang dang po'i grub mtha' phyi rol pa
 yin pa dang | rgyal ba nyid kyis kyang bstod pa byed
 par lung bstan pa ltar 'dis mdzad pa'i snyan ngag gi
 bstod pa shin tu mang ba sogs la brten nas byung 'dug
 kyang | de gnyis gcig pa'i skabs med de | slob dpon
 Dpa' bo'i mtshan gyi rnam grangs Rta dbyangs dang
 | Ma khol dang | Pha khol dang | Thub dka' Nag po
 dang | Chos ldan Rab 'byor dang | Ma ti tsi tra | Dpa'
 bo zhes pa rnam kho na 'byung gi | Dbyug pa can
 zhes pa'i mtshan gang nas kyang ma bshad | bstan bcos
 'di'i mdzad pa po slob dpon Daṇḍi ni phyis nang pa'i
 grub mtha' la zhugs pa'i lo rgyus kyang med do || 'di'i
 mtshan Dbyig pa can zer ba ma dag Dbyug pa can yin
 zhes phyis kyi mkhas pa kha cig gsungs pa ni de gnyis
 brda gsar rnying gi khyad par ma gtogs don gcig pa ma
 dgongs par zad do ||⁶³

“Furthermore, there is another, slightly different mode of explanation, according to the *Dohā of the Commoners*, that says:

“They take a trident-staff, bear the form of
 the
 Beneficial One, they sacrifice in the proper
 time...”⁶⁴

Accordingly, Daṇḍin is thought to be an ‘insider’, and this served as a base for many errors, such as identifying him with the master [Ārya]Śūra. The master Śūra was also—initially—an ‘outsider’ and [later] wrote many hymns in verse, as it had been prophecized by the Buddha. For this and other reasons, he is [the same—or

⁶³DBYANGSROI:26-27

⁶⁴The matter of the *dohā*-quote is confusing for two reasons. The first is that these two lines do not appear together in the edition I have consulted (the Peking Tripitaka, Bstan 'gyur), and the second is that where the first line appears (the 4th verse of the song), the author, the *mahāsiddha Saraha* seems to be referring to (and mocking) *śaiva* ascetics (the motif of the trident and the imitation of ‘*Legs ldan*’ which is an epithet for *Dbang phyug*, *Īśvara*, i.e. Śiva.)

so they thought.] There is no ground whatsoever to take those two [i.e. Daṇḍin and Śūra] as one. Among the variant names of master Śūra we find: Aśvaghōṣa, *Mātr̥ceṭa, *Pitr̥ceṭa, *Durjayakṛṣṇa, *Dharmasubhūti, *Maticitra [probably Mātr̥ceṭa again], Śūra and only these. The name ‘Daṇḍin’ is nowhere to be found. Furthermore, there are no accounts that the author of this work, master Daṇḍin, later became a follower of some Buddhist school. The claim that the [form] ‘*Dbyig pa can*’ was corrupt and ‘*Dbyug pa can*’ is correct was made by some later authorities who did not recognize the archaic and new variants of the same word.”

It is evident that some tried to force Daṇḍin into being Buddhist by identifying him with authors known for their *kāvya*s with Buddhist subjects: Aśvaghōṣa (author of the *Buddhacarita*), Mātr̥ceṭa (author of the *Adhyardhaśataka*) and Āryaśūra (author of the *Jātakamālā*).⁶⁵ No doubt that the identification and thus the incorporation of the KĀ into Buddhist scripture was well intended, nevertheless, it lacked the ground as the commentators point out. It is worth noting here that Khams sprul is extremely sensible in treating his subject matter. He recognises that the KĀ, as it is a text of the ‘outsiders’, should be treated accordingly, as to interpretation of verses, terminology, etc.⁶⁶

Mi pham has interesting remarks on how the ‘outsiders’ and the real buddhists treat their conventional sciences. He condemns once more the ‘great meditators’ and those who use the sciences merely for their own, selfish purposes. They, he claims, aren’t any better than the heretics themselves.

*de las nang rig sde snod gsum dang rgyud sde bzhi
dgongs ’grel dang bcas pa ni bstan pa la zhugs pa kho
na’i khyad (6b)par gyi chos yin pas thun mong ma yin
pa dang | gzhan bzhi phyi nang kun gyi thun mong*

⁶⁵It is irrelevant from our viewpoint, yet to be noted that Tibetans considered these three as the same person.

