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Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas in Tangut Xia: Notes on Khara-khoto Chinese Manuscript TK329*

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1. Introduction

No Chinese document has previously been found to have anything to do with Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas, although many Tibetan historiographies and biographies have mentioned his eastward trip to Wutai Mountain. This paper presents a Chinese manuscript in the Khara-khoto collection, TK329, and identifies the pivotal figure, named Xiaoheizu 小黑足 in the concomitant biography, as Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas. We thus know for the first time that Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas's teachings, as well as his brief life story, once circulated in the Chinese language as early as Tangut Xia dynasty (1038-1227).¹

Enthusiastic in importing Buddhism, the Tangut kingdom of Xia opened its door to different traditions and thoughts found in China, Tibet, and Uighur.² The inclusive attitude and the geographical occupation of the Sino-Tibetan borderland made the Tangut kingdom a multilingual region and the frontier of cultural exchange.³ Scholars' understanding of this kingdom in the twentieth century benefited a lot from those who drew on informations in Tibetan sources, such as R. A. Stein, Elliot Sperling, and Leonard van der Kuijp.⁴ Recently, an approach of textual criticism in interpreting

*I would like to thank Shen Weirong, Leonard van der Kuijp, Dan Martin, Cai Rang, Xie Jisheng, Liu Guowei, Du Xuchu, and Kazuzhi Iwao for their kind help and insightful comments.

¹ I use the terms “Tangut” and “Xia” in the sense that is suggested by Ruth Dunnell, a sense analogous to the use of Mongol and Yuan. In most contexts the word “Tangut” is used to point to the people who lived and the things they produced under the Tangut Xia dynasty (1038-1227). Ruth Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh Century Xia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996): xiii-xiv.

² Ruth Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh Century Xia*. Shi Jinbo 史金波, *Xixia fojiao shilue* 西夏佛教史略 (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1988). Shen Weirong, “Reconstructing the History of Buddhism in Central Eurasia (11th-14th Centuries): An Interdisciplinary and Multilingual Approach to Khara Khoto Chinese Buddhist Texts,” in *Edition, éditions: l'écrit au Tibet, évolution et devenir*, eds. Anne Chayet, Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, Françoise Robin, and Jean-Luc Achard (München: Indus-Verlag, 2010): 337-362.

³ Shen Weirong, “Reconstructing the History of Buddhism in Central Eurasia(11th-14th Centuries): An Interdisciplinary and Multilingual Approach to Khara Khoto Chinese Buddhist Texts.”

⁴ R. A. Stein, “Mi-ñag et Si-hia,” in *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient XLIV* (1951): 223-65. Elliot Sperling, “Lama to the King of Hsia,” in *The Journal of Tibet Society* 7 (1987): 31-50. Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, “Jayānanda: a Twelfth Century Guoshi from Kashmir among Tangut,” in *Central Asiatic*

Khara-khoto Chinese manuscripts ushered in by Shen Weirong has disclosed some concrete content of Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism in the Tangut area.⁵ The focus of this paper, Chinese manuscript TK329, gives us another occasion to further appreciate the deep Tibetan influence.⁶

TK329 is an exegetical work on some Esoteric Buddhist meditative instruction which is dated to the Tangut Xia dynasty. My basic methodological presupposition is that our Chinese text can be explained effectively in the light of the Tibetan language and Buddhism. I first examine the biography and lineage attended to the exegesis proper, and identify the pivotal transmitter in the lineage as Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas. Second, I further investigate the text's historical and literary context with references to other texts in the Khara-khoto Collection and in *Dasheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集, providing one possible explanation of how Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas's teaching spread across the culture border, or at least the language border. Finally, to the consequent question of whether or not Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas had been to China in person, I propose the biographical narrative in Tibetan sources about his journey to the east is a hybrid textual construction which hardly gives us historical details.

2. TK329 and Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas

While the production of block-printed sutras or tantras was often esteemed as a merit and usually carried out under the patronage from the court, the handwritten tracts represent what were actually being circulated, read and followed by devotees. TK329

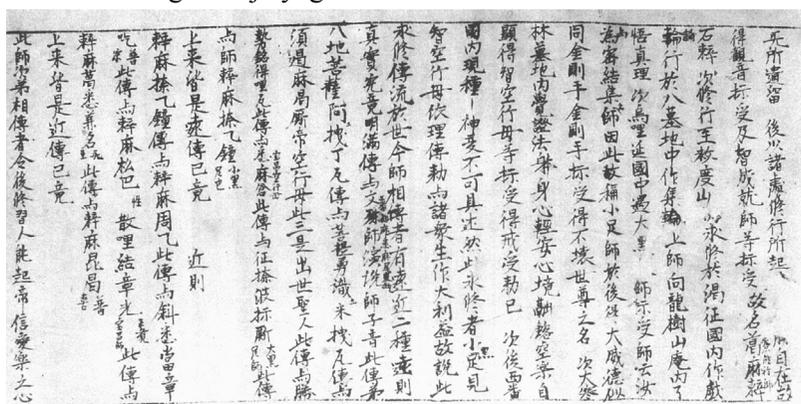
Journal 37/3-4 (1993): 188-197. Elliot Sperling, "Rtsa-mi lo-tsa-ba Sangs-rgyas Grags-pa and the Tangut Background to Early Mongol-Tibetan Relations," in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, ed., Per Kvaerne (Oslo: The Institute For Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994): 801-824.

