

Bonpo family lineages in Central Tibet

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Introduction

According to Tibetan historians, before Buddhism was introduced into Tibet, the Bon religion was the only religion in Tibet. Among the Bonpos, there were various classes according to their position in society. The *sku gshen*, who performed the daily ritual for the royal family, held the highest position. From the first king of Tibet up to King Khri-srong lde-btsan (eighth century A.D.), the position of *sku gshen* had been maintained, and was even gradually strengthened. The *sku gshen* took part not only in the religious realm but also in political life. Indeed, the *sku gshen* was in the process of becoming a new aristocracy. Their position was almost equal to that of the king. In the course of time, the *sku gshen* posed a threat to the royal throne. So when King Khri-srong lde-btsan ruled the country, he felt that the Bonpo priests represented a threat. He decided to persecute Bon and to favour Buddhism. Although most historical texts claim that the Bon religion was persecuted during the reign of this king, the Buddhists usually preferred to adopt rituals of the Bonpos rather than to persecute them. On the surface, Bon seemed to be persecuted, Bonpo saints were compelled to flee from Central Tibet, and Buddhism took root. In fact, Buddhism could not have been established without adopting the ritual activities of Bon. So while the Buddhists persecuted the Bon religion, they also gradually adopted the Bonpo ritual system. There was a great debate between the two religions during the reign of King Khri-srong lde-btsan. The *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang* says:

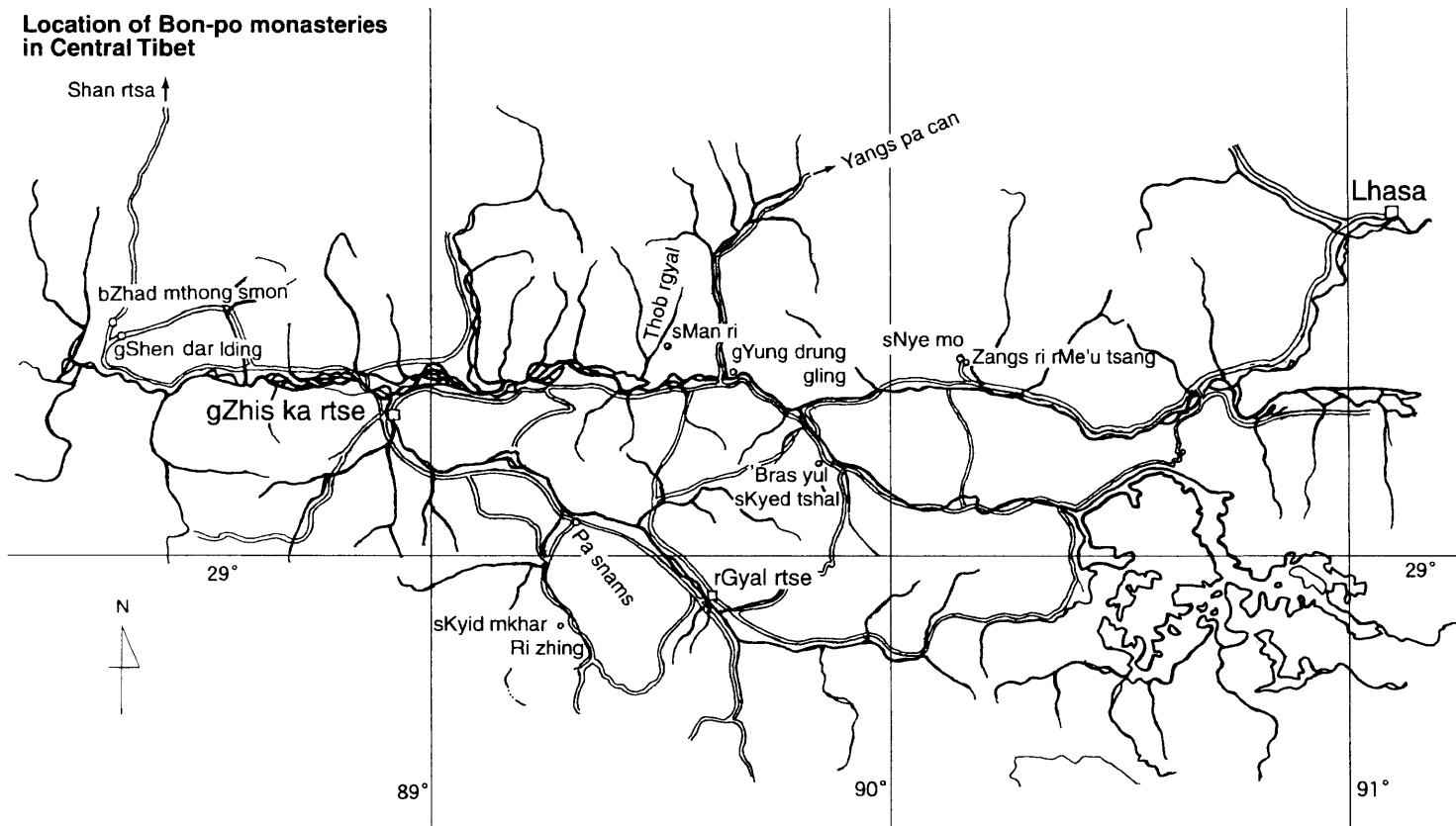
“Once again, all Bonpo priests said that you Buddhists cut your hair which has been given by your own father, and you change your clothes which have been given by your own mother, and you hold a beggar’s stick and bowl.” “Then Li-shu stag-ring said that the word *bswo* which we Bonpos recite is the sound of the original Bon of creation. We use instruments such as the *phur pa*, the *gshang* and the drum in order to conquer the devil and establish a link between gods and humans *'dre* and *srin*.”¹⁾

Thus the conflict between the two religions started and has lasted from generation to generation. The Abbot of Samye played the role of *sku gshen* at that time. The monks in the monasteries were given a very special position; the abbots became the new aristocracy. In this way, the old political conflict arose again. Some noble families took advantage of this situation. So King Khri Dar-ma, whom

Buddhist historians call Glang-dar-ma, carried out the so-called persecution of Buddhism. That was, however, not only a persecution of religion but rather a conflict between the royal family and the monastic power. Then lHa-lung dPal-gyi rdo-rje, the Abbot of Samye, murdered the king, and the Tibetan Empire collapsed. About a century later, Buddhism was once more introduced from India. Many Tibetan Buddhists visited India and Indian scholars were invited to Tibet. Buddhism first rose again in western Tibet. Meanwhile Bon also rose in Central Tibet. This is known as 'the Restoration of Religion' (*bstan pa phyi dar*). Bonpo texts had been hidden since King Khri-srong lde-btsan had banned Bon in the eighth century. The restoration of Bon started when Bonpo textual treasures were discovered in the tenth century.

In the tenth and the eleventh centuries, the monastic order was not so prominent in Tibet, even among the Buddhists. Temples were on a small scale. Because there were no monasteries to function as centers of learning and practice of the doctrine, masters always taught in their own homes. Thus the combination of religious figure and family member was not characteristic of Bon only. It is easy to find a similar system in Buddhism also at that time. Although Atisha's (982-1054) insistence on the rule of celibacy had been promulgated in Central Tibet, people did not care much whether a lama was married or not. The family lineage, rather than spiritual succession from master to disciple, was considered important. Indeed, within a spiritual lineage, the master was usually the paternal uncle of the disciple. The idea of family lineage was strong in Bonpo communities also. gShen, one of the six Bonpo family lineages, was considered to have many famous treasure discoverers (*gter ston*). gShen-chen Klu-dga' (996-1036 *STNN*), the most famous and influential Bonpo textual treasure discoverer, was born at 'Bri-mtshams in Tsang. He was considered to be a descendant of gShen-rab Mi-bo, the founder of the Bon religion. Having discovered numerous Bonpo texts in the year 1017, he transmitted them to the Bru, Zhu, and sPa lineages. The latter three wrote commentaries to the texts which had been discovered by gShen-chen. The *sNang srid mdzod phug* was commissioned to Bru Nam-mkha' g-yung-drung, and his son Bru-sha Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan composed a commentary to this texts. He also established the doctrinal tradition of the Metaphysical Teachings (*mtshan nyid kyi bshad srol btod*), which later on developed into a teaching system at the monastery of dBen-sa-kha in gYas-ru. The Tantric Teachings (*gsang sngags*) were commissioned to sPa-ston dPal-mchog, and he composed a commentary to the *Thig le dbyings 'chad*²⁾ and established the tradition of the Tantric Teaching (*gsang sngags kyi bshad srol btod*). The Mental Teachings were commissioned to Zhu-gyas Legs-po. His son Zhu sKyid-po composed a commentary to the *Byang sems gab pa*³⁾ and established the doctrinal tradition of the Mental Teachings (*sems phyogs kyi bshad srol btod*). One may think that rMe'u is also one of the famous disciples of the great gShen. According to reliable Bonpo historical sources, rMe'u was just a disciple of Bru, Zhu and sPa, but not a direct disciple of gShen-chen.

**Location of Bon-po monasteries
in Central Tibet**



These are later known as gShen, Bru, Zhu, sPa and rMe'u, and they are the most influential Bonpo family lineages in Tibet. These five family lineages were considered as the most important ones, and therefore won a very important position in Bonpo society. So far the earliest source in which the five families are given referred to as lama lineages is *TN* by sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po. At the time, the Khyung-po lineage is not referred to as a lama lineage. So this lineage became as a lama lineage later. Not only these five figures but also their family lineages became very important in the later religious development of Bon. Indeed they are important not only with regard to religion but for the Bonpo community as a whole.

From the twelfth century onwards Bon and Buddhism established their monastic power. At that time, Buddhist monasteries were not only the place where Buddhist doctrines could be learnt, but were also the centre of economy and politics. So the combination of secular and monastic power had already been established in Tibetan society. The power was usually held by one family. The Sakya principality was the most successful among both Buddhist and Bonpo traditions. Along with the gradual rise of monastic power, the idea of *sprul sku* was established. The first *sprul sku* was acknowledged in the Karma bka'-brgyud tradition. There are two very important aspects of the *sprul sku* system. Firstly, this system can freely spread religion and increase the religious power in society; secondly, it can also bring huge wealth and power for religious realm. The Bonpo tradition, however, did not pay much attention to the *sprul sku* system, but instead continued the tradition of family lineages. In Bonpo tradition, there are only five clans, which can have lineage lamas. One who is born in one of these five clans is considered as a holy person, and has a high position in Bonpo society. This is a remnant of pre-Buddhist thought or is at least older than the *sprul sku* system. In the later development of Bon, the idea of *sprul sku* was also adopted, but it did not develop to the extent that it did in the Karma bka' brgyud pa and dGe-lugs-pa traditions. So the five family lineages remained the main way of succession in Bon in Central Tibet until the beginning of the fifteenth century. Each family founded its own monastery. At the beginning, family and monastic life were combined. The early period of the monastic system of Bon did not follow the celibate rule, so people who came to the monastery to study Bon did not have to receive the vows of a monk. Dam-pa rgyal-tshab, who founded the monastery of the gShen family, had not received the vows of a monk, and the monastery was run by lay lamas for several generations after him. With the growth of new Buddhist schools which emphasized the keeping of the vows of a monk and which reformed monastic life, the Bonpos were criticized for not obeying the monastic discipline. Then, in fact, the conflict between the two religions started again.

Buddhism as well as Bon found a theoretical basis for their own systems. The Bonpo tradition is based its system on the texts, which were discovered by the later treasure discoverers (*gter ston*). Those discoverers lived in between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. Even though Bonpos maintained the family lineage system,

they also adopted the idea of *sprul sku* and the monastic system. The Bonpo texts which were discovered in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries claim that all of Bonpo discoverers are reincarnations of the ancient Bonpo saints (*rig 'dzin*), and the five families lineage are considered as descendents of some sort of divinities or of sTon-pa gShen-rab. The emergence of the idea of *sprul sku* in Bon was a sign that Bon began to adopt Tibetan Buddhist ideas. However, the lineage system had not been abandoned, although the impact of the new monastic system could not be avoided. Interaction between the two religions was taking place in the form of an acute and complex struggle. During this conflict not only was Bon assimilated to Buddhism, but Buddhists also adopted a large number of Bonpo beliefs and practices. This actually started as early as the reign of King Khri-srong lde-btsan. Even though Bon and Buddhism are assimilated to one another, the conflict has been maintained for many centuries, even in modern times. The acute conflict caused the Bonpo population in Central Tibet to diminish. The Bonpo community was gradually to a large extent driven away from Central Tibet. Bon had the most difficult time during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-82). The Mongolian troops, who were his patrons, destroyed many Bonpo monasteries. Indeed they destroyed not only Bonpo monasteries, but also other Buddhist schools. Even though many Bonpo monasteries were destroyed, the typical Bonpo tradition, namely that of the old family lineages, was maintained. In a certain sense, these family lineages played an important role in Bonpo tradition. Nevertheless, they could not spread the Bon religion as widely as the Buddhist schools, which were characterised by the *sprul sku* system. The Bonpo monasteries in Central Tibet were unable to extend their monastic influence much; the number of monks diminished. For example, in the time of its prosperity, there were three colleges (*khams tshan*) in the Zhu seat at sKyid-mkhar, each college having more than one hundred monks. However in the beginning of this century, there was only one college left with about thirty monks⁴). The decline of the monastic life of the Zhu lineage started in the seventeenth century, namely, during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama. It has been a regular feature that lamas from these family lineages visit northern and eastern Tibet yearly in order to get economic resources to support their monasteries in Central Tibet. They usually go to areas where Bonpos are settled such as Hor, Khyung-po, and parts of Kham and Amdo. The duration of their visits usually depends on how far they will travel. Sometimes their visits last one or two years, so that they even take up residence in the area. In the gShen lineage, the first one who went to Bonpo areas to get economic support was gShen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan (b. 1360). He was the abbot of Dar-lding, a monastery of the family. Before his visit to Dang-ra in Hor, Dar-lding was still very small, almost like a hermitage. He built two more temples in Dar-lding when he came back from Dang-ra (see Part I).

The sPa lineage entirely moved to the Hor area in northern Tibet. It sometimes happened that a lama founded a monastery during his visit to a particular place, but

it would not necessarily be run by his lineage afterwards. Even though the monastic system had been completely adopted by the Bonpos, people were still willing to support the five great lineages. Therefore, Bonpos respected lamas from these lineages in the same way as the *sprul sku* was respected by Buddhists. The *sprul sku* system even caused the Bru lineage to completely disappear in the latter part of the 19th century. However, the other four lineages have survived in Central Tibet.

The development of the five family lineages mentioned above can be divided into two phases. The first is a period of combination of mythical and legendary accounts. Each family claimed divine descent. Although such accounts lack historical validity, it is still very important to take them into consideration. The gShen family, for example, is said to be related to sTon-pa gShen-rab. After his enlightenment, his descendants became the imperial priests (*sku gshen*) in Central Tibet. The Bru family, too, is said to have descended from the sky to the earth and became priests in Bru-sha, west of Zhang-zhung. Some scholars have identified Bru-sha as Gilgit. Zhu is considered to be the descendants of 'Bri which was a famous family lineage during the reign of King Gri-gum in Central Tibet. sPa and rMe'u are said to be of divine descent. For the second phase, some sources are available in which we find accounts of historical events from the tenth century up to the present day. We have comparatively abundant sources for this period. Accounts of both stages are insufficient from the Buddhist side. As we know, historians belong to different schools seldom quote one another. This is especially true with regard to Buddhist historians when dealing with Bon. Thus, it is extremely difficult to bear out an event on the basis of accounts from other traditions.

In the later development of Bon, these five great lineages not only exercised secular power, but also monastic power. Each family maintained its own family lineage. Meanwhile, an extensive monastic system was established. In the early thirteenth century, gShen Kun-mkhyen Ye-shes blo-gros founded a monastery called Ri-rgyal at Dar-lding in Tsang, Bru-sha rJe-btsun founded a monastery known as dBen-sa-kha at gYas-ru in Tsang, and Zhu Ye-shes rin-chen founded dBang-ldan lhun-grub-sgang at sKyid-mkhar in Tsang. The sPa and rMe'u also founded their own monasteries in Central Tibet. With the growth in influence of the religious orders, succession to power in these families took effect on two levels or two lines. A married brother transmitted the secular power from father to son; another brother, a monk, passed on the religious power. Many famous Bonpo scholars were from these five family lineages, especially in the early development of Bon. Bonpo religious rituals have been influenced by the five family lineages, some of whom have evolved a special ritual style. These different styles were adopted by Bonpos, and were established wherever Bonpos settled. These ritual styles are known as *lugs*: *Bru lugs*, *gShen lugs* and so on. Thus the same ritual texts can be performed in different ways according to the different styles.

Although all the lineages are found today except Bru, our sources only provide incomplete lists of each family lineage. Especially, many primary sources were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Information about the family lineages during the last two centuries is therefore rather vague, as we only have oral sources. Most families did not compile very detailed genealogies; in addition the families were divided into several branches. There were not many interactions between those branches, so it is very seldom that they refer to each other.

Textual and Oral Sources

The sources I am using can be divided into written and oral ones. The written sources are historical texts whereas the oral ones are interviews. The history of the family lineages is based on written sources and that of modern families is based on oral sources. The written sources can be divided into two groups according to their contents. Those texts in which the events before King Khri-srong lde-btsan's persecution of Bon are recorded mainly belong to the first group, and when these sources talk about the Restoration of Bon they are always referring to the prophecies of Dran-pa nam-mkha', Li-shu stag-ring and other Bonpo masters. Among sources which belong to this group are the *bsGrags pa rin chen gling grags*, the *'Dul ba gling grags*, the *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang rnam thar chen mo*, and the *Dran pa'i lde mig 'bring po*. These texts mostly appeared around the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Those, in which the rediscovery of the Bonpo texts is recorded, belong to the second group. They principally quote from the sources belonging to the first group, and some later events are dealt with in greater detail than is the case in the first group. Sources which belong to the second group are the *rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas* by Khyung-po Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, the *Dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron me* by sPa-btsun bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, the *Sang rgyas bstan pa spyi yi 'byung khungs* by Kun-grol grags-pa, the *Legs bshad rin po che'i gter mdzod* by Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan, and the *gYung drung bon gyi bstan 'byung phyogs bsdus* by dPal-tshul. The chronological order of these texts is as follows:

- (1) The earliest source is the *Bon chos dar nub gi (kyi) lo rgyus rgyas pa rin chen gling grags ces bya ba dmongs pa blo'i gsal byed*. According to LShDz, it was discovered by mTha'-bzhi Ye-shes blo-gros *alias* mTha'-bzhi 'khrul-gsas from bSam-yas dbu-rtse⁵, but SGK indicates that it will be discovered in Bum-thang in Lhasa (Lha-sa bum-thang). Karmay points out that this text is also called *bsGrags byang* (Karmay 1972: 17). The *gYung drung bon gyi rgyud 'bum*, which is published in *Sources for a History of Bon*, also has the marginal title as *bsGrags byang*. This term can thus refer to any one of several related texts, dating from the 13th century⁶.

- (2) The *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang rnam thar chen mo* is the second eldest source available so far. According to later historical texts, it was discovered by Gyer Thogs-med also known as Khod-po Blo-gros thogs-med in the year 1302 (*STNN*), and it is believed to be a prophecy of Dran-pa nam-mkha' and Li-shu stag-ring (eighth century). An account of the famous debate between Buddhists and Bonpos in the eighth century is given in this text in detail. No source recorded the great debate in as great detail as this text. It is obvious that this passage can provide no evidence of monastic vows in Bon at that time, as the Bonpo priests were just yogis or ritual performers. Later Bonpos repudiate this fact, so they never give the quotation of the relevant passage in their own works. In fact, this indicates that this text may be earlier than the *bsGrags byang*. But what we have now is not the original one. It seems to have been revised by later writers, because it mentions some figures who came five generations later than gShen-chen (995-1035 *STNN*).
- (3) *Dran pa'i lde mig 'bring po* is one of the three versions of the prophetic texts of Dran-pa nam-mkha' (eighth century) namely the longest, the medium length and the short. They were passed on orally to Blo-ldan snying-po (b. 1360 *STNN*) by Dram-pa nam-mkha' (Karmay 1972: 72). It seems to have been available by the thirteenth century because no lama is mentioned later than that century.
- (4) *'Dul ba gling grags*. The full title of this text runs: *'Dul rgyud bsgrags pa gling grags*, but in short it is referred to as *bsGrags pa gling* or *'Dul ba gling grags*. It was discovered by Slob-dpon Gang-zhug thog-rgyal in Mang-mkhar lcags-'phrang. It is published in *Sources for a History of Bon*, Dolanji, 1972.
- (5) *rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas* by Khyung-po Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan. The passage called 'the Duration of the Coctrine' runs: 'King Khri-srong lde-btsan was born in the horse year. Buddhism was established when he was twenty-one. Bon was persecuted when he was forty-five and he died at the age of fifty-six. Four sixty-year cycles and fifty-two years had passed when gShen Klu-dbang discovered Bon doctrines in the snake year. When another two hundred and seventy-six years had passed the temple of gShen Dar-lding was built. Then ninety-seven years passed I composed this chronicle'. According to *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, King Khri-srong lde-btsan was born in 790 A.D. which is the same as that given by our author. The building of Samye monastery started in the year 810. This fits with the year which our author gives as that of the establishment of Buddhism. Then in the year 834 the persecution of Bon began, and the king died in the year 846. Since then two hundred and ninety-two years had passed, which brings us to the year

1137. This was the year that the great gShen discovered Bon doctrines. Then four hundred and twenty-two years passed, which brings us to the year 1559. This was the earth-sheep year in which our author wrote his chronicle. This date is justified by the *bstan-rtsis* of Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan (b. 1783)⁷⁾ A different date for the *rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas* is given by Kvaerne (1985:243) and Karmay (1977:118), viz. 1439.

