The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-modern TIbet

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PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag 24 februari 2015
klokke 16.15 uur

door

Berthe Katrien Jansen
geboren te Amsterdam
in 1980

PROMOTIECOMMISSIE

Promotor:	Prof. dr. J.A. Silk (Universiteit Leiden)
Co-promotor:	Prof. dr. L.W.J. van der Kuijp (Harvard University)
Overige leden:	Dr. S.N. Clarke (McMaster University)
	Prof. dr. A.F. de Jong (Universiteit Leiden)
	Dr. P.C. Verhagen (Universiteit Leiden)

ISBN 978-94-6203-748-9
Cover photo: Hemis monastery, Ladakh (by Berthe Jansen)
Cover design: Jozef Wist

Print: CPI – Koninklijke Wöhrmann, Zutphen

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world. The unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

G.B. Shaw, *Man and Superman*, 189.

How can enough leather be found to cover the surface of this earth? With just the leather under my feet, it is as though the earth's entire surface is covered.

Likewise, it is the external things that I cannot control; therefore, I will control my own mind. What need is there to control anything else?

Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* Ch. 5, v. 6, 7.

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1. INTRODUCTION

How on earth do all these thousands of monks spend their time? How are they supported? And what good, if any, do they do?[1]

Theory and Practice

The level of influence of any given religion on a society or a culture and the nature of the relationship between doctrine and reality, theory and practice, are much debated issues. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine these relationships. As Spiro puts it: 'It is one thing to assert that religion has a specified influence on one or another of a society's social or cultural institutions, and another to demonstrate it.'[2] Until recently, it was common to explain social practices in societies on the basis of their religious doctrine, often with written texts as the sole source. This seems particularly to have been the case with regard to Buddhism, both within Buddhist Studies and outside of it. The result that this method of inquiry tends to yield is that – perhaps unsurprisingly – reality and doctrine are often at odds with each other. Or so they seem. The dichotomies, problems, and contradictions that are blatantly obvious to the Buddhist Studies specialist are often invisible to Buddhists themselves, including the Buddhist literati. Rather than continuously looking for paradoxes, it may be more useful to take the perspective of Buddhists as the point of departure.

In doing this, it is important to avoid 'culturalist' theoretical thinking – the notion that people do things simply *because* they are Buddhists, for this would be to ignore the question of how this 'ideological relevance is secured (and maintained) as the basis for social action in any particular context.'[3] Furthermore, one also should not uncritically reiterate certain 'standard' Buddhist narratives that have evolved over time. Nonetheless, these narratives – and perhaps more importantly – the issues that they remain silent about need to be tested and investigated.

Collins' work *Selfless Persons* investigates 'how the fact of social differences in thought and practice are taken account of *by Buddhist doctrine itself*, and how they affect it.'[4] Here I propose the inverse of this approach. In other words, I propose to explore the ways in which social differences and relationships existed within a Buddhist society in practice and, subsequently, to examine whether – if at all – these differences were seen to be justified by aspects of Buddhist thinking by figures that had an active, authoritative role within monastic communities. Here the point of departure is not 'Buddhist doctrine' but realities on the ground. Thus, the main question is essentially two-fold: What were the social differences and relationships in Tibetan Buddhist societies and how were they taken into account by Buddhist authors on monastic matters?

In this study the focus lies on pre-modern Tibet.[5] When we examine pre-modern Tibetan Buddhism as interpreted and propounded by monastic authors, can

[1] These are questions the mountaineer and traveller Spencer Chapman, who reached Lhasa in the 1930s, asked himself. Spencer Chapman, 1984 [1938]: 171.
[2] Spiro, 1971: 425.
[3] Mills, 2003: 340, 1.
[4] Collins, 1982: 6, 7.
[5] By 'pre-modern' here I mean the time before 1959 and 'Tibet' here refers to 'ethnographic Tibet', an area encompassing much more space than the Tibet on any map, however contested its borders may be. For the current purpose, the unifying factor is the presence and dominance of monastic Buddhism. While this study mainly addresses Tibetan Buddhist societies, Bon monasticism is also occasionally referred to. Because Bon monastic organizational features are largely identical with Buddhist monasticism the two Tibetan religions will be often consciously conflated. Also see Kvaerne, 1970:

we speak of such a thing as a homogenous understanding of issues of social justice, which includes all manner of general differences among people and (perceived) inequalities such as judicial matters, education, social mobility, economic distribution and opportunities, and class? Did the rules as stated in the monastic 'law' codes imported from India (Vinaya) and in textual materials on the individual monks' vows (*prātimokṣa*) – shared by all Tibetan monastics – create a uniform set of morals that guided monks when dealing with both internal and external affairs? Or could it be that other factors were at play in the development of monastic rules and regulations and that, more generally, there existed an alternative set of standards that 'dictated' how to treat others, how to relate to the status quo? Naturally, it is to be expected that Buddhist ethics, as communicated by Buddhist texts such as biographies (*rnam thar*),[6] *Jātaka*-tales, sūtras, 'introductory' works (*lam rim*), to name but a few, had some influence on monks' sense of morality. However, it is equally plausible that there were other factors that were, to a certain extent, decided by cultural, economical, political and geographical matters, and that monks were influenced by both the religious and the political affiliation of the monastery and the charisma of particular spiritual leaders.

Social Justice, Buddhism, and Society

The laity are tolerant both in religious and social matters, but not the priesthood.[7]

Monasteries traditionally played a big role in the lives of ordinary people in Tibet. To date, however, relatively little is known about the role of the monks in Tibetan society. Furthermore, the impact of monastic Buddhism on other expressions of Buddhism as well as on a wide range of aspects of Tibetan culture is tremendous. To contrast, whereas Christian monasticism is only of secondary importance to its faith,[8] Buddhist monasticism is generally seen as primary to Buddhism. Its importance is brought to the fore both in Buddhist doctrine and Buddhist practice. That Buddhist monastic institutions then not only were a religious 'driving force' but also became organizations that dealt with more than religion alone should, therefore, not come as a surprise. As most are aware, in countries where Buddhism was adopted as the main religion, monasteries came to be major players in politics, economics, culture, art and society as a whole.

Christianity, and particularly the Christian clergy, has historically been directly involved in the establishment of various social institutions, most notably schools, poor houses, and hospitals. The Christian Church is viewed by many to still have a strong social function. But while the Christian monastic institution, as it existed in medieval Europe, is seen as the earliest organization and a model for later institutes such as schools, orphanages and hospitals, the Buddhist monastic

188. While the phrase is used throughout this work, I am aware that a singular 'Tibetan society' does not, and never did, exist. Furthermore, all concepts of society should be seen in the context of a specific time and space.

[6] I here largely follow the so-called 'Wylie-system', except for that generally no hyphens or capital letters are used in the transliteration, see Wylie, 1959. However, where applicable, the first root-letter of Tibetan works, personal names and place-names is capitalized. Often recurring place-names, which include the names of monasteries, are romanized, the Tibetan translatiteration is given in brackets upon first appearance. Places and monasteries mentioned only once or twice are only given in transliteration. When canonical (i.e. *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur*) material is cited, the Tōhoku catalogue number of the Derge version is given.

[7] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 21.

[8] Silber, 1985: 252.

community, according to Spiro, 'provides no model for the organization of lay society.'[9] While it is doubtful that this remark is applicable to all Buddhist cultures, Spiro's comment shows how this notion of the religious specialists as the guardians of social institutions and social justice is engrained in the psyche of many modern (Western) thinkers and commentators – be they academically or otherwise affiliated. People who are aware of the role Christian monasticism has played throughout history, sometimes associate the clerical role with particular worldly concerns, social service, community welfare, economic justice, and charity work. Evidence for this influence can easily be found throughout the history of the Christian church.[10] This is what makes the question why certain other religions and non-Christian societies have not given rise to the same types of institutions so ubiquitous, as it is difficult to not view the other through the lens of one's own cultural and religious background. Even though this study has to engage the above question – simply put: 'why not Buddhism?' – this is not primary to this research. This is because the starting point in this study is the emic position – that is to say, how (monastic) Buddhists view society, what is morally just, and the duties and rights of individuals and institutions.

Buddhism is often seen as a religion that contains strong expressions of morality: a religion that has an emphasis on orthopraxy, rather than orthodoxy.[11] This focus on 'right practice', however, has not materialized into pre-modern Buddhist societies' development of well-organized 'faith-based' social institutions. This notable absence has opened up various varieties of Buddhism throughout Asia – and perhaps Tibetan Buddhism in particular – to the criticism of being insufficiently socially engaged. This accusation did not just stem from the camp of those who were heavily influenced by certain Judeo-Christian notions or from those who had a political or ideological axe to grind. The Japanese Buddhist monk Ekai Kawaguchi who travelled widely in Tibet between 1900 and 1903, comments on this lack of 'social engagement' by 'Tibetan priests'.[12] He accuses them of being entirely disengaged from societal problems. Kawaguchi sees this social aloofness as a result of the Tibetan ideal of a hermitic lifestyle, in which practitioners willingly cordon themselves off from the outside world. Yet, he explicitly did not see this as a shortcoming of Buddhism itself.[13] This is in sharp contrast with the attempts by certain non-Buddhist commentators to explain the lack of pre-modern institutions that promote social equality and justice in Buddhist countries: if the connection with religion is made at all, the finger is usually pointed at the Buddhist faith in general, and the doctrine of karma in particular. In other instances, scholars portray the Buddhist religion as nothing more than a power-grabbing ploy.[14]

That Buddhist societies of old did not give rise to social institutions – or for that matter well-defined concepts of social justice – in the way that they existed in the Christian world does not mean that Buddhism has had no influence on society as a whole. Rather than asking the question why Buddhist societies have developed

[9] Spiro, 1971: 428. While Spiro's research generally focuses on Burmese Buddhism, some of his comments – like this one – he saw to be applicable to all Buddhist societies.
[10] Spiro also makes this point, ibid.: 287.
[11] This is also argued by Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 113.
[12] It is most likely that he means monks by 'priests' but this is not entirely certain when one takes the notion of 'priests' in Japan into account.
[13] Kawaguchi, 1909: 373.
[14] This appears to be a view expressed by Parenti, who regards pre-modern Tibet as 'little more than a despotic retrograde theocracy of serfdom and poverty, so damaging to the human spirit, where vast wealth was accumulated by a favored few who lived high and mighty off the blood, sweat, and tears of the many.' See Parenti, 2003: 590.

differently from Christian ones, it appears more rewarding, at least from the outset, to examine the way in which Buddhism as practised has affected certain societies and conceptualisations of society. In this study the focus lies on the pre-modern Tibetan society and how monastic Buddhism has affected it.

The term 'social justice', a phrase most commonly associated with political philosophies on government and liberally employed when an ideal society is envisioned, was previously briefly mentioned.[15] It is a notion that, while only irregularly referred to throughout this work, has influenced the topics that are discussed. Social justice can be seen as both a process and a goal. Generally speaking, the predominant notion of social justice is one that sees it as a *telos*, a universal truth, and a tool for political rhetoric. According to Minogue, social justice is a belief that the government has the duty to redistribute wealth, implying that the agent of social justice can only ever be the state.[16] He sees social justice as an *a priori* notion of justice, as it depends on a 'conception of society as a harmonious set of roles and relations.'[17]

For the current purpose it is important to note that social justice as it is conceived of today is a construct, a desideratum that has almost entirely originated from developments in the history, culture and religion of the West. When applying or 'superimposing' a Western construct onto Asian societies one thus has to tread with care. I do not believe, however, that merely because the term social justice has originated in the West, it is rendered meaningless when the focus is on a non-Western society.

For the purposes of this study, it is important to move away from anything that is prescriptive: the social justice perceived of as an ideal, sought after by politicians and the socially engaged, does not merit extensive research. The primary concern here lies with the *processes* or machinations of social justice.[18] Thus, in this context the term 'social justice' concerns the idea of what is right or just, as well as the expressions thereof within a certain social context. Social justice has to do with the way human beings are or should be treated. This approach is not ideosyncratic, for an online sociology guide defines social justice as a process in the following way:

> Social justice is also used to refer to the overall fairness of a society in its divisions and distributions of rewards and burdens [..] Social justice derives its authority from the codes of morality prevailing in each culture.[19]

In investigating social justice in Tibetan society (or any given society) it is thus not important to engage the question of whether people were happy;[20] rather, the focus should lie on the opportunities a society provided people with. Some of these opportunities seen to greatly improve lives are economic and social mobility, access to education and healthcare and – to a lesser extent – institutional justice.

If social justice derives its authority from the prevailing codes of morality, what were those codes and how did they come to be? Here, various degrees of social

[15] e.g. Rawls, 1999 [1971].
[16] Minogue, 2005 [1998]: 256.
[17] ibid.: 258.
[18] I agree with Palmer and Burgess, who comment that depending on the context, social justice 'can be a near-synonym for any one of several forms of justice, including distributive justice, compensatory justice, retributive justice, procedural justice, or restorative justice.' Palmer and Burgess, 2012: 4.
[19] http://www.sociologyguide.com/weaker-section-and-minorities/Social-Justice.php (viewed: 18-01-2012).
[20] Sen, 2009: 283.

justice can be found by closely studying the rights, opportunities, and the level of equality a society grants its members, but when looking at social justice in a historical context *the conceptualizations* of social justice can be understood by studying the people who comment on that society. In the case of historical Tibetan societies, these commentators, often viewed as guardians of social mores, were almost invariably monks. The relevant 'codes of morality' were not directly taken from the corpus of Vinaya texts themselves, but, among others, from works that existed in parallel with the Vinaya. These were works that contain rules adapted to the specific time and place. These texts, the primary sources of this research, are monastic guidelines (*bca' yig*). These works were mostly written for the monk populations of specific monasteries but they also affected the lay population, occasionally explicitly, and – as I shall argue – always implicitly. This is not to say that social norms were not also formed by other members of the 'elite' in Tibet, but it remains the case that the lion's share of written material we have access to was written by monastics.

I fully agree with Minogue's assertion that 'the best source for understanding what social justice means is not the writings of normative political philosophers but the point at which philosophy touches social policy.'[21] To translate that to the topic of Buddhism and social justice, it means that what we need to look at is the point where *Buddhism* – problematic though that term may be – touches social policy and practice. From there we can explore whether and to what extent (monastic) social policy was informed by notions of justice implicit within certain doctrines of Buddhism, at certain points in time.

In the context of pre-modern Tibet, even the mere *description* of the processes of social justice is an enterprise that has hardly ever been undertaken, let alone their analysis. One reason for this is that Tibetan politics on the one hand and religious doctrine on the other have historically taken centre-stage for most scholars involved in Tibetan Studies, Buddhist Studies and (World) History. Chayet notes ruefully that 'it is true that the economic and social history of Tibet has still to be written.'[22]

Some may argue that to use the concept of social justice in the context of Tibetan society is anachronistic, or 'presentist'. Descriptions of the past using terms that express present notions and values have been heavily criticized. Although the term 'social justice' has only come about in the modern period and is not perfectly or comfortably translatable in any Buddhist language of the past, simply not using the term does not help us to understand Buddhist beliefs and practices that would now fall under the header 'social justice'.[23] The term is here used with an awareness both of the culture I write about as well as of the culture I write from.[24] In addition, to use 'external categories' or terms based on or derived from these categories provisionally is not only convenient but also beneficial as doing this has the potential to stimulate 'useful discussion about just what it is that these terms fail to capture.'[25]

My assumption is that the processes that decided the level of equality and opportunity for Tibetans in pre-modern Tibetan societies underlie a certain *Weltbild*, a set of notions or motivations. These motivations may be self-described as Buddhist,

[21] Minogue, 2005 [1998]: 262, 3.
[22] Chayet, 2003: 86.
[23] This point is also made by Palmer and Burgess, who are concerned with the question of whether religions actually deal with the language of social justice. They note: 'Clearly, many do not use (or have not historically used) the language of social justice. At the same time, that a religion does not use (or has not historically used) the language of social justice does not mean that it has not struggled with issues that in some way qualify as social justice issues.' See Palmer and Burgess, 2012: 2.
[24] For more on this issue see Hull, 1979.
[25] Pomeranz, 2007: 85.

with the possibility of them being somehow grounded in established doctrine. Alternatively, they are merely made out to be so. At the same time, certain aspects of pre-modern Tibetan culture were deliberately disassociated from the Buddhist religion, be it either by works written in pre-modern times or by contemporary Tibetans in- and outside of Tibet, for the likely reason that these phenomena did not fit the Buddhist narrative.

Beside making sense of the ways in which issues of social justice manifested in the Tibetan (monastic) society, it is the underlying motivations or notions that have in some way or the other a connection to Buddhism that I endeavour to understand and analyse. Because the monastery in Tibet took centre stage in Tibetan society and was often seen as having an undefined moral authority over Tibetans, the focus lies on these 'codes of morality' and notions of social justice held by monastics. In order to understand the viewpoints held by monks, it is imperative to understand the structure they inhabited: the way the monastery was organized and how it functioned.

On Sources and Lack thereof

As all are well aware, monastics played an important role in almost all aspects of Tibetan society. But the exact, or even approximate, nature of that role has hardly been studied. Carrasco, writing in 1959, comments that since 'the church plays such an important role in Tibet, it should be examined as a whole and in its relation to the lay society.'[26] To date this research has not been undertaken. Tibetan monasteries have been both lionized and demonized for their impact on pre-modern society in Tibet. Critics chastized the Tibetan monastic institutions in particular for their economic dominance over large sections of the population and the apparent lack of social engagement.[27] However, despite the existence of conflicting views on the underlying motivations of monasteries and monastics in their management of affairs, it is undeniable that Tibetan monastic Buddhism is of primary importance for understanding not merely the culture but also the history of pre-modern Tibet.

It is estimated that between 997 and 1959 over six thousand bigger and smaller monasteries (*dgon sde*) were built in political Tibet alone.[28] They exerted great religious, cultural, political and economic influence over the general populace. Furthermore, monks were the authors of the lion's share of the Tibetan language works now available to us. Although the literature these monks produced is most regularly utilized by academics for the study of complicated doctrinal conundrums, some of these texts contain valuable information on various aspects of pre-modern Tibetan society and how it was conceived of by monastic authors. It needs to be noted, however, that the majority of the documents that bear direct witness to the role of monasteries in Tibet before the 1950s appear to be lost forever. Land-deeds, contracts, monasteries' accounts, official correspondence and the like were all but destroyed, first when the People's Liberation Army arrived in Tibet in the 1950s and later during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).[29] Thus, in the process of examining

[26] Carrasco, 1959: 218.
[27] See for example Bataille, 1988 and Parenti, 2003: 579-90.
[28] *Bod kyi shes yon*: 67. Here political Tibet is taken to consist of the current-day Tibet Autonomous Region, Kham and Amdo.
[29] A fair number of documents valuable to social historians that have escaped destruction have been catalogued and published in http://www.dtab.uni-bonn.de/tibdoc/index1.htm and in many collections edited by Dieter Schuh. Manuscripts found on the periphery of the Tibetan state have been also collected. See, for example: Ramble and Drandul, 2008. Many valuable sources are not available to (most) academics and are kept in Beijing and in the Lhasa archives (*Lha sa yig tshags khang*). It is unrealistic to expect that access to them will be possible in the foreseeable future.

the monastery's position in Tibetan society, it is important to be aware of the lacunae regarding documents that contain information on social policy.

To fully understand the role monasteries played in Tibet throughout history it is essential to first of all look at the way in which the monasteries themselves operated and the general mind-set of the monks with regard to Tibetan (lay) society. In other words, any account of pre-modern Tibetan civilization would be incomplete without a more comprehensive appreciation of the impact of Tibetan monasticism on the society as a whole. Ellingson similarly talked of 'the need for understanding the monastic system, the most distinctive and characteristic of Tibetan socio-political institutions, on its own terms in order to develop a balanced and integral comprehension of Tibetan polity as a whole.'[30]

The way in which scholars of contemporary Tibetan monasticism study the current state of the monastery shows how relatively little is known about the basic organizational structure of the monastery and the extent to which local and global politics as well as 'modernity' has affected this structure.[31] A complicating factor, as is demonstrated in this study, is that organizational structures varied over time and place. However, when viewed comparatively, for example by looking at Christian monasticism, Tibetan monastic policies changed surprisingly little. While the political climate has changed entirely for monks, both in exile and in Tibet, the monkhood can be said to be for the most part 'a continuation of what came before in Tibet.'[32] This study largely deals with Tibetan religion and social history before the 1950s, and therefore, when general statements are made, they are often in the past tense. This is not to say, however, that these policies practices or rationales have ceased to exist after 1959. In many cases – of which I highlight only a few – these practices continue to the present. More research on contemporary Tibetan monasticism, both in exile and Tibet, is needed to understand what has changed and what has remained the same.

By examining and comparing monastic guidelines, in which basic behavioural and organizational rules are set out and which are seen as pivotal to the monastery for which they were written, it becomes possible to describe the kinds of ideas that touch upon prevalent issues of social justice and to understand specific conditions prevailing at a certain monastery, which influenced monastic behaviour. This information is supplemented by materials that provide context: recent scholarship, monastic histories,[33] ethnographic and travellers' accounts and oral history. The combination of these sources makes it possible to obtain a more comprehensive appreciation of the historical, economic and political context. One type of source material that features in this study is oral history: interviews with elderly monks and monks in administrative positions. On the basis of the information they provide it is possible to understand how texts were used and to determine the extent to which their contents affected monastics in daily life. The primary textual material, the monastic guidelines written for the individual monasteries (*bca' yig*), is largely prescriptive and may paint an idealized picture of monastic life. However, close reading enables us to gain an understanding of the mainly religious, but also political, economic, and cultural ideas that influenced the lives of the monks in the monastic institutions as well as those of lay-people. So far, I have been able to locate over two hundred sets of monastic guidelines.

[30] Ellingson, 1990: 218.
[31] For works that attempt to understand contemporary monastic Tibetan Buddhism in part through the lens of its history see Caple, 2011; Makley, 2007; Mills, 2003; Hillman, 2005.
[32] Gyatso, 2003: 236.
[33] e.g. *gdan rabs* or *dkar chag.*

In order to get relatively representative results I selected texts on the basis of – first of all their availability – their locality (centre and periphery; historical Tibet and beyond);[34] their religious affiliation (all schools are represented); the respective economic circumstances ('state' sponsored, privately sponsored, partially self-sufficient, maintained by another monastery), and the age of the texts. It is noteworthy that the majority of the currently available bca' yig hail from the 17th and 18th century. This is likely due to the organizational overhaul that took place among monasteries as well as the building of new monasteries after the establishment of the Ganden Phodrang (*dGa' ldan pho brang*) government in 1642. In this year Tibet became politically unified under one leader, the Dalai Lama, with him taking on both temporal and religious authority. However, texts from the 12th to the 16th and the 19th and 20th centuries also feature widely in this research.

With regard to the religious affiliation of the texts, it is striking that the majority of the bca' yig that are generally available[35] were written for Gelug (*dGe lugs*) monasteries. It is tempting to extrapolate from that and state that the composition of monastic guidelines was largely a Gelug enterprise and to conclude that rules and discipline in the monasteries were deemed more important in the Gelug school than in others. Taking into account, however, the greater access the Gelug school historically had over the printing presses and the fact that more collected works (*gsung 'bum*) by Gelug masters have been (re-)printed and digitized, it comes as no surprise that there is a greater wealth of bca' yig for Gelug monasteries available at the moment. In fact, bca' yig written for monasteries of *all* other traditions exist. Paying due attention to the unevenness in the number of available materials, this research is based on a broad selection intended to be representative of the variety of monasteries that existed in greater political Tibet and its cultural sphere, thereby including Mongolia, Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh, Spiti, and Nepal.[36]

Using the above mentioned sources, this study intends to address the following questions: What was the role of the monastery and its monks in pre-modern Tibetan society? How are concepts of justice and right action in society conceived of by the religious agent (i.e. the monk-author)? To what extent are these concepts products of, or grounded in, Buddhist thought? What impact have these concepts made on society as a whole? Before engaging with these issues, the problematic nature of two pivotal terms employed here – monk and monasteries – needs to be addressed.

What Makes a (Tibetan) Monk?

There does not appear to be a consensus on the definition of a monk in the context of Buddhist Studies. Silk, while acknowledging that the monastery would have been populated with various kinds of Buddhists, appears to translate the word 'monk' only for the term *bhikṣu* (*dge slong*).[37] Similarly, Clarke[38] also excludes 'novices'

[34] Monastic guidelines from outside the Tibetan polity can be equally informative on monastic policies. A collection of manuscripts that contains a small number of monastic guidelines for Sikkimese monasteries is found in Schuh and Dagyab, 1978.
[35] For example, through www.tbrc.org.
[36] Throughout this study, when Tibetan texts are cited, their spelling and grammar is not corrected. Alternatives or emendations are only suggested, when it affects the understanding of the contents or when it is in some other way significant.
[37] Silk, 2008: 65.
[38] He simultaneously points out that by choosing the word 'monk' as a translation of *bhikṣu* the Buddhist renunciate is burdened with 'unwanted cultural baggage.' See Clarke, 2014: 164.

(*śrāmaṇera*, *dge tshul*) from the classification of monks.[39] Were we to follow such an 'exclusive' definition of the term monk – the English word itself is of course also not without its own semantic problems –[40] we would probably not be able to class the majority of Tibetans living in monasteries, today and in pre-modern Tibet, as monks. For the above reasons, the word 'monk' covers a broad range of Sanskrit and Tibetan terms, throughout this study.

In the texts studied here, we come across several terms referring to (male) inhabitants of a monastery,[41] such as *ban de*[42] *grwa pa*, *btsun pa* (S. *bhadanta*), *bla ma*,[43]and *dge 'dun pa*. This overarching group of people who have 'renounced' lay-life, or 'have gone forth' (*rab tu byung ba*, S. *pravrajyā*) is most regularly subdivided into *dge tshul* (S. *śrāmaṇera*)[44] and *dge slong*. Sometimes, when an author wants to include everyone in the monastery the *dge bsnyen* (S. *upāsaka*) are also mentioned, but in this context this word refers not simply to lay-practitioners but to 'aspiring monks'. These are usually young boys, who have not yet been allowed or are not (yet) able to take *dge tshul* vows.[45]

Although Seyfort Ruegg is right in claiming that the division between lay-men and monks was not always straightforward throughout the history of Buddhism,[46] the Tibetan normative distinction between a member of the Sangha and a lay-person is fairly clear-cut. Of course, there were (and are) what scholars often perceive as grey

[39] ibid.: 171, n. 2. In many works, the term *bhikṣu* is translated as 'fully ordained monk,' probably referring to the fact that this person has taken the full gamut of vows (*bsnyen par rdzogs pa*, S: *upasaṃpadā*).

[40] Students and scholars of Buddhism are less likely to conflate the Buddhist monk with his younger Christian counterpart, the latter of whom has taken vows of poverty, obedience, and stability, and so on. I ask other readers to keep an open mind every time the word 'monk' is mentioned.

[41] On the – equally problematic – term 'monastery' see below.

[42] Various spellings of this loanword exist. According to Snellgrove it is derived from Sanskrit *vandya*, from which the anglicized Japanese term '*bonze'* is also derived, see Snellgrove, 2002 [1987]: 419, n. 71. However, there is now a consensus that the word *ban de* is more likely to represent the honorary Sanskrit appellation *bhadanta* (T. *btsun pa*). Davidson mentions a group of historical agents called the Bendé (*ban de*) who were intimately associated with the ancient royal dynasty. He describes them as 'part clergy, part laity, and intermittently observing some monastic traditions.' See Davidson, 2005: 11. Later on, it appears that the word became somewhat less ambiguous; a prominent example is the Fifth Dalai Lama's penname *Za hor gyi ban dhe*: 'the monk from Za hor'. The development and use of the term *ban de* is in need of further investigation.

[43] The word *bla ma* (in this work mainly written as 'lama' for ease of reading) is another very problematic term. The multifarious nature of this word has caused no end of serious misunderstandings (for a recent example, see Hillman, 2005: 34, n. 16). While acknowledging that this term is in desperate need of a thorough examination on the basis of emic descriptions from both written and oral materials, here, when 'lama' is used and the context is not immediately obvious, I mention whether the word refers to the category of 'monks' or otherwise.

[44] While the translation often given for this term is 'novice', the English term does not cover the ontological status of a *dge tshul*. The word novice suggests that one will, one day, become something more than that, that it is just the start of something. In most Tibetan traditions, however, many monastics never take *dge slong* ordination, nor do they intend to, for various reasons. One will thus find many elderly 'novices' in Tibetan monasteries, who will have been in robes for almost their whole life. For this reason – and for lack of a better translation – when the texts clearly differentiate *dge slong* from *dge tshul* I give the Tibetan or Sanskrit, instead of an ambiguous or misleading English translation.

[45] For this and other reasons it is problematic, even for scholars of Indian Buddhism, to translate *dge bsnyen* (S. *upāsaka*) as 'householder' or 'lay-man', as is oftentimes done. An *upāsaka* is someone who has taken certain vows, which sets him apart from other non-monastics, who are usually referred to as *khyim pa* (S. *gṛhin*) or *khyim bdag* (S. *gṛhapati*) in the Indic traditions. Also see Seyfort Ruegg, 2004: 24-6.

[46] ibid.: 24.

areas, such as the 'yellow house-holders' (*ser khyim pa*), a community of religious specialists who wore robes but married,[47] and the lay tantric practitioners,[48] who sometimes lived in 'monasteries' of their own.[49]

In this study I use the term monk to refer to someone who has taken some sort of vow of celibacy and wears the monastic robes.[50] One of my informants, a scholar monk at Kirti monastery in Dharamsala, remarked that for him – being from Amdo – the word *grwa pa* to denote monk appeared foreign,[51] but that *grwa* in his dialect – as it does in classical Tibetan – means edge or side (*zur*). This would thus make a *grwa pa*, a monk, someone who lives on the edge of society.[52] As is demonstrated in this study, while the above explanation is unlikely to be etymologically correct, it does describe the position of the Tibetan monk: not outside of society, but on the edge of it. As Collins so aptly put it, 'religious figures do not leave society, but merely exchange one social position for another.'[53]

What Makes a (Tibetan) Monastery?

In this study, I delimit the monastery as an institution that demands celibacy of its members. By so defining the monastery, I exclude certain types of hermitages (*ri khrod*) and religious encampments (*chos sgar*) to name but a few, within which a commitment of celibacy – although common – was not a prerequisite for admittance. The reason for excluding those religious institutions in which celibacy tended to be optional is not because the various religious groups consisting of non-celibate practitioners or a mixture of lay- and monk-members do not merit scholarly attention, but because one of the objectives of this research is to explore the connections between Tibetan monastic policy and organization and the Vinaya. This approach furthermore facilitates comparison with various kinds of Vinaya materials and procedures in place at monastic establishments in other Buddhist cultures that are similarly defined. Thus, despite the fact that there are a number of scholars working in different fields who call places inhabited by non-celibate religious practitioners 'monasteries', I define the monastic institution in a narrower fashion. Considering that celibacy is 'the *raison d'être* of Buddhist monasticism,'[54] the monastery is the very centre of that celibacy.

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[47] In certain contexts, these people also lived in '*dgon pa*', a word most commonly translated as monastery. For more on these communities in South-West Tibet, see Aziz, 1978: 76-92. *Tshig mdzod chen mo* glosses the word *ser khyim pa* as lay-people who wear yellow, i.e. people who look like monks but have wives (p. 2948: *ser chas can gyi khyim pa ste dbon ser gzugs*). It appears that these 'yellow house-holders' were in their earliest guise a type of wayward or run-away monks. sPyan snga grags pa 'byung gnas instructs the monks in his 13th century bca' yig for Drigung thil ('Bri gung mthil, also spelled thil or thel, in this study this text is referred to as *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*), to make the *ser khyim pa* in the area of the monastery retake their vows and if they would refuse to expel them from the monastic estate. See *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 250a.

[48] The 'politically correct' term in use for these practitioners is 'the white-clad, long-haired ones' (*gos dkar lcang lo can*), whereas colloquially they are often known as *sngags pa*.

[49] For the rules and regulations of a contemporary community in Amdo, see Dhondup, 2013.

[50] See Cabezón, 2004. He states that a monk is either: 'a renunciate' (*rab 'byung*), which he takes to means someone who has taken the *dge bsnyen*/ *upāsaka* vows), a novice (*dge tshul*), or someone with full ordination (*dge slong*).

[51] There the word *ban de* is commonly used to indicate monks.

[52] In his words: *spyi tshogs kyi zur la gnas pa*. Personal communication with Re mdo sengge, Dharamsala, July 2012.

[53] Collins, 1988: 106.

[54] Spiro, 1971: 294.

So far, the English word 'monastery' has been used to describe a (Tibetan) Buddhist phenomenon. There is a danger of confusing a number of terms here, however. According to Vinayic[55] texts, a physical establishment of the Sangha was only created by putting down a *sīmā*; a monastic 'border',[56] after which certain essential ritual practices could be performed. To be counted as a place where a Sangha lives, a set of three monastic rituals described in the Vinaya need to be performed (*gzhi gsum cho ga*). These are: the fortnightly confession for *bhikṣu*s (*gso sbyong*, S. *poṣadha*), the ritual start of the summer retreat (*dbyar gnas*, S. *varṣā*) and the ritual closing of that retreat (*dgag dbye*, S. *pravāraṇa*).[57] In practice, this does not mean, however, that each individual monastic community is required to have its own *sīmā*. In Dharamsala in India, the established ritual border is so large as to include at least fifteen monasteries and nunneries, all belonging to different schools. The fortnightly confession ritual is performed in the main temple there.[58] Thus, practically, a *sīmā* does *not* define a monastery or a monastic community, at least not in terms of a distinct institutional identity of any kind.

Scholars of Indian Buddhism often translate the Sanskrit *vihāra* with 'monastery', which brings with it another set of problems. *Vihāra*s often refer to the (potential) living-spaces for monks, but according to Schopen, in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, the sole Vinaya in use in Tibet, they are not 'presented here primarily as residences for monks to live in, but rather as potential and permanent sources of merit for their donors.'[59] *Vihāra*, in Tibetan translated as *gtsug lag khang*, thus does not represent the 'intentional' celibate communities we see in Tibetan Buddhism. There are a number of Tibetan terms, however, that *can* denote these monastic communities that live in well-defined physical spaces, and which I choose to translate with the word 'monastery'. These are: *gdan sa*, *grwa sa*, *dgon sde*, *chos sde*, *grwa tshang*, *dgon pa*. In these places, the three rituals mentioned above may or may not be performed.[60]

The word *dgon pa* does not necessarily cover what Tibetans understand to be a living community of monks, for it refers more to a physical space than to a community. The contemporary Tibetan author and monk Re mdo sengge writes the following on the notion of *dgon pa*:

> Generally speaking, when one takes the word *dgon pa* to mean a secluded place, away from the hubbub, such as in the word 'remote monastery' (*'brog dgon pa*), then it is the case that, at the time of the Dharmarāja Srong btsan sgam po, the Brag yer pa temple (*lha khang*) [built by] Mang bza' khri lcam, the Brag lha mgon po temple [built by] Ru yong bza', and likewise the subduing temples and the minor subduing temples, and similarly even 'Samye temple' (bSam yas gtsug lag khang), etc. are then in fact also *dgon pa*.
>
> However, Tibetans will not generally identify the place as *dgon pa* but as hermitages (*ri khrod*); it is more common to understand *dgon pa* to be an institution where there is an organized community of ordained people who

[55] In this study, I use the word 'Vinayic' to refer to anything derived from either the canonical Vinaya (*'dul ba*/ *'dul ba'i lung*) or commentaries and sub-commentaries on monastic discipline.
[56] Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 150.
[57] Dreyfus, 2003: 45.
[58] Personal communication with Thub bstan yar 'phel, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[59] Schopen, 1996a: 123.
[60] According to one of my informants, however, a *dgon pa* becomes a *dgon pa chen mo* if it carries out the three rituals (*gzhi gsum cho ga*), mentioned previously.

> maintain the three rituals (*gzhi gsum*).[61] In this way, there is no dispute over what needs to be in place for something to qualify as a *dgon pa* in the sense mentioned above.
>
> The Ra sa 'phrul snang gtsug lag khang built by the Nepalese wife Khri btsun, the rGya stag ra mo che gtsug lag khang built by the Chinese wife Kong jo, the Thim [sic: Them] bu bkod pa temple built by Zhang zhung li thig sman[62] are mere places where the representations of deities are kept and where offerings can be made and not places that are centres of education and learning that contain an organized community of monks.[63]

It is clear that the word *dgon pa* as part of a name of an institution, and the common understanding among Tibetans of what the term means are here seen to be at odds with each other. While this author emphasizes the educational aspects of the *dgon pa*, it needs to be noted that this learning does not necessarily imply scholastic knowledge but may also include, or even solely refer to, ritual education.