⁵ In Khara-khoto Collection, Shen Weirong has identified a Chinese manuscript *Zhongyoushen yaomen* 中有身要門 as a translation of *Sgyu-lus man-ngag* by Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams rin-chen (1079-1153). Shen Weirong, "Studies on Chinese texts of the yogic practices of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism found in Khara Khoto of Xi Xia (Tangut) [I]: Quintessential instruction on the Illusory Body of Dream," in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie 15—Conception et circulation des textes tibétains*, ed. F. Jagou, (Kyoto: La Section, 2005): 187-230.

For esoteric tracts about Mahākāla identified by Shen, see Shen Weirong, "Xixia Mengyuan shidaide Daheitian chongbai yu Heishuicheng wenxian" 西夏、蒙元時代的大黑天神崇拜與黑水城文獻, in *Xianzhe xinyan 5 賢者新宴五*, ed. Wang Yao 王堯 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007): 153-167. Kano Kazuo has found a topical outline of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* by Rngog-lo Blo-ldan shes-rab (1059-?1109), which is not included in the extant works transmitted in Central Tibet. But the date of the text is not conclusive. Kazuo Kano, "Rngog Blo-ldan shes-rab's Topical Outline of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* Discovered at Khara Khoto," in *Contributions to the Buddhist Literature: PIATS 2006*, ed. Orna Almqvist (Halle: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2008): 127-194.

⁶ A glimpse at its transcribed names will enable one to find some Tibetan elements. To name but a few, 烏哩延國 comes from Tibetan *U-rgyan*, with a 哩 to represent Tibetan prefix *r-*, which is absent in its Sanskrit origin *Uḍḍiyāna*, and 征捺波攝廡 comes from Tibetan *Rje nag-po zhabs*.

belongs to the latter. It is a nicely handwritten manuscript in the form of a scroll, with its opening lines missing.⁷ The title given at the end of the scroll reads *Sizi kongxingmu jiwen juanshang* 四字空行母記文卷上, which could be rendered as *Notes on Four-Syllable Dākinī: Volume One*. As the text itself suggests, TK329 is an exegesis on *Quintessential Instruction of Aural Transmitted Sādhana on Vārāhī* (亥母耳傳求修劑門), which belongs to the *cakrasaṃvara-tantra* system (集輪根本本續) in *mahāyoga-tantra* (大修習本續).⁸ It should be noted that the different terms that appear in this text such as *haimu* 亥母 (*vārāhī*), *kongxingmu* 空行母 (*dākinī*), and *xiuximu* 修習母 (*yoginī*) are all referring to Vajrayoginī in her different forms.⁹



TK329, preserved in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences

⁷ Shi Jinbo 史金波, Wei Tongxian 魏同賢, and E. I. Kychanov, eds. *Ecang heishuicheng wenxian* 俄藏黑水城文獻 (Khara Khoto Documents Preserved in the St.Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999).

⁸ The information scattered through the text provides us with some details: *Quintessential Instruction of Aural Transmitted Sādhana on Vārāhī* is based on a *sādhana* entitled 吉祥金剛修習母求修 (its phonetic presentation of Sanskrit as 室哩末日囉二合口養機你西底, which helps construct a Sanskrit title as *Śrīvajrayoginīsiddhi*), and its status in tantric system belongs to *mahāyoga-tantra* (*daxiuxi benxu* 大修習本續) out of the four categories of tantras (*sibenxu* 四本續). Also, the *Quintessential Instruction* covers the essence of two canons, *Jilun genben benxu* 集輪根本本續 (*Cakrasaṃvara-tantra*) and *Haimu chuxian benxu* 亥母出現本續 (*Jñānavajravārāhī-adhibhāva-tantra*). *Cakrasaṃvara-tantra* exists both in Sanskrit and in its Tibetan translation, See David B. Gray, *The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra: The Discourse of Śrī Heruka (Śrīherukābhīdhāna)*. (New York: Columbia University, American Institute of Buddhist Studies, co-published with Columbia University's Centre for Buddhist Studies and Tibet House US, 2007). *Jñānavajravārāhī-adhibhāva-tantra* could be found only in Tibetan Tripiṭaka, named *Ye-she rdo-rje phag-mo mngon-par-byung-ba'i rgyud* (Derge no. 0378). In the most popular classification of tantric teachings in Tibet, the fourfold categories of tantra are usually *kriyā-tantra*, *caryā-tantra*, *yoga-tantra*, and *mahāyoga-tantra*. Ronald Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005): 35.