- (6) *bsTan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron me* by sPa-btsun bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, is the most important text among the second group of historical texts which pay particular attention to the Restoration of Bon, especially describing the rediscovery of the doctrine. This text is often quoted by later sources. There are two main points in this text. The first is relevant to gShen-sgur. It says that there are different versions regarding his discovery of Bon texts, but that his own version of the events is the correct one. It shows that there was an autobiography of gShen-chen which was available to sPa-btsun. The second main point is about the monastic lineages of the five great families. These monastic lineages were continued until the author's lifetime. Concerning the date of the writing of the text, the last paragraph reads as follows: 'Seven sixty year cycles and forty years had passed after the discovery of Bon texts by gShen-sgur in the fire-snake year when I wrote this work in the wood-bird year'. In other words, four hundred and sixty years passed after discovery of the text by gShen-chen, he wrote this chronicle. We have two most influential points of view for the date of the discovery of gShen-chen so far, one is the year 1017 given by Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin (b. 1813), and the other is the year 1137 given by gShen Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan (b. 1738). According to the first source, the year of the writing this chronicle would be 1477, and the latter would be the year 1597. As no information is to be found in this text concerning gShen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan contemporary with mNyam-med Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan (1356-1415, *STNN*), the first date would seem to be more probable than the latter one. There are two editions of this text, Dolanji 1972 edition, and Beijing 1991. There are some differences between the two editions. Especially, the date of writing the work is given differently. The Beijing edition gives the year as the wood-mouse year, while the Dolanji edition says it was written in the wood-bird year. So it is clear that there are several manuscript copies of this text.
- (7) *Sang rgyas bstan pa spyi yi 'byung khungs yid bzhin nor bu 'dod pa 'jo ba'i gter mdzod* by Kun-grol grags-pa, composed in 1742 (Kvaerne 1990: 156, note 41), dealing not only with Bon, but also with Buddhist schools. There is a passage in which a brief list of five great Bon family lineages is made. It

just mentions the name of the lamas, but does not provide further information.

- (8) *'Dzam gling gangs ti se 'i dkar chag tshang dbyangs yid 'phrog dgos 'dod* by dKar-ru grub-chen bsTan-'dzin rin-chen, written in 1844 in Khyung-po. There are two editions of this text. one is found in *mDzod phug rtsa ba dang spyi don dang gangs ri ti se 'i dkar chag*, published at Dolanji in 1973, and the second is published in Serie Orientale Roma, volume LXI, edited by Namkhai Norbu, 1989.
- (9) *Legs bshad rin po che 'i gter mdzod* written by Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan in 1972, pays particular attention to the discovery of texts and the five Bon family lineages. Most quotations in this text are from *SGK* and *TN*. It has been translated by Karmay (1972).
- (10) *gYung drung bon gyi bstan 'byung phyogs bsdus* by dPal-tshul in 1960s, is the only historical text in which an account of monasteries and brief biographies of lamas are given. However, it does not mention which sources are used.

1. The gShen Lineage

1.1 The origin of the gShen family

According to the biography of gShen-chen Klu-dga', the word *gshen* was not the name of the clan from which gShen-rab was descended. Originally, the term *gshen* meant 'priests' in general. It just indicated a person who performed the religious ritual. There were many types of *gshen* in ancient Tibet, such as *lha gshen*, *srid gshen*, *phywa gshen*, *dmu gshen* and so on. Among the *gshen*, *dmu gshen* were the most important, as they performed rituals for the royal family only. Later they were known as 'gshen of the king's body' (*sku gshen*). The dMu clan played a very important role in ancient Tibet. Since the first king, the priestly lineage lasted up to King Srong-btsan sgam-po, the thirty-second king of Tibet, and the main priests came from the dMu clan. The *dmu thag* is a supernatural rope. It was believed that it established a link between the king and heaven. The dMu are considered to be one of the six original tribes of ancient Tibet⁸⁾. sTon-pa gShen-rab was born in the dMu clan. The dMu clan is also the same clan from which the first mythical king of Tibet descended. Different chronicles give, each in its own way, legendary accounts of the dMu clan. According to the *GRB*, from the first dMu family to gShen-rab Mi-bo fifteen generations succeeded each other:

dang po lha dang gshen gyi rgyud rabs ni/ sgra 'grel ⁹⁾ *las/ sang po dang chu lcam gnyis las/ sras ming sring bco brgyad do/ de 'i gcen srid rje 'brang dkar/ lha*

za gung grags gnyis 'tshos pa las/ sras bco rgyad sras mo bco brgyad byung ba'i che ba/ lha rab gnyen rum rje bya ba lha yi skye ba yin/ de'i sras gnam lha dkar po/ de'i sras gnam 'then rje la sogs 'then dgu gcig brgyud du byung/ lta ba khyung chen lding ba'i rgyud¹⁰⁾ las/ mu rje lha rgyud 'od gsal lha las chad/ dang po ye mu la 'then/ de nas dmu sangs la 'then/ de nas pa la sangs g-yen la 'then/ de nas g-yen sangs phywa la 'then/ de nas phywa sangs 'ol la 'then/ de nas 'ol sangs yum la 'then/ (de nas yum sangs rgod la 'then/)
de nas yum sangs 'od la 'then/ de nas rlung sangs 'od la 'then/ de nas 'od gsal dmu la 'then/ 'then dgu 'od kyi snyig ma la / rgyal po dmu phyug gi rab bzhag/ rgyal po sangs kyi gdung 'dzin pa/ thar byed ston pa rgyal po 'i/ dmu rgyal lam pa phyag dkar bzhag/¹¹⁾

The dMu clan was a descendant of the 'od gsal lha. The dMu clan first counted nine generations called 'then, followed by six bzhag. The term 'then means to be descended from and bzhag has a similar meaning. *STBK* gives a similar account concerning the ancestor of gShen-rab Mi-bo:

srid pa yab yum las brgyud pa 'i/ phywa dmu gtsug dang gsum du srid/ dmu las dmu rje btsun po dang/ de las dmu rabs 'then dgu srid/ de nas stag cha 'al 'ol sogs/ 'al 'ol gsum grol stag cha las/ phywa rgye yab bla bdal drug byung/ srid pa 'i phywa rabs mched bzhi byung/¹²⁾

The dates of gShen-rab are as obscure as his birthplace. His biography contains a remarkable episode, namely his action in Tibet. According to the *mDo 'dus*, he married five women, one of whom, rKong-bza', was a princess from Kongpo (rKong-po). It is quite possible that this event took place because Kongpo was a well-known place before King Srong-btsan sgam-po in Tibet. According to the stone inscription (eighth century) in Kongpo, the ruler of Kongpo was called rKong-rje dkar-po, and there was a relationship between the Yar-lung king and rKong-rje dkar-po after the killing of Gri-gum btsan-po¹³⁾. A son of Gri-gum btsan-po supported Bon in Central Tibet. sTon-pa gShen-rab was, perhaps, a famous priest in the Gri-gum btsan-po era, who had good relations with rKong-rje dkar-po. According to the *gZer mig*¹⁴⁾, a biography of gShen-rab, before gShen-rab went to Kongpo, the demon Khyab-pa, a Kongpo chieftain, had stolen the seven horses of gShen-rab. gShen-rab was chasing him to Kongpo, where they had a conflict. Finally gShen-rab conquered Khyab-pa, and the people of Kongpo were converted to Bon. So this was, perhaps, the main reason why he married rKong-bza'.

rKong-bza' gave birth to a son, named rKong-tsha dBang-lan. The dMu clan was able to keep its high position and good relations with the royal family until the eighth century. There are only four generations of which there are detailed accounts from sTon-pa gShen-rab to King Khri-srong lde-btsan (eighth century)¹⁵⁾. According to *LShDz*, after sTon-pa gShen-rab, the dMu lineage can be divided into three lineages, known as *che rgyud*, 'bring rgyud and chung rgyud. The line which leads down to dMu-gshen Nam-mkha' snang-ba mdog-can is the *che rgyud* lineage. The line from which Dran-pa nam-mkha' descends is the 'bring rgyud. The line of

descendants of the family of dMu-gshen in Tsang is the *chung rgyud*¹⁶⁾. As a consequence of Khri-srong's persecution of Bon, many Bonpos were compelled to leave Central Tibet and go to far-away places or convert to Buddhism. At that time, not only the dMu family but also many other Bonpos were obliged to flee from Central Tibet or convert to Buddhism. Dran-pa nam-mkha', for example, converted to Buddhism:

“He (Dran-pa) put his *gshang* (flat bell, a Bonpo ritual instrument) on his head three times and said: Now I will convert to Buddhism and give up the magic practices of Bon. Then the *gshang* was hidden. He held the *dril bu* (bell, a Buddhist ritual instrument) and said, I have converted to Buddhism. He touched the *dril bu* to his brow three times, took a knife from his pocket, and cut his hair and put it on the Mandala; he was named Bra-ka dPal-chen-po (sic). Then Dran-pa nam-mkha' became a Buddhist monk and studied and taught Buddhism¹⁷⁾.”

It might have caused the '*bring rgyud*' line of the dMu clan to be extinct. Under those circumstances, the *chung rgyud* line of the dMu clan migrated as far as Tsong-kha¹⁸⁾, in north-eastern Tibet. There is no information about the activity of this clan in Amdo, but according to later genealogical texts¹⁹⁾, the dMu clan in Amdo, too, converted to Buddhism, as will be discussed below. Some sources claim that the move of the gShen family took place during the reign of King Gri-gum bTsan-po²⁰⁾.

1.2. The rise of the gShen family in Central Tibet

About one century after King Khri-srong's persecution of Bon, bKra-gsal rgyal-po, from the dMu family in Amdo, made a pilgrimage to U-tsang. His mother was a descendant of the sGa clan, one of the six ancient tribes of Tibet. He settled at 'Bri-mtshams²¹⁾ in Tsang. According to a genealogical text of the gShen clan²²⁾, bKra-gsal rgyal-po was a Buddhist *sngags pa*. There is a short account about how his descendants became Bonpo. The story says that dPal-mgon-gsas, the third generation from bKra-gsal rgyal-po, married a woman from a Bonpo family. She was the last descendant from her family, and after dPal-mgon-gsas married her they carried on her family. Since then the dMu clan became Bonpo again²³⁾. They had three sons, Klu-dga', Klu-rtsegs and Ge-khod. Klu-dga', the eldest, was born at 'Bri-mtshams in Tsang, and was later known as gShen-chen or gShen-sgur. Accounts of him are comparatively numerous. According to sPa-btsun bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, there are several biographies of gShen-chen. The autobiography was considered the most reliable among them. sPa-btsun quotes a passage from the autobiography of gShen-chen, saying “It is the only reliable one because it was told by gShen-sgur himself, but apart from that, several accounts of him are all invented²⁴⁾”. Thus it seems that there existed an autobiography of gShen Klu-dga' in sPa-btsun's lifetime. The biographies available to us are genealogical texts. Who the authors of those texts are is not clear, nor the dates of writing (see the Introduction).

There are two important events during the lifetime of gShen-chen. One is the discovery of Bonpo texts when he was twenty-one years old. This event was the most influential one for the later development of Bon. The other is his family's move to Dar-lding. There is some uncertainty concerning his moving from mTsho-rnga-brag to Dar-lding, nor do we know if his whole family moved. According to rGya-mtsho who used to be a monk of Ri-rgyal at Dar-lding, after gShen Klu-dga' discovered Bonpo texts, he wanted to found a new seat (*gdan sa*), so he threw a white scarf (*dar kha*) into sky. The white scarf flew to Dar-lding, and accordingly he made up his mind to found a seat there. Since then the place has been called Dar-lding which means "a scarf floating in the air". This story giving the reason for the move has been handed down orally. The seat which was founded by gShen-chen was called dGe-lding gSer-sgo khra-mo. It is just three kilometers away from the place where the modern gShen family is located²⁵). It might be the antecedent of the seat later known as Dar-lding gSer-sgo khra-mo, the main seat of this family. There are different versions concerning the date of gShen-chen's discovery of the Bonpo texts. Most sources claim that when he was twenty-one-years old he discovered them in 'Bri-mtshams mtha'-dkar.

gShen-chen was the famous master of the lineages of Bru, Zhu and sPa. According to the genealogical text of the gShen lineage, Zhu-g-yas Legs-po heard that gShen-chen had discovered Bonpo texts in 'Bri-mtshams mtha'-dkar, and he went to meet him. When he first met gShen-chen, he himself was thirty years old, and gShen-chen thirty-six²⁶). gShen-chen's autobiography, which is quoted in sPa-btsun's chronicle, has a similar statement. It says that when he was twenty-one years old, he discovered the Bonpo texts. After one twelve-year-cycle (in other words when he was around thirty-three years old), Me-nyag Na-gu and Zhu-g-yas Legs-po came to him to receive Bon doctrines²⁷). After Legs-po had received many doctrines from gShen-chen, he went back to his home and looked for a place where he could practise the doctrines. Legs-po found gSas-mkhar Zo-bo khyung-lag in sKyid-mkhar, west of Gyantse, and he practised meditation there. After some time, Legs-po met Atisha (982-1054)²⁸) near Gyantse, and they discussed Buddhism and Bon²⁹). That was, perhaps, when Atisha was on his way to dBus (Central Tibet). So Legs-po was at least active around the years 1042-54. Me-nyag and Legs-po were the first Bonpos who received Bon from gShen-chen Klu-dga'. So gShen-chen's discovery of the Bonpo texts must have taken place before Legs-po met Atisha. Not long after that, sPa-ston dPal-mchog also heard about gShen-chen's discovery of the Bonpo texts, and came to meet him. When he met gShen-chen, the latter was very sick, and could not preach Bon. He just gave sPa-ston some texts and recommended him to 'Dzi-ston dBang-gi rgyal-mtshan, after which gShen-chen passed away³⁰). So gShen-chen Klu-dga' perhaps lived forty years as is stated by Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin. There are several different versions concerning the date of his birth. The date which Nyi-ma bsTan-'dzin gives is probably close to the facts. So gShen-chen was born in 996, discovered the Bonpo texts in 1017 and died in

1036³¹). The *GRB* and *TKDD*, however, give the date of gShen-chen's discovery as 1137 A.D., but other sources do not seem to confirm this date.

As already discussed above, around the eleventh and twelfth centuries some Bonpos received Buddhist texts from Buddhist lamas in Central Tibet. The conflicts, on the other hand, between Bon and Buddhism become more and more fierce. Especially the discovery of numerous Bonpo texts took place one after another, and the discoverers became more and more famous. On the Buddhist side, this was a cause for concern. gShen-chen was the most famous Bonpo discoverer in U-tsang, and many Bonpos came to him to receive Bonpo texts. His fame perhaps caused him to move his family to Dar-lding. But it could not help him avoid the fierce conflicts between the two religions. Finally he was poisoned by Lo-ston rDo-rje dbang-phyug, a Buddhist, in Dar-lding at the age of forty³²).

gShen-chen Klu-dga' married Na-ga-za dPal-sgron when he was twenty, and had two sons. Since then the main family of gShen has been settled at Dar-lding. We do not know if he had any daughters. In genealogies, women are usually not mentioned. This causes considerable trouble when attempting to identify women. According to rGya-mtso, there was a nunnery at Dar-lding, which used to belong to the gShen family. Each generation of this lineage had at least one nun. rGya-mtsho could give neither the name of the founder of the nunnery nor the date of founding. Nor have we been able to find any sources in which information concerning this nunnery is found.

1.3. Foundation of Monastic life

When a family has more than one child, especially, more than one son, the successor of the main family lineage is usually open to question. Even though the eldest son normally is the successor, sometimes the traditional rule is not followed. In the case of the gShen family, everyone who is born in this lineage must be a man of religion, and automatically has a high position. After gShen-chen's death, the gShen family separated into several branches, which settled in different places around 'Bri-mtshams. Dam-pa rgyal-tshab, for example, the third generation from gShen-chen Klu-dga' (996-1036), was the first person who separated from the main family. The date of his birth is also uncertain. According to the genealogical texts of the gShen lineage, he was a disciple of Zhu sGrol-ba gshen-rgyal and Bru-sha Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan, and the latter received many Buddhist texts from Phya-pa Chos-kyi seng-ge (1099-1169) in the monastery of gSang-phu ne'u-thog. So gShen Dam-pa rgyal-tshab must have been active in the first part of the twelfth century. Consequently his birth date which is given in *TKDD* as 1238 seems to be too late. He founded the first monastery (*gdan sa*) of this lineage at Bo-dong-kha near 'Bri-mtshams. It is not certain whether there was a real monastery or just a temple at that time, but in later times it developed into a monastery. We do not have clear information whether Dam-pa rgyal-tshab himself separated from the main family of gShen. The sources that we have just mentioned state that he

founded a seat at Bo-dong-kha. He did not receive the vows of a monk, but he was married and had four sons³³).

Jo-bkra, the eldest son of Dam-pa rgyal-tshab, likewise moved to 'Ol-mo stag-tsang in mJed near Bo-dong-kha and had three sons. One of them, gShen Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan, had his first meeting with Yar-me-ba³⁴) when he was twelve years old, and received the vows of a monk from him. Having followed Yar-me-ba as a master for twelve years, he composed a biography of his teacher. He is considered to be the first ordained monk of the gShen lineage, and the monastic lineage of the gShen family known as *gShen gyi 'dul brgyud* originated from him. He was also the head of a monastery at Bo-dong-kha. At that time the monastery had become quite big, but we have no information about the main family at 'Bri-mtshams in that period. sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po counted eight lamas who formed the monastic lineage of the gShen family starting with gShen Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan. Among those lamas, only three generations lived at Bo-dong-kha, while the others lived at Dar-lding. Our sources do not mention any reason why the monastery at Bo-dong-kha disappeared from the historical stage after it had lasted for three generations. Since Dar-lding took the place of Bo-dong-kha, the main family lineage has remained at Dar-lding up to the present day. From gShen Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan the gShen family established their own monastic system and have their own monastic lineage (*'dul brgyud*), but the family lineage is still considered to be more important. Even if one receives the vows of a monk, one may give back one's vows if that is necessary to preserve the family lineage. Abbot Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin gives his dates as 1094-1169, which seems too early; it is more likely to be the second half of the twelfth century.

Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan's elder brother Jo-rtse had three sons, of whom the eldest, Ye-shes-rgyal, received monastic vows from his uncle Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan. He became the second monk of the monastic lineage of his clan at Bo-dong-kha. Jo-rgyal, the youngest son, had two sons, of whom Blo-gros seng-ge became the third monk of the monastic lineage. Shes-rab-rgyal had two wives. One of them was from the Zhu family. We will discuss this family lineage in more detail below (see 2.2). Zhu-za gave birth to three sons, of whom Khri-skyong dar-po, later known as Kun-mkhyen Ye-shes blo-gros, received the vows of a monk. Another wife also gave birth to three sons, of whom Rin-chen-'bum, later known as 'Gro-mgon Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, became the fourth monk in the monastic lineage of the gShen family.

Kun-mkhyen Ye-shes blo-gros was one of the most important figures in this lineage. According to the majority of Bonpo *bstan rtsis*, he founded gSer-sgo khra-mo at Dar-lding as the seat of his family. Before founding gSer-sgo khra-mo, there was no temple at Dar-lding. Actually, there is not much information concerning Dar-lding from the period of gShen-chen to Kun-mkhyen. There was probably no permanent seat for the gShen family before the founding of gSer-sgo khra-mo by Kun-mkhyen. On the other hand, Dam-pa rgyal-tshab, the third generation from

gShen-sgur, founded a monastery in Bo-dong-kha in Tsang. It lasted for at least three generations after him. So it would seem that gSer-sgo khra-mo was a new seat for this lineage. According to the brief history of the monastery at Ri-rgyal, Kun-mkhyen was also the founder and first abbot of the monastery. We will call it simply Ri-rgyal. It was of course a small hermitage at that time but it later became a monastic center for the gShen lineage. So there must be some confusion between Kun-mkhyen's founding of the monastery at Ri-rgyal and gShen-chen's founding of the seat of the gShen clan at Dar-lding. Kun-mkhyen was not only famous for the founding Ri-rgyal, but he was also a great scholar who composed many Bon texts. There are various versions regarding the date of the Kun-mkhyen's birth. gShen Tshul-khrims rgyal-mtshan stated that Kun-mkhyen was born in the year 1312 and founded gSer-sgo khra-mo in 1354³⁵). This is more close to the fact than what is given by bsTan-'dzin dbang-grags viz. 1192 and 1233. The Abbot Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin placed the founding of the temple as far back as 1173. Kun-mkhyen is suggested to have composed a prayer in 1235 following the *bstan rtsis* by Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin (Karmay 1977: 158)³⁶). In my reckoning he must have been active during the first part of the fourteenth century.

