

Is there Beer in Tuṣita? Dialogue with the Fourth Karma pa, Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340–1383), about his Intermediate State (*bar do*)

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1. Introduction¹

In this study, an annotated translation from two different sources of a dialogue (embedded in *rnam thar*) between the eight-year-old Fourth Karma pa, Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340–1383), and a previous disciple, together with an analysis of its content and meaning against the backdrop of Vajrayāna, its symbolism, and the historical context, is presented. The dialogue deals with questions about the passing of the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339), and his subsequent sojourn in Tuṣita, trying to dispel doubts among an audience of disciples. The sources used are the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (“Feast of the Wise”) by dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566) and the *Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* (“Golden Garland of the Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud”) by Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774) and his student.

Life stories (*rnam thar*) of Tibetan Buddhist masters exhibit different levels of content, which classically are divided into outer, inner, and secret life stories.² The genre of *rnam thar* is meant to show the “complete liberation” of the protagonist, as its Tibetan name suggests. In this respect, the secret life stories (*gsang ba'i rnam thar*) might be most defining for this genre, since they contain mystic events experienced by the protagonist, such as miraculous dreams, visions, and supernatural phenomena—all of which represent realization of the nature of mind. One sub-category of the secret life story is accounts of experiences during the intermediate state between death and rebirth

¹ I would like to thank Jim Rheingans for his comments on this paper, which I very much appreciated. I am grateful to Paul Partington for his English copyediting.

² This classification is ascribed to sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705) (Vostrikov 1994, 186–87).

(*bar do*).³ These accounts are usually called *bar do'i rnam thar* and are especially associated with the Karma pas, the hierarchs of the Karma bka' brgyud lineage, the first lineage of successive incarnation in Tibet.⁴ There are English translations of such accounts for the Third, Fourth, and Seventh Karma pas, which are in first-person or third-person narration.⁵

In contrast, in this paper, I want to draw the reader's attention to an account of the *bar do* state that comes in a different form—namely, that of a dialogue. rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba, one of the main students of the First Zhwa dmar pa, rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge (1283–1349), and a contemporary of the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339), asks his eight-year-old reincarnation, the Fourth Karma pa, Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340–1383), questions about his passing in his third incarnation and his sojourn in Tuṣita afterward, in front of an audience.⁶

The dialogue at hand has the form of (written down) oral questions and answers. This reminds one of the Tibetan genre of *dri lan*, which usually stands separately but is sometimes found embedded into *rnam thars*.⁷ Rheingans defines the genre as follows: "Tibetan texts entitled *dri lan* or *dris lan* ('questions and answers' or 'answers to questions') predominantly consist of written answers to one or more questions, mainly containing short treatments of queries about the Buddha's teaching that are suited to specific individuals."⁸ Notwithstanding the fluidity of Tibetan genres, the passage at hand being a written record of an oral dialogue rather disqualifies it as a *dri lan*, though it might

³ On the meaning of *bar do*, see Cuevas 2003, 39–68.

⁴ Sometimes they are also called *rnam thar bar do ma*, especially with respect to the Third Karma pa. See for example Manson 2009, 44, and Berounský 2010, 7.

⁵ For the translations see Gamble 2020, 121–27; Dell 2024, 86–89; and Dell 2020, 48–51. For a more extensive overview of representatives of this sub-genre, see Dell 2020, 41–47 and Dell 2024, 84–86.

⁶ Rheingans mentions the existence of another dialogue where the Eighth Karma pa, Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554), is asked about his stay in Tuṣita by his attendant A khu A khra (Rheingans 2014, 86). Its translation and analysis, together with a comparison, might be an interesting future research paper.

⁷ Rheingans 2014, 75.

⁸ Announcement text for a lecture by Jim Rheingans on May 13, 2024, with the title "Discussing the Dharma: Answers to Questions (*dri lan*) by the 15th Century Kagyupa Masters as Sources for the Study of Tibetan Religious History." Accessed March 15, 2024. https://www.oew.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/IKGA/PDF/events/Poster_Rheingans_Discussing_the_Dharma.pdf. The genre of *dri lan* is not much researched (Rheingans 2015, 3), but there are a few contributions. For instance, for a translation of *dri lan* letters replied by Sa skya Paṇḍita, see Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen and Rhoton 2002, Part III; for a case study on a *dri lan* about Mahāmudrā answered by the Eighth Karma pa, see Rheingans 2011.

share some features with this genre.⁹ One main difference is that a dialogue consists of two-way communication.¹⁰ In general, dialogues can be considered a typical element of narrative texts.¹¹ The genre of *rnam thar* can be classified as a narrative text (in most cases) and its main narrative is often interspersed with what can be called embedded texts.¹² In the case at hand, the embedded text is a dialogue and its translation and analysis will be the focus of this paper.¹³

The analysis presented in this paper will be with respect to the content of the text, which is interpreted on the background of Vajrayāna and its symbolism, as well as from the historical background. As the text does not stand alone, its function within the main narrative will also receive some attention in the analysis.

The paper is based on two different sources, in which the dialogue appears in different lengths. The first one is a historiographical work of the genre “Religious History” (Tib. *chos 'byung*) called “Feast of the Wise” (Tib. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*), composed by the historian dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566), which will be henceforth referred to as CKG.¹⁴ The second source is also a historiographical work, but of the genre “Golden Garland” (Tib. *gser 'phreng*), often referred to as the “Golden Garland of the Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud” (Tib. *Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*) or by its ornamental title “Moonstone Water-Crystal Mālā” (Tib. *Nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*, often shortened to *Zla ba chu shel*), which will be henceforth referred to as KSP. It was written by the polymath Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774), also known as Si tu Paṅ chen, and his student 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab (b. 18th cent.).¹⁵

The KSP has become the standard work for scholars in the Karma bKa' brgyud tradition who deal with the lives of their lineage's masters. Its language is considered easier to understand and its organization is more chronological than the earlier CKG, which is another standard historical Karma bka' brgyud work.¹⁶ In the case at

⁹ On the fluidity of Tibetan genres, see Jackson 2015.

¹⁰ Rheingans similarly analyzes dialogues embedded into *rnam thar* and delimits them toward *dris lan* (Rheingans 2014, 75–76).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 76 with reference to Neumann and Nünning 2011, 110.

¹² Rheingans 2014, 69–70.

¹³ Rheingans refers to a *mKhan po* he consulted, according to whom such recordings of oral dialogues are very rare in Tibetan literature, but Rheingans also points out that this claim is still to be verified by a detailed survey (*Ibid.*, 76, footnote 24).

¹⁴ For an overview of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, see Dell 2021. For the life of its author, see Bjerregaard and Dell 2022.

¹⁵ For an overview of the *Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* and references about the lives of its authors, see Dell 2023.

¹⁶ Rheingans 2017, 69.

hand, in both sources, the dialogue follows the same story line and content, but the text is generally more extended in the KSP.

As for the outline of this paper, in section 2, annotated translations of both texts are to be presented, followed by an analysis of their content in section 3, and a conclusion in section 4. An appendix contains the Tibetan text of both passages (section 5).

2. Translation

In this section, annotated translations of the Fourth Karma pa's dialogue with rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba about his sojourn in Tuṣita during his intermediate state are presented, based on the CKG and the KSP.

2.1. Translation from the CKG

rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba met [with the Fourth Karma pa].¹⁷ Since a fire was lit in the assembly rows, it became hot. [The Karma pa] used a fan and said: “[It] is like the heat of the summer [in] China. Even if [one] uses a fan, [it] will only gather the heat.”

[rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba] asked: “[In your third incarnation, you] asserted that [you] would live to be eighty-four years old. Why did [you] not live beyond the age of fifty-six?”¹⁸ [The Karma pa] replied: “[I] was disenchanted, because many engaged in negative actions.”

[He went on] asking: “Togs ldan Grags seng ba saw [you] departing to Tuṣita, and many people saw [your shape] on the moon [disc]. Is this true?”¹⁹ [The Karma pa] replied: “Yes, that was me. At that time, the Mongols were acting like this.” [While saying this, he] knelt down and made a gesture of showing the moon. [The Karma pa] went on: “In general, Tuṣita is not far away. The one who was on the moon, the one who was on the lion or the elephant, and so forth, all of these were me.”

[rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba] went on asking in a joking way: “Is there beer in Tuṣita?”²⁰ [The Karma pa] replied: “There is no such

¹⁷ rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba is mentioned in the *Blue Annals* as one of the four main disciples of the First Zhwa dmar pa, rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge (1283–1349; Roerich 1995, 532). Further details on his life are not provided there. Possibly, he can be identified with Brag nag pa mGon rgyal ba (b. 14th century; BDRC, P5090).

¹⁸ In Western counting, his age would be fifty-five. The Third Karma pa lived from 1284 to 1339.

¹⁹ Togs ldan Grags seng ba can be identified with the First Zhwa dmar pa, rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge (1283–1349; BDRC, P70), who was a disciple of the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339).

²⁰ In the following text, the Tibetan does not mention the agent who asks the questions explicitly. Hence, it could also just be some random people from the

intoxicating [drink, but] there is divine *amṛta*." [He] asked: "It is said that the black *amṛta* is good. Is that true?" [The Karma pa] replied: "[I] have not seen black *amṛta*, [but] the white [*amṛta*] similar to milk is endowed with a hundred flavors."

[rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba] said: "There is nothing like the silk parasols of Tshal gung thang [in Tuṣita].²¹ [The Karma pa] replied: "O lama, all desirables of the human realm appear small [compared to Tuṣita]. There are single flowers in Tuṣita that do not even fit into [the great mountain hermitage of] lKog 'phreng."²²

[He] asked: "Is there no great river like the Yar gtsang?²³ Is there not even a castle like that of rTam nyog?"²⁴ [The Karma pa] replied: "In Tuṣita, all water is *amṛta*. All castles [are] only [made of] jewels, there are no ordinary soils or stones."

[rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba] asked: "Is there anything like the horses with brass-colored [manes] of rTam nyog?" [The Karma pa] replied: "If [you] have no time for the Dharma, [you] are an old monk who has gone astray. Act according to just that! [Practice the Dharma!]"

2.2. Translation from the KSP

In the earth-mouse year (1348), when [the Fourth Karma pa] was nine years old,²⁵ the people of Tshal²⁶ offered [him] tea and other [gifts]. [He] was invited to tea by all the important people of Amdo (Tib. *mdo*)

assembly. That is also what Roerich assumed in this translation of the corresponding passage from "The Blue Annals" ("they asked"; Roerich 1995, 495–97). Unlike Roerich, since no new agent is mentioned, I assume that the conversation just continues between rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba and the Karma pa through to the end. This is also supported by the fact that the Karma pa repeatedly (once in CKG and three times in KSP) addresses his conversation partner as "lama" (Tib. *bla ma pa*) which certainly applies to him but not to a random person from the audience.

²¹ Tib. *tshal gung thang (dgon)*. "Monastery of the Tshal pa bka' brgyud tradition and the seat of the Tshal pa myriarchy," which was founded in 1187 and destroyed by fire in 1546. It is located close to Lhasa (BDRC: G30).

²² Tib. *lkog 'phreng*. This is the name of a great mountain hermitage (*ri khrod chen po*) which had already been visited by the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje, who composed a commentary there (Roerich 1995, 492; Van der Kuijp 2004, 47, footnote 141; Ducher 2017, 120, footnote 357; Brunnhölzl 2007, 158). It is also the place where this very scene takes place, as seen from the equivalent passage in KSP.

²³ Tib. *yar gtsang*, short for *yar lung gtsang po*, the largest river in Tibet, which turns into the Brahmaputra when descending to India.

²⁴ Tib. *rtam nyog*. I could not find any reference to this as a place name or a name of a castle or another building.

²⁵ In Western counting, this would be eight years.

²⁶ Tib. *tshal pa*. It might refer to the Tshal pa bka' brgyud branch, with their seat in 'Tshal gung thang, located in central Tibet (Davidson 2005, 328–29).

and central Tibet (Tib. *dbus*) and received offerings [from those who] arrived.

Many [people] from mTshur phu [monastery],²⁷ Karma [monastery],²⁸ Nags phu [monastery],²⁹ Ba yo [monastery],³⁰ lKog 'phreng³¹ and other places invited [him, but they could] not come to an agreement. Therefore, the dharma master said: "This time, I am going to lKog 'phreng." Thus, [he] came to lKog 'phreng, [where he] received offerings [and] was treated with utmost respect. Since [he] recognized the belongings of [his] predecessor such as conch shells, texts, and statues, [they] offered [them] all [to him].

While [the Karma pa] was staying at sTag khrom, in the mountain hermitage of lKog 'phreng, one night, in the rows of the feast offering, [he] said: "Light a big fire!"³² [The fire] was lit and [he] said: "It is hot! Bring [me] a fan!" Since a fan was offered [to him], [he] fanned [himself] and said: "[It] is like the heat of the summer [in] China." rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba asked: "How is that?"³³ [The Karma pa] replied: "When it is very hot in China, even if [one] uses a fan, [it] will only gather the heat, and [one] will never have a feeling of coolness. In the same way, here, it makes it hotter and hotter."

Then, rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba asked: "Previously, [you] prophesied that [you] would live to be eighty-four years old [in your third incarnation]. Why did [you] not live beyond the age of fifty-

²⁷ Tib. *mtshur phu (dgon)*. This is a Karma bka' brgyud monastery and one of the main seats of the lineage, located north-east of Lhasa, founded by the First Karma pa, Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193), in 1189 (BDRC, G33).

²⁸ Tib. *karma (dgon)*. This is a Karma bka' brgyud monastery and one of the main seats of the lineage located in Chab mdo, eastern Tibet, founded by the First Karma pa, Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193), in 1184 (BDRC, G35).

²⁹ Tib. *nags phu (dgon)*. This is a Karma bka' brgyud monastery in Kong po, south-east of Lhasa, founded by the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339; Roerich 1995, 529).

³⁰ Tib. *ba yo (dgon)*. A monastery in the Kong po region (Roerich 1995, 542–43).

³¹ Tib. *lkog 'phreng*. Name of a place in the Kong po region where a great mountain hermitage (*ri khrod chen po*) is located, which had already been visited by the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje, who composed a commentary there (Roerich 1995, 492; Van der Kuip 2004, 47, footnote 141; Ducher 2017, 120, footnote 357; Brunnhölzl 2007, 158).

³² I could not find a reference to lKog 'phreng (Tib. *stag khrom*) as a place name. It is probably not the name of the mountain hermitage, as literally it means "tiger market" and a hermitage would not be called "market." It could be the name of a village nearby or of the district, while the mountain hermitage itself is called lKog 'phreng.