⁶⁶*skabs ’di dag tu phyi rol pa rnams rang gi ’dod pa dang mthun par ’chad dgos [...]* (DBYANGSROL:10) “In such instances, the explanation should be done according to the very tenets of the ‘outsiders’”.

*du bslab bya yin pas thun mong pa'i rig gnas su yang
 bzhag || de dag kyang phyi rol pa rnams ni rnyed grags
 bkur sti sogs 'phral bde don gnyer gyi bsam pas 'jug
 pa | nang pa'i yang rigs can gsum gyi gang zag mtha'
 dag nang rig la theg pa gsum gyi byang chub don gnyer
 gyi bsam pas 'jug par mthun la | lhag ma bzhi la nyan
 rang rnams phas kyi rgol ba tshar bcad pa dang | rang
 gi grags pa bsgrags pa sogs gnas skabs kyi dgos pa 'ga'
 zhig gi phyir 'jug gi | gzhan don du rdzogs byang gi
 bsam pas 'jug pa ni med do || theg chen la zhugs pa'i
 byang chub sems dpa' rnams ni | rang gzhan gyi don
 rgya chen po sgrub pa'i slad du shes bya'i gnas kun la
 'jug cing bslab par bya ba yin te | Byang chub sems
 dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa las |*

*rgyal sras rnams kyis mi bslab pa'i |
 dngos de gang yang yod ma yin |
 de ltar gnas pa'i mkhas pa la |
 bsod nams mi 'gyur gang yang med ||*

*ces 'byung ba lags kyang | deng sang ci rigs kyi bsam
 blo la | spyir gyi rig gnas la slob pa ni grags 'dod langs
 pa'am mi tshe phyid thabs tsam yin la | bye brag mu
 stegs dang thun mong du gyur cing khyim pas bslab par
 bya rgyu'i rig gnas bzhi po de 'drar sbyang ba ni dal
 ba don med 'ba' zhig go snyam sems pa (7a) dang | de
 bas kyang blo chung ba kha cig | gzhung lugs chen po
 la slob pa'i gtam thos na dug sbrul gyis gla rtsi'i dri
 tshor ba ltar 'jigs sems dang sdang sems mnyam du
 'char zhing cha bsdus lad pa'i rig pa thar thor dpe bral
 gyi yon tan du bsgom pa'i rigs gcig dang | yang 'ga'
 zhig thos pa rgya chen po la skyon du 'dzin | [...]⁶⁷*

“Among the five [sciences], the inner science⁶⁸ has the characteristic that it introduces someone only to the

⁶⁷DGONGSRGYAN:6a-7a

⁶⁸*nang rig* (*adhyātmavidyā*) in this context usually refers to the exegesis of the *Abhidharma*. Mi pham (as others do frequently) broadens the meaning of the word to denote the entire collection of teachings that refer to the Self.

teaching [embodied] in the three collections⁶⁹, the four tantric classes⁷⁰ and their commentaries, hence it is considered uncommon. The four other [sciences] present the object of study for both 'outsiders' and 'insiders', hence, they are placed among the common sciences. Considering these [four], 'outsiders' study them with the aim of earning wealth, fame, respect and other transitory enjoyments. On the other hand, all individuals of the three classes of 'insiders'⁷¹ pursue the inner science with the aim of attaining the enlightenment [described] in the three vehicles⁷² [respectively]—in this there is no difference. Concerning the other four, however, the *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* pursue them in order to refute their opponents, to make their own fame spread, and for other reasons, according to the circumstances; they do not pursue them with the intent of [attaining] perfect enlightenment. The *bodhisattvas* of the *mahāyāna*-path pursue and study every topic of anything to be known in order to act for the great benefit of themselves and others. Just as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* says:

‘There is nothing that should not be learned
by the Sons of Conquerors [i.e. *bodhisattvas*].
For one with mastery therein,
there is nothing destitute of merit.’

However, nowadays some people's minds are intent on [using the common sciences] for winning fame or merely as means to attain their livelihood. Hence, they are not different from the heretics⁷³ and accordingly, study the four sciences as something for householders,

⁶⁹The *Tripitāka*, denoting the *Vinaya*, the *Sūtra* and the *Abhidharma*.