The word *grwa tshang*, often glossed as 'college' although this translation does not apply to all instances, has a stronger communal aspect, although in contemporary Tibet many monks will primarily still refer to their *dgon pa*, and only to their *grwa tshang*[64] when they, for example, belong to one of the Three Great Seats (*gdan sa gsum*)[65] and want to specify the subdivision within the large institution to which they belong, i.e. their college. The sources discussed in this study are selected on the basis of their representation of Tibetan Buddhist monastic communities before the 1950s, but also on the basis of the information they contain. Occasionally, the names of the geographical places mentioned in these works may suggest that they were hermitages (*ri khrod/ nags khrod*) or temples (*gtsug lag khang*). However, the texts written for these institutions clearly suggest that they were seen, or saw themselves, as monastic celibate communities, using the word *grwa tshang*.[66]

Monastic communities often have different primary functions, such as education, ritual practice, and meditational retreats, although there may be

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[61] This is a shortened form of *gzhi gsum cho ga*, mentioned above.

[62] According to Tibetan historiography these three women were all wives of Srong btsan sgam po.

[63] *Bod kyi shes yon*: 53, 4: *spyir dgon pa zhes pa ni 'brog dgon pa ste 'du 'dzi'i dang 'bral ba'i dben gnas la 'jug pa'i go ba'i thog nas bsltas na/ chos rgyal srong btsan sgam po'i sku dus su mang bza' khri lcam gyi brag yer ba'i lha khang dang/ ru yong bza'i brag lha mgon po'i lha khang/ gzhan yang mtha' 'dul dang yang 'dul gyi lha khang/ de bzhin bsam yas gtsug lag khang sogs kyang dgon pa yin pa'i gnas lugs shig yin kyang/ de ri khrod red dgon pa ma red zer ba lta bus mtshon pa'i bod mi'i (54) 'du shes kyi ngos 'dzin la dgon pa zer ba ni/ gzhi gsum gyi nyams len dang ldan pa'i rab tu byung ba'i sgrig 'dzugs kyi sde khag cig la go ba rgyugs che bas/ gong gsal de dag 'di lta'i dgon pa'i khyad chos ji bzhin tshang ba zhig yin tshod mi 'dug la/ bal bza' khri btsun gyis bzhengs pa'i ra sa 'phrul snang gtsug lag khang dang/ rgya bza' kong jos bzhengs pa'i rgya stag ra mo che'i gtsug lag khang/ zhang zhung li thig sman gyis bzhengs pa'i thim* [sic: *them*] *bu bkod pa'i lha khang rnams ni lha rten bzhugs yul dang mchod gnas tsam ma gtogs grwa pa'i 'dus sde sgrig 'dzugs kyi rang bzhin ldan pa'i shes yon slob sbyong gi ste gnas shig min/*

[64] According to a Tibetan dictionary, a *grwa tshang* is a rather big division among a community of monks; see *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 417: *grwa tshang – dge 'dun sde tshogs kyi tshan khag cung zad che ba*/; and a *dgon pa* is either a secluded place at least one *krośa* removed from the village (as a translation of *araṇya*) or the residency of the Sangha, see ibid.: 461: *dgon pa* – (*araṇya*) *grong las rgyang grags gcig gis chod pa'i dben gnas sam*/ *dge 'dun gnas sa*/

[65] The Three Great Seats refer to the three large Gelug monasteries in Central Tibet: Drepung, Ganden and Sera.

[66] Examples of this are the bca' yig for the 'forest hermitage' (*nags khrod*) of Phabongkha (*Pha bong kha bca' yig*) and the 'temple' of Ramoche (*Ra mo che bca' yig*). The latter's title actually calls this institution a *grwa tshang*.

crossovers.[67] Tibetan monasteries can be characterized by being monastic residencies, by being ritual communities organized around the performance of rituals, and by being corporate entities.[68] While the specific ritual functions of monasteries are not examined in this study, the sense of community and identity, strengthened by shared vows, the shared spiritual teachers, and the shared geographical location – eventually amounting to the sum of the monastery – plays an important role in this study.

Authority, the State and the Monastery

Had it not been for the Buddhist dictum of humility [..] *the monks could have considered themselves as the ruling elite of Tibet*.[69]

While it is unlikely that the 'Buddhist dictum of humility' – a highly problematic notion to begin with – had any impact whatsoever, it is important to appreciate the nature of the Tibetan government in order to understand the role of the monasteries in Tibetan society and the extent of their authority. There exists a common misconception that – particularly from the start of the Ganden Phodrang government in 1642 onward – the Tibetan state was a single unity, with a high level of control and influence.[70] In fact, the Tibetan government always had a predisposition towards loose government, i.e. it controlled certain aspects of Tibetan society, but it certainly never even attempted to govern on a local level. Power-vacuums were thus filled by local landlords, chieftains, nobility, *and* monasteries.

Conceptually, from the mid 17th century onward all land belonged to the Dalai Lama and his government, which meant that local leaders ultimately answered to the state. The position of monasteries was different from that of other ruling parties, because their authority was regularly both political and religious. This both facilitated and complicated relations with the government. The networks of Gelug monasteries were seen as safeguarding the ultimate authority of the state, whereas the larger monasteries of certain other schools were less likely to eagerly accept influence of the state. At the same time, it was the influence of the large Gelug monasteries in Central Tibet that occasionally destabilized and undermined the authority of the government. The sheer amount of monks living in these institutions was a force that had to be reckoned with: the Three Great Seats alone housed up to twenty-five thousand monks.

The broader issue of why, compared to other countries where Buddhist monasticism throve, the amount of monks was so much higher in Tibet, has not yet been answered satisfactorily. Various sources give estimates of the monastic population that range from ten to as high as twenty-five per cent of the male population.[71] I suspect that while these numbers may have been accurate at certain times, from a demographical point of view, they are open to misinterpretation. In particular, it is often not taken into account that for the largest monasteries in Central Tibet (for usually the percentages of monks only pertain to that area), the number of 'immigrant monks,' e.g. people from Mongolia, Kham, Amdo, and beyond must have been very high. Most of these monks were not permanently residing at the monasteries. Thus, even though one in four males residing in Central Tibet may

[67] Gyatso, 2003: 219.
[68] Dreyfus, 2003: 52.
[69] Michael, 1982: 57.
[70] For a critique of this notion, see Samuel, 1993: 142-6.
[71] Samuel gives an overview of the amount of monks in different areas based on secondary sources and concludes on the basis of this that overall the monk-population consisted of perhaps ten to twelve per cent in the agricultural areas and a considerably lower number in other areas. ibid.: 578-82.

indeed have been a monk, this does not mean that a quarter of all boys born in Central Tibet would eventually be sent to the monastery. The percentages – however high or low the estimates – are therefore nearly *always* misrepresentations, for these numbers would not necessarily have a direct effect on Central Tibetan society and its taxable workforce. Immigration and semi-permanent residence are issues that need to be taken into account when making umbrella-statements about the state of Tibet's societal composition.[72]

On a local level the monastery was a crucial agent in Tibetan society. Taken as a whole, it had more influence on the day-to-day life of ordinary people than the state ever had. In examining issues of social justice in a given society, the starting point is the main authority in place, which, in most cases in the modern Western context, is the state. This is taken as the point of departure when the way in which that authority deals with the general populace is scrutinized. In the Tibetan context, however, the direct authority was often, though by no means always, the monastic institution. It is for this reason that, while state involvement must be taken into account, the role of the government is not the starting-point of this study. In the *longue durée* of Tibet's history, it was the monasteries that have been more influential in shaping the government than the government has been in shaping the monasteries. Thus, the focus must lie in the first place on these monasteries as the *de facto* loci of influence and power.

A Preview

In order to contextualize the primary sources that form the backbone of this study, Chapter 2 focuses on the genre of the bca' yig as a whole and the way in which these texts relate to the larger corpora of both Indic and Tibetan Vinaya texts. In this chapter I demonstrate that the bca' yig were often written in reaction to realities on the ground, to issues that were seen to be in need of attention. They thus contain mention of corruption, bribery, nepotism, maltreatment of lay-servants and political scheming. The texts furthermore give us insight into the internal hierarchy and organization of the monastery, its judicial role, monastic economics, and the social stratification within the monastery. For this reason, I argue in this chapter that these works are rich sources for monastic social history and, despite the fact that they do not overtly deal with matters of social justice, a great deal of insight can be gained from close reading of the bca' yig.

Chapter 3 provides a background of the monastic system that was prevalent in pre-modern Tibet. It looks at the development of monasticism in Tibet and the various types of monasteries. In this chapter I elaborate on the status of the monastery and the monk in Tibetan society and how it has influenced monastic attitudes toward issues of social justice. The chapter explores the extent to which these monastic attitudes are grounded in Buddhist thought.

Chapter 4 looks at the restrictions to entrance to the monastery. The bca' yig provide information on who were and were not to become monks. This chapter explores both Vinayic and local justifications given for barring certain people from entering the monastery and thereby – potentially – making social advancement.

In Chapter 5 I focus on the organization of the Tibetan monastery, how the community was formed and how monastic official roles were divided. This chapter considers the internal hierarchy and the social stratification within the monastery.

[72] I also make this argument in Jansen, 2013a: 121, 2.

Chapter 6 deals with monastic economy, how the monastery balanced the Vinayic need for limited possessions and how monks made a living. In this chapter I deal with the issue of individual monks' business, and trade conducted by the monasteries, monastic property in general, the monasteries' functioning as banks, and the theoretical economic separation of the individual and the institutional as featured in the monastic guidelines and the Vinaya.

Chapter 7 deals with the relations between the monastery and the laity. Here particular attention is given to issues of charity and to the relationship between sponsors and their monastic beneficiaries. The rules regarding monks giving alms to the needy are also examined. It further looks at family ties, the role of the monastery as an educational facility and at healthcare in and around the monastic institutions.

Chapter 8 examines the judicial position of the monasteries in Tibet. It looks at the extent to which these institutions were legally allowed *and* obligated to punish both lay-people and monks, paying some attention to what kind of punishments were given. It furthermore explores cases in which monks were to be tried according to state law and looks at what happened with monks who broke their vows.

The concluding Chapter 9 sums up the main points and arguments made throughout the study, and indicates issues that have yet to be examined.

Throughout this study some references to other Buddhist cultures and even to other types of monasticism are offered. This is done in order to emphasize the point that Tibetan monastic Buddhism cannot and should not be viewed in isolation, as has been a general tendency of previous scholarly works. In contemporary academia, the mystification and idealization of the Tibetan monkhood – and more broadly, Buddhist monasticism in its entirety – continues. Ellingson, writing in 1990, notes that: 'Tibetan monasteries are still widely characterized as mysterious enclaves of "priests," Rasputin-like powers behind thrones, and hordes of ignorant fanatics who periodically and inexplicably march forth to topple governments.'[73] This depiction is still current, while it is alternated by the cliché of monasteries filled with enlightened beings, all striving to bring happiness to this world. While being aware of the fact that to represent past Tibetan societies is an undertaking 'permeated with uncertainty and subjectivity,'[74]this study aims to present a picture of Tibetan monks and monasteries that remains close to the Tibetan sources, without taking them at face-value and without needing to pay lip-service to any political agenda. Monastic policy and ideology are the focal points of this study, although all assertions are made with the understanding that 'to categorize human actions as ideal or material is philosophically absurd, they are always both.'[75] The monastic guidelines are works that contain both the ideal and the material, to which I now turn.

[73] Ellingson, 1990: 206.
[74] Childs, 2005: 5.
[75] Sewell, 1993: 25.

2. BCA' YIG: DOCUMENTS THAT ESTABLISH THE RULES[76]

Introduction

[..] *a broad survey of bca'-yig* [..] *provides what might be considered a general outline of normative monastic polity*.[77]

A bca' yig or a bca' yig-like text in its most basic form is a formal and written address directed to a group of religious practitioners, which concerns the future of that group. When considering the broader connotation of the word bca' yig, one can even leave out 'of religious practitioners'.[78] The word bca' yig is an abbreviation of *khrims su bca' ba'i yi ge*: a document that establishes rules.[79]The most likely origins for the word bca' yig are the works mentioned in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*. Schopen notes the existence of the so-called *kriyākāraṃ*, which is found in Tibetan translations both as *khrims su bca' ba* and *khrims su bya ba*. These are texts of which both secular and clerical versions exist. Both types can be found within the vast corpus of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*. The earliest *kriyākāraṃ* is the '*bhichu samgasa kriyakara*', the largest part of which has been lost.[80] Another document that contains 'regulations for the monastic community' stems from the 3rd century and is written in Kharoṣṭhī script. This is a document from Central Asia, which is unfortunately fragmentary. In a translation by Burrow, the 'regulations for the community of monks' speak of what kinds of punishment are to be meted out for which offence. For example, the monks who do not attend ceremonies, who wear householder's clothes, or hit other monks, must all pay fines of a certain number of rolls of silk.[81] Schopen mentions that not much research has been done on these 'monastic ordinances' and that they in all likelihood were more important to monastic communities than the canonical Vinaya.[82] Mention of *sāṃghikaṃ kriyākāraṃ* is given in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. Tatz translates the relevant passages that describe in which cases a bodhisattva does and does not commit a fault, when he does something that is generally seen as wrong, such as not rising to greet his senior: 'In keeping an internal rule of the community, there is no fault.'[83] One could then see this internal rule as 'more binding than the canonical monastic rule or *prātimokṣa*.'[84]

The extent to which Indic monastic guidelines, that may have existed either in oral or in written form, influenced their Tibetan counterparts is unknown. In any case,

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[76] Sections of this chapter are to be published as "Monastic Organizational Guidelines," *in* J. Silk (ed.) *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill 2015) and as "Monastic Guidelines (*bCa' yig*): Tibetan Social History from a Buddhist Studies Perspective", *in* J. Bisschoff and S. Mullard (eds.) *Social Regulation: Case Studies from Tibetan History* (Leiden: Brill 2015).

[77] Ellingson, 1990: 207.

[78] An example of this is the *bCa' yig chen mo*, a work seen as the earliest Bhutanese constitution written by the founder of Bhutan Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594-1651). It is claimed that this work itself was based on monastic bca' yig that the author had written previously. However, the later text was intended for the Bhutanese population as a whole. Aris, 1979: 215. The date of this law code is uncertain.

[79] It is tempting to translate *khrims* as 'law'. However, it is important to note that this word has both secular and religious connotations. See *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 283: *khrims – lha chos sam mi chos dang mthun pa'i lugs* (*khrims*: way[s] that accord either with Buddhist or with human governance).

[80] Schopen, 1996b: 589, n. 45.

[81] Burrow, 1940: 95, n. 489.

[82] Schopen, 2002: 360-2.

[83] Tatz, 1986: 66, 7.

[84] Schopen, 2007: 111.

Tibetan authors never point to Indian precedents for their bca' yig. Rather, the claim most commonly made is that the monastic guidelines address both local and contemporary issues, to which Indian precedents would not be relevant. The earliest texts that were later labelled bca' yig are still relatively late, some four hundred years after monastic Buddhism was supposed to have been introduced into Tibet. Mention of a 11th century Kadam (*bKa' gdams*) bca' yig is made in the 15th century work *bKa' gdams rin po che'i chos 'byung rnam thar nyin mor byed pa'i 'od stong*. In this religious history of the school, the author Lo dgon pa bsod nams lha'i dbang po (1423-1496) claims not to merely have heard of, but also that he has seen, bca' yig by the important Kadam tradition masters dGon pa ba, Shar ba pa, and Po to ba, as well as four sets of monastic guidelines for the general Sangha (*dge 'dun spyi'i bca' yig*).[85] To my knowledge, these works, which then would stem from the 11th century, are not extant.

The oldest existing works containing instructions for religious organizations hail from the 12th century. According to Ellingson, the first *bca' yig*-like text contains prescriptions for aspects of monastic governance and consists of instructions given by Zhang brtson 'grus grags pa (1123-1193), written down and preserved in his collected works.[86] The tradition maintains that it was recorded as an oral testament directed to his successors at the monastery of 'Tshal gung thang. It is said to have been spoken when Lama Zhang was on his deathbed, thus either in or before 1193.[87] Even though this text contains some valuable information on the monastic organization of the late 12th century, the monastic guidelines did not develop into a more established genre of literature until the 14th century.

bCa' yig as a Genre

No fitting definition of the *bca' yig* genre exists within any Tibetan tradition, contemporary or pre-modern. Tibetan redactors of collected works have been known to assign titles to works where they found none in the texts themselves. An example of this is the very short address by 'Jig rten gsum mgon, consisting of less than one and a half folios, which was later designated *gDan sa nyams dmas su gyur ba'i skabs mdzad pa'i bca' yig* ('Monastic guidelines created during the demise of the Monastic Seat').[88] This is not to say that the word 'bca' yig' was ever assigned randomly. The text mentioned above does instruct its audience to adhere to the previous *bca' khrims* (on which more below) and contains instructions pertaining to monastic organization.[89] There appear to have been certain characteristics according to which the redactors referred previously nameless texts as bca' yig. Thus, to designate works that are called bca' yig as a class of texts is not to superimpose the concept of genre onto Tibetan literature, for it takes into account the Tibetan perceptions and ideas of something that is rather similar to Western notions of genre.[90]

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[85] *gzhan yang dpal ldan dgon pa ba'i bca' yig / po to ba'i bca' yig / zhang ston shar ba pas snga phyir byas pa gnyis te dge 'dun spyi'i bca' yig bzhi'o/ de rnams ni thos tshod tsam min par mthong ba rnams bkod do/*. In Vetturini, 2013 [2007]: 165, 6; 375.

[86] Ellingson, 1990: 208.

[87] This text can be found in *dPal ldan tshal pa bka' brgyud kyi bstan pa'i mnga' bdag zhang g.yu brag pa brtson 'grus grags pa'i gsung 'bum rin po che*: bKa' thor bu: shog dril chen mo (Kathmandu: Shree Gautam Buddha Vihar, 2004), 176-81.

[88] Martin, 2010: 210, n. 52. The word *gdan sa* here refers to the monastery of gDan sa mthil. This work is henceforth referred to as *gDan sa bca' yig*.

[89] *gDan sa bca' yig*: 127.

[90] Although there is not one word that can be translated as genre, Tibetan redactors had to organize texts into sections, which means some type of classification took place. See Cabezón and Jackson, 1996: 21.

Nonetheless, the labelling of works as bca' yig *ex post facto* appears to be rather arbitrary, or – considering that many texts are probably lost – we are not able to understand the principles at work. One can argue that the selection of texts made here, initially largely on the basis of their titles, is therefore equally arbitrary. This is not the case, because first of all the works that appear to have been named bca' yig at a later date do not form the lion's share of the works I examine here, and further, despite there being undoubtedly more and perhaps even earlier works that have similar contents, I feel it to be more beneficial to include those texts that were retrospectively called bca' yig rather than exclude them. This is not merely because their contents are highly informative, but also because Tibetans themselves perceived these earlier texts as bca' yig. It is safe to assume that later authors of bca' yig must have been influenced by the texts in question.

In the works that were only called bca' yig retroactively there is a strong presence of orality. The traditional view is that these works are records of the words of the master. They are what Martin calls 'orally determined literature'.[91] Often the monks (or another religious group) are directly addressed, and usually - but not always - practical rules pertaining to the group are laid down in them. Despite the problematic nature of the word 'genre', I think the term is helpful when discussing the extents and limits of the material at hand and I will therefore make use of it to denote the works. There is no single standard delineation of genre for Tibetan texts, even though attempts have been made, by Tibetan and Western scholars alike, to arrange and structure them. The suggested typology developed by Cabezón and Jackson – who themselves feel it to be incomplete – contains eight main genres.[92] The header of the last section is 'Guidebooks and Reference Works', consisting of the sub-genres of 1) Itineraries (*lam yig*) 2) Catalogues (*dkar chag*) 3) Dictionaries (*tshig mdzod*) 4) Encyclopaedias.

The bca' yig, although clearly not part of any of the sub-genres, may be seen as a reference work, in so far as it was used by monastic officials to learn the correct procedures and organizational features of the monastery. Tibetan compilers of more recent monastic histories regularly choose to include pre-modern bca' yig.[93] There is thus an understanding among Tibetan literati today that a bca' yig, in one way or another, is part of the history of a monastery. Most of the shorter bca' yig usually do not claim to relate the history of the monastery, although some display a keen self-awareness of the changes that the institution in question has undergone. The bca' yig often function as reference works, but just what kind of guides they are meant to serve as and the intended audience may vary. Below I discuss the range of topics a bca' yig covers and the various purposes bca' yig- type works serve.

bCa' yig: Constitutions, Regulations or Guidelines?

The only scholar to have written on bca' yig in more general terms is Ellingson. In his article, he proposes that this genre derived from sources such as common law and traditional rights, in accordance with the way the larger polity was divided up. In light of the presumed origination in Tibetan traditional 'secular' law, he translates bca' yig

[91] Martin, 2010: 202.
[92] Namely, 1) History and Biography 2) Canonical and Quasi-Canonical Texts 3) Philosophical Literature 4) Literature on the Paths 5) Ritual 6) Literary Arts 7) Non-literary Arts and Sciences 8) Guidebooks and Reference Works. See Cabezón and Jackson, 1996: 30, 1.
[93] Examples of this are *O rgyan smin sgrol gling gi dkar chag*: 272-316, and *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 92-7.

both as ‘monastic constitution’ and as ‘a monastic constitutional document’. He states:

> [..] the Tibetan bca’ yig are “constitutions” in the sense that they are constitutional-documentary outlines of part of a more extensive body of documentary and traditional fundamentals of monastic government.[94]

He does not give further information on this extensive body of works, but mentions many of these may be oral.[95] The translation of ‘monastic constitution’ or ‘monastic ordinances’ for the Tibetan word bca’ yig is problematic, as a fair number of texts that are called bca’ yig are not written for *monastic* communities. We know of bca’ yig written for hermitages (*ri khrod*)[96] and for communities of *tantrikas* (*sngags pa*) who are not monks.[97]

Certain legal codes in Bhutan are also called bca’ yig, although this is a more recent development. Another interesting use of the word is in the context of modern Amdo, where in certain village communities, the term bca’ yig can denote a series of rules jotted down in a notebook. These consist of rules on lay religious gatherings (such as reciting *maṇi* mantras) and state the monetary fines to be paid by those who fail to attend, do not wear Tibetan dress, or arrive late at the gathering.[98] The name bca’ yig also crops up in the context of regulations for certain Himalayan communities. There is a text for the inhabitants of Pachakshiri, written by Lama Lodre Gyamtso in the early 1930s and some years later completed by Sonam Gelek Rabtan Lhawang. It gives information on the migration of people to an area and the creation of a so-called Hidden Land (*sbas yul*). The text lays down rules on correct moral behaviour, the relationship between the ruler and his subjects, the establishment of law, and social and religious order. It also instructs on how to deal with newcomers or tribal neighbours. It can be read as a justification of Pachakshiri’s inhabitants’ rights as the chosen community.[99] The word bca’ yig appears in yet another context: a text that contains guidelines on issues such as aesthetics and punctuation for copyists of the *bka’ ’gyur*.[100]

It is clear that the bca’ yig is a name for a genre of texts that intend to address more audiences than merely the monastics. However, in this particular context I choose to translate the word bca’ yig as ‘monastic guidelines’, because the texts that I deal with in this study are by and large limited to the monastic context. I use the word ‘guidelines’, although one might render the word bca’ yig as: regulations, constitutions, rules, codes, protocols, manuals, laws, rulebooks, regulatory texts, codified rules, regimens, monastic injunctions, standards, charters or edicts.

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[94] Ellingson, 1990: 205.
[95] ibid.: 210.
[96] Examples of this are: *dBen gnas ’khyung rdzong ri khrod pa rnams kyi khrims su bca’ ba’i yi ge thar pa’i them skas*. *In* bCa’ yig sde brgyad la springs yig lam yig sko ’ja’ sogs kyi rim pa phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs (bsKal bzang rgya mtsho (the Seventh Dalai Lama) *gSung ’bum vol.* 3): 434-45 and *De mo srid skyong dang pos dar nor ri khrod la bstsal ba’i bca’ yig* (1757), in *bCa’ yig phyogs bsgrigs*: 151-5.
[97] For example, *Rong zom chos bzang gis rang slob dam tshig pa rnams la gsungs pa’i rwa ba brgyad pa’i bca’ yig* (here abbreviated to *Rong zom bca’ yig*).
[98] Personal communication with Ciulan Liu, Taipei, June 2011.
[99] Grothmann, 2012: 137-9.
[100] Kun mkhyen rig pa ’dzin pa chos kyi grags pa (1595-1659) wrote the *bKa’ ’gyur bzhengs dus dpon yig rnams kyi bca’ yig*. In *gSung ’bum vol. 2*: 175-180. This text is briefly discussed in Schaeffer, 2009: 31-3. He translates the title as ‘Guidelines for Chief scribes [sic] During the Production of a Kangyur’.

So far the most common translation choices into English have been 'constitution'[101] and 'regulations'.[102] In many cases, however, the texts that bear the classification of bca' yig are not 'constitutions' in the sense that they are not always 'the fundaments' of conduct in the monasteries, because they can often be additions (not replacements) to an older existing bca' yig. Occasionally, they cover not the whole monastery, but only a part of it, such as the assembly hall (*'du khang*) or the debate ground (*chos rwa*), and sometimes bca' yig are written for special occasions, such as the Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*). Concerning the large variety of topics that bca' yig may cover, ranging from the details of punishments to mere spiritual advice, a translation that has a broad coverage is preferable.

bCa' yig and the Law

It is tempting to assume – as Ellingson does – that the bca' yig have their origin in Tibetan secular law, which is probably also why he chose to translate the word with 'constitution'. Indeed, the name itself does seem to suggest this: the word bca' yig is commonly understood as an abbreviation of *khrims su bca' ba'i yi ge*: a document that establishes rules. The *Tshig mdzod chen mo* gives the meaning for bca' yig as *khrims bzos pa'i yi ge*: a document that creates law or rules, and gives as an example the bca' yig of a monastery (*dgon pa'i bca' yig*).[103] Cüppers sees an early word denoting 'constitution'; namely, *bca' tshig* (from the 17th century onwards: *rtsa tshig*), as an abbreviation of *khrims su bca' ba'i tshig*, which he in turn connects with bca' yig. He writes that later on, *bca' tshig*/ *rtsa tshig* came to refer to secular, and bca' yig to religious, law. He also notes that both types of documents contain a similar use of terms, in particular when it comes to stating the rules.[104] He seems to imply that both terms have the same starting point, but it remains unclear as to whether this point is religious or secular. Whitecross suggests that in the context of Bhutan and Tibet, 'law codes illustrate the operation of each regime and how they secured their legitimacy, it is in the monasteries that we find *bca' yig*, texts that are more recognizable to us as written "constitutions".'[105] This author may not be aware, however, that bca' yig (unlike most constitutions) were composed with reference to specific times or purposes – they were not necessarily written to stand the test of time, making the translation of 'constitution' less apt.

One possible connection of the bca' yig with legal and secular texts is their shape. Several pre-modern bca' yig found *in situ* within monasteries do not have the palm-leaf shape most religious texts do, but are scrolls made out of sheets of paper stuck together with glue.[106] They could also be scrolls made out of cloth or silk. The Mongolian author Blo bzang rta mgrin (1867-1937), the author of the guidelines for Chos sde chos dbyings 'od gsal gling, a monastery likely to have been in Mongolia, explains the process of creating the guidelines:

> In the midst of an assembly of old and new studying monks (*chos grwa*), I, together with friends and enemies, 'made' a big piece of paper (*shog chen po*

[101] e.g. Ellingson, 1990.
[102] e.g. Cabezón, 1997.
[103] *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 751.
[104] Cüppers, 2011.
[105] Whitecross, 2014: 352.
[106] e.g. the facsimiles of two bca' yig found in Schuh and Dagyab, 1978: 250-67 and 272, 8.

> *byas te*) and established regulations regarding meeting up (*gtugs pa'i srol tshugs pa yin*).[107]

Law codes that were kept in the Tibetan courts had the same scroll-like shape, similar to that of many other official secular documents.[108] Nowadays, Tibetan monasteries in exile still keep the version of the bca' yig that is read out by the disciplinarian in the same format, while copies that are handed out to monks usually take the shape of a small book.

Despite the fact that there are indications that lead one to assume that the format of the texts as well as the term (and subsequently the genre of) bca' yig is derived from Tibetan legal sources, the contents and vocabulary of available works that carry in their title the word bca' yig do not suggest a *direct* relationship to Tibetan 'secular' law. This is not to say that 'secular' legal matters are not treated in the bca' yig: to the extent that these issues are relevant to the community that is addressed they are occasionally mentioned. I asked my informants for their views on the relationship between the secular law and the bca' yig. According to most informants, there was considerable overlap, as the monastic rules contain 'laws' that could be found in secular society, such as the rule on not killing human beings. One respondent mentioned that for this reason the monastic law (*dge 'dun gyi khrims*) is broader in spectrum (*khyab che ba*) than the secular one, as the latter does not contain rules on religious behaviour.[109] That the question I asked was answered in this way does indicate that (at least some) Tibetan monks think of the rules of the monastery as a parallel law. Another respondent answered the question by saying that 'generally speaking the bca' yig falls under the country's law (*rgyal khrims*): the contents of the guidelines can never be in contradiction with the general law.'[110] The compilers of *Bod kyi snga rabs khrims srol yig cha bdams bsgrigs*, a book which contains a variety of pre-modern law-books, appear to have had a similar notion, because aside from numerous important law-books (*khrims yig*) it contains five bca' yig-s and a text by the Fifth Dalai Lama that explains the *prātimokṣa* vows.[111] A more elaborate discussion on the role of the bca' yig within the monastic organization and its legal authority, as well as a more general treatment of the judicial position of the monastery, can be found in Chapter 8.

bCa' yig as an Instrument of Government?

In some cases, monastic guidelines can also be understood as an instrument of government, which was occasionally local and at other times translocal. At certain times the bca' yig were tools of the state, or of those allied with the state. At other times, they were the instruments of local governing bodies or of people whose authority was largely religious in nature. This distinction is easily made by looking at the authors of the bca' yig. Some writers are the founders of the monastery for which

[107] *Chos sde chos dbyings 'od gsal gling bca' yig*: 434.
[108] See Schneider, 2002: 416 and French, 1995: 125, plate 23.
[109] Personal communication with bsTan 'dzin 'brug sgra, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[110] Personal communication with Re mdo sengge, the editor in chief of the latest bca' yig for Kirti byes pa monastery (in Tibet), Dharamsala, July 2012. He mentioned that in the old Tibet abiding by the country's rule never presented the monks with any problems, but that this has now become difficult, because of the current Chinese government's policies, which effectively prevent monks from following the traditional monastic education. For many monks, upholding the traditional education system is paramount to abiding by Chinese law.
[111] *Bod kyi snga rabs khrims srol yig cha bdams bsgrigs*. Tshe ring dpal 'byor et al (eds.). (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1989).

they write the bca' yig, others are in one way or another affiliated to the monastery, but are requested to write monastic guidelines because of the charismatic authority they can be perceived to have over the monastic populations. Again others write bca' yig for monasteries that are often both physically and 'religiously' far removed from their effective power. Examples of this can be seen in the works of the Fifth Dalai Lama, who wrote a bca' yig for Bon and Nyingma (*rNying ma*) monasteries and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama who wrote a great amount of bca' yig, most of which were for monasteries in Kham and Amdo. These monasteries presumably already had monastic constitutions of their own, but it appears that issuing these constitutions was, to a large extent, a political act – a way to draw Eastern Tibetan monasteries, not well known for their allegiance to the Central Tibetan Government, into the political and religious sphere of the Dalai Lama.

It is important to note that the existence of government-issued bca' yig at monasteries far removed from the political centre is *not* proof of state-control or even mere influence; rather, it should be understood to be proof of *an attempt* at state-control and nothing more. While the political aspects of the bca' yig should never be overlooked and do merit further research, this study is more concerned with the practical usages of the monastic guidelines.

Parallels with Other Buddhist Traditions: Theravāda

Aside from the above mentioned Indic predecessor of the bca' yig, the *kriyākāraṃ*, similar works also exist in the Theravāda as well as in East Asian Buddhist traditions. In Sri Lanka a number of monastic ordinances called *katikāvata*s or *katikāvatta*s survive. Several of these were preserved as inscriptions and others as manuscripts. The *katikāvata*s are agreements on the rules of conduct for the monastic community, often laid down by the monastic leader with the most authority. The rules were decided upon at an assembly of the Sangha held specifically in order to reorganize the monastic community as a whole or a particular individual monastery. These reorganizations mostly happened with the support of the king; some *katikāvata*s thus bear the name of the king in question. The texts were written to establish stability within the community and to respond to contemporary practical issues faced by the Sangha.[112]

Some make a distinction between *katikāvata*s for a specific monastery (*vihāra katikāvata*s) and those composed for the whole collection of monks (*sāsana katikāvata*s).[113] The former consist of rules mostly to do with the administration of a particular monastery, whereas the latter, which were promulgated by kings or local chieftains, contain a long historical introduction and focus more on the behavior of monks. The general purpose of these texts contrasts with the local flavour that their Tibetan counterparts often have, although the latter texts can be very generic as well, particularly when written by someone who is less involved in the monastery. An example of the *sāsana katikāvata*s is one written by Mahākaśyapa on the occasion of the *sāsana* reform by the Sinhalese King Parākramabāhu I (1123-1186), which came about by royal order and not by a monastic council. That it was accepted by the monastic community shows the authority of the king over monastic matters. The first *katikāvata* promulgated by the monastic community without *any* royal interference can be dated as late as 1853.[114]

[112] Blackburn, 1999: 286, 7.
[113] Rammaṇḍala, 1880: 90-6.
[114] Wijetunga, 1970: 4-7.

The organizational structure of the Parākramabāhu I *katikāvata* has formed the basis for the organization of the Sangha in Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian Buddhist countries, despite the fact that its contents deviate in some instances from the Vinaya. The text even adds some new rules that directly contradicted the Vinaya. Ratnapala has provided translations and analyses for a number of the *sāsana katikāvata*s, the earliest of which dates back to the 12th century.[115] No extensive study on the *vihāra katikāvata*s has yet been conducted.

In Sri Lanka, inscriptions on granite slabs estimated to date to the 9th century have been found near ruins of monasteries. These are not explicitly called *katikāvata*s or named otherwise, but clearly contain regulations intended to guide monks and lay-people who lived within the monastic compound or areas belonging to the monastery. Similar types of inscriptions must have been present in and around the Tibetan Buddhist monastic compound. One surviving early example of this is the writings on the walls found in Tabo monastery, provisionally dated to 1042.[116] In Sri Lanka then, the Abhayagiri Inscription – written in Sanskrit – reveals that from the early 9th century rules were laid down both for monks and lay staff of the monastery.[117]

Another such source is the Mihintale Slab Inscription written in Sinhalese in the early 11th century. This states that it bases itself on the rules of the Abhayagiri as well as on those of the Cetiyagiri monastery. It furthermore details both the ideal daily routine of monks, and offers very particular information on how servants and monastic property should be managed.[118] Gunawardhana utilized the above mentioned and other similar inscriptions for his superb book on the monasticism and economy in Sri Lanka, exactly because they contain a wealth of information on the economic and social role of Sinhalese monasteries from the 9th to the 13th centuries.[119] The Sinhalese monastic guidelines also contain information on the monastery's scholastic schedule and the education of monks more generally.

It is difficult to explain the apparent absence of literature on monastic rules in other South and Southeast Asian countries where monastic Buddhism had a presence. In Thailand, before the 'Sangha Act' in 1902, there existed nothing that was formal or centralized.[120] This leaves us with various possibilities; namely, that either no manuscripts survive, that they were not made public, or that rules for the organization of the monastery were communicated mainly orally.

Parallels with Other Buddhist Traditions: East Asia

The translation of Vinayas into Chinese took place long after the introduction of monastic Buddhism to China. It is suggested that the earliest rules for monks were orally transmitted and were intended for the foreign monk-population.[121] In a letter Dao'an 道安 (312-385) laments the fact that there was no complete text of the five hundred monastic rules at Xiangyang 襄陽, which he mentioned was most needed.[122] Dao'an's biography notes that the rules he eventually developed, which pertained to daily life in the monastery, were followed by monks throughout the empire.[123] There

[115] Ratnapala, 1971: 6-13.
[116] Tauscher, 1999: 29-94.
[117] Wickremasinghe, 1912: 1-9.
[118] ibid.: 98-113.
[119] Gunawardana, 1979.
[120] McDaniel, 2008: 101.
[121] Heirman, 2007: 168.
[122] Zürcher, 2007 [1959]: 197.
[123] Link, 1958: 35, 6.

is no suggestion that Dao'an directly concerned himself with the administration or management of a monastery as such. Later on, the regulations that were formulated for Chan monasteries in China were said to be based on Dao'an's and Daoxuan's works 道宣 (596-667).[124]

Traditionally, Baizhang's 白丈 (749-814) *Pure Rules* (*qinggui* 清規) are thought to form the foundation for later Chan monastic communities. Like those of Dao'an, Baizhang's rules were said to be written for general practice and not for particular circumstances, and concerned themselves with ritual while remaining largely silent on issues of administration. However, many scholars doubt that Baizhang's *Pure Rules* ever existed. The title is in any case apocryphal, for the term *qinggui* does not appear in a monastic context before the 12th century.[125] The earliest extant text on monastic rules written by a Chan master is *Shi guizhi* 師規制 (the Teacher's Regulations) written in 901 by Xuefeng 雪峰 (822-908). The work is short and is not directed to one single monastery. It appears to be in line with rules as laid out in the Vinaya but also contains references to more localized Chinese practices.[126] The Tiantai monk Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032) revived the abandoned temple Tianzhusi 天竺寺 and wrote guidelines for his successors called the *Tianzhusi shifang zhuchi yi* 天竺寺十方住持義 in 1030.[127] Other non-Chan Chinese monastic guidelines are so far unknown.