³³ rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba is mentioned in the *Blue Annals* as one of the four main disciples of the First Zhwa dmar pa, rTogs ldan Graps pa senge (1283–1349; Roerich 1995, 532). Further details on his life are not provided there. Possibly, he can be identified with Brag nag pa mGon rgyal ba (b. 14th century; BDRC, P5090).

six?"³⁴ [The Karma pa] replied: "O lama, [I] was indeed disenchanted, because there were few who practiced virtue and many who engaged in negative actions."

Further, [he] was asked: "Previously, at the time when [you] had passed to bliss, many saw [your] face on the moon.³⁵ Did [you] previously show [your] face [on the moon]?" [The Karma pa] replied: "Based on my immeasurable compassion and their faith, many had this vision. It seems, at that time, the Mongols were acting like this." [While saying this, he] knelt down holding [his] hat in [his] left hand. With [his] right index finger, [he] pointed to the moon, drawing the shape of [his] body. Then he sat down on his seat and said, "I am the one who was on the moon, the one who was sitting on the lion, and the one who was sitting on the elephant."

[rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba]³⁶ related: "When you passed to bliss at dawn on the fourteenth day, rTogs ldan Grags seng ba³⁷ had a vision in which he saw you [in your previous form] holding a [piece of] agarwood³⁸ [colored like] white cotton and dwelling in the sky amidst rainbow light, and he asked [you] during [this vision]: 'Looking with compassion upon us disciples, how were you [able to] pass to bliss and not stay [with us]?' You replied: "I had good intentions, but in this degenerate age, the merit of sentient beings is not accomplished. [I] am disenchanted because there are many who engage in negative actions. I am going to Tuṣita.' These words arose [to rTogs ldan Grags seng ba] in his pure vision."

[rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba now] asked [the Fourth Karma pa]: "Did you say these words [to him]?" [The Karma pa] replied: "This is indeed

³⁴ In Western counting, his age would be fifty-five. The Third Karma pa lived from 1284 to 1339.

³⁵ Tib. *bde bar gshogs pa*, lit. "gone to bliss" is usually an epithet of the Buddha. Here, it is a euphemism for the Karma pa's passing away. Alternatively, *bde ba* might be short for *bde ba can* (Skt. *sukhāvātī*), the pure land of Buddha Amitābha, and thus also a euphemism for his passing away.

³⁶ In the following text, the Tibetan does not mention the agent who asks the questions explicitly. Hence, it could also just be some random people from the assembly. That is also what Roerich assumed in this translation of the corresponding passage from "The Blue Annals" ("they asked"; Roerich 1959, 495–97). Unlike Roerich, since no new agent is mentioned, I assume that the conversation just continues between rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba and the Karma pa through to the end. This is also supported by the fact that the Karma pa repeatedly (once in CKG and three times in KSP) addresses his conversation partner as "lama" (Tib. *bla ma pa*) which certainly applies to him but not to a random person from the audience.

³⁷ He can be identified with the First Zhwa dmar pa, rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge (1283–1349; BDRC, P70), who was a disciple of the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339).

³⁸ Tib. *a ga ra* is not lexicalized. However, *a ga ru* and *a ka ru* can be found in dictionaries as "agarwood," a very precious substance.

true, but I had left feeling sad. Furthermore, [I] had pretended to have gone to Tuṣita through illusory emanations such as a thoroughbred horse and an eagle, the king of birds, and through emanations of the body of the pure deities, even though Tuṣita is not far away.”

In that [situation], [rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba] offered [him] a select portion [of beer] and asked: “Please, drink [it]. Is there [such a] select portion [of beer] in Tuṣita?” [The Karma pa] replied: “No, there is no such intoxicating beer. There is [only] the so-called divine *amṛta*.”

Then, in order to dispel the doubts [of] others, [rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba] asked a few questions in a joking way: “The divine *amṛta* of black color is said to be good. Is that true?” [The Karma pa] replied: “I have not seen that black *amṛta*. [But I] tasted the various supreme flavors of the white [*amṛta*, which] is like milk.”

[He] related: “Furthermore, it is said that the goods which are [usually] offered in our human realm, such as the silk parasols that are [used as] offerings in Tshal gung thang, do not exist in Tuṣita.”³⁹ [The Karma pa] said: “O lama, all desirables of the human realm appear small [compared to Tuṣita]. Each flower in Tuṣita is as large as lKog 'phreng, and there are [more] inconceivable desirables such as these.”⁴⁰

[rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba] related: “It is said that [in Tuṣita], there are no rivers like the Yar chab gtsang po,⁴¹ [and] there are no castles like the ones of Kong po gsang⁴² and rTa mchog.⁴³ The reason for this is that it seems there are no good stones like the long stones of our human realm.” [The Karma pa] replied: “O lama, all the water in Tuṣita is *amṛta*. It is not like the Yar chab gtsang po in the human realm. There are no such soils and stones in Tuṣita. All the soils and stones are made of jewels. The celestial palace of the Bhagavān

³⁹ Tib. *tshal gung thang* (*dgon*). “Monastery of the Tshal pa bka' brgyud tradition and the seat of the Tshal pa myriarchy” which was founded in 1187 and destroyed by fire in 1546. It is located close to Lhasa (BDRC: G30).

⁴⁰ Tib. *lkog 'phreng*. This is the name of the place where this dialogue takes place (see beginning of the paragraph).

⁴¹ Tib. *yar chab gtsang po* (also known as *yar lung gtsang po*). The largest river on the Tibetan plateau, which eventually descends through India and Bengal to the Indian Ocean, where it is known as Brahmaputra (Phuntshog 1998, 49).

⁴² Tib. *kong po gsang*. Literally, it means „secret Kong po,” where Kong po is a region in southeastern Tibet (BDRC, G640). However, I could not find any reference to this as a name of a castle or another building.

⁴³ Tib. *rta mchog*. Literally, it means “supreme horse;” it can also refer to the horse of a *cakravartin* or to Hayagrīva (Tib. *rta mgrin*), the “horse-headed” (Duff 2009, *rta mchog*). However, I could not find any reference to this as a name of a castle or any place. CKG mentions *rtam nyog* as a place instead, which I could not identify either, but the two are very similar and one of them might be a misspelling.

Maitreya⁴⁴, the palace of the Bodhisattva Ratnāmati,⁴⁵ the mansion of Complete Victory in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three,⁴⁶ and so forth, the celestial palaces of the god realms are made of various jewels. The castles of the human realms appear small [compared to them].”

[He] asked further: “In Tuṣita, are there any good horses like the horses with brass-colored [manes], which [are] supreme horses?” [The Karma pa] replied: “If [you] have no time for the Dharma, [you] are an old monk who has gone astray. Act according to that! [Practice the Dharma!]”

3. Analysis

3.1. Context

To provide the context for the passage to be analyzed in this paper, I will very briefly summarize what happens before based on the KSP (the CKG has the same story line but is shorter and certain scenes are omitted). The life story starts with a short description of the intermediate state (*bar do*) of the Karma pa between his third and fourth incarnation.⁴⁷ Then the circumstances of his birth are mentioned such as parents, place, and date. The first few years of his life are covered on about three folios. The text relates various miracles, visions, and prophecies taking place with his parents and some other people. It also reports several scenes from the Karma pa's travel activities where he meets previous disciples, cures ill people through his blessing, receives offerings, and has some small teaching dialogues. Many of his activities try to evoke trust in his previous disciples. At the age of eight, he finally finds himself in the questions and answers situation to be analyzed below.