⁹ Elizabeth English, *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals, and Forms* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001). Janet Gyatso, "The Development of the Good Tradition," in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*, eds. Barbara Nimri Aziz and Matthew Kapstein (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1985):320-41.

We meet three levels of exegesis here. First, *sādhana* (*sgrub-thabs*). A *sādhana*, literally a “means of achievement,” is a text comprises meditative and ritual procedures, by which the practitioner self-visualize as a deity, in our case as Vajravārāhī.¹⁰ Second, “quitesential instruction,” *man-ngag* in Tibetan and *āmnāya/upadeśa/upāyikā* in Sanskrit. It is used to guide an esoteric practice and is very esoteric in itself. Last, TK329's level, an exegetical work (*bshad-pa*) to explain *man-ngag*. At the bottom of this exegetical strata, TK329 is most likely to be an actual practical instruction for practitioners.

The extant part has 185 lines, each line containing approximately 18 characters. Fortunately, as a custom in exegetical works, an outline is provided. Adding a Foreword section to it, we could get an overview of the entire exegetical work and be able to locate our *Volume One*:

Foreword -----	(missing)
F.1 Merit of Relating Masters-----	(partly missing, line 1 to line 25)
F.2 Clarify the Status in Tantric Categories -----	(25-34)
F.3 Explain the Name of <i>vārāhī</i> -----	(35-61)
F.4 Explain the Benefit -----	(61-64)
F.5 Clarify the Outline -----	(61-68)
1, Introduction	
1.1 Explain the Title of the <i>Sādhana</i> -----	(68-87)
1.2 Explain Benediction: Taking Refuge and Offering Reverence ---	(87-91)
1.3 Explain the Praise -----	(91-121)
1.4 Rebuttal to the Accusation of Claiming Fake Authority -----	(121-151)
2, Main Body	
2.1 Preliminaries	
2.1.1 Chose the Practice Mode -----	(151-155)
2.1.2 Establish the <i>Maṇḍala</i> -----	(155)
2.1.3 Clarify the Calming -----	(156-178)
2.1.4 Explain the Clinging -----	(178-183, the end of <i>Volume One</i>)
2.2 Principal Practice	

¹⁰ For information on *sādhana* in general, see Daniel Cozort, “Sādhana (sgrub-thabs): Means of Achievement for Deity Yoga,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, eds. Jose Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1995): 331-43. For information on *sādhana* on Vajrayoginī in particular, see Elizabeth English, *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals, and Forms*.

- 3, Explain the Advantage and Disadvantage in Terms of Three Levels of Capability
- 4, Clarify the View, the Understanding, the Meditation, and the Result
- 5, Concluding Stage

The fragmentary section of “The Merit of Relating Masters,” which comprises an incomplete hagiography and a lineage, is my focus. How much is lost in the narrative is hard to estimate precisely because it starts midway in relating the story of a master named Xiaoheizu 小黑足. No parallel in Tibetan has been found, but in the light of the relative Tibetan materials, I identify Xiaoheizu as Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas.¹¹ For ease of discussion, I present the extant biographical words with my tentative punctuation, and annotate some terms in translation with their Tibetan equivalents.¹²

无所遺留，後以諸處修行，所起□□□□自在，故得觀音攝受及智成就師等攝受，故名葛麻粹石粹（無足能行師）。次修行至救度山。□求修於渴征國內作戲輪（論）。行於八墓地中，作集輪。上師向龍樹山庵內，了悟真理。次烏哩延國中，遇大黑□師攝受，師云：“汝為密結集大師。”故稱小足師。於後得大威德，似同金剛手，金剛手攝受，得不壞世尊之名。次大寒林墓地內，覺證法體，身心輕安，心境融鎔，空樂自顯。得智空行母等攝受。得戒受敕已。次後西番國內，現種種神變，不可具述。然此求修者，小黑足見智空行母，依理傳敕，與諸眾生作大利益故說此求修，傳流於世。

He practiced in many different places. Being blessed by Avalokiteśvara, master Zhichengjiu [Jñānasiddha?], and others, he was named Kamalaśīla (interlinear note: fleet-footed master [*rkang-mgyogs-pa*]). He then practiced in Liberating Hill [*Sgrol-ma'i-ri*]. Performed gaṇacakra in eight charnel grounds. In Nāgārjuna’s meditation cave

¹¹ All the Tibetan sources I exploit are available at TBRC. *Ding-ri glang-khor gyi phyag-dpe zab-khyad-ma (Zhi-byed snga-bar-phyi-gsum gyi skor*, TBRC ID W23911). Khams-smyon Dharma seng-ge, *Zhi-byed dang gcod-yul gyi chos-'byung rin-po-che'i phreng-ba thar-pa'i rgyan* (TBRC ID W00EGS1016278). Khams-smyon Dharma seng-ge, *Grub-pa'i dbang-phyug chen-po rje-btsun dam-pa sangs-rgyas rnam-par thar-pa ngos-sgrub 'od-stong 'bar-ba'i nyi-ma* (TBRC ID W23755). Rdza-sprul Ngag-dbang bstan-'dzin nor-bu (1867-1940), *Gcod-yul nyon-mongs zhi-byed kyi bka '-gter bla-ma brgyud-pa'i rnam-thar byin-rlabs gter-msho* (TBRC ID W19811).

