

# LAY RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN 11TH- AND 12TH-CENTURY TIBET: A SURVEY OF SOURCES\*

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We intend to supply here a survey of a number of lay religious movements active in 11th- through 12th-century Tibet. Our basic thesis is that, despite the fact that very little may be positively known about the majority of them — their status as lay movements is one of the very things that requires discussion — they are of significance for our understanding of the socio-cultural history of the period and may have had an impact, direct or indirect, on general Tibetan religious and doctrinal developments. In this survey we will keep in our category of 'lay religious movements' any movement that included a significant number of lay persons, lay persons who were not just followers, but who had important leadership roles, either as founders or as teachers and lineage holders. Even this simple definition needs to be narrowed down still further for our immediate purposes. 1) We will not attempt coverage for lay movements pertaining to the Old Tantra Translation school (i.e., the Rnying-ma-pa) and to Bon or to the followings of their 'treasure revealers', *gter-ston*, although these may appear incidentally. 2) We would wish in principle to exclude from consideration what are arguably the three largest and most successful 'lay initiated movements' of the times, the Sa-

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skya-pa, Bka'-gdams-pa and Bka'-brgyud-pa schools (although as we will see the Bka'-brgyud-pa does enter into the questions raised here), whose Tibetan founders or earliest transmitters were in each case laypersons, as were doubtlessly the greater part of their followers, supporters and patrons.<sup>1</sup> The movements we are dealing with here might be said to have constituted (with a few exceptions) an 'alternative second spread', in which lay spiritual leadership and potential were provided for. The individual fates of these movements varied in that for the most part they eventually either faded away or were absorbed into or directly opposed and defeated by the emerging monastic institutions. It must be borne in mind that very nearly all of our textual passages on these groups (leaving out of discussion for now the Zhi-byed-pa and Bka'-brgyud-pa, who were after all successful in their own rights), with one significant exception, were written by (or in at least one case probably only attributed to) prominent members of monastic institutions. We have nothing, or very nearly nothing, that could in any sense be described as 'self-representation' by members of the groups in question. Most of the textual material ranges from the dismissive to the overtly hostile. In the absence of actual sources of self-representation, we must assume a liberal amount of misrepresentation. We might be reduced to gleaning information about their locations, datings and followings, and little else.

It is not only in Tibet that sources about lay religious movements are "sparse, biased, contradictory, sometimes written at a great distance in time or place from the events described, and from a worldview foreign to most modern scholars."<sup>2</sup> In fact, the words just quoted are from a survey of 8th- to 12th-century European religious movements. If it is found that much of the following information is confusing, it isn't so much our confusion, but rather a confusion that emerges from a close reading and comparison of the texts.<sup>3</sup> It is

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<sup>1</sup> See the passage in Sde-srid, *Khog-'bugs*, pp. 497-8, for a listing of important laypersons in Tibetan religious history, including 'Brom-ston Rgyal-ba'i-'byung-gnas, Tibetan founder of the Bka'-gdams-pa school; the 'three white roots' of the Sa-skya-pa school; Mar-pa, Mtshur, and Mi-la-ras-pa of the Dkar-brgyud-pa (a spelling for Bka'-brgyud-pa preferred by some authors); Ni-gu-ma (actually an Indian laywoman) of the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa, and others.

<sup>2</sup> Russell, *Dissent*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> This confusion is in itself significant, since it tells us how little interest the writers took in these movement leaders, and reflects their tendency to lump them all in one category within which their individual identities were deemed irrelevant.

of most importance to weigh the sources in terms of their relative polemical intent. What is probably our earliest general source, an appendix added near the end of some manuscripts of the history by Nyang-ral Nyi-ma-'od-zer, is also the most moderate and sympathetic. Chag Lo-tsa-ba's is the most hostile and polemical in nature, while the testimonies in the *Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye* and *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha* are also hostile, but somewhat less so. Leaving aside the *Sdom Gsum*, which only tells stories about two movement leaders, we have three passages which tell about groups of leaders, and these passages are nested in quite different contexts. The general characterizations of these groups according to the three textual 'nests' do not simply differ. They largely contradict each other. While Nyang-ral called the groups in his list 'accomplishment transmissions' (*bsgrub-brgyud*) of the 'Later Propagation' (Phyi Dar),<sup>4</sup> Chag Lo-tsa-ba refers to a quite similar list as simply 'wrong Dharma' (*Chos log*). The *Dgongs-gcig*, apparently in direct contradiction to Nyang-ral, says that they lack any transmission lineage.

In what follows we have basically followed the roughly chronological arrangement of Nyang-ral (see the appended chart A<sup>5</sup>), even though the dates of many of these movements are not clear and the nature of the sources may occasionally force us to depart from strict chronology. We concentrate on the identities of the leaders of the movements, but include testimonies on their followings whenever possible.

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<sup>4</sup> The distinction between 'teaching/explanation transmission' (*bshad-rgyud*) and 'practice/accomplishment transmission' (*sgrub-rgyud*) is well known to students of Tibetan religion. Here we would just point out a passage prior to Nyang-ral, composed by Lce-sgom-pa some time in the 12th century, where he says that Atiśa along with his followers 'Brom-ston-pa and Po-to-ba each taught both 'explanation transmission' and 'accomplishment transmission' (Lce-sgom-pa, *Dpe-chos*, p. 5). This distinction is also known in the mid- to late-12th century works of Zhang G.yu-brag-pa.

<sup>5</sup> Chart A is arranged chronologically from left to right according to the dates of the sources, and chronologically from top to bottom according to our understanding of the dates of the various movement leaders. This chart corresponds closely to the structure of the present paper.

## I. Ka-ru-'dzin.

A note in the self-annotated version of Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta's *Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye*, says that Ka-ru-'dzin is a "pal-ma'i grub-thob."<sup>6</sup> I do not know what a *siddha* of Pal-ma might mean, unless *pal-ma* is a textual error for Bal-po, 'Newari', as other sources would suggest. He appears only briefly, as an example of a source of 'false blessings'. Just seeing his hermitage was said to be enough to produce states of *samâdhi* in some people. No time frame or geographical location is suggested for his appearance.

Sa Pan (writing in 1232?) says,

There emerged a *siddha* who possessed false blessings by the name of Ka-ru-'dzin.

They say that just by seeing his hermitage *samâdhi* was produced in some [people].

Later on his *siddha* [-hood] dissolved and then the *samâdhi* came to an end.

Such *samâdhi* have been [authoritatively] stated to be made by elementals of the delusionary type.

Blessings that come from striving according to Buddhas' pronouncements are [blessings] of the Buddhas.<sup>7</sup>

As examples of those who received 'sky revelations' (*gnam chos*), the (1260's?) story collection in the *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha* names the greater and lesser Ka-ru-'dzin who emerged at different times:

6 Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta, *Sdom Gsum Rang Mchan*, p. 88.2. For a discussion about the history and authenticity of the annotations in this work, see Jackson, 'Several Works', pp. 242-249.

7 The Tibetan text from Sa-skyia Paṇḍi-ta, *Sdom Gsum Rang Mchan*, p. 88 (note that the *mchan*/notes of this text, not translated here, are inserted in square brackets; proper names are in small capitals): [pal ma'i grub thob zer || KA RU 'DZIN zhes bya ba yi || brdzun rlabs can gyi grub thob byung || de yi dgon pa mthong tsam gyis || 'ga' la ting 'dzin skyes zhes zer || phyi nas de yi grub thob zhig || de nas ting 'dzin de rgyun chad || de 'dra'i ting 'dzin bdud rigs kyi || 'byung po rnam kyis byed par [mdo rgyud las] gsungs || [NAG PO RO ZAN bya ba zhig gis kyang la lar bsgom thebs pa byung ste | de yang rgyal 'gong zhig gis byas par 'dug zer || sangs rgyas gsung bzhin bsgrub pa yi || byin rlabs sangs rgyas rnam kyi yin ||].

While some say that he did *sâdhana* at Glang-ru<sup>8</sup> in the Nepal Valley (Bal-mo), the greater Ka-ru-'dzin is the one who was brought down to the ground from the sky with a gesture (*sdig-'dzub*) of gazing (*lta-stangs*) by the translator Rin-chen-bzang-pö.<sup>9</sup>

Chag Lo-tsâ-ba, probably writing in about the year 1260, says,

When Bsam-yas was built, Guru Padmasambhava came from India and put an end to wrong teachings. After he established some karmic connections (*rten-'brel*) with his followers,<sup>10</sup> he returned to India. After this, the 'king' [spirit] Pehar possessed the body of a Newari named Ka-ka-ru-'dzin, who put a meditation hat on his head, stuck some bird feathers in it, dressed in fur,

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<sup>8</sup> 'Ox Horn', identified with Nagarjun Hill to the NW of the city of Kathmandu, Nepal. The name Glang-ru (in Sanskrit, Gośrṅga), which is also a name of a hill in Khotan, connects this place to prophecies in Buddhist scripture. It seems odd that this text has Bal-mo instead of the usual Bal-po for 'Nepal', and this does introduce a note of uncertainty.