⁴⁴ Tib. *bcom ldan 'das byams pa mgon po*. The first part, *bcom ldan 'das*, corresponds to the Sanskrit Bhagavān, which literally means “endowed with fortune,” and is one of the standard epithets of a buddha (Buswell and Lopez 2014, 108, *bhagavat*). The second part means Maitreya in Sanskrit or Protector Maitreya in English and is an epithet of the future Buddha Maitreya who is said to dwell in Tuṣita until he takes birth as the fifth Buddha of our eon (ibid., 550–51, *Maitreya, Maitreya*).

⁴⁵ Tib. *blo gros rin chen*. Ratnāmati is the name of a bodhisattva who appears in various Mahāyāna sūtras (ibid., 703, Ratnāmati).

⁴⁶ Tib. *sum cu rtsa gsum*. Skt. *trāyastriṃśa*. The Heaven of the Thirty-Three is the second-lowest of the six heavens of the desire realm (Skt. Kāmadhātu). It is the realm of Śakra, the king of the gods (ibid., 921–22, *trāyastriṃśa*).

⁴⁷ An analysis of this passage is provided in Dell 2024 based on the KSP and CKG.

3.2. *Outline of the Translated Section*

In order to embark on an analysis of the questions and answers session with the Fourth Karma pa about his intermediate state in Tuṣita, first, an outline of the scene, which includes both versions, is provided:

- Invitation to many places and decision to go to lKog 'phreng (KSP only);
- rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba meets with the Fourth Karma pa in an assembly in lKog 'phreng; reference to the heat in China;
- Question why the Third Karma pa did not live as long as prophesied;
- Question whether the Karma pa had shown his shape on the moon disc after his passing;
- Question about Togs ldan Grags seng ba's vision (KSP only);
- Question whether there is beer in Tuṣita;
- Question about the goods for offering in Tuṣita;
- Question about rivers and castles in Tuṣita;
- Question about the horses in Tuṣita.

3.3. *Invitation to lKog 'phreng*

This first passage is only described in the KSP and is lacking in the CKG. The Fourth Karma pa is described as nine years old, or in Western counting, eight years old.⁴⁸ Having received invitations to go to many different Karma bka' brgyud places, he decides to accept the invitation to go to lKog 'phreng, a great mountain hermitage in Kong po, where his predecessor, Rang byung rdo rje, had spent some time. Hence, the eight-year-old boy is already so highly respected that he decides on his own where he travels next. It is also mentioned that he recognized some belongings of his predecessor, and that they were offered to him. This generates faith in his disciples that he is really the reincarnation of the Third Karma pa. Also, in other places before, it is reported that he identified certain objects. Likewise, what follows

⁴⁸ The CKG does not mention the age in the paragraph dealt with in this paper. However, just after this paragraph, it is mentioned that the Karma pa was seven years old, which is inconsistent with the KSP. However, in this case, one should rather trust the KSP, as it is known, in general, for its chronological organization (Rheingans 2017, 69), while the CKG sometimes deviates from the chronological order in favor of a thematic organization (*ibid.*, 67).

during the dialogue and before can all be seen in the light of dispelling doubts and generating trust that he is really the Karma pa.

3.4. *Meeting in lKog 'phreng, Reference to China*

While staying at the mountain hermitage of lKog 'phreng, one night there was an assembly with a feast offering. In this situation, the Karma pa is asking a fire to be lit and a fan to be brought. He is fanning himself and equating the experience of heat to the summer in China. This is clearly a reference to his previous incarnation as the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje, in which he spent many years at the Mongol court in China, and in particular, he was there during his passing.⁴⁹ Thus, again, just like in the previous scene, he implies access to the memories of his predecessor and exhibits the continuation of the Third Karma pa in him with the potential aim of building trust toward him in the audience.

In this scene, also rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba is introduced as the character who asks the questions in the following dialogue. He is mentioned in the *Blue Annals* as one of the four main disciples of the First Zhwa dmar pa, rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge (1283–1349).⁵⁰ Further details on his life are not provided there. Since in the given situation he is speaking continuously in front of the audience, he is likely to have some official function representing the place of lKog 'phreng. His first question is about what exactly the Karma pa means by his comparison. The Karma pa explains that when it is very hot in China, even if one uses a fan, one will only feel hotter but not cooler. The statement does make sense literally, but it could also be an allusion to the situation he faced at the Mongol court. There, he felt like he was in a gilded cage, and desperately wanted to return to Tibet, but the emperor did not let him.⁵¹ At the risk of overinterpretation, with respect to the image, the “heat” could be equated with the situation being unbearable for him and the “fanning” could symbolize his repeated requests to leave the court that might have made his situation even worse for him.

3.5. *Unfulfilled Prophecy about Age of Passing*

In the next question, rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba confronts the eight-year-old Karma pa with the fact that in his third incarnation, he only lived until age fifty-six instead of eighty-four as had been prophesied.

⁴⁹ Gamble 2018, 251–55; Gamble 2020, 104–14. Generally, for the Third Karma pa, see also Seegers 2009 and forthcoming 2024.

⁵⁰ Roerich 1995, 532.

⁵¹ Gamble 2018, 251.

I was not able to find any record of this prophecy in Gamble's books about the Third Karma pa or elsewhere.⁵² Nevertheless, eighty-four is well known as an auspicious number. Most prominently, it appears as the number of *mahāsiddhas* according to the Indian author Abhayadattaśrī,⁵³ and it is certainly derived from the 84,000 teachings the Buddha is said to have given, representing antidotes to the 84,000 afflictions.⁵⁴ The Karma pa's reply to the reproach is that he was disenchanted, because of the few virtuous people and the many who engaged in negative actions. At first, it sounds like general lamentation about our degenerate age, but again, here, it must be seen against the backdrop of his passing. It thus relates to much more specific circumstances. As pointed out in the previous paragraph, he was discontent with his situation at the Mongol court and wanted to leave for Tibet, which the emperor denied. According to Gamble, his biographers report that already some years before his death, he made a prophecy to his students that he would soon die and even gave hints concerning his future place of birth.⁵⁵ It is even said that this was a chance for the emperor to understand how important it was for Rang byung rdo rje to leave, but even after repeated requests following the prophecy, he did not let him go. Consequently, he soon fell ill and left his body at the age of fifty-six, as an opportunity to leave the unwholesome circumstances and be more beneficial elsewhere in his next life.⁵⁶ Thus, his excuse for not having lived longer due to too many non-virtuous actions around him specifically referred to the circumstances at the Mongol court.

3.6. *The Karma pa's Shape on the Moon Disc*

The next question follows along these lines and again alludes to events after his passing at the Mongol court. rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba asks the Karma pa about a vision that many people reportedly had: seeing the Karma pa's body on the moon disc after his passing. He wanted to know if that was caused by the Karma pa. This vision is also described in Gamble's book: Fifteen days after his death, the palace guards waiting outside the gates of Xanadu saw the complete body and a *stūpa* on the moon disc. As the image persisted, they woke up the minister to have an authoritative witness of their vision.⁵⁷ Gamble also points out that the image of the moon was evoked repeatedly throughout his

⁵² Gamble 2018 and 2020.

⁵³ Buswell and Lopez 2014, 508.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 668.

