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Early *phyi dar* Manuscripts from Ladakh*

Helmut Tauscher

The first step in the development of the Tibetan Buddhist canon is represented by the collections of sacred literature translated primarily from Sanskrit and Chinese into Tibetan from the 7th century onwards. The first large-scale campaign of systematic translation was started during the time of the so-called “earlier diffusion” (*snga dar*) of Buddhism, at the command of King Khri srong lde btsan (756–796).^① These collections are commonly referred to as *bka' bstan bcos*,^② understood as containing “all translations of the words [of the Buddha] and exegetical treatises” (*bka' dang bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog*)^③, without systematically separating these two categories that in a later development constituted the Kanjur and Tanjur sections of the canon.

Until the 11th/12th century, these *bka' bstan bcos* remained the prevalent type of canonical collections kept at royal palaces and monastic centres. None of these collection has survived as such; they are known from two catalogues of collections at royal palaces in Central Tibet: the *IHan/IDan (d)kar ma* (Lalou 1953, Herrmann–Pfundt 2008) which is included in the Tanjur (e.g. D 4364) and the *'Phang thang ma*.^④ A third one, the *mChims phu ma*, is not extant, but mentioned in later sources. The remains of several collections of that kind survived in the caves of Dunhuang, and also parts of the manuscripts from Tholing kept in the IsIAO library (Rossi Filibeck 2007) and similar collections might have belonged to *bka' bstan bcos* collections. It can be expected that a considerable amount of comparable material lies hidden in various stupas, where waste manuscripts were deposited on the occasion of funeral ceremonies. However, it is only on very rare occasions that they come to light.

* This paper is an abridged and slightly modified and revised version of “Manuscript fragments from Matho. A preliminary report and random reflections.” M. Clemente, O. Nalesini and F. Venturi (eds), *Perspectives on Tibetan Culture. A Small Garland of Forget-me-nots offered to Elena De Rossi Filibeck*. Paris: *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, July 2019, 337-378. Most significantly, in the discussion of the variant readings of *Ālokamālāprakaraṇa* (p.215ff.) the Sanskrit version is taken into consideration.

① For a dating of this event, see Panglung 1994.

② Prolog to the *IHan kar ma* catalogue, Tanjur editions of Cone, Ganden and Peking; see Herrmann-Pfundt 2008: 1.

③ On this topic, see Skilling 1997.

④ Published by Kawagoe 2005; see also Halkias 2004; Dotson 2007.

Such an occasion occurred in spring 2014 in Matho (*mang spro*), Ladakh. Some fifty *mchod rten* at the edge of the village were destructed on the advice of Klu sdings mkhan chen Rin po che, the head of the Sa skya–Ngor lineage, as he detected them as the origin of some malign influence on the wellbeing of the community. One of these *mchod rten* used to be referred to popularly as the “King’s stupa” (*rgyal po’i mchod rten*), and another one as the “Queen’s stupa” (*rgyal mo’i mchod rten*). This local usage has obviously preserved the memory of historical facts, but it mixes up names and persons and periods of time.

Although not all of these *mchod rten* were contemporary, they are generally said to have been erected “at the time of the Mongol war”. This expression usually refers to the Tibet/Mongol–Ladakh–Mughal war around 1680,^① and the local tradition does, in fact, associate these *mchod rten* in some way with dGa’ ldan Tshe dbang (1644–1697), the commander of the Tibetan–Mongol army that invaded Ladakh at that time. Accordingly, it seems to be easy to ascribe some sinister influence to places connected with his name. The connection with dGa’ ldan Tshe dbang might be a good excuse for destructing the *mchod rten*. Historically, however, it is not possible, as the *mchod rten* were much older. Possibly, the memories of this 17th century war mix with those of some military campaign by the sTod Hor (Chagatai Mongols) in mNga’ ris skor gsum in mid–13th century,^② but this is mere speculation.

Alternatively, the *mchod rten* are locally said to originate from “the times of the kings”, i.e. from the times when there were kings at Matho, before Mar yul was turned into “Ladakh” under the rNam rgyal rulers.

Nothing is known—to my knowledge—about this period of the history of Matho or about its kings in general. In pre–rNam rgyal times, many of the villages were “kingdoms” of their own. Some of them gained wider influence, but Matho, presumably, did not, as it had access neither to mining nor to major trade routes. Nevertheless, as an agricultural area with no competitors for pastoral land some distance up the Indus, Matho might have acquired some importance and also wealth as a supplier of food and an ally (or vassal) of the kings of Shel (or She ye, i.e. modern–day Shey).^③

When the *mchod rten* were destructed, the rubble together with all the grave goods was

① On these events, see, e.g., Petech 1947, Petech 1977: 71ff., Emmer 2007, Nawang 2015.