Khro-'bum, one of Kun-mkhyen's elder brothers, had a son named dPon-gsas Seng-ge-grags. He had two sons, bSod-rgyal-dpal and dPal-'od-dar. bSod-rgyal-dpal is counted as the second abbot of Ri-rgyal and the sixth lama in the monastic lineage of the gShen clan³⁷). He composed a gShen genealogical text, which was available to later Bonpo historians. (Concerning his biography see the Introduction). As a monk of a monastic lineage, he must have received the monastic vows from his master. Nevertheless, according to the biography of the gShen lineage he had descendants³⁸). rNam-dag dri-med, one of his sons, was counted as the seventh lama in the monastic lineage of the gShen clan, and was also counted as the third abbot of Ri-rgyal.

dPal-ldan rnam-rgyal *alias* bDag-po-dpal, a nephew of gShen bSod-rgyal-dpal, was the only person in this clan who had been to China from where he received some support. *LShDz* runs as follows:

*dpal 'od dar gyi sras bdag po dpal ldan rnam rgyal/ kun dga' dpal ldan gnyis/ dpal ldan rnam rgyal rgya nag tu phebs nas yig tshang tham ka blang shing/ dge lding gi pho brang lcags ri dang beas pa gsar bskrun mdzad/*³⁹)

1.4. Religious Conflicts and Family Division

gShen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan, the sixth generation from Kun-mkhyen Ye-shes blo-gros was born at Dar-lding. He was another very important figure in this lineage. At the same time he was different from previous gShen lamas. He was not only famous as a great scholar, but he was also well known among the lay community of Bonpos. No lama was as popular among lay Bonpos since gShen-chen. Kun-mkhyen, on the other hand, was a great scholar, but not as popular as gShen Nyi-ma among the lay community of Bonpos, perhaps because of the

latter's successful struggle with the Buddhists. During his lifetime, the conflict between Bonpos and Buddhists was still rather acute. There is a story about how gShen Nyi-ma defeated a Buddhist *sngags pa*. This story is known to all people who follow the Bon religion in Tibet. According to rGya-mtsho, the story runs as follows: There was a small monastery of the Sa-skya tradition to the west of Dar-lding. It was called Mu-gle'u-lung and there was a *sngags pa* there called Rol-tsho sngags-pa. Buddhists usually called him sNgags-'chang Yo-mo, but Bonpos called him Mu'i wa-mgo. One day a local noble family held a wedding ceremony for their son, and the family invited the lamas from both the Ri-rgyal and Mu-gle'u-lung monasteries. Rol-tsho sngags-pa attended as a representative of his monastery, and gShen Nyi-ma took part as a representative of his monastery. The host asked the two lamas to compete in magic power. Rol-tsho sngags-pa lost the competition, but was unwilling to admit defeat. Then he sent a wild yak (*'brong*) to destroy the seat of the gShen family in Dar-lding. When the magic wild yak was charging towards gSer-sgo khra-mo, gShen Nyi-ma hurled a magic *gshang* at the yak. The *gshang* hit it in the middle of the head, and it was killed. After conquering the evil wild yak, the relations between gShen and Rol-tsho got worse. Rol-tsho sngags-pa meditated in order to obtain his revenge. He competed in magic power with gShen Nyi-ma again, and once more he lost. gShen Nyi-ma conquered the evil yak and its skin was stuffed. This specimen was hung in the gallery of the main temple of gSer-sgo khra-mo until the 1960's. rGya-mtsho had personally seen it.

This is the second detailed story about conflict between the two religions in Central Tibet. gShen Nyi-ma built two more temples in Dar-lding to enlarge the monastery at Ri-rgyal. In order to enlarge it as well as gSer-sgo-khra-mo, he visited the Dang-ra district in northern Tibet. There is a story concerning his visit to Dang-ra. According to the *GRB*, a temple was built two hundred seventy-six years after gShen-chen had discovered the Bonpo texts in 1137, in other words, in 1413.

In the year 1639, however, the gShen lineage split into two branches⁴⁰⁾. rNam-par rgyal-ba, the fifth generation from gShen Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan (15th century), was born at Dar-lding. He had two sons, gYung-drung nyi-ma'i rgyal-po and lHun-grub dpal-bzang. The latter moved to sKyid-gzhong⁴¹⁾ and founded another gShen seat called lHun-grub bde-ldan pho-brang. In the following two centuries, this new seat of the gShen family was prosperous. Several abbots of Ri-rgyal were from this seat. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was a dispute between the sKyid-gzhong and the Dar-lding seats. bKra-shis lhun-po, the residence of the Panchen Lama in Shigatse, came to settle the dispute. Finally, bKra-shis lhun-po confiscated the whole property of the sKyid-gzhong seat and the larger part of the property of the Dar-lding seat as well. Only seven families were left for the gShen family in Dar-lding⁴²⁾. The sKyid-gzhong seat was given to a dGe-lugs-pa monastery called bKra-shis dge-'phel which is near Dar-lding. Since then the sKyid-gzhong seat was an estate of the dGe-lugs-pa monastery. Phun-tshogs dbang-rgyal, an eighty year old monk of Ri-rgyal, said: "One at autumn,

when I was about ten years old, I saw a tax-collector of bKra-shis dge-'phel monastery come to sKyid-gzhong estate to collect tax. At that time the sKyid-gzhong estate no longer belonged to the gShen family, and another noble family was running it." So towards the end of the nineteenth century both Dar-lding and sKyid-gzhong seats were extinct. According to rGya-mtsho, there was a lama named gShen Phun-tshogs bstan-'dzin rnam-dag in Dar-lding at that time. He married two women, but neither of them gave birth to a child, and he himself died in Lhasa. The second wife remarried a man from the Zhu family. They had a daughter named Tshe-ring. At that time, in fact, there was no heir at all in the gShen clan at Dar-lding and sKyid-gzhong after gShen bsTan-'dzin rnam-dag's death. However a branch of the gShen family had survived in bKra-gdong, a place near 'Bri-mtshams mtha'-dkar. It must be the first place where the gShen family settled when it came from Amdo. According to historical texts, the gShen seat in Dar-lding was founded by gShen Kun-mkhyen Ye-shes blo-gros, but no text says that his whole family moved with him. Before founding gSer-sgo khra-mo in Dar-lding, he lived in Bo-dong-kha with his five brothers. This place, too, is close to 'Bri-mtshams. So we can infer that the gShen of bKra-gdong could be the descendants of one of Kun-mkhyen's five brothers. Having founded gSer-sgo khra-mo and Ri-rgyal in Dar-lding, people paid less attention to the gShen family in Bo-dong-kha and bKra-gdong as well. Tshe-ring married 'Dzam-gling rin-po-che who was from the gShen family at bKra-gdong.

2. The Bru Lineage

2.1 The Origin of the Bru clan

The Bru lineage is considered to be the second greatest clan in the Bonpo tradition. There are two different accounts of the origin of this clan, one Buddhist, the other Bonpo. According to Buddhist texts, the Bru clan is one of the six ancient tribes from which the Tibetan people were derived. These six tribes arose from the coupling of a monkey and an ogress in Tsetang⁴³). According to the Bonpo tradition, however, there is a different account concerning the origin of the Bru clan. In Bonpo texts, this clan is usually called Royal Bru (*rgyal rigs bru*). Perhaps it received this name because the ultimate source of this lineage is related to the king of Bru-sha west of Tibet. According to *STBK* this clan is of divine descent:

rgyal rigs bru yi gdung rabs la/ gnam bru dang ni sa bru ste/ sa bru dpal ldan sa skya pa/ yin te 'og na chos grar ston / gnam bru sku gsum sang rgyas mchog/ thugs rje 'i sems can don la dgongs/ lha bu 'od zer mdangs ldan zhes/ 'og min sdug (stug) po bkod pa nas/ bar lha 'od gsal gnas brgyud de/ 'dzam gling mi yul 'byon dgongs nas/ rtsa gsum lha yi gnas su babs / lha yi dbang po rgya sbyin sras/ lha bu dri med mdzes pa zhes/ lha sras mang po 'i 'khor dang bcas / rol chen glu gar bsgyur ba la / ma chag ri rab zur la byon/ gling bzhi gling phran yongs la gzigs/

khyad par 'dzam bu gling chen gyi/ o rgyan bru sha thod gar yul/ bdud rje ngam len nag po zhes/ gtso dang 'khor du sprul par bcas/ rkang gnyis mi dang rkang bzhi phyugs/ blo (glo) bur ye 'brogs sna tshogs gtong/ sad ser btsa' 'bu'i gnod pa gzigs/ de dag 'dul ba'i gnyen po ru / rdzu 'phrul rtsal gyi rnga la bcibs/ mdang gsal gshen gyi sna drangs te/ mtshe gco gshen gyi (gyis) sku rten nas/ rol mo sgra bcas mi yul du/ o rgyan bru sha thod dkar po'i/ gsas mkhar rtse mor mngon par bab/ de la rgyal po sad wer gyis / sku mkhar nang du gdan drangs te/ bram ze gsal 'bar khyod kyi (kyis) ni/ lha sras 'di yi mtshan rtags nas/ don dang 'brel ba'i mtshan zhig thogs /
gsungs bzhin bram ze'i mtshan btags pa/ phyi nang mtshungs pa'i rten 'brel la/ gnam nas sa la brul b'i bru/ lha brug gsha'mar 'dug pas sha/ tshangs bug dbyings su dod pa
yi/ bru sha gnam gsas spyi rdol gsol/ de nas bru sha gnam gsas kyis/ bdud rje ngam len nag po bsgral/ zhing khams thams cad bde bar byas/ de tshe o rgyan tho dkar dang/ bru sha'i yul gyi 'gro rnam la/ thegs pa chen po'i bon bstan nas/ rtogs shar
grub thob mang du byon/ khyad par o rgyan thod gar gyi/ rgyal po sad wer gsal 'bar yang/ 'khor ba'i las la zhen pa log/ rgyal srid btsun mo sras 'khor bzhi/ bru shar yul nas yul rje mdzad/ de rjes btsad po bya sde dang/ mnga'ris skor gsum sa mtshams
nas/ dmag 'dren len (lan) bzhi tsam byas mthar/ bru sha gnam gsas rgyal khab thob/ rtsod sde'i rgyal po btson du bzung/ de la 'khor 'bangs sde bcas kyi (kyis)/ gser dang rgyal po mnyam bkyag bslus/ bru sha gnam bon spyi rdol lam/ bru sha gnam gsas 'phrul skyes te/ gser gyi bys ru can lngar sprul/ phyag cha g-yu rnga bcibs nas byon/ rtsod (btsan) po rtsod (btsad) sdes gus btud nas/ rgyal po bla yi mchod gnas mdzad/ bzhi po
slar la byon tshul bstan/ bru sha gnam gsas yul der bzhugs/ sku sras lha bu gsas khyung 'khrungs/ de sras lo tsa chen po ste/ mtsho btsan skyes zhes bya bar grags/ de la sras dgu 'khrungs pa yi/ gcen lnga bru sha'i yul du bzhungs/ gcung bzhi btsan pa (po) btsad sde yi/ mnga'rir spyan drangs bzhugs su gsol/ mnga'ris skor gsum man
chad nas/ bod yul ru bzhi yan chad bkur/ gcung bzhi' gcen po g-yung rgyal mtshan/ gtsang du mar byon bzhungs pa yi/ sras gnyis gcen po khyung nag 'dzin^{A4)}

An abridged translation is as follows:

The lineage of the Royal Bru can be divided into two lineages, viz. Bru of the earth (*Sa bru*), and Bru of the sky (*gNam bru*). The Bru of the earth is the Sa-skyapa, which later converted to Buddhism. The Bru of the earth is the manifestation of 'the excellent enlightened being'. He did not have any attachment to heaven but he intended to be of benefit for sentient beings. When he went to O-rgyan, Bru-sha and Thod-gar to conquer bDud Ngam-len nag-po who caused suffering to people,

he mounted the drum of magic power, and was led by the *gshen* mDang-gsal and accompanied by the *gshen* of mTshe and gCo. When he descended to the top of the temples (*gsas mkhar*) of O-rgyan, Bru-sha and Thod-gar, King Sad-wer invited him into his castle, and the king let the Brahmin give a name to the boy. The Brahmin gave him the name Bru-sha gNam-gsas spyi-rdol. After some time, Bru-sha gNam-gsas spyi-rdol 'released' the demon Ngam-len nag-po. Thereafter there was fighting four times between Bru-sha and mNga'-ris skor-gsum. Finally Bru-sha won the war and the leader of the Tibetan army was taken into prison. The subjects collected gold equal in weight to the king (of Tibet). Because Bru-sha gNam-gsas spyi-rdol helped the king of Bru-sha to win, the king made him his superior offering priest. Bru-sha gNam-gsas had a son named lHa-bu gsas-khyung. The latter had a son named mTsho-btsan-skyes. The latter had nine sons. The five elder brothers remained in Bru-sha. The four younger brothers were invited to mNga'-ris by bTsan-po bTsad-lde. The eldest of the younger brothers, *gYung-rgyal*, went to Tsang and remained there.

This short story tells how the first Bru clan appeared on earth and came to Central Tibet. In the story there are some events that remind us of similar episodes which are found in historical texts.

Firstly, when Bru-sha gNam-gsas spyi-rdol came down to earth, he was led by the *gshen* mDang-gsal⁴⁵⁾ and accompanied by the *gshen* of mTshe and gCo. This reminds us of the first king of Tibet coming down to earth. The *sGrags pa rin chen gling grags* says:

rje (gNya'-khri) de gshegs pa'i dus su/ sku srungs kyi bon po nam mkha' las sprul pa ni/ dmu bon ye then rgyud las 'tshe mi rgyal du sprul/ phya bon the lag rgyud las bco(gco) gshen phyag dkar sprul te bon po de gnyis kyis rje'i phyag g-yas dang g-yon rten nas/ yar lung sogs dkar (sog kar) gshegs pas/⁴⁶⁾

When King gNya'-khri btsan-po, the first king of Tibet, was coming down to earth, he was also led by two divine boys. One was 'Tshe-mi rgyal who was manifestation of dMu-bon Ye-then rgyal, the other one was gCo-gshen Phyag-dkar who was manifestation of Phya-bon The-lag. Likewise, the descent of the divine youth gSal-ba, one of three brothers who goes down to earth to be born by a human mother as the Bonpo teacher and the savior gShen-rab.

Secondly, we read that bTsan-po Bya-sde led an army from mNga'-ris to Bru-sha four times. The leader of the Tibetan army was taken prisoner and his subjects collected gold equal in weight to the king. This reminds us of the similar event which happened at the beginning of the eleventh century on the frontier region between mNga'-ris skor-gsum and Bru-sha. According to the *lDe'u chos 'byung*, mNga'-ris skor-gsum is identified as Mang-yul, sPu-rang and Zhang-zhung. These three were ruled by three sons of Khri Nyi-ma-mgon *alias* sKyid-lde nyi-ma-mgon who was the grandson of 'Od-srung, the elder son of Glang-dar-ma (ninth century):

dpal mgon la mang yul gtad / bkra shis mgon la spu rang gtad/ gtsug lde la zhang zhung gtad pas stod mnga'ris skor gsum de tsho lags/⁴⁷⁾ yab ni lha bla ma ye shes 'od ces bya'o/ khong rang yang rgya gar du byon pas/ lam du gar log gi dmag gis bzung ste/ bod kyi gser bsdus nas slu bar brtsams pa na'ang / sku lus tsam gcig rnyed pa la dbu tsam gcig ma rnyed par dkrongs/⁴⁸⁾

IHa bla-ma Ye-shes-'od, the king of the one of the kingdoms of mNga'-ris skor-gsum, was caught by the army of Gar-log, a non-Tibetan tribe which resided in the west of Tibet in the first part of the eleventh century. Even though his subjects had already collected gold equal in weight to his body except his head, he was killed. Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las identified Gar-log as Bru-sha in his commentary on the *Deb dmar*.

The *IDe'u chos 'byung* makes a similar statement:

gcen po rtse lde zhes pa mnga' bdag byang chub 'od kyi phu bo ste 'o lde'o/ de'i sras bsod nams lde/ de la sras gsum ste gcen po bkra shis rtse dang/ de 'og mnga' thang skyong gnyis gar log gis bkrongs / chung ba 'od 'bar lde ga log gi yul la bzhugs te/⁴⁹⁾

This work does not say that rTse-lde himself was taken prisoner but two of his grandsons were killed in Gar-log or Bru-sha. However, if we combine all these events which are given by different sources, they correspond to what is stated in *STBK* quoted above.

2.2 The Bru clan in Central Tibet

The Bru family lived for three generations in Bru-sha since gNam-gsas spyi-rdol, the first man of the Bru clan who came down to earth. mTsho-btsan-skyes, the third generation of the Bru clan, had nine sons. Four of them were invited to mNga'-ris by King rTse-lde. This must have taken place in the eleventh century because King rTse-lde, *alias* 'Od-lde, was the elder brother of Byang-chub-'od who invited Atisha to mNga'-ris in 1042⁵⁰⁾. One of them, gYung-drung rgyal-mtshan, migrated to Central Tibet and settled in La-stod Ga-ra ngo-mang in Sa-skya⁵¹⁾. The family had lived for four generations in La-stod, when Bru Nam-mkha' g-yung-drung left the La-stod Bru family. He came to Tsang and founded another Bru seat in sMon-dkar dge-lding, also known as Nya-mo bon-gnas. It developed into a fairly big Bonpo centre before the founding of dBen-sa-kha, the first real monastery of this clan. Bru-sha Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan was born in the Bru family in Ga-ra ngo-mang. Both his father Bru Nam-mkha' g-yung-drung (994-1054 *STNN*) and himself were disciples of gShen-chen (996-1036 *STNN*). Particularly he was one of the four "commissioned disciples" (*bka' babs kyi slob ma*) of gShen-chen. According to the genealogical text of the Bru family, he also

received the *Byams chos sde lnga* texts from Phya-pa Chos-kyi seng-ge (1099-1169)⁵² in gSang-phu ne'u-thog which had been founded by rNgogs Legs-pa'i shes-rab in 1073⁵³. Bru-sha Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan had followed Phya-pa Chos-kyi seng-ge for thirteen years. According to the *Deb ther dmar po*, there were eight famous disciples of Phya-pa Chos-kyi seng-ge, of whom bSod-nams seng-ge is from the 'Bru-zha family⁵⁴. It is clear that 'Bru-zha is another way of spelling Bru-sha, the form which is usually used in Bonpo texts. bSod-nams seng-ge was the name which Bru-sha Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan used when he studied Buddhism with Phya-pa Chos-kyi seng-ge. When Bonpos go to Buddhist monasteries to study Buddhism, they often use a new name in order to conceal their Bonpo identity. Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan finally founded a temple (*gsas khang*) in Ga-ra ngo-mang⁵⁵. It was very small, but his famous commentary on the *Byang sems gab pa* and the *mDzod phug* were finished there. He traveled in almost all parts of Tibet, to Se-rib, sPu-rang, Ru-thog and Gu-rib in mNga'-ris, southeast to Kongpo and Brag-sum, and to some parts of Khams. He must have been active in the first part of the twelfth century.

After two generations, the family moved to gYas-ru dBen-sa-kha. Bru-sha rJe-btsun *alias* Bru gYung-drung bla-ma, a nephew of Bru-sha Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan, a contemporary of rJe-btsun Khro-tshang 'brug-lha, was born in gYas-ru dge-lding. Since his uncle Khyung-gi rgyal-mtshan was the disciple of Phya-pa (1099-1169), he must have lived in the latter part of the twelfth century. He received the vows of a monk from gNyos Lag-drug. lCo-mo Dung-skyongs-ma, the wife of Klu-rgyal gzi-chen, invited him to dBen-sa-kha as he was a famous Bonpo master in gTsang, and she offered a *dgon sa* to him. We can not identify which family this couple was from, but they must have been a noble family in gYas-ru at that time. The word *dgon sa* does not mean an actual monastery but just a building or group of houses. This could be the antecedent of the later famous Bonpo monastery known as gYas-ru dBen-sa-kha. That is perhaps the reason why later Bonpo historians claim that gYas-ru dBen-sa-kha was founded by this lama. This monastery gradually became the biggest in Central Tibet before the founding of sMan-ri in 1406 (*STNN*). From the founding of this monastery by Bru-sha rJe-btsun in the twelfth century onwards, there were eighteen abbots, known as the Eighteen Teachers of gYas-ru (*g-yas ru'i ston pa bco brgyad*). Bru-sha rJe-btsun was also the first in the monastic lineage of this clan, called the monastic lineage of Bru (*Bru'i 'dul brgyud*). Starting with him, the Bru family settled in gYas-ru dBen-sa-kha. Since then dBen-sa-kha was regarded as the main seat of the Bru clan. Thereafter, the Bru clan started to wane. The Abbot Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin gives the date of birth of Bru-sha rJe-btsun as the year 1040 and the date of the founding dBen-sa-kha 1072, but this seems too early, as has been pointed out above.