¹² I put the original interlinear glosses in a smaller font with parentheses; inner-linear glosses in a smaller font without parentheses. “□” stands for one illegible Chinese character.

[*Klu-grub-kyi-phug*], he realized the reality. Then in Uḍḍiyāna [*Urgyan*] he met Master Great Kṛṣṇapāda who blessed him and said, “You are the master of esoteric community [*Guhyasamāja?*].” This is why (the master) is called master Xiaozu [which should be a slip in writing Xiaoheizu]. Later, having obtained the ability as powerful as Vajrapāṇi, [he] got blessed by Vajrapāṇi and received the reputation of the indestructible protector [*Myi-'pham mgon-po*]. Then in the big charnel ground, the master realized the dharmakāya, ecstasy and the unity of bliss and emptiness, and got blessed by Jñānaḍākinī. Later on [the master] manifested various magics in Tibet, a detailed account of which is impossible. This teaching was bestowed by Jñānaḍākinī to master Xiaoheizu who taught it and transmitted it for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Xiaoheizu 小黑足 literally means Little Black Foot, in which “foot” is originated from Sanskrit *pāda* for an honorific meaning and often directly becomes *zhabs* in Tibetan names such as Nag-po-zhabs (Kṛṣṇapāda) and Sangs-rgyas ye-shes-zhabs (Buddhajñānāpāda). A phonetic transcription of this name, 捺鐘, is found elsewhere in the text and can be used to reconstruct its Tibetan origin as Nag-chung, which is the very nickname of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas in Tibet.¹³ Here, as part of the phonetic presentation of Nag-chung, the middle sign ㄣ can not be presented by Pinyin, because ㄣ is not an orthographical corruption, but a genius creation. Since the finals such as *-p*, *-t*, and *-k* had disappeared in the north-western Chinese dialect at the end of the twelfth century,¹⁴ the sign ㄣ, I propose, is a one-stroke-omitted 九, being used to present the sound of the Tibetan suffix *-g*.

I chose what Dan Martin calls the Zhi-byed Collection (*Ding-ri glang-'khor gyi phyag-dpe zab-khyad-ma*) as my primary “informant” for its early date (the mid-thirteenth century) and sheer bulk (four volumes).¹⁵ Not only can we find in it Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas's different names such as Kamalaśīla, Myi-'pham mgon-po, Nag-

¹³ Dan Martin, “Padampa Sangye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet,” in *Holy Madness: Portraits of Tantric Siddhas*, Rob Linrothe (ed.), New York: Rubin Museum of Art. 2006:108-123. Ronald Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*: 245-249.

¹⁴ Gong Huangcheng 龔煌城, “Shi'er shiji mo hanyu de xibei fangyin (Yunwei wenti)” 十二世紀末漢語的西北方音(韻尾問題) (A northwestern Chinese dialect at the end of the 12th century [the problem of finals]), in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan dierjie guoji hanxue huiyi lunwenji (Yuyan yu wenzi zu)* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1989): 145-190.

¹⁵ Dan Martin, “Padampa Sangye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet.”

chung, we can also find a brief biography in which we are told that he was blessed by Avalokiteśvara, that he beheld the vision of Smra-ba'i seng-ge, that he practiced in Liberating Hill for twelve years, that he achieved capacity in Nāgārjuna's cave, and that he got the accomplishment of fleet-footedness—so similar to our Chinese one!¹⁶ But I fail to find a teaching that is equivalent to TK329 in the Zhi-byed Collection, which is possibly because this collection covers only the “later transmission” (*phyi-ma*) out of Pha-dam-pa's three Zhi-byed transmissions, not including the early or middle ones.

TK329 then gives us a lineage that comprises two parts, “the far transmission” (*yuanchuan*, 遠傳) and “the near transmission” (*jinchuan*, 近傳):

- 1 真實究竟名滿, Yang-dag-par rdzogs-pa'i sangs-rgyas (Samyak-saṃbuddha).
- 2 文殊演說獅子音西番□麻悉麻尾□吃, 'Jam-dpal Smra-ba'i seng-ge (Vādisiṃhamañjuśrī).
- 3 第八地菩薩阿拽丁瓦, Eighth Bhumi Bodhisattva Āryadeva.
- 4 菩提勇識米拽瓦, Byang-chub sems-dpa' Birwa-pa (Virupa).
- 5 須遏麻曷廡帝空行母, Ḍākinī Sukhamahāsiddhi.
- 6 勝勢銘得哩瓦, Rgyal-ba Maitri-ba (Maitripa).
- 7 征捺波攝廡大黑足師, Rje nag-po-zhabs (Kṛṣṇapāda).
- 8 捺^ㄣ鐘小黑足師, Nag-chung.