② Discussed in Vitali 2005: 100 ff.

③ Quentin Devers in a personal communication of 12 September 2015. On Shel, see Vitali 1996: 245ff. (in particular, n. 352 on the different versions of the name) and 495ff. (in particular, n. 834 for a clear statement of the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* on the distribution of power in present-day Ladakh, though the situation might not have been all that clear and easy as bSod nams grags pa makes us believe)

shovelled into the river. Much archaeological material was lost in this way: skeletons, a mummy, ritual objects, manuscripts, etc., before this action could be stopped by the intervention of locals who were concerned about the fate of these relics. The remaining grave goods were saved and collected at Matho Monastery by the Matho Museum Project, among them a *thangka*, long human hair, *tsa tsa* and various ritual items, and manuscript fragments. The majority of these items—though not the skeleton and the mummy—and practically all the manuscripts come from the “King’s stupa”.

The recovered *thangka* has been dated by the art-historians of the Matho Museum Project to the 12th century, but the early 13th century could also be considered possible.^① Assuming that it was painted for the funeral ceremony, it could provide a date for the erection of the *mchod rten*, and the *terminus ante quem* for all the items found inside. On an art-historical basis, this dating is supported by two fragmentary illuminations from the “King’s stupa” and one that was discovered in a stupa at Matho village; all three show iconographic and stylistic characteristics of works from 11th–12th century mNga ris.^②

The manuscript fragments, too, suggest this early dating. Apparently, not all of them were produced at exactly the same period, and it is not possible—at least not at the present stage - to date any of them within the narrow frame of, let’s say, half a century. In general, however, their formal characteristics indicate an early phase from the 10th to 12th century, or the early 13th century at the latest, according to the criteria presented by Scherrer-Schaub (1999: 25); some manuscripts might be even older.

These features are mainly:

- The very simple opening sign (*mgo yig*).
- Ornamental signs to mark the end of sections, fill gaps, etc.
- The foliation system(s)^③

Short text like ritual and prayer texts usually do not show any foliation. For the rest, no standard way of foliation can be observed; various systems are used, some of them will be discussed below.

- Orthography: the *ma-ya btags*, i.e., the letter *ya* subscribed to *ma* followed by the vowels *i* and *e* in words like *m(y)i*, *m(y)ed*, *sm(y)in* and the like, the *da drag*, i.e. *-da* as a second final consonant after *-na*, *-ra*, and *-la* (e.g. in *phyind*, *gyurd*, *rold*),

- Palaeography: the inverted *i* (*gi gu log*), or the “horizontal” ligatures *r-ts*, *s-t*, *s-p*, *s-ts*.

① Christian Luczanits, in an e-mail communication of 3 August 2015.

② Amy Heller, in e-mail communications of 22 July and 7 October 2015.

③ For systems of foliation in general, see Scherrer-Schaub 1999: 22, Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002: 197, ancient systems are also described in Dotson 2015.

One characteristic of old manuscripts is also the use of string holes, frequently surrounded by red circles. Imitating Indian palm leaf manuscripts, where they were used for tying the manuscripts, these holes were applied to Tibetan manuscripts until around the 15th century, although rather soon they were not used any more, and occasionally even their original meaning seems to have been forgotten. In Matho, roughly 25 % of the manuscripts have string holes, but none of them shows any sign of having been used.

There are two or three leaves or later additions on apparently older leaves that create the impression of more “modern” writing. These cases must be investigated in detail. In general, however, these fragments are certainly the oldest manuscripts ever found in Ladakh.

The manuscripts are written in *dbu can* script as well as in an—in most of the cases—archaic *dbu med*, in various writing styles and handwritings. In general, they resemble very closely many of the manuscripts discovered at Dunhuang, but also the *dbu med* inscriptions at Alchi Monastery (11th cent.).^①

With regard to writing support, there are two kinds of manuscripts: birch bark and paper. The manuscripts were certainly incomplete and damaged already when they were deposited in the *mchod rten*, yet due to the treatment suffered during the destruction of the stupa they were additionally torn to pieces and scattered; those recovered were found in total disorder. This applies in particular to the birch bark manuscripts. Of these, only very few reasonably substantial units are extant; the majority consists only of small pieces. This material has not yet been investigated at all. Special preparation was necessary before it could even be touched without risking damage to the birch bark.