⁷⁰The Tantric canon is usually divided into these four classes: *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga* and *anuttarayoga*.

⁷¹I.e. *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and followers of the *mahāyāna*, i.e. would-be *bodhisattvas*.

⁷²In this context: *śrāvakayāna*, *pratyekabuddhayāna* and the *mahāyāna*.

⁷³*mu stegs pa (tīrthika)* is another, nonetheless a bit harsher name for the 'outsiders'.

their fortune⁷⁴ thus becoming nothing but meaningless. There are some, even more stupid than them, in whom, upon hearing an account of [someone's] learning in a great treatise, fear and hostility arise in the same time, much the same way as in a venomous snake when smelling the scent of musk. Furthermore, some⁷⁵ meditate considering [their own] makeshift, scattered and faint knowledge as something having merits beyond comparison. Again, some consider vast learning a vice!"

The bodhisattva-argument

We have already made passing references to the fact that the commentators make use of what might be styled as the 'bodhisattva-argument' in their refutations. Here, the word 'bodhisattva' is used in two of its meanings, viz. the Buddha in his earlier life (or indeed, lives), before becoming enlightened and the desired behavioural pattern of any mahāyānist (or any follower of the *vajrayāna*⁷⁶). A *bodhisattva*, who seeks enlightenment for the sake of other beings must acquire the skill in means (*upāyakauśalya*, *thabs la mkhas pa*) in order to convert and lead his or her fellow-beings out of the transmigratory world (*samsāra*, *'jig rten*) and towards buddha-hood. Since the very cause of the samsāric mode of being is ignorance (*avidyā*, *ma rig pa*), omniscience (*sarvajñānatva*, *thams cad mkhyen pa nyid*) is the only antidote against it. Omniscience, again, refers to both conventional and transcendental wisdom, where the first is the indispensable prerequisite of the second.

It is worth noting that Sa skya paṇḍita's ideal of *pāṇḍityam* is incorporated into the *bodhisattva*-argument. Although the paṇḍita himself would have subscribed to this idea, it seems that in his

⁷⁴*dal ba* means to have the opportunity to practise Buddhism and not to be born in one of the eight states without that opportunity.

⁷⁵These are again the *sgom chen*.

⁷⁶Many, if not all Tibetan and Indian *vajrayāna* followers stress the idea that ideologically there is no difference between these two levels of the doctrine. Both seek higher spiritual levels and ultimately enlightenment for the sake of other beings as well.

time the *pāṇḍityam* argument might have been sufficient. The shortest presentation of the ‘*bodhisattva*-argument’ is, not surprisingly, that of the Fifth Dalai lama, a great admirer of Sa skya pa’s works and personality.

In the following I am going to show how the ideas of the first paragraph are presented in Mi pham’s commentary. Although this passage constitutes the beginning of the commentary, I reproduce it in this last chapter, as the aim was to reconstruct an argument with the conclusion (*siddhānta*) at the end. Khams sprul’s presentation is a somewhat more elaborate version of Mi pham’s text. While citing Mi pham verbatim, he presents a few additional authoritative quotations and defends the initial translation of the passage by Maitreya (see note below).

de ltar yang | Zhi ba lhas |

*sngon chad ma byung ba ni ’dir brjod min |
sdeb sbyor mkhas pa’ang bdag la yod min
(3b)te |*

*de phyir gzhan don bsam pa bdag la med |
rang gi yid la bsgom phyir ngas ’di brtsams||⁷⁷*

*zhes gsungs pa bzhin | sngon du byung ba’i Rgya Bod
kyi mkhas mchog rnams kyi gsung rgyun las brtsams
te cung zhig gleng na | bdag cag gi ston pa mchog gi
bstan pa ’di la | thar pa dang thams cad mkhyen pa’i
grong khyer chen por ’jug pa’i sgo ’phar bla na med pa
ni shes bya rig pa’i gnas lnga ste | Mdo las⁷⁸ |*

*byang chub sems dpa’ rig pa’i dngos po lnga
ma bslab na ni nam du yang bla na med
pa yang dag par rdzogs pa’i byang chub tu
thams cad mkhyen pa’i ye shes thob par mi
nus so || de bas na bla na med pa’i byang
chub thob par bya ba’i phyir rig pa’i dngos
po lnga bslab par bya’o*