<sup>9</sup> Sher-'byung, *Dgongs-gcig*, vol. 2, pp. 436-437: gnam chos ni | grub chen KA RU 'DZIN CHE CHUNG gnyis snga phyir byung ba la | BAL MO GLANG RU grub pa yin yang zer bar 'dug pa la | KA RU CHE BA ni | LO TSA BA RIN CHEN BZANG POS lta stangs kyi sdigs mdzub mdzad pas nam mkha' nas sa la lhung |  
KA RU 'DZIN CHUNG BA ni | ZHANG SHAR BA tshogs pa [437] skyong ba'i dus na | btsun chung gcig chos nyan pa la sngar brtson pa yin pa la | phyis yong ma nyan pas grogs po kun gyis | khyod sngon chos nyan pa la brtson 'grus che ba yin na | da tsug song byas pas | kho na re nga dad pa chung du song ba men | chos dung byung ba'i dus na nam mkha' nas mi dkar po gcig 'ongs nas nga'i chos nyon dang | ngas nam mkhar 'khrid par byed zer ba yin | nga la dbang med zer ba la | de'i dus su ZHANG SHAR BAS btul te | nga men pa'i dge bshes cig yin na | dpon slob kun kho'i dbang du 'gro ba la tshogs med gsung ngo ||. The story of the lesser Ka-ru-'dzin, not translated in this context, is a story of Pehar's visitation of a young monk. On the *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha* and the dating of its various parts, see Martin, 'Beyond Acceptance'.

<sup>10</sup> This expression implies that the teachings were given in a very brief and basic manner, in order to plant the karmic seeds of a guru-disciple relationship, which might bear fruit at some time in the more-or-less distant future, perhaps even in future lives. The period of Padmasambhava's stay in Tibet became a contentious issue between the Old and New Tantra Schools, with the Old School insisting on its longer duration.

made the announcement at Bsam-yas, "I am Padma," and taught innumerable wrong teachings.<sup>11</sup>

In more recent sources, Sum-pa Mkhan-po retells the story in a passage explicitly based on his reading of Chag Lo-tsâ-ba.<sup>12</sup> Sum-pa Mkhan-po's disciple Thu'u-kbwan dismisses the same story as 'impassioned rumor'.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Sngags Log Sun-'byin*, p. 13: yang bsam yas bzhengs dus RGYA GAR nas GU RU PADMA 'BYUNG GNAS byon nas chos log tshar bcad | rjes su bzung ba'i rten 'brel 'ga' brtsams nas slar RGYA GAR du gshegs so || de rjes su RGYAL PO PE KAR BAL PO KA KA RU 'DZIN bya ba'i spungs su zhugs nas mgo la sgom zhu byon [sgom zhwa gyon] || de la bya spu btsugs lus la za ber gyon nas | BSAM YAS su PADMA yin zhes bsgrags nas | chos log dpag med bshad |. Compare Sum-pa Mkhan-po [A], p. 379: de yang BSAM YAS bzhengs dus PADMA SAM BHA WA dngos byon nas tshar bcad rjes 'dzin cung zad mdzad nas myur bar RGYA GAR du byon shul du BAL PO KA RU 'DZIN zhes pa'i rgyud du THE'U RANG PE HAR zhugs nas mgo ldir zhwa la bya phru btsug lus la za ber gyon pa byung te GU RU PADMA yin zer nas BSAM YAS sogs su chos log de dag dar bcug |. I could also consult the Dga'-ldan-chos-'khor-gling woodblock print of the work by Chag Lo-tsâ-ba (in the form of a partially legible photocopy of a somewhat wormeaten woodblock print [some pages replaced with manuscript pages] kept in St. Petersburg, with thanks to E. Gene Smith), but the variant readings here are not especially significant ones, and a Bhutanese exemplar of the same Dga'-ldan-chos-'khor-gling print was used as the basis for the publication of *Sngags Log Sun-'byin*.

<sup>12</sup> Sum-pa Mkhan-po and Thu'u-bkwan are the sources for the story as retold in Hoffmann, *Religions*, p. 64. Sum-pa Mkhan-po Ye-shes-dpal-'byor (1704-1788), composed his work in 1748. See Sum-pa Mkhan-po [A], p. 392: de yang BSAM YAS bzhengs dus PADMA SAM BHA WA dngos byon nas tshar bcad rjes 'dzin cung zad mdzad nas myur bar RGYA GAR du byon shul du BAL PO KA RU 'DZIN zhes pa'i rgyud du the'u rang PE HAR zhugs nas mgo ldir zhwa la bya phru btsug lus la za ber gyon pa byung te GU RU PADMA yin zer nas BSAM YAS sogs su chos log de dag dar bcug |.

<sup>13</sup> Thu'u-bkwan, *Grub-mtha'*, pp. 60-61: slob dpon phyir gshegs rjes mu stegs pa zhid slob dpon du brdzus nas mgo la rgod sgro btsugs pa sogs deng sang O RGYAN ZA HOR MAR grags pa 'di'i cha byad kyis BOD du 'ongs nas rnying ma'i chos sna tshogs pa 'di dar bar byas so zer ba ni chags sdang gi gtam yin par mngon no ||. For a discussion of the markedly different sectarian attitudes of Sum-pa Mkhan-po and Thu'u-bkwan, see Kapstein, 'Purificatory Gem'.

In many ways Ka-ru-'dzin, whose name might be a Tibetan translation of an Indic/Newari name meaning 'holding white',<sup>14</sup> is atypical of the leaders we will be discussing in that he was apparently a Newari and the earliest sources are relatively even more confusing. The *Dgongs-gcig* passage identifies him as the teacher defeated in the time of Rin-chen-bzang-po, which is understandable, especially in light of the fact that no name is supplied for that teacher in the early biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po. The later sources, following Chag Lo-tsa-ba, make him a pretend Padmasambhava who appeared at Bsam-yas soon after the real one had departed from Tibet. These later sources are also remarkable in connecting him with the origins of false teachings belonging to the Rnying-ma school, and this connection is entirely lacking in sources prior to Chag Lo. The polemical motives of Chag Lo might be further illumined by the passage immediately following, an attack on his contemporary the Rnying-ma-pa *gter-ston* Gu-ru Chos-dbang (1212-1270?), most likely his real intended target. His account of the 'historical' false teacher Ka-ru-'dzin is just prelude to one he considers the more pressing and relevant.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Or it might possibly be a direct transcription of Newari name; I haven't been able to decide on this point. The spelling *ka-ru* for 'white' is a highly unusual one (*dkar-po* is the usual word), but it does occur in the works of Zhang G.yu-brag-pa (Zhang, Samdo ms. A, vol. 2, p. 212), and in Chödag Tibetan-Tibetan dictionary. A similar language process seems to produce the rare form *na-gu* for the usual *nag-po*, 'black' (and notice the form *nag-gu*, below). *Ma-ru*, which occurs in some place names, might be similarly based on *dmar-po*, 'red'.

<sup>15</sup> In this way, Gu-ru Chos-dbang's source of authoritative inspiration, Padmasambhava, is displaced by a false Padmasambhava. A similar sort of delegitimizing strategy is employed in the anti-Bon polemic in the original commentary to the *Dgongs-gcig*, closely contemporaneous to the polemic by Chag Lo. For account of a fraudulent Co Lab-sgron from Hor as source of false Gcod teachings, who appeared fifty years after the real Lab-sgron, see Gyatso, 'Development', p. 335. For more in Gu-ru Chos-dbang, see Gyatso, 'Guru'. The date of his death is uncertain, but since he in any case must have survived until 1269, the description of his death by Chag Lo, who himself passed away in 1264 is, to say the least, somewhat suspect, and the chronology requires closer study. The anti-Bon polemic of the *Dgongs-gcig* also makes Gshen-chen Kludga' to die a horrible death from spirit-inflicted maladies, just as Chag Lo makes Gu-ru Chos-dbang (for testimonies on the death of Gshen-chen, see Martin, 'Poisoned Dialogue'). I haven't noticed any serious illnesses mentioned in the biographies of Gu-ru Chos-dbang (see, for example, Dudjom, *Nyingma School*, vol. 1, pp. 760-70, and see also p. 891 of the same work for a 13th-century response to Chag Lo's polemic). Sum-pa [B], pp. 736-37, has a remark on Gu-ru

## II. Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal:

The earliest source for Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal is doubtlessly in the biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po — probably composed in the mid-11th century, while the following episode ought to have taken place slightly after 987, to judge from its position in the biography — although this source does not supply any proper name.