Birch bark has been in use in Ladakh for ritual purposes to the present day. Some scrolls inside the *maṅi* wheels along the walls of temples and monasteries, e.g., are written on this medium. Ladakhi birch bark manuscripts, however, have not been identified so far. They **might** be of Kashmiri origin and lead us right back to the days of Rin chen bzang po. Radio-carbon dating the birch bark could clarify this question, yet some bureaucratic hurdles must still be overcome before testing can occur.

The paper manuscripts present themselves in unexpectedly good condition after having been cleaned and flattened by the team of the Matho Museum Project. Only a few leaves are affected by fungi or other impairments, and the greater part of them is reasonably legible. Of course, many leaves are torn, and many of the “units” established so far consist only of a single folio; related

① See Denwood 1980 and Tropper 1996, in particular pp. 30-38 on orthographic and palaeographic peculiarities.

folios might simply not have been discovered or their relation to others might not be recognized yet. However, there are also bigger units with up to some 100 folios, and 36 of them in succession.

With regard to style, size, and format they display a great variety, which shall not be discussed here in detail. With regard to content, these manuscript findings contain fragments from a great variety of literary genres: ritual texts, *pūjā*, practice manuals (*khrid yig*), pith instructions (*man ngag*), eulogies (*bstod*), etc., but also “Kanjur” and “Tanjur” texts (i.e., texts that were included into the Kanjurs or Tanjurs some 100–150 years later), as well as philosophical commentaries that could be of Tibetan or even local origin, frequently with interlinear glosses. Very provisionally one can distinguish three groups: “various” ritual and religious texts, “canonical” texts, and “non-canonical” philosophical commentaries etc.

Among them, the ritual and prayer texts may originate from Matho village, but the canonical and commentarial treatises are certainly not from “village manuscripts”. With their philosophical texts, their interlinear glosses and their “writing exercises”, whereby novice monks practiced writing in the margins of old manuscripts, etc., these fragments very much reflect scholastic monastic life. In the 11th and 12th centuries, the monastic and intellectual centre of the area was Nyar ma (now in ruins),^① the only monastery in Ladakh the foundation of which (ca. 1000 CA) can with a high degree of certainty be ascribed to the “great translator” Rin chen bzang po. As the crow flies, it is situated only some six km from Matho on the opposite bank of the river Indus. It seems very likely that Nyar ma monks performing or attending the funeral ceremonies of a Matho king brought their waste manuscripts to deposit them in the stupa, so that these findings offer a glimpse into the library of a monastery at the early days of the “later diffusion” (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism, consisting of both a collection of canonical scriptures and indigenous Tibetan commentarial literature.

Here, only the paper manuscripts shall be discussed, with the main emphasis on the canonical texts, and only a few remarks on the non-canonical material.^②

The canonical texts are predominantly *dpe cha*^③ of various sizes; the smallest of them measure some 28 × 10 cm. However, there is a clear tendency towards bigger sizes—with regard to both foli-

① On this site, see Panglung 1983; Snellgrove/Skorupski 1977: 19. Snellgrove/Skorupski 1980: 84 mentions a description of Nyar ma Monastery as it once was, included in a biography of Rin chen bzang po composed in 1976 by Blo bzang bzod pa from Tiksey Monastery and published by rDo rje tshe brtan in *Historical Materials Concerning the bKra-sis-lhun-po and Rin-chen bzang-po Traditions from the Monastery of Kyi in Lahoul-Spiti (Himachal Pradesh)*, Delhi 1978.

② For a provisional hand-list of both groups of manuscripts, including images of the manuscript, see: <http://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/Matho>.

③ As an exception, there is only one canonical text in the format of a stitched booklet among the material identified so far. See below (n.1, p.213).

os and script – in comparison to non-canonical texts. Quite a number of these manuscripts measure ca. 56–60 × 9–12 cm, with 6–9 lines per page. Even large-size folios of 60–65 × 18–20 cm were in use, anticipating the “standard Kanjur size” of ca. 70 × 20 cm of later days. They were prepared for the scribes with wide margins and string holes surrounded by red circles. However, they were not used in this form, but cut in half before the manuscripts were.