Among the clans, Bru was particularly active in establishing religious centers. dBen-sa-kha developed into a large monastery. It was not only the seat of the Bru clan, but also a general Bonpo monastic center. Many Bonpos went there in order

to study. For example, the eminent Bonpo lamas gYor-po Me-dpal, 'A-zha bDud-rtsi rgyal-mtshan, 'A-zha Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan etc. *A khrid*, one of the three traditions of the great Perfection of Bon (*bon gyi rdzogs pa chen po*), developed in this center. This tradition was later known as the *A khrid* teaching of gYas-ru (*g-yas ru'i a khrid*), even though the teaching lineage did not originate from the Bru clan nor from gYas-ru dBen-sa-kha.

Bru 'Dul-ba *alias* 'Dul-ba rgyal-mtshan, the fourth generation from Bru gYung-drung bla-ma, was born in gYas-ru, probably in the first part of the fourteenth century. He took the vows of a monk from 'A-zha Blo-gros⁵⁶⁾, an abbot of dBen-sa-kha, and also received the *A khrid* teachings from him. He received some other Bonpo texts from Zhu Khang-gsar-ba Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan. According to *A khrid thun mtshams bco lnga*, after giving teachings, 'A-zha Blo-gros passed the throne of the monastery to Bru 'Dul-ba who was the Abbot of Ben-sa-kha for few years. He became tired of being in a situation which was full of conflict. The main conflict seems to have been between Bon and Buddhism. Bru 'Dul-ba left the monastery in order to lead the life of a yogi. While he was meditating in the lHo-brag mkhar-chu hermitage, he was invited back several times by his family and dBen-sa-kha as well. However, he never returned to his monastery again. He replied to the invitation:

*dgon de na tshig rtsub mtshon cha rno/ mi bdag gi bzod pa'i phub chung srab/ phyis g-yo sgyu'i rme skran byung dog gda'/ bdag da rung phyogs med ri khrod 'grims/*⁵⁷⁾

'So bad words in the monastery (dBen-sa-kha), I am not able to be patient with them; (I am) worried about crafty trouble from outside, so I had better keep my hermit life.'

This short statement indicates that during Bru 'Dul-ba's lifetime, there was still very serious conflict between Bon and Buddhism. It was not only an internal monastic conflict, but his answer refers to society outside the monastery as well. The term *phyis g-yo sgyu'i* refers to something outside of his own clan, especially, outside of the Bon religion. He was not the only one who became tired of such conflicts. The fourteenth century was one of the most turbulent period in Tibetan history. Finally he died at the age of fifty-one in lHo-ma ngon-lung which probably is in lHo-brag⁵⁸⁾.

Bru rGyal-ba g-yung-drung was born in gYas-ru dBen-sa-kha as the youngest brothers of four sons in the family⁵⁹⁾. He took a monk's vows from his elder brother Bru 'Dul-ba. He received the most important Bonpo teachings from Bru 'Dul-ba, especially those of the *A khrid* tradition. He mainly lived in dBen-sa-kha, and sometimes in mKhar-sna, a hermitage near dBen-sa-kha. He originally wanted to receive the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* from Yang-ston rGyal-mtshan rin-chen, the founder of the monastery known as bSam-gling in Dolpo⁶⁰⁾. He dispatched a messenger to Yang-ston in bSam-gling and asked to be taught the *sNyan rgyud*. Yang-ston sent several *rdzogs chen* texts to him and said "There is a

‘practical instruction’ (*nyams rgyud dmar khrid*) for this tradition, but we are so far away from one another. It is a single teaching lineage (*gcig rgyud*), it has never been written before. Thus I cannot break the rule of this teaching tradition. I have already transmitted it to rTogs-ldan Dad-pa shes-rab, so you should try to meet him and receive it from him⁶¹.” rTogs-ldan Dad-pa shes-rab was invited to dBen-sa-kha when he was on his way to gNam-mtsho, and as Yang-ston’s had suggested, Bru rGyal-ba received the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* teaching from him. Bru rGyal-ba was the most important figure in the Bru clan. He played a very important role not only in the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* teaching lineage, but in the *A khrid* teaching lineage as well. Indeed, he systematically developed those two traditions. Firstly, the major part of the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* tradition had never been written down before Bru rGyal-ba, but had been transmitted orally according to the rule which Yang-ston had said. He had, however, revised the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* according to the ideas of the previous masters, and composed a profound commentary. It was a revolution in this tradition that now developed a complete teaching system. Secondly, he systematized the *A khrid* tradition into the fifteen meditative stages (*thun mtshams bco lnga*). Since he revised the *A khrid* teachings, it has later known as *A khrid* of gYas-ru (*g-yas ru’i a khrid*). The Abbot Nyi-ma bstan-’dzin gives 1242 as the date of birth of Bru rGyal-ba, but, as we have seen above, this date is open to discussion. The *NYNT* says that when Bru ’Dul-ba, a brother of Bru rGyal-ba, was in the lHo-brag mkhar-chu hermitage, rTogs-ldan Dad-pa shes-rab came to meet him. *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* says:

*bla ma rtogs ldan dad pa shes rab kyis/ dgung lo lnga bcu rtsa lnga lon pa’i dus/ dbus gtsang gi grwa sa grub gnas gnas chen kun bskor zhing/ khyad par du lho brag tu mtshan ldan ’dul ba’i drung du gtugs nas/ rdzogs chen a khrid dmar byang/ dri med lhan skyes dbang ye dbang chen mo las sogs pa’i lung rnams zhus dus/ snyan rgyud kyi gsung gling(gleng) mang du byung bas/ mtshan ldan pa’i zhal nas/ khyed la snyan rgyud kyi lung rdzogs par ’dug pas/ nga rgad po ni zhus kyang so mi bsod(gsod) pa las med/ khyed kyis lung ’di rgyal ba g-yung drung la phog dgos/*⁶²

‘It is very important that you have received the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* tradition, I want to get it from you but now it is too late for me. Please transmit it to Bru rGyal-ba g-yung-drung’.

This implies that rGyal-ba g-yung-drung was much younger than Bru ’Dul-ba. As we have seen above, Bru ’Dul-ba must have lived in the first part of the fourteenth century. So it is possible that rGyal-ba g-yung-drung’s year of birth as 1302, one *rab byung* later than that given by the Abbot Nyi-ma bstan-’dzin.

2.3 The End of the Bru Lineage

Five generations after Bru rGyal-ba, the ‘brothers of the Bru family’⁶³⁾ offered the two colleges of dBen-sa-kha (dBu-rtse dkar-po and dBu-rtse dmar-po) to mNyam-med Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan (1356-1415 *STNN*), who were then regarded as the chief of the Bru. Not long after dBu-rtse dkar-po and dmar-po had been offered to Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan, dBen-sa-kha was destroyed by flood. Although Bonpos claim that the monastery was destroyed by flood, this was still not a sufficient reason for its disappearance. Usually a monastery is rebuilt after having been destroyed, unless there is an official order not to rebuild it. Therefore, besides the flood, its disappearance must have been due to other factors. *LShDz* says that “dBen-sa-kha had been destroyed by flood owing to the jealousy of the Buddhists⁶⁴⁾.”

After the destruction of the monastery, the Bru family started to wane. And even though the family lineage was maintained, from then on no great scholar was born to it. In addition, in 1663, a boy was born in the Bru family in a village near dBen-sa kha. When this child was four years old, he was recognized, under the Fifth Dalai Lama’s supervision, as the incarnation of the fourth Panchen Lama⁶⁵⁾. He was enthroned in rGyal-mtshan mthon-po, the place of the Abbots of bKra-shis lhun-po, and given the name Blo-bzang ye-shes (1663-1737) by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Since the Fifth Panchen Lama was born in the Bru family, the village was called ’Khrungs-gzhis. Not long after that, sPyan-gsal dgon-pa, a dGe-lugs-pa monastery, was founded in ’Khrungs-gzhis village. The people of the village had to sponsor this monastery instead of sMan-ri, a Bonpo monastery, which had been founded by mNyam-med Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan in 1405(*STNN*) just after the destruction of dBen-sa-kha. Almost two centuries later, in 1855, rNam-rgyal dbang-’dus rgyal-mtshan(1855-81) was born in the Bru family. When he was six years old, he was recognized as the incarnation of the Seventh Panchen Lama and enthroned with the name Blo-bzang dpal-ldan chos-kyi grags-pa bsTan-pa’i dbang-phyug. According to Tibetan tradition, the family name should be retained by the paternal side of the family. If there is no married son in the family, the lineage will come to an end. Two Bru lamas’ being recognized as the Panchen Lama caused the Bru lineage to completely disappear. Because of the disappearance the Bru lineage and the founding of the sPyan-gsal monastery at the ’Khrungs-gzhis village, the entire village was converted to dGe-lugs-pa order.

3. The Zhu lineage

3.1 The Founding of the Zhu seat

In contrast to the other old Bonpo families, this clan has no tradition of being of divine descent. Indeed Zhu is not the original name of the clan. According to *STBK* it was originally called ’Bri, one of the two famous clans in western Tibet

during the reign of King Gri-gum. This family is not known for its monastic lineage as much as the gShen and the Bru clans, but for its ritual tradition especially the 'dur ritual, namely the three hundreds and sixty 'dur phug ritual ('dur phug sum brgya drug cu). The family was later known as Zhu-tshang due to its having lived in the place called Zhu-yi ba-mo⁶⁶). Since then, wherever the family moved, it was called Zhu-tshang. Among the Bonpos, this lineage is traditionally known as dBang-ldan zhu. People think that this name refers to power. Actually it is just a name of the place where the Zhu family lived. Sometimes it is also called Ri-zhing zhu or sKyid-mkhar zhu. All these names point to the places where the Zhu family lived, as will be explained below.

After some time, some of the family members migrated to Central Tibet. Zhu-g-yas Legs-po (b. 1002 *STNN*) was born in Shab ba-mo-che in Sa-skya. He is the first historical figure of this clan. There are several versions concerning this man. The major sources state that he was a disciple of gShen-chen. When he went to meet gShen-chen and asked to be accepted as a disciple, gShen-chen tested him in many ways to see whether he had pure faith and let him experience hard physical work for eight years. Finally gShen-chen knew Legs-po had pure faith, and he understood it was time to transmit the Bon doctrines to Legs-po⁶⁷). Thus Legs-po received many Bonpo teachings, especially concerning the *sems phyogs* doctrine. He became one of the four commissioned disciples (*bka' babs kyi slob ma*) of gShen-chen. There is, however, a biography of Legs-po which contains a different version concerning how Legs-po received the teachings from gShen-chen⁶⁸). It states that he came to gShen-chen and asked to bestow on him certain texts. gShen-chen told him that the texts which he wanted were still hidden underground. There were many things, which needed to be collected in order to discover them. If he were able to do so, all the texts would belong to him. The things they needed in order to discover the texts were one yak-load of hoes and pickaxes, thirteen strong men (*gyad pa mi rgod*), six yak-loads of paper and ink, a hundred writers, several kinds of vases which were to be put in the place of the texts that were taken out, and silk of high quality.

Legs-po went back to Shab ba-mo-che, where his family lived, collected all the things required and returned to gShen-chen. They discovered the texts together at mTsho-rnga-brag, also called 'Bri-mtshams mtha'-dkar. While he was with gShen-chen, he also received a prediction from the goddess Srid-pa rgyal-mo. She told him to find the sKyid-mkhar sngo-phug cave in order to practise the doctrine there. He left in order to look for this cave, and asked many people but no one could tell him where it was. Finally, he arrived at dBang-ldan, a small valley near Gyantse. The people of dBang-ldan asked him to stay there. While he was living in dBang-ldan, he received a prediction from goddess again, who told him how to get to the cave from there, and accordingly he found it at sKyid-mkhar. He was a native of dBang-ldan and local people began to call him dBang-ldan zhu. This name has been retained by the Bonpos. The main Zhu family lived at sKyid-mkhar

to the west of Gyantse, since Legs-po established its seat there in the eleventh century. According to the Bonpo sources, the Zhu family had lived for five generations at Zhu-yi ba-mo and Shab ba-mo-che in Sa-skya before Legs-po founded the new seat at sKyid-mkhar.

3.2 The Monastic Life of the Zhu clan

Zhu Jo-'bar, the fourth generation from Legs-po (b. 1002 *STNN*), was perhaps the first who migrated with his family to sKyid-mkhar. He had a son named Khro-rgyal-'bar. When the latter was eight years old, he received a monk's vows and the name Ye-shes rin-chen from gShen-ston Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan and Yar-me-ba (1058-1132 *STNN*). He founded dBang-ldan lhun-grub-sgang at sKyid-mkhar as the first monastery of this clan. He was also known as Sangs-rgyas Zhu-chen, and was the first abbot of lHun-grub-sgang and the first monk of the monastic lineage of the Zhu family (*Zhu yi 'dul brgyud*). During these two generations, the Zhu seat at sKyid-mkhar split into two branches, namely the West Seat and the East Seat (*bla brang nub ma dang bla brang shar ma*). The West Seat is also called Khang-sar. The Zhu family started to split into several branches after five generations.

mKhan-chen Grags-rgyal, the sixth generation after Zhu Ye-shes rin-chen (12th century), visited many parts of Khams in order to enlarge his monastery at sKyid-mkhar. This must have taken place in the first part of the fourteenth century. Meanwhile, an outstanding man was born in the Zhu lineage, namely Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig. There were two figures named Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig in this lineage. The biographies of both are available. The first Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig, a grandson of Legs-po was born when his father was eighty-five years old. His father felt ashamed that he had a son when he was so old: *pha mgo skya la bu rkang dmar byung ba ngo tsha'*⁶⁹) So the father pretended that the baby was born to his own son Jo-mkhar and gave him a secret name, 'Bum-me. When 'Bum-me was eight years old, his father passed away. He left his home when he was fourteen years old. Having studied Bon for ten years under the master Jo-gshen⁷⁰), he started his yogi career. Later he was known as Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig⁷¹). This is the first Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig who resided at the sNgo-phug cave at sKyid-mkhar and in La-stod. However, the second Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig was born in Yar-'brog. When he was five years old, he went to sKyid-mkhar to meet his father. The name of his father is not given in his biography. Having received some Bonpo teachings from his father, he went to the mountain called rTsib-ri in La-stod in order to meditate there. He received the teachings of the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* from Yang-ston Nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan who was contemporary with Bru rGyal-ba g-yung-drung. After having meditated nine years in rTsib-ri, he made a pilgrimage to Amdo. He had many disciples there, among whom some were his own descendants.

According to the *sNang zhig gdan rabs*, besides the five or six old Bonpo families in Central Tibet, there are eighteen other well-known Bonpo families. They are called the Eighteen Zhig-po Lineages (*zhig po bco brgyad*), namely

sNang-zhig, 'Bru-zhig, lDong-zhig, Gling-zhig, Shel-zhig, rGa-zhig, Nag-zhig, gYu-zhig, sTag-zhig, sKyang-zhig, Se-zhig, Bri-zhig, rGya-zhig, 'Ga'-zhig, Bazhig, Co-zhig, rTse-zhig, Ur-zhig⁷²). Some of them are considered to be the descendants of the Zhu clan. For example, sNang-zhig Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, the founder of the sNang-zhig monastery, the largest Bonpo monastery in Amdo, is considered to be both son and disciple of the second Zhu-sgom 'khrul-zhig (14th century)⁷³). According to *NZDR*, the second Zhu-sgom 'Khrul-zhig is said to have lived three hundred and sixty years. This source must have confused him with the first Zhu-sgom who probably was active in the twelfth century.

The Zhu lineage is the most widely spread among the five old Bonpo family lineages in Tibet. There were three main seats of the Zhu lineage, viz. the Upper, the Middle and the Lower Seat (*gdan sa gong ma bar ma 'og ma*). The Upper Seat is situated at sKyid-mkhar in Tsang, while the Middle one, which no longer exists, was called Sog gYung-drung-gling and was located in Sog in northern Tibet. We do not know who founded it and when, but it certainly existed until the seventeenth century. It was destroyed by Mongolian troops (Jungar) who were usually considered to be the supporters of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). According to Bonpo historians, after the destruction of this monastery, Sog Tsan-dan-dgon, a dGe-lugs pa monastery was founded nearby. Mongolian troops destroyed not only Bonpo monasteries, but also those of other Tibetan Buddhist sects except the dGe-lugs-pa ones. Moreover, many Bonpo families were converted to the dGe-lugs-pa order. At the same time, the Bonpo tradition was strongly influenced by the dGe-lugs-pa order. Especially the Bonpo monastic order became almost a replica of the dGe-lugs-pa. After the destruction of Sog gYung-drung-gling, the family Zhu in Sog fled to Nag-shod in eastern Nag-chu. This Zhu family then founded a monastery at gSa'-mda', which was maintained until the Cultural Revolution. Khra-rgan nyi-phug, the Lower Seat of the Zhu lineage, was founded in Kham by Khra-chag-med bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan in the fifteenth century⁷⁴). Even though he was not from the Zhu lineage, all the subsequent heads of the monastery were from that family and therefore this monastery became a Zhu seat in Kham. Besides the three main seats already mentioned, there are many other small seats of this lineage in Central Tibet and Kham, e.g. 'Jed sPang-lung, Shang, sNye-mo, sTa-nag, Nag-shod Bur-rdzum, and Se-tsha, some of which are still in existence.

According to Zhu Tshe-ring rdo-rje⁷⁵), there was a famous Zhu master named Zhu bsTan-'dzin nyi-rgyal, who was contemporary with the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). He enlarged lHun-grub-sgang (also called Zhu Ri-zhing) into three colleges (*kham tshan*), viz. the East, the West and the Middle. He went to China where he received valuable gifts. During the Fifth Dalai Lama, this monastery received an official seal, which gave it a permit for grazing rights all over Tibet. This seal was preserved until the 1960's. However, we cannot find this master in our written sources. According to bSod-nams 'od-zer⁷⁶), in the Fifth Dalai Lama's time there were three colleges in lHun-grub-sgang, each with one hundred monks.

The monastery also had thirteen estates. But when he was a monk in this monastery in 1950's there was only one college with fifty monks. After the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) there is nothing now but a huge ruin. There is no information about the other Zhu seats in northeastern Tibet, but they existed until modern times.

4. The sPa Lineage

4.1 The Origin of the Lineage

Each of the five old family lineages has a different account of its origin. Likewise, their development and way of succession are quite different. Accordingly, each lineage is given a special title. Traditionally the sPa lineage is called the Yogi sPa (*grub thob spa*). This might be because initially this lineage paid more attention to the practice of tantric doctrine than monastic life. In *STBK* there is an origin account of the clan similar to that of the Bru clan. This seems to be the earliest source in which the origin of the sPa clan is recorded. It reads as follows:

*grub thob chen po spa yi brgyud/ grol tshul lo rgyus cung 'chad na/ dang po 'od gsal lha yi gnas/ sangs po chu lcam las grol ba'i / lha bu spa la mdzes pa zhig/ rtsa gsum lha yi gnas su babs/ lha rnam 'dus nas bon 'khor skor/ de tshe yul la gzigs pa'i tshe/ lho gling zhang zhung yul khams su/ bon gyi stan pa gzug('dzugs) par dgongs/ zhang zhung rnam rgyal lha rtsar babs/ sprul pa mi 'dra du mar ston/ ti se gangs kyi shel phug tu/ lo gsum sgrub pa mdzad pa'i tshe/ mgon po gsum dang dbye ru med/ khri men bya ru can zhes grags/ sa las zhang zhung rgyal po che/ gnam las lha bu spa bas mdzes/ grub thob spa tshang de la grags/*⁷⁷⁾

As we can see from this text, the sPa clan, like the Bru lineage, descended from the Divine Realm of the Thirty-three Gods (*rtsa gsum lha yi gnas*) specifically from the Gods of Clear Light (*'od gsal lha*). Having propagated Bon there, the divine son sPa proceeded to rNam-rgyal lha-rtse in Zhang-zhung.

Even though there are very few sources concerning Zhang-zhung, it is clear that Zhang-zhung was an ancient kingdom on the Tibetan Plateau. According to Bonpo sources the Zhang-zhung kingdom was composed of three parts namely sGo-pa, Phug-pa and Bar-pa. sGo-pa was considered as Khyung-po, northeastern Tibet, and Khyung-po rtse-drug was its centre. Phug-pa was considered as mNga'-ris, and its centre was Mount Ti-se. Bar-pa was considered as Dang-ra in northern Tibet and its centre was Dang-ra khyung-rdzong. According to *GTKC*, there were eighteen kings bearing the name Bya-ru-can in the Zhang-zhung kingdom⁷⁸⁾. One of them, Phra-man 'od-kyi bya-ru-can, might be the same figure that appears in the text. When this king was ruling Zhang-zhung, a saint who was the son of Sangs-po 'bum-khri and Chu-lcam rgyal-mo came from the Divine Realm of the Thirty-three Gods. He was the first man who came down to earth in the sPa lineage. There

are two different versions of his name, viz. sPa-ba spa-thog and sPa-ba spa-mdzes. Sangs-po 'bum-khri is a very important figure in Bonpo tradition, and he is always connected with the cosmological myth. Karmay translates the passage on him in *LShDz* as follows:

“They (i.e. Sangs-po and his spouse) came from eggs and are said to be the original parents of man and animals. Sangs-po is called the King of Phenomenal Existence (*yod khams srid pa'i rgyal po*) and stands in opposition to the king of Nothingness (*med khams stong pa'i rgyal po*). These two kings represent white and black, right and wrong, and thus god and demon who are born together with every human being⁷⁹.”