As the end point of the far transmission, Little Black starts “the near transmission”:

- 1 粹麻捺^ㄣ鐘小黑足師, Nag-chung.
- 2 粹麻周^ㄣ, ?
- 3 斜悉當章吃普宗, ?
- 4 粹麻松巴性散哩結章光正覺寶昌師, ?
- 5 粹麻葛悉兼名無生, Skye-med.
- 6 粹麻昆曷普喜, Kun-dga'.

All the names after Nag-chung (Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas) in “the near transmission” could not be identified by me while three of them even look puzzling from the perspective of Sino-Tibetan translation/transcription. One explanation is that there are Tangut elements in them while we know so little about this kind of

¹⁶ The text contains the concise biography is “Phyag rgya chen po brda'i skor gsum (or A rtsa ra nag po brda'i zhu lan rnam gsum),” in *Ding ri glang 'khor gyi phyag dpe zab khyad ma*, Volume 2, p138. I thank Dan Martin for this crucial reference.

translation/transcription.¹⁷ The last one in the lineage, in our case Kun-dga', is usually the actual teacher who dictated the teaching. As the sixth lineage holder, this Kun-dga' is unlikely to be the famous Thugs sras Kun-dga' who is the direct disciple of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas.

According to Thu'u-bkvan's doxography and *The Blue Annals*, Pha-dam-pa bestowed the teaching of Four-Syllable to a disciple named Shangs-pa dbu-sdebs,¹⁸ but no further information is given. In the catalog of books preserved in 'Bras-spungs monastery, a text entitled *Four-Syllable Esoteric Sādhana (Gsang-sgrub yi-ge bzhi-pa)* is attributed to “a disciple of Pha-dam-pa” (*Pha-dam-pa'i slob-ma zhig*).¹⁹ Unfortunately, this text, among others that might shed light on our TK329, lies silently inside the dim archives, with no access for the public.

3. TK329 and other texts: A Greater Context

As a reader who knows Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas well may have found, one of his chief distinguishing marks, the “fifty-four masters,” is absent in TK329. Tibetan materials about him almost ubiquitously mention that he attended fifty-four masters, including Saraha, Kṛṣṇapāda and so forth. This mark is present in another Khara-khoto manuscript A15.

A15 is also fragmented but preserves its opening part. It is entitled *Ganlu zhongliu zhongyoushen yaomen* 甘露中流中有身要門 (Nectar Flow: Quintessential Instructions on Bardo), and is attributed to Shaohei fashi 少黑法師 (“Master Young Black”). A brief three-folded transmission and explanations thereof are listed before the instruction proper:

- 1) the buddha is Smra-ba'i seng-ge,
- 2) the bodhisattva is Sgrol-ma, and
- 3) the accomplished masters are the fifty-four masters such as Birwa-pa.

“Young Black” is obviously an alternative way of translating Nag-chung and refers to Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas, but some divergences are noticeable: *Fo* 佛 vs. *zhenshi*

¹⁷ For some discussion on this issue, see Ruth Dunnell, “Translating History from Tangut Buddhist Texts,” *Asia Major*, third series, vol. 22, part 1 (2009): 41-78. One can also expect to find more information from inside the Tangut texts, one example of which is given by K. J. Solonin, “Mahāmudrā Texts in the Tangut Buddhism and the Doctrine of ‘No-thought’”, *Historical and Philological Studies of China's Western Regions (No. 2)*, Shen Weirong ed., Beijing: Science Press, 2009: 277-305.

¹⁸ Thu'u-bkvan Blo-bzang chos-kyi-nyi-ma, *Grub-mtha' shel-gyi-me-long* (Lan-kru'u: Kan-su'u mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1984): 167. 'Gos lo-tsā-ba Gzhon-nu-dpal, *Deb-ther sngon-po* (Khreng-tu'u: Si-khron mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1984): 1015-1092.

¹⁹ Dpal-brtsegs bod-yig dpe-mnying zhib-'jug-khang ed., *'Bras-spungs-dgon du bzhugs su gsol-ba'i dpe-mnying dkar-chag* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2004): 1269.

jiujing mingman 真實究竟明滿, *mi* 密 vs. *mi* 米, and, the most important one, *shaohai* 少黑 vs. *xiaohai* 小黑. These differences may be a result of their unawareness of each other's translation, and it is also possible that the two translators followed different traditions of transmission and did not approve each other's way. Having an unknown fellow or competitor, TK329 was not alone.