⁷⁷BODHICARYĀVATĀRA 1.2: *na hi kiñcid apūrvam atra vācyaṃ na ca saṃgrathanakauśalaṃ mamāsti | ata eva na me parārthacintā svamano vāsāyitum kṛtaṃ mayedam ||*

⁷⁸According to DBYANGSROI.4-5, this from the **Anukampāpratīkaraṇa-sūtra* (Drin lan bsab pa’i mdo, Tōh. 353.; translated from Chinese)

zhes dang | Rgyal tshab chen po Mi pham pas |

*rig pa'i gnas lnga dag la brtson par ma byas
na |
'phags mchog gis kyang thams cad mkhyen
nyid thob mi 'gyur |
de bas gzhan dag tshar gcad rjes su gzung
phyir dang |
bdag nyid shes bya phyir de la de brtson
bya||⁷⁹*

zhes dang | Sa paṇḍi tas |

*rang blo shes bya'i gnas lnga la ma sbyangs
na |
thams cad mkhyen pa nam mkha'i mtha' ltar
rings |
de ltar dgongs nas rgyal dang rgyal sras kyis|
shes bya'i gnas kun sbyangs zhes legs par
gsungs ||⁸⁰*

*zhes gsungs pa 'di dag ni rnam pa thams cad mkhyen
pa'i rgyu'i gtso bo | rang gzhan gyi don gnyis 'byung
ba'i gzhi | 'phral yun gyi legs pa thams cad kyī 'byung
khungs ston pa'i (4a) gsung yin te | 'khor ba'i rgya
mtsho chen po 'dir sems can rnam sduḡ bsngal gyi
tshor ba la long su spyod pa'i rgyu ni | 'jig lta dang
mtshungs par ldan pa'i ma rig pa kho na yin | de spong
byed kyī gnyen po rig pa'i ye shes | rig pa de 'phel bar
bya ba'i thabs su phyi nang gi rig pa'i gnas ji snyed*

⁷⁹The other two commentaries also reproduce this verse, cf. DGYESGLU:8-9. & DBYANGSROI:5-7. There was an interesting controversy as to the correct translation of *pādas* a and b. The Fifth Dalai lama reproduces the initial translated form and then an emended version made by [Stag tshang lo tsā ba] 'Gyur-med Bde-chen. While the Dalai lama claims that the emendation is correct, Khams sprul, by virtue of his superior knowledge of Sanskrit, refutes this view (without mentioning names), dwells on the explanation of Maitreya's verse for a few paragraphs and arrives to the conclusion that the translation should be left in its original state. I think that the Dalai lama's admiration for Stag tshang voiced here as well, justifies my emendation above (*dgongs pa'i skad* for *dgos pa'i skad*).

⁸⁰ROI.BSTAN:colophon.

*cig 'byung ba kun kyang | de bzhin gshegs pa rnam
thabs la mkhas shing thugs rje che bas | ci rigs par
dngos dang brgyud pa'i sgo nas ma rig pa 'joms byed
kyi thabs su bstan pa yin* |⁸¹

“Just as Śāntideva had said⁸²:

‘Nothing will be said here which is unpre-
cented
and I have no talent in composing [verses].
Therefore I am not concerned whether this
might be beneficial to others.
I wrote it only to refine my own understand-
ing’,

my brief discussion begins [with some quotations] from the exegetical tradition of earlier Indian and Tibetan great masters. Concerning the doctrine of our teacher, the best of all [i.e. the Buddha], the unsurpassable threshold of the great realm of liberation and omniscience are the five sciences. The *sūtra* says:

‘Oh, *bodhisattva!* If you do not become learned in the five sciences you will never be able to attain the wisdom of omniscience for the sake of unsurpassable, utterly perfect enlightenment. Therefore, learn the five sciences in order to attain unsurpassable enlightenment!’

Furhermore, the great regent, Ajita⁸³, said:

‘Without manifesting diligence in [learning]
the five sciences, even the most exalted one

⁸¹DGONGSRGYAN:3a-1a

⁸²Here Mī pham is merely imitating Śāntideva’s ‘excuse’.