Just at the time that he went to Purang there was a teacher (*dge-bshes*) there who appeared sitting cross-legged on a seat of coarse grass. Everyone was paying him respects and there was general wonderment, but our Lama Translator [=Rin-chen-bzang-po] gave thought to the matter and knowing that it was a delusive manifestation of Pe-har,<sup>16</sup> he sat for a month in profound coercive rites. Then he went to him and pointed his finger at him, and the monk turned head over heels, fell to the ground and went ['disappeared'].<sup>17</sup> From then on our Lama Translator was treated with great respect.<sup>18</sup>

We have studied the various textual testimonies on Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal elsewhere,<sup>19</sup> and so will just recapitulate some of the interesting details here. The sources conflict with each other on various points. One of these points is the identity of the spirit entity that is supposed to have possessed him. We even have available an alternative manuscript of the same biography

Chos-dbang himself as a false Padmasambhava: "The one renowned as U-rgyan Rin-po-che who came even later on wore a black hat and a black cloak, excessively enjoying beer and women ([note in the text:] Gu-ru Chos-dbang), it is easy to see that he was not the actual Padmasambhava."

- 16 Pe-kar. A variant manuscript of this work reads *klu-bdud*, a type of spirit which is opposed to the *nāga*-spirits; this of course contradicts the idea that he was possessed by a *nāga*-spirit. For iconographic representations of Pe-kar/Pe-har, see Lauf, *Ikono-graphie*, p. 146, and references supplied there. See also Hummel, 'Pe-har'.
- 17 The use of the verb *song* here may imply that he 'disappeared' or 'vanished' in a more-or-less miraculous manner.
- 18 Snellgrove & Skorupski, *Cultural History*, vol. 2, p. 91. I have given the translation that appears there with no significant change.
- 19 Martin, 'Star King'. References to Skar-rgyal are found in Hoffmann, *Religions*, pp. 117-18 and Hoffmann, *Tibet*, p. 139, although the connection he drew between Skar-rgyal and Bon is impossible to substantiate.



of Rin-chen-bzang-po that calls the spirit a *klu-bdud*, an enemy of *nāgas*. Many later works say it was a *nāga*. While the Rin-chen-bzang-po account characterizes him as a *dge-bshes*, which in this early time I take to mean simply 'teacher', the later sources mostly agree that he was a person of 'bad birth' (they do *not* refer to him as a *dge-bshes*), and usually specify further that he was a herdsman. His status as a lay religious teacher seems not to be in much doubt, but we have been unable to find out anything about his actual teachings which would explain why Sa Pan in particular treats him as an archetype of the false teacher. Evidently we are expected to reject his inspiration and authority just on the basis of his birth and occupational status, or his alleged possession. Many of the sources underline the threat that he and his following posed. Sa Pan says "It is said, 'If the great personage Rin-bzang had not lived in those times, the wrong teachings of the one named Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal would have been established.'" The *Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye* commentary of Spos-khang-pa has Skar-rgyal say, after his exorcising, "I am a *nāga*-spirit who live in lake Gu-ma of Mar-yul. My teachings have covered all Tibet. They have become inseparably mixed into many texts and precepts like salt in water. They cannot be separated out."<sup>20</sup> In the *Mkhas-pa'i Dga'ston* is the unique statement that the *Benefits of the Vajracchedikā* is Skar-rgyal's teaching, adding "It seems that a *nāga*-spirit of the dark side known as Skar-rgyal had possessed a herdsman and started to create obstacles for the Teachings."<sup>21</sup> Given the more consistent use of the name Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal, it would seem that he or his followers were claiming that he was to be identified with the Buddha of the far distant past named Skar-rgyal, known in Buddhist scriptures. The name Klu Skar-rgyal, or 'Nāga' Skar-rgyal would have then been given to him by his detractors, saying in effect, 'He is no high Buddha, if anything just a lowly *nāga*'. As a name for a *nāga*, Skar-rgyal — *Tiṣya* or *Puṣya* in Sanskrit, a lunar asterism — doesn't seem very likely, and doesn't occur, to the best of my present knowledge, in any other context.

### III. Pha Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas:

It may be surprising, especially in retrospect, to see Pha Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas' Zhi-byed (as well as Gcod), and the Bka'-brgyud-pa, included in the present company, but in their earliest histories at least, they formed multiple

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<sup>20</sup> Spos-khang-pa, vol. 3, p. 203 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Dpa'-bo, *Mkhas-pa'i Dga'ston*, vol. 1, p. 524.

lineages, not institutionally unified sects.<sup>22</sup> It might have seemed significant that Nyang-ral uses the name Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas, while Chag Lo uses the name 'little black holy man', Dam-pa Nag-chung. But Dam-pa Nag-chung is known from other non-polemical contexts, including the literature of the Zhi-byed school, and we also encounter the name Nag-gu, which seems like Nag-chung to be a diminutive form with the same meaning. Zhang Rin-po-che in the late 12th century calls him Dam-pa Rgya-gar Nag-chung, 'little black Indian holy man', and the forms Dam-pa Rgya-gar and Rgya-gar Na-gu also occur in his collected works.<sup>23</sup> All these names are, I believe, nothing more than Tibetan epithets based on his sanctity, his national origin, his stature and skin tone. In India he was Kamalaśrī, a name he received with his novice vows at age 15, or Kamalaśrī.<sup>24</sup> Since all of the other leaders we will now discuss were (or were said to be) in some kind of direct or indirect relationship with Pha Dam-pa, it is especially unfortunate that we don't have a clear idea about his dates which vary widely in the sources. Deeming this sufficient for present purposes we will assume that this south Indian master's last visit to Tibet and his period of greatest influence, his lengthy — perhaps 20-year-long — stay at Ding-ri Glang-'khor, took place in the years before his death in the year 1117.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The Zhi-byed and Gcod lineages would ultimately flow into all the other sects, thus losing any sense of institutional identity, although in earlier centuries there were some monasteries specializing in Zhi-byed and Gcod teachings. The historical development of the Bka'-brgyud-pa took a quite different pattern. The large numbers of early lineages came to coalesce into distinct 'branches' such as the Tshal-pa, 'Bri-gung-pa, 'Brug-pa, and so forth, which gradually, between the last decades of the 12th century through the 13th century, developed their own independent sectarian identities.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang, Samdo ms. A, vol. 3, p. 73, for example.

<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that one named Kamalaśrī was the Buddhist informant of Rashid Al-Din in Kashmir, but for chronological reasons, the two Kamalaśrīs cannot possibly be identical. For more on the life of Pha Dam-pa, see Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan*, pp. 467-467, and, most recently Edou, *Machig*, p. 31 ff. Some sources have Pha Dam-pa arriving in Tibet in the year 1113, after a lengthy (perhaps 12-year) visit to China. A number of Tibetan sources want to identify him with Bodhidharma, the Ch'an patriarch, although this will be extremely difficult to defend, historically speaking, and may be based on little more than a vague similarity between the Chinese pronunciation of Bodhidharma's name and the name Pha Dam-pa.

<sup>25</sup> Chos-kyi-seng-ge, p. 55, a biography of Pha Dam-pa compiled in 1906, says how when he first arrived at Ding-ri Glang-'khor, he was not known to the people,

#### IV. Bka'-brgyud-pa:

As this is the most successful of the groups placed in the *sgrub-brgyud* category by Nyang-ral, and certainly the best known, we will not go into a long discussion. Nyang-ral provides a lengthy listing of names of the various spiritual descendents of Milarepa, and it is at least interesting to see that for him the configurations of Bka'-brgyud sub-schools are different from those to which we are accustomed, probably reflecting perceptions current at the time of writing, and this passage<sup>26</sup> deserves to be studied closely for that very reason. (He gives prominence to a Tshal-pa Circle and a Mtshur Circle, within the general school which would be called by its second and third generation spiritual descendants the Dwags-po Bka'-brgyud.) It is important to ask how Nyang-ral could feel justified in placing the Bka'-brgyud-pa in this context. Probably this is because the Bka'-brgyud-pa fits in his category of *sgrub-brgyud*, in which practical accomplishment in religion is given priority over interpretation and study. Perhaps also, even despite the dramatic growth in its monastic institutions throughout the last half of the 12th century, it was still considered to be primarily a lay (and lay renunciate) movement.

Chag Lo doesn't speak about the Bka'-brgyud-pa school as a whole, but about certain much less wellknown teachings of Ras-chung-pa and the Bde-mchog Snyan-brgyud. The Bde-mchog Snyan-brgyud is a general term for

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and he went into a three-year retreat. Then the people of all of La-stod gathered around him, and then people from all the Four Horns of Tibet came to seek his Dharma and blessings. Since he didn't give precepts widely and displayed some miracles, there were some who said that he was a *mu-stegs-pa*, a 'non-Buddhist'. The same work (p. 91) says that those who gathered at Ding-ri Glang-'khor were both monastic and lay (*skya btsun*). Important material for Pha Dam-pa's dating may also be found in Mang-thos, *Bstan-rtsis*, p. 94 ff. Mang-thos gives the date of Pha Dam-pa's 5th visit to Tibet, at Ding-ri, as a Fire Ox year, four years prior to the year of Gayadhâra's arrival in Tibet. This Fire Ox year should correspond to 1037, according to the calculations of Mang-thos, but it seems to me that this date is 60 years too early (especially since most of his Tibetan disciples hadn't even been born yet in the year 1037), although this point needs thorough study.