A15 and TK329 are both described as “Xixia (Tangut Xia dynasty, 1038-1227) manuscripts” in the catalog edited by Men'shikov, Jiang, and Bai.²⁰ Although no dating evidence is given, the editors' connoisseurship must have noticed the name taboo in A15. A15 omits two stokes in writing 明, which shows a naming taboo for the first ruler, Li Mingde 李德明 (r. 1004-1031), and a tradition that probably lasted for the entire dynasty till 1227, which maybe our document's *terminus ad quem*. While the presence of the taboo gives us a clue on dating, the absence of it in TK329 does not rule out the possibility of its composition during the dynasty because this imported tradition from China was not executed as a rigid rule.²¹ Moreover, the early dates of TK329 and A15 are suggested by the fact that as some of his epithets such as Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas (“Excellent Father the Buddha”) and Dam-pa rgya-gar (“Excellent Indian”) became dominant in Tibet, Nag-chung (“Little Black”), which sounds a little impolite, eventually became less favored in the literary tradition in Tibet.²²

Another link in TK329 with other texts is about the fifth lineage holder, Wusheng in Chinese and Skye-med in Tibetan. In *Wusheng shangshi chuxian ganying gongdesong* 無生上師出現感應功德頌 (Eulogy to the merits of Master Wusheng) included in *Dasheng yaodao miji*,²³ there exist two connections to TK329 which are

²⁰ Meng Liefu (Men'shikov), Jiang Weisong 蔣維崧, Bai Bin 白濱, “Ecang heishuicheng wenxian xulu” 俄藏黑水城文獻·敘錄 (The descriptive Catalog of Khara khoto Collection in Russia), in *Ecang heishuicheng wenxian*.

²¹ Han Xiaomang 韓小忙, “Xixia bihui zhidu chutan” 西夏避諱制度初探, in *Ningxia shehui kexue*, 1994/5, 66: 59-63.

²² Dan Martin, “Padampa Sangye: A History of Representation of a South Indian Siddha in Tibet.” Ronald Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*: 245-249.

²³ *Dasheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集, facsimile edition (Taipei: Ziyou chubanshe, 1962). For more information on the book, see Beckwith, Christopher, “A Hitherto Unnoticed Yuan-Period Collection Attributed to 'Phags pa,” in *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Cőrös*, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984): 9-16. Chen Qingying 陳慶英, “*Dasheng yaodao miji* yu xixia wangchao de zangchuanfojiao” 《大乘要道密集》與西夏王朝的藏傳佛教, in *Xianzhe Xinyan 3* 賢者新宴 3, ed. Wang Yao 王堯 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003):49-64. Shen Weirong 沈衛榮, “*Dasheng yaodao miji* yu Xiaxia Yuanchao suochuan Zangchuanmifa” 《大乘要道密集》與西夏、元朝所傳藏傳密法, in *Zhonghua foxue* 20 (2007), pp 251-303. There is a precedent evidence showing that Khara khoto documents have some textual link with *Dasheng yaodao miji*. See Shen Weirong, “Studies on Chinese texts of the yogic practices of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism found in Khara Khoto of Xi Xia (Tangut) [I]: Quintessential instruction on the

enough for an identification. The eulogy is attributed to Matishan Xiuxingseng Zabazuozhu 馬蹄山修行僧拶巴座主, who compiled it from *fanben* 梵本, which probably refers to a Tibetan text rather than a Sanskrit text.²⁴ The eulogy has 22 verses. Each verse is typical of the *bstod-pa* style in Tibetan literature, with four lines (*rkang-pa*) constituting a verse (*tshigs-bcad*), the first three relating some deeds and the ending line giving the compliment.²⁵ The use of Chinese in the eulogy is not quite standard, which may partly come from the inherent difficulty in translating and partly from the limited level of the translator's Chinese.

Wusheng is depicted as a traveller, a thaumaturgist, a Buddhist master, and all other images that are typical of a *siddha* (*grub-thob*).²⁶ There is no mention of his birth place, possibly because it was a common knowledge in his particular circle. But from the logic of the narrative and the sequence of places he had travelled, Wusheng was born in the Tangut area or in greater the Hexi area. He travelled to the Country of Queen (Sum-pa?), Yiwu 伊吾 (in modern Kumul Prefecture, Xinjiang), Gaochang 高昌 (on the northern rim of the Taklamakan Desert, Xinjiang), Uḍḍiyāna (Swat valley) and other places in India, Tibet, and finally Tangut Xia.²⁷

In the third verse, we are told that “When [he] did mendicancy in the east, he dreamed of Vajrapāṇi, who prophesied that [he] would learn from Master Songba 松巴師 in Tibet for one year.”²⁸ Although no mention of the realization of the prophecy is found, we can assume that he did learn from Songba afterward because the prophecies always come true in Tibetan literature. The seventh verse further tells us his activity in Xianguo 夏國 (i.e. Tangut Xia):

Illusory Body of Dream.”

²⁴ Like TK329, many proper names are clearly from Tibetan.

²⁵ For example, the 17th stanza can be translated, if not to be exactly accurate, back into Tibetan as: rgyal po dang gyes mi nyag yul du 'gro don byas/ skya ser dam chos zhus zhing gser gyi dkyil 'khor phul/ snyan rgyud phag mo yi ge bzhi ba'i man ngag gnan/ bla ma dam pa skye med de la bdag gis 'dud. (辭王化利夏國大臣民，僧俗求請奉金曼捺辣，受與耳傳四字亥母法，甚深無生師處我讚禮。)

²⁶ James Burnell Robinson, “The Lives of Indian Buddhist Saints: Biography, Hagiography and Myth,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, eds. José Cabezón, Roger R. Jackson (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1995): 57-69.