⁵⁵ Gamble 2018, 254.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

life story.⁵⁸ For instance, at the description of his birth, Rang byung rdo je reports that right after his birth he saw the moon, which made him happy.⁵⁹

The Karma pa confirms that many people had this vision due to his compassion and their faith. He also assumed the posture taken by the Mongols when they saw this vision (kneeling down, pointing to the moon and drawing the shape of his body with the index finger). The mention of the Mongols here is only comprehensible when one knows the circumstances of his death and the ensuing vision from other sources, as portrayed above. When only looking at the KSP (and even more so at the CKG, where the description is even shorter), it seems a bit out of context, but given the background, it is not.

As for the moon disc, according to Beer, especially when used in depictions with a meditational deity sitting on it, it represents relative or conventional *bodhicitta*, which “refers to the altruistic resolve to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.”⁶⁰ The Third Karma pa leaves his body and the Mongol court with the resolve to be more beneficial for beings, and then at the end of his life story is seen on the moon disc which represents exactly this. And there is even an interesting continuity with the beginning of the Fourth Karma pa’s life story, since there he is portrayed as sitting on a moon disc looking at the world from a pure or celestial realm.⁶¹ Hence, it is just the same situation from another perspective. Furthermore, together with the Karma pa’s shape, the Mongols witness the shape of a *stūpa*. It is not mentioned in the passage translated in this paper, but in Gamble’s book cited above.⁶² The *stūpa* symbolizes the Buddha’s enlightened mind. This fits with the Karma pa’s destination when he is seen on the moon. He is on his way to Tuṣita, the heavenly realm where the Buddhas-to-be dwell before their final rebirth. The Karma pa is designated the sixth buddha of our eon.⁶³ Hence, he can be seen as having the enlightened mind of a buddha.

The Karma pa adds that he was not only the one on the moon, but he was also the one riding the lion and the elephant. Gamble mentions that there were other reported visions after the Third Karma pa’s death where yogis saw him flying through the sky, travelling to Tuṣita, and the like.⁶⁴ She does not go into any details, but possibly in some of

⁵⁸ Ibid. and Gamble 2020, 47.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 45, 47.

⁶⁰ Beer 1999, 38.

⁶¹ Dell 2024, 86, 87.

⁶² Gamble 2018, 255.

⁶³ Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé 2010, 349: “The future sixth buddha, Lion’s Roar, in the guise of a bodhisattva, appears as the Karmapas.”

⁶⁴ Gamble 2018, 256.

those visions the Karma pa was seen riding on a lion or an elephant. The lion is regarded the king of all animals and is a symbol of Buddha Śākyamuni, who is also known as Śākyasiṃha, “the lion of the Śākya clan.”⁶⁵ In Tibet, the Indian lion turned into the mythological snow-lion, who carries a similar symbolism.⁶⁶ Beer holds that “iconographically [the snow-lion’s] most important function is to serve as the vehicles or throne supports for enlightened beings.”⁶⁷ As for the symbolism of the elephant, Beer states: “The elephant is one of the seven possessions of the *chakravartin*. It is both the most gentle and powerful of creatures, representing the endurance, self-control, patience, gentleness, and power of the Buddha.”⁶⁸ According to him, it is a mount of many Vajrayana Buddhist deities, and especially associated with the blue Buddha Akṣobhya, “the immovable one,” whose qualities are symbolized by those of the elephant.⁶⁹ Hence, both animals—lion and elephant—are related to different qualities of a Buddha and thus are appropriate mounts for the Karma pa on his way to Tuṣita, the residence of buddhas-to-be.

3.7. Togs ldan Grags seng ba’s Vision

rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba relates a vision of his main teacher,⁷⁰ Togs ldan Grags seng ba, who can be identified with the First Zhwa dmar pa, rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge (1283–1349), a disciple of the Third Karma pa.⁷¹ In this vision, which happened right after the passing of the Third Karma pa, the First Zhwa dmar pa saw him in the sky surrounded by rainbow light and holding a piece of agarwood, and then he asked him how he was able to abandon his disciples.

The rainbow the Karma pa is surrounded by is an auspicious sign *par excellence*, even when related to the passing of a great master, which is often the case.⁷² It is used in the life story of the Buddha to mark auspicious events. The agarwood that the Karma pa holds in his hand, also known as eaglewood or aloewood, is one of the most precious woods in the world, known to many cultures and often used for

⁶⁵ Beer 1999, 78.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 80.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 82.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Roerich 1995, 532.

⁷¹ For a summary of rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge’s life, see Gardner 2009. The title of Zhwa dmar pa was only awarded to him posthumously, probably at the time of the Fifth Karma pa.

⁷² Beer 1999, 31.

incense and the like due to its unique complex odor.⁷³ The agarwood is described in the KSP as having the color of white cotton. Indeed, Tibetan medicine recognizes three types of agarwood: black (*ar nag*), white (*ar skya*) and red (*ar mar*).⁷⁴ Hence, the text might refer to the white agarwood. Generally, agarwood is used to cure “fever and particularly heart fever” and other diseases caused by heat.⁷⁵ As for the symbolism, agarwood is a very precious substance and therefore an adequate accessory of the Karma pa. Apart from that—and at the risk of overinterpretation—it could also refer to the Karma pa’s cremation⁷⁶ and in some sense be a cure for the heat of this event. However, given that the text previously describes the simile of the summer heat in China where fanning makes it worse, and assuming that this possibly stands for the unbearable situation at the Mongol court where the Karma pa could not move out of the gilded cage, the agarwood in his hand might also represent a cure for this kind of heat, which is now cured with his passing.⁷⁷

Upon rTogs ldan Graps pa sengge’s question about how he was able to abandon his disciples, the Third Karma pa replied in the vision that he had good intentions, but that he was not able to benefit beings due to this degenerate age and since many engage in negative actions, and that therefore he was going to Tuṣita. This is very much in accord with what the Fourth Karma pa said earlier in this dialogue when asked about his untimely death.

Confronted with this vision by rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba, the Fourth Karma pa confirms that he had indeed said these words, but

⁷³ For the cultural history of agarwood in Asia, see Jung 2016; its use in Tibet is also mentioned by Beer 1999, 50.

⁷⁴ Dunkenberger 2019, 73.

⁷⁵ Rechung Rinpoche Jampal Kunzang 1976, 70, 174, 239.

⁷⁶ Gamble 2018, 255.