⁸³This is Maitreya, the buddha of the coming age. He is called ‘regent’ since he took the Buddha’s place in the *Tuṣita*-heaven when the Buddha departed to the human realm. He, Maitreya, is also thought to have appeared in a vision to Aśaṅga, an early Indian *mahāyāna* master, and delivered five scriptures, commonly known in Tibet as the *Byams chos sde lnga*.

would not have attained omniscience. Therefore, in order to refute [opponents], to safeguard [believers] and to know the essential nature [of all there is], diligence must be applied.’

And Sa [skya] paṇḍita said:

‘If you don’t refine your intelligence in the
 five sciences,
 omniscience will be far away, like the boundaries of the sky.
 Thus have thought the Conquerors and their
 sons⁸⁴,
 and properly said that all sciences should be
 learned.’

Hence, all these [authoritative] quotations teach the main cause of omniscience of all aspects, the basis for the welfare of both oneself and others, the origins of all good, both ephemere and lasting. The reason why beings partake of suffering in this ocean of *saṃsāra* is ignorance which is dreadful even to be looked upon / *transitory*. Its antidote is insight wisdom. The means for broadening that wisdom are the outer and inner / *Buddhist and non-Buddhist* sciences, as many as they are. Even the Beatified Ones, since they are skillfull in means and supremely benevolent, they have taught it, by direct or derived teaching, as a means to defeat ignorance.”

We have already seen the vehemence with which the Fifth Dalai lama defended logic as a conventional science capable of being a method for reaching buddha-hood. Nevertheless, he claims that poetry (or rather poetic expression) should be learned first and foremost. I interpret this passage as another covert attack

⁸⁴I.e. the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*.

against the *Bka' brgyud pa*, for it was their tradition in which the expression of esoteric teachings in 'folk songs' was in vogue.⁸⁵

*de yang tha snyad rig pa lnga'i nang nas thog mar
gang la slob ce na | Zur mkhar Blo gros Rgyal pos |*

*rgyal po lang tshos dregs gyur kyang | rgyan
med pa na skye bos gleng | de bzhin
snyan ngag mi ldan pa'i | bstan bcos
mkhas la rtsis su med ||*

*ces pa ltar | tshig sbyor phun sum tshogs pa'i snyan
ngag dang mi ldan pa'i grong tshig tsam la brten nas
don bzang po yod par rlom pa ni | lus kyi lang tsho
rgyas pa'i skyes bu zhig rgyan gos dang 'brel te gcer
bur rgyu ba na 'jig rten na 'phya smod byed pa ltar
| tshig rnam par *mi nyams pa'i [em. : nyams pa'i]
bstan bstan bcos la mkhas pa rnams kyis brnyas par
mdzad pas na | [...]⁸⁶*

“Then, which of the sciences dealing with conventional terms should be learnt first? Zur mkhar Blo gros Rgyal po⁸⁷ had said:

‘If a king, even if boasting of youth, is un-
adorned,
people will speak badly of him.
In the same way, one, who does not know
poetry,⁸⁸
will not be counted among those versed in
śāstra.’

Therefore, someone who assumes that colloquial expressions, lacking any poetical [quality], i.e. the perfect application of composition, are agreeable—[is like

⁸⁵Their tradition imitates the *dohās* of the Indian *mahāsiddhas*. The greatest cultivator of the genre was thought to have been Milarepa (Mi la ras pa).

⁸⁶DGYESGLU:13.

⁸⁷An earlier commentator of the KĀ.

⁸⁸I.e. *alaṅkāraśāstra*, the ‘ornamentation of words’

someone] strolling around without jewelry and clothes, i.e. naked, whom people will invariably ridicule and denigrate. He will be likewise be condemned by the scholars versed in undeteriorated *śāstra*.”

The mastery of poetical expression is not an exigence only in the later career of the *bodhisattva*-scholar, when he is required to teach and compose works. The historian Dpa' bo claims that even in understanding some passages from the scripture, poetics is a must.

*mdo'i tshigs bcad rnam la snyan ngag gi rgyan shin tu
legs pa dpag dka' ba dang sgrig pa la ma ltos pa'i sdeb
sbyor sbyor yod pa dang | re re'ang ming gi mngon
brjod du mas brjod par mdzad pa [...]*⁸⁹

“Even among verses in the *sūtras* there are verses with beautiful poetic ornamentations which are difficult to fathom, which do not pay attention to common [linguistic] arrangements, and whose expression is filled with different synonyms.”