<sup>26</sup> The passage on the early Bka'-brgyud-pa is located at Nyang-ral [B], pp. 583-585; [D], pp. 492-494. The Tshal-pa Circle and Mtshur Circle mentioned by him are, of course, the Tshal-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa, a branch lineage instituted by Zhang G.yu-brag-pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa, and the Karma-pa (with its main monastery at Mtshur-phu) instituted by Karma-pa I Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa.

esoteric Cakrasamvara transmissions that came through three of Milarepa's disciples, Ngam-rdzong Ston-pa, Dwags-po Lha-rje (Sgam-po-pa) and Ras-chung-pa, called the Ngam-rdzong Snyan-brgyud, the Dwags-po Snyan-brgyud and the Ras-chung Snyan-brgyud respectively. Chag Lo says,

Then the Lama Rechungpa, out of a desire to vilify others and to have many attendants and servants, composed the *The King Tantra Clearly Revealing the Secret of Bhagavan Vajrapāni*.<sup>27</sup> In its *sādhana* which shows the deities and secret mantras of that [tantra] it was composed by the Indian Karmavajra. Interpolating this [text], displaying many of his own inventions and doctrines of Acala, he made twenty different cycles of Inner Heat practices.

Furthermore [he] interpolated the Esoteric Cakrasamvara Transmission and giving the source as Ti-phu[-pa] composed a large number of varied Completion Stage [texts]. While the fault of mixing into it many non-Buddhist practices is apparent, it was accredited to [the *mahāsiddha*] Bir-wa-pa. Some Tibetan elders made *sādhana*s of a female with a pig head to perform the 'summonings' of non-Buddhists, and then said that this was the Dākinī of the *Abhidhāna Tantra*.<sup>28</sup>

I choose not to comment on any possible factual basis for the charges of Chag Lo, but I believe the polemical tone is clear. What the Bde-mchog Snyan-brgyud clearly shares with the other members in Chag Lo's category of 'wrong Dharma' is an unwillingness to work within the system of the monastic institutions, a claim to direct contact with the sources of religious authority and blessings free of the mediation of monastic leaders and scholars. These

<sup>27</sup> Compare Sum-pa Mkhan-po [A], p. 392: yang bla RAS CHUNG gis phyag rdor gtum skor rtsams ces pa dang gzhan rdzogs rim 'dra min sogs mang po byas pa dang |.

<sup>28</sup> *Sngags Log Sun-'byin*, pp. 15-16: yang bla ma RAS CHUNG PAS gzhan khyad gsod dang 'khor 'bangs mang bar 'dod nas *phyag na rdo rje gsang ba bstan pa bya ba'i rgyud le'u nyi shu rtsa gcig* brtsams | de'i lha gsang sngags ston pa'i sgrub thabs la rgya gar LAS KYI RDO RJE mdzad pa yod do || de la bslad nas *mi g.yo ba'i chos dang rang bzo mang po bstan nas* | gtum mo'i sgrub skor 'dra min nyi shu bya'o || yang BDE MCHOG SNYAN RGYUD la bslad nas TI PHU la khungs phyung nas rdzogs rim 'dra min dpag med brtsams | de la mu stegs pa'i sgrub thabs mang po bsres pa'i skyon snang yang | [16] BIR WA PA la kha 'phangs nas bod rgan 'gas mu stegs kyi 'gugs byed phag mgo ma'i sgrub thabs byas nas sngon byung rgyud kyi mkha' 'gro ma bya ba yin no ||. Note, the *Sngon-byung Rgyud* I read as *Mngon-byung*, which must, given the context, be the *Vajravārāhi-Abhidhāna Tantra*.

esoteric lineages did have not only laymen, but also laywomen holding their main transmission lineages, both before and after Chag Lo-tsa-ba's writing.<sup>29</sup>

V. La-stod Dmar-po:

According to Nyang-ral,

A *siddha* who was known as Rje-btsun Dam-pa Dmar-po emerged. He had [followers] including the Three Small Disciples and the Three Groups of Eight. Serving as leader of beggars he made many animate beings free.<sup>30</sup>

According to Chag Lo:

Furthermore, one called La-stod Dmar-po, because of his desire for gold, wrongly changed the sounds of the Six Syllables of Great Compassion, pronouncing 'am' in place of 'om', and then went on to take deities of the Kriyâ and Caryâ classes and attached to them the channels and four channel-wheels of the Supreme Mother Tantras and mixed this together with the Zhi-byed Stong-rim, thus composing the wrong dharma which was called Great Compassion according to the A-ma system.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Considering their rarity in later times, women religious leaders and lineage holders were relatively much more common in the late 11th through early 13th centuries. This is particularly true of the early Zhi-byed-pa and Gcod schools, but one finds it also in a 13th-century Mahâmudrâ lineage coming from Mitrâyogin (see *Blue Annals*, pp. 1039-1040), and in some of the early Lam-'bras transmissions. See also the discussion of women as leaders in Lo Bue, 'Case', but note, on p. 486, that his placement of the Four Children of Pehar within the Rnying-ma-pa school cannot be justified in the sources, and is counterindicated by Nyang-ral, who includes them in an appendix devoted exclusively to the Later Propagation (Phyi Dar).

<sup>30</sup> Nyang-ral [D], p. 494: RJE BTSUN DAM PA DMAR POR grags pa'i grub thob byon | de la slob ma chung gsum dang brgyad tshan gsum la sogs pa byon | sprang po'i ded dpon mdzad de 'gro ba mang po grol bar mdzad do ||. The reading has been checked against NYANG-RAL [B], p. 585.

<sup>31</sup> *Sngags Log Sun-'byin*, pp. 14-15: yang LA STOD DMAR PO bya ba gcig gis [15] gser 'dod pa'i phyir du thugs rje chen po'i yi ge drug pa sgra log par bsgyur nas | om la am du bos pas dang | bya spyod kyi lha la bla med ma rgyud kyi rtsa 'khor bzhi btags pa la zhi byed stong rim bsres nas | thugs rje chen po A MA LUGS yin zer ba'i chos log brtsams so ||. Compare SUM-PA MKHAN-PO [A], p. 392: yang LWA BA

Besides these two early sources, we are fortunate to have a biographical passage in the *Blue Annals*, which we will quote in translation and paraphrase due to its length.<sup>32</sup> According to this he was born in 'U-yug [a major valley in Gtsang province] to the Ram clan. It says,

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DMAR PO zhes bya ba BOD du LHA MO RE MA TI spyen 'dren pa po des thugs rje chen po od [sic!] lug [sic!] sogs byas |. Another version of the text reads, even more improbably, *ong lug*, in place of *od lug*. Here it is clear that Sum-pa Mkhan-po has confused La-stod Dmar-po with the Indian A-tsa-ra Dmar-po, since it was the latter, and not the former, who was responsible for the work on the Goddess Re-ma-ti included in the Derge Tanjur. A-tsa-ra Dmar-po (AKA Gsang-ba-shes-rab) has himself been perceived as a purveyor of perverse tantra, a perception with which the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, for one, strongly disagreed (see the passage translated in the editorial note, most probably by Gendun Chomphel [Dge-'dun-chos-'phel], in *Blue Annals*, p. 1050): In a work composed in 1782 as a response to a polemical work by the author's own teacher Sum-pa Mkhan-po (for the details, see Kapstein, 'Purificatory Gem') — Thu'u-bkwan, *Byi-dor*, folio 20 — the problem of the two 'red teachers' seems to be even further compounded: "Although there is a transmission to Lce 'Byung-gnas-bzang-po and others from the A-tsarya Dmar-po who is Lwa-ba Dmar-po, in this case Lwa-ba Dmar-po is a name of Pandi-ta Gsang-ba-shes-rab. But the Lwa-ba Dmar-po who spread several wrong teachings in Tibet is a different one..." (LWA BA DMAR PO'i A TSARYA DMAR PO las LCE 'BYUNG GNAS BZANG PO sogs la brgyud pa yin na'ang / 'di'i LWA BA DMAR PO ni PANDI TA GSANG BA SHES RAB kyi mtshan yin gyi / bod du chos log 'ga' zhig dar bar byed mkhan gyi LWA BA DMAR PO dang mi gcig pas...).

<sup>32</sup> *Blue Annals*, pp. 1025-8. There is also a brief biography in Bradburn, *Masters*, pp. 131-132, with the information that two texts excavated by him are to be found in the *Rin-chen Gter-mdzod*, and noting that most of his excavations were no longer available at the end of the 19th century when Kong-sprul compiled the collection. The dates of mid-12th to early 13th century, as given in this publication, are surely incorrect. Also, in a chronology entry for the year 1043 in *Bod Rgya*, p. 3215, we find the statement, "Lo-tsa-ba Gzhon-nu-shes-rab or [i.e., also known as] Lwa-ba Dmar-po died." I do not find this date of death convincing, especially since I have been unable to confirm any connection, let alone an identity, between the translator Gzhon-nu-shes-rab — a native of Pu-hrang known from several canonical colophons and a junior translator under Lo-chen Rin-chen-bzang-po (*Blue annals*, p. 352) — and Lwa-ba Dmar-po (evidently Gzhon-nu-shes-rab was confused with Gsang-ba-shes-rab?). Because of his connection with Bhutan, Dam-pa Dmar-po finds brief mention in Aris, *Bhutan*, p. 157. There ought to be more information buried in the four-volume 'record of teachings received' (*gsan-yig*) of the Fifth Dalai Lama (not at the moment available to me). One does find a few notices in the *gsan-yig* of

“When he was a child, he with six children stoned to death a mad dog. Then they, imitating a homa ceremony of the tantrics, burnt the dog’s corpse inside some shrubs, and thus contacted some Nāgas. His playmates died within one year, and he himself suffered from the disease [of leprosy].”