Another very influential set of extant monastic guidelines for a Chan monastery is the *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規. Written in 1103, it later became the standard for the rulebooks of all bigger Chan monasteries in China and represents an important milestone for Chinese Buddhist history because it was the first indigenous set of monastic rules that more or less equaled the status of the Vinaya.[128] Foulk divides these rules up into five sections: 1) standards of behavior addressed to individual monks; 2) procedures for communal calendrical rites; 3) guidelines for the organization and operation of public monastery bureaucracies; 4) procedures for rituals of social interaction; 5) rules pertaining to the relationship between public monasteries and the outside world, particularly civil authorities and lay benefactors.[129]

Many of the Tibetan monastic guidelines, in particular the larger ones, can be seen to cover roughly the same topics, although the texts usually do not have clearly distinguishable sections. The *Chanyuan qinggui* describes in detail the duties of monk officials responsible for economic matters, such as tax- and rent-collecting. These new roles were not seen in the administrative structure of the earlier Tang dynasty monasteries.[130] Initially this genre of monastic guidelines called *qinggui* were restricted to Chan monasteries, but by the Yuan dynasty the practice of compiling codes with *qinggui* in the title had spread to other branches of Chinese Buddhism.[131]

Whereas the *qinggui* were intended for all public monasteries, there were also monastic guidelines written for individual monasteries, which appear quite similar to the Tibetan *bca' yig*. Welch found that texts called *guiyue* 規約 present the most comprehensive information on the monastic system as actually followed. In the early

[124] Yifa, 2005: 125.
[125] Yifa, 2002: 28-35.
[126] Poceski, 2003: 33-56.
[127] Yifa, 2002: 35-7.
[128] Foulk, 2004: 275.
[129] ibid.: 289.
[130] Collcutt, 1983: 182.
[131] ibid.: 169.

to mid- 20th century his monk-informants thought them to be more relevant on issues of monastic organization than the contents of the *prātimokṣa* vows.[132] Such guidelines were usually divided into sections, of which each was dedicated to a certain department in the monastery. Although these texts claim to be based on Baizhang's works, they were flexible, for when the need arose, the abbot could add new rules.[133]

Not surprisingly, the genre of *qinggui* also spread to Japan. Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253) wrote regulations for Eihei monastery later collected in the *Eihei shingi* 永平清規, which includes regulations and procedural instructions for a variety of monastic activities. This work consists of six parts written on separate occasions.[134] Dōgen is sometimes viewed as a modernizer of Zen monastic Buddhism, but almost all the texts on monastic rules attributed to him are in fact commentaries on the *Chanyuan qinggui* and other works deriving from the Vinaya tradition. This makes Dōgen a transmitter rather than an innovator of monastic rules.[135]

Generally speaking, the codes compiled in Japan are often shorter than their Chinese counterparts, and do not entirely reproduce the issues addressed in the *qinggui*s: local and specifically Japanese concerns were also voiced in the *shingi*.[136] As in the case with China, aside from the *shingi* that were directed to all Zen monasteries, there were also regulations for individual Zen monastic institutions, as well as schools called *kakun* 家訓. The latter term suggests a connection to aristocratic and warrior house codes, which bore the same name.[137] The *Rinsen kakun* 臨川家訓, compiled in 1317, is an example of an individual monastery's code.[138] The articles in this text appear to be responses to particular problems. Both in terms of their aim and their contents, these texts are comparable to the Tibetan monastic guidelines. Western language scholarship so far has been limited on the topic of local monastic ordinances in Japan, aside from those that pertain to Zen monastic Buddhism. Undoubtedly similar guidelines for other Japanese monastic traditions exist, but have not been subjected to extensive research.

Another way in which rules for monastic conduct and life in Japan were created was through external authorities; perhaps comparable to the way the Sinhalese *sāsana katikāvata*s were promulgated. The Nara court issued regulations for monks and nuns in 701, called the *Sōniryō* 僧尼令, which consists of twenty-seven articles.[139] Even though these regulations contain rather stringent rules, they do not appear to have been strictly enforced.[140] The Hōjō and the Ashikaga rulers (1199-1333; 1336-1573) issued many codes for individual Zen monasteries.[141] This practice was already current in China from the 5th century onwards: the *sengzhi* 僧制 (Sangha regulations) were attempts by the secular authorities to regulate the monk-community, in particular with the aim to control monk-ordinations, thereby countering tax-evasion.[142] Whether the *sengzhi*'s Tibetan counterparts had the same function hundreds of years later is something that is briefly discussed elsewhere in this study.

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[132] Welch, 1967: vi.
[133] ibid.: 105-7.
[134] Dōgen, Leighton, and Okumura, 1996: 21-3.
[135] Foulk, 2006: 140.
[136] Collcutt, 1983: 130.
[137] ibid.: 152.
[138] ibid.: 149-65.
[139] Translated by Piggott, 1987: 267-73.
[140] Augustine, 2005: 60-2.
[141] Collcutt, 1981: 165, 6.
[142] Foulk, 2004: 276, 290.

In Korea, monastic regulations written specifically for local monasteries appear rare. In the Sŏn monasteries monks studied a basic handbook called the *Admonitions to Beginners* (*ch'obalsim chagyŏng mun*), a collection of three works. This book serves to inform monks on basic monastic rules and the right way of behaving in a monastic environment.[143] One work included in the collection, by Chinul (1158-1210), is called *Admonitions to Neophytes* (*kye ch'osim hagin mun*).[144] The *Admonitions to Beginners* does not seem to serve as a manual for monastic organization, but functions more as a manual for individual monks. It is one of the most commonly read and studied works among Korean Sŏn monks.[145]

The absence of guidelines for monastic governance may be explained by the intimate relationship between the monastic community and the state. In the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392), a Sangha registry was instated which functioned as mediator between temples and state-officials, modeled after that in China, albeit without the anti-Buddhist undertone. This system may have caused the Korean monkhood to lose its self-rule,[146] which then accounts for the lack of monastic guidelines which are often an expression of autonomy, be it political or religious, or both. However, similar information to that which we find in the monastic codes of other Buddhist countries is contained in prohibition orders (*kŭmnyŏng*) and the chapters on law in the History of Koryŏ (*Koryŏsa*), which were promulgated by the secular authorities. In these works one can find rules on monastic behavior that occasionally correspond to the contents of the Vinaya.[147]

bCa' yig and the Vinaya

The question arises how the rules as laid down in the Vinaya and those contained in the monastic codes relate to each other. Some see the monastic guidelines as additions to the existing Vinaya code[148] or clarifications and abridged versions of it. Ellingson suggests for example that the bca' yig were (and still are) seen as necessary because certain rules in the Vinaya were believed to require clarification.[149] He writes:

> [t]he bca' yig condense the details of the Vinaya into basic principles of communal life and government, and articulate soteriological concepts into specific guidelines for the conduct of religious communities.[150]

Others view this type of work as presenting the practical message of the Vinaya in a more accessible way,[151] as the Vinaya texts themselves were often – not only conceptually, but often even physically – inaccessible. In China, the canonical Vinaya was initially not translated, and the Vinaya texts were often not kept in the monasteries.[152] In Tibet those who wished to study the monastic discipline as a subject of formal study were required to be *bhikṣu*s.[153] Furthermore, in the monastic

[143] Buswell, 1992: 80.
[144] Translated in Buswell, 2012.
[145] Buswell, 1992: 101.
[146] Vermeersch, 2008: 183-237.
[147] ibid.: 161.
[148] e.g. Seneviratna, 2000: 187.
[149] Ellingson, 1990: 209.
[150] ibid.: 210.
[151] Blackburn, 1999: 286.
[152] ibid.
[153] Cabezón, 2004: 6. This rule was not a Tibetan invention: study by non- *bhikṣu*s was prohibited in the Vinaya texts themselves.

educational curriculum of the Gelug school, the Vinaya was a topic only studied for the last four years of the scholastic training that took at least sixteen years.[154] Moreover, the canonical Vinaya texts themselves were not studied in any of the Tibetan monastic educational systems. The main focus lay instead on Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* (*'Dul ba'i mdo rtsa ba*), a summary of the rules found in the Vinaya.[155] Despite the fact that the Vinaya was an integral part of the monastic curriculum, extensive knowledge of the contents was not a requirement for one's scholastic progress.[156] The number of studying monks in traditional Tibet was relatively small; the vast majority of monks therefore *never* studied Vinayic texts in any detail; all their awareness of monastic regulations and guidance came through oral instruction and the *bca' yig*. Monastic life was thus directly regulated more by local monastic guidelines than by the Vinaya.[157]

It is thus plausible that, at least in Tibet, exactly because they usually addressed *all* monks who inhabited a monastery, the monastic guidelines were *not* mere appendices to Vinayic texts. As noted above, the bca' yig were seen as more comprehensive than secular law codes, and – perhaps in a similar way – they are seen to function as a way to uphold not just the *prātimokṣa*, but all the vows, which includes more than just Vinayic matters. A contemporary work on Pelyul (dPal yul) monastery, formulates this thought in the following way:

> Furthermore, the internal rules (*bca' khrims*) of the monastery are laid down as a foundation, which is not going against the duties and prohibitions of the three: *prātimokṣa*, bodhisattva and tantra [vows] as well as the local and religious customs.[158]

Another way in which the monastic guidelines can be said to be more 'inclusive' than the Vinaya is that although the bca' yig usually overtly address only the Sangha, they demonstrate that lay-people – both monastery-employees and lay-devotees – were often part of the 'jurisdiction' of the monastic institution. In Tibet, for example, hunting on monastic property was forbidden and a *bca' yig* by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama states that hunters who were caught were to be made to leave their weapons in the protectors' chapel (*mgon khang*) and promise not to re-offend.[159] This regulation thus addresses the behaviour of those outside of the monastic community, something that does not occur in the Vinaya itself.

In the case of Tibetan monasteries, a need was felt to supplement the general discipline with more specific documents that focused on 'the practical aspects of daily life.'[160] Such documents have on the whole little to do with clarifying the Vinaya or the *prātimokṣa* vows, but contain practical instructions that seek to regulate monastic life. One set of monastic guidelines for dGa' ldan thub bstan rab rgyas gling, written

[154] Dreyfus, 2003: 114.
[155] D4117 (P5619). For an English summary and the Sanskrit of the first chapter of this text, see Bapat, 1982. A commentary to that text *'Dul ṭīk nyi ma'i 'od zer legs bshad lung rigs kyi rgya mtsho* by the 13th century Kadam master Kun mkhyen mtsho sna ba shes rab bzang po is used in all Tibetan Buddhist traditions.
[156] Dreyfus, 2003: 117.
[157] ibid.: 40.
[158] *dPal yul gdan rabs*: 360, 1: *gzhan yang dgon pa nang gi bca' khrims ni/ tshad gzhi so byang sngags gsum gyi gnang bkag dang mi 'gal zhing yul lugs dang chos lugs mi 'gal ba'i rmang gzhi'i thog bzhag pa ste*
[159] Huber, 2004: 135. For more on monastic execution of justice see Chapter 8.
[160] Cabezón, 1997: 337.

by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1664, notes in its opening verses that the text contains the means to 'with the hook of establishing rules and morality (*bag yod)*, purely bring about liberation [that is] being disciplined (*dul ba'i rnam thar*).'[161] Here the author connects keeping to rules to spiritual progress, and inserts a play on words: *dul ba* (S. *vinīta*), meaning control, ease or being tame(d), is the end-result of *'dul ba*, the effort of taming, disciplining oneself, and the translation of the Sanskrit word *vinaya*. Even though the importance of keeping to certain rules is linked to one's religious practice, the monastic codes are neither necessarily clarifications or new standards, nor merely supplements to the Vinaya, but handbooks or guidelines.

According to the Pāli Vinaya, the first Buddhist Council decreed that the Sangha was not to alter Buddha's laws.[162] The notion that the Vinaya, and in particular the monks' vows, cannot and should not be modified, appears very much alive today. Many of the senior Tibetan monks I interviewed insisted that the rules for the monastery have no bearing on the rules contained in the Vinaya, because the monastic rules are flexible, whereas the Vinayic ones – which is to say, the *prātimokṣa* vows – are not.[163] This is echoed by the early Sri Lankan Sangha *sāsana*, which Seneviratna sees as a very liberal society, and whose rules were rather flexible: 'It allowed the monks to get together and decide for themselves what rules and regulations should be adopted.'[164] It is perhaps for that reason that one can see the Vinaya rules and the monastic guidelines as existing – at least in theory – alongside each other.

The literature containing local or specific monastic rules is never presented as a commentary to Vinaya material. Nonetheless, the authors of these works do tend to state that they write in accordance with the contents of the Vinaya, and they sometimes add that certain Vinaya-like works have been consulted. One such example is the bca' yig for Phabongkha hermitage (*Pha bong kha ri khrod*), written in the early 1800s. Towards the end of this work, the author Ye shes blo bzang bstan pa'i mgon po (1760-1810) states:

> In short, all manners of behaviour that have or have not been clarified in these monastic guidelines [have come about] by taking the *Vinayapiṭaka* as a witness, although there were some slight differentations that needed to be made due to the time and place here in this land of snow. However, this is not imprudently meddling so as to take control of the Dharma, but [in following] the early great and honourable scholar practitioners, in particular Tsongkhapa and his two main disciples.[165]

Here then the Vinaya, or rather the notion of the Vinaya, is used to reaffirm the authority of the rules given in this text.

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[161] *dGa' ldan thub bstan rab rgyas gling bca' yig*: 159: *bag yod khrims su bca' ba'i lcags kyu yis/ dul ba'i rnam thar gtsang byed 'di na 'o/*

[162] Bechert, 1970: 772.

[163] Personal communication, July 2012. However, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* clearly states that *individual* monks could not alter the *kriyākāraṃ*: communal rules could only be changed as a communal effort. See Schopen, 2007: 112.

[164] Seneviratna, 2000: 199.

[165] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 248: *mdor na bca' yig 'dir gsal ba dang ma gsal ba'i spyod lam mtha' dag 'dul ba'i sde snod dpang du gtsugs (btsugs) pa'i steng nas gangs ljongs 'dir yul dus kyi dbang gi phran bu'i khyad par 'byed dgos pa rnams kyang chos la dbang za ba'i gzu lum ral gcod ma yin par sngon gyi mkhas grub chen po tshad ldan dang khyad par rje yab sras kyi lung rig (rigs)gi (kyi) lam nas dpyad pa mdzad pa'i gnang bkag gi rjes su 'brangs te* [..]

While the Chan *Pure Rules*, for example, incorporated contemporary Chinese cultural values, they were also strongly influenced by Vinaya texts and other Vinayic literature.[166] It is also not uncommon for these types of works to cite the Vinaya to lend authority to their rules, or to incorporate well known Vinayic strands into the text. In the Tibetan context too, various bca' yig cite extensively from Vinayic works: others make no mention of them whatsoever. This may have to do with the intended audience of the bca' yig, which again could have varied, as well as with the expertise of the author. One informant, the disciplinarian Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, states that:

> The monastic guidelines generally speaking contain rules pertaining to the relations within the monastic community. If it is relevant, then the Vinaya is quoted in these works, as a support (*rgyab brten*). For example, if I were to say: 'hey, you are a monk, you should not drink alcohol,' then some monks will obey but others will simply say: 'well, why is that exactly?' At that time I can give a valid reason. I can then say that this is the word of the Buddha, and I can give the appropriate citation. That often makes quoting useful.[167]

It is not the case, however, that these monastic rulebooks were never in contradiction with rules found in the Vinaya-corpus. As mentioned above, the contents of the *katikāvata* sometimes did deviate from the canonical law and even directly contradicted it.[168] It is, however, rare for this type of literature to display an awareness of the possibility of a contradiction between Vinaya and monastic rules. The author of the *Chanyuan qinggui*, Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗賾 (? -1107), appears to have been aware that he was writing a set of rules different from or competing with the Vinaya. He solves this possible tension by pointing to precedent and by stressing that the rules he promulgated were aimed to further the good of the monastic community.[169]

To what extent then did monastic regulations silently 'overrule' Vinaya rules rather than merely existing alongside them? Schopen notes this process was indeed not always silent: 'Explicit instances of adaptation of monastic rule to local custom can be found in all vinayas.' He sees this preference to local values as a characteristic that also features in Indian *Dharmaśāstra* materials, where the accepted principle appears to have been that 'custom prevails over dharma.'[170] Further, if this overruling were a regular occurrence, which set of rules would hold final authority? By attempting to establish the relationship of Vinaya-works and the bca' yig, the place of Vinaya in Tibetan monasticism needs to be addressed.

As mentioned above, the Vinaya was a subject often only studied in the later years of one's monastic curriculum. This did not mean, however, that Tibetan authors did not encourage monks to study the Vinaya. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama emphasizes the importance of studying the Vinaya along with its commentaries, for without it one would 'become blind to correct behaviour.'[171] It is important to note that the relative lack of emphasis on the study of the Vinaya is not exclusively found in Tibetan Buddhist monasticism; it is equally a feature of the Theravāda tradition. Blackburn

[166] Yifa, 2005: 134.
[167] Personal communication Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[168] Bechert, 1970: 765.
[169] Foulk, 2004: 285.
[170] Schopen 1994b: 147.
[171] *bKra shis dga' ldan chos 'phel gling bca' yig*: 498: *dgag sgrub gnang ba'i bcas mtshams phra rags tshul 'dul ba lung sde bzhi'i gzhung 'grel mtha' dag la zhib par ma sbyangs na blos rnam par dpyod pa'i mig ldongs sar 'gyur bas*

writes that in medieval Sri Lanka a monk who had not yet become a *thera* was unlikely to ever encounter the Vinaya. She argues that instead certain sūtras were used to teach monks about monastic discipline.[172]

Even though it is impossible to determine the way in which all Buddhist monasteries in all traditions emended the rules for purely practical reasons, it is important to keep in mind that the Buddhist monastery is an institution that *was* (and still is) ultimately pragmatic. The monastic guidelines are witness to this pragmatism. They show the efforts made by the authors to regulate the monastic community and to negotiate its position within society. Thus, as Gene Smith notes:

> Monastic ordinances (bca' yig) represent a special type of Tibetan Buddhist literature. Although bca' yig have a close connection with the vinaya rules, the two are quite distinct. Monastic morality and individual conduct are the fundamental concerns of the vinaya literature, while institutional organization and the liturgical calendar are emphasized in bca' yig.[173]

One Single Genre? The Similarities and Differences between *bCa' yig*, *bCa' khrims*, *rTsa khrims*, *sGrig yig*, and *sGrig gzhi*

As shown above, monastic guidelines throughout the Buddhist world have various purposes. One can thus distinguish three subgenres among the monastic codes: 1) guidelines for multiple monasteries written by someone whose religious authority is acknowledged by those monasteries; 2) codes that are written for multiple or all monasteries of a particular region, encouraged or enforced by a political ruler; 3) rulebooks for individual monasteries that contain references to specific situations and local practices. Often it will prove difficult or impossible to distinguish the first two, an example being the Sikkim *bca' yig* in which the author has religious as well as political authority.[174] However, the majority of the extant Tibetan Buddhist monastic guidelines are for specific monasteries.

A plethora of terms exist for texts that in some way deal with the organisation of the monastery in Tibet. One finds *bca' yig*, *bca' khrims*, *rtsa khrims*, *bka' khrims*, *bca' sgrig*, *sgrig yig*, *sgrig gzhi*, and *tshogs gtam*, that all may contain rather similar information. What is then the difference, if any, between these words? How are they conceived of by the monastic traditions themselves? To a certain extent, the differences appear to derive from regional variations. In Nechung monastery (gNas chung), the monastic guidelines, first written in 1986, are called *nang khrims* (internal rules). The disciplinarian of that monastery makes a distinction between *nang khrims* and *bca' khrims*: *bca' khrims* are the rules, which are like those given by the Buddha in the Vinaya, while the *nang khrims* are specific rules for the monastery (*dgon pa*).[175] These are its own rules, which also 'serve to distinguish oneself from lay-people' (*khyim pa dang mi 'dra ba bzo ba*). He also mentioned that this particular text gets adjusted regularly. This task of updating the monastic rules is not just the job of the

[172] Blackburn, 1999: 281-309.
[173] Smith, 2001: 156.
[174] For this bca' yig see Jansen, 2014.
[175] On this distinction he said: 'The internal rules are created by human beings. This means that human beings can adjust them, but the Vinaya rules are made by the Buddha. If we as humans go and change those, it will be as though we put ourselves on the same level as the Buddha.' *dge 'dun gyi nang khrims mi yis bzos pa red/ byas tsang mi yis yang sgyur ba gtang thub kyi yod red/ 'dul ba'i bca' khrims de sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das kyis mdzad pa red/ 'dul ba de nga tsho mi yis sgyur ba gtang na nga tsho sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das dang mkhas chags gro byed kyi red/*

disciplinarian but happens on the managerial level. The 'steering committee' (*lhan rgyas*) revises the *nang khrims* together.[176] So far, just one late pre-modern Tibetan text that bears the title nang khrims has come to my attention. This text in fact has all the makings of a bca' yig, but is simply named differently.[177] I suspect that the majority of these texts – as most had no authorship and thus no prestige – have not survived the Cultural Revolution. Some author-less bca' yig have, however, been preserved. The *bCa' yig phyogs sgrig* contains a bca' yig from 1903 written by the 'office' (*yig tshang*) for Pelkhor chöde (dPal 'khor chos sde).[178] Another set of guidelines from 1900 suggests that the contents had been written by the office of the lama(s) and the community of monks.[179]

To the extent that monastic guidelines are comparable to any set of guidelines for a larger institution such as those of a university, they do not necessarily need an author. The rules are often compilations of existing and new rules and even rules taken from the guidelines of other institutions. The role of the author becomes pivotal not when it comes to the contents of the guidelines but with regard to the way the guidelines are to be received, perceived, and implemented. Authorship often equalled authority, but at times authorship also required authority. A monk who acted as the disciplinarian at Sera je (Se ra byes) in India, wrote a set of guidelines for his monastic college (*grwa tshang*), but 'when the rules were completed, many [monks] did not like them and for two nights, stones were pelted at my house, which is why those shutters had to be made. They did that twice in the night within a gap of about seven days.'[180]

As noted above, there is a relation between monastic guidelines and legal works. The most common understanding of *rtsa khrims* is (national) 'constitution'. There is at least one instance of the words bca' khrims and rtsa khrims being conflated, in all likelihood by the editors.[181] Cüppers' hypothesis is that the conceptual separation between secular or legal (*rtsa tshig, rtsa khrims*) and religious rules (*bca' yig, bca' tshig*) was one that initially did not exist, and developed later.[182] We do, however, have a text entitled *rtsa tshig* from 1820. This text clearly functions as a set of monastic guidelines, but is perhaps called a rtsa tshig only because it was a text issued by the then-regent of Tibet, Tshe smon gling pa ngag dbang 'jam dpal tshul khrims.[183] Taking into account the fluidity of the terms treated above, however, we might wonder whether this conceptual separation was ever really established.

Another prevalent concept to do with monastic guidelines is *sgrig gzhi*.[184] Modern monastic rulebooks sometimes bear this term in the title.[185] This is also a

[176] Personal communication with Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[177] Tshul khrims bzang po (1884- c.1957), *dByar gnas dge 'dun nang khrims*. In *gSung 'bum, vol. 8*: 655-66.
[178] *dPal 'khor chos sde bca' yig*: 413. This monastery is likely to be located in Gyantse (rGyal rtse).
[179] *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 412: *bla ma grwa tshogs spyi thog nas bris pa'i don bzhin bgyis/*
[180] Interview with Ngawang Choseng (no. 91), Tibetan Oral History Project, 2007: 38. This source unfortunately only gives the English translation, while the interview was conducted in Tibetan.
[181] The text in question is *rDo rje gdan 'bri gung byang chub gling gi rtsa khrims*. In: *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*, vol. 34. A mgon rin po che, ed. (Lhasa, 2004): 390-4. In the collected works by the author of this text sPyan snga grags pa byung gnas, the title is given as *rDo rje gdan 'bri gung byang chub gling gi bca' khrims*. In *gSung 'bum vol. 1* (Delhi: Drikung Kagyu Publications, 2002): 515-21.
[182] Cüppers, 2011.
[183] This text (*Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*) was written for the whole of Sera monastery.
[184] This term is more generally used to mean 'internal organization'. See for example *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 85. It appears that colloquially it is used to denote what may be written in full as *sgrig gzhi'i yi ge*: a written work on internal organization.

word used in the context of the oral communication of the monastic rules. One of my informants, in describing the process of entering the monastery, talked about how the *sgrig gzhi* of the monastery is explained to a new member by the disciplinarian.[186] The *sgrig gzhi* is also not a term that aims merely to regulate religious practitioners. There exists for example a secular work on the administrative organization of Tashi Lhunpo (bKra shis lhun po) called *De snga'i bla brang rgyal mtshan mthon pa'i srid 'dzin sgrig gzhi'i spyi'i gnas tshul*.[187]

In Ganden monastery there exists something called *sgrig yig* (rulebook). According to *Bod kyi dgon sde*, a contemporay work on Tibetan monasticism and Ganden in particular, it is possible that the *sgrig yig* – unlike the bca' yig – is available to all monks, and can be put up in the common hall or anywhere fitting, for all to read. There can be various kinds of sgrig yig for one and the same monastery. In Ganden it is the custom for the disciplinarian to explain the contents of the *sgrig yig* during the 'spring religious festival' (*dpyid chos chen mo*) and the 'autumn religious festival' (*ston chos chen mo*). The authors of the *Bod kyi dgon sde* see the difference of the contents of the bca' yig and the *sgrig yig* as slight: the latter is a sort of expansion (*zur bkod*) of what is said in the former.[188] Another variant to this spelling is *'grig yig*, as evidenced in *Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil gyi 'grig yig*, a work written in 1812, which contains guidelines for the calendrical (ritual) procedures at the monastery.[189] From the above it appears that the monastic guidelines were not available to everyone at all times. In order to understand what can be learned from the bca' yig, first we need to know about the way they were used.

The Accessibility and Practical Use of the bCa' yig

The bca' yig were often inaccessible not only to lay-people but also to ordinary monks. Although all monks in the Kirti monastery in India have access to the bca' yig, in the Kirti monastery in Amdo, the text used to be restricted to just the disciplinarian.[190] In Ganden, the bca' yig was kept by the disciplinarian or the monastery's head (*khri pa*) and it was not disclosed to others.[191] In some monasteries, this is still the case. The texts are oftentimes equally inaccessible to researchers. During my fieldwork, access to them for me was occasionally limited. Of the fifteen monasteries I visited, three did not make use of a specific set of guidelines. However, at seven of the monasteries the bca' yig were not public: only the disciplinarian had access to the text. In three cases, I was able to look at or photograph the texts, but in the other four instances I was told they were not for me to see. Although this is just a small sample of the number of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, it appears no coincidence that all these seven monasteries where the bca' yig were in some way restricted are Gelug.[192]

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[185] e.g. *'Phags yul 'bri gung bka' brgyud gtsug lag slob gnyer khang gi khungs gtogs slob phrug rnams kyi blang dor sgrig gzhi* (Dehradun, Drikung Kagyu Institute, n.d.). This small booklet is handed out to the studying monks and nuns enrolled in the three Drigung monastic branches in the Dehradun area. It contains user-friendly bullet-pointed rules, a table of contents, and diagrams.

[186] Personal communication with Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, Dharamsala, August 2012.

[187] Jagou, 2004: 87.

[188] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 97, 8.

[189] *Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil gyi 'grig yig*, by 'Jigs med dam chos and dKon mchog rgyal mtshan.

[190] Personal communication with Re mdo sengge, Dharamsala, July 2012.

[191] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 92.

[192] This finding accords with that of Brenton Sullivan, who researches the history of Gelug monasteries in Amdo. He told me it was often difficult, if not impossible, to gain access to the bca' yig. Personal communication, Taipei, June 2011.

I was given different reasons for why these works are kept hidden by different informants. Re mdo sengge hypothesizes that the reason why the bca' yig is not public is 'because it concerns the monastery's rules, the monks' rules. It does not concern the general populace. It is also kept away because it is considered precious (*rtsa chen po*).'[193] In a similar vein, another informant, who would not let me copy the bca' yig, said that the bca' yig is not for everyone to see and that one is not meant to show it to lay-people. He justified this by saying that it is precious (*rtsa chen po*), and that if one has something precious one would wants to protect it. But because the bca' yig in question had already been published in the author's collected works he did allow me to have a brief look at it. Other Gelug monks I asked simply claimed they did not know why they were not public. The disciplinarian of Nechung monastery who used to be a monk at Drepung ('Bras spungs) in Tibet, had also heard that bca' yig-s did not use to be public works. They were considered special and were well-guarded:

> There was a very special work there called '*bCa' yig chen mo*', written by the Fifth Dalai Lama. This work could only be kept by the overarching disciplinarian (*tshogs chen zhal ngo*). During the Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*) the Drepung monastic guidelines would be 'invited' (*gdan 'dren zhu ba*) to Lhasa. The *zhal ngo* would carry the text, accompanied by the disciplinarian's assistants (*chab ril*) and *phagdampa*,[194] about twenty people in total. According to oral lore this text could fly. When transported to Lhasa, the bca' yig would not go underneath the stūpa which is between the Potala and this one hill, it would fly up and then around the Potala and land back into the *zhal ngo*'s hands. For twenty-one days, during the festival, everyone would abide by the rules of the Great Prayer Festival.[195] On the way back the bca' yig would again fly up. This is an anecdote (*gsung rgyud*), I have of course not seen this myself. I was told that before 1959 the original of this bca' yig was kept safe at the monastery and that a copy of it would be used for general purpose. All the versions of the bca' yig must have been destroyed: when I became a monk at Drepung there was no bca' yig there at all.[196]

Although none of the informants stated it explicitly, there seems to be a sacred (perhaps even a magical) element to the bca' yig. This may also be what – at least in the Gelug monasteries – set bca' yig apart from the *sgrig gzhi*. We can perhaps see a parallel with the way the Vinaya was restricted to lay-people as well: 'Vinaya texts were not meant for public consumption, but were strictly - *very* strictly - in-house documents'.[197] A similar notion also seems to have been upheld in Sri Lanka, as there is a *katikāvata* that stipulates that the disputes settled within the monastery should not be made known to outsiders, and that members of one monastery should not meddle in disputes of other monasteries.[198] However, none of my informants drew a

[193]Personal communication with Re mdo sengge, Dharamsala, July 2012. The idiom '*rtsa chen po*' does not merely refer to something rare or expensive, but has an added connotation of sacrality.
[194] This must refer to the *chab gdams pa*, the deputy of the overarching disciplinarian. See Dagyab, 2009: 219. I may have misheard this term, or the informant may have misremembered it.
[195] The whole city of Lhasa would be under the rule of Drepung monastery during that festival. The overarching disciplinarian would have final authority over the population of monks and lay-people at that time. For an eyewitness account see Bell, 1998 [1948]: 58.
[196] Personal communication with Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, Dharamsala, August 2012.
[197] Schopen, 2010a: 108.
[198] Wickremasinghe, 1928: 281.

comparison with the Vinaya, or remarked that the monastic disputes bca' yig may convey are not for lay-people to peruse.

Importantly, it should be noted that the Gelug school seems to represent the exception here, rather than the rule. As far as I am aware, none of the other schools impose explicit restrictions on access to the bca' yig. Pelyul monastery (Nyingma) in Kham has its rules posted above the entrance to the assembly hall (*'du khang*). All monks were meant to memorize this bca' yig for the assembly hall (*bCa' yig mi chog brgyad cu*), which is written in verse. It is recited at all assemblies.[199] Hemis monastery belonging to the Drugpa Kagyü school (*'Brug pa bka' brgyud*) in Ladakh also has a (more recent) bca' yig above the entrance of the assembly hall. One of my informants reported hearing that many bca' yig in Tibet used to be written on the walls of the assembly hall. Because all monks had to go there regularly, they would be reminded of the rules.[200]

Whether they were public or not, most monasteries had one or more bca' yig. The mere presence of guidelines, however, does not mean that they were followed to the letter. For example, Blo bzang don grub of Spituk monastery said that only when things go wrong does the disciplinarian look at the text and use it to clarify the rules of the monastery. This relatively small Ladakhi monastery does not, however, hold a ceremony of reading out the bca' yig.[201] Sometimes the opposite is true and then the bca' yig has a purely ceremonial purpose, even though its contents are viewed as unusable. This is the case in Tshe mchog gling, India, where a bca' yig written by Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1713-1793) is read out, but only during ceremonies. Practical additions have been written for the day-to-day management of the monastery.[202] It is likely that the rules were only regularly consulted in unusual situations, or when there was a need to support a decision with a (religious) textual authority. However, again, this appears to be more common in the Gelug monasteries than in the others.

Some parallels to this use of rules as tokens of authority can be found in the treatment of secular law in Tibet. According to Schuh, despite the fact that there were formal secular laws in place, so far there is little evidence that they were ever applied in practice.[203] Pirie writes that the legal code in its written form had a symbolic function and that it was only used to support the authority of the person charged with mediating two parties, not for its contents.[204] The notion of a written work that has as its main function the empowerment of the authority that has access to the work seems a pervasive one in Tibetan (and more generally, Buddhist) culture. Various sources show that the bca' yig was used as a tool to lend authority to figures in some kind of official position, in most cases this was the position of disciplinarian.

Gutschow writes that every year at the Gelug Karsha monastery in Zangskar a new disciplinarian is appointed. The accompanying ceremony is held on the twenty-fifth of the tenth month: (*dGa' ldan lnga mchod*), the day on which the birth of Tsongkhapa is commemorated. The new disciplinarian arrives at the monastery riding a horse, and is welcomed 'like a new bride,' i.e. he is presented with ceremonial scarves (*kha btags*) and receives a variety of gifts. He then reads out the bca' yig to the congregation.[205] Even though Gutschow does not make it clear, it is likely that this

[199] Personal communication with monks at Pelyul, Kandze prefecture, March 2011.
[200] Personal communication with Thub bstan yar 'phel, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[201] Personal communication with Blo bzang don grub, Spituk, August 2012.
[202] Personal communication with bsTan 'dzin 'brug sgra, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[203] See Schuh, 1984: 291-311.
[204] Pirie, 2010: 214.
[205] Gutschow, 2004: 63. The bca' yig in question is reportedly written by the 15th century Gelug master Shes rab bzang po and his disciple Slob dpon mdo sde rin chen.

was a public event and that therefore not just monks but also lay-people would be present. Excerpts of a bca' yig for Amdo's Labrang (Bla brang) monastery written by the second 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa were indeed read out publicly to lay people and monks alike. Nietupski presumes that its function was 'a formal recognition of authority'.[206] This analysis is possibly incomplete. Assuming that it was the case that reading parts of the bca' yig out to an audience of lay-people, as well as monks, was intentional, I think that it served, on the one hand, to set a standard for the monks to live by and, on the other hand, to give the lay-people an idea of how monks can be expected to behave. This in turn would presumably inspire admiration for the monks' adherence to the rules. This admiration, paired with the general concept that donations given to worthy receivers generate more merit, would reinforce the standing religious and economic relations of the lay-people and the monks. In other words, making the monastery's rules known to the lay community would increase social control, for lay-people perceive themselves to have a stake in the correct behaviour of the monks they support – rituals and the like are known to be less effective when performed by monks with poor ethical discipline, and the amount of merit gained by making a donation is dependent on the religious standing of the receiver.[207] That the reputation of the monks with the lay-community is immensely important is corroborated by many of the bca' yig, as will become apparent in the following chapters. In fact, it is perhaps *the* most common line of reasoning for en- or discouraging certain types of behaviour among monks.[208]

As mentioned above, in some monasteries the bca' yig were (and are) public, in others the monastic guidelines were only ever to be consulted by the disciplinarians and abbots. The latter attitude appears to be a Gelug approach, although we have seen that several Gelug institutions had their bca' yig read out in public. This does not mean that all people in effect understood what was read out or that they had hands-on access to the actual texts. Although there is no direct evidence to support this, as the traditional way in which the individual bca' yig were employed is in many cases unknown or altogether lost, I suspect that the contents of the bca' yig differ according to whether they were intended to be for public or private use. Some works explicitly state that the intended audience are the monk-officials (*las sne*),[209] others are less explicit in this.

Close reading of the texts is a way to infer their intended audience: the voice of a bca' yig can show the extent of its 'insiders' language'. This also complicates understanding the contents of the bca' yig at certain points, for they make references to things and situations only known by monks of that monastery at that particular time. It is then also possible to get an idea of the intended audience of specific monastic guidelines. For example, when a bca' yig contains many more technical terms derived from the Vinaya, it seems likely that it was meant for a *specialist* audience (i.e. the disciplinarian, abbot or other monastic official), when such terms are largely absent then the text probably was directed to the general populace of monks. Certain linguistic aspects also point to the performatory use of some bca' yig: some of these monastic guidelines most certainly were written to be read out. One of these, the early 20th century bca' yig for Pelyul darthang (dPal yul dar thang)

[206] Nietupski, 2011: 64.
[207] Silk, 2003: 177.
[208] See Chapter 7 for more on the relationship between lay-people and monks.
[209] e.g. *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 182.

monastery in Golog (mGo log), Amdo, actually states that the 'rulebook needed to be recited once every month.'[210]

The Orality of the bCa' yig

Many of the bca' yig begin with '*Oṃ svasti*' or '*Oṃ bde legs su gyur cig*, 'may all be well'. It is possible that texts that begin with those words were (originally) intended to be read out aloud, as this appears to be a way of greeting the audience.[211] The presence of this phrase then may be an indication that the text was not for mere personal reference. Some of the larger bca' yig such as those for Tashi Lhunpo (*bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*) and Drepung (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*), contain a long introduction consisting of the history of Tibet, Buddhism in Tibet and the monastery in particular. This way of relating history is a common feature of Tibetan oral literature, which can be found in monastic as well as in non-monastic contexts.[212] Again, this may be another indication of the text being written for a (ritual) performance.