Another aspect of the *bodhisattva*-argument lies in citing scripture, biographical passages about the last and previous lives of the Buddha where poetry played some role or another. In *mahāyāna* thinking, the spiritual path of a buddhist is essentially an imitation of the Buddha himself. Therefore, everything he has done is to be viewed as a veritable model. The biographical parts of the scripture (the *Vinaya* being quoted most often) present young Siddhārtha's education that consisted in mastering the 64 arts (*kalā, sgyu rtsal*) or the 18 sciences (*vidyāsthāna, rig gnas*). Metrical science and / or poetry are present in these lists, which were condensed into the five-plus-five model mentioned above.

There are also several legends involving poetry. One has already been reproduced above, where the Buddha was an elephant in a previous life and a *brāhmaṇa* praised him, thus accumulating great merit. In another legend it is said that the Buddha himself praised an earlier buddha (by the name of Tiṣya, Skar rgyal) with

⁸⁹MKHASSTON:854

a hymn for seven entire days while ritually circumambulating him. In this way he achieved the full accomplishment of the 'perfection of endurance' (*vīryapāramitā*), a prerequisite for the path towards enlightenment.⁹⁰ Of course, these poems have nothing in common with *kāvya* as such, yet it is interesting that Tibetans found it as a justification for the accomodation of poetry in their own country, to the buddhist dogma, and for themselves.

⁹⁰Cf. the *Chos 'byung* of *Bu ston Rin chen grub*, p. 62. (Derge ed.) probably referring to *ABHIHĀRMAKOŚAKĀRIKĀ* IV:112 and *BHĀṢYA* *ad loc.cit.* where the verse is reproduced and the Buddha is said to have recited the verse for seven days standing on one foot.

Glossary

alaṃkāraśāstra — (‘treatise on ornaments’) Poetic treatises dealing with all the rules that make a work achieve a belletristic level. Usually two schools are distinguished, the earlier ‘*alaṃkāra*-school’ and the later ‘*dhvani*-school’. Daṇḍin was a chief exponent of the former. A classical *alaṃkāraśāstra* usually defines different styles of poetry (*mārga*, *rīti*), the shortcomings (*doṣa*) and excellencies (*guṇa*) of different aspects of poetical expression, figures of speech (*alaṃkāra*), etc. The definitions are followed by illustrating verses (which are usually the writer’s own).

ālaṃkārika — one who composes an *alaṃkāraśāstra*.

Bka’ brgyud pa — ‘The Oral-precept Lineage’ founded by Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros (1012–1097), which later forked into numerous sister orders founded by the disciples of Sgam po pa (1079 – 1153): *Dwags po Bka’ brgyud*, *Shangs pa Bka’ brgyud*, *Karma Bka’ brgyud*, *’Brug pa Bka’ brgyud*, etc. The main focus of this order was mystical meditation on topics revealed both orally and written by Indian siddha type yogins (Tilopa, Nāropa, Saraha, etc.). The crux of *Bka’ brgyud* practice is the *mahāmudrā* (tib. *phyag rgya chen po*), a mystical state of buddha-hood, beyond the grasp of discursive thought and descriptions by ‘conventional terms’ (*vyavahāra*, *tha snyad*). They gained considerable political influence in the 14–15th centuries and thus presented a problem for the rising *Dge lugs pa* order.

bodhisattva — (tib. *byang chub sems dpa’*). The ideal person of *mahāyāna* Buddhism, who relentlessly works for the welfare of sentient beings and is a candidate to complete buddha-hood. It is also a designation for the historical Buddha, during his life before enlightenment.

’Brug pa — v. *Bka’ brgyud pa*.

Daṇḍin — the author of the KĀ. He may be tentatively placed in 7–8th-century Kāñcipuram, Southern India. He was a Hindu, probably a śaivite. His work draws on earlier *alaṃkāraśāstras* (in

both Sanskrit and Pāli).

Dbyangs can dgyes pa'i glu dbyangs — v. *Fifth Dalai lama*.

Dbyangs can ngag gi rol mtsho — v. *Khams sprul Bstan 'dzin chos kyi nyi ma*.

Dbyangs can mgur rgyan — v. *Dpang lo*.