Due to the fragmentary character of the material, nothing can be said about an overall systematic structure of this collection. Judging from the foliation, many of the manuscripts did not belong to any bigger set, but were only single texts, which would suggest a *bka' bstan bcos* collection.

In many cases only numerals are used, with crosses marking the units of hundred from fol. 101 onwards, without any indication of any bigger unit as a volume, as the texts were obviously considered as individual items (Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002: 196). Occasionally, the letters *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, etc., are used as numerals numbering the folios (type I of Scherrer-Schaub 1999: 22). Apparently, this system is used only with shorter texts, as no folios with combined letters or any other additions were discovered. In three cases, numerical figures are used instead of numerals spelt out in words. In addition, a system is used where letters indicate the hundreds, followed by numerals (*ka* 1–100, *kha* 1–99, 200, *ga* 1–99, 300, etc.; type II of Scherrer-Schaub).

Other cases, however, suggest the existence of bigger units. Several leaves from short texts bearing a high folio number give evidence of volumes where related or similar texts were compiled. This might indicate an early form of a proto-Kanjur, i.e., an (attempted) comprehensive collection of the Buddha's words in *mdo mangs* volumes, however, without the systematic arrangement of a fully edited and structured Kanjur (Tauscher 2008: xi–xii).

A foliation system typical for western Tibetan proto-Kanjur collections from late 13th to early 15th century (Basgo, Tholing, Tabo, Gondhla, Phukthar), too, is represented among the Matho fragments. In a combination of letters and numerals, all the volumes show the foliation *ka* plus numeral (1–100) for the folios 1–100, *ka* with subscribed *na* plus numeral (1–99, 200) for the folios 101–200, and *ka* with subscribed *ma* plus numeral (1–99, 300) for the third group of hundred. No folios with higher numbers were discovered at Matho. Within texts that cover more than one volume, like the long *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* or the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, and within the groups of sutras that were transmitted as units already prior to their translation into Tibetan, i.e., the *Avatamsaka* (usually four volumes) and the *Ratnakūṭa* (usually six volumes), the sequence of the volumes is indicated by the letters *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, etc. In these cases the letter *ka* in the foliation is replaced by the respective letter indicating the volume number (type III of Scherrer-Schaub).

Strong evidence for the existence of larger manuscript units is also provided by a manuscript of the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā*. Here, the letters *ka*, *kha*, *ga* and *nga* appear to indicate units of hundred, and

the same letters with subscribed *na* equal units of a second series, presumably constituting a second volume.^① This system is merely inferred, as only folios from the units *kha-na* and *ga-na* are extant, but if this assumption is correct, the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā* could not have been the first text in its set; just like in the Tanjurs, it might have been preceded by the *Vinayasūtravṛṭṭyabhidhānasvavyākhyāna*. However, the foliation *ga-na* 400 does not fit into this assumed system.

The greater part of these canonical texts could be identified with a high degree of certainty, though not all of them. The Matho material preserves textual versions that divert considerably from the editions in the various Kanjurs and Tanjurs, some representing distinct translations from the Sanskrit (or Chinese?) or even translations from different Sanskrit (or Chinese?) models. Due to this fact a number of fragments are suspected to be from “canonical” texts, but they cannot (yet?) be related to any one in particular. In addition, several texts could be identified that are not included in any known canon or at least not in any mainstream Kanjur.

Almost all the major canonical sections (according to the arrangement of the Kanjur and Tanjur of Derge) are represented among the texts hitherto identified. From the Kanjur sections only Avataṃsaka (Phal ches) and Ratnakūṭa (dKon brtsegs) are missing, and from the Tanjur no texts from the sections “Sutra commentary” (mDo ’grel), Abhidharma (mNgon pa), Jātaka (sKyes rabs), and of the sections on the general fields of knowledge, “Grammer” (sGra mdo), etc., have been found. The only text that should probably be included in the “Hymns” (bsTod tshogs) section is not contained in any Tanjur (p. 8ff.).

The absence of Avataṃsaka and, in particular, Ratnakūṭa texts is remarkable, as Ratnakūṭa is prominently represented among the western Tibetan proto-canonical collections mentioned above. Their absence from Matho does not necessarily imply that Avataṃsaka and Ratnakūṭa were not studied at Nyar ma, it simply indicates that at the time of this particular funeral there were no waste copies around from these two sections to be deposited in the *mchod rten*, whatever the reason might have been.