²⁷ This route is reminiscent of Jiyesanzang's 繼業三藏 trip recorded in *Wuchuan lu* 吳船錄. Xie Jisheng 謝繼勝, “Mogaoku 76 ku *Batabian* ji xiangguan de jige wenti” 莫高窟 76 窟《八塔變》及相關的幾個問題: 11 至 13 世紀中國多民族美術關係史研究, in *Yishushi yanjiu* 13 (Guangzhao: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 2011): 207-250. James M. Hargett, trans., *Riding the River Home: A Complete and Annotated Translation of Fan Chengda's (1126-1193) Diary of a Boat Trip to Wu (Wuchuan lu)*, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2008): 69-73.

²⁸ My interpretation here can only be tentative because the Chinese is somewhat mysterious. The verse reads: 化於東方夜夢金剛手，教示指歸西番中國內，松巴師處受生於一載，遏令惠辨師處我讚禮。

辭王化利夏國大臣民
僧俗求請奉金曼捺辣
受與耳傳四字亥母法
甚深無生師處我讚禮

[He] left the King [of Tibet] to teach and benefit the great subjects of the kingdom of Xia.

Upon the monks and lay people's asking for teachings and offering the golden mandala,

The master bestowed the teaching of Aurally Transmitted Four Syllables Vārāhī.

For the exceptionally profound Wusheng lama I praise.

We can be fairly certain that Wusheng in this eulogy is none other than the fifth dharma heir in TK329's lineage, and can thus infer that Wusheng is the one who learned Four Syllables from Songba (the fourth master in the lineage) in Tibet and brought it to Tangut Xia. In the meanwhile, however, the Tibetan counterpart of this text remains to be disclosed.

Stories about Wusheng in the eulogy altogether have excluded the possibility that he could be any of the Tibetans or Indians who share the same or part of the same name. Some of his namesakes are Bal-po Skye-med (i.e. A-su) recorded in the *Blue Annals*, Skye-med 'od-gsal in the Gcod tradition, and Kun-dga' (Bla-ma skye-med byang-chub-sems-dpa' Kun-dga') in the Zhi-byed tradition.

4. Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas's Eastward Trip in Tibetan Documents

While we may have some clues about how TK329 was transmitted, the teaching of *bar-do* in A15 is still mysterious. It is intriguing to think that Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas had some actual connections with China such as his personal trip to China. I, once again, resort to Tibetan documents. *The Blue Annals (Deb-ther sngon-po)* of 1476 allots a lengthy chapter on the Zhi-byed tradition, in which we find some details of Pha-dam-pa's journey in China. Between his fourth and fifth sojourns in Tibet, Pha-dam-pa went to the Wutai Mountain:

On the road of climbing the Wutai Mountain (Rtse-lnga'i ri), He met an old sage who was holding a staff made of plantain tree. He was an emanation of Mañjuśrī. He said, “There is *Rnam-par rgyal-ma'i*

Gzungs (Uṣṇiṣavijayādhāraṇī) at the Vajrāsana in India, you should retrieve it today and pacify the major epidemic which is sweeping this region. It should be done this very night.”²⁹

Pha-dam-pa then secured the *dhāraṇī* in time through a miraculous way—he found the Vajrāsana right in the Mountain and got it instantly—and pacified the disease. This story is reminiscent of another Wutai-bound pilgrim, Buddhapālita. In *Kaiyuan shijiaolu* 開元釋教錄 (Kaiyuan era catalogue of Buddhist teachings) of 730, the retrieval of this magical *dhāraṇī* is attributed to Fotuoboli 佛陀波利 (Buddhapālita),³⁰ while the backcloth of Wutai Mountain, the supporting role of an old man remain the same. We are told that in the year of 676 (the first year of Tang Yifeng), when Buddhapālita came from India to pay homage to Mañjuśrī in the Wutai Mountain, he met an old man in the mountain who asked for *Uṣṇiṣavijayadhāraṇī* to eliminate all the evil karma of sentient beings. Buddhapālita heeded the advice and, less magically, actually returned to India and brought back the needed *dhāraṇī*.³¹

Buddhapālita is not the only paradigmatic figure to inspire the authors of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas's life stories. Like most other progressively glorified biographies, the latest hagiography of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas by Khams-smyon is the lengthiest one,³² in which the author not only copies the aforementioned episode almost verbatim, he also adds something new. As the narrative comes to Pha-dam-pa's returning to west, Khams-smyon credits to him what Bodhidharma the founder of Chan/Zen has done: left one shoe in the tomb and left for the west.³³ This is only hinted in *The Blue Annals* as “some maintain even that Pha-dam-pa had died in China.”³⁴

This kind of appropriating is not breaking news because historical writing in

²⁹ 'Gos lo-tsa-ba Gzhon-nu-dpal, *Deb-ther sngon-po*, (Khreng-tu'u: Si-khron mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1984): 1063-64. George N. Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976): 911.