He decided to go to India, thinking that in any case he would soon die. He borrowed a turquoise from his aunt on the pretext that his cousin needed to wear it to her wedding, hid it in a bamboo walking stick and went to La-stod on his way to India. He forgot his walking stick at Ding-ri, and when he went back to look for it, it was Pha Dam-pa himself who returned it to him. Then he encountered the translator Mar-pa, dressed in black and leading a black dog. This Mar-pa, who may or may not be the famous one,<sup>33</sup> convinced him that he would do much better to take gold to India, since turquoises were not in high demand there, so he went back to La-stod to exchange it. Travelling together with Mar-pa, he met the Greater Rdo-rje-gdan-pa (which might be Ratnākaragupta) at Bodhgāya. Rdo-rje-gdan-pa, upon an offering of half the gold, initiated La-stod Dmar-po into Great Compassion by putting a bamboo tube in his ear and pronouncing the syllables Om Mani-padme Hūm. La-stod Dmar-po was disappointed that he had come all the way to India and spent half his gold to receive such a common teaching. As penance for his bad faith in the teacher, he was told to consume urine and excrement, which he did. He went on to practice meditation at Bsil-ba’i Tshal cemetery and for seven more years in Bhutan. When he returned to stay in the southern Tibet-Nepalese

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Gter-bdag-gling-pa. In one place La-stod Dmar-po is credited with the excavation of a guidebook to the sacred area of Yer-pa near Lhasa, which he found in Ra-sa (i.e., Lha-sa), entitled *Yer-pa’i Dkar-chag Bstan-pa Dar-rgyas-ma* (Gter-bdag-gling-pa, p. 119; also listed in *MHTL*, no. 16379). In another place in the work of Gter-bdag-gling-pa, Dam-pa Dmar-po is excavator, at Spa-gro in Bhutan, of a body of alchemical texts for long life (*ibid.*, p. 466). There are chronological problems with the lineage given here, since Dam-pa Dmar-po is followed by an unidentified Rig-’dzin Karma, followed by the famous Thang-stong-rgyal-po (1385?-1468?), but then alchemists always do cause chronological problems with their extraordinarily long lives. Despite all the conflicting chronological testimonies, we prefer to locate his period of activity in the late 11th to early 12th century, following the evidence of the appendix in Nyang-ral’s history and the *Blue Annals*.

<sup>33</sup> It seems unlikely that the time of Mar-pa’s travels to India coincided with the time of Pha Dam-pa’s residence at Ding-ri.

borderlands, he wore a red cloak<sup>34</sup> and a white royal turban and so became known as Dam-pa Dmar-po, 'Red Holy One'. Among his followers were his two sons Ḥsod-nams-rin-chen and Bha-ru. In the end, despite his foreknowledge, he was poisoned by one of his own followers.

Although there are certainly peculiar elements in this story,<sup>35</sup> there seems to be nothing extraordinarily unorthodox about him. He is rather respected as the Tibetan founder of a lineage of Great Compassion.<sup>36</sup> The

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<sup>34</sup> The red cloak explains why he is known in some sources as Lwa-ba Dmar-po, 'red cloak'. This is more likely to be the name by which he was known during his life, since the Dam-pa in Dam-pa Dmar-po is usually used to preface the names of deceased saints.

<sup>35</sup> Leprosy, widely attributed to spirits (particularly *klu* [*nāga*] spirits) in Tibet, is so often made to afflict the archetypical false teacher (noting also the element of coprophagy) that we might suspect polemical motives in the *Blue Annals* account or its sources. Popular teachers spread the contagion of their unorthodox ideas, and therefore ought to be socially ostracized, like lepers. On the other hand, there seems to have been quite a lot of leprosy in 11th to 12th-century Tibet, so much so that we cannot be sure its mention is always polemical (Ras-chung-pa, for example, went to India to seek and find a cure for his leprosy; Ma-cig Lab-sgron cured 437 lepers [Edou, *Machig*, p. 163]; 'Chad-kha-ba and other early Bka'-gdams-pa teachers tended to the needs of leprosy patients as part of their Mind Training (*blo-sbyong*) practice, as a way to cultivate compassion). One must understand the connection between *nāgas* and leprosy, as well as the fact that *garudas* are the perennial arch-enemies of *nāgas*, in order to understand the politically incorrect joke Zhang G.yu-brag-pa makes about those who do not practice what they preach being, "Like a leper teaching a *garuda sādhana*. No one would come to hear it!" (Zhang, Samdo ms. A, vol. 4, p. 233).

<sup>36</sup> He does appear in a number of brief passages in histories of the *gter-ston* and other places without the least hint of antipathy being expressed. In Kong-sprul, *Shes-bya*, vol. 1, p. 555, for example, he is found worthy of mention in an appendix to a history of the group of 'eight great accomplishment transmissions'. Here he is credited with the cycles of Great Compassion granted him by Vairāsana the Great, and some cycles of precepts granted him by the five classes of *dākinīs* at Cool Grove Cemetery. There must certainly be more pieces of unnoticed biographical materials about him in the histories of Great Compassion (Thugs-rje-chen-po), the most popular tantric practice in all of Tibetan religious history until now. La-stod, Dmar-po may, in fact, be part of the history of its popularization, but that is for future research to decide. Although it is not entirely relevant to our discussion of the term in its earlier



*Blue Annals* even adds that (the second Karma-pa) Karma-pakshi (b. 1204 or 1206, d. 1282 or 1283) considered himself to be a rebirth of Dam-pa Dmar-po, perhaps, we might think, because both were instrumental in popularizing the Great Compassion *sâdhana* and the Mani mantra among the people.<sup>37</sup> Given Dam-pa Dmar-po's peculiar dress and the existence of two sons, we may assume that he was a layperson, even if this is not explicitly stated. The *Blue Annals* says that one of his sons, Bsod-nams-rin-chen, studied in a monastery, but his other son Bha-ru lived a holy life of feigned insanity, and his other named disciple Smyon-pa Ldom-chung, as the earliest reference of Nyang-ral suggests, kept the lifestyle of a beggar.

#### VI. Rdza-phor-ra:

About Rdza-phor-ra, by far the most obscure of our movement leaders, Nyang-ral tells only that he was a student of one Sbas Shâkya-brtson-'grus, and that he had a transmission lineage which included Four Word Descent disciples, Eight Lineage Holders, Four Heart Sons and Eight Close Sons.<sup>38</sup> The *Blue Annals* seems to supply more clues about him. In one place it is noted that 'Dzeng (disciple of Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas), received from one Rdza-

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usages, it is interesting to note the eight main traditions that Kong-sprul lists among his 'accomplishment transmissions': 1. Snga-'gyur Rnying-ma. 2. Bka'-gdams-pa. 3. Lam-'bras-pa (this 'accomplishment transmission' belongs primarily, but not exclusively, to the Sa-skyapa school). 4. Mar-pa'i Bka'-brgyud. 5. Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud. 6. Zhi-byed together with its branches. 7. Sbyor-drug-pa (i.e., followers of the Six Yogas of the Kâlacakra). 8. Rdo-rje Gsum-gyi Bsnyen-sgrub-pa (i.e., followers of the Three Vajra Sâdhana of the Kâlacakra, revealed to O-rgyan-pa Rin-chen-dpal, 1230-1308/9).

<sup>37</sup> The best general historical survey of the development of the cult of Great Compassion in English to date is without doubt Kapstein, 'Remarks', which has references to further literature.