⁷⁷ There is evidence that the word from the original source in that place did not make much sense to the later Tibetans either. At least, the KSP and the Blue Annals have different readings here. The KSP reads *ras dkar po'i a ga ra zhig bsnam nas*, which I rendered as “holding a [piece of] agarwood [colored like] white cotton” (SX1, vol. 11, 165r, l. 4). In contrast, the “Blue Annals,” where we find a parallel description of this passage, read *ras dkar po'i ang rag bsnam nas* (‘Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal 1974, vol. *nya*, fol. 41r, l. 7 (p. 431)), which Roerich translated as “wearing a white loin-cloth” (Roerich 1995, 496). The presumably original life story of the Fourth Karma pa written by the Second Zhwa dmar pa has yet another reading: *ras dkar po'i am ga rag gcig mnabs nas* (mKha’ spyod dbang po 2013, fol. 10r, l. 3), which is difficult to make sense of. I only have access to this text in the form of the modern type-set edition by dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib ‘jug khang, which can in itself contain typos and miscorrections compared to the text they copied it from. In the end, it is possible that no agarwood is involved at all, but that he is just wearing some kind of white cotton clothing. Nevertheless, since in this paper I am concerned with the KSP as a source text, I go with its reading and my interpretation of it.

stresses that he had left with a sad feeling. He adds that on his way to Tuṣita, he had shown himself in illusory forms such as a thoroughbred horse, an eagle, and the body of deities, even though Tuṣita was not far away. Hence, the Fourth Karma pa is pointing to further auspicious forms in which he has shown himself to his disciples on his way to Tuṣita, even though Tuṣita is not a place that can be reached by travelling a worldly distance, but rather through a state of mind attained in meditation. The forms he mentions he has shown himself in on his way to Tuṣita add to the forms he mentioned earlier as having shown himself riding on (lion, elephant) and represent certain qualities. The horse mainly stands for “inexhaustible speed” but is also related to the element of wind.⁷⁸ The eagle, who has the apposition of “the king of birds” in the text at hand, is an auspicious sign often related to cremations of realized masters, similarly to rainbows.⁷⁹ The forms of the deities represent the destination the Karma pa is heading for after his passing, i.e., the pure realms or the celestial realm of Tuṣita.

The entire passage about the vision is only contained in the KSP. In the CKG, it is distorted to the single sentence: “Tuṣita is not far away.” This sentence is then moved to the section about the moon and appears a bit out of context.

3.8. Beer in Tuṣita

This passage appears both in the KSP and the CKG, though it is a bit shorter in the latter. rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba offers beer to the Karma pa and asks if there is also something like that in Tuṣita. The Karma pa replies that there is no such intoxicant, but that there is the divine *amṛta*. Being asked about black *amṛta*, he has not seen it, but praises the white *amṛta*, which is like milk and has various supreme flavors.

The notion of *amṛta* (Sanskrit for “immortal”), the nectar of immortality, originates from the ancient Indian Vedic legend of the churning of the ocean, which later became absorbed into Buddhism.⁸⁰ To cut the story short: Both *devas* and *asuras* desired the *amṛta* which was hidden in the ocean. They cooperated to churn the ocean, through which its water first turned into milk and then into *amṛta*. Both sides quarreled to obtain the *amṛta* exclusively and in the end the *devas* won and kept the *amṛta*.⁸¹ Tuṣita is one of the heavens of the Kāmadhātu, the Desire Realm, where *devas* dwell. Since the *devas* are in possession

⁷⁸ Beer 1999, 161, 110.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 109.

⁸¹ For a more extended version of the story, see *ibid.*, 109–10.

of the *amṛta*, it is found there. The description in the KSP and CKG says that the question about the black *amṛta* was asked jokingly in order to dispel the doubts of others. Certainly, it was common knowledge among the audience that *amṛta* is white and not black. In that sense, rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba might have used the question to test the Karma pa. And indeed, his reply indicates that he has witnessed the white *amṛta* in Tuṣita and that he speaks out of experience. Consequently, the reply serves to generate trust in his devotees, though it is in no way a proof of him having been to Tuṣita. If the facts about the *amṛta* were common knowledge to the audience, they might also have been known to the eight-year-old Karma pa.

3.9. *Offering Goods in Tuṣita*

The following questions are asked in the same joking, not quite serious mood. rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba wants to know if there is anything in Tuṣita like the silk parasols used for offerings in Tshal gung thang. The Karma pa replies that all desirables of the human realm appear small compared to Tuṣita and that, for instance, flowers in Tuṣita are as large as lKog 'phreng, i.e., the place where this dialogue takes place. There is no significant difference in content and length of this passage in the KSP and the CKG. The parasol "is a traditional Indian symbol of both protection and royalty. [The] coolness of its shade symbolizes protection from the heat of suffering, desire, obstacles, illnesses, and harmful forces."⁸² However, here, the symbolism seems not overly important. rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba just asks a somewhat stupid question to play with the Karma pa, who replies simply pointing to the overabundance found in Tuṣita.

3.10. *Rivers and Castles in Tuṣita*

The series of joking questions continues. rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba asks if there is anything like the Tibetan part of the river Brahmaputra and some presumably magnificent Tibetan castles in Tuṣita. The Karma pa replies that all water in Tuṣita is *amṛta* and that there are only jewels, of which the palaces are made instead of soils and stones. In the KSP, he additionally mentions some examples of celestial palaces such as those of Maitreya and Ratnāmāti.

Again, it seems the specific symbolism of the objects asked about is not very important. The Karma pa just replies again pointing to the

⁸² Ibid., 176.

overabundance and splendor found in Tuṣita compared to the human realm.

3.11. *Horses in Tuṣita*

This is the fourth “stupid” question to the eight-year-old Karma pa. rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba asks about good horses in Tuṣita. The Karma pa does not reply to the question, but instead he stops this game of irrelevant questions, telling him that he should not spend his precious time on meaningless considerations, but rather practice the Dharma. This situation reminds one of the parable of the poisoned arrow. Māluṅkyaputta asked the Buddha all kinds of metaphysical questions, whereupon the Buddha told him this parable. If a man was hit by a poisoned arrow and he refused to take out the arrow before he found out all sorts of details about the person who shot it and about the making of the arrow, etc., then he would die and still not have answers to his questions. It is more important to remove the poisoned arrow first. In the same way, Māluṅkyaputta’s metaphysical questions do not make him progress on the way to liberation and enlightenment. The answers would be irrelevant for his progress.⁸³ In a similar way, the Karma pa—after kindly playing along for some time—stops the useless questions about Tuṣita. In this sense, his inclination to turn the focus of his disciples toward the Dharma might be a better proof of him being a high bodhisattva or a buddha, than his knowledge of details of Tuṣita. At least, acting in this way, he is completely in line with the Buddha’s example.

The way the Karma pa stops the dialogue might seem a bit rough. Rheingans, who comes across a somewhat comparable example of “surprisingly strong” language in a dialogue between the Eighth Karma pa and his attendant, holds that “the use of straightforward language in communicating with a student can, the more so in traditions of guru-devotion, express the strong bond between guru and disciple.”⁸⁴ Accordingly, the directness can be seen as an expression of humor, and the fact that the student is able to endure it shows his devotion and close relationship to the Karma pa.

⁸³ For the full story, see *sutta* 63 in the Majjhima Nikāya section of the Pāli canon, e.g., in translation by Thānissaro Bhikkhu n.d.

⁸⁴ Rheingans 2014, 84. He also points to other situations known from the early bKa’ brgyud masters such as Mar pa and Mi la ras pa, where there are even more rough stories.

4. Conclusion

The core of the article is the annotated translation from the *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (CKG) and the *Kam tshang bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* (KSP), together with the analysis of the dialogue between rTogs ldan mGon rgyal ba and the Fourth Karma pa about the passing of the Third Karma pa and his subsequent sojourn in Tuṣita. The analysis tried to decipher and explain the dialogue by putting it into context. To this end, the background of Vajrayāna and its symbolism was considered, as well as the historical context, particularly with respect to the Third Karma pa's stay at the Mongol court toward the end of his life, to which the dialogue had many allusions.

The first part of the dialogue was mainly concerned with clarifying doubts related to the Third Karma pa's untimely death, upon which his students had felt somewhat abandoned. This involved collective visions (his shape on the moon), as well as an indirectly reported personal vision by the First Zhwa dmar pa, which, interestingly, consisted of a short dialogue embedded in the main dialogue. The Fourth Karma pa tried to explain himself and thus re-establish the students' trust.