On the other hand, the sections Vinaya (’Dul ba) and Tantra (rGyud) from both Kanjur and Tanjur are particularly well represented. The strong presence of Tantra texts as such is not at all surprising, considering the strong tantric inclination of Atiśa, Rin chen bzang po, Zhi ba ’od, and others who were active in these western parts of Tibet during the early days of *phyi dar* and the time of the production of these manuscripts, which is presumably only slightly later and still to be considered as early *phyi dar*. Nevertheless, it is striking in the context of the general situation of tantric literature in the area:

① Cristina Scherrer-Schaub in an e-mail communication of 3 November 2015.

The proto-canonical collections mentioned above contain nothing that could be counted as “tantra” apart from gZung ’dus (*Dhāraṇīsaṅgraha) texts. gZung (’dus), however, is occasionally considered a category distinct from rGyud, and it appears as a separate section, e.g., in the Early Mustang Kanjur (Eimer 1999) and in the Kanjur of Derge.

In the Kanjur of Basgo (around 1635) the rGyud section is fully represented, but it is not (yet?) known according to which tradition. It contains a considerable number of *rnying ma* tantra, in a separate section as well as intermingled with *gsar ma* tantra, as well as texts not included in any other known Kanjur. The same was probably also true for the contemporary Kanjurs of Hemis (Tauscher/Lainé 2015).

The Kanjurs of Stog and Shey (around 1730), in turn, did not continue this (Ladakhi ?) tradition, but presumably took their rGyud sections from a Bhutanese Kanjur.

Like in Hemis and Basgo, in Matho *rnying rgyud* texts are extant, texts considerably diverging from their canonical versions, and text not contained in the main-stream Kanjurs. All of them, however, are included in the Kanjur of Basgo, so that a common tradition of transmitting tantric literature has to be assumed, of which the Matho fragments provide the earliest witness. This tradition might also be reflected in the Kanjur of O rgyan gling (around 1700; Samten 1994), which contains—just like Basgo—a number of *rnying ma* tantra within its general Tantra section (Mayer 2011) and corresponds with Matho and Basgo in some details.

A few examples may suffice:

Chos spyod thams cad kyi man ngag mngon par rtogs pa’i rgyud (**Sarvadharmacaryopadeśā-bhisamaya tantra*): A commentary on this text is to be found exclusively in the Tanjur of Narthang (N 3536). The root-text, however, is not contained in any Kanjur except for Basgo, where it appears twice.

(*rGyud thams cad kyi gleng gzhi dang gsang chen*) *dPal Kun tu kha sbyor las byung ba [zhes pa’i (b)rtag pa’i rgyal po]* (*[*Sarvatantrasyanidāna-mahāguhya*] *Śrī Sampuṭa [tantrarāja]*): Commentaries are included in all Tanjurs, but the root-text is preserved only in the Kanjurs of Basgo and O rgyan gling.

The *Abhidhānottaratantra* is a popular text, known in all main-stream Kanjur editions as **mNgon par brjod pa’i rgyud bla ma**. In Basgo, however, and in all three manuscripts from Matho it appears as **Nges par brjod pa’i rgyud bla ma’i bla ma**. Both forms represent nothing other than different translations of “*Abhidhānottaratantra*”, but even if this was the sole divergence it would be a very strong indication of the respective line of transmission, in this particular case, pointing to a common tradition of Basgo and Matho (or Nyar ma), in the same way that the two other texts do. Yet it is not only an issue of an alternative translation of the title; the colophon suggests distinct

versions.

While that from Matho is not extant, the Basgo colophon does not give the names of the translators, but it does mention two steps of revision: 1) by Kumāra (= Kumārakalaśa?) and Byang chub shes rab, and 2) by Jñānaśrī, Blo gros snying po, and Rab zhi (spelt *bzhi*). This seems to be the same translation by Dīpaṃkara and Rin chen bzang po that is mentioned in the colophon of Phug brag (F 446) as “another translation” (*gyur gzhan*). In Phug brag the text is titled *Nges par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma*, but as translators Jñānākara and Rig pa gzhon nu are named, and as revisers Prabhākara and Shākya ye shes.

The version contained in the main-stream Kanjurs, the *mNgon par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma*, was translated by the same team as the Basgo–Matho version, Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (Padmākaraśrījñāna in Stog and Shey) and Rin chen bzang po. However, it was revised by Jñānaśrī and Khyung po Chos kyi brtson 'grus, and, once more, by Ānanda and the “Junior translator” (*lo chung* = Legs pa'i shes rab).