LShDz and *YBSB* seem to think that sPa-ba spa-thog is the same figure as Khri-men lcags-kyi bya-ru-can. This must be due to a confusion of the two.

Before the Zhang-zhung kingdom was annexed in the seventh century A.D., the sPa lineage priests in Zhang-zhung played a role as important as the *gshen* priests in Tibet at that time. Having played an important role in the royal family of Zhang-zhung, the sPa family disappeared in that country. In the eighth century, however, sPa Ji-phrom dkar-po, a sPa yogi, appeared in Central Tibet. The *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* says:

“There were many yogis in Zhang-zhung. One of them, Tso-men gyer-chen, lived when King Lig-mi-rkya (rhya) was ruling the country. There were also many yogis in Tibet. One of them, sPa Ji-phrom dkar-po, lived when King Khri-srong sde-btsan was ruling the country⁸⁰”.

sPa Ji-phrom dkar-po is the first member of this clan to appear in Central Tibet. This indicates that this lineage had already extended to Central Tibet in the eighth century. Thereafter, it was, just as the other lineages, was not mentioned until gShen-chen Klu-dga' discovered the Bonpo texts in Tsang in the year 1017 (*STNV*).

4.2 The sPa clan in Gung-thang

Gung-thang is located between mNga'-ris and Tsang and it is also called La-stod lho. It was a quite famous place in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. There were many famous yogis both Buddhist and Bonpo who were active there in that period, for example, Khro-tshang 'Brug-lha (956-1077 *STNV*), an outstanding Bonpo yogi, Mi-la ras-pa (1040-1123), Ma-cig lab-sgron (1031-1129) and Phadam-pa Sangs-rgyas, an Indian yogi who came to Tibet three times, the last time being in the year 1113⁸¹).

The first historical figure of the sPa clan was sPa-ston dPal-mchog, who was born in 1014 (*STNV*). The place where he was born is not clear. But there are certain accounts in which his activities are mentioned in sources such as *TN* and *YBSB*. These accounts provide some information about him. When he was meditating at sNye-nam dwags-kyi yang-dben, a small hermitage in Gung-thang, he heard that gShen-chen had discovered Bonpo texts in Tsang. He came down to 'Bri-mtshams mtha'-dkar to meet gShen-chen. On gShen-chen's recommen-

dition, he received the complete tantric teachings from 'Dzi-ston who was an outstanding disciple of gShen-chen. Having done that, he returned to sNye-nam dwags-kyi yang-dben. He had practised the tantras for some time when he composed the famous commentary on the *Thig le dbyings 'chad*, a Bonpo tantric text. He had many followers. Among them four were the most famous disciples, namely, gShen Dam-pa rgyal-tshab, rMe'u lHa-ri gNyen-po, rMe'u Dam-pa ri-khrod and sPa Dar-ma-dpal.

He had close relations with Pha-dam-pa who used to meditate in the Ding-ri area. He suggested to his disciples to meet Pha-dam-pa. Later in his life, he decided to take a monk's vows from Khro-tshang 'Brug-lha. He went to Khro-tshang and asked him to shave his hair. Khro-tshang said to him 'you have already achieved a high level of tantric practice, I cannot shave your hair, please keep it and continue your meditation as before⁸²⁾'. Since then the sPa lineage has been famous for the practice of tantra.

During this period, there were two lineages in the sPa family. One was the lineage in which a disciple could receive tantric doctrine without taking the vows of a monk. This lineage carried on the family line as well. The other one was the lineage in which a disciple received the doctrine together with monastic vows. It is usually called the Monastic Lineage ('*dul brgyud*). Both lineages are discussed in detail in *TN*.

sPa 'Od-gsal rgyal-mtshan, a nephew of dPal-mchog was the first monk in the sPa clan. He received vows from Yar-me Shes-rab 'od-zer (1058-1132 *STNN*), and thus he became the first monk in the monastic lineage of this clan. There were complete teaching systems among the sPa lineage, but no monastery had been founded yet. Disciples received teachings in different places according to the place where their masters were meditating. Several places are mentioned in *TN* such as sNye-nam, Rin-chen-sgang, lHa-yul, Ri-khud and so on. All these places are actually in Gung-thang. Ri-khud, also known as gNas-chen Ri-khud bde-sgang, had already developed as a monastery when sPa dPal-ldan-bzang-po, the fifth monk figure in the monastic lineage from sPa 'Od-gsal rgyal-mtshan (12th century), was born in the sPa family. According to the *YBSB*, the father of this man founded the monastery, but it had already existed as a hermitage for several generations before that. Thus it is difficult to point out who founded it and at what specific time. It seems to have been gradually developed as a monastery and became the main seat of the sPa family in the following centuries. It is known as sPa La-phug.

Thereupon, according to *YBSB*, there were thirteen masters bearing the name bZang-po (*bzang po bcu gsum*) in La-phug. sPa-btsun bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, one of these teachers, was born in La-stod. He was the eighth generation from sPa-ston dPal-mchog, and the seventh of the monastic lineage of the sPa clan. He was not only famous in his own clan, but also one of the greatest scholars in the whole Bonpo tradition. Unlike previous generations he did not concentrate only on the tantric practice in a small hermitage, but paid more attention to the scholarly study

of the Bonpo history. He had several masters, among whom Glan-ston bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan and Kar-tsha bSod-nams blo-gros were the most important. From the first master he took the vows of a monk, and from the latter he received the complete teachings of the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*. It is not clear when he was born, but according to his own work, *TN*, he finished it when four hundred and sixty years had passed since gShen-chen had discovered the Bonpo texts. This suggests that he must have been active in the year 1477. He not only appeared in his own monastic lineage, but also in the lineage of the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* teaching. The lineage of the *snyan rgyud* teaching can be divided into six branches according to the regions where the masters came from, for example, sTod-lugs, sMad-lugs, Byang-rgyud, lHo-rgyud and so on. bsTan-rgyal bzang-po himself belonged to the lHo-rgyud to which Bru rGyal-ba g-yung-drung also belonged. He was the fourth figure from Bru rGyal-ba in this lineage. He composed several texts, but only two of them are available. First is the famous historical work: *TN*. This work is the first chronicle in which the discovery of Bonpo texts is described in detail. Likewise, the five Bonpo families are described as lineage families. It was probably written in 1477 (see Introduction). Two years later, he composed a biographical work on the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud* teaching lineage. There is a short biography of himself in this text which seems to have been written by one of his disciples and inserted in the text after his death. Both works were finished at gNas-chen bde-sgang, also called sPa La-phug.

After sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, a few generations lived in La-phug in Gung-thang. During that time, members of the sPa family frequently moved between western and eastern Tibet. The *YBSB* says:

*de rjes dbus gtsang la sogs yar mar du/ lhun grub dbang ldan zla ba grags pa dang/ lhun grub dbang rgyal tshe dbang 'od zer sogs/ bstan 'dzin skyes su (bu) 'ga' byon de tsam na/ gtsang stod la phug phyogs kyi gdung rgyud phra/ bar skabs gdung 'dzin kha cig mdo smad phyogs/ byon brgyud spa ston g-yung drung rgyal po'i sras/ dgra 'dul bstan rgyal bsod nams dbang grags bcas/ 'di dus yar byon hor sde ye tha'i nang/ gzhis chags bzhugs shing de dag gi sras dbon/*⁸³⁾

This is the only account of what happened between sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po and the founding of the new sPa seat in the Hor area. The author did not give the reason why the sPa family disappeared in Gung-thang and migrated to eastern Tibet. But according to the general Bonpo history, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bonpos had a very difficult time, especially in Central Tibet. Many Bonpos were forcibly converted into Buddhists, and many Bonpo monasteries in Central Tibet were faced with a crisis, because they were losing support. Thus some Bonpo families had to migrate from Central Tibet. The sPa family was apparently one of those families. After the sPa family's migration, La-

phug existed as a small hermitage with some twenty monks, but it was no longer managed by the sPa family.

4.3 The sPa family in the Hor area

The so-called Hor area is located in northern-eastern Tibet. Before 1959 there were thirty-nine tribes in that area, all of them Bonpo. Hor Ye-tha was one of them. We do not know the exact time of the migration of the sPa family to eastern Tibet, but *STNN* states that in the year 1847 a sPa master founded a monastery in Hor Ye-tha, known as gYung-drung rab-brtan-gling or simply sPa-tshang dgon. The founder was sPa-ston Nam-mkha' bzang-po whose grandfather came from mDo-smad.

In the year 1854, sPa Nyi-ma 'bum-gsal was born in Hor Ye-tha. He received the vows of a monk from Zhu rGyal-mtshan nyi-ma and mKhan-chen sKal-bzang bstan-pa'i nyi-ma. He became the Abbot of sPa-tshang. During his time as abbot, the monastery was improved and became the largest Bonpo monastery in the Hor area with four hundred monks. Two teaching sections were established, namely, the philosophy teaching (*mtshan nyid bshad grwa*) and the tantric teaching (*sgrub grwa*).

Shar-rdza bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan states in his *LShDz* that he once met this sPa Nyi-ma 'bum-gsal and received teachings from him⁸⁴.

sPa Nyi-ma 'bum-gsal had numerous disciples. One of the most famous was sPa-ston bsTan-pa 'brug-grags who was born in 1892 in Hor Ye-tha. He composed many works, not only concerning religious matters but also concerning linguistics and medicine. He passed away in 1951 in Hor Ye-tha.

During the time of these two sPa masters sPa-tshang became very important in the Hor area. In 1959 it was completely destroyed. After some twenty years later the sPa family restored it.

5. The rMe'u Lineage

5.1 The Origin of the rMe'u clan

This lineage, like the other lineages, was considered to have descended from the Divine Realm ('*od gsal lha*). It is the only lineage which came directly to Tibet. *STBK* gives an account of its origin myth as follows:

mi rgyud lha las yas mar chad/ srid pa sangs po 'bum khri yi/ rgyud las grol ba lha yi sras/ 'od kyi khye'u dkar po zhig/ 'od gsal lha nas yas mar babs/ yig tshang can gyi sdong las chad/ de sras rma dang rme'u gnyis/ rme'u ngam len skyor po yi/ lha rgyud mi rabs dbu bzungs nas/ gsang sngags dbal phur nag po sgrub/ phur pa'i lha tshogs zhal yang gzigs/ grub rtags rdzu 'phrul dpag med mnga'/ g-yu 'brug sngon po rta ru zhon/ phyag phreng rag shas lcags byas nas/ ti se gangs la thur du rgyug/

*lha ri gyang tho'i rtse ru byon/ gnya' khri btsad por dbang skur zhing/ bla yi mchod gnas dam par skur/*⁸⁵⁾

According to this text, the first man of the rMe'u clan is called Ngam-len skyol-po, the descendant of Sangs-po 'bum-khri in heaven of the 'Od gsal lha. After having meditated on Mount Ti-se for a while, rMe'u Ngam-len skyor-po went to the top of Mount lHa-ri gyang-tho in Kongpo. It is one of the three summits of the Bonpo holy mountain Bon-ri. He became a priest of King gNya'-khri btsad-po, the first king of Tibet who also came down to the top of the mountain from heaven⁸⁶⁾. Two of Ngam-len skyol-po's manifestations went to gYas-ru Shang in Tsang. After many generations had passed, rMe'u Rog-dbal-bon was born in Gur-zhog in Tsang. He was the first historical figure of this clan and contemporary with rJe-btsun Khro-tshang 'brug-lha (956-1077 *STNN*). He had a son, lHa-ri gnyen-po.

5.2 The rMe'u clan in Central Tibet

lHa-ri gnyen-po was born in 1024 in Gur-zhog in Tsang. According to *TN*, he himself did not meet gShen-chen, but he met all masters of the other three lineages who had received teachings from gShen-chen. He particularly studied the Bonpo philosophical doctrine. At the same time, his paternal uncle Shakya-brtan⁸⁷⁾ had a son known as dGongs-mdzod ri-khrod-pa, who was born in 1038. The latter received teachings from Bru-ston gYung-drung bla-ma (12th century), Zhu sGrol-ba gshen-rgyal, sPa-ston dPal-mchog (b. 1014) and his own cousin lHa-ri gnyen-po. During the lifetime of these two men a monastery was founded in Gur-zhog and gathered many Bonpos to study there. Since then this clan is known as the Scholarly rMe'u (*mkhas pa rme'u*).

dGongs-mdzod ri-khrod-pa, also called Dam-pa ri-khrod, was not only famous in the clan, but also important in the whole Bonpo tradition. He was the founder of the *A khrid* teaching and the first monastic lineage master of all the five old Bonpo families. He had numerous disciples, but the most outstanding was Yar-me-ba Shes-rab 'od-zer (1058-1132). rMe'u lHa-ri gnyen-po (b. 1024) had a son named Tshul-khrims dpal-chen, also called the scholar dPal-chen (*mkhas-pa dPal-chen*). He was born in 1052 in Gur-zhog. He took the vows of a monk from Sum-ston Tshul-khrims bla-ma, and went to Nyang-stod gNas-rnying, a Buddhist monastery, to study philosophy. Later he founded a Bonpo monastery in sNye-mo which perhaps was the antecedent of the present Zang-ri rMe'u-tshang monastery in sNye-mo.

According to *YBSB*, this monastery was quite large, with one thousand monks. In spite of having been founded by the rMe'u family, this monastery did not exclusively belong to the family. rMe'u Tshul-khrims dpal-chen let sPa 'Od-gsal rgyal-mtshan carry on its tradition. After him the monastery was looked after by other people who were not members of the rMe'u clan.

6. The contemporary situation of the five families

6.1 The gShen family

Since the dGe-lugs-pa school gained control over Tibet, monastic institutions were strengthened, and the family lineages became gradually weaker. After a remarkable history, the five old Bonpo families became less prominent. One of them has even become extinct. During the last several centuries the founding of a monastery was not easy, especially for the Bonpos, who had to present an application to the Government in Lhasa. At the same time the monastery had to be affiliated with another main monastery. Even then it was difficult to obtain the necessary permission. So continuing the family lineage instead of founding a monastery was the easiest and most practical way to preserve the tradition. Since most Bonpo communities were in north-eastern Tibet, the Bonpos who lived in Central Tibet were in a difficult political and economic position. They had to go to where there were larger Bonpo communities live in order to get some support for their monasteries. Even though historians paid more attention to monastic matters than those of the lineage masters, a historical account of these old Bonpo families has been retained by their own descendants.

The Bonpos think that they have a great responsibility for preserving those clans. As we have discussed above, however, in the 17th century the gShen family itself had split into two seats, namely the gShen of Dar-lding and the gShen of sKyid-gzhong, and both were extinct by the end of the 19th century. Since the people of Dar-lding thought that it was very unfortunate that this great clan had become extinct, they looked for a solution to this problem.

gShen Nyi-zla tshe-dbang a member of the family lived as an ordinary Tibetan around the beginning of this century in bKra-gdong, a place in western Tibet (see 1.4). He was asked to give his son to Dar-lding in order to carry on the gShen family there. He let his son gShen 'Dzam-gling dbang-'dus go to Dar-lding to take over the gShen seat. 'Dzam-gling dbang-'dus married Tshe-ring, a woman of the Zhu family who had been in charge of the gShen seat since the clan had become extinct there. However, she did not give birth to any child. 'Dzam-gling dbang-'dus usually visited northern Tibet in order to get some support for his own family and the monastery in Dar-lding. The lamas who are from the five great clans are respected wherever they go. He once visited the Bar-tha area near Nag-chu-kha and there he produced a son. This son became therefore the only successor to the gShen clan at the time. After a year, the little boy was brought to Dar-lding and named gShen Nyi-ma 'bum-gsal. He in turn became the father of the present gShen Nor-bu dbang-rgyal⁸⁸). People usually call Nor-bu dbang-rgyal gShen-sras Rin-po-che.

When gShen-sras was three years old, his father went to visit the Hor area. It was in 1959, and the uprising had begun in Tibet. gShen Nyi-ma 'bum-gsal was on his way to Sog-sde in north-eastern Nag-chu-kha. sKyang-nag mTha'-yas rgya-mtsho, a lama from Amdo who was the Abbot of sTag-rtse monastery in Kongpo,

was accompanying him. One day in the early morning they were attacked by the PLA. gShen Nyi-ma 'bum-gsal was injured, unable to move, he asked lama sKyang-nag to take care of his son and a few minutes later he passed away. sKyang-nag and other Bonpo monks who were with him cremated his remains at that very place, and the ashes were taken to Kongpo in order to deposit it on the famous holy mountain, Bon-ri⁸⁹.

Because of the earthquake in the Kongpo area around the year 1958 many monasteries were destroyed, and sKyang-nag had to take care of the restoration of the sTag-rtse monastery. In addition, there was a very tense situation in Tibet at that moment, and people were not allowed to travel much. He could not go to Darding to take care of the child. Five years later sKyang-nag was arrested and he was kept in detention for fifteen years. But he had never forgotten what gShen Nyi-ma 'bum-gsal once asked him. It was in 1981 that sKyang-nag was released. First of all, he began to search the boy who had been lost for fifteen years. A-khu Yi-dam, who used to travel with the father of the boy and sKyang-nag when they visited the Hor area, lived in Lhasa. He was asked to go to Tsang in order to look for the boy. A-khu Yi-dam went to Shigatse twice, but nobody could tell him where the boy was although everybody still had fresh memories what had happened to themselves during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and to the people who had relations to lamas or monasteries. It was in 1982 that A-khu Yi-dam finally found the boy in Shigatse. He took the boy to lama sKyang-nag who then lived in Lhasa.

The young boy was illiterate and he was in a very poor physical condition. Since sKyang-nag took care of him and started to teach him everything, they trusted each other. The boy accepted sKyang-nag as his master. The boy told him his own story of how he had lost his father when he was three years old, and how, when he was six years old, all the members of his family were attacked, the property of the family was confiscated, and their houses were completely destroyed. His mother died during a struggle session. Afterwards, he became completely homeless.

Even though he had been through such terrible experiences, it was good news for the Bonpos that he was alive in spite of everything. The news was spread to every place where Bonpos lived, even as far as the Bonpo community in India.

In the year 1985, lama sKyang-nag wrote the first letter concerning gShen-sras to Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin, the Abbot of the Bonpo monastery in India. The Abbot immediately replied to say that he should take care of gShen-sras. But unfortunately he was not so well-behaved, he began to drink a lot and was frequently drunk. This made sKyang-nag very anxious, and he had no idea what to do. So he had to write a second letter to the Abbot to ask what he should do about gShen-sras. The Abbot suggested to him to arrange for gShen-sras's marriage as soon as possible.

sKyang-nag called some senior Bonpo lamas in Central Tibet together. They nominated seven girls from different Bonpo communities, and their names were sent to Dolanji. A special ritual for this important marriage was held in the Bonpo monastery at Dolanji for a week. At the end of the ritual, the girl Nyi-ma mtsho-mo was chosen to be the spouse of gShen-sras Rin-po-che.

Following the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution, the People's Republic of China gradually permitted the renewal of religious activity. According to the recommendation of dGe-slong Shes-rab bstan-'dzin, an old monk of gYung-drung-gling who first managed to restore this monastery in 1981, gShen-sras Rin-po-che was on the board of the Buddhist Association of Shigatse District. Thereupon he undertook the restoration of gSer-sgo khra-mo which was the main seat of his family and which had been completely destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. gSer-sgo khra-mo was restored but its size is only half of what it had been before. There are only six monks in the temple. It has become more like a small monastery rather than a seat of the gShen family, because gShen-sras himself usually lives in Lhasa with his family. A few years later, he became a vice-chairman of the Board of the Tibetan Buddhist Association of TAR.

He has four children, two daughters and two sons. They were born respectively in 1986, 1988, 1992 and 1994 in Lhasa. His two sons are living with their parents in Lhasa, and the two daughters mostly live with their maternal aunt who married bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma in Nag-chu-kha. bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma has been one of the most active Bonpo lamas in Nag-chu since the renewal of religious activity was allowed from the beginning of the 1980s.

bsTan-pa'i nyi-ma has cooperated with gShen-sras Rin-po-che to undertake the publication of the Bonpo brTen-'gyur. They collected more than three hundred volumes of Bonpo manuscripts from all over Tibet, and arranged for Bonpo scholars to edit them. The new edition is available from 1998. gShen-sras is not like other Bonpo lamas who frequently take charge of religious rituals in their daily lives. This is perhaps because of his special experience in his early life and because he has been with his master for too short a time, sKyang-nag having passed away before he finished passing on to gShen-sras the necessary knowledge of religion. But Bonpos from all over Tibet give great respect to him, and always ask for his blessing.

At the seat of sKyid-gzhong which we have already discussed above (see 1.4), a wall painting of the eighteenth century when the seat still belonged to the gShen family, has escaped the destruction of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. The building was confiscated by the Government and assigned to seven other families. The third floor of the building was removed. Fortunately, however, the second floor on which the wall painting is found has been preserved.