In the second part, the dialogue turns to a number of joking questions being asked about Tuṣita, supposedly (as the text states) to dispel doubts in the audience. The Karma pa plays along for some time and provides intelligent answers to these questions, which imply that he has witnessed these different aspects of Tuṣita himself. In this way, this could indeed be considered a proper means to dispel doubts and generate trust. It might have played a role here that the Karma pa was only eight years old. Asking the same questions to a grown-up Karma pa might have been more embarrassing, while here it seemed admissible. Nevertheless, at some point he abruptly stops the interrogation and asks the inquirer to rather use his time to practice the Dharma than to bother about such possibly irrelevant questions. This both aligns him with the Buddha (thinking of the parable of the poisoned arrow) and expresses the strong bond between student and teacher (by knowing the student is able to endure the somewhat harsh reaction).

Looking at the greater context of the story, the visit to lKog 'phreng, where this dialogue takes place, lines up with previous passages where the Karma pa also visited different places, met students of his previous incarnation, and re-established their trust through various situations such as curing diseases through blessing and the like. This again fits into the even greater picture of the function of *rnam thar*, which is to portray the qualities of a realized master, showing his

“complete liberation” and thus generate or foster devotion in the readers or disciples.

Research about accounts of the intermediate state (*bar do'i rnam thar*) of realized masters is still in its infancy.⁸⁵ Those accounts are usually recounted by a first-person or omniscient third-person narrator. The paper at hand adds another format—that of a dialogue. The shift of perspective and the interactive element is refreshing, and literally and figuratively brings such accounts more down to earth. Whether it is really a record of an oral dialogue that happened this way, or if it rather contains fictional elements employed to serve a didactic purpose, is certainly up for discussion. Likewise, the question of what role this dialogue plays in the further unfolding of the Fourth Karma pa's *rnam thar* might be answered by future research. I only came across one other mention of a dialogue about Tuṣita.⁸⁶ It might be worthwhile to undertake a survey of such texts and compare them. To this end, the application of a narrative analysis might be useful.⁸⁷

As for the sources used for this paper, the fact that the description in the later KSP is more extensive than in the earlier CKG suggests that the KSP has not (or not only) drawn from the CKG, but that there must be an earlier source known to both authors. There is a *rnam thar* of the Fourth Karma pa consisting of sixty-one folios authored by his contemporary and student, the Second Zhwa dmar pa, mKha' spyod dbang po (1350–1405).⁸⁸ There are grounds to conjecture that both later sources drew from this text, but to confirm this remains a task for future research and goes beyond the scope of this paper.

5. Appendix: Edition

5.1. Edition of the Passage from the CKG

An extensive overview of the extant textual witnesses of the CKG was provided by me in an earlier publication, and I will use the same sigla in the paper at hand.⁸⁹ All witnesses are derived from just one set of printing blocks—the IHo brag printing blocks. There are several textual witnesses of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, of which the most interesting and original one is a reproduction of prints from the IHo

⁸⁵ First contributions are found in Gamble 2020, 121–27; Dell 2024; Dell 2020, 48–51; Verhufen 1992, 75–77.

⁸⁶ Rheingans 2014, 86.

⁸⁷ For an example of a study that applies narratology to a similar text, see Rheingans 2014.

⁸⁸ For the person, see BDRC, P1413; for the Tibetan text, see mKha' spyod dbang po 2013.

⁸⁹ Dell 2021, 126–41.

brag blocks from Rumtek Monastery in two volumes from 1980 (PX1). This reproduction is also available via BDRC, and I took this as the starting point for the edition provided here. There are several other prints or reproductions of prints from those printing blocks available. However, as they are all produced from the same printing blocks, I do not expect any added value from considering them, and therefore, I neglected them for the edition. All other textual witnesses are derived from these printing blocks' text more recently.

Apart from the mentioned block print reproduction, I used only one of the contemporary editions, i.e., rDor je rgyal po's modern edition in book format, which was published by Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, first in 1986 in two volumes (PB2). It is also available via BDRC. The added value of rDo rje rgyal po's edition is that in many places it corrects spelling mistakes or non-standard spellings from the original block print. If there are differences, they are indicated in the apparatus. Generally, there are no significant differences in the section I studied.

[PX1, vol. 2, p. 100, l. 7; PB2, p. 952, l. 8] *rtogs ldan mgon rgyal bas mjal*
 [PX1, vol. 2, p. 101] *te*⁹⁰ *tshogs gral du me bus pas tshad pa tsha nas gsil yab*
kyis g.yabs pas rgya yul gyi dbyar sos kyis tshad pa dang 'dra bar gsil yab
*g.yabs kyang tsha 'ub 'ub byed gsungs*⁹¹/

khong gis dgung lo brgyad bcu rtsa bzhir bzhugs par zhal bzhes yod pa la
lnga bcu rtsa drug las mi bzhugs pa ci lags zhus pas/ sdig spyod grangs mang
*bas*⁹² *skyo ba skyes pa yin gsungs*⁹³/

rtogs ldan grags seng bas dga' ldan du gshegs par gzigs 'dug pa dang zla
ba'i steng na bzhugs par mang pos mthong 'dug pa de ltar lags sam zhus pas/
de yang yin/ de dus hor rnam 'di ltar byed kyis 'dug gsung pus btsugs zla ba
ston pa'i rnam 'gyur mdzad/

lar dga' ldan thag ring po na med/ zla ba'i steng na 'dug pa dang seng ge
*dang glang po'i steng na 'dug pa sogs de thams cad nga yin gsungs*⁹⁴/

yang co 'dri zhus tel/ dga' ldan na chang yod dam zhus pas/ myos byed 'di
*med/ lha'i bdud rtsi yod gsungs*⁹⁵/

bdud rtsi nag po bzang zer ba bden nam zhus pas/ bdud rtsi nag po ma
*mthong dkar po 'o ma 'dra ba la ro brgya dang ldan pa yin gsungs*⁹⁶/

*tshal gung thang gi dar gdugs lta bu mang*⁹⁷ *mchi zhus pas/ bla ma pa mi*
yul gyi 'dod yon kun g.yas chung/

⁹⁰ *te* PB2 | *ste* PX1

⁹¹ *gsungs* PB2 | *gsung* PX1

⁹² *bas* PB2 | *pas* PX1

⁹³ *gsungs* PB2 | *gsung* PX1

⁹⁴ *gsungs* PB2 | *gsung* PX1

⁹⁵ *gsungs* PB2 | *gsung* PX1

⁹⁶ *gsungs* PB2 | *gsung* PX1

⁹⁷ *mang* PB2 | *med* PX1

*dga' ldan gyi me tog re yang lkog⁹⁸ phreng du mi shong ba yod gsungs⁹⁹/
 yar gtsang lta bu'i chu chen po med mchi [PB2, p. 953] rtam nyog gi
 mkhar khang 'dra ba yang med dam¹⁰⁰ zhus pas/ dga' ldan na chu thams cad
 bdud rtsi yin/ mkhar khang thams cad rin po che 'ba' zhig las sa rdo phal pa
 med gsungs¹⁰¹/*
*rtam nyog gi rta rag pa 'dra ba mchis sam zhus pas /chos la dus tshod med
 na ban rgan 'chal ba yin/ de tsam la mdzod gsungs¹⁰²/*

5.2. Edition of the Passage from the KSP

An overview of the different textual witnesses of the KSP was provided by me in an earlier publication, and I will use the same sigla in the paper at hand.¹⁰³ There is only one set of printing blocks. Consequently, one of their reprints is used below (SX1), which forms volumes 11 and 12 of the collected works of Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas. In addition, one of the modern editions is used for the reader's convenience (SB3). In the paragraph at hand, there were no differences in spelling, and I emended only one place name to the standard spelling. In the edition below, the page numbers of both texts are indicated in brackets, if a new page starts.