<sup>38</sup> Nyang-ral [D], p. 494: de dang dus mtshungs par SBAS SHAKYA BRTSON 'GRUS la slob ma RDZA PHOR RA'i brgyud pa | bka' babs bzhi dang | gdung 'dzin brgyad dang | thugs sras bzhi dang | nye ba'i sras brgyad ces pa byung |. The version of the text in Nyang-ral [B], p. 585, aside from some insignificant spelling differences, allows us to read the name as Rdza-spor-ra as well as Rdza-phor-ra. Despite my best efforts, so far I have been unable to learn anything further about the identity of Sbas Shâkya-brtson-'grus.

bor-pa teachings called *Three Drops of Elixir* (*Bdud-rtsi Thigs Gsum*).<sup>39</sup> This connection with 'Dzeng, a wellknown follower of Pha Dam-pa, at least places him somewhere between the late-11th through mid-12th centuries. It is possible also that a piece of biographical material belonging to him has been wrongly embedded in the *Blue Annals* biography of the 15th-century Shes-rab-dpal. This story goes like this:

He spent a considerable time at rDza-spo and became known as the Dharmasvâmin rDza-spo-ba. After that he proceeded to some hot springs, and stayed in a house with a mani-wheel. He spent some time in a house in the vicinity of the hot-springs. He made a window, and [through it] showed his face to all, great and low, and distributed to them a sort of curry made of nettles [i.e., nettles] mixed with other ingredients, including his urine and excrements. His life was long. All presents, which he received, he used to offer to the congregation and was known as a great *mahâsiddha*.<sup>40</sup>

If our intuitions are correct, and this story actually belongs to the 12th-century Rdza-bor-ba/Rdza-phor-ra, we may at least know that he was a charismatic figure with a significant following from a broad range of social classes, persons "great and low." We cannot be sure if he was a layperson or not, although there is no reason to think otherwise.

#### VII. Four Children of Pehar:

For the Four Children of Pehar (Pe-har Bu Bzhi) there is a relatively large amount of material, at which we have already looked in another paper.<sup>41</sup> The passage in Nyang-ral, once again our earliest source, in which he significantly calls them the Six Black Yogis, reads:

In about the same time [as La-stod Dmar-po and Rdza-phor-ra] there were: The Yogi Crazies from Zhang-po Rgya-'thing of Zar Stag-sna, the Yogi Do-nothings from 'O-la 'Ba'-su of Rtsa-ri, the Fire-Water Reversalists from the 'victor' Sro Kha-'thams of Ru-mtshams, and the

<sup>39</sup> *Blue annals*, p. 180. See also Dudjom, *Nyingma School*, vol. 1, p. 546. 'Dzeng Dharma-bo-dhi (I leave the obviously Indic part of his name in its Tibetan form, since he was a Tibetan, not an Indian!) lived from 1052 to 1168.

<sup>40</sup> *Blue Annals*, p. 694.

<sup>41</sup> Martin, 'Star King'.

Flyers who had the teaching Glong Nag-po Rgya-'dzam from She-mo Rgya-lcam of Central Tibet (Dbus), The Stag Yogi Group and the teachings of Mgos of Rdzi-lung added on, these were called the Six Black Yogis. They themselves performed well the accomplishment transmission. The followers of the translators and pundits make these same ones to be Rdol-chos.<sup>42</sup>

The *Dgongs-gcig* passage in fact characterizes the first four as Rdol-chos ('outbreak teachings'), calls them the Four Children of Pehar, and tells rather long stories about each one. We will limit ourselves to the first story in the *Dgongs-gcig*, the one about She[ll]-mo Rgya-lcam: After her husband was murdered she felt great grief but couldn't bring herself to weep in front of others. She went to a cave with some people carrying *tsha-tsha* and remained there alone for a long time crying until she was completely exhausted. Pehar came from the sky and said to her, "Do not cry. There is absolutely no connection between your thoughts and external objects. If there were, since you cry thinking about your husband, he ought to return to you as before; you cry and call out, but still have no husband." She thought about this and decided it was true. She went down the valley to a place where a teacher was explaining Dharma to five hundred students, started dancing, and sang:

Thoughts and things have no connection.  
The very idea must be rejected —  
by teacher, student and teaching three —  
that they are the least bit interconnected.

All at once, everyone, teacher and students included, got up and started dancing. They became her followers, calling the cave where she had stayed Prophecy Relic Cave (Lung-bstan Sku-gdung Phug).

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<sup>42</sup> Nyang-ral [D], p. 494: dus de tsa' na ZAR STAG SNA'i ZHANG PO RGYA 'THING las rnal 'byor smyon tsho dang | RTSA RI'i 'O LA 'BA' SU las rnal 'byor byar med dang | RU MTSHAMS kyi rgyal ba SRO KHA 'THAMS las me chu go log pa dang | DBUS kyi SHE MO RGYA LCAM las | glong nag po rgya 'dzam | [de] la 'phur tsho zhes zer te | SHANGS kyi rnal 'byor stag tsho dang | RDZI LUNG gi MGOS tshos kha bskangs pa 'di rnams la | rnal 'byor nag po drug zer | khong rang gis sgrub brgyud bzang por byed | lo pañ gyi rjes su 'brenge ba rnams ni khong gi de rnams rdol chos su byed |. The version in Nyang-ral [B], p. 585, reads Rtsi-ri in place of Rtsa-ri, 'O-la 'Ba'-ru in place of 'O-la 'Ba'-su, *nag-po tsho drug* in place of *nag-po drug*, and *tol chos* in place of *rdol chos*.

A number of later sources make a connection between one or all of the Four Children and Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas. The only early source we know on this is the *Dgongs Gcig*, which says that the other woman among the Four Children, Zhang-mo Rgya-'thing-ma, was later converted by Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas and became his consort. The *Blue Annals* (p. 984) in fact tells the story of Zhang-mo Rgyal-mthing, but obviously using elements from the story of Shel-mo Rgya-lcam as told in the *Dgongs Gcig*:

She being afflicted by grief after her husband's death, Dam-pa [Sangs-rgyas] bestowed [on her] the precepts which teach the absence of a link (*'brel med*) between mind and objects (*dngos*), and she obtained emancipation.

It is interesting that the teachings that according to the *Dgongs Gcig* were given her by the spirit Pehar are here given her by Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas. Just as the stories of the two women are confused with each other in the sources, so too are the stories about the two men (see the appended Chart B). One recent source says that Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas converted the Four Children of Pehar, who have here been reduced to ghostly spirits that he had to bind by oath.<sup>43</sup> More frequent is a story of the taming of four *tīrthika dākinīs* by four insider *dākinīs* (the latter group includes Ma-cig Lab-sgron; see the appended Chart C<sup>44</sup>). According to a biography of Ma-cig Lab-sgron, there was a fear that the four *tīrthika dākinīs* who had taken birth in Tibet would bring all of the country under their power and so four Jñāna-dākinīs came to tame them

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<sup>43</sup> Chos-kyi-seng-ge, p. 100: gzhan yang DPE DKAR BU BZHir grags pa sogs gdug 'dre mang bo dam la btags shing mi dang mi ma yin pa'i 'gro ba dpag tu med pa phan bde'i lam la bkod |.

<sup>44</sup> Various testimonies on the names of these *dākinīs* are given in chronologically ordered columns. Note that the first two columns of Chart C are both 15th century sources, while the last three columns all have their immediate source in a single work (but using different textual exemplars, and of course employing very different forms of phonetic transcription or transliteration, which can cause much confusion, even for the Tibetan-literate!), very difficult to date (see the discussion in Edou, *Machig*). It should prove interesting to note that Shel-mo Rgya[l]-lcam, the third of the non-Buddhist *dākinīs*, and Zhang-mo Rgya-mthing, the fourth, are identifiable as the two women among the so-called Four Children of Pehar.

so that subsequently they themselves became good Jñāna-dâkinīs, each with her own special ability to promote the welfare of sentient beings.<sup>45</sup>

The apparently 14th-century polemic attributed to Bu-ston says in a brief chapter on the Four Children that they existed in his own times, pretending to be followers of Dharma (*chos-pa*). Quoting the end of the chapter, it says,

They [the four groups] are nowadays split up  
filling Dbus and Gtsang up to Mdo-khams.  
Theirs are not Buddhist teachings  
but the Dharma of Pehar.  
So people [should] keep them at a distance.<sup>46</sup>

We would like to end our survey by posing several questions, some of which can be answered with varying degrees of confidence. First, were their followings sufficient to term them 'movements'? Yes, although we are not supplied with information about their followings in some cases, in the majority of cases there are indications that their influence was considerable in their own times. Especially the Four Children are stressed in several sources as having a quite significant number of adherents over a broad geographical range lasting, if we follow the *pseudo*-Bu-ston polemic, into the 14th century.

A second question: Do these constitute laypeople's movements? In some cases, such as Skar-rgyal and La-stod Dmar-po, the Four Children, certainly, even if these and the other movements may have also included monastics in their followings, as the Zhi-byed-pa and Bka'-brgyud-pa obviously did. The Bde-mchog Snyan-brgyud's might have been too esoteric and restrictive to be termed a movement, but they did include laymen and laywomen among their lineage holders.

A third question: Since certain of the leaders of these groups are said to have been possessed by spirit entities, might they not have been simple village

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<sup>45</sup> Chos-kyi-seng-ge, pp. 276-77.