Cabezón, in describing the bca' yig of Sera je monastery, mentions that this text called the Great Exhortation (*tshogs gtam chen mo*) is the transcription of an oral text written down only in 1991[213] and it indeed directly addresses the audience.[214] This text is traditionally read out once a year to the assembly of monks at the start of the 'summer doctrinal session' (**dbyar kha'i chos thog*) by the disciplinarian.[215] It is not generally available to the monks.[216] Even though the monastic guidelines are now written down, when the *tshogs gtam chen mo* is performed, the disciplinarian is still at liberty to add certain things, such as proverbs (*gtam dpe*). Certain monks who have misbehaved particularly badly may even be named and shamed at such an occasion.[217] Cech notes that the Bon bca' yig for Menri (sMan ri) monastery was to be read out once a year by the steward (*gnyer pa*), but does not provide any details on its general availability.[218]

Reading out the bca' yig was a regular occurrence, but not in all monasteries. In Kirti monastery in Tibet the bca' yig is still read out every year by the overarching disciplinarian. Re mdo sengge describes it as a nice occasion: someone holds out the scroll and it is slowly unrolled as the *zhal ngo* reads. The reading out of it does not sound like ordinary prayers (*kha 'don*) or reciting other texts, since there is a specific 'melody' (*dbyangs*) to it. In general Kirti monastery has eight doctrinal sessions (*chos thog*), two per season of the year. The bca' yig is read during one of those sessions but my informant does not remember which one. At that time all the monks come together, but no lay-people are present. The *zhal ngo* reads out the bca' yig and

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[210] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 199: *zla re bzhin sgrigs yig 'di tshar re bton*

[211] The oral literature of Tibetan wedding recitations also usually start with either of these 'greetings'. See Jansen, 2010. In certain narratives in the Vinaya the greeting of the Brahmin usually is 'svasti svasti'. See Schopen, 2000b: 159, n. V.5.

[212] Examples of these orally transmitted histories can be found in Jackson, 1984. Also see Jansen, 2010: 59-62.

[213] Cabezón, 1997: 337-8. The book is actually called *Byang chub lam rim che mo dang 'brel ba'i ser byas mkhan snyan grwa tshang gi bca' khrims che mo* (Bylakuppe, Ser jhe Printing Press, 1991), it contains the Great Exhortation (5-108), as well as the ritual calendar for the debate ground (*grwa tshang gi chos ra'i mdzad rim*) (109-18).

[214] e.g. ibid.: 108: *khyod gsan pa po rnams nas gsan dgongs rnam par dag pa'i sgo nas* [..].

[215] Cabezón, 1997: 339.

[216] A thousand copies of this text were printed, against a population in excess of 3500 monks. Source: http://www.serajeymonastery.org/history/190-in-exile- (viewed 02-04-2013).

[217] Personal communication with dGe bshes Ngag dbang bzod pa, Amersfoort, February 2012.

[218] Cech, 1988: 71.

explains the commentary (*'grel pa*) to the bca' yig. If he is well-educated then he also adds his own citations (*lung drangs pa*), which are usually from the Vinaya.[219] Thus even in the cases that these bca' yig are read out in public, in a ritual context, they can both be adapted as well as explained. Again, it appears that the performatory aspect of the bca' yig is much stronger in the Gelug school than elsewhere. However, there is no uniformity among the Gelug monasteries, as to at what occasion, by whom and how often the text is 'performed'. In Gyütö (rGyud stod) monastery in India it is recited on average once every three years, on an 'auspicious date' (*tshes bzang*) by the *bla ma dbu mdzad*.[220] In other monasteries it is recited only when the conduct of the monks is found wanting.

Nonetheless, the Tibetan monastic guidelines do not tend to be concerned with the minute details of the life of a monastic inmate. Instead they largely deal with the upkeep of an institution, the organization of the monks, and the monastery's reputation among patrons and direct neighbours. This is quite unlike the monastic regulations found in China and Japan, in which all mundane daily tasks are painstakingly prescribed. How then, did Tibetan monks learn how to behave, and understand what was expected of them? From the interviews I have conducted, it has become clear that much of the information a new monk needed to know was passed on orally. A young monk would be assigned a 'teacher',[221] who would apparently be responsible for the monk's well-being but also ultimately for his financial situation.[222] It appears then that the day-to-day activities of ordinary monks were fairly strictly regulated, despite the fact that detailed descriptions of these activities did not tend to get written down. Geshe Lhundup Sopa notes that everyday matters would be solved by the relevant administrators according to an oral tradition of rules.[223] This is acknowledged in the 1682 bca' yig for Drepung (*'Bras spungs bca' yig*):

> The *dge bsnyen*, *dge tshul*, *dge slong* need to carefully examine the instructions on what to take up and what to abandon that is part of their respective vows, and those of lower intelligence can rely on the 'master of the place' (*gnas kyi slob dpon*)[224] and make an effort to listen to and heed the instructions according to the way the elders have explained them.[225]

[219] Personal communication with Re mdo sengge, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[220] Personal communication with Ngag dbang sangs rgyas, Dharamsala, August 2012.
[221] In Gyütö monastery, this position of an older monk who responsible for a new monk is called *khrid mkhan dge rgan* (the accompanying teacher). In other monasteries the person who would be in charge of teaching the new monk how to behave could be the *shag dge rgan* (the living-quarter's teacher) or the *kham tshan dge rgan* (the regional house's teacher).
[222] In fact, Das reports that in Tashi Lhunpo in the late 19th century, if a new novice monk would misbehave and be turned out, his 'tutor' would receive 'ten stripes of the cane' and needed to pay 'a fine of 40 lbs of butter within three days'. See Das, 1965 [1893]: 7.
[223] Ellingson, 1990: 210. This is reiterated by Thub bstan yar 'phel who said that the rules are mainly communicated orally (*ngag rgyun*). Personal communication, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[224] This is a technical Vinaya term. It appears to refer to someone who is concerned with the maintenance of celibacy. *Vinayasūtravyākhyāna* (D4121): 162a: *gnas kyi slob dpon la ma gus na gnas med pas tshangs pa mtshungs par spyod pa dang / chos dang zang zing gi longs spyod du med pa'i phyir sdom pa thams cad 'jig pa'i phyogs so/* If you do not respect the master of the place, then because you will not have a place, this will contribute to the destruction of celibacy and all your vows, due to then not having access to both Dharma and material goods.
[225] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 316: *dge bsnyen/ dge tshul/ dge slong la sogs pa rnams rang rang gi sdom pa'i ngo skal gyi spang blang phra rags bslab bya che chung tshor zhib mor blta zhing/ blo dman rnams kyis kyang gnas kyi slob dpon bsten pa dang bslab pa rgan pas ji ltar zer ba bzhin bslab byar nyan bsrung la 'bad pa dang/*

The bca' yig then seem to be connected both to rules that had previously just been communicated orally as well as to 'edicts' promulgated by kings or high lamas. A set of monastic guidelines written some time around 1800 by Ye shes blo bzang bstan pa'i mgon po (1760-1810) in fact state that previously rules for the community of monks at the Phabongkha place of practice (*bsgrub gnas*) had solely been communicated orally (*ngag rgyun tsam*) and that this text was the first to commit these rules to writing. The author furthermore promises to promulgate the rules clearly, possibly suggesting that the oral transmission may have caused certain misunderstandings.[226]

The Monastic Guidelines and Issues of Social Justice

The Tibetan monastery is often described as a micro-cosmos, in which the inhabitants follow their own rules, according to their own standards, without being much concerned with externalities such as politics, economics or even the local population. This description is not entirely accurate largely because there was (and is) such a great variety of monastery-types. We are aware that there were many monasteries that did have a great deal of independence and were largely self-governing bodies that had economic, political and judicial power within their respective domains. For this reason it is important to consider the internal structure of the monastery in order to unravel concepts of all matters concerning social justice, such as class, social and economic mobility, health-care, and education. The bca' yig can perhaps uniquely inform us on the make-up of the monastery, its internal hierarchy and the (perceived) roles, rights, duties and obligations of the monks within the institution.

The modern Tibetan work *Bod kyi dgon sde* states that bca' yig, *sgrig gzhi* and the like were used to decide on legal matters (*gyod don*) by the disciplinarian.[227] To a certain extent, these types of documents were works that could be consulted and possibly cited in justification of their rulings, by those tasked with maintaining the discipline in the monastery. There are indications that both jural issues of an internal nature (i.e. monks' behaviour) and of an external nature (i.e. the behaviour of non-monks on monastery grounds) feature in these texts. Huber notes that the 15th century bca' yig of rGyal rtse chos sde (also known as dPal 'khor chos sde) states that non-monastics, such as hunters and traders, would be fined when found to have killed animals on the monastic territory: the punishment was to offer a communal tea service (*mang ja*) to the monks. The residents of the monastery and its retreat-houses were responsible for overseeing the protection of life in the area.[228]

This, in addition to the descriptions of the use of the bca' yig mentioned earlier, suggests that as in some cases lay-people were directly affected (and restricted) by the rules laid out in the monastic guidelines it is probable that they would have been made aware of their contents. This communication would in all likelihood have been oral. It is not likely that written guidelines for lay-people who moved within monastic grounds were expressly composed, although this possibility cannot be dismissed entirely. As in the contemporary example from Amdo mentioned earlier, it is possible that a headman whose village was part of a monastic estate would make sure that his villagers knew the rules of the land. Furthermore, one can

[226] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 237: [..] *bsgrub gnas 'di nyid du bzhugs pa'i dge 'dun rnams nas nyams bzhes gnang rgyu'i sgrigs lam kun spyod kyi rim pa rnams snga phan sngon gyi ngag rgyun tsam las bca' yig tu 'khod pa mi 'dug stabs/ 'di lo bca' yig tshig gsal bkod pa'i sgrigs lam gyi rim pa gsar du yi ger 'god pa la*[..]

[227] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 108.

[228] Huber, 2004: 134.

assume that, because monasteries in many areas had considerable power, the way that monks behaved had an influence on the inhabitants of those areas. The mere fact that it was deemed necessary to formulate rules in particular situations tells us something about the interaction between monks and lay-people. These rules and regulations thus inform on the value certain people attached to specific societal phenomena. Sandel argues that, in asserting the levels and notions of social justice, it is important to ask how 'the things we prize – income and wealth, duties and rights, powers and opportunities, offices and honours' are distributed. He then states that: 'Ideas of justice get filtered out when there is disagreement, public debate.'[229] While 'public debate' seems never to have been an influential aspect of Tibetan society, the bca' yig contain references, albeit unsystematic and casual ones, to matters that concern us here: those pertaining to social justice and perceptions thereof.

Above I have alluded to how the contents of bca' yig may vary greatly from one text to another. Some explicitly contain references to things that have actually happened, other bca' yig are concerned with specific organizational matters. A bca' yig for the Mongolian Gelug monastery Chos sde chos dbyings 'od gsel gling, deals merely with the set-up of formalized debate-sessions at certain periods in the summer. It speaks of the times at which the debates are to take place, between which classes, and so on. It even comments on what the correct answers to give during a debate are. Such a bca' yig is thus limited to one very specific aspect of monastic organization and is of little use to us here.[230]

Other bca' yig give instructions that are more 'spiritually' oriented rather than practical guidelines. The earlier mentioned *bCa' yig mi chog brgyad cu* is a case in point. Written in 1918 by dPal chen 'dus pa rtsal (1887-1932), the head of Pelyul monastery in Kham, it contains, as the title suggests, eighty 'prohibitions' written for the monks of Pelyul. Some of these are common in other bca' yig and may be interpreted as having some direct practical purpose. Prohibition number fourteen, for example, states that one is not allowed to ever wear sleeves and lay-people's attire, as one's robes are the base for the Vinaya.'[231] Other prohibitions are clearly less easy to obey, for this bca' yig regularly forbids certain mental activity, such as the last two prohibitions of the text: 'It is not allowed to ever forget the instructions of one's guru, [be it during] birth, death or the intermediate state. It is not allowed to forget the instructions for dying at the time of death.'[232]

Clearly then, not all bca' yig were contemporary reactions to the situation of the monastery on the ground. The eighty prohibitions for Pelyul monks should thus be seen as guidelines of a more spiritual nature. They are instructive when one is concerned with the conduct of the 'ideal monk'. For the current purpose, however, these rules are of little use. It is important to appreciate that there are several reasons for listing rules in the Buddhist context. With regard to Indian monastic Buddhism, Silk has noted that 'it is one of the conceits of the literature of the Buddhist monastic codes, the Vinayas, that they record case law.'[233] Likewise, in the Tibetan case we need to be careful not to reify the stipulations that appear in the bca' yig. For just as in the case of Indic Vinaya, in which the 'world of monastic law does not appear to be a

[229] Sandel, 2009: 19.
[230] *Chos sde chos dbyings 'od gsal gling bca' yig*. This text was written by Blo bzang rta mgrin (1867-1937). The location of this monastery is unknown to me.
[231] *dPal yul gdan rabs*: 402: *ser gos dang gzan sham gyon pa 'dul ba'i gzhi yin pas nam yang phu 'dung dang skya chas mi chog/*
[232] ibid.: 405: *79 bla ma'i gdams ngag skye 'chi bar do nam yang brjed mi chog/ 80 'chi ka'i gdams ngag 'chi dus su brjed mi chog/*
[233] Silk, 2007: 277.

simple one of fables and fiction or half remembered 'historical' accounts, but a complex one of carefully constructed 'cases' in which concerns of power, access and economics were being or had been negotiated,'[234] the Tibetan monastic guidelines cannot simply be read as reactions to problems. At the risk of stating the obvious, I here identify some possible motivations for writing the rules. Keeping these in mind allows us to better distinguish different types of rules. These possible motivations are:

1) To formally address actual problems and misconduct
2) To settle organizational matters
3) To exhaust all possible similar occurrences
4) To give spiritual guidance

In other words, monastic rules can be firmly based on reality or on hypothetical situations, or on a combination of both. In my treatment of the bca' yig and their suitability as a source of information on social justice in and around Tibetan monasteries, I distinguish those texts and sections of texts that are clearly rooted in on the ground realities from those that mainly sketch an ideal image of the monk and the monastery. Nonetheless, separating utopian rules from real ones is not always easily achieved. It is also not always necessary, in particular when it is the goal to examine monastic *attitudes* towards issues of social justice, as visions of an ideal society are then just as relevant as the tackling of actual problems in the monastery. When one takes a closer look at the bca' yig texts as a genre, the underlying reasons authors may have had to write a text can be given as follows:

1) The monastery had just been established
2) A new building or department had been built at the monastery
3) The monastery had been taken over by another religious school
4) The monastery had sided with a losing political party and the winning party saw the need to reform
5) A change in the numbers of monks had occurred (drastic increase or decrease)
6) The monastery had started a new curriculum
7) A powerful religious (and political) figure sought to establish (strategic and moral) authority over the monastery in question
8) Misconduct of the monks was reported
9) The monks' ritual practices had become 'adulterated'
10) The existing regulations were seen to have become archaic, irrelevant, redundant, or deficient
11) The economic situation of the monastery had changed

Ortner notes that when a particular nunnery was newly founded, Lama Gulu of Tengpoche (sTeng po che) monastery was asked to write a bca' yig 'to construct the temple for the nunnery.'[235] With this document the nuns went from village to village to raise funds to actually build the place. The building was begun in 1925 and completed in 1928. If the composition of a bca' yig before the institution was actually set up was something that occurred more regularly elsewhere this adds another possible purpose to the monastic guidelines, namely as an official document with which one could raise funds to build or rebuild a religious institution.

[234] Schopen, 1994a: 60.
[235] Ortner, 1989: 171.

In order to understand which rulings are actual reactions to current situations or problems faced by the institution, it is helpful to read several bca' yig written for the same monastery. This is of course the ideal situation, but in many cases, we do not have more than one bca' yig. When analyzing a bca' yig, in particular when one is looking for rulings that directly address on the ground issues, one needs – in addition to being aware of the possibility that certain rules and phrases were derived from Vinayic texts – also to be conscious of the fact that certain rules and expressions are reiterations of (and in a sense tributes to) bca' yig that were written by the author's predecessors. The close reading of bca' yig composed for one monastery at different times reveals a certain level of (textual) continuity but also the changes a monastic community has gone through. These changes are highlighted by new rulings and remarks on the contemporary status of the monastery.

Generally speaking it is safe to say that the vast majority of extant bca' yig do address contemporary monastic issues in a pragmatic manner. The texts themselves often explicitly state their local and contemporary purpose. An example is the bca' yig written in 1909 for all Sikkimese monasteries, in which it states that it is a work in accordance with all the monasteries' own rules, the local customs, [people's] dispositions, capacities and intentions.[236] What we can then see is that when structural changes took place in a particular monastery (e.g. it changed affiliation or it had been rebuilt after it had been destroyed), the bca' yig of that monastery was seen to be in need of revision or replacement. This is not unlike the notion prevalent among the authors of the *katikāvata*s: some of these Sri Lankan monastic codes state that they were renewed in accordance with the changing times.[237] The contemporary nature of most of these works means that they can provide a great deal of information with regard to monastic life and the internal hierarchy of the monastery in general.

It is imperative, however, also to stress the provisional character of these works. The monastic guidelines do not claim to have the final mandate on how the monastery should be run and how monks are to conduct themselves. Many of the bca' yig express this provisional nature, and this is exactly the reason why a certain monastery can have a number of bca' yig written for it: the later harking back to, but also 'overwriting', the earlier ones. Needless to say, the contents of the bca' yig are prescriptive and normative and it would be naïve to assume that rules in the monastery were followed to the letter, but when one wants to study the way the monastic institution and its role in society was conceived of, they are certainly valuable sources. In the context of the pre-modern Tibetan society, it appears that the point where 'philosophy touches social policy'[238] can be found in the monastic guidelines.

[236] *'Bras ljongs bca' yig*: 269: *'bras khul gyi dgon sde che phra tshang ma nas sgrigs lam rnam gzhag rnams yul lugs khams dbang bsam pa dang bstun*.
[237] Ratnapala, 1971: 164.
[238] Minogue, 2005 [1998]: 262, 3.

3. HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL FRAMEWORKS OF MONASTIC ORGANIZATION IN TIBET

Introduction

The Church, yes, She must worry for She is destined not to die. Solace is implicit in Her desperation. Don't you think that if now or in the future She would save herself by sacrificing us She wouldn't do so? Of course She would, and rightly.[239]

Even though the position of the monastic institution within Tibetan society has changed significantly throughout the ages, there is also a level of continuity. This continuity is a historical as well as an ideological one. The way in which Vinayic literature was interpreted by monastics among the various schools has remained more or less unaltered for hundreds of years. As we are here concerned not just with monastic organization but also with attitudes of monks towards the rest of society, the manner in which certain notions seen as pivotal within Tibetan Buddhism are interpreted is also relevant. This chapter explores the historical and the ideological continuations and concepts thereof discernible at Tibetan monastic institutions, for these are the building blocks of both the physical as well as the conceptual space that the monastery occupies within society.

The earliest extant monastic guidelines were written in the late 12th century, while according to traditional sources, monastic Buddhism was introduced in the 8th century by the completion of the monastic complex at Samye in 779 at the behest of Khri srong lde btsan (r. 755-797 or 755-804). Samye was seen as the first 'real' monastery in Tibet because it was a place where monks could receive ordination. During the 8th century, Tibetans who were ordained elsewhere[240] were apparently already occupying the temples (*gtsug lag khang*) and other residences that had been built by Khri srong lde btsan's predecessors. The foundation of Samye has been viewed by Tibetans as a crucial turning-point concerning the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet.[241] While the introduction of Buddhism, along with writing and a legal system, during the time of Srong btsan sgam po was traditionally seen as a civilizing force, the construction of Samye is seen as an achievement that ensured the endurance of Buddhism in Tibet. This view demonstrates the widespread conflation in Tibet of religion *tout court* with monastic Buddhism, which is not unlike what occurred in other countries where monastic Buddhism flourished. Kern argues that early Indian Buddhism *an sich* was a monastic institution and 'the laity but accessory.'[242] For Tibet, this conflation is a signifier of the prominence of the monastic institution.

Another important decision, reportedly taken by the last of the Dharmarājas, Ral pa can, who was keen to promote uniformity in Buddhist practice, was to only allow translations of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* and its commentaries and no other Vinaya-materials.[243] This sealed the fate of Tibetan monasticism, for while religious traditions quarrelled over the interpretations of complicated philosophical points, the

[239] Tomasi di Lampedusa, 2007 [1958]: 29.
[240] Snellgrove, 2002 [1987]: 240.
[241] Kapstein, 2000: 60.
[242] Kern, 1896: 72.
[243] Davidson, 2005: 64.

shared ordination-tradition brought about a more or less homogenous identity among monks all over, in particular when compared with other Mahāyāna countries.[244]

In order to understand how the monastic institutions in Tibet were managed and organized, it is useful to look at the socio-economic status of the monasteries prior to the period under investigation, i.e. the late 12th to the mid 20th centuries. The *sBa' bzhed*/ *dBa' bzhed*, which should be read 'as a work of historical fiction,'[245] provides us with some clues on the way in which the first monastery in Tibet was perceived. The dates as well as the authorship of this text are unknown, but passages quoted elsewhere suggest that there were versions of this text in circulation by the twelfth century.[246] This work tells us that, initially, Samye was to be a *gtsug lag khang* (*vihāra*), a temple. The narrative of the construction of the place does not mention building accommodations for monks, and nowhere does it speak of Samye as a *dgon pa*. However, when Samye was completed, several people took vows there. All of them reportedly belonged to the aristocracy, the first was said to be dBa' gsal snang, whose ordination name was Ye shes dbang po.[247]

It is important to note that Tibetan monastic Buddhism was from the outset both patronized and controlled by the state.[248] According to *Bod kyi dgon sde*, the first monastery of Tibet was populated by over a thousand monks, not long after Khri srong lde btsan had founded it, and was fully supported by the state: which is to say that the ruler appointed seven families to sponsor the upkeep of one monk.[249] In the beginning Samye had no estates, no land and no cattle. During that time all monks would get the same allowances, regardless of their status. They would receive 25 *khal* of grain annually, 11 *khal* of butter and 30 *srang*.[250] The widespread Tibetan narrative of the rise, height, and subsequent decline of (monastic) Buddhism during the early transmission (*snga dar)* is significant for later conceptualizations of monastic ideals. With the completion of Samye and the first ordinations there the introduction of Buddhism was complete, and the Sangha flourished. The way that the Sangha was entirely dependent for its survival on the ruler as its sponsor has been idealized by many later monks as the best way to subsist. By pointing to how the first monks lived solely off the donations they received, they could criticize the situation many a monastery found itself in in later times – monks had to provide their own income by working or doing business, monasteries possessed vast estates, loaned money against interest, and invested in trade.

Although the contemporary state of monastic Buddhism is not the topic of my investigation, it is worth noting that because monks – both in exile and in the PRC – have had to renegotiate their economic position in relation to both 'the state' and the laity, the historical patterns that live on through shared memories play an important role in this process. In much the same vein, Aris once commented that Tibetans, 'by

[244] This is not to say that there were no disagreements on how to interpret the *praṭimokṣa* vows, in particular in combination with the other two sets of vows. On the interpretation of the *trisaṃvara* see, Sobisch, 2002.
[245] Kapstein, 2000: 25.
[246] Wangdu and Diemberger furthermore remark that the style of the text appears to be in transition: from archaic Dunhuang style Tibetan to early 'classical' Tibetan. Wangdu and Diemberger, 2000: 2, 11.
[247] ibid.: 64-9. *sBa' bzhed*: 17b: *rab tu byung ba'i ming ye shes dbang po*.
[248] For an overview of state-involvement in the patronage of the Sangha see, Dargyay, 1991: 111-28.
[249] *sBa bzhed*: 63: [..] *btsan pos ni bandhe gcig la 'bangs khyim bdun* [..]
[250] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 169. The primary source the authors used is probably the *dBa' bzhed*, see Wangdu and Diemberger, 2000: 73. It is difficult to tell how much these allowances amounted to, as the measurements of the unit *khal* fluctuated over the centuries and could differ, region to region.

comparison with many other peoples of the east or west, [..] maintain a high level of historical consciousness and a deep sense of the vitality of the living past.'[251] This makes an awareness of collective memories crucial to any analysis of both less ancient history as well as current-day affairs that concern Tibetans. It appears that in current-day China the recent increased commercialisation at the monasteries is seen as problematic by both monks and lay-people alike, partly because it is seen as a by-product of tourism (and state-intervention) and thereby of 'modern times'. The collective memory is thus rather selective, as the monasteries in traditional Tibet in fact played an active role in business. At the same time, begging the lay-people for alms is nowadays regarded to be a last resort and often actively discouraged. This, however, is not a recent development: misgivings towards (morally) coercing lay-people into giving to the monkhood are found in some of the older monastic guidelines.[252]

The current drive towards self-sufficiency (*rang kha rang gso*) is seen by many monks as a break from both the recent past – during which the monasteries were dependent on state support – as well as a respite from the atmosphere of oppression, often associated with monastic economic policy during pre-modern times. There is the realization that self-sufficiency, by means of setting up businesses, funds, and 'providing services to the community,' is far from ideal, yet necessary to survive. It is clear that now for many, the purest form of monastic economy is one in which doing business is not needed and sponsors volunteer to make donations, without the monks having to ask for them.[253] This is reminiscent of the earliest state of the monastery in Tibet, or at least the collective memory of it.

There is another way in which the traditional narrative highlights the position of monastic Buddhism. For later Tibetan historians, the death of Ral pa can was followed by the disastrous rule of king Glang dar ma (c. 803-842), and the subsequent period of fragmentation (*sil bu'i dus*). This is projected as the darkest period in the history of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. In the Tibetan histories, especially those of the genre of *chos 'byung*, the collapse of the empire after the reign of Glang dar ma started with the persecution of the clergy. A large portion of the monks was reportedly made to disrobe while some fled both east- and westwards. While it is now evident that certainly not all Buddhist practitioners had fled Central Tibet during that time, later narratives conflate Buddhism and monastic Buddhism, stating that only the embers of the Dharma were left in the region.[254] This demonstrates the importance of the monkhood for the religion – for monks were seen as the keepers of the Buddha's Teachings.

Most Tibetan histories describe that a period of political and social unrest followed the monastic persecutions. The temples were in disrepair, the Imperial

[251] Michael Aris' foreword to Martin and Bentor, 1997: 9.
[252] See Chapter 7 for the relevant passages from the bca' yig.
[253] The discussion of the recent developments of the monastic economy among Tibetans in the PRC is based on Caple, 2011. Caple views the drive towards self-sufficiency as coming from Tibetans themselves and argues that it is not necessarily part of the dynamics between the state and the monasteries. This view is perhaps not entirely warranted: one of my informants was told by the Chinese during communist re-education in the early 1960s that the monks in the old Tibet had been eating other people's food, and that they should actually be self-sufficient (*rang kha gso dgos*) (Personal communication with Shes rab rgya mtsho, Rajpur, August 2012). This is why the monks who were allowed to remain at the monasteries (up until the Cultural Revolution) were made to do farm-work. Initially, at least, self-sufficiency was forced upon the Tibetan monks by the PRC government.
[254] The wording is *dam pa' i chos kyi me ro* or *bstan pa'i me ro*. One of the earlier works in which this story features is the text by lDe'u jo sras written in the 13th century, *lDe'u chos 'byung*: 390-2.

treasury was plundered and generally the social order suffered the consequences.[255] During this period of chaos Tibet did not just lack a central state, but it was also a time during which social structures eroded. Nyang nyi ma 'od zer (a.k.a Nyang ral, 1124-1192) writes that at that time: 'A son did not listen to his father, a servant did not acknowledge his lord, and the vassal did not hear the noble.'[256] We now know that Buddhism had not entirely disappeared under and after Glang dar ma, but rather that the monks had lost their royal patronage and that the aristocratic families were divided over the support of the religion. The accuracy of the accounts of events given in the historiographies is thus highly questionable, but for the current purpose this is irrelevant. Here it is of importance that this narrative was well known throughout Tibet, not just among the learned but also presumably among the ordinary people. The endurance of this semi-historical account is what Halbwachs calls 'collective memory',[257] explained as a group-process in which the way the past relates to the present is more important than the historical facts themselves. It is likely that the Sangha's disappearing from (Central) Tibet and the social upheaval that followed were seen to be intimately related.

This very pervasive narrative confirms the message that some Indic Buddhist texts are seen to convey: wherever the Sangha remains, there the Dharma will be, and where the Dharma is, the area will prosper and be at peace. The set of monastic guidelines by the Fifth Dalai Lama for dGa' ldan thub bstan rab rgyas gling written in 1664 for example, cites the *Vinayottaragrantha*: 'As long as there are monks (*btsun pa*, S. *bhadanta*), the holy Dharma will remain.'[258] The author of these guidelines further explains that: 'Because the *Vinayapiṭaka* is the foundation for all other dharmas of both Hinayāna and Mahāyāna, the Buddhist Teachings depend on the Sangha who maintain that [*Vinayapiṭaka*].'[259] Very similar wording is used in the bca' yig for the Sakya (*Sa skya*) nunnery Rinchen gang (Rin chen sgang), written in 1845. It tells the nuns to study and practice well because: 'it is said that the Teachings of the Buddha depend on the Sangha.'[260] And again an early 20th century bca' yig says: 'whether or not the Buddha's Teachings remain in the world depends on the Sangha that maintains them,'[261] demonstrating an awareness that the Sangha had as its primary role the preservation of the Dharma, making 'concern for the happiness of all beings [..] the foundation of the Sangha's very existence,'[262] but only implicitly: the methods to bring about lasting happiness (i.e. *nirvāṇa*) *are* the Buddhist Teachings that the spiritual community is charged with continuing.[263]

Connected with the responsibility to preserve Buddhism is the notion of what is often translated as the 'degenerate times', the *kaliyuga* (*snyigs ma'i dus*).[264] This age of decline implies not just that Buddhism as we know it will one day disappear but also that it will gradually become more difficult to properly practice the religion.

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[255] Davidson, 2005: 65-72.
[256] ibid.: 71, translating *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*: 446.
[257] Halbwachs, 1992 [1941].
[258] *dGa' ldan thub bstan rab rgyas gling bca' yig*: 160: *btsun pa ji tsam gyis na dam pa'i chos mchis pa zhes bgyi* [..]. Quoted from the *Vinayottaragrantha* (D7): 234b.
[259] ibid.: 161: *'dul ba'i sde snod ni theg pa che chung gi chos gzhan mtha' dag gi rtsa ba yin pa'i phyir na/ sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa de 'dzin pa'i dge 'dun la rag las/*
[260] *Rin chen sgang bca' yig*: 210: *de la sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dge 'dun la rag las zhes pa'i rgyu mtshan de yin/* A similar point is made in Snellgrove, 2002 [1987]: 306.
[261] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 187: *rgyal ba'i bstan pa 'jig rten na gnas pa ni de 'dzin pa'i dge 'dun la rag las shing/*
[262] Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 19.
[263] This same notion was also widespread in Chinese Buddhism, see Walsh, 2010: 7.
[264] For more on the widespread Buddhist narrative of decline see Nattier, 1991.

Monks, in particular those that have studied the Vinaya, display an acute awareness of this notion. Some use it to explain the divergence between the original Vinaya rules and the practice found among Tibetan monks: 'in this day and age we cannot keep the Vinaya in all its details; this is because of the degenerate times (*snyigs dus*). But we keep the rules as well as we can. The bca' yig are written in accordance with the times, these rules are generally more relaxed (*lhod po*) than the exact stipulations in the Vinaya.'[265] These remarks are seconded by the abbot of the nunnery dGe ldan chos gling who comments that 'the old rules as contained in the Vinaya are too strict (*tsha po*) for this day and age. Therefore there is a need for rules, which are in accordance with the time and place (*yul dus dang bstun nas*).'[266] He mentions that this allowance for relaxations in the discipline can be found in the Vinaya itself. Here he may be referring to the exemptions with regard to monastic communities living in the outer regions mentioned in the Vinaya.[267]

One informant, who was visibly upset, told me that whenever he would comment on the lax attitude towards discipline at his monastery, monks would commonly answer: 'oh well, considering the times..', implying that when taking this current age into account the monks are not all that bad.[268] It is likely that this notion of the age of decline was also in the past seen as a valid reason to relax the rules,[269] which affected both the internal organization of the monasteries as well as the way in which monks dealt with the outside world. The monastic guidelines themselves regularly claim that they contain rules that are adapted to the specific place and time, thereby appealing to a mindset common among monks.

The presence of the Sangha, which was for most ordinary people synonymous with 'monks' (and only very occasionally nuns), was not simply in order for the lay-people to gain merit, and also not merely for the monks to perform rituals that would appease local spirits on the behalf of the ordinary population. Although it may not have been the case during the initial stages of the introduction of monastic Buddhism, certainly from the 11th century onwards, monks in Central Tibet started to play a bigger role and were classed among the 'important men' (*mi chen po*). According to Davidson the efforts of these important people at spreading the Dharma 'were understood as contributing to social cohesiveness and organizations, a trend in Tibetan public life that continues to the present.'[270] Their presence alone must have been seen as conducive to social cohesion, and perhaps even as a necessity, not least because it provided a shared identity: 'Buddhism had always been seen as the core of

[265] Personal communication with bsTan 'dzin 'brug sgra, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[266] Personal communication with dGe bshes phan bde rgyal mtshan, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[267] One of these relaxations is that one needs a smaller group of *bhikṣu*s present at an ordination. In central lands one needs ten, whereas in outer regions one needs just five '*vinayadhara*s'. See *Vinayavastu* (D1): 52a: *yul dbus su dge slong bcu la sogs pa'i tshogs sam/ mtha''khob dag tu gzhan med na 'dul ba 'dzin pa dang lnga la sogs pa'i tshogs la yang rung ste*. However, the perception that Tibet was counted among those foreign regions was one not readily entertained by Tibetan authors.
[268] Personal communication with lama 'Tshul khrims', Dehradun, August 2012. He reported that the monks even have a shortened phrase to brush off any such criticisms: '*dus dpags*' (considering the times..). On the age of decline this monk says that 'it is not the Dharma that is changing, or that the Dharma is not as good as it used to be. The Dharma remains the same – it is the individual that changes and worsens. These days, there are just more delusions (*nyon mongs*) around.'
[269] Again, this is not just a Tibetan custom, nor was it only prevalent in more recent times. In 9th century Japan the author of the *Mappō-tōmyōki* (末法燈明記) argued that the government should not punish those monks with poor discipline, because one could not expect adhering fully to the rules in such a decadent age. See Nattier, 1991: 138.
[270] Davidson, 2005: 102.

Tibetan identity, and its clergy the epitome of "Tibetanness".'[271] For these reasons, the importance of the Sangha, the monks in Tibetan society cannot be overemphasized. Their primary position – collectively, though not always individually – should be borne in mind in the discussion on the societal role of the monastery and the monks.

Yet another aspect of Tibetan monastic Buddhism is its portrayal as the embodiment of the continuity of the Indian tradition. The notion of the necessity for unbroken lineages of practice, ritual, and ordination brings with it a notoriously conservative attitude and an aversion towards innovation and invention. Kapstein sees the ideology of monastic Buddhism in Tibet as one 'that often appears to systematically devalue innovation and personal inventiveness, considering them sources of deviation and of the transgression of the genius of the past.'[272] This is particularly well attested in the Tibetan scholastic tradition, in which accusations that an individual writer was being imaginitive, creative, or promoting divergent ideas – all possible translations of *rang bzo* – was particularly damaging to one's scholarly reputation.[273]

Although scholars nowadays acknowledge that the Tibetan variety of Buddhism is most definitely not a carbon copy of the 'original' Indian religion and that it was adapted in many ways,[274] the fact remains that the ideal among monks was to preserve the religion and its accompanying rituals. Change – any change – may have been seen as possibly disrupting the process of preservation. This conservative attitude with regard to matters of religion is likely to have affected the behaviour of monks within social settings. Furthermore, according to Gombrich, this type of 'inertia, or conservatism, may cause cultural forms to persist, perhaps even for centuries, while material conditions are changing.'[275] There are other factors that contributed to this conservatism – or fear of change – and the subsequent status quo attitude among the monastic agents, which in turn affected the relationship between the monks and the laity.[276]

A further significant feature of Buddhism in Tibet is that it had a monopoly position. Although there were several schools that sometimes vied for disciples and sponsors, and fought over doctrinal issues and transmission lineages, monks were, generally speaking, united in their vows. Of course the presence of the Bon religion cannot be denied, but in the *longue durée* of Tibetan history its adherents played only a minor role in the public sphere. From the point of view of market theory, a monopoly position of a product or a service is expected to decrease social welfare.[277] This monopoly in the religious market is then seen to reduce the level of morality of individual believers, but to 'improve the quality of the moral constitution supporting a market society.'[278] In other words, a shared religion brings about shared values, which positively influence society. This is why some argue that a monopoly in the market for organized religion could in fact increase the 'net social welfare.'[279] This

[271] Shakya, 1999: 419.
[272] Kapstein, 2000: 9.
[273] See for example van der Kuijp, 1987: 69, n. 13.
[274] For an exploration of the ways in which Tibetans adapted Buddhism, see Kapstein, 2000.
[275] Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 12.
[276] These factors are further discussed in Chapter 7.
[277] Anderson, 1992: 374.
[278] ibid.: 390.
[279] ibid.: 374. In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith argued that state-supported, monopoly religions produced inferior services for its consumers, but he did not look at the overall societal benefits of such religions (Smith 1976 [1776], 311), see ibid.: 377.

contemporary argument would not look amiss in the writings of pre-modern Tibetan monastics, although this type of reasoning is not often explicitly present in the texts under consideration here.