Rare or unique Tanjur texts, too, are preserved at Matho. Again, a few examples shall suffice:

mChod rten la mchod pa dbul ba (**Caityapūjāpradāna*, or similar):^① This text claims to be composed by the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna (*slob dpon Klu grub kyis mdzad pa*), however, it is not included among the canonical works ascribed to Nāgārjuna, the author of the *Madhyamakārikā*, and at least I do not know about such a work ascribed to any Nāgārjuna.

Bodhi(sattva)caryāvatāra: One folio is extant from the shorter and apparently older version of this text, attributed to an *Akṣayamati (Blo gros myi zad pa), which is otherwise known to exist only among the Dunhuang manuscripts (IOL Tib J 628 + PT 794).^② The Tanjur version of this treatise, ascribed to Śāntideva (D 3871), too, is represented by only one single folio. However, it preserves, even though only partially, the two *pāda* 10.50cd, which are missing from all Tanjur editions and are known only from the Sanskrit. The complete verse reads in Sanskrit:

pratyekabuddhāḥ sukhino bhavantu śrāvakās tathā |
devāsuranarair nityaṃ pūjyamānāḥ sugauravaiḥ ||

“Equally, may the Pratyekabuddhas be happy, and also the Śrāvakas,
constantly worshiped by respectful gods, demigods and humans.”

In Matho, the second half of the verse reads:

① Preserved in the format of a stitched booklet (Stoddard 2010) of some 17 x 10 cm, which apparently contained several shorter *bstod* texts.

② See Saito 1993 and 2000; for the names of the author, see Saito 2018: 159-157.

[| *lha dang lha min mi rnam* | *s kyis* | | *rta* [*g*] *tu gus bcas skang* / [*b*] *skur bar shog* |

The beginning of *pāda* c, missing in the manuscript due to breakage of the folio, is easy to be reconstructed from the Sanskrit. The equivalent of *pūjyamānāḥ* (“worshiped”), however, poses a problem, as the reading is very uncertain. The term to be expected is *bskur bar*, but this reading does not seem to be possible. Either the manuscript contains a sever scribal error, or it is an example of an older terminology, rendering *pūj-* by *skang ba* (“to satisfy, gratify, ...”). More evidence is needed to decide which might be the case. However, the canonical translation by dPal brtsegs and Sarvajñādeva is already an “old”, a *snga dar* translation, and so we should probably rather assume a scribal error.

A clear example of a different, apparently older translation is provided by the *Āloka-mālāprakaraṇa* (*sNang 'phrel ba'i rab tu byed pa*) of Kampala/Kambala(*pāda*). In the canonical version (D 3895), the text consists of 281 verses plus one introductory verse of veneration. Of these, the introductory verse and 77 1/2 verses are extant in the Matho fragments on four folios (1, 2, 10 and 11, numbered *ka*, *kha*, *tha* and *da*) of probably twelve.^①

Apart from terminological differences and minor variants, some of the verses are rather similar in both translations. In general, however, the different terminology, word order, and arrangement of *pāda*, occasionally even across the limits of a *śloka*, etc., leave no doubt that it is not merely a different version of the canonical translation by Kumārakalaśa and Shākya 'od, but a distinct translation. Possibly, it was even prepared from a—albeit only slightly—different Sanskrit model.

Two of the verses, 216 and 241, consist of five *pāda* each in the Matho version. In the Tanjur of Derge they appear as formally correct *śloka* in the ideal form of metric units of four *pāda*, expressing logically and contextually coherent ideas. As one would not expect a *lotsāba* to add or omit a *pāda* to his liking, these differences must have existed already in Sanskrit, and one rather has to assume the efforts of a Sanskrit editor to formally “straighten” an older version through contextually minor alterations. In fact, the only extant Sanskrit manuscript of this text (Lindtner 2002) displays four-*pāda śloka* in both cases. It is, however, not clear whether this manuscript reflects the direct model of the canonical translation.^②

① The entire fragment is edited, in comparison with the canonical version of Derge, in Tauscher 2019.

② This question shall not be pursued here. However, verse 241 (see n.2, p.215), *pāda* b, e.g., might evoke some doubt when *lakṣālakṣaṃ ca tatṣaṇam* (“having a mark and not having a mark the same moment”, translation of Lindtner 2002) is represented by *mtshan dang mtshan nyid med par snang* (“without sign [*lakṣa* ?] and characteristic [*lakṣaṇa*]”) in Derge, while Matho reads *mtshan gzhi' mtshan nyid myed ldan pa* (“without the basis of characteristics [*lakṣya*] and characteristics [*lakṣaṇa*]”).