Dge lugs pa — ‘The Order of Virtuous Conduct’. Up to this day the most influential order in Tibetan Buddhism. Founded by Tsong kha pa (at the turn of the 14–15th c.), it later produced the Dalai lamas and from the middle of the 17th century it exerted complete religious and secular supremacy over Tibet. Its doctrines stress the celibacy and perfect discipline of monks, the thorough study of logic as a prerequisite for actual fruitful practice, and the gradual path to enlightenment.

Dharmakīrti – v. *Pramāṇavārttika*.

Dpa' bo [Gtsug lag 'Phreng ba] — *Bka' brgyud pa* historian (16th c.). His most famous work is the *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (‘The Feast of the Wise’), a monumental, multi-volume, comprehensive chronicle of the Buddhist doctrine, its spread in Tibet and further related topics. Portions of the work had been banned by the Fifth Dalai lama one century after it had been written.

Dpang lo [Blo gros Brtan pa] — (13–14th c.) An eminent translator, scholar of Sanskrit. He revised the *Shong ston* translation of the KĀ and wrote a commentary to it with the title *Dbyangs can mgur rgyan* (‘An Ornament to Sarasvatī’s Songs’).

Dwags po — v. *Bka' brgyud pa*.

Fifth Dalai lama [Ngag dbang Blo bzang Rgya mstho] — (1617 – 1682) Also known as ‘the Great Fifth’, the most prominent of the Dalai lamas. During his time, spiritual and political power over Tibet merged in one hand. Also a prolific writer on a variety of subjects. He wrote his commentary to the KĀ, the *Dbyangs can*

dgyes pa'i glu dbyangs in 1656.

Gtsang pa Rgya ras pa — (1161–1211). Early master in the *Bka' brgyud pa* lineage, also known as Ye shes Rdo rje, founder of 'Brug ('Dragon') monastery after which 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud got its name.

kāvya — 1. poetry itself, i.e. all those works that conform to artistic and literary norms; 2. an individual poem. It is written entirely in verse, entirely in prose, or alternates between prose and verse. In the West *kāvya* was rendered as 'ornate poetry', 'Kunst-dichtung', or 'classical poetry', where classical does not refer to any definite period but to that poetry which corresponds closely to the poetic canon and the norms and ideals of *alaṃkāraśāstra*.

Kāvyaḍarśa — (KĀ) 'The Mirror of Poetry', (original title: *Kāvyaalakṣaṇa*, 'The Definitions of Poetry') the work of Daṇḍin, one of the earliest Sanskrit *alaṃkāraśāstras* that survived up to this day. The work exerted a remarkable influence in India and in later times it was used as a basic textbook for students of poetry. It was the only work of *alaṃkāraśāstra* that was translated into Tibetan in the second half of the 13th c. by Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan and the Indian *paṇḍita*, Lakṣmīkara. Excerpts from the work had already been translated in the first half of the 13th c. by Sa skya paṇḍita. The complete translation was later revised twice (first by Dpang lo Blo gros brtan pa on the basis of an original ms. and Ratnaśrī's commentary; then by Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1444–1529)).

Khams sprul [Bstan 'dzin chos kyi nyi ma] — also known as Sgra dbyangs zla ba bdud rtsi'i lang tsho, was born in 1730 A.D. At the age of four (1733 A.D.) he was recognized as the incarnation of the 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud abbot of the *Kha stag dkar mo* monastery in *Khams* (South-eastern Tibet). Having studied the KĀ, the grammar of Candragomin, metrics and other common sciences, from the age of twenty five (1754 A.D.) he composed the greatest Tibetan commentary on the KĀ with the title *Dbyangs can ngag gi rol mtsho* ('The Ocean of Sarasvatī's songs'). He

passed away in 1779.

Mañjuśrī — (tib. *'Jam dpal*) the Buddhist deity of both conventional and transcendental wisdom, patron of the arts. Other names: Mañjughoṣa (tib. *'Jam dbyangs*), etc.

Mkhas pa la 'jug pa'i sgo — v. *Sa skya paṇḍita*.

Pramāṇavārttika — (tib. *Tshad ma rnam 'grel*) ‘The Commentary on the Basic Verses of Epistemology’, the work of *Dharmakīrti* (7th c.). Arguably the greatest work of Buddhist epistemology and logic, it is certainly the most influential, most widely known and commented by Tibetan literati. Translated in the 13th c. by *Sa skya paṇḍita* and later revised.