The aforementioned aspects: the central role of monastic Buddhism in Tibetan society, the need for the preservation of the religion, the degenerate times, the conservative attitudes, and the religious monopoly position emphasize both the centrality and the continuity of Tibetan monasticism. At the same time, living in the *kaliyuga* meant that potential threats and evils had to be regularly negotiated, indicating change as well as continuity. This continuity makes it possible to look at Tibetan monasticism diachronically and detect certain patterns. By uncovering these patterns, one may detect certain changes over the centuries, and the factors that lead to those changes. Another of these factors that encouraged continuity and homogeneity among monks and, less overtly, even among lay-people is 'the Buddhist *Weltbild*'. Below I discuss what the contents of this Tibetan 'universal' doctrine may possibly be and the extent to which it affected societal behaviour.

The Influence of Buddhist Learning on Monastic Organization

What first of all needs to be acknowledged is that the education level – and this includes formal religious education – was relatively low at the monasteries. Among the population of Drepung for example, an estimate of ten per cent were scholar-monks (*dpe cha ba*).[280] These monks at the larger university-like monasteries studied topics that were often highly abstract and philosophical. Works that are now seen as primary texts that contain 'basic Buddhist values', such as Tsongkhapa's Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (*Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*), Atiśa's Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment (*Byang chub lam gyi sgron me*), Gampopa's Precious Ornament of Liberation (*Rin chen thar rgyan*), or Patrul Rinpoche's Words of my Perfect Teacher (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*), do not appear to have been part of the general curriculum at most monasteries. These texts were taught – if at all – at public teachings, during which lay-people and monks would gather to listen to a sermon by a great master. Perhaps the main exception is Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*sPyod 'jug*), which is a text that was widely studied in centres of Nyingma scholasticism.[281] This leaves us with the question of what the monks actually learned and thus knew about Buddhism and about what may now be called 'Buddhist ethics'. This subject has not been widely studied, perhaps partly because the results of a query into this matter will necessarily be highly speculative. For the current purpose it is important to understand the kind of religious education that monks with positions of power and influence received.

In the *Ratnarāśisūtra*, the Buddha tells Kāśyapa that an administrative monk (*vaiyāpṛtyakara bhikṣu*) should be either an *arhat*, or someone who 'is purified, who is fearful of censure in the other world, who has confidence [in the idea that results will come about for him as] the maturation of [his own] deeds, and who feels shame and remorse.'[282] In other words, it should be a person who has a deep understanding of karma and who knows how to apply that understanding to his own actions. Some of the Tibetan monastic guidelines take a more pragmatic stance with regard to the religious accomplishments of monks in charge of administrative or managerial tasks. The *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig* states that a prospective candidate for the position of

[280] Goldstein, 2009: 10.
[281] Personal communication with Markus Viehbeck, Heidelberg, May 2012.
[282] Silk, 2008: 27.

disciplinarian (*dge skos*/ *dge bskos*)[283] needed to have a better standard of education (*slob gnyer drag pa*), but this was not the only requirement: one had to also be affluent, be of an authentic lineage (*rgyun drang*),[284] and have a sturdy appearance.[285]

In the Nyingma monastery Pelyul in Kham, certain important positions such as that of *dbu mdzad chen mo*, which was of the same rank as disciplinarian, required someone who had completed a three year retreat (this would earn one the title *bla phran*). If no one of that rank was available, the individual still had to be from the ranks of *mchod gral pa*. These were monks who had completed various other types of retreats.[286] The source for this information is the author who was a monk at the monastery in Tibet before the 1950s. The extant set of monastic guidelines unfortunately does not give this type of information. Apparently, other positions that had a more prosaic character, such as treasurer (*phyag mdzod*) or 'manager'/steward (*gnyer pa*),[287] do not seem to have required a particular level of religious education or practice. It appears that historically in Gelug monasteries it was unusual for people with the highest educational degree (*dge bshes*) to fill administrative positions.[288] In Sakya monastery, however, 'a doctor of theology'[289] regularly was appointed as *zhabs pad*, a high managerial position at the Sakya estate.[290] To become a *chos khrims pa*[291] there during the late 1950s one had to have followed the monastic curriculum up to a certain point, but it was not essential to be a *dge slong*.[292] Whatever the level of education of monastic decision-makers, the monastic education-system itself was clearly not designed to teach 'applied Buddhism'. Wangchuk mentions that the monastic system expects educated monks to master three activities, namely teaching, debating, and composing (*'chad rtsod rtsom gsum*). In this way the monks preserve and spread the Buddhist Teachings and work for the well-being of other living beings. Wangchuk hypothesises that because helping others is done solely on the basis of their knowledge gained from education, the educated monks are traditionally not primarily charitable or socially engaged, and that this may be the reason that there are very few charitable undertakings in Tibetan society.[293]

Social Realities and Buddhist Thought

'Buddhist traditions generally did not develop practical ethical systems which might work to ameliorate the genuine suffering of the world,'[294] at least not in the way current-day non-governmental organizations and the like are seen to make the world a better place. In Tibetan Buddhist works, social realities are not often reflected and commented upon, but when this does occur, it seems that these realities, such as the

[283] The important post of disciplinarian is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
[284] I assume that this refers to the ordination lineage.
[285] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 86: *slob gnyer drag pa dang/ 'byor ldan can rgyun drang zhing mi babs lhing ba sogs 'os nges rnams 'jug*
[286] *dPal yul gdan rabs*: 358, 9.
[287] These terms are further discussed in Chapter 5.
[288] Dagyab, 2009: 55.
[289] This is likely to be a translation of *dge bshes*, which was the highest scholastic degree in the Sakya tradition.
[290] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 206.
[291] This is roughly equivalent to *dge skos*: disciplinarian.
[292] Personal communication with Shes rab rgya mtsho, Rajpur, August 2012.
[293] Wangchuk, 2005: 227: 'Wir sehen daran, dass die Tradition von den Mönchsgelehrten nicht in erster Linie karitatives und soziales Engagement erwartet, sondern dass sie anderen Menschen durch Lehrtätigkeit helfen. Das dürfte der Grund darfür sein, dass es sehr wenig karitative Unternehmungen in der tibetishcen Gesellschaft gibt.'
[294] Silk, 2008: 10.

plight of those who transport tea to Tibet,[295] or the hypocrisy of those Tibetans who purport to be pious but crave meat excessively, are highlighted not in order to encourage direct change, but to show the realities of *saṃsāra* and thereby the need to renounce concerns for the current existence alone. The aim of these types of texts is to show the 'injustice' of certain common situations, so as to provoke the realization that cyclic existence does not provide a stable base for any type of felicity, and, this would also include justice. Emphasizing human (and other) suffering was thus usually not directly aimed at mustering support to rally against social injustices.

Similar topics that can be recognized as relevant to social justice are mentioned in religious texts when authors write about compassion. The audience is reminded about the suffering of sentient beings, of the poverty and disease of a stricken populace. The aim is to evoke not just feelings of compassion but also a heartfelt commitment to do something about the suffering of others. This commitment, however, does not translate into social action (or at least, social action is not presented as a necessary expression of this commitment), because there is a strong awareness that an ordinary human being is unable to structurally alter the plight of others: only a Buddha can.[296] In this way the attainment of Buddhahood becomes the ultimate goal. Nonetheless, for those committed to the goal of attaining enlightenment for the sake of other beings, helping others is presented as a responsibility, as well as a necessary means of accumulation of the merit required for the achievement of that goal.

According to the Buddhist doctrine in the Tibetan tradition, understanding the world around us, understanding the unjust and dissatisfactory nature of *saṃsāra* is necessary to arrive at those most essential of Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts: renunciation (*nges 'byung gi bsam pa*) and the wish to attain enlightenment (S. *bodhicitta*, *byang chub kyi sems*). For Buddhist practitioners a thorough awareness of the outside realities is therefore warranted, although it is likely that a rather abstract and general understanding of those realities was seen to suffice for most. In fact, meditation was in some cases preferred to directly aiding others. The Kadam master, dGe bshes ston pa (a.k.a. Brom ston pa rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas, c. 1004/5-1064) was reportedly asked by 'the three brothers' (*sku mched gsum*)[297] whether it is better to practice in solitude (*dben pa bsten pa*) or to help beings by means of Dharma. He replied that: 'In this current age of decline, it is not the time for an ordinary being to actually help others, while not being involved in developing love, compassion, and

[295] This text, which has been translated in English as *Words of my Perfect Teacher*, explains how during harvesting the tea leaves many insects get killed, and that the tea is transported by people on foot up until Dar rtse mdo (a Tibeto-Chinese border-town in modern Sichuan). These people carry the loads strapped to their heads, which causes the skin to peel, so that the white bone on their heads becomes visible. This tea is then loaded onto pack-animals, who also suffer under the weight. The readers are then not implored to do something about these exploitative practices, but to think of the dissatisfactory nature of *saṃsāra*. *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*: 74.

[296] In the section that discusses compassion, the author of the *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung* criticizes the mistreatment of animals, especially by so called lamas and monks, who are meant to be the refuge, the saviour and the defender of all living beings, but instead are only involved in protecting their patrons who give them food and gifts, by bestowing initiations and blessings onto them: 198: *de bzhin spyir bla ma dang ser mo ba zhes bya ba ris med pa'i sems can thams cad kyi skyabs dang skyob pa mgon dang dpung gnyen yin pa la/ rang la bza' btung dang 'bul ba byed pa'i yon bdag de rang phyogs su bzung nas de la srungs shig dang skyobs shig zer zhing dbang skur dang byin rlabs byed/*

[297] These were his direct disciples: Po to ba, sPyan nga ba and Phu chung ba.

bodhicitta in solitude.'[298] Here it is the degenerate times that make it a priority to practice first, before one can venture to help others.

Traditionally, then, the focus on love, compassion, and the resolve to attain enlightenment served first and foremost to change the practitioner's mental attitude and thus did not seem to have brought about a push for a structured change of the status quo: both secular and religious institutions in pre-modern Tibet did not facilitate such actions, at least not structurally. Social and economic mobility was limited within the strongly hierarchical Tibetan society. This societal rigidity was in part due to 'collective conservatism,' which was maintained for a large variety of reasons (on which more below). The influence of the Buddhist *Weltbild* maintained by Tibetan believers – and thereby social agents – should also not be underestimated.

Psychological research on the concept of justice among young monks in a contemporary Tibetan Buddhist monastic community in Nepal suggests that:

> The virtues of liberty, equality, and justice are not emphasized in this particular Buddhist environment. Concern for compassion and suffering takes absolute precedence. Perhaps in a worldview where fairness is built into the fabric of the universe (the concept of karma) one need not be preoccupied with making the world fair or just.[299]

This initially confirms that there are certain issues that take centre stage in textual Buddhism that do get incorporated into the mindset of monks. Speculative as the above cited research may be, it does strengthen the hypothesis that doctrinal discussions of (human) suffering were not primarily geared towards, and usually did not lead to, social engagement. In the words of Spiro: 'soteriological action provides no support for action in this world. As it is nirvana through knowledge, not through works.'[300]

The Monastery as a Corporate Institution

It is not uncommon for economic historians to describe the medieval Catholic Church as a corporation closely connected to economic progress. Weberians have argued that the Church was to be held culpable for slowing down economic development in Europe, whereas others have argued that the Church has had a positive influence on growth in the economy.[301] It is less common to analyse Buddhist institutions in such a way.[302] Considering Buddhist monasticism in China, Walsh gives the definition of an institution as 'a competitive structure seeking to perpetuate itself'. He argues that religious institutions such as monasteries operate as corporate bodies.[303] Miller, who surveyed Tibetan monastic economy, disagrees with this notion of an institution: 'The monastery was not conceived of as a corporate economic unit, but as a collection of individuals having individual, transient funds.'[304] Indeed, when looking at the Tibetan case, it does not seem likely that monks ever thought of their monastery as an economic unit (which does not mean that it was not one). However, the stress Miller

[298] ibid.: 233: *des na da lta snyigs ma'i dus 'dir so so'i skye bos dben par byams snying rje byang chub kyi sems la blo goms par bya ba ma yin par/ sems can la dngos su phan gdags pa'i dus ma yin/*
[299] Heubner and Garrod, 1993: 179.
[300] Spiro, 1971: 429.
[301] See Walsh, 2010: 10,11.
[302] Cf. McCleary and van der Kuijp, 2010: 149-80.
[303] Walsh, 2007: 373.
[304] R. Miller, 1961: 436.

lays on the individuality of the monks also seems unwarranted. Cassinelli and Ekvall claim there is a high degree of individualism in Tibetan Buddhism.[305] This emphasis on the individual has its precedence in the depiction of Indian Buddhism. Dumont, in his *Homo Hierarchicus* writes that 'Buddhism truly expresses the place of the individual in Indian Society.'[306] Collins adds to this by stating:

> One might say that the monastic group directly instantiates the vision of the most simplistic kind of individualist, social contract theory, where society is seen as a collection of what are in some sense non-social, but adult and (supposedly) rational, agents whose joining together in association results from a conscious and rational decision that that is where their interests and aspirations will best be furthered.[307]

As argued above, the Tibetan Buddhist monastery *as an institution* is generally not concerned with salvation or liberation, but with continuation and preservation. In that way the monastery's task is to preserve the *facilitation* of salvation on an individual level. This is what gives monks their individuality: they, at least in theory, have the individual choice to make use of the facilities. Goldstein claims that 'the karma-grounded ideology of Tibetan Buddhism saw the enforcement of morality and values as an individual rather than an institutional responsibility.'[308] This statement is perhaps only partially correct, for it is true that in the monastery the orthopraxy is more important than orthodoxy,[309] but the information provided by the bca' yig show us that this can never have been entirely the case. The (publicly displayed) lax morality of a few monks would reflect negatively on the whole of the Sangha, first of all because it would inspire bad behaviour in other monks and secondly because it would cause the laity to lose faith in the Sangha. This would indeed make morality – at least to the extent that it pertains to external behaviour – a matter of institutional responsibility. This concern is highlighted in the monastic guidelines, which suggest that the danger of harbouring a single individual with faulty discipline is comparable to the presence of one diseased frog, which has the potential to destroy all the other frogs.[310]

In most other contexts, it appears that the word 'individuality' to describe the life-style of monks is misguided, for it bears too many (both Western and modern) connotations that are simply unheard of in a monastic setting, even today. The nature of the monastery as an institution is that of a conglomerate of individuals – who to a large extent retain the socio-economic status they held in the 'lay-world'– and a socio-economic unit at the same time. The monastic guidelines paint a picture of a monastery as a socio-economic unit while acknowledging that individuals are the parts that create the whole. When viewing the bca' yig from the point of view of their audience, one finds that they both address the whole (how the monastery ideally should function) as well as the parts (the role individual monks have within the institution). According to Collins, what monasteries intend to be is not always what they then turn out to be:

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[305] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 74.
[306] *Homo Hierarchicus*: 277, as quoted by Collins, 1988: 116.
[307] ibid.: 116.
[308] Goldstein, 1998: 22.
[309] Cf. Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 113.
[310] This expression is alluded to in *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 227, *Kong stod dung dkar dgon bca' yig*: 594, and *sKu 'bum rgyud pa grwa tshang bca' yig*: 275. The complete saying is: *sbal pa rma can gcig gis sbal tshang phung*, see Cüppers, 1998: 178.

> Although it seems that both Buddhist and Christian monasticism aims to incarnate the close sense of community which sociologists often call *Gemeinschaft*, that is a small group with close cohesion, emotional intensity and absence of internal division, it is more likely that the monastic group is a *Gesellschaft*, a society with separate and separable individuals whose relations are governed by contract and whose ultimate goal lies beyond the immediate fact of association.[311]

When it concerns Tibetan monasteries, it seems more likely that the monastic institution is *both* a group with close cohesion as well as a society with separable individuals governed by contract. This is particularly evident in the larger monasteries, where the internal cohesion is found largely within the separate houses (*kham tshan*)[312] or the colleges (*grwa tshang*), whereas solidarity between these houses and colleges was far more tenuous.[313] More generally, what the monastic guidelines portray as of importance to the continuation of a monastic institution then is a good reputation among lay-people, religious prestige, a steady flow of donations, a stable community of monks and a conducive political climate. None of these are issues entirely beyond the reach of the monastic institution.

Justification for Buddhist monasteries holding such important positions of power in Tibetan society was found in the doctrinally prevalent notion of the paramount importance of preserving the Sangha: the end justified the means. Viewing the monastic institution as a corporation, in which monastic agents act on (at least) two levels, namely individual and communal, allows one to understand how certain types of behaviour that would be unacceptable if they concerned a lone monk would be allowed or even encouraged if the whole community could benefit by them. This bipartite modus of organizing the community is not just an aspect of Tibetan monasticism, but is present in Indic Buddhist texts as well.[314] An example of this is that in Buddhist India the offerings given to a stūpa could not be redirected to the general nor to the universal community (i.e. the monks present locally and the entire Sangha, respectively).[315] This clearly demarcated division is also apparent in the Vinaya literature that demonstrates that the monastic community is not in itself liable for the actions of its members. Schopen gives the example of debts left by deceased monks: the debtors had to consider their money lost.[316] This is another instance – and there are many – in which the monastic institution is comparable to a modern-day corporation.

For Ashman and Winstanley, contemporary corporations exist 'as legal and economic entities constructed to pursue social and economic objectives.'[317] The Buddhist monastery does not fit this definition, for its fundamental aim is the betterment of all beings, and more specifically, the continuation of the Dharma. Contrary to what it claimed by some, I do not believe that the Sangha's primary aim is to 'raise the efficiency of religious practice' and that 'its beneficiaries are none other

[311] Collins, 1988: 115.
[312] This word is spelt in various ways (e.g. *khang tshan*/ *khams tshan* / *kham tshan*). When the term is referred to without it featuring in a particular text the preferred spelling is *kham tshan*.
[313] In the larger monasteries inter-collegiate feuding was a regular occurrence. For more on this 'communal violence', see Chapter 8 and Jansen, 2013a: 122 et seq.
[314] This dual model is further elaborated upon in Chapter 6.
[315] Silk, 2008: 31.
[316] Schopen, 2001: 111.
[317] Ashman and Winstanley, 2007: 86.

than the monks who constitute its membership.'[318] The monastery can be described as having features that are akin to those of corporations. One such feature is corporate identity. Corporate identity – here an anachronism of sorts, in the context of the monastery is similar to monastic identity – which is imbued with the notion of belonging to a larger community that has a shared purpose and a sense of belonging.

It is common to ascribe certain human features to such an institution. It is, however, problematic to view the corporation – that is not an actual entity – 'as possessing identity or acting as a conscious moral agent.'[319] This means that 'an institution of any kind is both an idea and a materialized reality.'[320] To what extent then can an idea be held accountable? Velasquez questions the notion that a corporate organization can be held morally responsible (at least in part) for its actions, and dismisses the idea that there is such a thing as corporate moral responsibility.[321] The modern-day law appears to be in accordance with this, as it seems to acknowledge that only individuals can be ascribed morality, and thereby culpability.[322] To translate this into Buddhist concepts: just as a corporation cannot be held morally responsible, it also cannot accumulate karma – only individual agents can. What monks did on behalf of the monastic administration, with a benevolent motivation, would not have been seen as reprehensible in any way, regardless of the consequences of those actions. This in turn is an explanation for the relative low level of social responsibility monasteries appear to have had for their immediate surroundings.

This is by no means to suggest that monastic institutions acted with impunity. Despite the fact that 'the moral order of organizations has a powerful effect on individual motivation, morale and performance,'[323] the monasteries were ruled and administered by individuals, usually monks, who had their own sets of values. The monks and nuns portrayed in hagiographies are often depicted as being heavily involved with 'serving social ends,' of which the bridge-builder Thang stong rgyal po (1385-1464) is a famous example. Helping others, however, took place on an individual basis.[324] Assumedly, members of the monastery did see themselves as having a level of responsibility regarding the lives of others, but this would generally not translate into the improvement of the socio-economic state of others but rather in the facilitation of religious practice and merit-making. Clearly, in Tibet the relationship between the monastery and the laity was not limited to mere religious facilitation. It was much more far-reaching. When this relationship is examined, in particular with regard to the perceived religious responsibilities and justifications of certain socio-economic practices, a clearer picture of the social embedding and role of monastic Buddhism as practiced emerges.

To move beyond the simplified, yet valuable, model of the bipartite levels of perceived moral responsibility, one needs to look at the monastic organization, the roles the individuals played within it, and the Buddhist values embedded within this larger corporation. By understanding the day to day organization of the monastery it becomes easier to answer fundamental questions such as whether monasteries forced lay people to work for them or whether it was seen as a meritorious exchange, and to

[318] Ishii, 1986: 6.
[319] Ashman and Winstanley, 2007: 83.
[320] Walsh, 2010: 9.
[321] Velasquez, 2003: 531-62.
[322] Ashman and Winstanley, 2007: 92.
[323] Sayer, 2008: 148.
[324] Maher, 2012: 271. The author inexplicably extrapolates from the instances found in the biographies of great monastic figures, which abound with accounts of how the poor were fed, that '[s]ervice to society became a standard element of monastic life.'

what extent the views of lay people and monastics differed on this issue. It also helps comprehend the rights and duties ascribed to lay-people and monks, both materially and religiously. By understanding the underlying Buddhist frameworks, combined with the way in which the monasteries were organized, it becomes possible to get a more nuanced picture of the extent and nature of social responsibility among monks and monasteries in traditional Tibet.

4. ENTRANCE TO THE MONASTERY[325]

Introduction

Tibetan society before 1959 is often seen as highly stratified and hierarchical, offering limited opportunities to climb the socio-economic or socio-political ladder. In the 1920s, Charles Bell supposed that of the 175 *rtse drung* – the monastic government officials at the Ganden Phodrang – forty were from families that supplied the lay-officials (*drung 'khor*) whereas the rest were the sons of ordinary Tibetans who were chosen from the many monks of one of the Three Great Seats: Drepung, Sera, and Ganden. This, along with other similar examples, is often seen as evidence that social mobility in Tibet was possible, but that becoming a monk was a first requirement to move up in life for those from a 'working class' background. Bell furthermore noted that: 'Among the laity it is wellnigh impossible in this feudal land for a man of low birth to rise to a high position; but a monk, however humble his parentage, may attain to almost any eminence'.[326] If the above statement is correct – and there is no reason to believe that it is not – it raises the question whether the monkhood itself was open to all. And if it was not, what were the criteria for entering a monastery? In this chapter I intend to answer these questions and to demonstrate the limits of this vow-induced social mobility and shed some light on the opportunities and limitations of ordinary Tibetans in pre-modern times.

One of the few avenues of climbing up the social and political ladder was to join a powerful monastery. In modern-day Tibetan monasteries in exile, 'anyone who shows the slightest inclination' can become ordained and even the restrictions with regard to who can or cannot enter the monkhood contained within the Vinaya are 'routinely disregarded'.[327] The widespread assumption, perhaps based on this contemporary practice, is that this open-door policy is a historical continuation: that any male at any given time and place in Tibet could become a monk and make something of himself.[328] This idea is perhaps strengthened by the popular image of Buddhism as a religion that originally agitated against the caste system and strove towards a more egalitarian society. However, some *katikāvata*s, the monastic guidelines of Sri Lankan monasteries stemming from the 12th century, state that men of low birth were not allowed to become monks and elsewhere mention that it was the king who prohibited low castes from entering the order.[329] One *katikāvata* relates that the new monk should be examined according to *jāti* and *gotra* (caste) although it is unclear how this was done.[330] The question is thus whether the idealized images, both of Tibetan monasticism and that of Buddhism in general, correspond with historical realities. Some of the information on this issue is conflicting to say the least.

Who Could Enter the Monastery?

Sarat Chandra Das, who visited Tashi Lhunpo monastery towards the end of the 19th century, states that 'the order of the Lamas is open to all, from the highest noble to the

[325] This chapter is a slightly adapted version of Jansen, 2013b: 137-164.
[326] Bell, 1931: 169.
[327] Gyatso, 2003: 222.
[328] Goldstein's coining of the phrase 'the ideology of mass monasticism' has contributed to the notion that the monkhood in Tibet was open to all, see Goldstein, 1998 and Goldstein, 2009. For a critique of this position see Jansen, 2013a: 111-39.
[329] Ratnapala, 1971: 259.
[330] ibid.: 141.

Ragyabas, the lowest in the social constitution of Tibet'[331] while elsewhere he notes that to be admitted to Tashi Lhunpo one could not be one of the 'lower castes'.[332] The latter statement, along with the numerous restrictions that are contained in some of the bca' yig, suggests that entry to the monkhood and admission to the monastery were at times and at certain monasteries restricted. The custom of restricting different types of people from joining the Sangha or a monastery was not a Tibetan invention. To understand what drove the Tibetans to exclude certain groups of people from entering the monastery, we need to first look at the Indic materials. Despite the widely held view that Buddhism does not distinguish people according to their birth, caste or race, there are ample Buddhist sources that show that one's background often did matter. Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*, which is one of the main Vinaya-texts used by all Tibetan Buddhist traditions, states a number of restrictions in the chapter on ordination, the *Pravrajyāvastu* (*Rab tu byung ba'i gzhi*).

Although the classification is not made in the text itself, one can distinguish (at least) three different types of reasons for excluding someone from becoming a monk. One could be excluded on the basis of one's physical disposition, that is to say, people who were handicapped, ill, deformed, had one of the five sexual 'disabilities,' who were too young, or even too old, were not eligible. Then there were those who were excluded on the basis of their behaviour, which is to say those who had committed any of the five seriously negative acts (*mtshams med lnga*); monks who had broken any of the root vows;[333] known criminals, and people who generally were deemed to be too troublesome. Lastly, people could be excluded on the basis of their background or their social circumstances. Some of these were slaves (*bran*, S. *dāsa*), the king's soldiers, and people without permission from their parents.[334]

So far, excluding the people mentioned above appears quite commonsensical – from a socio-economic point of view, if nothing else – for allowing them to seek refuge in a monastic community may have meant getting on the wrong side of the authorities and society, depriving it of work-force and sons. However, the *Vinayasūtra* also mentions other groups of people: 'cobblers' (*lham mkhan*), and those of low caste (S. *caṇḍāla*, *gdol pa*) and 'outcastes' (S. *pukkasa*, *g.yung po*) may not be ordained.'[335] The Sanskrit version contains, but the Tibetan translation omits, the chariot-makers (S. *rathakāra*, *shing rta byed pa*) from this list. Guṇaprabha's auto-commentary, the *Vinayasūtravṛtti* does contain this group of excluded people.[336] The *Vinayasūtraṭīkā*, attributed to Dharmamitra, gives an explanation for each of the above terms given in the *Vinayasūtra*:

> A cobbler is someone who works with hides, a *gdol pa* is someone of an inferior caste, and a *g.yung po* is a barbarian (*kla klo*). These types of people

[331] Das, 1965 [1893]: 4.
[332] ibid.: 7.
[333] i.e. killing a human being, having sexual intercourse, lying (usually the false claim of spiritual accomplishments), and stealing (something of value).
[334] Bapat and Gokhale, 1982: 20, S.116-148. Gernet notes that in China slaves were not to be ordained and that this seems to be supported by the Vinaya (referring to Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, 1881-1885, Mahavagga vol. I: 47; 199), not because of their lowly state but because they were owned by someone else, see Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 129; 351, n. 171.
[335] *Vinayasūtra* (*'Dul ba'i mdo* D4117): 4b*: lham mkhan dang gdol ba dang g.yung po dang de lta bu rab tu dbyung bar mi bya'o*/. The relevant section in the Sanskrit text can be found in the above cited work: S.149-64.
[336] *Vinayasūtravṛttyabhidhānasvavyākhyāna* (*'Dul ba'i mdo'i 'grel pa mngon par brjod pa rang gi rnam par bshad pa* D4119): zhu 24b: *shing rta byed pa dang / lham mkhan dang / gdol pa dang / g.yung po dang / de lta bu rab tu dbyung bar mi bya'o zhes bya ba la* /

> may not be given food and [thus] there also is a prohibition on ordaining them. This should be understood to mean that there is a very strict prohibition against [them becoming] *śrāmaṇeras* (*dge tshul*) and the like.[337]

It is unclear to which categories of people *gdol pa* and *g.yung po* refer here exactly. In this context, the word *gdol pa* seems to denote someone who is of low birth, but who exists within the caste-system, whereas the word *g.yung po* appears to carry the connotation of an outsider, a foreigner, or simply an outcaste. The explanation seems to suggest that there was no commensality between the givers of the food and the prospective receivers of the food and that this was perhaps the main problem. Although these are important and interesting issues, for the current purpose, it is not of crucial importance to understand what Buddhists in early India ultimately meant by the above terms, but rather how Tibetans understood, interpreted and applied them.

There can be no doubt that the Tibetan society into which Buddhism was introduced was a stratified one, but the Indic notions of caste cannot have been easily adapted, or 'culturally translated' by the Tibetans. It is therefore of some interest to look at what these concepts were taken to mean by Tibetan Buddhists in different times and places, by which we can better understand the way the various strata in Tibetan societies were conceived of. While in some contexts *g.yung* seems to mean 'civil' or 'civilians' (as opposed to the military (*rgod*)), during the time of the Tibetan empire,[338] in some Dunhuang texts (Pt 1089 and Pt 1077) the word *g.yung* appears to denote 'people of the lowest order, virtually outside the pale of Tibetan society'.[339] According to the *Tshig mdzod chen mo* the word *g.yung po* refers to *caṇḍāla* or *bukkasaḥ*,[340] a low caste in early India, which is said to be the same as *gdol rigs*. However, the second meaning given is that of a pejorative word for a group of people who eat crabs, frogs, and tadpoles.[341] In the same dictionary, *gdol pa* is also taken to mean *caṇḍāla*, but the word is further explained to mean butcher (*gshan pa*) as well as 'a low caste in the society of early India.'[342] The phrase *gdol rigs* is said to denote 'people who are even lower than the *śūdra* (*dmangs rigs*), the lowest caste of the four *varṇa*s in early India, [and they consist of] blacksmiths, butchers, hunters, fishermen, weavers (*thags mkhan*) and bandits (*chom po*), etc.'[343] All these dictionary entries show that the words can denote both Indic and native notions of people at the bottom of society.

The monastic guidelines under examination here deal with these concepts in a similar way, usually displaying an awareness of them being Vinayic stipulations while translating them to the societal sensibilities of Tibetan Buddhists, in different times and different contexts. As alluded to above, these notions crop up in the monastic

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[337] *'Dul ba'i mdo'i rgya cher 'grel pa* (**Vinayasūtraṭīka*) (D4120): 'u 36b: *lham mkhan dang gdol pa dang g.yung po dang de lta bu rab tu dbyung bar mi bya'o zhes bya ba la/ lham mkhan zhes bya ba ni ko lpags mkhan no/ /gdol pa zhes bya ba ni rigs ngan no/ /g.yung po zhes bya ba ni kla klo'o/ /de lta bu zhes bya ba ni zan bza' bar mi bya ba ste/ de dag ni rab tu dbyung ba'i phyir yang bkag pa nyid yin pas dge tshul nyid la sogs pa dag gi phyir ches shin tu bkag pa yin par rig par bya'o*/ To my knowledge, a Sanskrit version of this text is not extant.

[338] Iwao, 2012: 66.

[339] Richardson, 1983: 137.

[340] This appears to be a misreading for *pukkasa*, which is understandable because graphically *bu*/*pu* may appear very similar.

[341] *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 2624: 2) *sdig srin dang sbal pa lcong mo sogs za mkhan gyi mi rigs la dma' 'bebs byas pa'i ming*/

[342] ibid.: 1354: *<caṇḍala> bshan pa/ sngar rgya gar gyi spyi tshogs nang gi dman pa'i rigs shig*

[343] ibid.: *sngar rgya gar gyi rigs bzhi'i tha ma dmangs rigs las kyang dman pa'i mgar ba dang/ bshan pa/ rngon pa/ nya pa/ thags mkhan/ chom po sogs spyi'i ming*/

guidelines when the topics of admission to the monastery and entry to the monkhood are raised. The texts state limitations based not just on one's societal background, one's physical condition, or one's past conduct, but also on one's economic position, as well as one's place of origin. To a certain extent, however, these limitations are interlinked. In the monastic guidelines, the most common bases on which people are excluded from becoming a monk are 1) one's origins 2) one's economic position, and 3) one's societal background.

Exclusion on the Basis of One's Origins

As explained in Chapter 1, monasteries in the Tibetan Buddhist world had different functions: some were small local monasteries that mainly served their direct community with ritual, prayers and ceremonies, others were large and had a focus on education, some concerned themselves with retreat and practice, and yet others had a strong administrative function. These different monasteries required and attracted different types of monks. Small village monasteries were usually populated with monks from the direct surroundings, while certain large, prestigious and well-positioned monasteries had a more interregional and sometimes even international character.

Because Das accurately noted in 1893 the restrictions with regard to certain people entering the monastery of Tashi Lhunpo, which was both a large educational and administrative institution, he may have seen or known of its bca' yig written in 1876 (*me byi lo*).[344] This work gives a long list of people who were not allowed to enter the monastery as monks.[345] It stipulates that people from the direct surroundings of the monastery could not join Tashi Lhunpo.[346] Sandberg notes that this rule extended to all Gelug monasteries in the Tsang (gTsang) area in Central Tibet: one was not to enter a monastery less than forty miles away from home.[347] A similar restriction was in place at the Bon monastery of Menri; local men were discouraged from joining. Most monks living at Menri monastery before 1959 were said to be from the east of Tibet.[348] Cech's informants said that this rule was to guard against the danger of nepotism. We can perhaps then deduce from this that nepotism was something certain monastic institutions – particularly those that conducted 'business' with the lay-people in the immediate surroundings – tried to avoid.[349]

The reasons that some larger and more prestigious monasteries did not enroll monks from the neighbourhood would therefore seem to be largely pragmatic. Such monasteries were well known for their multi-ethnic make-up. Drepung monastery in the late 17th century had monks from almost all Tibet's neighbours. Its bca' yig, written by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1682, notes the presence of Indian, Newari, Mongolian, Hor and Chinese monks.[350] Even though in Drepung the multi-ethnic monastic society was a *fait accompli*, the Fifth Dalai Lama viewed the presence of so many foreigners as a possible security threat, mentioning that this might result in the

[344] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 35-158.
[345] It should be noted here that people requesting admission to the monastery could either be laymen in search of ordination or monks from other monasteries.
[346] The villages that are named are Zhol, rNams sras and bDe legs. *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 68.
[347] Sandberg, 1906: 122.
[348] Cech, 1988: 70.
[349] Restricting people from entering the monastery on the basis of their regional origins did not just happen in Tibetan Buddhist areas; in Korea, during the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392) not just slaves but the inhabitants of entire regions were prevented from ordination. See Vermeersch, 2008: 155.
[350] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 302.

Bar skor getting set on fire.[351] This mistrust of foreign monks may also be implicit in the admission-policy of Namgyel dratshang (rNam rgyal grwa tshang). Although the only extant set of monastic guidelines does not state any restrictions whatsoever,[352] Thub bstan yar 'phel, the current general secretary (*drung spyi*) of the monastery in Dharamsala, India, informed me that its admission-policy has historically been very strict. He mentioned that traditionally only 'pure' Tibetans (*bod pa gtsang ma*) could become monks there. This was because Namgyel dratshang was the Dalai Lama's monastery, which made it part of the establishment. It could prove harmful to the Dalai Lama's government if a foreign monk would step out of line. Thub bstan yar 'phel noted that since the Dalai Lama's resignation from politics in 2011, this policy, that effectively excludes non-Tibetan Tibetan Buddhist 'Himalayan peoples' (*hi ma la ya'i rigs brgyud*), has become less relevant. However, this rule of only admitting Tibetans is upheld to this day.[353]

In Sikkim, people were also prevented from entering the monastery on the basis of their origins. According to the 'History of Sikkim' (*'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs*) only Tibetan stock was admitted in the Sikkimese 'Pemionchi' (*Pad ma yang rtse*) monastery,[354] thereby effectively excluding the Lepchas, many of whom did practice Tibetan Buddhism. In the *Gazetteer of Sikhim* it is mentioned that the 'novitiate' gets questioned by the disciplinarian and chant-master on his descent and if he has 'a good strain of Tibetan blood he is let off cheaply and vice versa'.[355] As the above citation suggests, the entrance fee was not equal for all. Carrasco notes that in Sikkim in the second half of the twentieth century, all new monks had to pay an admission fee, with the notable exception of those belonging to the nobility.[356] This admission fee was formalized at certain monasteries, but at most monasteries it was not a set fee but rather an offering by the parents.[357] Monasteries were (and are) fundamentally pragmatic: those which were short of monks would invite boys in, for little or no remuneration at all.[358] The likelihood remains, however, that certain, possibly more prestigious, monasteries did demand relatively high fees from monks-to-be and that this fee would be higher for certain groups of people. Theoretically, therefore, in some cases the poorest families would have been unable to afford to send their sons to the monastery, suggesting that another factor that limited access to the monastery was an individual's economic situation.