<sup>46</sup> *Sngags Log Sun-'byin*, p. 33: de dag ding sang so sor gyes || mdo khams yar bcad dbus gtsang khengs || 'di dag sangs rgyas bstan pa min || dpe dkar gyi ni chos yin pas || skye bo rnam kyis ring du spangs ||. Sum-pa Mkhan-po [A], p. 394, thought that the Bu-ston polemic must have been written by one of Bu-ston's students.

mediums and oracles, like those that commonly exist in Tibetan communities to this day? In the first place these sorts of characterizations are made only about Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal, Ka-ru-'dzin and the Four Children. Skar-rgyal is characterized in a number of different ways. Sa Pan says, without expressing great personal conviction, that Skar-rgyal is said to have been possessed by a *nâga*-spirit known as Skar-rgyal who then magically took on the form of a Buddha. A commentary adds the information that this *nâga* belonged to the retinue of Ratîsvara, or Kâma, the Indian god of desire, of Kâma Sûtra fame. In the earliest source, the biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po, he is a delusive manifestation of Pehar, but another manuscript version of the same source reads instead *klu-bdud*, a spirit-enemy of the *nâgas*. Thus, in our earliest source Skar-rgyal could just disappear like a bad dream, while in the later sources, the exorcism returns him to his 'proper' status as a lowly specimen of humanity. As for the Four Children, they are more consistently said to have been seized by Pehar. But Nyang-ral, which may be our earliest source, has nothing to say about any possession or delusive spirit manifestations. I suggest, while emphasizing that this is only a suggestion, that these shifting attributions of spirit possessions and manifestations are only symptomatic of an effort to account for them, to place them in a particular light. It may be that a 'spiritological' study of the meaning of Pehar during the period in question would yield some useful insights. Although I cannot go very far into this now, Pehar, besides serving as a monastery protector at Bsam-yas, and later (toward the end of the 12th century) at Tshal Monastery, seems to be involved in a number of stories in which he inspires young monks to acts of mischief, including the burning down of Tshal Monastery.<sup>47</sup> Still, there are a few sources suggesting that Pehar could already in those days form the focus of a *sâdhana* practice. These include the *Blue Annals* account of Pha Dam-pa's disciple 'Dzeng (whom we have mentioned already; see *Blue Annals*, p. 177) and a *Dgongs Gcig* commentary which says that *sâdhanas* of Pehar and Gtsang-btsan can be of little benefit.<sup>48</sup> Leaving the question in abeyance, we would point out that Skar-rgyal and the Four Children both appear in the

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<sup>47</sup> Notice also the story of how Pehar appeared to Padmasambhava in the form of a *dge-bsnyen* (a householder with lay vows) in chapter 104 of the *Padma Bka'i Thang-yig*. Here, even though bound to an oath to protect the monasteries and chortens of Tibet, most of the space is devoted to the mayhem he will cause if he breaks that oath.

<sup>48</sup> A commentary to the *Dgongs Gcig Yig-cha* contained in 'Bri-gung-pa texts, vol. 2, p. 274.6: "Those who perform *sâdhana* for Gtsang-btsan, Pe-har and the like are not [worthy to be] called *siddhas*."

sources as teachers with quite extensive influence, even an intractable influence, although one that is not well defined. If only for this reason, they cannot be reduced to simple village oracles. It seems more likely that charges of spirit possession were used to account for their revelations, which were opposed for more practical and possibly even broadly speaking 'political' reasons.

Fourth question: Were any of them heretical groups, dissenting groups or schismatics? These characterizations are doubtful. Any careful judgment will have to weigh the fact that (except, again, the Bka'-brgyud-pa and Zhi-byed-pa) we have no reliable sources of self-representation, and so it is impossible to feel secure in characterizing them by any of these terms either singularly or in combination, even if some of our sources do indeed characterize the teachings of some of them in very negative terms. We also have to bear in mind that these lay movements were positively evaluated in one of our earliest sources, one which was composed by a lay religious leader.<sup>49</sup> From the viewpoint of the authors of some of our other sources, it might in some cases be appropriate to employ on their behalf the label 'heretic', but bearing in mind the different ways they contextualize their statements; Chag Lo, for example, is more concerned about proper textual transmissions from India than about proprieties of the doctrinal kind. Despite his strongly worded condemnations, questions of heterodoxy (strictly speaking) are at best of secondary concern and scarcely surface in his polemic.<sup>50</sup>

The final question, are these groups significant? The answer is yes, but just how significant, and in what areas, introduces further questions that I cannot feel safe in answering unequivocally just yet. Certainly they had strong social and cultural impact on Tibet of the period, that has been in no way

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<sup>49</sup> It is perhaps worthy of mentioning that Nyang-ral was himself never specifically targeted in the polemical literature. As far as I know he is only mentioned once in the (*circa* 1400) circular of 'Bri-gung Dpal-'dzin, where he is listed together with a number of other *gter-ston* as being a false teacher. Nyang-ral seems not to have aroused the kinds of controversies that surrounded later *gter-ston* such as Gu-ru Chos-dbang and Padma-gling-pa.

<sup>50</sup> Although we might quote Roerich, *Chag*, p. 108: [In about 1258, while staying at Thang-po-che,] "The Dharmasvāmin said, "The Tibetan Doctrine is not pure. (*Bod lta ba ma dag par yod*) Formerly the doctrine of the Ha-shang Mahāyāna spread. Now it is the same. In order to purify the Doctrine it would be good to preach the Mādhyamika Ratnāvalī. I should preach it in winter to the assembly of monks at Thang."

adequately portrayed in the Dharma Histories, aside from a few extremely brief hints. On the doctrinal level, it is well known that Tibetans, unlike most Buddhists in other countries, found a way to integrate the three Vehicles in a most comprehensive vision. Part of this process of integration would have been the outcome of 12th century discussions about the relationships between the Three Vows. Cyrus Stearns has some interesting discussions in connection with the Indian Vibhūticandra's early 13th-century work on the Three Vows which he composed in Tibet, although his authorship has been denied by some.<sup>51</sup> There are still earlier discussions in the works of Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, Sgam-po-pa and Zhang Rin-po-che. It would be interesting to know how these various views might have made more or less allowance for the religious pursuits of lay people. Zhang Rin-po-che, writing in the late 12th-century, often stressed the superiority of the full monastic vows as basis for the higher Bodhisattva and Vidyadhāra vows, although he did both in theory and practice promote the most lofty practices and goals for persons with Vinaya vows of laypersons.<sup>52</sup> To give another example, Pha Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas, himself often called a 'Holder of the Three Vows' is said to have taught that the Three Vows are not made up of different substances, while they might also be kept distinctly, that the tantra vows, if kept purely, include the precepts of the lower vows even when the latter are not specifically kept.<sup>53</sup> These discussions need to be pursued and then reviewed in light of their consequences for different evaluations of the potentialities of laypersons. To the possible objection<sup>54</sup> that some of these group leaders and their followers, since they lived some or all of their lives not as householders but as itinerant renunciates, might represent the 'true' or 'original' monkhood, my only answer

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51 It does seem curious that his authorship should be denied on the basis of some Tibetanisms in his work. Vibhūticandra composed the work in Tibet and in Tibetan, and so 'Tibetanisms' could only go to prove that his Tibetan (or that of his assistants) was very good. On the 'three vows' controversies in general, see Stearns, 'Life' and Sobisch, 'Preliminary'.

52 Zhang believed that Vinaya vows formed a necessary basis for the Bodhisattva and Vidyadhāra vows, but within the category of Vinaya vows he explicitly includes holders of lay vows, yet with the proviso that full monastic vows provide the best basis. See Zhang, Samdo ms. A, vol. 3, p. 16; vol. 4, p. 30. In general Zhang accepted the idea that the lower vows form a continuing core of the higher vows.

53 See Chos-kyi-seng-ge, p. 67.

54 This objection was in fact raised after an oral presentation of an earlier form of this paper.



is another question, Why should they not, in at least equal degree, be considered 'true' or 'ideal' Buddhist laypersons?

We also ought to consider these groups in the light of different religious points of view about the ideal sources of authoritative guidance and blessing.<sup>55</sup> Arguably, Chag Lo-tsa-ba was one who preferred to locate religious authority in authentic Indian scriptural texts, while the 'accomplishment transmissions' of Nyang-ral located authority and blessings in personal experience and in cults of saints in which the saints are defined as persons believed to have gained contact with Buddhas/Buddhahood through their personal experience or even identity. The *Dgongs-gcig* finds some of these same persons lacking in the authority that comes from 'tradition', meaning the handing down of realization through a lineage of accomplished masters. Too often we assume that everyone in Tibetan culture did, or had to, share a single vision on these sorts of issues.

Any reading of the works by the great Bka'-gdams-pa, Bka'-brgyud-pa, Sa-skyapa and Rnying-ma-pa teachers from the mid-12th to mid-13th centuries will soon detect a strong sense of freshness and vibrancy, and often an urgency, in their discussions of religious issues. This was a time when monastic institutions were growing at a pace perhaps unequalled in the history of humanity, a situation that could not have come about without considerable interest and support from the lay population. Yet this situation was fluctuating and uncertain, and the sectarian identities that have since become so familiar to us were not yet foregone conclusions. We suggest that these lay movements, briefly and tentatively surveyed here, will play a part in our slowly emerging portrait of 11th- to 12th-century Tibet and its Buddhism. They tell us that lay religiosity was alive and effectual, not reducible to a watered-down, or a trickled-down, version of monastic Buddhism. But for future studies it will be most important not to neglect to bear in mind that one person's 'wrong Dharma' might very well be another person's 'accomplishment transmission'

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Russell, *Dissent*, p. 36: "The sources of Christian authority are the Bible, tradition, experience, and reason." On the quite similar 12th-century list of 'four authorities' (*tshad-md bzhi*) known to Phag-mo-gru-pa and employed in the *Dgongs-gcig Yig-cha*, see Martin, 'Beyond Acceptance'.