³⁰ Zhisheng 智昇, *Kaiyuan shijiaolu* 開元釋教錄. *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*, no. 2154, 0565a05-0565a22. The Chinese version of *Uṣṇiṣavijayādhāraṇī* is named 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 (*Uṣṇiṣavijayadhāraṇīsūtra*.) The monk's name is transcribed as Fotuoboli 佛陀波利 and translated as Juehu 覺護 in Chinese. I reconstruct the name in Sanskrit as Buddhapālita, where the *-ta* (陀) dropped in this transcription just as Kumārajīva became 鳩摩羅什 and lost its *-va* (婆).

³¹ The story did not end with the retrieving of the text. In 679, Buddhapālita met the Emperor of Tang who called upon two officers to translate *Uṣṇiṣavijayadhāraṇī* together with him, then came out the first Chinese version of the *dhāraṇī*.

³² Khams-smyon Dharma-seng-ge, *Grub-pa'i dbang-phyug chen-po rje-btsun dam-pa sangs-rgyas rnam-par thar-pa ngos-sgrub 'od-stong 'bar-ba'i nyi-ma* (TBRC ID W23755).

³³ Khams-smyon Dharma-seng-ge, *Grub-pa'i dbang-phyug chen-po rje-btsun dam-pa sangs-rgyas rnam-par thar-pa ngos-sgrub 'od-stong 'bar-ba'i nyi-ma*: 53-54.

³⁴ George N. Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals*: 911.

Tibet has been by and large a religious tradition, not to mention the biographical/hagiographical works. In his *Crystal Mirror of Buddhist Doxography* (*Grub-mtha' shel gyi me-long*), Thu'u-bkvan comments on the identification of Bodhidharma as Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas:

Some people said, "This master [i.e. Bodhidharma] is Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas, who is widely known to have been to China. Also, in some teachings of Zhi-byed, Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas bore a cloth bag on his shoulder when manifesting in the form of Vajra body, just like how the costumes of Bodhidharma is depicted. There is also some legend of Pha-dam-pa going back to India with one sandal on his shoulder." Since I have not seen any narratives that have authentic sources, it is hard to believe this.³⁵

Thu'u-bkvan's doubt is cast on the following logic chain: because 1) it is well-known that Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas went to China, 2) he corresponds to the image of Bodhidharma, and 3) there is a legend about his sandal, he must be Bodhidharma.

What Thu'u-bkvan disapproves is representative of the kind of logic that is used to blend together similar narratives and to harmonize the conflicting names. There might be a chronological gap between Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas's fourth and fifth stays in Tibet; the hagiography authors are in charge of filling it. Bernard Faure has demonstrated the creating of Bodhidharma's biography through a hybrid constructing and appropriating way,³⁶ and we now see the constructed biography of Bodhidharma has in turn been exploited to construct another biography. Kurtis Schaeffer gives the example of how Sahara was created in Tibetan literature,³⁷ and as one of the claimed disciples of Saraha, Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas has been treated in the same way.

We have reasons to say that it is the recreations of Tibetan writers that have given life and details to Pha-dam-pa's eastward trip, but we can not exclude the possibility of the trip itself. To project imaginary elements, a blank space is often necessary. There likely exists a chronological gap of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas's life in disciples' knowledge, a gap where he was known to head to the east.

³⁵ Thu'u-bkvan Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-nyi-ma, *Grub-mtha' shel-gyi-me-long* (Lan-kru'u: Kan-su'u mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1984):439.

³⁶ Bernard Faure, "Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm," in *History of Religions* 1986/25 (3): 187-198.

³⁷ Kurtis R. Schaeffer, *Dreaming the Great Brahman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

In the massive *Mdo-smad chos-'byung* of 1865, Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas is reported to have arrived at 'Ju-lag River (i.e. Datong River):

Just before Atiśa arrived in Tibet, Pra-sgom Chos-kyi-rdo-rje was born near the 'Ju-lag River. So thirteen military camps of Pra's troops appeared. Because Pha-dam-pa and Lab-sgron, the master and the disciple, have been to this place, the place is also known as Lab's Hut, Dam-pa's Ditch, and other names.³⁸

This paragraph belongs to the chapter called “Generally Relating How Buddhism Developed in Amdo”. To Brag-dgon-pa, the nineteenth-century author, the place near 'Ju-lag was part of Amdo, but at the time of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas, it was almost a border river between Tangut empire and Tibetan tribes. Such notes on toponyms are not enough for us to make any conclusion, but they suggest that stories behind them remain to be explored. As for now, what we know more than Thu'u-bkvan, while still holding the doubt that he once had, is that some esoteric teachings of Pha-dam-pa sangs-rgyas did go across some kind of border and come into the Chinese language.

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³⁸ Brag-dgon-pa Dkon-mchog bstan-pa rab-rgyas, *Mdo-smad chos-'byung* (Lan-kru'u: Kan-su'u mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang, 1982): 20. The blockprint version of the book reproduced by Lokesh Chandra (TBRC W6004) (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1975-1977): 50.

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