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[351] ibid.: *bar skor lta bur mi sna tshogs bsdad na me mi brgyag pa'i nges pa'ang mi 'dug*. Also see Jansen, 2013a: 109-39.

[352] This is the *bca' yig* written for Namgyel dratshang by the Seventh Dalai Lama, bsKal bzang rgya mtsho in 1727.

[353]Personal communication, Dharamsala, July 2012. One notable exception to this rule is of course Georges Dreyfus, who was admitted to this monastery at the behest of the Dalai Lama himself, but whose admittance met with some resentment from the other monks. See Dreyfus, 2003: 32.

[354] Carrasco, 1959: 188.

[355] Risley, 1894: 292.

[356] Carrasco, 1959: 188.

[357] For a description of a monk's admission into the monastery see Dreyfus, 2003: 59. It should be noted here that actually entering and living at a monastery and getting officially admitted to the monastery are separate occasions, and it is likely that certain 'monks' living at a monastery at particular times were never actually officially enrolled at the institution. On semi-monks and unofficial monks in Drepung see Jansen, 2013a:109-39.

[358] In some cases a chronic lack of new monks at a powerful monastery resulted in the levying of the 'monk-tax' (*grwa khral*). The topic of 'monk-tax' is in need of more academic attention. I plan to take this up as a research-topic in the near future.

Exclusion on the Basis of One's Economic Situation

It appears that in pre-modern Central Tibet, an ordinary family had to ask their 'landlord' for permission to send a son to the monastery. Surkhang notes that this permission had to come from the district officer (*rdzong dpon*) and that if permission was granted one would be presented with an official document called *'khrol tham*, a 'seal of release'.[359] Eva Dargyay, who bases her research on oral accounts, mentions that consent was always given due to social and religious pressure.[360] Even in the unlikely cases that this consent was everywhere and in all instances given, it still does not mean that ordination was always financially possible. A modern Tibetan-language book on Tshurphu (mTshur phu) monastery gives a rather detailed list of what one was expected to donate upon entrance. At least one communal tea to all the monks (*grwa dmangs*) had to be offered, for which seven round bricks of tea (*ja ril*) and ten *nyag lcags khal* of butter were required. This was called the 'enrolment tea' (*sgrig ja*). The book furthermore gives a long list of what quality scarves (*kha btags*) had to be given to whom by the new monk. This process of providing tea and scarves could then be repeated for the group of monks who shared a home monastery, but only in the case the monk came from another institution.[361] In Dwags po bshad grub gling during the first half of the 20th century, monks arriving from other monasteries to study were required to pay one silver *ṭam ka* upon entering and one such coin upon leaving.[362]

In Phiyang monastery (Phyi dbang bkra shis rdzong) in Ladakh the requirements for the enrolment tea were adjusted to the affluence of the family. I was told that all families could always afford to pay for it.[363] The originally oral version of the monastic guidelines for Sera je, which now has been written down, also mentions that the entry fee depended on what the individual could afford. For a layman to enter the monastery: 'he should offer the master at least a needle and some thread and [if he is well off] a horse or even an elephant.'[364] According to Snellgrove and Richardson however, 'would-be' monks at Drepung, after having made an application with the chief teacher of the house *(kham tshan*) of choice, had to provide a large amount of gifts and offerings just before the start of the Tibetan New Year.[365] The admission fee thus varied greatly over time and among monasteries.

Although it is by no means clear how affordable it was for average-income or poor families to provide such offerings, the above instances show that the monkhood was not as easily accessible as is sometimes imagined. In certain monasteries in Ladakh, a new monk had to have a monk-field (*grwa zhing*). This was a field that was owned and worked by the monk's relatives. The proceeds of the field would go towards the upkeep of the monk.[366] A son of a family that did not hold any land could

[359] Surkhang, 1986: 22.
[360] Dargyay, 1982: 21.
[361] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 257, 8. The guidelines for *dGa' ldan mdo sngags chos 'phel 'chi med grub pa'i byang chub gling* from 1949 also enumerate the gifts a new monk was supposed to offer. See *'Chi med grub pa'i byang chub gling bca' yig*: 649.
[362] Nornang, 1990: 267, n. 16.
[363] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos nyid, Phiyang, August 2012.
[364] Cabezón, 1997: 350.
[365] Snellgrove and Richardson, 1986 [1968]: 238.
[366] Carrasco, 1959: 32, 3. A comparable system appears to have been in place at Dunhuang in the 9th and 10th centuries. Monks and nuns possessed fields and they hired labourers to farm their land, see Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 132.

therefore not become a monk.[367] A so-called monk-field was not always provided by the monk's family: dKon mchog chos nyid, an elderly monk at the Ladakhi Phiyang monastery, was assigned a field by the monastic authorities upon entering the monastery at eight years old in the 1930s. His relatives worked the field for him and he could live off the harvests.[368] This means that in certain monasteries in Ladakh the concept of 'monk-field' was flexible, and that actual ownership of the land was not a requirement, although it is obvious that one had to have relatives able and willing to work the field one was assigned.

A 13th century bca' yig for the monastery of Drigung thil states that an aspiring monk needed to have provisions that would last him at least a year: it is likely that poorer people would not have this kind of resources. This text, one of the earliest works actually (but probably posthumously) called a bca' yig, written by sPyan snga grags pa 'byung gnas (1175-1255), also requests monastic officials (*mkhan slob*) not to ordain people who had not gained permission from their superiors, or those who lacked superiors.[369] This indicates that there were indeed people, perhaps runaway servants, who sought refuge in the monastery, and that their presence was not welcomed. This is in many ways understandable: to allow landowners' servants to become monks would upset the social and economic balance, in particular in Central Tibet, where there tended to be a chronic shortage of labourers.[370] The materials available to me suggest, however, that concerns regarding the entrance to the monastery of 'lowly' individuals and fugitives were not purely of an economic nature.

Exclusion on the Basis of One's Social Position

Persons whose social position was low, persons whose position could not be verified, or those who were simply destitute, were not always welcomed by the monasteries in Tibet.[371] The author of the *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*, mentioned earlier, clearly does not conceive of the monastery as a charitable institution: 'Ordaining all beggars and bad people without relatives will bring the Buddha's Teachings to ruin.'[372] It is clear from this text that the population at Drigung thil monastery was growing rapidly at the time of writing. There were too many people, possibly putting too much of a strain on the local population and its resources. Clearly, the author sPyan snga grags pa 'byung gnas wanted to put a stop to the unregulated population-growth at the monastery. He explains his wish for a more restrictive admission policy as follows:

> These people do all kind of things that are not in accordance with the Dharma here in greater Klungs in Central Tibet (*dbu ru klungs chen*). Because they

[367] To this day, Sri Lankan monasteries also only allow new recruits from the landholding caste, see Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 166. Kemper makes a similar point, saying that except for a brief period of time only members of the Goyigama caste could become monks. See Kemper, 1984: 408. It is not clear, however, whether in contemporary Sinhalese society the decisive factor is one's birth in such a caste or the actual ownership of fields.

[368] Personal communication, Phiyang, August 2012. An interesting parallel to this is a Chinese decree issued in 955, which states those who cannot be supported by their parents may not enter the order. Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 45.

[369] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 248a.

[370] Goldstein, 1986: 96.

[371] Spencer Chapman furthermore notes that a high physical standard was also required for monks-to-be. Spencer Chapman, 1984 [1938]: 179.

[372] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 248a: *sprang po dang mi log bza' med thams cad rab tu phyung bas bstan par snub pa 'dug*

> cause annoyance and bring [us] disgrace, I request that from now on these types of people do not get ordained. If the likes of them do get ordained, then whatever established rules (*bca' khrims*) are made here, it will be as in [the saying] 'if the old cow does not die, there will be no end to the stream of wet [cow-] dung (*snyi slan*, sic: *rlan*).'[373] [Then] whether or not established rules are made, there will not be [any]. This is what it comes down to.[374]

It is possible that the author's main reason for not letting beggars and drifters become monks was that certain people had been abusing the system, becoming monks just so that they could acquire food or even enrich themselves. The problem with these types of people may have been that they lacked a support system, a family, which would ensure a level of social control. This does not mean that the author did not also entertain certain notions of class.

Kawaguchi mentions that people, such as blacksmiths, who would normally have difficulties in gaining access to the monastery, sometimes went to places far away and entered the monkhood having concealed their background.[375] Thus a prospective monk who arrived from further afield and who had no one to vouch for him would often be suspected of belonging to a lower social class. Although in Tibet caste as understood in the Indian context was never an issue of much import, this did not mean that class, in the broadest sense of the word, did not matter.[376] A late 17th century bca' yig for the monastery of Mindröl ling (sMin grol gling) states that people desiring to enter the monastery had to be *rigs gtsang*: this can be glossed as being of a pure 'type', 'class', 'background', 'lineage,' and even 'caste.' This phrase is thus very much open to interpretation. When I mentioned this term to a monk-official from Mindröl ling in India, he immediately suggested that it refers to people from blacksmith and butcher-families.[377] According to Cassinelli and Ekvall, butchers were not allowed to become monks at Sakya monastery. Men from blacksmith families were also not accepted into the monkhood, 'because they disturb the earth gods and make the implements of killing'.[378] Kolås cites a Chinese work, which, having a clear propagandist agenda, states that in pre-modern Tibet all lowly types (*rigs dman*) or impure people (*mi btsog pa*) were barred from entering the monastery. These low ranking people included butchers, blacksmiths, carpenters, leather-workers and corpse-cutters.[379] Spencer Chapman, a mountaineer who visited Lhasa in the early 20th century, despite being rather ignorant of Tibetan culture, writes that those whose line of work had to do with taking life were excluded from becoming a monk. He names tanners, butchers, gunsmiths, body-cutters and leather-workers.[380]

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[373] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig* b reads *snyi rlan*. Due to its vivid imagery the gist of the proverb, despite it not being a very well known one, is quite clear.

[374] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 248a, b*: de 'dra ba rnams kyis dbu ru klungs chen 'dir chos dang mi mthun pa sna tshogs byed/ sun 'don/ zhabs 'dren rnams byed par 'dug pas/ de'i rigs rnams da phyin chad rab tu mi 'byin par zhu/ de 'dra ba rnams rab tu byung na 'dir bca' khrims ci byas kyang/ ba rgan ma shi na snyi slan rgyun mi chad kyi tshul du 'ong bar 'dug/ bca' khrims byas ma byas min 'dug/ rtsa ba 'dir thug nas 'dug*

[375] Kawaguchi, 1909: 435, 6.

[376] The concept of class as developed and defined by socialist thinkers did not exist in Tibet until modern times. In modern Tibetan *gral rim* is a neologism that denotes 'class.' See Kolås, 2003: 181-200, for an examination of notions of class in Tibetan society.

[377] Personal communication with Lama 'Tshul khrims', Dehradun, August 2012. This highly placed monk explicitly requested to remain anonymous; his name here is a pseudonym.

[378] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 269.

[379] Kolås, 2003: 188.

[380] Spencer Chapman, 1984 [1938]: 179.

The 19th century *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*, in addition to excluding would-be monks on the basis of their place of origins, also gives further restrictions to do with social background:

> [Those not allowed are] outcastes (*gdol pa'i rigs*) who deal with killing, such as butchers, fishermen, hunters and those who are here in Tibet considered a bad 'class', namely blacksmiths and tanners, as well as villagers who are after sustenance and clothing, or those who have no land.[381]

The above demonstrates that the author of this bca' yig was well aware of the Vinaya rules, as he refers to outcastes, but he also gives the concept a local gloss by stating 'here in Tibet,' which shows his awareness that certain restrictions had to do with native sensibilities. One set of monastic guidelines, written by the Seventh Dalai Lama (1708-1757) for Sera je, stipulates that 'black people[382] such as blacksmiths, cobblers, beggars and the like may not be allowed to become estate-dwellers (*gzhis sdod*).'[383] Unfortunately, it is not clear whether this refers to monks who do not have 'resident' status or whether it pertains to all people living on grounds owned or managed by the monastery. However, earlier on, the text mentions that people from Kham and Mongolia who already belong to a subsidiary monastery (*gzhis dgon*) may not become residents (*gzhis pa*).[384] This suggests that the restriction in place against blacksmiths, cobblers and beggars becoming estate-dwellers might not necessarily have meant that their admission was refused outright but that, if they were admitted at all, they would maintain an outsider status.

Smiths – and blacksmiths in particular – were traditionally considered to be very low on the societal ladder and to be of a 'polluted' or unclean type (*rigs btsog pa/ rigs mi gtsang ma*). The reason for this pollution is interpreted by some to be because blacksmiths provide the implements of killing, thereby implying that the justification for their low status is a Buddhist one.[385] Other Tibetans answered the question why the smith is despised by saying that it simply had always been that way. However, when pressed to give reasons they commonly answered that it was because the work is dirty and dishonest, that they make weapons, the tools of killing, and because they work metal, the mining of which was prohibited because it was perceived to disturb the spirits, which in turn would bring ill fortune.[386]

The notion of pollution is not merely historical; in certain Tibetan and Himalayan communities it is still very much a feature of everyday life, and similarly the exclusion of people from entering the monkhood on the basis of their birth is something that was, until very recently, a commonly accepted occurrence among some communities of Tibetan Buddhists. In Spiti, boys from the lower classes were not allowed to become monks at the local level. Traditionally only sons of the land-owning and thus tax-paying *khang chen* class were allowed to become monks, while the blacksmiths (*bzo ba*) and Bedas (musicians) could not enter the monastery as

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[381] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 68: *bshan pa/ nya pa/ ling pa sogs srog gcod gi byed pa gdol pa'i rigs dang/ mgar ba/ ko pags mkhan sogs bod 'dir rigs ngan du byed pa rnams dang/ grong gseb pa 'tsho chas kyi phyir dang sa cha ma zin pa* [..]

[382] This phrase (*mi nag*) commonly refers to people who commit non-virtuous actions.

[383] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 579: *mgar ba/ lham mkhan/ sprang po sogs mi nag gi gzhis sdod byed du mi 'jug*

[384] ibid.: 571: *snga sor khams sog gis gzhis pa byed srol med 'dug kyang/ bar skabs su sna tshogs shig byung yod 'dug pas/ da nas bzung khams sog dang/ gzhis dgon yod pa'i rigs kyis gzhis pa byas mi chog*

[385] Fjeld, 2008: 113.

[386] Rauber-Schweizer, 1976: 80, 1.

monks. In 2006, sixteen *bzo ba* boys from Spiti were admitted into Ganden Shartse (dGa' ldan shar rtse) monastery in South India. The rest of the community[387] summoned them to return to Spiti and punished the boys' families with a ban on access to water and fire (*me lam chu lam*), amounting to social ostracism.[388] This ban was only lifted in 2009 after letters of support by the head lama of the local monastery and the Dalai Lama were sent. The community still maintained that the boys of lower backgrounds should only ever become monks in monasteries outside of the Spiti area.[389] It is important to note here that the resistance to admitting people of 'blacksmith' background appears to have originated at the community level and not at the monastery one. This shows the level of influence a lay-community may have on monastic organization.

It can be surmised from the various examples given above that the exclusion of people on the basis of their societal status occurred throughout the ages, in monasteries of all different schools and in a variety of areas. While it is argued that in Tibet 'social inequality was based mainly on economic and political criteria'[390] and that the perception of pollution and the resulting 'outcaste' status is grounded in the present or original socio-economic status of these groups of people,[391] there may be more to it than that.

Reasons for Excluding Entry into the Monastery

It is rare for monastic guidelines to give explanations or justifications why a certain rule is made, aside from citing certain authoritative Buddhist texts. This in itself is telling of both the authors as well as the audiences of this genre of texts: it implies the assumption on the part of the author that his moral authority will not be questioned and that the justifications are already known by the audience. Thus the mere absence of explicit reasoning as to why certain individuals could not become monks does not mean that this policy always sprang forth from mere socio-economic concerns. It is imaginable that specific restrictions were imposed in certain areas so as to not upset the precarious equilibrium of labour and to avoid the monasteries becoming tax havens and shelters for runaway peasants. We also can see quite clearly that monasteries tended to act in accord with the ruling societal norms, as they must have been careful not to upset society in general. However, by making rules and regulations that reiterated these societal norms, the monasteries further solidified existing inequalities. This is much in line with the way in which the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* positions the Sangha in society:

> The Buddhist rule that *dāsa*s ['slaves'], *āhṛtaka*s, etc., could not become Buddhist monks or nuns does not seem simply to accept the larger cultural and legal fact that such individuals had no independence or freedom of action (*svatantra*) and were a type of property; it seems to actively reinforce it. There is in any case no hint of protest or reform.[392]

[387] It is not clear whether this includes the inhabitants of the local monastery.
[388] The same practice occurs in Te, Mustang, where it is called *me bcad chu gcad* (to cut off the fire, to cut off the water). In addition to not being allowed access to water and fire, villagers may not share any food and drink with those boycotted, see Ramble, 2008: 178, 9.
[389] Tsering and Ishimura, 2012: 5-9.
[390] Thargyal and Huber, 2007: 67.
[391] Gombo, 1983: 50.
[392] Schopen, 2010b: 231.

From a purely pragmatic point of view, it made sense to exclude certain people: who in the traditional Tibetan society would have been willing to make donations, or to have prayers and rituals carried out by a monastery filled with beggars and outcasts?[393] It is tempting to look towards the doctrine of karma to explain why people of low birth, and who thus had accumulated less good karma, were not seen fit to become monks. This is, however, an argument that I have never come across reading pre-modern Tibetan texts.[394] I suspect that the aspect of pollution plays a larger role than previously acknowledged. This notion of impurity existed in- and outside of the monastery. The ideas of pollution continued into the monastic institutions not just because they had to accommodate the sensibilities of lay-people, who may have been unwilling to have monks from, for example, a blacksmith family perform the death-rites for their loved ones. In addition to these societal concerns, there are reasons to believe that these 'polluted' people were also excluded due to apprehension related to the presence of local deities, which were often transformed into protectors (*chos skyong*, *chos srung*, *srung ma*, *bstan srung*) where a religious institution was built.

One of the earliest works actually called a bca' yig gives an indication of the problem the presence of impure people could present for the gods living within the physical compound of the community. This short text by Rong zom chos kyi bzang po (1012-1088) was not written for a monastery but for a community of tantric practitioners, who were, in this case, preferably celibate but who were not (necessarily) ordained as monks. It names fives types of people who should not receive tantric vows (*dam tshig*, S. *samaya*,): butchers, hunters, thieves, robbers, and prostitutes. These people are classed as sinful (*sdig can*), but it is furthermore mentioned that one should not sleep alongside persons who are unclean (*gang zag mi gtsang ma*). The text names nine problems that may occur if these people 'and tantric vows are mixed' (*dam tshig bsres na*). One of them is that giving these people vows will upset the protectors and the clean *vajra-ḍākiṇi*s, and from that will arise [unfavourable] circumstances and obstacles.[395] The text then further explains how these unfavourable conditions would affect people's religious progress and how this in turn would debase the Teachings (*bstan pa dman par 'gyur ba*), and that the end result would be strife and disharmony in the community.

There is further evidence that suggests that the behaviour and 'cleanliness' of the religious practitioners and the benevolence of the protectors were seen to be intimately related. The set of monastic guidelines for Mindröl ling concludes by stating that those who go against the rules stipulated in the text will be punished by the protectors and their retinue,[396] and the author gTer bdag gling pa calls for the monks to behave well for that reason.[397] Another bca' yig in fact does not connect the mere keeping of the vows and behaving correctly to the munificence of the protectors,

[393] While I previously used the word 'outcaste' as a translation of *pukkasa*/ *g.yung po*, here the word 'outcast' is more apt, for in the Tibetan context the people who were turned away from the monastery were often those who had been banned or cast out of their village or tribe as a punishment for certain misdeeds.

[394] This is not to say that the model of karma is never used to justify the manner in which lower classes of people are treated in the Tibetan Buddhist world. An example of such reasoning, passed on orally and after 1959, can be found in Mumford, 1989: 47-9.

[395] *Rong zom bca' yig*: 399: *gsang sngags kyi srung ma rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma gstang ma rnams 'khangs te sngags pa rnams la rkyen dang bar chad 'byung ba* [..]

[396] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 313: *mthu stobs kyi dbang phyug dpal mgon lcam dral 'khor dang bcas pas*

[397] ibid.

but suggests that if one does not perform certain rituals or even the style of incantation of prayers according to one's own religious tradition one might invoke the wrath of the protectors. The text in question is a set of monastic guidelines for one part of Samye monastery, called lCog grwa, where the mediums of the oracles (*sku rten*) and the monks who were charged with performing the necessary rituals were based.

These guidelines, written by the Sakya master Kun dga' blo gros (1729-1783), suggest that even though Samye was at that time affiliated to the Sakya school, at some point monks started to carry out certain rituals, in particular those that had to do with the oracles entering the bodies of the mediums, that were derived from other religious traditions. This change, according to the work, upset the oracles, which caused upheaval among the people living in the immediate surroundings. This text, in fact, is primarily an admonition asking the monks to keep to the Sakya tradition. The author mentions that he asked the Dalai Lama (*rGyal dbang mchog gi sku mdun rin po che*)[398] for advice on the situation at Samye and that the latter replied that:

> It is not just at lCog but it has been stated that in any monastic situation adhering steadfastly to one's own original religious tradition – which ever that may be – [ensures that] no enmity damages the tantric vows [linking one] to one's deities and teachers, and that the wrath of the Dharma-protectors is not provoked.[399]

It thus appears that protector-deities were not well disposed to change. The monastery then also had to negotiate the local protectors, who were naturally conservative, on top of maintaining a balanced relationship with the local lay-people and the benefactors, both socially and economically.[400] The monastic guidelines are witness to this process of negotiating the changing times and socio-economic and political contexts, while the overall objective was to maintain the status quo. The adherence to the status quo by Tibetan monastics has often been commented upon by outside observers. I believe that this conservative attitude, in part, has to do with the main self-proclaimed objective of the Sangha as a whole (though not necessarily that of the individual monk), namely to maintain, preserve and continue the Buddhist Teachings. Another major factor in the Tibetan monastics' rejection of most types of change, as alluded to above, is not just grounded in the mere fear of change but also in the trepidation of the local deities' reaction. Their wrath would not necessarily be limited to the monastic compound but might also affect surrounding lay-communities and their harvests.

While the monastic communities saw the preservation of the Teachings as their primary *raison d'être*, the lay-population was probably – and understandably – more concerned with the effect that that preservation would have on the disposition of the local deities, which therefore may have been the perceived fundamental purpose of the presence of the monastery and its monks in the first place – at least, for the local lay-population. This demonstrates the rather fluid relationship between lay-

[398] This must have been the Eighth Dalai Lama 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho (1758-1804).

[399] *bSam yas lcog grwa bca' yig*: 405: *phyir phebs su/ lcog tsam du ma zad dgon gnas gang du 'ang rang rang gi chos lugs gang yin de ma 'gyur ba zhig byung na lha bla ma'i dam tshig la sel mi 'jug pa dang chos skyong gi mkhu ldog mi yong ba'i gnad yin 'dug gsungs shing/*

[400] Schopen makes a similar argument in the context of the Vinaya literature: 'The Vinayas are actually preoccupied, if not obsessed with avoiding any hint of social criticism and with maintaining the status quo at almost any cost. In terms of social norms, the monks who compiled the Vinayas were profoundly conservative men.' See Schopen, 1995a: 478.

people and monastics, which was, in contrast to what is commonly thought, not merely a benefactor-recipient or patron-priest alliance, nor simply a hegemonic relationship, but rather a balance in which both parties had an obligation to care for each other's livelihood and continuance. While social change and progress may have been something on the minds of some people at certain times, this adherence to the status quo was too firmly grounded in concerns regarding the continuity of Buddhism and the sensitivities of the deities for any significant societal change to take place.[401] When changes were implemented in traditional Tibetan society, they most commonly were initiated or authorized by people of high religious standing – exactly those people who were seen to have more control or power over the local deities.[402]

Concluding Remarks

I have argued above that while one of the few possibilities for social mobility in traditional Tibet was the entrance into the monkhood, specific groups of people at certain points in time and in certain areas did not have that option. This gives us a rough idea of the layers of Tibetan society for which social mobility seems to have been severely restricted.[403] Although the emphasis here has been on social mobility, it should be noted that in pre-modern Tibet education most commonly was only available in a monastic context and it is probable that those who were excluded from becoming monks were also usually excluded from formal education.[404] Later non-monastic educational institutions, such as the rTse slob grwa at the Potala, largely followed the organizational patterns of the monasteries, while admission was restricted to the children of aristocrats and government officials.[405]

It should be noted that most of the monasteries mentioned here that excluded certain types of people were in one way or another prestigious and important. This makes it likely that these monasteries, at the time their monastic guidelines were written, could in fact afford to turn away such types of people. It is furthermore noteworthy that, so far, no bca' yig written for monasteries in Amdo and Kham that I have come across contain restrictions on the basis of an individual's social background. This may then confirm the suggestion that historically the east of Tibet had a more egalitarian society[406] but this, for now, is a mere argument from silence.

Three types of grounds on the basis of which it was impossible for people to enter the monastery can be distinguished: 1) a person's birth place (for fear of nepotism) 2) a person's economic situation (for fear of profiteering) 3) a person's social background (for fear of pollution and social concerns). Some of these grounds can be traced to the Vinaya, although the categories found in Vinayic material often underwent a process of cultural translation in order to bring them in line with Tibetan

[401] The question as to whether these deities were merely 'invented' to justify certain political or economic policies is here irrelevant. Hubert and Mauss noted the existence of a *sphère imaginaire de la religion*: arguing that because religious ideas are believed, they exist and they thereby become social facts (cited in Collins, 1998: 73).

[402] One may argue that these people usually also had political power and that it was thus not necessarily their religious position that made change possible. I suspect, however, that in particular in the larger monasteries, the politically and economically significant posts were usually not given to the religiously influential monks, because holding such an office was seen as a potential threat to their religious standing.

[403] There appears to be a parallel between marriage and entering the monkhood. Even though people from various classes intermarried, the lowest strata were endogamous, and were thus excluded from marrying up. This presented these people with another limitation to social mobility.

[404] A similar point is made in the context of contemporary Spiti by Tsering and Ishimura, 2012: 6.

[405] Access to education is further discussed in Chapter 7.

[406] Thargyal and Huber, 2007: 205.

social norms. These social norms were not just based on concerns of a purely pragmatic nature but also on notions of pollution and purity. I put forward the hypothesis that these notions of pollution in turn were closely related to the perceived presence of local deities and protectors, at monasteries and elsewhere. This perceived presence might have – in part – contributed to the aversion to change, regularly commented upon by outside observers of pre-modern Tibetan society. A proverb from Sakya echoes this general attitude: 'no progress could be made unless the gods were offended'.[407] Although the local deities were clearly no advocates for change, they presented lay and monastic Buddhists with a common cause, namely to appease these supernatural yet worldly beings.

When viewing pre-modern Tibetan society from a social history point of view one should never neglect the influence of religious practices and sentiments. These cannot and should not be reduced to being solely politically or economically motivated. In this way one gains a more nuanced understanding of the manner in which the lay and monastic communities interacted with each other. Therefore, by looking at both societal and religious norms and practices and where they intersect one cannot but understand the pre-modern monastery as being part and parcel of Tibetan society, and not – as some still choose to think – outside of it.

[407] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 83.

5. MONASTIC ORGANIZATION

Introduction

In most monastic societies a well-developed organizational structure was in place. Nonetheless 'the Vinaya does not appear to provide for an administrative structure or hierarchy beyond that of seniority.'[408] In the literature of Tibet, the structure of monastic organization is most evident in the monastic guidelines. Little is known of the Tibetan monastic organization from the 9th to 12th centuries. It appears, however, that monasteries became larger during and after the 12th century. It is during this time that the first bca' yig-like prototypes emerge. This may be because larger monasteries were seen to be in need of a more streamlined organizational structure. The bca' yig can then possibly be seen as a benchmark for the institutionalization of monasticism in Tibet. A similar argument is made in the discussion of the relative late emergence of summaries of Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* in Tibet, which may also be seen as indicators of increased monastic institutionalization.[409]

In the case of the monastic guidelines, it is difficult to confirm this hypothesis as a significant number of texts have been destroyed. Looking at the texts that were preserved, we see that the genre emerges only during the 12th century and that a surge in new bca' yig occurred after the establishment of the Ganden Phodrang in 1642, indeed when many monasteries were forced – and volunteered – to 're-organize'. This at least indicates that the guidelines were written when an improved or new monastic organization was felt to be necessary.

Hierarchy and Equality in the Monastery

Equality and hierarchy are often seen as dichotomies.[410] It has also been argued that hierarchy can co-exist with notions or practices of egalitarian behaviour, albeit in a somewhat contradictory fashion.[411] In many Asian countries hierarchy is more highly valued than it is in the West, and Tibet has been no exception.[412] There is no doubt that the Tibetan monastery was hierarchical, in much the same way as Tibetan society itself. Nonetheless, certain elements in the monastic organization, many of which can also be detected in the Vinayic literature, suggest a sense of egalitarianism. The importance of hierarchy in the monastery becomes very clear when looking at the emphasis the bca' yig give on the correct seating arrangements of the monks (*grwa gral*) during the assembly (*tshogs*). While one would perhaps assume that monastic seniority is the decisive factor here,[413] in the case of Tibetan monasteries, the arrangements were much more complex.

In Tashi Lhunpo monastery there even existed a bca' yig that dealt specifically with the seating arrangements during the assembly. Unfortunately, this work does not

[408] Ferguson and Shalardchai, 1976: 104, 5. In the context of monastic Buddhism 'seniority' always refers to the time since ordination and never to age.
[409] Nietupski, 2009: 11.
[410] e.g. Rawls, 1999 [1971]: 264: 'The principle of fair equality of opportunity goes against the ideas of a hierarchical social structure with a governing class.'
[411] See for example Dumont, 1980: 231-8.
[412] Thailand is another example where the concept of hierarchy is associated with order and harmony. See Ferguson and Shalardchai, 1976: 140.
[413] In the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* seniority was the most decisive factor. Schopen describes this as follows: 'This rule of seniority in its broadest form dictated that a monk's access to places, goods, and services be determined by his monastic age or the length of time he has spent as an ordained monk – the longer one had been a monk the closer he got to the head of the line.' Schopen, 2004c: 177.

seem to be extant.[414] More generally, the seating was not just according to seniority and the level of vows taken, but had to do with a number of other factors. One bca' yig from 1802 notes that when arranging the seating 'one should listen to the two disciplinarians, and not be pushy (*ham pa mi byed*) with regard to one's seniority, saying, "I am older,[415] I was here first".'[416] In the heavily populated Drepung monastery not everyone had a seat in the assembly to begin with. In 1682, the Fifth Dalai Lama encouraged the monastery to restrict some people's entry to the assembly hall. Here the author takes both seniority and education-level into account. In addition, he talks of the 'riffraff' (*'bags rengs*) who want to use the possessions of the Sangha (*dkor*).[417] It appears that to deny the riffraff entry to the assembly-hall was not directly motivated by a sense of hierarchy. Instead, it was paramount to denying these people a means of income; wages (*phogs*), tea, and offerings were usually distributed during the assembly. This policy served to disincentivize the less sincere renunciates from crowding the already overpopulated monastery. As it said in the aforementioned text:

> Previously, according to the speeches about the examinations that were made by earlier honourable monks, there was no custom of restricting the riffraff who are after *dkor*. However, nowadays, if all are allowed in, then the junior monks who are involved in study will not be able to enter [the assembly hall]. Therefore, of course not all monks [can enter], and the riffraff who have not been there beyond eight years or those who have not passed the five higher exams should not be let in.[418]

In some cases, authors of monastic guidelines felt that the level of education should take prominence over seniority. The bca' yig written in 1909 for all Sikkimese monasteries reflects this sentiment:

> Monks, both *dge tshul* and *dge slong*, who behave well, get – in addition to general admiration – a seat and a table, even when they are young, and get a double share (*skal*: i.e. wages), the same as the chanting-master and the disciplinarian (*dbu chos*). With the monastery's monetary allowance they should be given rewards (*gsol ras*) annually, taking into account their particular conduct (*byed babs dang bstun*).[419]

This is, to a certain extent, a departure from the norm, for it was common that status (here in the form of a seat, a table, and an extra allowance) was conferred on the basis of seniority and official appointment. The author Srid skyong sprul sku (1879-1914) here values behaviour over the traditional sense of hierarchy.

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[414] This text called *Tshogs kyi bzhugs gral bca' yig chen mo* (the Great Monastic Guidelines on the Seating Arrangements at the Assembly) is mentioned in *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 87.

[415] Here *nga che* could also mean 'I am more important' rather than 'older'.

[416] *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig*: 402: [..] *chos khrims pa gnyis kyi ngag bkod ltar ' khod pa ma gtogs/ nga che nga gnyan slebs snga rim gyi ham pa mi byed*/ Here *gnyan* is read as *sngon*.

[417] This concept is further elaborated in Chapter 6.

[418] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 301: *sngar lha btsun cha bas rgyug tshad mdzad pa'i gtam tsam las dkor phyir 'breng mkhan gyi 'bags rengs bkag srol med kyang da cha tshang mar byas na chos grwa 'grim mkhan gyi btsun chung mi tshud 'dug pas grwa pa gang yin brjod med dang'bags rengs kyi rigs lo brgyad dang rgyug tshad mtho lnga ma longs na mi gtong/*

[419] *'Bras ljongs bca' yig*: 270: [..] *dge slong dang/ dge tshul tshul mthun byung na/ spyir gzigs pa che ba'i khar/ gdan dang lcog rtse 'phar kha/ grwa gzhon gras yin kyang dbu chos dang 'dra mnyam gyi gnyis skal// dgon pa'i dngul phogs thog nas lo re bzhin byed babs dang bstun gsol ras babs gzigs gnang rgyu/*

On some occasions, lay-people participated in major rituals at certain monasteries. One early 20th century *sgrig yig* that is only concerned with the correct execution of the *sKu mchod 'phrul thos grol chen mo* ritual[420] also notes that the attending lay-people should be seated according to their knowledge while always behind the monks: 'the *upāsaka* lay-people sit at the end of the row, and are properly arranged according to their training.'[421] In fact, the Bhutanese seating-arrangement ritual (*bzhugs gral phun sum tshogs pa'i rten 'brel*) initiated in the mid 17th century, in which both lay- and monk-participants were carefully seated according to their religious, political and social status, is said to replicate the seating order of the monastery, which was based on both seniority and learning. The ritual was praised as creating hierarchy and order in a society where these aspects were seen to be lacking.[422]

As reflected in the above given fragment on Sikkim, monks with official positions (such as disciplinarian or chanting-master) are also found higher up in the hierarchy, and while most bca' yig do not explicitly mention this, reincarnations would also have a better seat in the assembly. In the *'Bras spungs bca' yig*, for example, the Fifth Dalai Lama stipulates that the elder monks sit at the front (*gral stod*) according to seniority, the intermediate ones sit in the middle (*gral rked*), while the 'riffraff that is after monastic wealth (*dkor*)' sit at the back (*gral gsham*).[423] In addition to the level of education, monastic seniority, and official position there appears to have existed another benchmark, which determined an individual's place in the assembly:

> From now on, the purity of the *samāya* and the vows shall be examined on a yearly basis. And when impurities do occur the individuals, whether they are high or low, up until the level of lamas and incarnations (*sprul sku*), are not to enter the great assembly. Judgement will be made, commensurate to the severity and the number of the impurities, as to whether individuals entirely forfeit their entitlement to inclusion in the assembly row, or whether they retain [a place] in the side-assembly.[424]

[420] Not much is known about this ritual. Judging from the name, it can be assumed that it was some kind of commemorative ritual held in Pelyul monastery, which may have involved the recitation of the *Bar do thos grol* ('The Tibetan Book of the Dead').

[421] *Thos grol chen mo sgrig yig*: 385: *dge bsnyen khyim pa rnams gral mjug phyogs te bslab gral ma nor bar sgrigs*. The word here translated as 'training' (*bslab*) is ambiguous, for in monastic contexts it often also refers to the vows (S. *śikṣā*).

[422] Penjore, 2011: 17.

[423] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 300, 1: [..] *grwa rnying yongs grags gral stod/ bar shar ba rnams gral rkad/ dkor phyir 'breng mi 'bags rengs rnams gral gsham*/ The exact meaning of the phrase *dkor phyir 'breng mi 'bags rengs rnams* is not clear, but it is definitely very pejorative, which my translation tries to convey. *'bags* means polluted or degenerated, while *rengs* can mean stiff or obstinate.