[SX1, vol. 11, 164v, l. 3; SB3, p. 387, l. 21] *dgung lo dgu bzhes pa'i sa byi
 lo 'dir tshal pas ja 'dren phul ba sogs mdo dbus kyi mi chen kun gyi ja zhus
 dang 'bul nod 'byor/*

*mtshur phul/ karma/ nags phu/ ba yo lkog 'phreng ba sogs gdan 'dren pa
 mang [SB3, p. 388] po kha ma 'chams pas/ chos rje'i zhal nas da res lkog
 'phreng du 'gro gsungs nas lkog 'phreng du phebs 'bul nod bsnyen bkur dpag
 med byas/ chos dung phyag dpe lha rten sogs gong ma'i dus kyi rnam ngos
 'dzin mdzad pas thams cad phyag tu phul/*

*lkog 'phreng gi ri khrod stag khrom du bzhugs pa'i dus su/ nub cig tshogs
 mchod kyi gral du me chen po bus gsungs nas bus pa la/ tshad pa tsha bsil yab
 de khyer la shog gsungs nas/ bsil yab phul bas g.yab par mdzad cing / rgya
 yul dbyar sos kyi tshad pa dang 'dra bar 'dug gsung ba la/ rtogs ldan mgon
 rgyal bas de ji ltar lags zhus pas/ rgya yul gyi tshad pa tsha dus bsil yab kyi
 g.yab kyang tsha 'ub 'ub byed pa las bsil ba'i snang ba ye med/ de bzhin du
 'dir yang tsha 'ub 'ub byed gsungs/*

⁹⁸ *lkog* PX1] *lkob* PB2

⁹⁹ *gsungs* PB2] *gsung* PX1

¹⁰⁰ *dam* PB2] *tam* PX1

¹⁰¹ *gsungs* PB2] *gsung* PX1

¹⁰² *gsungs* PB2] *gsung* PX1

¹⁰³ Dell 2023, 21–29.

yang rtogs ldan mgon rgyal bas/ drung nas dgung lo brgyad cu rtsa bzhi
bzhugs pa'i lung bstan yod [SX1, vol. 11, 165r] pa la lnga bcu rtsa drug las
mi bzhugs pa ci lags zhus pas/ bla ma pa/ dge ba spyod pa nyung zhing sdig
pa spyod pa mang bas skyo ba skyes pa yin mod gsungs/

yang drung nas bde bar gshegs pa'i dus su zla ba'i steng nas zhal mthong
ba mang po byung 'dug pa drung nas zhal bstan pa lags sam zhus pas/ nged
kyi tshad med pa'i snying rje dang khong rang rnams kyi dad pa la brten nas
mthong ba mang po byung 'dug

/de'i tshe hor sog rnams 'di bzhin byed kyin gda' gsungs nas/ dbu zhwa
phyag g.yon du bzung/ pus mo btsugs/ g.yas pa'i mdzub mos zla ba ston cing
sku lus kyi rnam 'gyur yang mdzad do/

/de nas bzhugs gdan la bzhugs tel/ zla ba'i steng na 'dug pa yang nga yin/
seng ge'i steng na 'dug pa yang nga yin/ glang po che'i steng na 'dug pa yang
nga yin gsungs/

yang drung nas bde bar gshegs pa'i bcu bzhi'i tho rangs kha/ rtogs ldan
[SB3, p. 389] grags seng pa'i gzigs snang la/ drung nyid ras dkar po'i a ga ra
zhig bsnams nas 'ja' 'od kyi nang na nam mkha' la bzhugs par mthong ba la
khong gis zhus tel/ drung nas nged bu slob rnams la thugs rjes gzigs nas mi
bzhugs par/ bde bar gshegs pa ji ltar lags zhus pas/ drung gi zhal nas/ nga la
bsam pa bzang po yod kyang/ snyigs dus sems can gyi bsod nams la mi 'grub
par 'dug /sdig spyod grangs mang bas skyo ba skyes pa yin/

da dga' ldan du 'gro gsungs pa zhig khong gi dag snang la byung 'dug pa/
drung nas de skad gsungs pa lags sam zhus pas/ de ltar yin mod/ nged skyo
ba skyes nas song ba yin/ gzhan yang cang shes kyi rta dang / bya rgyal rgod
po la sogs sgyu ma'i sprul bsgyur dang / dag pa lha sku'i sprul bsgyur la sogs
pas/ dga' ldan du phyin pa'i tshul yang byas/ lar dga' ldan de thag ring po
zhig na yod pa ma yin gsungs/

der phud cig [SX1, vol. 11, 165v] drang ste/ mchod par zhu dga' ldan na
phud yod lags sam zhus pas myos byed kyi chang 'di med/ lha'i bdud rtsi bya
ba yod gsungs/

de nas gzhan dag the tshom bsal ba'i phyir/ co 'dri'i zhu phod cung zhig
zhus tel/ lha'i bdud rtsi kha dog nag po de bzang zer bar 'dug pa de ltar lags
sam zhus pas/ bdud rtsi nag po'am de ngas ma mthong / kha dog dkar po 'o
ma lta bu la ro mchog sna tshogs bro ba yin gsungs/

yang dga' ldan na rang re mi yul gyi mchod pa'i yo byad tshal gung
thang¹⁰⁴ gi mchod pa'i dar gdugs la sogs pa de lta bu med mchi zhes zhus pas/
bla ma pa mi yul gyi 'dod yon kun g.yas chung / dga' ldan gyi me tog re re la
yang lkog 'phreng tsam yod cing/ de la sogs pa'i 'dod yon bsam gyis mi khyab
pa yod pa yin gsungs/

yang rang re mi yul gyi yar chab gtsang po tsam gyi chu yang med/ kong
po [SB3, p. 390] gsang dang rta mchog gi mkhar khang 'dra ba yang med zer/

¹⁰⁴ tshal gung thang em.] mtshal gung thang SX1, SB3

de'i rgyu mtshan rang re mi yul gyi sgyed rdo ring mo can 'di 'dra ba'i rdo legs po yang med pa 'dra zhus pas/

bla ma pa/ dga' ldan gyi chu thams cad bdud rtsi yin/ mi yul gyi yar chab gtsang po 'dra ba ma yin/ dga' ldan na sa rdo 'di 'dra ba med/ sa rdo thams cad rin po che sna tshogs las grub pa yin/ bcom ldan 'das byams pa mgon po'i gzhal yas khang ngam/ byang chub sems dpa' blo gros rin chen gyi pho brang ngam/ sum cu rtsa gsum na rnam par rgyal ba'i khang bzang la sogs pa lha'i yul gyi gzhal med khang rnams rin po che sna tshogs las grub pa yin/ mi yul gyi mkhar khang 'dra ba g.yas chung gsungs/

yang dga' ldan na rta mchog gi rta rag pa 'dra ba'i rta bzang po yod dam zhus pas/ chos la dus tshod med na ban rgan 'chal pa yin/de la mdzod gsungs/

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