In verse 216^① “after having properly learned the nature [of defilements], when yoga has been practiced” (| *rang bzhin legs bslab de nas ni* | | *rnal ’byord goms byas de phan ’chad* |) (Ma) is shortened to “thereafter, somebody who has performed (yogic) practice ...” (| *de nas sbyor ba byas pa yis* |), with the content of the omitted *pāda* being clear from the preceding verse. In this case, the additional *pāda* could theoretically represent a passage from a commentary, taken over by mistake when excerpting the verse–text. However, it does not appear in the only known commentary to the *Ālokamālā*, the **Ālokamālāṭīkā Hṛdānandajanānī* (*sNang ba’i phreng ba’i ’grel pa Yid dga’ ba bskyed pa*) by *Asvabhāva (Ngo bo nyid med pa), D 3896.

In verse 241^② the elaborate expression “in the seeing of those who see emptiness as emptiness” (| *stong nyid stong nyid mthong rnams kyi* | | *mthong bas*) of the Matho version is shortened to the lapidary “when one sees (this)” (*mthong nas*). In Matho, the statement of the two preceding *pāda*, viz. that phenomena are like a dream, without sign and characteristics, is repeated in paraphrase, while the canonical version only refers to it.

A characteristic feature of the terminology of the Matho version is the use of *mthong ba* (“to see”) where Derge has *snang ba* (“to appear”); both terms translate some form of Skt. *dr̥ṣ-*, *paś-*, *īkṣ-*, *vīkṣ-* or *iṣ-*. Seven of these cases occur in the fragment (e.g., 241e/d). Twice, however, it is reversed, and Ma reads *snang ba* vs. *mthong ba* in D; in both cases the Sanskrit version has *paś-*.

① Verse 217 in the counting of the Sanskrit manuscript:

| *rang bzhin legs bslabs de nas ni* | | *rnal ’byord goms byas de phan ’chad* |
 | *g.yul gi nang du dpa’ pa bzhin* | | *’dod chags la sogs skye rnams la* |
 | *dpa’ bos dgra ltar rdeg par byed* | (Matho)
 | *de nas sbyor ba byas pa yis* | | *g.yul ngo ru ni dpa’ bo bzhin* |
 | *’dod chags la sogs pa yi gnas* | | *dpa’ ba’i dgra la bsun par bya* | (Derge, 59a7f.)
kṛtayogyas tu tatpāścāc chūravat samarodare |
rāgādyāyataneṣv eva prahared bodhiśatruṣu || (Lindtner 2002).

While the two Tibetan versions appear to clearly convey the same message, Skt. *kṛtayogyas* (represented in Derge by *sbyor ba byas pa yis*) in *pāda* a, is ambiguous, possibly even intentionally used as a pun. In combination with the following comparison with the hero in battle, it might suggest the interpretation “when he has joined in combat” (Lindtner 2002). In the Tibetan translations, however, the text clearly speaks about practicing yoga. On the ambiguity of the term *yoga* see Mumm 2018.

② Verse 242 in the counting of the Sanskrit manuscript:

| *brtan pa’i rmyi lam sad shes la* | | *mtshan gzhi’ mtshan nyid myed ldan pa* |
 | *stong nyid stong nyid mthong rnams kyi* | | *mthong bas ’jig pa lta bu nyid* |
 | *ci yin zhes kyang mthong ba yin* | (Matho)
 | *rmi lam gsal sad shes pa dang* | | *mtshan dang mtshan nyid med par snang* |
 | *mthong nas mi snang dang mtshungs par* | | *ci zhig lta bur snang ba yin* | (Derge, 60a6f.)
gādhasvapnotthitajñānaṃ lakṣālakṣaṃ ca tatkṣaṇam |
dr̥ṣṭānaṣṭanibhaṃ caiva kim apīva ca paśyati || (Lindtner 2002).

Other examples of terminological divergences, both to be found in verse 240 are:

g.yogs pa (“to obscure, cover”) (Ma) vs. *khyab pa* (“to permeate, cover, pervade”) (D):

Although these verbs are not attested elsewhere as translations of the same Sanskrit term, their meanings are similar enough that we can take them as the equivalents for the same expression; the extant Sanskrit version reads *saṃkīrṇa* (“mixed, mingled, confused, polluted”).