[424] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 194: *lar phan chad nas lo re bzhin dam sdom la gtsang dag zhib cha bgyid nges pas bla sprul man mtho dman gang nas ma dag pa byung tshe tshogs chen du mi tshud nges la/ ma dag pa tshab che chung dang mang nyung la dpag nas tshogs gral la gtan nas mi dbang ba dang/ zur tshogs tsam la dbang ba bcas rjes bcad/* The word *zur tshogs* could have multiple meanings. It may refer to a less prominent spot (possibly on the 'side-rows') when assemblies are held, but it might also indicate a less important assembly, i.e. a different occasion altogether. The latter gloss is more likely, because in the monastic guidelines for Phabongkha monastery the context clearly indicates that *zur tshogs* is a minor assembly that does not require the whole monk-community, *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 246.

The level of monastic purity thus could also decide where or even whether a monk could sit in the assembly-hall.[425] All in all, we can surmise from this that the (spatial) hierarchy is dependent on the level of perceived qualities of the monks and that these qualities were specified in various ways throughout time and in different monasteries. While this emphasis on the correct order of seating is found throughout Tibetan society,[426] the ordering on the basis of the individual monk's qualities is likely to be connected to the Buddhist idea that the worthier the recipient of offerings (*mchod gnas*) is, the more merit the donor (*yon bdag*/ *sbyin bdag*, S. *dānapati*) gains. Thus, in the monastery, those who sit in a prominent place get served first and monks in the front row are also likely to receive larger and better shares of offerings.[427]

According to Gombo's experience, for the – mostly married – lamas in the Nyingma religious institution in his village the seating arrangement was meant to be according to learning, age, and seniority: 'in practice, however, their seating positions reflected their social backgrounds.'[428] In Chinese Chan monasteries, the rector (*wei na* 維那), which may be equivalent or similar to the Indic *karmadāna* or *vihārapāla*,[429] was in charge of guarding the hierarchy and seniority at the monastery, which in practice meant that he needed to know the correct seating order.[430] While I am not aware of a particular office in the Tibetan context that is similar to this, overseeing the seating arrangements was generally the task of the disciplinarian and his assistants. The importance attached to the correct order of seating demonstrates that it reflected a particular value system that is shared with other types of Buddhist monastic communities throughout Asia.

While the make-up of the monastery is thus thoroughly hierarchical, at the same time there is a sense of egalitarianism in that important positions, such as that of the disciplinarian, were chosen by means of voting. The apparent presence of elections within the Vinaya is regularly commented upon: when the Sangha met, a chairman had to be elected. This post was valid only until the end of the meeting. According to Pachow, all *bhikṣu*s had an equal right to vote.[431] In Tibet, candidates (*'os mi*) for an official position would be selected by the general monastic office (*bla spyi*). However, voting was not open to all: in some cases, only monks with a certain level of education could cast their vote and in others, only those who had been living in the monastery for at least ten years were able to do so. While in the Vinaya having the status of *bhikṣu* appears to have been a prerequisite for voting, ordination status (*dge tshul* or *dge slong*) does not seem to have played a significant role in the Tibetan context.[432] That the voting process did not always take place in an honest fashion is

[425] There is a parallel here with the narrative found among others in the *Cullavagga* IX, in which the Buddha perceives the presence of someone in the assembly who was not pure. This impure person is explained as someone without vows and without precepts. This man was not allowed to partake in the recitation of the *prātimokṣa*, and was taken out of the assembly, see Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, vol. IX, 1881-1885: 299-319.

[426] This is also apparent in Tibetan wedding ceremonies; see Jansen, 2010.

[427] In the Tibetan context, the advantage of sitting in front is obvious: the butter in the tea that is served during the assembly usually collects on top (partially due to the cold climate), thus those who are first in line get the portion high in caloric value, whereas the tea of those at the back contains hardly any butter.

[428] Gombo, 1983: 52.

[429] For the terms *karmadāna* and *vihārapāla* see Silk, 2008: 127-35; 136-46. The Indic use of these terms seems to diverge significantly from the 12th century Chinese one.

[430] Yifa, 2002: 151-3.

[431] Pachow, 2000 [1955]: 230.

[432] This information is largely based on my fieldwork and pertains to the contemporary situation in Namgyel dratshang, Nechung, and Gyütö. The bca' yig I have read hardly report on this voting

suggested by the stipulation regarding the collection of nominations of candidates or actual 'absentee ballots,' given in the 19th century bca' yig for Tashi Lhunpo:

> The tantric lamas who hold office (*las sne*) need to appoint new functionaries (*las tshan*). And when the lists of nominations (*'os tho*) of those lamas who had to go to faraway places in China, Mongolia, Kham or Tibet are collected, they [the appointing lamas] need to be honest and collect them, having taken the Three Jewels as a witness. They may not, out of partiality (*phyogs lhung gis*), do things that will harm or help individuals.[433]

In the case of Ganden monastery, the office of disciplinarian is now elected by the general office (*bla spyi*) alone. Previously, however, the Tibetan government had the authority to appoint monks to this post.[434] Goldstein mentions that the government also chose the abbots of the Three Great Seats from a number of candidates that were preselected by the monasteries themselves.[435] Positions of any consequence were almost always temporary, however, which meant that the governing class fluctuated frequently and allowed for internal socio-economic mobility that was nonetheless limited in many ways.

Social Stratification within the Monastery: the *Chos mdzad* and other Cases

The privilege of sitting at the front of the row was not always 'earned' by being educated, serving the monastery, or being an incarnation of some variety. This privilege could, in some cases, also be bought or obtained through other means. Thus, while the view that entering a monastery would do away with one's previously held status in lay society is widespread,[436] there are indications that social and socio-economic stratification was a reality among the monks in Tibet. Stein notes casually and without providing any sources that 'social classes are maintained in the monasteries'[437] Likewise, Carrasco contends that most of the class differences within lay society were carried over into 'the church'.[438] Even though it is very likely that merely entering the monastery would not even out any existing class differences within the lay-community, not much research on the social dynamics within the monasteries has been conducted to date.

In Chapter 4, the need to pay 'fees' to enter the monastery was briefly discussed. Alternatively, the family of the prospective monk could pay additional fees, taking the shape of offerings made to the whole community of monks. With these fees they could buy their son certain privileges. The monks entering the monastery in that way were sometimes called *chos mdzad*, which translates as 'practitioners of the dharma'. In the Gelug school these 'monk-sponsors', as Dreyfus calls them, often

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process. That voting is a continuation of older practices and not influenced by modern (or Western) processes is speculative, but, in my opinion, likely nonetheless.

[433] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 85: *sngags pa'i bla ma las sne rnams nas de kha'i las tshan gsar bkod dang/ rgya sog khams bod kyi bla ma phyogs thon dgos rigs kyi 'os tho bsdu skabs kyang drang 'brel 'os nges dkon mchog dpang btsugs te bsdu ba las phyogs lhung gis so so'i phan gnod sgrub byed du 'gro rigs mi byed/*

[434] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 86: *de ni bla spyis 'dem bsko byed kyin yod/ sngar bod sa gnas srid gzhung gis 'dem bskor the gtogs byed kyin yod pa dang/*

[435] Goldstein, 1968: 220.

[436] Michael naively states that 'for the monk or nun social origin was, of course, no longer relevant.' See Michael, 1982: 119.

[437] Stein, 1972 [1962]: 140.

[438] Carrasco, 1959: 216.

came from aristocratic families and were usually housed in the more influential 'monastic households' (*bla brang*), 'which were like small dynasties of monastic administration'.[439] While these monks tended to be aristocrats, it is not the case that they were always noblemen: often they were simply wealthy. In Sera je they were, like the incarnations, also allowed to wear fine wool on the backs of their garments.[440] The main exemption that these monks were granted was that they did not have to carry out *gzhon khral* (literally: youth tax) [441] or *gsar khral* (new tax); menial tasks,[442] such as sweeping and fetching water, that junior monks had to carry out for the duration of one or two years. While it does not use the term *chos mdzad*, a recently written history of Tshurphu monastery describes the process of getting exempted from performing these tasks:

> Furthermore, some relatives of a newly enrolled monk, in order to prevent him from having to perform youth tax (*gzhon khral*) for the studying monks, held something called 'the burning light of the message: a confession to the rows [of monks]' (*gral bshags*), during the assembly of the Sangha. This involved giving an enrolment tea (*sgrig ja*) and along with that there was the custom of giving each member of the Sangha (*dge 'dun*) an offering of money. Previously this was half a silver *zho* each,[443] but later on this became, in Tibetan currency, five *zho* for each member as an offering of money. Then one did not have to perform junior tax.[444]

In theory, this could be seen as a way to allow these monks to spend more time studying, but this suggestion was vehemently denied by my monk informants, who were generally dismissive of the *chos mdzad*. Re mdo sengge explains:

> The *chos mdzad* was a position in the monastery that could be bought; it had nothing to do with the level of education. It was for the rich. The advantage was that one had more rights (*thob thang*): one did not have to work and one would get a prominent place in the monk-rows (*gral*). It was not for incarnations, except for the very minor ones, who would not get a good place in the rows to begin with.[445]

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[439] Dreyfus, 2003: 51.

[440] Cabezón, 1997: 348. The original text not given in Cabezón's translation reads: *bla ma sprul pa sku dang grwa tshang gi chos mdzad sogs kyi sku 'gag rgyab sha' mther* [sic: *shwa ther*?] *dra ma lhen gtong chog pa dang*/ See *Tshogs gtam chen mo*: 26. This wool is in all likelihood comparable in quality to pashmina or shatoosh. Re mdo sengge, dKon mchog chos nyid and Blo bzang don grub all claim that the robes the *chos mdzad* wore were the same as those of the ordinary monks.

[441] *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 2432: *grwa pa gsar pa byas nas las sne zhig ma byung bar chu len rgyu dang rdog khres dbor rgyu/ ja blug rgyu/ spyi khang la gad phyis byed rgyu sogs kyi bya ba byed dgos par gzhon khral zer/*

[442] This is also noted in Dagyab, 2009: 111. In Tshurphu this tax was also called *grwa khral* (monk tax), see *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 259.

[443] Literally it says *skar rnga* [sic: *lnga*]: five *skar ma*, which made up half a *zho*. One *zho* is a tenth of one *srang*.

[444] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 258: *yang sgrig zhugs grwa pa rnams kyi khyim bdag 'ga' zhig gis gsar zhugs nas gsham thab* [sic: *thabs*] *bslab gral gyi gzhon khral rgyugs mi dgos pa'i phyir du dge 'dun 'dus tshogs rnams la bshags 'bul snyan sgron gyi mtsho byed (gral bshags) zhes pa sgrig ja dang mnyam du dge 'dun rer sngar lam phyag 'gyed dngul kyang zho med skar rnga* [sic: *lnga*] *re 'bul srol 'dug kyang phyis bod dngul srang med zho lnga re phyag 'gyed du phul phyin gzhon khral rgyugs mi dgos/*

[445] Personal communication with Re mdo sengge, Dharamsala, July 2012.

Blo bzang don grub lived in Drepung monastery for five years until he was forced to leave and return to his native Ladakh in 1959. His description of the *chos mdzad* concurs with the above, while it also suggests that a prominent place in the rows was only allotted to the *chos mdzad* in the monastic house (*kham tshan*), but not in the main assembly:

> They were often of aristocratic background. Their quarters (*shag*) were much nicer. The physical space was the same, but they had the means to furnish the rooms nicely. They did not have to do chores: they were not used to working hard. There were other exemptions as well; they did not have to go to the assembly – well... maybe except when there was a major assembly (*tshogs chen po*). They also did not have to go to the debate ground (*chos rwa*): they could just hang out. When a communal tea (*mang ja*) was served at the house (*kham tshan*) they could sit at the head of the row (*gral mgo*). But this was not the case at the college level (*grwa tshang*). There the older monks got to sit at the head. Their special treatment often did not do much good for their studies. The poorer ones (*nyam chung*) usually made the better students: they worked much harder. The life of the *chos mdzad* was just easier, not better. [446]

While the term *chos mdzad* is not employed by Cech, she notes that a lama (here: a monk) could 'buy off' his duties by providing tea for each monk. Thus, in the case of two monks who had taken their vows on the same day, the one who had had the financial means to give a communal tea-round got seniority over the one who had not.[447]

Actual references to the *chos mdzad* are rare in the monastic guidelines. In fact, the bca' yig for Tashi Lhunpo appears to be the only set of monastic guidelines, apart from the *Tshogs gtam chen mo*, that explicitly mentions the title. Das states that monks in Tashi Lhunpo bore titles reflecting their social status. He writes that when the boys who were to be ordained took the vows, the 'Grand Lama' (i.e. *Ta bla ma*) added certain titles of aristocratic distinction to the names of those from the upper classes: old nobility and descendants of earlier tantric families were given the title of 'shab-dung' [**zhabs drung*] and sons of land-holders and high officials were called 'je drung' [**rje drung*], the class of gentlemen, and the 'sha-ngo' [**zhal ngo*] family were called 'choi-je' [**chos mdzad*].[448] Again, while Das does not give the source for this information, it is quite clear that, in one way or the other, the *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig* was available to him, since it says in this text:

> Then with regard to the *gtong sgo*:[449] the certified incarnations; the *zhabs drung* whose tantric practitioner (*sngags bon*) lineages are intact; the *rje drung*,

[446] Personal communication with Blo bzang don sgrub, Spituk, August 2012.
[447] Cech, 1988: 77.
[448] Das, 1965 [1893]: 8.
[449] This word may mean different things in different context. The *Tshig mdzod chen mo* describes it as meaning either 'cost' (*'gro song*) or the activity of regularly giving ordinary material goods toward a certain cause (*gtong yul nges pa can la 'char can zang zing gi rgyun gtong ba'i byed sgo*). More specifically, it refers to the gifts the graduate handed out to the monk-population in the event of receiving a certain 'academic' title. Colloquially, the word is most commonly known as the contributions monks need to make when receiving their *dge bshes* title. Furthermore, it may indicate simply the whole ceremony of being granted a title. Although the *Tshig mdzod chen mo* suggests that this custom is a thing of the past, it is still in place in exile monasteries (p. 1049: *sngar dge bshes kyi ming btags byed ched du nges par gtong sgo rgya chen po zhig gtong dgos pa*).

> who are the monks with *sger rigs* origins,[450] and the *chos mdzad* who have come from a lineage of *zhal ngo,*[451] get [their] titles from the moment they enter the monastery. Aside from these people, unless it is definite they have really earned it, they are not to be given [titles] at will.[452]

The author thus singles out the titles that are given to certain people on the basis of their birth,[453] while specifying that other titles, and in particular academic ones, should be bestowed with the utmost care. He goes on to say that only those who are genuine aristocrats or from Kham or Mongolia, in other words, the incarnations and the others, mentioned above, may hold an aristocratic *gtong sgo* (*sku drag gi gtong sgo*).[454] This ceremony may indeed refer to the price (in the guise of gifts to the Sangha) that was paid in order for those from good families and those from areas such as Kham and Mongolia to obtain a position of privilege. Again, the author states how certain privileges could be bought, whereas others could only be earned:

> Even when these people have held this aristocratic *gtong sgo*, other than [exemptions from] the junior tax (*gsar khral*) and the living arrangements, like before, this will not satisfy any expectations with regard to any of the exams. Doing things like having a special tea in order to get certain exemptions or in order to quickly move up from the ranks of the ordinary monks has been gradually put a stop to long ago. Therefore this may in no way be done.[455]

This suggests that in the Tashi Lhunpo of the late 19th century, the attempt to move up in the monastic hierarchy by offering financial incentives was persistent and occurred with some regularity. Titles, like that of *chos mdzad* were – as my informants also suggest – often not more than ways to get an easier life in the monastery.

Having such a title was not always merely ceremonial, however. In the early 20th century the *drung dkyus*, a type of middle-rank government official was drafted as a sort of tax from the Three Great Seats by the Ganden Phodrang government. It appears that these officials were chosen from among the *chos mdzad* monks. The reason given for this was that the position was unpaid and these wealthier monks could be supported by their families. As a *drung dkyus* one could climb up to more elevated positions within the government,[456] which allowed the nobility to get an even stronger foothold in the political arena. While Goldstein does not link the two, it cannot be a coincidence that at that time some aristocratic families were made to send

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[450] Das' gloss of *sger rigs* is correct here. It must refer to *sger pa*, referring to private landowners and the lower aristocracy. In other cases *sger pa* indicated all (lay-) nobility. Travers, 2011: 155-174.
[451] This may refer to either a type of hereditary chiefs or to military officials.
[452] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 73, 4: *'di'i gtong sgo'i skor la/ bla sprul thob nges/ sngags bon gyi rgyud ma nyams pa'i zhabs drung/ sger rigs khungs btsun gyi rje drung/ zhal ngo'i brgyud las gson nges pa'i chos mdzad de/ 'di dag kyang thog ma grwa sar 'jug skabs nas zung/ dngos gnas thob nges yin na ma gtogs rang snang gang shar gyis ming btags mi chog cing/*
[453] This is not dissimilar to what was common practice during the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392) in Korea. The sons of the concubines of the king would often become monks. When they got ordained they automatically obtained a high administrative rank (i.e. *samjung* 三重). Vermeersch, 2008: 171.
[454] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 74: *'di'i skabs su'ang bla sprul sogs sku drag dang khams sog bcas dngos gnas yin na ma gtogs sku drag gi gtong sgo mi gtong/*
[455] ibid.: *de dag yin nges rnams nas sku drag gi gtong sgo btang yang gsar khral dang sdod gnas sngar rgyun ltar las dpe rgyugs spyi 'dre la re khengs byed sa med cing/ dkyus ma'i rigs sgrigs spo mgyogs khyad sogs kyi ched khyongs ja gtong rgyu sogs bcad mtshams sngon ma na rim du bkag pas gtan nas mi byed/*
[456] Goldstein, 1968: 156, 7.

an unspecified number of sons to the Three Great Seats so that they could become monk officials there (as a sort of monk tax).[457] The same families presumably were rewarded for their contribution through their sons being given the opportunity to exert influence on a state level.

Gombo argues that while one's family's socio-economic background did, to a large extent, determine one's position in the monastic institution, this was less pronounced in the larger monasteries that had a strong focus on learning.[458] Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to gauge the extent of this type of monastic social stratification within the smaller monasteries, examples given above demonstrate that – while it is possible that this type of class disparity was less prominent there – a lot could be gained through entering one of the larger monastic institutions as a member of the higher strata of society.

The history of Buddhist monasticism in, for example, Thailand, shows that the monastic life was at a certain point in time only attractive to the poorer people: the permanent monks were (and are) almost invariably the sons of farmers or poor city-dwellers.[459] As we have seen in the previous chapter, to have a monastery consisting of just the poor and needy was seen in Tibetan societies as detrimental to the continuation of the Sangha. In order to attract sponsors, it needed to have not just good but also well-connected monks. The position of *chos mdzad* made becoming a monk for those used to a life of relative luxury less unattractive. By incentivizing the entry of wealthier and aristocratic monks, the monastery opened itself up to ties with their affluent lay-relatives and friends. In a way, the incentives offered by monasteries to join up were balanced against the disincentives developed to ward off the less influential and affluent. This policy clearly did nothing to improve education or discipline, but did strengthen the bonds between the monastery and wealthier lay-people. Having an ongoing connection with the higher layers of society could ensure the survival of the monastery. A level of inequality along with the contempt many ordinary monks obviously felt towards these *chos mdzad* may have been seen by the monastic administrators as a small price to pay.

The Size of the Monastery, Discipline, and Social Control

But do not take as important for there to be many monks [..] *Leading a large assembly of monks but being outside the Way is completely wrong.*[460]

McCleary and van der Kuijp state that 'unlike European medieval monastic organizations, the Tibetan monastic system retained kinship as the basic unit of social organization.'[461] Taken at face value, this statement contradicts the opinion voiced by Goldstein and Tsarong that 'the basic building block in the monastic system is not a family-type social group but rather the solitary monk compartmentalized as an autonomous social and economic unit.'[462] In secondary literature, there seems to exist some contradictory information with regard to the monastery's social organization and the position of the individual monk therein: in some cases it is argued that the family-situation is replicated within a monastery,[463] while others are of the opinion

[457] ibid.: 155.
[458] Gombo, 1983: 65, n. 10.
[459] Bunnag, 1973: 43.
[460] Dōgen, Leighton, and Okumura: 156.
[461] McCleary and van der Kuijp, 2010: 164.
[462] Goldstein and Tsarong, 1985: 21.
[463] Mills, 2000: 17-34.

that a Tibetan monk is often seen as a person with a high level of individuality (in particular when compared to lay-people with comparable social backgrounds) and even that Tibetan Buddhism itself affords a 'high degree of individualism.'[464] The level of individuality and group identity was no doubt also dependent on the size of and the level of control at the monastery. From Welch's research one can generally conclude that in China in the early 20th century, the bigger monasteries had more control and kept strict discipline, whereas the smaller temples had a more relaxed attitude.[465] The observance of the rules was heavily dependent on the contact with the lay-people and the economic situation of the monastery:

> Strict observance of the spirit as well as of the letter of the rules could most often be found at monasteries that had their own landed income and hence did not depend on mortuary rites; that were not an object of pilgrimage and did not welcome lay people to dine or spend the night; and that were so large that the only alternative to strictness was total disorder.[466]

There exist two divergent views on the correlation between a monastery's size and the level of monastic discipline. The one currently held by many (lay) Tibetans in exile is that discipline is (and was) better in the larger monasteries,[467] whereas at the beginning of the 20th century, Bell observes the exact opposite.[468] This may be because Bell was in Tibet during a particularly tumultuous time when the larger monasteries were asserting their political influence. Miller connects the position of the monastery within society to the level of discipline. Discipline then was a way for the institution to 'enforce its demands and obtain the support needed for large numbers of non-productive residents.' She also notes that the small monasteries have relied more on the communities in their immediate surroundings and were more likely to show a relaxation of 'orthodox dGe lugs pa practices.' She connects this relaxation of the rules to the economic needs of monks in local (read: poorer) monasteries to survive, which necessitated some monks to do farm work or trading.[469]

Goldstein reports that the large monasteries neither placed severe restrictions on comportment nor did they demand educational achievements.[470] Assumedly there was simply less social control in bigger communities. One of my informants claimed that while the moderately sized nunnery did not need a bca' yig, his home monastery Sera je in South India did because 'it is a very big place.'[471] Some of the bca' yig display the relative strictness of the monastery in terms of discipline. The *'Bras spungs bca' yig* is a witness to the problems overpopulation caused in Drepung, arguably once the largest monastery in the world. Drepung's massive population of monks may have been a contributing factor to the challenges the monastery faced when its guidelines were written, such as the members of monastic houses (*kham tshan*) and the smaller compartments therein (*mi tshan*) fighting with each other. The guidelines that the author, the Fifth Dalai Lama, composed are clearly geared towards

[464] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 74.
[465] Welch, 1967: 116, et seq.
[466] ibid.: 128.
[467] Dagpa for example, notes that '[d]iscipline, hierarchy and studies characterized the large Tibetan monasteries [..].' Dakpa, 2003: 177.
[468] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 199.
[469] Miller, 1958: 250.
[470] Goldstein, 2009: 12.
[471] Personal Communication with rGan Rin chen, Dharamsala, August 2012. Presumably, a smaller size institution could also rely more on information getting passed on orally, see Chapter 3.

curbing the unbridled growth at the monastery during the late 17th century. The uncontrolled nature of the monk-increase was seen to be the root of the problem, though not the size itself. [472] The Eighth Panchen Lama bsTan pa'i dbang phyug (1855-1882) notes that in the smaller monasteries affiliated with Tashi Lhunpo discipline was much more relaxed:

> The leader (*mgo 'doms = sgo 'doms*) of the religious discipline should – without merely paying lip-service – act in accord with the contents of the established rules (*bca' sgrigs*) of this monastic establishment (*gdan sa*). Not only that but the lamas[473] of each village monastery will also from now on enforce the ground rules (*rtsa 'dzin*)[474] regarding what is entirely prohibited. [475] In particular, the greater laxity (*bag yangs che ba*) in the village monasteries (*gzhis dgon*) has meant that monks from these village monasteries (*gzhis byed kyi grwa pa*) distribute alcohol (*chang*) at the assembly and also [distribute] the meat of livestock (*nor lug*) which have been earmarked for the ceremonial offering (*gtong sgo*) , i.e. the many things that are totally at variance with the Buddhist way (*nang pa sangs rgyas pa'i lugs*).[476]

Here, the author observes that certain practices, such as openly drinking alcohol and accepting livestock, which presumably would be slaughtered on behalf of the monastery, were not uncommon in the smaller monasteries. The above-cited section is furthermore significant because it shows that this text also addresses the minor monasteries and their leaders, or assumes that some of his audience are the future monastic heads of these village monasteries.

The greatest differences in discipline between monasteries are perhaps most pronounced not when it comes to size but when the overall orientation of the monastery is concerned. Smaller monasteries that were related to larger institutions often saw the brightest and most ambitious monks leave to further their studies. This situation was thus more than a brain drain; it also left the local monastery with those people who were less motivated to be good monks.[477] The discipline at monasteries that mainly ritually served the local lay-population were, as the passage above shows, often more in danger of slipping, perhaps exactly because of closer ties to the lay-community, but possibly also because educational standards were lower. Many bca' yig demonstrate the corruptive force that lay-people could present, while the same

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[472] Jansen, 2013a: 118-23.

[473] Here, the word *bla ma* must refer to the heads of the village monasteries.

[474] This must refer to the most basic of rules that monks needed to adhere to. It may even be the case that these refer directly to what is morally right, regardless of the nature of location of the monastery.

[475] With regard to '*phyin chad'*, the word (also: *da phyin chad*), which translates as 'from now on', signifies a break with previous practices. It very clearly addresses matters that were actually taking place. The author then in effect says: 'I want this to stop right now!' The phrase is a good indicator of when the author leaves behind his vision of the ideal monastery and actually attempts to put an end to certain practices.

[476] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 82, 3: *gdan sa 'di kha'i bca' sgrigs don bzhin chos khrims kyi mgo 'doms kha tsam min pa mdzad dgos par ma zad/ khyad par gzhis dgon khag 'di bag yangs che bar brten/ gzhis byes kyi grwa pa la tshogs su chang gtong ba dang/ gtong sgo'i rgyur dmigs nor lug ched du bcad pa'i shas gtong sgo gtong ba sogs nang pa sangs rgyas pa'i lugs dang ye nas mi mthun pa du ma 'dug pa 'di rigs/ phyin chad gzhis dgon gang sar gtan nas mi byed pa'i rtsa 'dzin bla ma so sos rgyun 'khyongs su byed/*

[477] This is also noted by Gyatso in the context of contemporary Gelug monasteries: 'Part of the problem within the Gelug school at least, is the dominance of the larger monasteries, which inadvertently does something of a disservice to the smaller ones.' Gyatso, 2003: 228.

texts also call on the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship with, and a good reputation among, the lay-population. The correlation between the level of discipline and the contact with lay-people on the one hand and that of discipline and the monastic economic situation on the other is important to examine, for it shows the degree of dependency between the unordained and the ordained.[478]

The Managerial Monks and their Qualifications

The terminology denoting the people who hold official positions in the monastery has varied. One of my respondents, a monk-official originally from Chamdo (Chab mdo), calls the monasteries' officials (*dgon pa'i las byed*) 'the representatives' (*'thus mi*).[479] Colloquially, among monks in exile perhaps the most commonly used term is simply *las byed*,[480] a word that is also used for those (lay-people or monks) who hold any kind of government job. In the Tashi Lhunpo of the 19th century the monks in office were called *rtse drung*, whereas those in a lower position were called *las tshan pa*.[481] In the monastic guidelines the terms *las tshan pa*,[482] *las sne*,[483] *las thog pa*,[484]*las 'dzin*,[485] and *mkhan slob*[486] all occur, each having a slightly different connotation. We see that particularly the earlier bca' yig contain idiosyncratic, and now obsolete, titles. The *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*, written between 1235 and 1255, displays at least two unusual terms denoting certain official posts, namely *sgom pa ba* and *dpon las*:

> Now, from the point of how to live correctly, I request the general Sangha, but also the *sgom pa ba*,[487] along with the *dbu mdzad pa* and the twenty *dpon las*,[488] to do what I tell them.[489]

Later, in particular after the 17th century, a more standardized and homogenous set of titles develops. This may also have to do with the fact that later (post 17th century) bca' yig are often primarily directed toward the officials, whereas the earlier ones speak more directly to the general populace of monks. The growth of monks in the 17th

[478] This relationship is examined in more detail in Chapter 7.
[479] Personal communication with mKhan po Chos dbyings lhun grub, Bir, August 2012.
[480] This term is not just a modern one: it is mentioned in the bca' yig written in the late 16th century, *dPal ri chos sde bca' yig*: 457.
[481] Jagou, 2004: 327, n. 81: '*rtse drung* qualifie le moine fonctionnaire'; ibid. n. 82: '*las tshan pa* désigne un fonctionnaire subalterne'.
[482] e.g. *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*.
[483] e.g. *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig*. *las sne pa* also occurs. This is short for *las kyi sne mo* (*pa*). In other instances, this term may refer to monks who are involved in monastic service as opposed to education. In the *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*, for example, the monk who repeatedly fails his exams is threatened to be made into a *las sne*, in all likelihood someone charged with menial labour, *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 288.
[484] e.g. *gDan sa chen po'i bya ba las kyi sne mor mngags rnams kyi bca' yig*.
[485] e.g. *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*.
[486] e.g. *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*. This term is of course a contraction of *mkhan po* and *slob dpon*. However, it is clear from the context that it is used to denote all those in official positions.
[487] This title I take as an equivalent to *sgom pa*. This was a high civil and military function within the Drigung Kagyü school, the so-called 'seat of civil power'; see Sperling, 1987: 39. This official generally was a lay-person and had considerable power, but this bca' yig clearly shows that he ultimately answered to the abbot (here: the author of the text).
[488] As far as I am aware, this word is not attested in any dictionary. In this context, it appears to indicate a group of minor officials.
[489] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 247b: *da ci 'os sdod pa'i ngos nas ngan bus ji ltar gsung ba de dge 'dun spyis bsgrub pa dang sgom pa bas dbu mdzad pa dpon las nyi shu po dang bcas pas bsgrub par zhu*

century may also have had something to do with this development. It is furthermore safe to assume that by this time the bca' yig for the bigger monasteries served as something of a template for the smaller monasteries of the same school.

Some bca' yig contain detailed information on the selection-criteria for monks in official positions, others only address this when the officials were known to have behaved badly in the past, and yet others do not contain any job-descriptions. The fact that many of these texts direct their attention to these roles reflects how important these 'managers' were for the monastery and the maintenance of its rules. The selection-criteria vary: in some cases the monk had to have reached a level of education,[490] while in others the monk needed a certain level of economic independence. Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las (1927-1997) remarks that in the Indian context there was a strict system of economy in place in which the managers of the general possessions (*spyi rdzas*) then could only be a *śrāmaṇera* (*dge tshul*) or an *upāsaka* (*dge bsnyen*), but never a *bhikṣu* (*dge slong*).[491] Dagyab mentions that it was unusual for highly educated monks to be appointed to managerial positions.[492] However, in Sakya the *zhabs pad*, who had the most practical power, had reached the level of 'doctor of theology' before he assumed the position.[493] The general character and reputation of the candidate was also taken into account.[494] Other times, the only requirement was that the officials remained impartial and honest. The importance of an unbiased attitude is regularly stressed, which gives the impression that monks in these managerial positions *may* occasionally have tended to enrich themselves by having others (both monastic and lay-) pay in exchange for favours, or that people in these positions simply had a tendency to favour their own friends or kinsmen. The bca' yig for Tashi Lhunpo states:

> The functionaries (*las tshan pa*) of the other three colleges[495] need to fulfill their allotted duties correctly, without succumbing to the evils of partiality. In particular, the disciplinarians (*chos khrims pa*) of the debate ground (*chos grwa*) need to encourage in an efficient way the improvement of the study of logic (*mtshan nyid*) without being partial to anyone.[496]

Monk-officials also need to be decisive and they must not let bad behaviour go unpunished. The *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig* states for example that in the case of someone breaking the rules 'the two disciplinarians (*chos khrims pa*) should not turn a blind eye (*btang snyoms su ma bzhag par*), but should give a fitting punishment (*bkod 'doms*).'[497] Both favouring certain individuals and being lax in enforcing the rules were apparently not uncommon among functionaries. So much so

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[490] Nowadays, in the larger Tibetan monasteries in India only the more senior and high-level *geshes* are considered for the posts of abbot and disciplinarian; see Gyatso, 2003: 230.
[491] *Dung dkar gsung rtsom*: 69.
[492] Dagyab, 2009: 55.
[493] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 206.
[494] mKhan po dKon mchog chos skyabs mentions that these days repeat-offending monks, who have stained their record by having been caught with alcohol and cigarettes repeatedly, are not eligible to become monastic functionaries in the future. Personal communication, Rajpur, August 2012.
[495] Previous to this section the tantric college was specifically mentioned.
[496] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 85, 6: *grwa tshang gzhan gsum gyi las tshan pa rnams kyis kyang rang rang gi bgo (86) skal gyi bya ba rnams phyogs lhung gdon bskyod kyi dbang du ma song bar ji lta ba bzhin bsgrub dgos pa dang/ khyad par chos grwa chos khrims pa rnams nas mtshan nyid slob gnyer dar rgyas yong ba'i lcag skul gnad smin rang gzhan phyogs lhung du ma song ba byed/*
[497] *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig*: 403: *chos khrims pa gnyis nas btang snyoms su ma bzhag par 'os 'tshams kyi bkod 'doms byed dgos shing/*

that some bca' yig stipulate punishments for those officials that let monks go scot-free or display a bias toward a certain group. Several sources mention that monks born in the vicinity of the monastery could not be appointed to official positions out of fear for bias, or accusations thereof.[498] This will be treated in more detail below.

The *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig* notes that when the committing of a *pārājika* offence goes unpunished, those in charge of punishing the *spyi gnyer* needs to prostrate themselves five hundred times, while – when the disciplinarian and the chant-master (*dbu chos*) are guilty of letting misbehaving monks go unpunished – they will have to do a thousand prostrations each.[499] Although most bca' yig are clearly not intended to function as monastic management self-help books, the bca' yig of Mindröl ling monastery provides a mission statement for all monks in a management position:

> In short, all those burdened with managerial positions, by providing for the livelihood of this place (*sde*), protect the tradition of liberation of those who are wise, disciplined and good.[500]

The official monks at Sakya had equally high expectations to live up to. They are reminded of the workings of karma and are then requested to sacrifice their lives for the monastery:

> Therefore, once one has been assigned a duty, one shall – for the sake of the very integrity of the religion and politics of the glorious Sakya – have the courage to be able to give up one's body, life, and possessions without reservation, and one shall have the perseverance to be able to serve the higher lamas, the lineage (*gdung brgyud*) and the religious community (*chos sde*) ceaselessly, and one shall hold a sincere wish for the subjects of the monastery (*gdan sa*) to expand, prosper and remain for a long time.[501]

Here, working for the monastery is presented as virtuous and, in line with sentiments held by monk-officials today, there is – *pace* Cassinelli and Ekvall – no sense of 'incongruity' with regard to the monks filling managerial positions 'taking them from their life of meditation and religious observance and putting them in charge of secular matters.'[502]

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[498] This illustrates the potential influence of monastic administrators. In some areas these monks also chose the headmen of the villages. Goldstein, 1968: 133.

[499] *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig*: 404, 5: *lhag par chos khrims gnyis dang/ do dam thun mong nas pham pa bzhi bcas 'gal ba byung rigs rna thos tsam byung 'phral rtsad gcod thog gong gi chad las sogs khrims kyi bya ba la nan tan byed dgos/ de la spyi gnyer sogs kyis 'gal na phyag lnga rgya re/ dbu chos kyis 'gal na stong phyag 'bul dgos/*

[500] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 312: *mdor na las 'dzin khur yod thams cad kyis sde 'di'i 'tsho tshis 'dzin pa la mkhas btsun bzang po'i rnam thar gyi srol bzung/*

[501] *gDan sa chen po'i bya ba las kyi sne mor mngags rnams kyi bca' yig*: 319: *ngo skal du gyur pa dpal sa skya'i bstan srid lar rgya 'di nyid kyi phyir lus srog longs spyod thams cad phangs med du gtong nus pa'i snying stobs dang/ bla ma gong ma gdung brgyud chos sde dang bcas pa'i zhabs tog dus khor mo yug tu sgrub nus pa'i brtson 'grus dang/ gdan sa'i mnga' zhabs rnams dar zhing rgyas pa yun ring du gnas pa'i lhag bsam rnam dag snying khongs su bcangs ngos/*

[502] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 143, 4.