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Table of 11th-12th century movement leaders from early sources.	Nyang-ral: characterized as <i>sgrub-brgyud</i> , 'accomplish-ment transmission'.	Sa-skya Pañdi-ta, <i>Sdom Gsum</i> .	Sher-'Byung, <i>Dgongs-gcig</i> ; characterized as lacking transmission lineage.	Chag Lo's polemic: characterized as 'wrong Dharma'	Other sources:
1. Ka-ru-'dzin (Newari):	<i>absent</i>	Source of false blessings.	Two persons, a 'greater' and a 'lesser' (the 'greater' of them being the opponent of Rin-chen-bzang-po, who is in other sources called Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal).	1. Ka-ka-ru-'dzin. A Newari false Padma (together with 2. Guru Chos-dbang, a source of false Rnying-ma teachings), possessed by Peihar, appeared at Bsam-yas.	Sum-pa Mkhan-po Thu'u-bkwan.
2. Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal (western Tibetan):	<i>absent</i>	Sangs-rgyas Skar-rgyal, opponent of Rin-chen-bzang-po. A person of low birth (a shepherd?) possessed by a nâga.	Under the name 'greater' Ka-ru-'dzin (as above), opponent of Rin-chen-bzang-po; associated with 'sky revelations' ( <i>gnam-chos</i> ).	<i>absent</i>	A. 11th-century biography of Rin-chen-bzang-po (where no name is given, but he is referred to as a <i>dge-bshes</i> and is called a delusive manifestation of Peihar). B. A number of commentaries on the <i>Sdom Gsum Rab-dbye</i> . C. The <i>Mkhas-pa'i Dga'-ston</i> .
3. Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas. Zhi-byed and Gcod.	1. Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas. Zhi-byed and Gcod.			3. Dam-pa Nag-chung, initiator of Zhi-byed-pa.	Sum-pa Mkhan-po. Numerous other sources.

4. Bka'-brgyud-pa:	2. The Bka'-brgyud-pa school and its sub-schools.	Together with the Bka'-gdams-pa school, focus of many of the critical comments	5. Ras-chung-pa, composer of a false Vajrapā=ni tantra, Inner heat teachings, as well as Bde-mchog Snyan-brgyud.	Numerous sources.
5. La-stod Dmar-po (Tibetan, active as a teacher in southern Tibet-Nepal border-lands, but widely travelled):	3. Rje-btsun Dam-pa Dmar-po. Leader of beggars who led many to liberation.		4. La-stod Dmar-po, initiator of the A-ma school of Thugs-rje-chen-po (Great Compassion)..	A. Substantial biography in <i>Blue Annals</i> . B. Sum-pa Mkhan-po: Lwa-ba Dmar-po, initiator of Light ('Od) school of Thugs-rje-chen-po.
6. Rdza-phor-ra (Tibetan):	4. The transmission of Rdza-pho-ra, follower of Sbas-Shākya-brtson-grus. Same time as the preceding.			Probably to be identified with the Rdza-spo-ba of <i>Blue Annals</i> , p. 694. See also p. 180 ("Rdza-bor-pa," 12th century).
7. Four Children of Pehar or Six Dark Yogis (Tibetan, active in 'Phan-yul and Gtsang): Others:	5. Six Dark Yogis. About the same time as the preceding.	absent	absent	<i>Pseudo-Bu-ston</i> polemic: Four Children of Pehar, subject of a brief chapter.
			6. Mu-stegs Khri-'bum, promoted a lion-headed female spirit to the status of a Jñāna deity.	

Chart A

## Six Black Yogis / Four Children of Pehar

Nyang-ral (Six Black Yogis):	Sher-'byung, Dgongs- gcig (Four Children of Pehar):	Pseudo-Bu-ston (Four Children of Pehar):	Other sources:
1. ZHANG-PO RGYA-'THING from Zar Stag-sna. Originated the Yoga Crazyes ( <i>rnal 'byor smyon tsho</i> ).	2. ZHANG-MO RGYA- 'THING. From Gtsang. No name given for the group.	1. ZHANG-MO RGYAL- MTHING. The Crazyes ( <i>smyon tsho</i> ).	See Chart C.
2. 'O-LA 'BA'-SU (or, 'Ba'-'ru) from Rtsa-ri. Originated the Yoga Do- nothings ( <i>rnal 'byor byar med</i> ).	3. 'O-LAM BHA-RU. Taught fire-water reversal. His followers called Crazyes and Nudists ( <i>smyo tsho dang gcer tsho</i> ). He was from 'Phan-yul.	2. 'OD-LA BAB-TU. The Do-nothings ( <i>byar med pa</i> ).	Perhaps to be identified with the son of La-stod Dmar- po who, according to the <i>Blue Annals</i> account, was called Bha-ru.
3. SRO KHA-'THAMS, Jina of Ru- mtshams. Originated the group called Fire Water Reversalists ( <i>me chu go log pa</i> ).	4. BSO KHA-'THAM. From Gtsang. No name given for the group.	4. SROG-KHIANG 'THABS-SHES. Had teachings on Rte'u Skor Bdun treatise, Lta- ba Rigs-pa'i Mdud Skor, and the proposition that Fire and Water change places.	
4. SHE-MO RGYA-LCAM, of Dbus [had the teaching called] Glong Nag-po-rgya-'dzam. Her group was known as the Flyers ( <i>'phur tsho</i> ).	1. SHEL-MO RGYA- LCAM. From Gtsang. No name given for the group. Later became a consort of Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas.	3. SNYI-MO RGYA-LCAM. The Union-Liberationists. ( <i>sbyor sgröl pa</i> ).	See Chart C.
5. The yoga group Stag of Shangs ( <i>shangs kyi rnal 'byor stag tsho</i> ).	lacking	lacking	
6. The group of Mgos of Rdzi- lung.	lacking	lacking	

Chart B



The Four Jñāna-Dākiṇīs and the Four Tīrthika Dākiṇīs They Converted into Jñāna-Dākiṇīs

Source:	Source: <i>Blue Annals</i> (composed, 1476-8), p. 984:	Source: Sum-pa Mkhān-po [Bl], p. 724:	Source: Allione, <i>Women</i> , pp. 167-168:	Source: Lo Bue, 'Case', pp. 485-6:	Source: Chos-kyi-seng-ge, pp. 276-7 (English tr. by Edou, <i>Machig</i> , p. 139):
1. Labs sgron from Eh. 2. Ma Jo rGya le-icam of Durlung. 3. zha ma lha rje from La-stod. 4. rGyal mo skyid of Zhamza.	1. Labs-sgron of gYe. 2. Ma-jo Byang-chub of Upper gNyal. 3. Zhang-mo rgyal-mthing of g'Tsang. 4. Smyon-ma of Lha-sa.	[1.] Ma-gcig Lab-sgron. 2. Gnyang-stod-kyi Jo-mo Byang-chub. 3. Gtsang-gi Zhang-mo Rgyal-mthing. 4. Lha-sa'i Smyon-ma.	1. Machig Zama of Latho (Lam dre teaching). 2. Camtro Chungma from Tritsham (Dzog Chen). 3. Sheldza Dromnema (Signs of Mahamudra). 4. Labdron from Lablung.	1. Ma-gcig Zama (expert in Lam-'bras). 2. Lcam-brod-chung-ma (expert in Rdzogs-chen). 3. Shel-zla Sgron-me-ma (expert in Mahāmudrā). 4. Lab-sgron.	1. Ma-cig Zha-ma of La-stod (Lam-'bras teachings). 2. Zhang-icam Brang-chung-ma of 'Bring-mtshams (Rdzogs-chen teachings). 3. Shel-bza' Sgron-tshe-ma of Sna-nam (Mahāmudrā). 4. Lab-sgron of Lablung-bar (chief of them all).
1. spal pa dkar po of Yarlung. 2. tshad mo nam mkha' of stod-lung. 3. She mo rgya lcam of g'Tsang. 4. Zhang mo rgya mthing of nyad-stod (i.e., Nyang-stod).			1. Barwa Garmo of Barpu. 2. Cho mo Namkha of Tholung. 3. Shalmo of Tsang. 4. Zhangmo Lhatri of Lading.	1. Spar-ba dGar-mo, from Spar-pu. 2. Chod-mo-nam-mkha', from sTod-lung. 3. Zhal-mo, from g'Tsang. 4. Zhang-mo-lha-khrid, from lHa-lding.	1. Spar-pa Dkar-mo of Spar-phu. 2. Chad-mo Nag-mo of Stod-lung. 3. Shel-mo Rgyal-icam of Gtsang. 4. Zhang-mo Lha-khri of Lha-lding.

Chart C