'khrul ba (“to deceive” etc.) (Ma) vs. *'khor ba* (“to revolve” etc.) (D):

The semantic connection between these terms is not obvious, but both are attested as translating Skt. *(vi)bhrama*, and in the present case the manuscript reads *paribhrama*, terms that combine the meanings of “roaming around” and “illusion, confusion, error”. Probably the idea of *saṃsāra*-like revolving could—in a particular context and time—be expressed by the verb *'khrul ba*. It has to be noted that in colloquial Tibetan the idea of “to err, to be deceived” can be expressed by *mgo 'khor ba* as well as by *mgo 'khrul ba*.

However, unless more evidence for these variations can be found in other texts, it cannot be decided whether they are examples of an “old” and “new terminology”, or merely peculiarities of this particular text and its translator.

The non-canonical texts all appear in *dpe cha* format of various sizes, with narrow margins and small script, exclusively an archaic *dbu med*. Quite a number of leaves measure 62–65 × 9.5–12 cm with 10–14 lines per page. Some of them use numerical figures in their *sa bcad*, abbreviations (*skung yig*) and contractions (*bsdu yig*) of syllables (Eimer 1992: 53ff.), just as they can be found in early manuscripts in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*,^① frequently with interlinear glosses.

Not a single text of this group could be identified so far. As is to be expected from the particular overall situation of the fragments, beginnings and endings of texts are rare. Even if they are extant, they pose questions rather than provide answers at the present stage, as they seem to indicate texts unknown to western academia as well as to local scholars, both laymen and monks.

This is the case, e.g., with the *sDud pa tshigs su bcad pa'i dka'* [the manuscript reads *rka*] *'grel kyi ti ka*, “composed by the Buddhist monk Byang chub ye shes” (*shag gya dge slong byang chub yais kyi sbyar ba*). Regarding the author one might think of the 11th century *bKa' gdams pa* scholar Ar Byang chub ye shes, author of the *sDud pa tshigs su bcad pa'i 'grel ba* (*bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*, vol. 3: 137–277). However, no *... dka' 'grel kyi ti ka* is known from either Ar Byang chub ye shes or any other author. Whoever the author may be, the text consists of “notes” on the *sDud pa tshigs su bcad pa'i dka' 'grel* by Buddhaśrījñāna, apparently composed by a *bKa' gdams*

① *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs*. 90 vols. [Khreng tu'u:'] Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006–2009.

pa scholar.^① The text originally consisted of 54 folios, 30 of which are extant.

When the people of Matho followed the advice of their Rinpoche and destroyed these *mchod rten*, they revealed a fraction of the oldest layer of Buddhist literature known in Ladakh. Much material was destroyed by the heedless actions of the villagers, the manuscript findings consist exclusively of fragments, the majority of them rather small ones, and the study of the material has only just begun. The full extent of information that it might provide cannot even be estimated. Nevertheless, even at this early stage of research it is possible hypothetically to assume that a part of the manuscripts found at Matho were initially in use at the monastery of Nyar ma. It is obvious that hitherto unknown texts or versions of texts are among the fragments, and one can expect information about the development and transmission of Buddhist canonical literature.

Communalities between some versions of Matho and the Kanjur of Basgo suggest a common origin of their tantric literature. While the Sūtra sections in the Kanjurs of Hemis and Basgo are closely related to the Early Mustang Kanjur (Tauscher/Lainé 2015), their Tantra sections apparently represent a tradition distinct from Mustang as well as from all better known Kanjurs. However, traces of it might have survived in the Kanjur of O rgyan gling.

All this is merely hypothesis; for the time being, nothing else can be offered, and much more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the material is required to evaluate all the information provided by the recently discovered Matho manuscript fragments.

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① J.L. Panglung, in an e-mail communication of 14 January 2015.

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Abbreviations and sigla

D	Kanjur and Tanjur edition of Derge
F	Kanjur edition of Phug brag
IOL	India Office Library
IsIAO	Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente
Ma	Manuscript fragments of Matho
N	Kanjur and Tanjur edition of Narthang
PT	Pelliot Tibétain

《西域歷史語言研究集刊》是由中國人民大學國學院西域歷史語言研究所主辦的學術刊物，以刊登國內外學者關於中國西北邊疆地區少數民族歷史、語言、考古、地理、宗教等方面的最新研究成果為主要宗旨，發表具有原創性的學術研究論文、書評和研究綜述等，以期推動國內學界在西域歷史語言研究方面的進步。

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