6.2 The Zhu family

On the historical stage, the Zhu lineage was the most widespread clan among the five old Bonpo lineage families. This was the only family lineage which had three main seats during the same period. However, at the beginning of this century, the lineage became very weak. After the Cultural Revolution, it became nearly extinct. For example, the Zhu of Khra-rgan used to be one of the three main seats of the Zhu clan in Kham, but now there is only a small monastery, which is no longer carried on by this lineage. The Zhu of gSa'-mda', in the Hor area, is practically extinct. The Zhu of sKyid-mkhar which was the largest and most important one still remains.

In the 1890s, there were three sons in the Zhu family at sKyid-mkhar, namely, Rig-'dzin g-yung-drung, gYung-drung grags-rgyal and Khri-chen Rin-po-che. The latter two took monastic vows. Khri-chen Rin-po-che later went to Gro-mo in order to look after the monastery at Pad-mo-sgang. Traditionally this monastery belonged to the Zhu lineage. gYung-drung grags-rgyal took care of Ri-zhing which is located at sKyid-mkhar, and he visited the Hor and Kham area several times. Rig-'dzin g-yung-drung, the eldest son, was married and had four children, namely, Tshe-dbang rab-brtan, Tshe-dbang rin-chen, Tshe-dbang thogs-med and bKra-shis lha-mo. The first son received monastic vows and took charge of Ri-zhing. He visited the Hor area as his uncle had done. His visit lasted for seven years and during those years one of his disciples, bSod-nams 'od-zer, who was seventy-three years old in 1996, accompanied him. In 1959, lama Tshe-dbang rab-brtan was arrested and a few years later he died in detention⁹⁰.

Tshe-dbang rin-chen, the second son, married A-nan who was born in 1920. They had six children, three daughters and three sons. Chos-mdzad bstan-dar, the eldest son, became a Buddhist monk in Gling-bu monastery which belonged to the dGe-lugs-pa tradition in Gyantse, and he has lived in Lhasa during the last twenty years. Tshe-dbang mi-'gyur, the second son, was born in 1946. When he was ten years old he met a Buddhist lama who was on his way to Mt. Ti-se. The lama gave him a Buddhist name Tshe-ring rdo-rje. Since then he has used this name. During the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, his family buildings were confiscated and assigned to five other families. His land was shared out as well. His father, Tshe-dbang rin-chen, fled to India after he was released from prison in 1965 and he died in India in 1982. Tshe-ring rdo-rje has never seen him again since 1965. His monastery was destroyed and he himself and his mother had to do all kinds of heavy labour.

Following the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution, a liberal policy was implemented in China in the early 1980s. Zhu Tshe-ring rdo-rje recalled what two families of his village said to him: 'You are the descendant of the Zhu lineage, if you can arrange to restore Ri-zhing, it will be very useful for the whole village.' I replied 'Of course I can, actually, that is my monastery and I have great responsibility for restoring it.' At that time bsTan-'dzin rnam-dag, a Bonpo lama

living in Nepal, was visiting Central Tibet. He also asked him to restore the monastery after he had visited its ruins and the cave of gYu-'brang phyug-mo⁹¹).

Thereupon Zhu Tshe-ring rdo-rje took care of restoring the cave, and local people offered their labour. Having done that, it was in 1987 that he first visited the Hor area in order to arrange for the restoration of Ri-zhing. In the same year even though he was married and had children, he received monastic vows from a Bonpo lama from Amdo, in order to take better care of his monastery. Following that he served on the board of the Buddhist Association of Shigatse District.

The old Ri-zhing was situated on the top of the mountain in which the gYu-'brang phyug-mo cave was located. It was impossible to rebuild the monastery in the same place, so he rebuilt it at the foot of the mountain, and it is only a single-storey building with a small courtyard. There were ten monks in the new monastery in 1996.

6.3 The rMe'u Family

In the 1920s⁹²) there were two children in the rMe'u family in bZang-ri, sixty kilometres west of Lhasa, a son and a daughter. The son was named A-bo. He married two women, one from Lhasa and the other from dPal-mgon in northern Tibet. Neither of them gave birth to a child. Eventually, he himself passed away in bZang-ri. His sister had been a nun, but because of the death of her brother, she had to marry in order to carry on the rMe'u family in bZang-ri. She married a local *sngags pa*. Traditionally, when an aristocratic family lineage is in danger of becoming extinct, it is possible to find another suitable person to continue the family, and the new descendants can retain the name of the old family lineage. The sacred lineage, however, does not function like that. It has to be succeeded on the paternal side. Even if a suitable person is found to carry on the lineage, nobody would regard him as a descendant of the clan. If there is only a daughter in the family, the clan is thus regarded as extinct. So at that time, the rMe'u lineage was extinct at their main seat of bZang-ri. Meanwhile, rMe'u bSod-nams dbang-grags was living in rDza-dmar which is one of the thirty-nine tribes of the Hor area (*hor tsho so dgu*) and rMe'u bSod-nams dbang-'dus was living in rGyal-shod, another Hor tribe. These two branches of the rMe'u family did not found any monastery in their home areas but continued the family lineage there. So the *sngags pa*, who married the daughter of the rMe'u family, went to the Hor area to invite a rMe'u male descendant to bZang-ri.

rMe'u bSod-nams dbang-grags refused to come to bZang-ri, but bSod-nams dbang-'dus accepted the invitation. He came to bZang-ri and lived at the main seat of the rMe'u family. Thereupon he married and had three sons, Rin-chen dbang-grags, Nyi-zla dbang-grags and Kar-ma grub-skyes. The eldest son was born in bZang-ri in 1939 and died in 1959. Nyi-zla dbang-grags, the second son, was born in 1942. Kar-ma grub-skyes, the youngest son, was born in 1948. Both are still living.

Like the other family lineages, this family had been through every struggle campaign during the 1960-70s. Tragically their parents died during the campaign. After the deaths of his parents and elder brother, Nyi-zla dbang-grags, the second son, had to take care of all family matters early in his life. In 1986, he undertook the restoration of the monastery of rMe'u-tshang in bZang-ri. Since then he has visited the Hor area almost every year. He married and has four sons and a daughter. sKal-bzang dbang-rgyal, the eldest son, took monastic vows from Kun-gsal blo-gros, the chief teacher in the monastery of gYung-drung-gling in Tsang, and since then he has been studying there. At the request of the local people of the rDza-dmar area, in 1986 he gave his second son, Tshe-dbang rig-'dzin, to them when he was ten years old. A few years later, at the instance of the rGyal-shod people, his third son, Kun-dga' rnam-rgyal, was given to them and became the head lama of the monastery of Ga-ru in rGyal-shod.

The youngest son and the daughter live with their parents in bZang-ri.

Abbreviations

BTBK	<i>gYung drung bon gyi bstan pa'i byung khungs nyung bsdu</i>
DLG	<i>'Dul ba gling grags</i>
DMB	<i>Dran pa'i lde mig 'bring po</i>
GL	<i>Bon chos dar nub gi lo rgyus rgyas pa rin chen gling grag ces bya ba dmong pa blo'i gsal byed.</i>
GRB	<i>rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas</i>
GTKC	<i>'Dzam gling gangs ti se'i dkar chag tshangs dbyangs yid 'phrog dgos 'dod</i>
KBNT	<i>rJe btsun khro tshang 'brug lha'i rnam par thar ba mu tig phreng ba</i>
LSh	<i>Legs bshad rin po che'i gter mdzod</i>
MSDR	<i>dMu gshen lha yi gdung rabs dbyar rnga'i sgra dbyang</i>
NYNT	<i>sNyan rgyud bla ma'i rnam thar</i>
NZDR	<i>sNang zhig bkra shis g-yung drung gling gi gdan rabs</i>
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLNT	<i>dPal ldan bla ma'i rnam thar mu tig phreng ba</i>
SGK	<i>Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang rnam thar chen mo</i>
STBK	<i>Sangs rgyas bstan pa spyi yi 'byung khungs yid bzhin nor bu 'dod pa 'jo ba'i gter mdzod</i>
STNN	<i>Sangs rgyas g-yung drung bon gyi bstan rtsis ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba</i>
TAR	Tibetan Autonomous Region
TKDD	<i>gShen gyi rtsis gsar rnam dag las bsTan rtsis bskal ldan dang 'dren</i>
TN	<i>bsTan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal sgron</i>
YBSB	<i>gYung drung bon gyi bstan 'byung phyogs bsdu</i>
ZYNT	<i>'Gro ba'i mgon po rgyal sras Zhu gYas legs po'i skyes rabs rnam thar</i>

Notes

- 1) *SGK* 69r-71r.
- 2) Karmay 1972: 137: “A commentary on *Tig le dbyings 'ched*, a tantric text (*KTDG*, p.8), is said to have already been found, together with the text, by gShen-chen Klu-dga’, but *KTDG* (pp. 16-17) does not mention any commentary on the text.”
- 3) Karmay 1972: 51: “Tib. *sems-smad sde-dgu*. They are the *Byang-sems gab-pa dgu-skor* (*Byang-sems gab-pa* or *Gab-pa*) which is listed under three textual treasures, then the *Khu-byug*, and lastly the seven small texts called the *Sems-phran sde-bdun* making nine in all.”
- 4) Interview with bSod-nams 'od-zer in sKyid-mkhar
- 5) *LShDz* pp. 246-247.
- 6) Kvaerne 1990: 154.
- 7) Kvaerne 1990: 159.
- 8) Tucci 1949: 713.
- 9) Karmay, 1972: 8, “*sGra 'grel, bDen pa bon gyi mdzod sgo sgra 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig*, attributed to Dran-pa nam-mkha’ (8th century), known in short as *mDzod sgra 'grel* or *sGra 'grel* is regarded as of special importance among the commentaries. ‘According to the colophon it appears to have been rediscovered by rMa Jo-lcam who was also known as rMa lCam-me and was a son of rMa-ston srol-'dzin (b.1092 *STNN*). However, our author (Shar-rdza) makes no mention of it either in the list of rMa lcam-me’s discoveries or Northern Textual Treasure. Thus since rMa lcam-me’s discoveries took place in Byang gsang-brag rgya-bo we may safely say that the text was rediscovered by rMa lcam-me, a fact which escaped our author’s eye though he used it as one of his principal sources.”
- 10) *lTa ba khyung chen lding ba'i rgyud* was discovered by rMa-ston Srid-'dzin at Yar-lha sham-po.
- 11) *GRB* pp. 67-69.
- 12) *STBK* pp. 273-274.
- 13) *Bod kyi rdo ring yi ge dang dril bu'i kha byang*, pp. 77-79
- 14) sTon-pa gShen-rab’s life-story is available in three versions. Karmay 1972: 4, note 1: “*'Dus pa rin po che dri ma med pa gzi brjid rab tu 'bar ba'i mdo* (often referred to simply as *gZi brjid*) is the long version (*mdzad mdo rgyas pa*) in twelve volumes with sixty-one chapters. It is said to have been transmitted orally to *sprul sku* Blo-lDan snying-po (b.1360 *STNN*) by sTang-chen dMu-tsha gyer-med (eighth century). *'Dus pa rin po che'i rgyud gzer mig (myig)* (often referred simply as *mDo gzer mig* or *gZer mig*) is the medium-length version (*mdzad mdo 'bring po*) in two volumes with eighteen chapters. It is said to have been translated into Tibetan from Zhang-zhung by Vairocana. Later it was discovered by Drang-rje btsun-pa (contemporary of rMe'u lHa-ri gnyen-po) at bSam-yas khri-thang dur-khrod. *Dus gsum sangs rgyas byung khungs kyi mdo* (often known as *mDo 'dus*) is the short version (*mdzad mdo bsdus pa*) in one volume with twenty-four chapters. It is said to have been translated by sNya-chen Li-shu stags-ring (eighth century) from sTag-gzig. It was discovered by Sad-gu Rin-chen grags-pa (contemporary of rMe'u lHa-ri gnyen-po) and Dre'u-rgya ra-dza at bSam-yas mchod-rten dmar-po.”

- 15) *STBK* pp.107r-v.
 16) *LShDz* p.141.
 17) *SGK* pp. 96r-v.
 18) *STBK* p. 108r.
 19) *TN* pp. 205-206.
 20) *YBSB* p. 348.
 21) There are various names for this place. *TN* (p. 205) gives lCog-ro 'bri-mtshams, but in the *Bla ma gshen chen po'i rnam thar* (p.59) we find 'Bring-mtshams gnyen-rtse gad-dmar, and *LShDz* (p.250) gives 'Bri-mtshams mtha'-dkar.
 22) *MSDR* f. 6.
 23) *TN* p. 206.
 24) *TN* p. 211.
 25) dGe-lding is now no longer a Bonpo seat, but there is a town where mThong-smon rdzong, a local administrative, is located.
 26) *ZYNT* pp.10r-11v.
 27) *TN* p. 213.
 28) Atisha came to Tibet in 1042. He had stayed in mNga'-ris for three years before he came to Central Tibet where he died in 1054.
 29) *ZYNT* pp. 10r-11v.
 30) *TN* p. 213.
 31) E.Gene Smith in his introduction to *Kongtrul's Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* states:
 "The literature of the 11th and 12th centuries is filled with the struggles of Bon and Buddhism; we read of contests to death between such names as Lo-chen Rin-chen bzang-po (958-1055) and Klu sKar-rgyal. This personage (the latter) is probably to be identified with gShen-chen Klu-dga' (996-1035) whose rediscovery of the Bon-po abhidharma text, the srid pa'i mdzod phug, in 1017 at 'grig-mtshams mtha'-dkar marks the beginning of the Later Spread (*phyi dar*) of Bon". (*Śatapitaka* series, vol.80, p.6)
 32) *MSDR* p. 7
 33) *YBSB* p.349.
 34) Yar-me-ba Shes-rab-'od-zer, according to *STNN*, was born in the year 1058, and died in 1132, but *TKDD* gave the date two *rab byung* later.
 35) gSer-sgo khra-mo is usually called the temple of gShen.
 36) Karmay 1977: 158.
 37) *TN* p. 191
 38) *YBSB* pp. 350-351.
 39) *LShDz* p. 257.
 40) Kvaerne 1990: 152.
 41) This place is a village beside Dar-lding village. Between these two villages there is a hill on which the Ri-rgyal monastery is situated.
 42) There were two villages with about hundred families belonging to the gShen family before the confiscation.
 43) Tucci 1980: 713-716.

- 44) *STBK* pp. 415-419.
- 45) In Hoffmann's (1969, p.138) transcription the term *ya ngal gshen* is used instead of the term *mdang gsal gshen*.
- 46) *sGrags gling*, fol. 10r.
- 47) *lDe'u chos 'byung*, pp. 380-381.
- 48) *Deb ther dmar po*, pp. 42-43.
- 49) *lDe'u chos 'byung*, p. 384.
- 50) *Deb ther dmar po*, pp.326-328.
- 51) There are two different versions regarding the location of Ga-ra ngo-mang. One is La-stod Ga-ra ngo-mang (*YBSB*). Historical sources usually distinguish between south La-stod and north La-stod, both in Sa-skya. The other one is Sa-skya Ga-ra ngo-mang (*PLNT*). Perhaps this place lay in the between La-stod and Sa-skya. So sometimes it is called La-stod Ga-rango-mang, and sometimes Sa-skya Ga-ra-ngo-mang.
- 52) In the *Deb ther dmar po* this name is also spelled Cha-pa Chos-kyi seng-ge.
- 53) Nyi-ma bstan-'dzin and *Deb ther dmar po* both also give the date of founding this monastery as 1073.
- 54) *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 68.
- 55) *PLNT* p. 69.
- 56) He was a disciple of 'A-zha bDud-rtsi rgyal-mtshan (b.1198 *STNN*), and he enlarged the dBen-sa-kha monastery into two colleges, viz. dBu-rtse dkar-po and dmar-po. These two masters were later known as 'Gro-mgon sku-mched.
- 57) *A-tri Thun-tsam Cho-nga*, p. 38.
- 58) There are two versions concerning his life. One is in the *A-tri Thun-tsam Cho-nga dang cha-lag che*, and the other one is in the *PLNT*. There are no big differences between these two versions.
- 59) *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*, p. 98, There are three versions of the biography of rGyal-ba g-yung-drung. The longest is found in the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*. The middle one is in the *A-tri thun-tsam cho-nga* and the short version is in the *rGyal rigs bru'i gdung rabs rgyas pa ltar bla ma bru chen nam mkha' g-yung drung rnam thar*, found in *PLNT*. There is no mention of the author of these biographies, except that the longest is compiled by sPa bsTan-rgyal bzang-po, the author of *TN*. According to the short version, he had not four, but five brothers.
- 60) Karmay 1998: xvii.
- 61) *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*, p.100.
- 62) *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*, p.99.
- 63) *LShDz* (p. 265) says "The two brothers of the Bru clan offered the dBu-rtse dkar-dmar monastery to him (mNyam-med)". We did not find the names of these two brothers.
- 64) *LShDz* p. 265.
- 65) There are two different points of view regarding the Panchen Lama's lineage; one is that this Panchen Lama counted as the third, and the eighth Panchen Lama is counted as the Fifth.
- 66) *STBK* pp. 420-421.
- 67) *YBSB* pp. 361-362
- 68) *ZYNT* fol. 3r-v.
- 69) *PLNT* p. 284.
- 70) Jo-gshen also called sGrol-ba gshen-rgyal, was from the Zhu family.

- 71) *PLNT* pp. 284-286.
 72) *NZDR* p. 27.
 73) *NZDR* pp.27-28.
 74) *YBSB* says that this monastery is in mDo-smad. mDo-smad is considered as north eastern Tibet, namely Amdo, but Khra-rgan nyi-phug monastery is actually located in Kham.
 75) A Zhu lama who has managed to rebuild the gYu-'brang phyug-mo temple in sKyid-mkhar after it had been destroyed during the Cultrural Revolution.
 76) He used to be a monk of Ri-zhing monastery.
 77) *STBK* fol. 114r-v.
 78) *GTKC* pp.70-72.
 79) Karmay 1972: 9-10, n. 6.
 80) *rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan rgyud las rje ta pi hri tsa'i lung bstan*, p.248.
 81) *rGya bod tshig mdzod chen mo*.
 82) *TN* pp.214-215.
 83) *YBSB* p.371.
 84) *LShDz* p.260.
 85) *STBK* p. 423.
 86) *Bod kyi rdo ring yi ge dang dril bu'i kha byang*, p.77
 87) In *LShDz* this master is referred to as lHa-ri gnyen-po's grandson.
 88) Interview with rGya-mtsho who used to be a monk of Ri-rgyal monastery in Dar-lding.
 89) Interviews with rGya-mtsho, Phun-tshog dbang-rgyal, a monk of Ri-rgyal monastery, A-khu Yi-dam, a man from Amdo, Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin, the Abbot of the Bonpo monastery in Dolanji, India.
 90) Interview with 'Od-zer who used to be a monk of Ri-zhing monastery in Gyantse.
 91) Interview with Tshe-ring rdo-rje, the lama of Ri-zhing monastery.
 92) Interview with Nye-zla dbang-grags, the head of the rMe'u family in bZang-ri monastery in sNye-mo and bsTan-'dzin rnam-rgyal, an old monk of the same monastery.

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Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang rnam thar chen mo.

Discovered by Gyer Thog-med or Khod-po Blo-gros thog-med (14th century), MS.

Sangs rgyas bstan pa spyi yi 'byung khungs yid bzhin nor bu 'dod pa 'jo ba'i gter mdzod

By Kun-grol grags-pa (b. 1700).