Ratnaśrījñāna — (9–10th c.) author of the earliest surviving Sanskrit commentary on the *KĀ*. He was a Buddhist (of Śrī Lankā), yet the spirit of his work reflects a general Indian learning rather than a specifically Buddhist one. The work circulated and was used in Tibet in a palm leaf ms. form, but has never been completely translated. Two manuscripts of the work survive: 1) the basis of the Darbhanga ed. (v. Bibliography) and 2) an incomplete ms. in Kathmandu.

Sa skya pa — ‘The Order of the Gray-land’ founded in 1073 by *Dkon mchog rgyal po* of the powerful *'Khon* family. The most influential order both politically and spiritually in the period of the Mongol supremacy (1241–1348). Besides its mystical doctrines (the cult of *Hevajra*; the *Lam 'bras* ‘The path and the fruit’, etc.), the order was a great propagator of classical Indian learning, much in the spirit of the great Indian Buddhist college monasteries of *Nālandā*, *Vikramaśīla*, etc. The translation and study of *kāvya* began in the folds of this order from the 13th c. onwards.

Sa skya paṇḍita [Kun dga' rgyal mtshan] — (1182–1251). The greatest figure of the *Sa skya pa* order: translator, scholar, politician and a prolific author on both religious and secular themes. The most important works of the latter category are: 1) *Mkhas pa la 'jug pa'i sgo* (‘The Gateway of Scholars’), which contains the

earliest translated excerpts of the KĀ; 2) *Legs bshad rin po che'i gter mdzod* ('A Jewel-mine of Eloquent Sayings'), a collection of adapted verses written in the *kāvya* style; 3) *Tshad ma rigs gter* ('A Treasury of Logic'), a most influential work in the footsteps of *Dharmakīrti*; 4) *Rol mo'i bstan bcos* ('A Treatise on Music'); 5) *Sdeb sbyor sna tshogs me tog gi chun po* ('A Bouquet of a Variety of Meters'), a treatise on prosody; 6) *Tshig gi gter* ('A Treasury of Words') a book of synonyms modelled on the *Amarakośa*, etc.

Sarasvatī — (tib. *Dbyangs can/ma/*) the Hindu and Buddhist goddess of eloquence of speech, patroness of the arts.

Shong ston [Rdo rje rgyal mtshan] — An eminent translator of the 13th c. and one of the greatest Tibetan scholars of Sanskrit. His translations include the KĀ, the *Amarakośa*⁹¹, Jñānaśrīmitra's metrical *tour de force*, the *Vṛttamālāstuti*, the *Avadānakalpalatā* of Kṣemendra, the *Nāgānandanāṭaka* of king Harṣa, the *Kālacakra-tantra*, etc. He is also the author of the earliest Tibetan commentary on the KĀ. (cf. KAPSTEIN 2003:782; ROERICHT 1953:784-785)

Tsong kha pa — (1357–1419) many a times styled as the 'Tibetan Luther'. The reformer of the *Bka' gdams pa* order (founded by Atiśa and 'Brom ston, 11th c.), which after him became known as the *Dge lugs pa*. An extremely prolific and most influential author. One of his disciples was later acknowledged as the first Dalai lama. The order gained exclusive religious and political power over Tibet during the Fifth Dalai lama and maintained it up to 1959.

Vinaya — (tib. 'Dul ba) 'Discipline'. One of the three parts of the Buddhist Canon (*Tripitaka*). The Buddha's teachings showing ethics, the discipline and moral conduct that is the foundation for all Buddhist practice, both for lay and ordained people. There were many recensions of this collection of texts, the Tibetan *Vinaya* is a translation of the *mūlasarvāstivādin* order's scripture.

⁹¹Kapstein's assertion. The edition I have consulted (the Peking Bstan 'gyur) has Kīrticandra and Grags pa rgyal mtshan as the translators.

Among the teachings about moral conduct, there are many historical and legendary accounts of the Buddha's life.

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⁹²I thank Prof. József Terjék for presenting me with this text.

⁹³I thank *rabjampa* Karmadorje for placing his copy at my disposal.

⁹⁴I thank Gergely Orosz for placing this text at my disposal.

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