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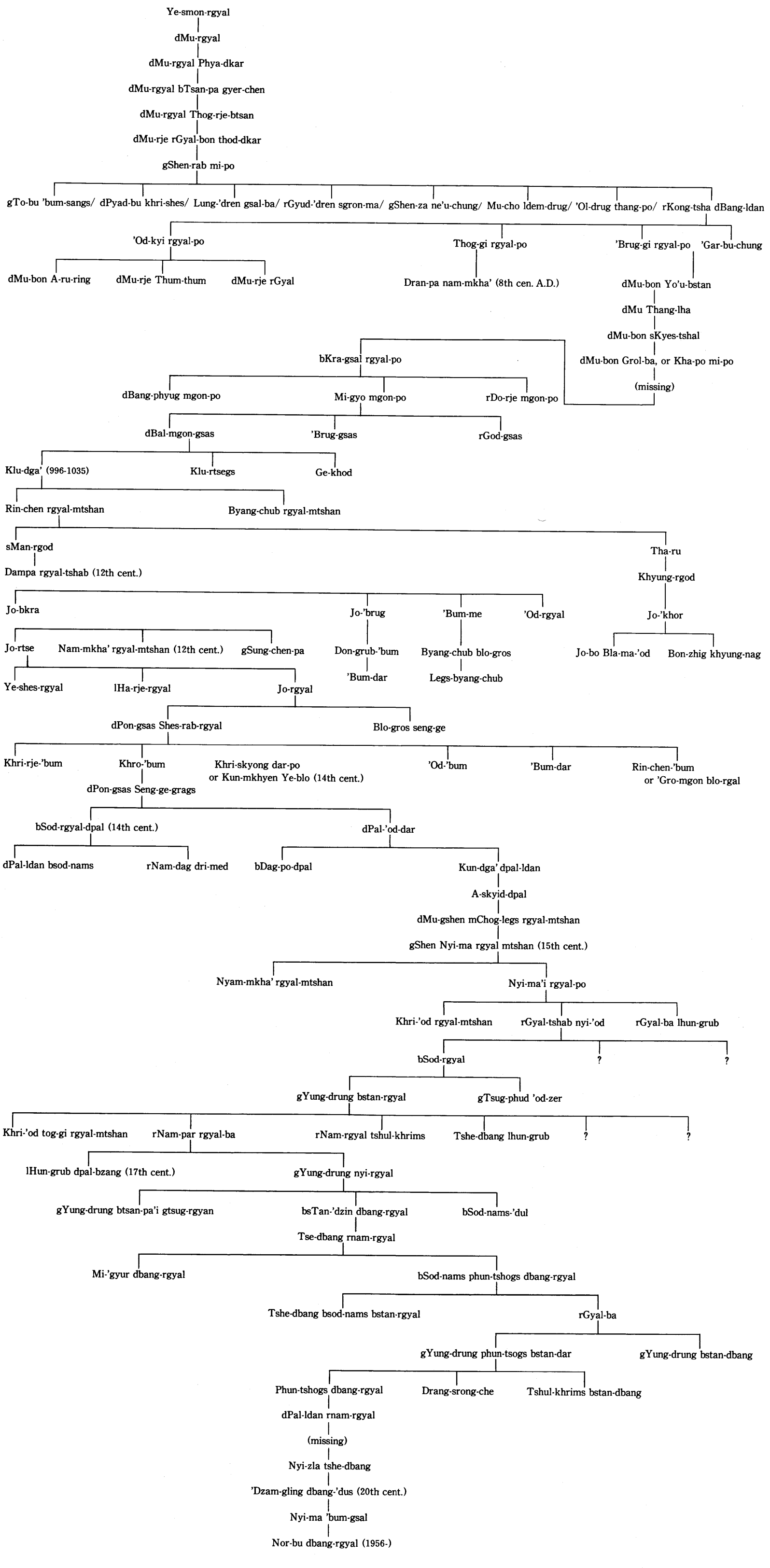
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Table 1 The gShen Family

a. the gShen family in Dar-lding



b. the sShen family in sKyid-gzhong

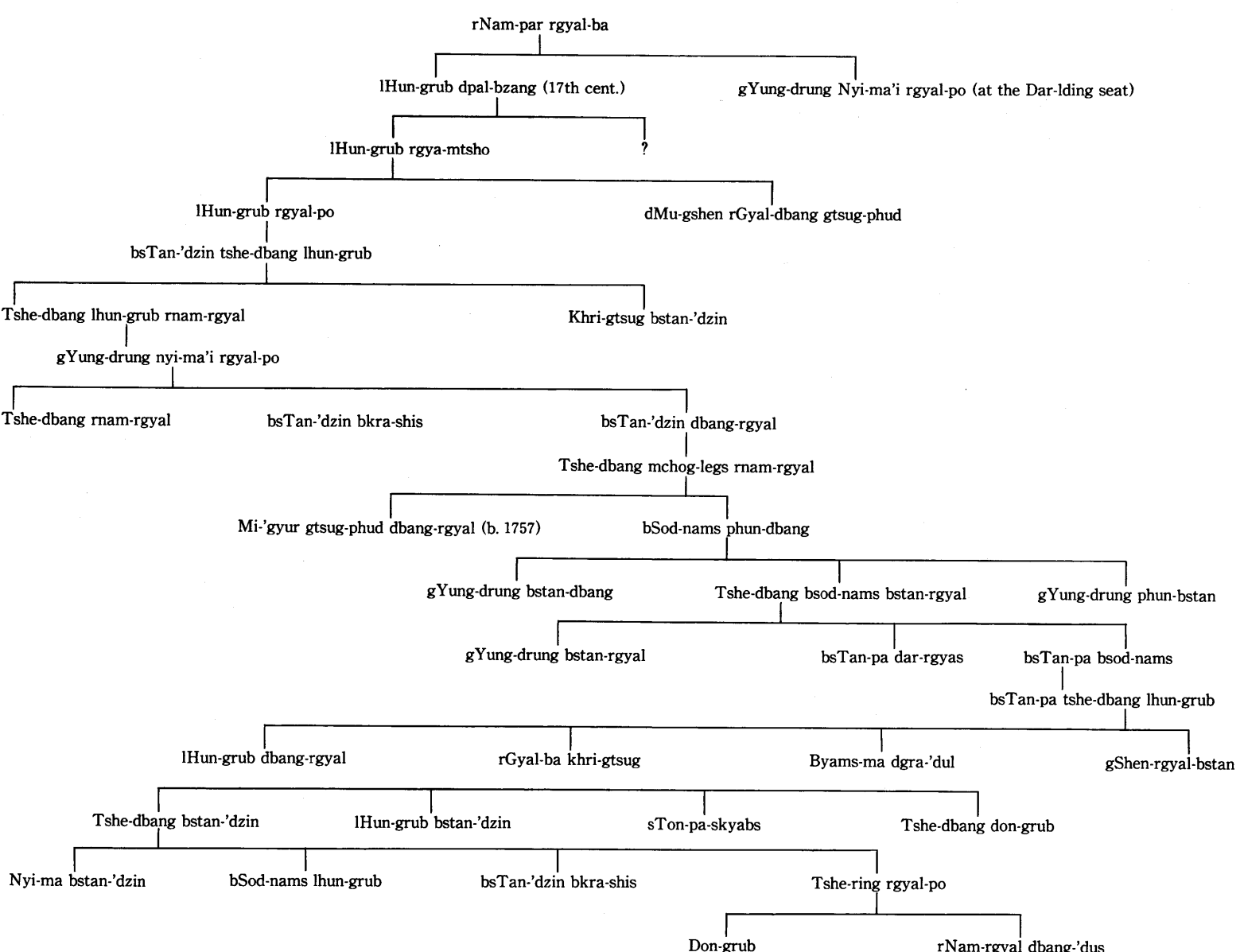


Table 2 The Bru Family

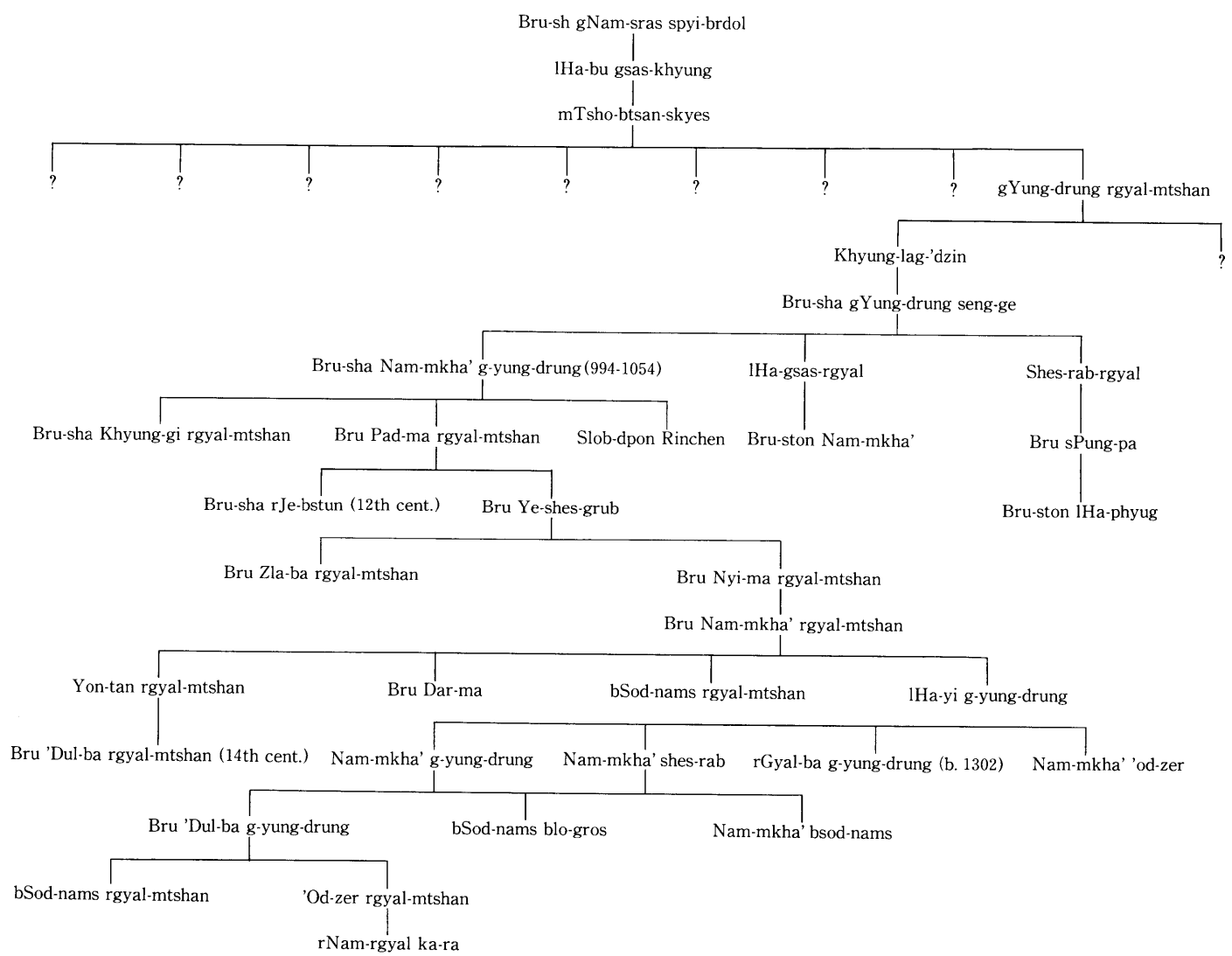


Table 3 The Zhu Family

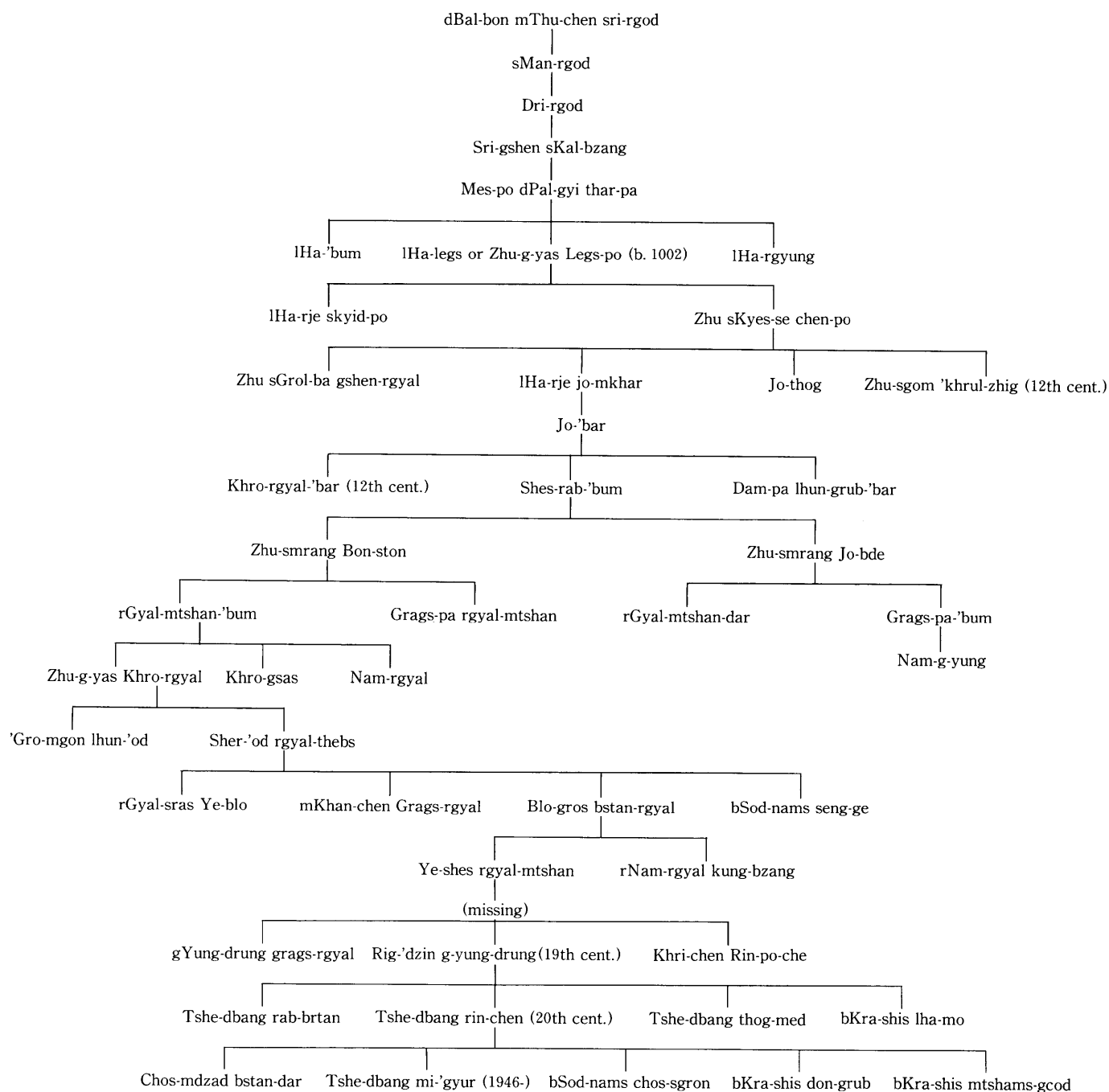
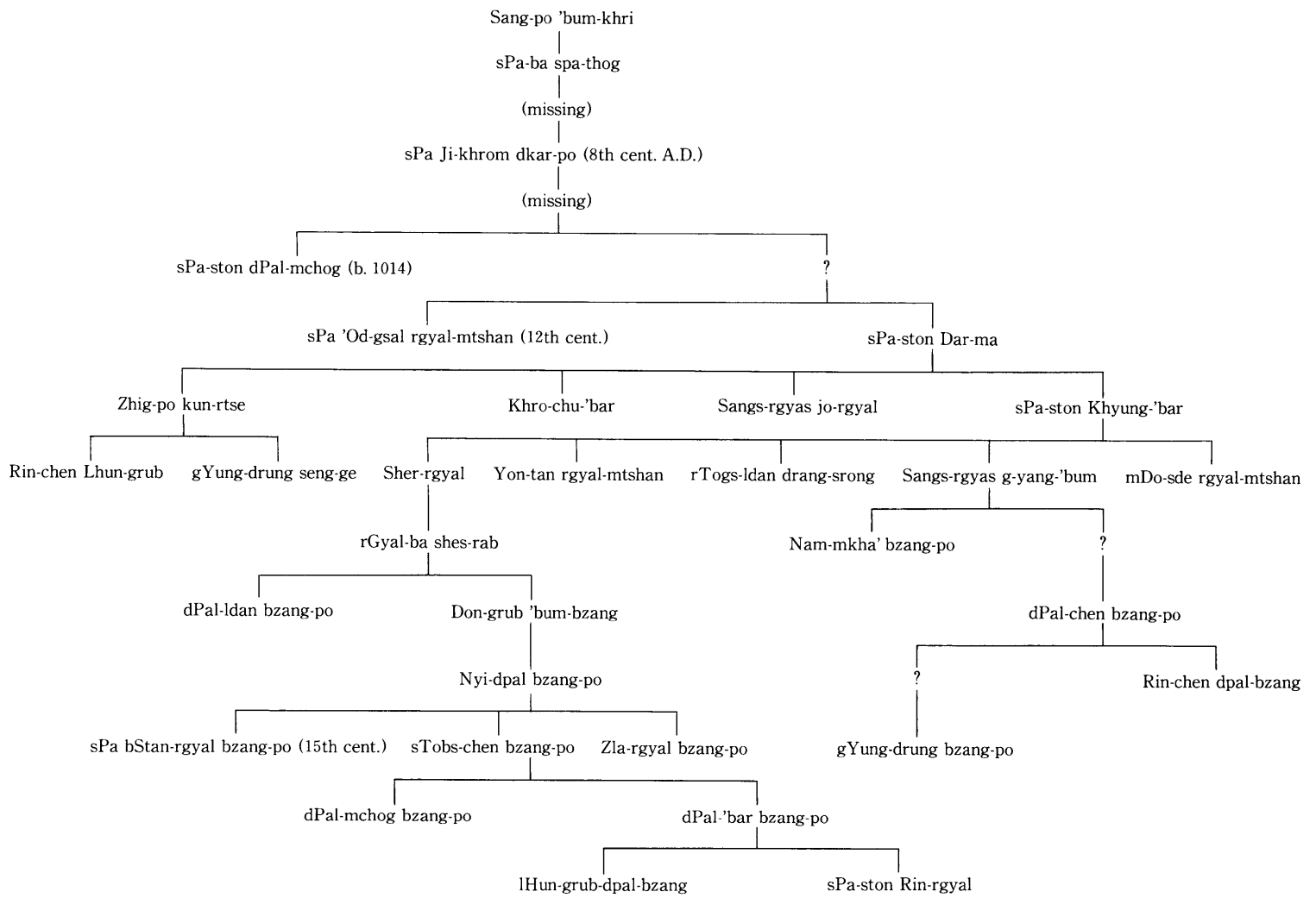


Table 4 The sPa Family

a. The sPa family in La-phug



b. The sPa family in the North-eastern Tibet

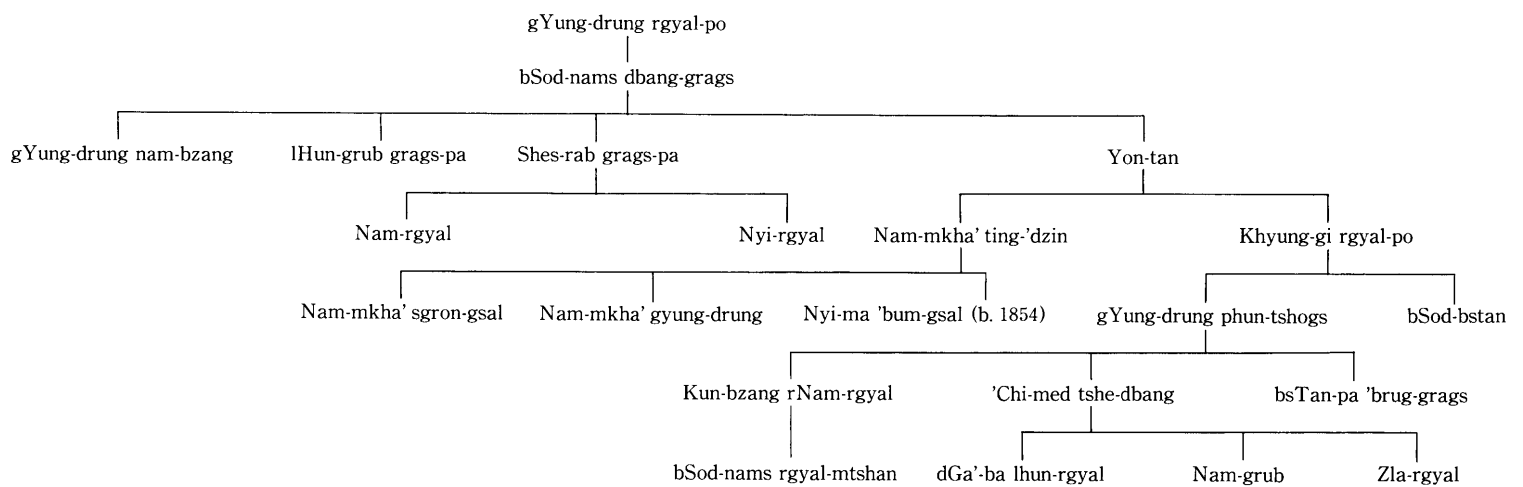


Table 5 The rMe'u Family

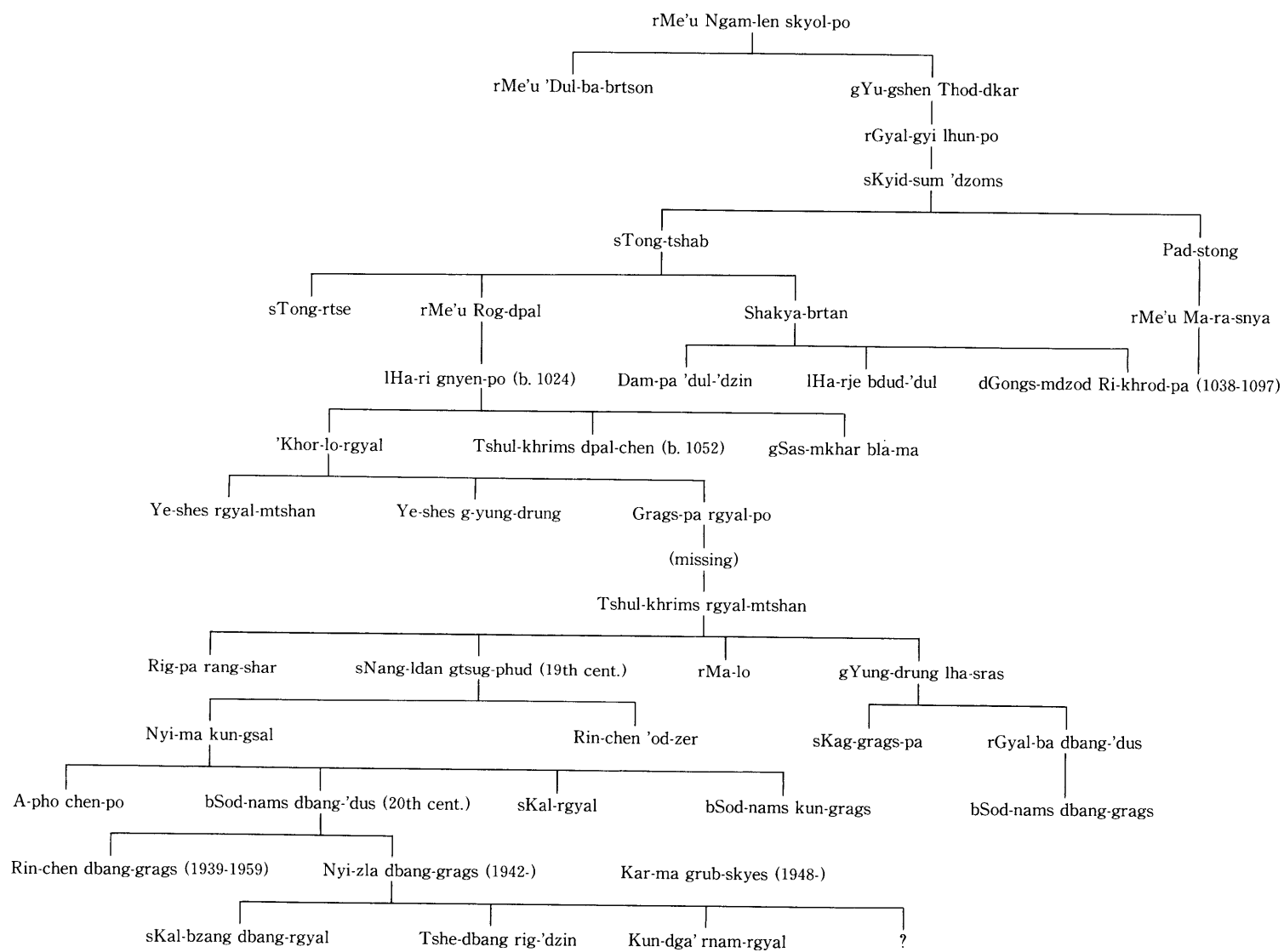




Plate 1 ལུ་རི་ཞིང་དགོན་པའི་གྲ་པ་བསོད་ནམས་འདྲ་ཟེར།



Plate 3 གཙང་བཞེད་མཐོང་སྒྲོན་རྫོང་།



Plate 2 ལུ་ཚོ་རིང་རྗེ་དང་ཁོང་གི་དགེ་ལུན་ལག་ཅིག།



Plate 4 ལྷིད་གཞིང་གྲོང་ཚོ།

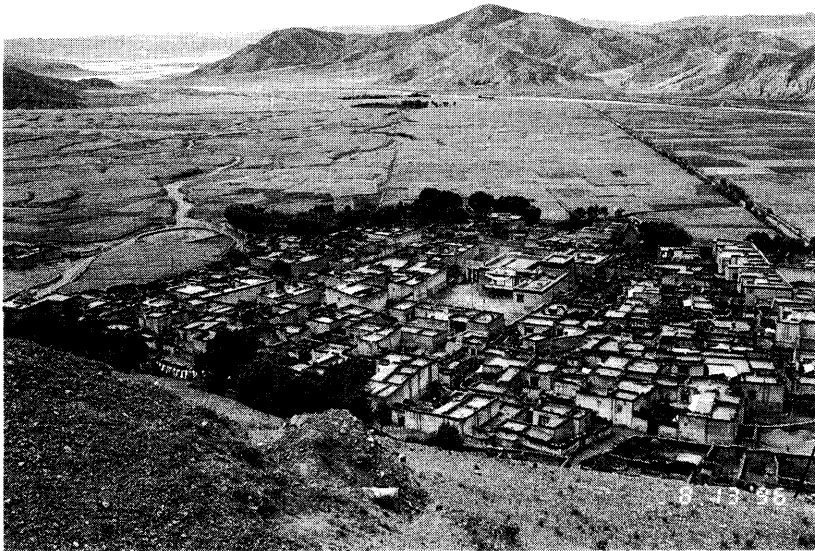


Plate 5 དར་ལྷིང་གྲོང་ཚོའི་རྒྱར་ཅིག།

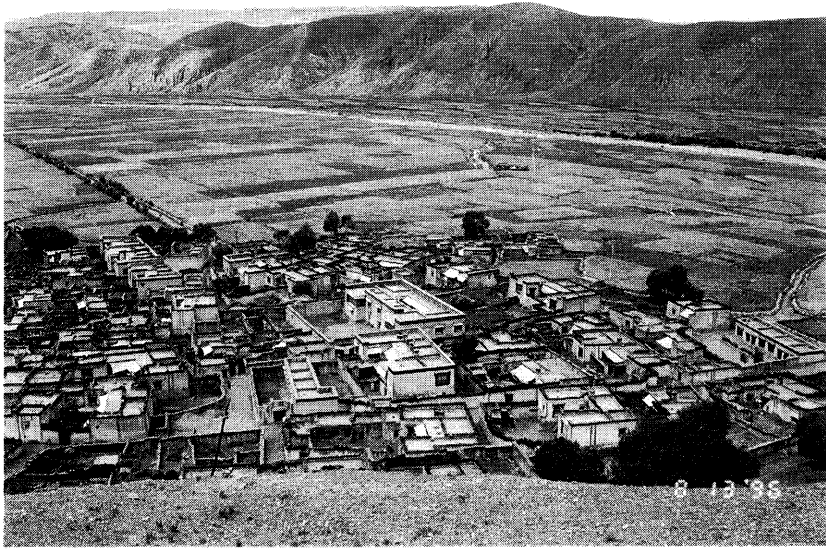


Plate 6 དར་ལྗེང་གྲོང་ཚོའི་ལུང་ཅིག།



Plate 7 བཤེན་ཉི་མ་རྒྱལ་མཚན་གྱི་མཛུབ་རིས། (དར་ལྗེང་)



Plate 8 གསེར་སྒོ་ཁ་མོ། (དར་ལྗིང་)

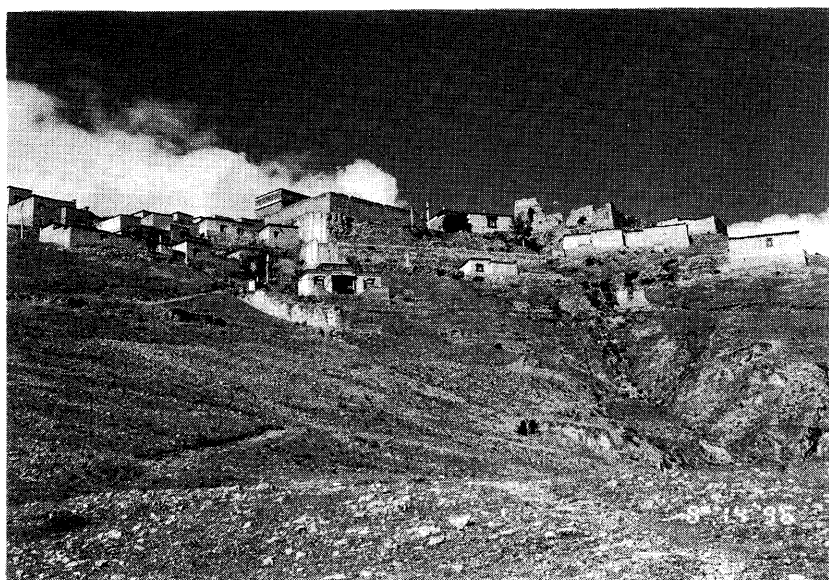


Plate 10 དར་ལྗིང་རི་རྒྱལ་ཅེ་དགོན།



Platc 9 ལྷོ་མཚོར་འོག་གི་བྱིས་པ་ཚོ། (དར་ལྗེང)



Plate 11 སྤུལ་སྤུལ་གཞིན་ཚེན་གྲུ་དགའ། གཞིན་ཉི་མ་རྒྱལ་མཚན། གཞིན་མི་འགྲུར་གཙུག་དབང།

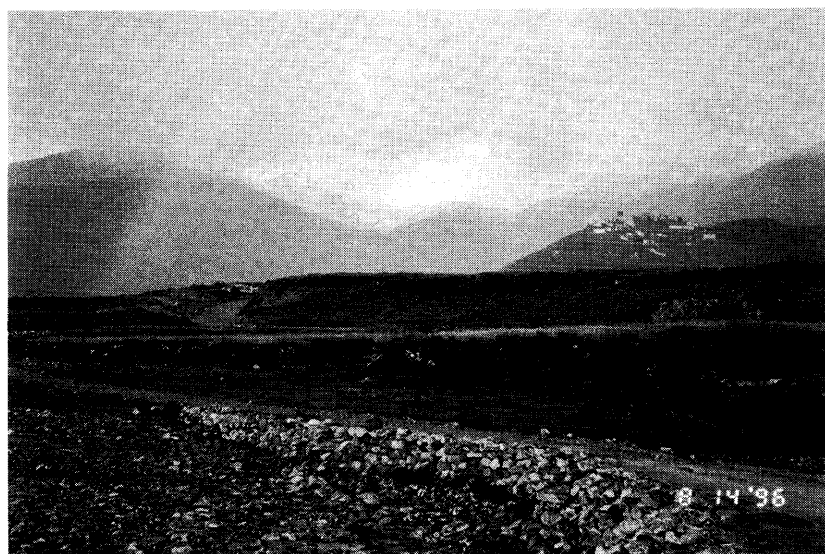


Plate 12 དར་ལྗོང་རི་རྒྱལ་ཅུ་དགོན།



Plate 13 ལྷ་མཚོ། (དར་ལྷིང་རི་རྒྱལ་དགོན)



Plate 14 གཡས་ཟུང་བེན་ས་ཁའི་གྲང་རྫོ། (མོ་རྒྱལ)



Plate 15 གཡས་ཟུང་བེན་ས་ཁའི་གནའ་ལུལ། (མོ་རྒྱལ)



Plate 16 གཡས་རུ་དབེན་ས་ཁའི་གནའ་ལྷལ། (ཐོབ་རྒྱལ)

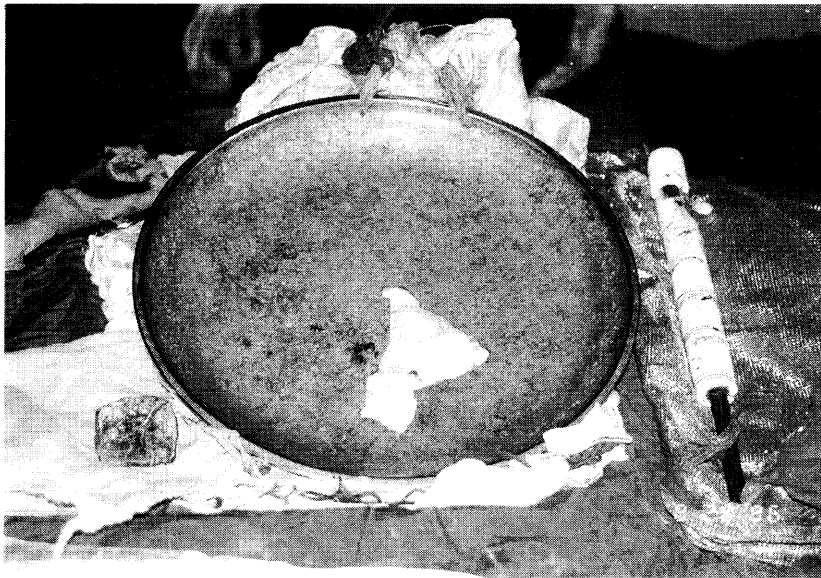


Plate 17 གཞིན་ཚེན་ལྷུ་དགའི་གཏིར་མ་རྣོང་འི་བྱིམ་པ་དང་གསས་མདའ་དུང་དབྱེག (རི་ཞིང)



Plate 18 ལྷ་ཚང་སྐབ་བཤམ། (མི་བ་རྒྱལ་ལ)



Plate 19 ལྷ་ཚང་སྐབ་བཤམ། (མི་བ་རྒྱལ་ལ)



Plate 20 ལུང་མཁའ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ (མོ་ལྷོ་)



Plate 21 ལུང་མཁའ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ (མོ་ལྷོ་)



Plate 22 སྤུན་རི་བགོན་པར་ལྷ་ཁང་གསར་བཞེངས་གནང་བཞིན་པ།



Plate 23 ལྷ་ཁང་གསར་པའི་ནང་གི་རྫོལ་ཀ་བརྟེང་པ་ཆ་གཅིག་ (སྤུན་རི་)



Plate 24 གཙང་སྐྱན་ཟི་བཏོན།



Plate 25 གཙང་གཡུང་རྩུང་སྐྱིང།



Plate 26 ལྷོ་མོ་བཟང་མཁའ་ལྷོང་ཚོ།



Plate 27 མེ་ཏུ་ཚང་སྐྱུང་བ་ (ལྷོ་མོ་)



Plate 28 ཟངས་རི་དགོན་ (ལྷོ་མོ)

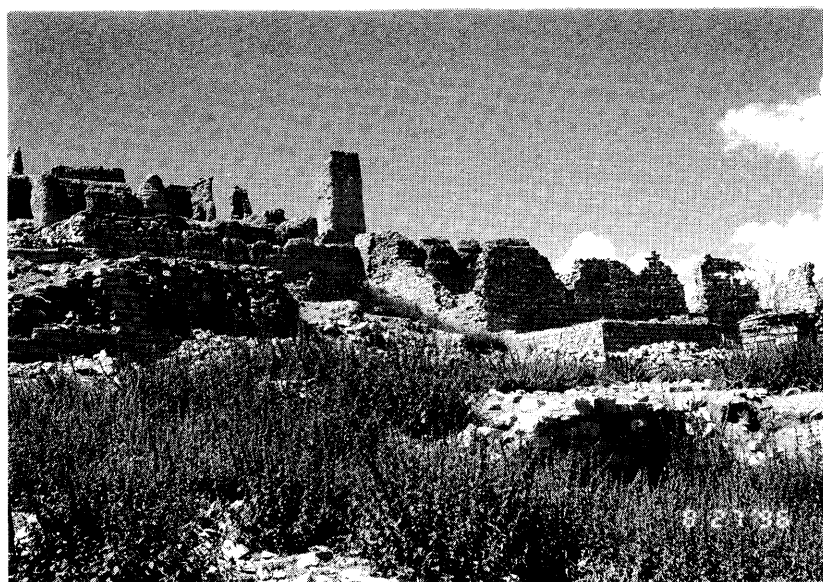


Plate 29 ལུ་རི་ཞིང་དགོན་པའི་ལུ་ལུ།



Plate 30 ལུ་རི་ཞིང་དགོན་པའི་གྲང་རོ།



Plate 31 ལུ་རི་ཞིང་དགོན་པའི་ལུལ།



Plate 32 ལྷོ་ཚང་རྩ་ཕུས་མཁའ་མཁའ་

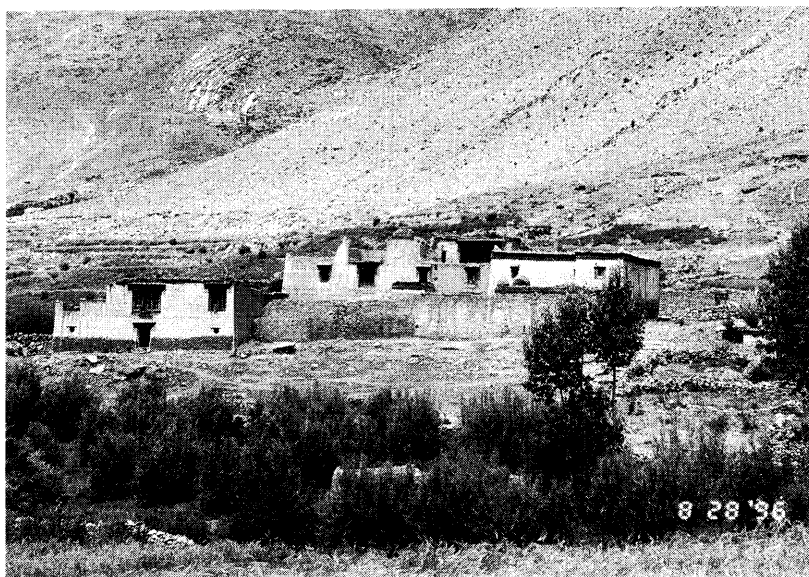


Plate 33 ལྷོ་ཚང་རྩ་ཕུས་མཁའ་མཁའ་



Plate 34 ལྲོའི་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་

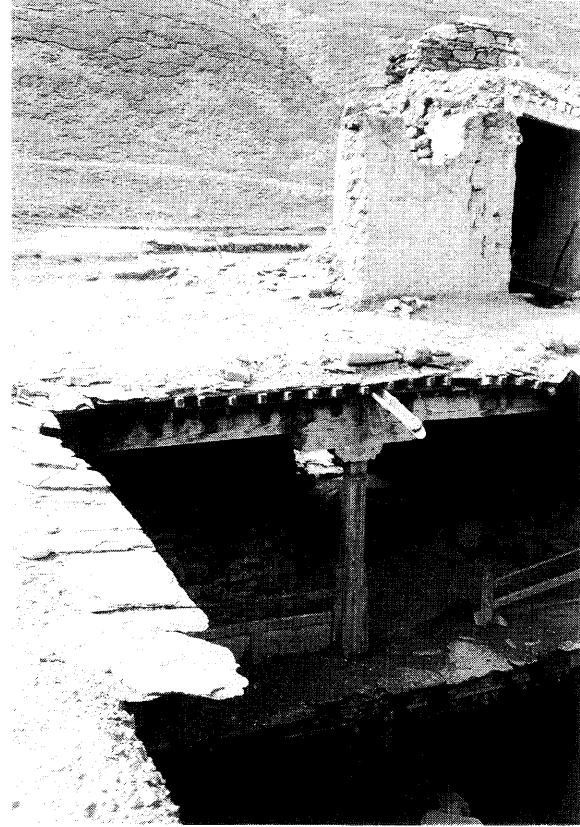


Plate 35 ལྲོའི་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་



Plate 36 ལུ་ཚང་རྩུ་ཕུ་སྐྱེ་བའི་བུ་



Plate 37 གཙང་རྩེ་གི་མཁར་གྱི་སྐོ་ཕུག་ཆོ་བའི་ལྷུང་ལག།



Plate 38 ཕད་མོ་སྤྲང་བཤོན་པར་བཞུགས་པའི་རྩམ་རྒྱལ་གཞུང་ས་ཚེན། (གྲོ་མོ)



Plate 39 གྲོ་སྤྲང་གོང་ཚོ།



Plate 40 ཡང་མོ་སྒྲུང་དགོན་པའི་འདུ་ཁང་ (གྲོ་མོ)



Plate 41 ཕད་མོ་སྤྲང་དགོན་པའི་འགན་འཛིན་ཚེ་རིང་དབང་འདུས། (གྲོ་མོ་)



Plate 42 གྲོ་མོ་ཕད་མོ་སྤྲང་གྲོང་ཚོའ་རྒྱུར་ཅིག་།



Plate 43 ཡང་མོ་སྐང་དགོན་པའི་ནང་རྟེན་རྒྱུ་ཡལ་བ། (གྲོ་མོ)

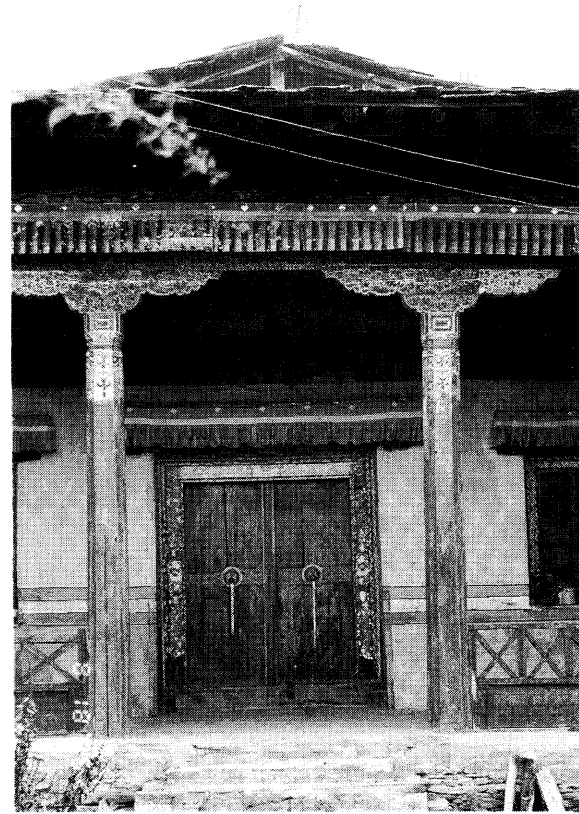


Plate 44 ཡང་མོ་སྐང་དགོན་པའི་འདུ་ཁང་སློ་མཚོར། (གྲོ་མོ)