The Management Team

Particularly in modern times the 'management team' is very important for the organization of the monastery. This committee, depending on the size of the institution, may both decide on internal issues, such as the education programme, as well as on external issues that have to do with financial matters, for example. This team or council is sometimes referred to as the *lhan rgyas* and can consist of the abbot, the disciplinarian(s), the chant-master, and the secretary.[503] According to Nornang, the monastery of Dwags po bshad grub gling counted three 'offices'; the *gnyer tshang*, the *spyi bso* and the *lhan rgyas*. The former two dealt largely with financial and external matters, whereas the latter appointed its members to those two offices and was primarily concerned with the general monk-population.[504] The most important member of this *lhan rgyas* was the *zhal ta pa,* an educated monk who was in charge of supervising the kitchen and its staff. He and the chant-master were the only ones to have access to the boxes in which the official monastic documents were kept.[505]

In Sera je, during the 18th century, the term *spyi so* denoted the committee that gave out the wages (*phogs*) to the monks at certain times.[506] In textual materials we often see the word *bla spyi*: the monastery committee,[507] which is similar, if not the same, as *spyi so*/ *bso/sa*.[508] Miller explains the word *spyi sa* to refer to either a place where goods are stored, goods donated for a particular purpose, or funds from which interest is drawn to pay for monastic rituals.[509] In many ways, this office served as the treasury for the general populace of monks. To confuse matters further, the term *spyi bso* refers in some cases to an individual rather than to a team of monks.[510]The same is true for *bla spyi*.[511] The most generic and widespread name, however, is *dgon pa*/ *pa'i gzhung*:[512] the monastic authorities or government.[513] In the large monastery of Drepung during the first half of the 20th century, the committee for the management of an individual college (*grwa tshang*), called *phyag sbug*, consisted of four or five members. This committee was responsible, on a lower level, for the distribution of

[503] In Dwags po bshad grub gling this team consisted of the chant-master (*dbu mdzad*) and eight monks. This council selected the abbot. See Nornang, 1990: 253. The term *lhan rgyas* is also regularly used to refer to a committee consisting of lay-people, e.g. *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 583: *gzhis rgan lhan rgyas*. In exile, contemporary bca' yig are compiled jointly by the members of the *lhan rgyas*. Personal communication, Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, Dharamsala, July 2012.

[504] Nornang, 1990: 263-9. In 1920, Sera monastery (full name: Se ra theg chen gling) had two offices the *spyi so* and the *gnyer tshang*, see *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 186. Sera's individual colleges naturally had their own organizational committees.

[505] ibid.: 253. This term *zhal ta pa* also features as the translation of *vaiyāpṛtyakara*: 'an administrative monk', although in some contexts this office was not filled by a monk. See Silk, 2008: 39-73 and 44 in particular. According to *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*, it can be equated with *do dam pa*, which can be roughly translated as 'manager'. See *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*: 765.

[506] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 569.

[507] e.g. Dagyab, 2009: 56, 7; *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 86.

[508] *bla spyi* is likely to be an abbreviation of *bla brang spyi sa*, as evidenced in *dGon khag gi dge 'dun pa rtsa tshig*: 303.

[509] R. Miller, 1961: 427, 8. This 'jisa mechanism' or 'model' is explained to underlie all Tibetan Buddhist monastic economies. Chapter 6 deals with this topic further.

[510] e.g. *Rong po rab brtan dgon bca' yig*: 538. Here the word is used in a way similar to *spyi pa*, on which more below.

[511] e.g. *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 139.

[512] e.g. Dagyab, 2009: 57.

[513] In smaller monasteries, the monastic authorities may be refered to simply as *bla brang*. Here then this word does not refer to the estates held by wealthier incarnations. See for example *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 241.

certain goods, such as tea, food, and money that came to the monastery, to the members of that college.[514]

The above names and titles serve to demonstrate that there was no single system of monastic organization in Tibet. For the current purpose, we are interested in how the people in charge of maintaining the monastery behaved and were expected to behave, so that their perceived and actual relationships within the monastery and outside of it can be better determined. The bca' yig are very informative on the subject of monastic job-descriptions and general management. Some of these monastic guidelines in fact solely address those monks with an official position.[515] They thus convey the monk-officials' status, background, remuneration, and duties towards monks and lay-people. It is important to understand that, in much the same way as in Buddhist India, monks did not have as their main vocation administration or management.[516] It is thus not necessarily the case that monks of all schools in Tibet 'were trained for the management of human affairs as well as for religious service.'[517] Most offices were temporary and tenure was rare. The posts most commonly described in the bca' yig are those of disciplinarian (*dge skos/ bskos*; *chos khrims pa*; *zhal ngo*), chant-master (*dbu mdzad*), and steward (*gnyer pa*; *spyi ba*; *spyi gnyer*), whereas the positions of treasurer (*phyag mdzod*, *mdzod pa*) and the various types of maintenance personnel (e.g. *dkon gnyer*, *nor gnyer pa*, *mchod dpon*, etc.) are referred to occasionally.[518] Absent from this list is the abbot (e.g. *mkhan po*), the head of a monastery or college. This important role that carries with it 'not just responsibility, but real power and prestige,'[519] is hardly commented upon in the monastic guidelines. This is in part because the abbots were often the authors of the bca' yig or those who informed the authors, but also because the abbots may have been regarded as having a distinct (religious) status that set them apart from the rest of the monks.[520]

Generally speaking, the members of the committee and the others who held official posts were monks. This is by no means standard Buddhist practice. In Thailand, the monastery committee (*kammakan wat*) consists of the abbot, one or more junior *bhikkhu*s, and several laymen.[521] The lay-presence in monastic organizations is widespread and rationalized throughout the Buddhist world.[522] However, Welch maintains that in China laymen generally speaking 'played no role whatever in the internal administration of monasteries,' although this may not necessarily reflect a historical reality.[523] While Tibetan monasteries do not advertise the involvement of lay-people, the bca' yig convey their presence occasionally. In the sections below the various offices and their roles are elaborated in more detail.

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[514] Dakpa, 2003: 171, 2.
[515] e.g. *gDan sa chen po'i bya ba las kyi sne mor mngags rnams kyi bca' yig*.
[516] Silk, 2008: 211.
[517] Michael, 1982: 44.
[518] While these terms are derived from non-Bon sources, the hierarchical system and its terms appear remarkably similar in (current) Bon monasteries, see Karmay and Nagano, 2003. While the latter two types of monks, the treasurer and maintenance personnel, feature frequently in the bca' yig, they will not be dealt with here. This is partly due to the limited role they played in the actual organization of the monastery and partly due to constraints of space.
[519] Gyatso, 2003: 230.
[520] On the role of the abbot see more below.
[521] Bunnag, 1973: 129.
[522] Pardue notes it was common to have lay-supervisors at the monastery who had to report back to the state on the quality of conduct. See Pardue, 1971: 121. The Christian monasteries employed lay-people as managers and otherwise, in very similar ways. See for example Smyrlis, 2002: 245-261.
[523] Welch, 1967: 374.

Monastery-officials

It has been noted that, while with regard to Buddhist terminology the Tibetans have been consistent and meticulous in translating and employing Indic terms, this practice has been not extended to titles that (may) denote monastic offices. Most Tibetan official titles appear to be native ones, perhaps with the notable exception of the terms *dge skos* (disciplinarian) and *zhal ta pa* (manager), which have been briefly mentioned earlier. Many of these words, however, turn out to be used in a wide variety of ways in different monasteries and at different times. Not infrequently these terms have 'lay-world counterparts', which leaves one to wonder whether the monks emulated the lay-people or vice-versa.[524] The treatment of various monastic official terms and roles below is merely an initial – and necessarily incomplete –venture into a territory that demands further elaboration. Arguably the most prominent position in the monastic guidelines, the disciplinarian alone could be subject of a lengthy academic work.

The Disciplinarian (*dge skos*/*dge bskos*/ *chos khrims pa*/ *zhal ngo*)

I never saw a master of discipline in the lamaseries wearing a delightful smile. More often they seemed to be the type of tormentors that might step out of a picture of the Eighteen Buddhist Hells.[525]

The word *dge skos*[526] occurs in the *Kṣudrakavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, the *Vinayasūtra*, and the *Mahāvyutpatti* as a translation for the Sanskrit *upadhivārika*.[527] The Tibetan term, which is not a literal translation from the Sanskrit, may be short for *dge bar skos pa*; he who establishes [others] in virtue, or he who is established in virtue. In the Indic context, the term is translated as 'supervisor' or 'provost' of the monastery. He is in charge of the material possessions of the Sangha and in the *Kṣudrakavastu* his task is to beat the dust out of cloth seats.[528] In Tibetan-ruled Dunhuang, the *dge skos* appears to have been in charge of loaning out grains from the temple granary against interest.[529] The connection of the *dge skos* to the maintenance of discipline appears exclusively in later Tibetan sources. He is a supervisor of the standards of discipline but he is not seen to have a consultative role,[530] solving problems according to Vinaya scripture.[531] Rather, his role is executive and he is to punish those who are in breach of the rules. His judiciary arm was said to stretch beyond the monks in the monastery itself:

> The disciplinarian has the authority to take charge of things related to the discipline of the general monk populace. Previously, he could also take charge

[524] Thargyal and Huber speculate that the administration of the Derge kingdom was modeled on that of the monasteries: Thargyal and Huber, 2007: 49.
[525] Schram, 2006 [1954]: 374.
[526] The spelling *dge bskos* also occurs regularly. For the sole reason of consistency I refer to *dge skos*.
[527] Silk, 2008: 103, 4; Schopen, 1996a: 117; and Schopen, 2004b: 68, 9; 103, 4.
[528] The role of the *upadhivārika* varied in the different narratives in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* from having a rather elevated status to being not much more than a janitor. See Schopen, 1996a: 97, n. 35.
[529] Takeuchi, 1993: 56, 7. The source used is Pt 1119. In Pt 1297, the disciplinarian (*dge skos*) of Weng shi'u temple (*weng shi'u si'i* (si =寺) also loans out grains (*gro nas*).
[530] Gyatso, 2003: 230.
[531] The *dge skos* should therefore not be confused or equated with the term *vinayadhara*, someone who has memorized and has extensive knowledge of the Vinaya.

> of the judiciary issues of the lay-people and monks [who lived at] the monastic estate. [532]

While the word *dge skos* has older Indic precedents, the earliest extant bca' yig do not mention the term. Discipline in Drigung thil in the first part of the 13th century was kept in the following way:

> In order for the new monks to listen to the honourable *slob dpon*[533] who holds the vinaya (*'dul ba 'dzin pa,* S. *vinayadhara*), you, supervising monks (*ban gnyer ba rnams kyis*) must encourage them. Not being familiar with the trainings and the precepts (*bslab bsrung*) will cause annoyance to all.[534]

In this monastery the executive power lay with the aforementioned twenty *dpon las*, as is evidenced by the following segment:

> Items of clothes worn by monks (*ban dhe*) that are not in accord with the Dharma, such as *ral gu*,[535] black boots, a type of woollen blanket,[536] all kinds of hats (*zhwa cho ru mo ru*), need to be taken off by the twenty [*dpon las*]. From then on they are not to be worn.[537]

Some of the available sources state that the *dge skos* required a certain level of education, whereas others stipulate a preference for non-intellectuals. Nornang, for example, notes that in his monastery before the 1950s the *dge skos* were appointed from among the *sgrogs med* monks, i.e. monks who did not study logic.[538] The colleges of Drepung monastery found middle ground by choosing their disciplinarians during the summer period from among the scholars and those who would serve in the winter from among 'the lay brethren'.[539] Per college two disciplinarians thus served terms of six months at a time.[540] This half-year term was the same for Mindröl ling monastery in the late 17th century.[541] Its bca' yig gives the job-description for the office of disciplinarian as follows:

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[532] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 86: *dge bskos kyis grwa ba spyi'i sgrig khrims thad the gtogs bya ba'i dbang cha yod/ sngar yin na des dgon pa'i mchod gzhis skya ser gyi gyod don la'ang the gtogs byas chog*

[533] The text reads *slob dpon lha*. This unusual address '*lha*' is here taken as an expression of respect, possibly interchangeable with *bla*.

[534] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 248b: *slob dpon lha 'dul ba 'dzin pa la ban gsar rnams 'dul ba nyan pa la khyed ban gnyer ba rnams kyis bskul/ bslab bsrung ngo ma shes pas thams cad sun 'don par 'dug*

[535] This word is derived from the Sanskrit *rallaka*, a blanket or cloth made from wool, possibly from the rallaka deer, comparable to Pashmina, Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*: 868.

[536] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig* b: 168a reads *glag pa* for *glog pa*, this may be an alternative spelling for *klag*, which is an archaic word for a thick cape woven from wool. *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 40: (*rnying*) *bal gyis btags pa'i snam bu'i lwa ba*.

[537] ibid: 250a: *ban dhes ral gu gon pa dang/ lham nag dang/ glog pa dang/ zhwa cho ru mo ru la sogs pa chos dang mi mthun pa'i gos rnams nyi shu bos shus/ phyin chad ma gon/*

[538] Nornang, 1990: 251.

[539] By this I assume the author means the non-scholar monks, without *dge slong* ordination.

[540] Snellgrove and Richardson, 1986 [1968]: 241.

[541] This six-month term is also in place in Gyütö monastery in India, while I was informed that in Tibet the disciplinarian's position used to change four times a year. Personal communication with Ngag dbang sangs rgyas, Dharamsala, August 2012. The maximum term appears to be three years, which is in place in Drigung Jangchub ling ('Bri gung byang chub gling) in India. Personal communication with the director of Drigung Jangchub ling, Rajpur, August 2012.

> The disciplinarian – who, having the approval of the general constituency, has good intentions for the general welfare, is involved with the *spyi so* and is very strict on discipline – is appointed for six months. He sets forth the general discipline, in all its facets, with effort, without regard for shiny white faces (*ngo skya snum*).[542]

The disciplinarian is in charge of the day-to-day upkeep of discipline: his permission must be gained before leaving the monastery grounds, he makes sure all dress appropriately and he is responsible for the comportment of the monks, during assembly, but also outside of it.[543] He confiscates improper attire or forbidden objects, such as weapons, but also divides the share of donations (*'gyed*) to the Sangha among the various monks.[544] He furthermore was responsible for keeping the register (*tho len po*) of the total monk-population (*grwa dmangs*).[545] In Drepung monastery during the late 17th century, the disciplinarian was also charged with handing out degrees. According to the Fifth Dalai Lama the *dge skos* did not always remain an impartial judge:

> It is well known that when taking the *gling bsre* [exam],[546] one would be let off the hook without having one's level of education examined, had the disciplinarian received a present (*rngan pa*).[547]

The bca' yig for Tashi Lhunpo monastery sees as its ideal candidate someone who is not just well educated, but also affluent, with a reliable background (*rgyun drang*),[548] and a sturdy appearance.[549] The text then states that suitable candidates should not try to get off the shortlist and that those not on the list should not try to get on it. The monk selected for the job is then given a seal or contract (*tham ga*), which lists his responsibilities, and from that moment on he cannot go back on his word.[550] While describing the procedure, the text then warns that no one should try to order

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[542] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 309: *dge bskos spyi'i 'os 'thu'i steng nas spyi bsam bzang zhing blo spyi sor gnas pa khrims non che ba re zla ba drug re bsko ba dang/ ngo skya snum la ma bltos pa'i spyi khrims yo srong 'bad rtsol gyis thon pa byed/* The unusual phrase *ngo skya snum* is here understood to indicate a certain bias, perhaps based on mere external qualities (a face that is white and shiny). The call to impartiality is also found in *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 87, where the word *snyoms gdal* is used, which can be translated as 'a fair approach'.

[543] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 280.

[544] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 238. What the disciplinarian is meant to do with the forbidden objects is not specified.

[545] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 87.

[546] This is one of the lower level *dge bshes* degrees at Drepung, Tarab Tulku, 2000: 17, 9.

[547] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 308: *gling bsre gtod* [sic?: *gtong*] *skabs dge skos kyi rngan pa blangs nas yon tan che chung la mi blta bar gtong ba yongs su bsrgags shing*/

[548] I take this to refer to his ordination lineage. No mention is made, however, if having *dge slong* ordination was a prerequisite. The elderly monk Shes rab rgya mtsho of Sakya noted that one did not have be a dge slong to be a disciplinarian there. Personal communication, Rajpur, August 2012.

[549] This physical quality is also mentioned by an anonymous monk-officer in 'Brug pa dkar [sic] rgyud monastery in Clement Town, Dehradun. He said that while the chant-master needs to be well educated (*slob sbyong yag po*) the disciplinarian has to be *gzugs po stobs chen po*: big and strong.

[550] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 86: [..] *dge skos las 'khur 'dzin dgos kyi tham ga byung phral dang len byed pa las/ tham ga phyir 'bul dang don bud sogs dgyis mi chog cing* [..]/ In contemporary Namgyel dratshang, the new disciplinarian (*dge skos*), during his appointment ceremony, recites a prayer (*smon lam*), the wording of which is not set. In this prayer he promises to follow the Vinaya and to serve the monastery. Personal communication Ngag dbang dpal sbyin, Dharamsala, July 2012.

around those who exercise the general law (*spyi khyab kyi khrims*), such as the disciplinarian, or those have done so in the past.[551]

The above selection procedure for Tashi Lhunpo was for the position of 'great disciplinarian' (*dge skos chen mo*). This position is similar to that of *zhal ngo* in Drepung, Sera and Ganden. This is a disciplinarian who oversees the great assembly (*tshogs chen*) and has a position of considerable power. The word *zhal ngo*, literally meaning simply 'presence,' is also used in the secular world. Aside from referring to 'someone who does the Sangha's work' the term is also simply explained to mean 'manager' (*do dam pa*).[552] In Bhutan, *zhal ngo* are the 'hereditary chiefs', i.e. the leaders of the clans.[553] The sense of an exalted social status in the secular world is also attested in *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig* where it is mentioned that the *chos mdzad* have come from a lineage of *zhal ngo*.[554] In the early 20th century, the word referred to a low ranking military officer,[555] which the *Tshig mdzod chen mo* specifies as a military commander over a group of twenty-five people.[556] Although there is no clear evidence for this, I find it unlikely that the monastic institution borrowed this term from the 'secular world' or vice versa. The term in all cases seems to imply a certain natural authority that the *zhal ngo* possessed.

In Tashi Lhunpo, the disciplinarians for the individual colleges were called *chos khrims pa*. These *chos khrims pa* exercised their own set of rules with the help of their own guidelines:

> The *chos khrims pa* is one who, without hypocrisy, enforces the rules with regard to the duties allotted to each tantric functionary. By praising the good and putting an end to the bad and by taking the contents of tantric college's own bca' yig as a base, he enforces the rules and guards their upholdance (*rgyun skyong*).[557]

A large monastery could thus house a sizeable number of disciplinarians. In smaller monasteries, there was often just one disciplinarian, who was either called *dge skos* or *chos khrims pa*.[558] While the role of the disciplinarian was seen by some monks as a burden or a distraction, within the Gelug school in particular it was an important stepping-stone. For the selection of the position of *dGa' ldan khri pa* (the head of the Gelug school), one had to have served as – among other things – a *dge skos* at either Gyütö or Gyümè (rGyud smad).[559]

It can be surmised from the above that the disciplinarian, as the enforcer of both unspoken rules as well as the bca' yig, generally speaking was not required to

[551] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 86: *dge skos 'di bzhin spyi khyab kyi khrims gnon du song gshis byed dang byas zin kyi rigs la mtho dma' sus kyang g.yog skul bgyis mi chog cing* [..]/
[552] *brDa dkrol gser gyi me long*: 765: *1) do dam pa'i ming 2) dge 'dun gyi las byed mkhan gyi ming*
[553] Aris, 1976: 690.
[554] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 71: *zhal ngo'i brgyud las gson nges pa'i chos mdzad de/*
[555] Travers, 2008: 14.
[556] *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 2379.
[557] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig* 84: *sngags pa'i las tsham rnams nas kyang so so'i bgo skal gyi bya ba chos khrims pa nas khrims gnon ngo lkog med nges/ bzang po la gzengs bstod dang/ ngan pa tshar gcod pa sogs 'di dang rgyud grwa rang gi bca' yig dgongs don gzhir bzhag gi khrims gnon rgyun skyong dang/*
[558] I have not been able to explain the use of the two terms on the basis of school or regional preference. It appears that monasteries in Ladakh prefer *chos khrims pa*.
[559] I was told that in Gyütö monastery the *bla ma dbu mdzad* could become the abbot and only retired abbots could become dGa' ldan khri pa. Personal communication with Ngag dbang sangs rgyas, Dharamsala, August 2012.

have an in-depth knowledge of Vinayic literature, whereas a thorough understanding of the local monastic rules was pivotal. He had high levels of responsibility and power and was therefore corruptible. This is perhaps one reason that the Bon Bya ti lo monastery in Lithang (Kham) only replaces its disciplinarian yearly and leaves all the other administrative monks in place.[560] While, as shall become apparent from the discussion below, the disciplinarians did not stand alone in maintaining discipline in the monastery, the day-to-day activities depended greatly on the moral standing of these monks.

The Chant-master (*dbu mdzad*)

In many bca' yig the chant-master and the disciplinarian are mentioned together as *dbu chos*, a contraction of *dbu mdzad* and *chos khrims pa*. This indicates that these two offices were seen to be of similar status. The Fifth Dalai Lama, however, allots the disciplinarian six shares, while the chant-master gets just five shares.[561] The *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig* describes the duties of the *dbu mdzad* in the tantric college and says he needs to make sure that the intonation, pace, and 'melody' (*gdangs dbyangs*) of the prayers that are recited during the various rituals are carried out exactly in accordance with tradition.[562] This is obviously not the chant-master's only job, for we have seen above that he was often also part of the administration.

As with the disciplinarian, for bigger monasteries such as Tashi Lhunpo, there also were – aside from those for the smaller congregations – one or more chant-masters for the great assembly (*tshogs chen dbu mdzad*), who were in charge of keeping the traditional ways of reciting and restoring them where necessary.[563] The maintenance of the ritual traditions is also stressed in the *dPal yul gdan rabs*, in which it is said that the chant-master was to make sure that 'innovations do not stain them.'[564] In Gyütö monastery, a position not dissimilar to that of *tshogs chen dbu mdzad* exists, which comes with more responsibilities. There the one who serves as *bla ma dbu mdzad* (a position higher than that of *dbu mdzad*) keeps the *bca' yig chen mo* in a box (*bla sgam*) to which only he has access. This position can only be obtained by a *lha rams dge bshes* who has finished the three year tantric exam.[565] The other *lha rams dge bshes* can vote in a new *bla ma dbu mdzad*. Only those who have been *bla ma dbu mdzad* can become the abbot of the monastery and only those are eligible to become dGa' ldan khri pa.[566] Despite the fact that leading prayers is still an

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[560] Karmay and Nagano, 2003: 508.

[561] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 305: *dbu mdzad la lnga skal dge skos la drug skal*. This is to say that they would get respectively five or six times as much of the donations as an ordinary monk would.

[562] This is a paraphrase of *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 84: *dbu mdzad nas cho ga bskang gso sogs zhal 'don char 'phar thams cad mgyogs khyad sla bcos su ma song bar snga tshig gdangs dbyangs thams cad dam pa gong ma'i phyag len gzhir bzhag 'phyugs med dang/*

[563] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 87: *tshogs chen dbu mdzad dag nas kyang char 'phar zhal 'don gang ci mgyogs khyad sla bcos su ma song bar gdangs dbyangs 'don lugs gang ci nyams pa sor chud/ ma nyams pa gong 'phel yong ba byed/*

[564] *dPal yul gdan rabs*: 359.

[565] Possibly contradictory information is given here: http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/study/history_buddhism/buddhism_tibet/gelug/brief_history_gyumay_gyuto_tantric_college.html (viewed 27-02 2014), where it is mentioned that the *bla ma dbu mdzad* are chosen from among the former *dge skos*.

[566] Personal information, Ngag dbang sangs rgyas, Dharamsala, August 2012. The *bla ma dbu mdzad* of Gyütö monastery in India himself was abroad during the time of my fieldwork. The monks at the monastery recommended him as the most knowledgeable on the topic of bca' yig. Their set of monastic guidelines, the *rGyud stod bca' yig chen mo*, is said to be the original scroll from the 15th or 16th century that had been taken from Tibet to India. It is not taken out of its box often except when the *bla*

important part of the job, the *bla ma dbu mdzad* position is significantly distinct from the normal *dbu mdzad* post. It even gets translated as 'assistant abbot'.[567] The post of *dbu mdzad* is not always an exalted position, however. In Drepung, the *lag bde dbu mdzad* appears to have been the supervisor of the kitchen-staff and was paid – on a par with the scholar monks (*rigs grwa pa*) – one share (*skal*) of the offerings.[568]

The word *dbu mdzad* does not appear in canonical texts. It may simply be the honorific term for leader (e.g. *'go byed*), a term used to denote the head of a lay-organization. A variant of the title is found in the 1845 bca' yig for Rinchen gang, one of the very few extant sets of monastic guidelines for a nunnery. There the nun in charge of leading the assembly is called *dbu byed*.[569] While it is tempting to surmise from this that authors felt less need to use honorifics when addressing female clergy-members, it actually appears that the term is used to denote a chant-master in the Sakya school, regardless of gender.[570] Another word that denotes the same position is *byang 'dren pa*, literally 'the one who begins' (in this case the prayers or rituals). According to the *dPal yul gdan rabs*, this *byang 'dren pa* is in the best case a lama, otherwise a *bla phran* and if the qualifications of education, voice and behaviour are met it can also be a *mchod gral pa*: a practitioner monk who has completed retreats.[571] Aside from having a good character and voice, he also needs to be able-bodied.[572] While this position is presented as a temporary one in most sources, Nornang reports that in his monastery the *dbu mdzad* was a life-long position. He, together with the *zhal ta pa*, had sole access to the boxes that contained official documents.[573]

Manager or Servant? (*zhal ta pa*/*ba*)

This official title was mentioned briefly above as a translation of the Sanskrit *vaiyāpṛtyakara*,[574] and is equated with the Tibetan word *do dam pa*: manager. The tasks covered by this person in the Indic context range from doing domestic jobs to making important financial and managerial decisions. While the term *zhal ta pa*[575] appears to be obsolete in contemporary Tibetan monasteries, older Tibetan sources suggest a range of meanings comparable to those found in Buddhist texts from India. The initial meaning of the word is someone who serves, derived from the verb *zhal ta*

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ma dbu mdzad decides to read it out in the presence of the assembly. This is done not at a special occasion, but when it seems appropriate, at least once in every three years. My informant, the disciplinarian at the time, thinks that over time new rules have been added to the original manuscript.

[567] Powers, 1995: 481; 530. The author further explains the hierarchy at the Gyütö monastery.

[568] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 305. I have not come across this title elsewhere. It is likely that it refers to the foreman of the kitchen staff (*lag bde*). Alternatively, it could mean the 'graceful' *dbu mdzad*. In any case, this post is clearly distinct from that of chant-master, who is paid much higher wages, namely five shares.

[569] *Rin chen sgang bca' yig*: 214.

[570] e.g. in the colophon of Kun dga' blo gros' (1729-1783) *dPal rdo rje gzhon nu'i byin 'bebs kyi rol yig mthon ba rang grol gsal byed mdzes rgyan*. In *gSung 'bum vol. 3*. Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2008: 926. This text, a so-called *dbyangs yig*, was written at the behest of the chant-master (*dbu byed*) Rin chen rgyal mtshan. Although little is known about the organization of nunneries, contemporary cases suggest that titles of officials and the like are the same as in the monasteries, e.g. Schneider, 2009: 285.

[571] *dPal yul gdan rabs*: 359: *dbu mdzad chen mo'am byang 'dren pa ni/ rab bla ma yin pa dang/ 'bring bla phran dang/ yon tan dan skad gshis kun spyod bcas tshad gzhi'i 'dang na mchod gral pa zhig gis kyang chog*

[572] ibid.: *mi gzhi skad gshis lus tshugs bcas legs par dgos*/

[573] Nornang, 1990: 253.

[574] For an extensive treatment of this role in Indic textual material, see Silk, 2008: 38-73.

[575] The variants *zhal ta ba* and *zhal ta* also occur.

byed pa: to do service.[576] The 17th century bca' yig for Mindröl ling gives the prerequisites for the *zhal ta pa* as follows:

> A suitable candidate should be appointed with care, for the *zhal ta* needs to be of middling vows (*bar shar*),[577] intelligent (*blo gtsang*) and good at handling the stove *(thab g.yos*). He has a sound sense of responsibility with regard to the welfare of the community (*spyi tshis kyi khur bsam bzang*) and good hygiene. He does not discard supplies or allow them to go to waste, which is to say that he thus leaves them intact.[578] Doing these types of things will become a cause for himself and others to accumulate merit. Furthermore he does not to manage things privately, by loaning out and giving away water, wood and kitchen appliances.[579]

This suggests a post for someone who is not a *dge slong* and who is involved in kitchen work. After serving as a *zhal ta*, one would become the 'seat steward' (*gdan gnyer*), someone who manages the laying out and clearing away of seats during the assembly.[580] The fact that this position gets full mention in the text suggests that it is of some import. A person doing kitchen work had access to both food and (costly) pots and pans that needed to be managed carefully.[581] Here the author also connects the *zhal ta*'s role to a larger issue: by guarding the contents of the kitchen carefully, one would thereby ensure that offerings given by the faithful would not be wasted, thereby allowing the donors to accumulate maximal merit. The bca' yig written for Sera je by the Seventh Dalai Lama lists the kitchen staff required to provide all the monks with tea. The kitchen needs one supervisor (*do dam pa*), three tea-makers (*ja ma*), two people in charge of the fire (*me 'bud*), two people who fetch water, and finally two *zhal ta pa*.[582] The suggestion here is that in Sera je in the 18th century the *zhal ta pa* were servants doing odd-jobs. Another bca' yig states that the two hornblowers (*dung mkhan*), the clean-handed *zhal ta ba* (*zhal ta ba lag gtsang ba*),[583] the shrine-keeper (*dkon gnyer*) and the disciplinarians' assistants (*chab ril ba*) need to be chosen from among the young monks (*lo grangs*). This suggests that all these posts are junior positions.[584] Equally, the guidelines for Tengpoche monastery in Nepal

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[576] Alternatively, one finds *zhal ba byed pa*, e.g. in *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 193, where this type of service clearly refers to physical labour such as fixing roofs and painting the buildings.

[577] According to the *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 1823, a *bar shar ba* is someone who holds the middling ordination vows (*rab tu byung ba'i bslab pa 'bring gras*).

[578] I here emend *thim pa* to *'them pa*.

[579] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 310: *zhal ta bar shar blo gtsang thab g.yos mkhas pa re 'os 'thus dmigs btsugs kyis bskos ngos/ spyi tshis kyi khur bsam bzang zhing gtsang sbra che ba/ yo byad rnams bar ma dor tshud ma zos par dmigs su thim pa sogs rang gzhan tshogs bsag gi rgyur ci 'gyur dang/ chu shing thab chas g.yar gtong sogs kyis sgos skyong mi byed/*

[580] ibid.: 311.

[581] Elsewhere in the same text, the monks are warned that the kitchen (*rung khang*) is the domain of its staff (*zhal ta'i las byed*) and that they cannot just enter it and stay near the stove. See *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 286.

[582] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 586; *Se ra byes bca' yig* 2: 83.

[583] This term *lag gtsang ba* could refer to the literal sense of maintaining a certain level of hygiene, which may well be important when the *zhal ta ba* are to handle food and drink. However, more figuratively it could have the sense of being honest and incorruptible, which may be equally if not more important here.

[584] *Gangs dkar gling bca' yig*: 147. Interestingly, in this work (p. 149) the steward (*gnyer pa*), the disciplinarian, the chant-master, the *zhal ta ba*, the two hornblowers, and the shrine-keeper are all alotted equal shares. This may be a typical feature of a smaller monastery.

from 1918 note that the junior ones, namely the tea server (*phyag bde ba*), the shrine-keeper and the *zhal ta ba*, should not be lazy in carrying out their tasks.[585]

The bca' yig written by Tsong kha pa mentions the *zhal ta pa* a number of times. He is named together with the disciplinarian as having a position that merits being exempt from certain rules, such as having to ask for permission to leave the monastic grounds and so on. Here, this title refers most definitely to a post of equal importance to that of the disciplinarian, and the task of managing the monastery is clearly part of his duties.[586] Similarly, in Tshurphu monastery in the 16th century, the 'Sangha's' *zhal ta pa* (*dge 'dun gyi zhal ta pa*) appears to have been one whose job it was to investigate those monks who stayed at lay-people's houses without permission.[587] In Drepung there seems to have been a variant of this title, namely *zhal ta dpon*. This *zhal ta dpon* was, together with the disciplinarian, in charge of examining and enrolling new monks.[588] This task of selecting members of the monastic community appears similar to that of the **vaiyāpṛtyakara bhikṣu* (*dge slong zhal ta byed pa*) as portrayed in the *Pravrajyāvastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*.[589]

It is unclear why this term has not survived the test of time, whereas most other organizational titles have remained unchanged for centuries. The above sources suggest inconsistencies with regard to what a *zhal ta pa* was meant to do, ranging from performing menial tasks such as kitchen-corvée to supervising and managing the monks. It is perhaps exactly this range of meanings that made the title unworkable in the modern context, in which – generally speaking – there is a drive towards uniformity among the monasteries, regardless of their affiliation.

Head-monk or Head of Finance? (*spyi pa*/ *sa*/ *bso*/*so*/ *spyi gnyer*)

Earlier, the ambiguity of the term *spyi sa*/ *bso*/*so* was briefly discussed. That it could refer to both a group of people and individual monks makes it slightly problematic. The word *spyi pa/ ba*, however, appears to refer solely to a person.[590] The sources at hand suggest, however, that this term may refer to disparate roles. Some texts speak of the *spyi pa* as someone in a supervisory position, while others suggest that this post was strongly linked to monastic moneymaking. Starting with the former, the bca' yig for the Sakya nunnery of Rinchen gang appears to ascribe a role to the *spyi pa* that is rather similar to that of disciplinarian in other cases:

> If one is a nun who is enrolled (*sgrig rgyugs pa'i rigs*), one's own clothing should conform to tradition. One is not allowed to wear clothes the colour of which has not been altered, such as [any] light colours. When one goes against the above, then an appropriate punishment will be given. The *spyi pa* should not hold back. The incumbent *spyi pa* (*spyi pa las thog pa*) has to enforce the

[585] *sTeng po che bca' yig*: 462/ 5b.
[586] e.g. *Byams pa gling bca' yig*: 251a.
[587] *mTshur phu bca' yig*: 706/4a.
[588] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 302. The post of *zhal ta dpon* does not seem to be in use in other texts.
[589] *Vinayavastu* (*'Dul ba'i gzhi*, D1): 97b; Silk, 2008: 55, 6.
[590] In contrast, in a work on the history of Labrang monastery in Amdo the *tshogs chen spyi ba* is translated as 'the general accounting office', which collected taxes on every load-bearing animal. Nietupski, 2011: 91.

> religious rules (*chos khrims*), so the *spyi pa* has to take responsibility for [adherence to] the monastery's regulations of order (*sgrig rnam gzhag*).[591]

The text further specifies her duties by saying that 'the contribution of the *spyi pa* is to bring those subtle matters of behaviour and rules (*sgrig lam kun spyod*) that are not clarified here but that are in line with the old system to the attention of all and to make sure that they are put in practice.'[592] Similarly, in Pelri chödè's (dPal ri chos sde) monastic guidelines, the *spyi pa* is named together with the chant-master and the disciplinarian as someone who needs to be contacted should monks misbehave.[593]

In the bca' yig of Mindröl ling it is said that when monks travel as a group (*ser sbrengs*) the *spyi pa* is to confiscate 'unsuitable' items of clothing (*zhe mi mthun pa*) that monks are found to carry with them. When any crimes occur that fall under the 'general law' (*spyi khrims*), they need to be brought before the *spyi pa*, once one is back at the base.[594] The same text states elsewhere that unless one has been assigned to do so by a *spyi pa* and is accompanied by a monk-friend (*khrims grogs*), one is not to wander around the village of 'Pher brgya as a guide for one's acquaintances, and so forth.[595] Clearly, the above-cited instances of the word suggest the *spyi pa* to be someone with authority, but not necessarily someone with financial responsibilities.

It appears to be more common for the term *spyi pa* to refer to a post that is of substantial economic import. Unlike in countries such as Thailand, where a lay-bursar called *waiyawachakon* handled all money on behalf of the monastery,[596] there is (and was) no perceived problem with monks being involved in financial matters. Ekvall, speaking largely from the experience he had accumulated by living and working as a missionary in the border areas of Tibet (mainly Amdo), describes this post in great detail. He notes that the monastery's wealth is 'administered by a formally and tightly structured organization and is headed by a sPyi Ba (superintendent). Often there are two of these, who are elected or appointed from among the monks and serve terms of two to four years.' He goes on to relate that the *gnyer pa* aid the *spyi pa*, who may also have assistants (*spyi g.yog*).[597] Ekvall's description of the duties of the *spyi pa* merits citation *in extenso*:

> To be successful, the sPyi Ba must combine the talents of good business executives, the acumen of investment bankers, and the special gifts of salesmen. They must be able to plan and manage such business ventures as the dispatch of trade caravans, the management of livestock herding, the cultivation of fields, and various handicrafts activities, building projects, and the general upkeep and maintenance of all the projects. They must know how

[591] *Rin chen sgang bca' yig*: 214: *btsun ma sgrig rgyugs pa'i rigs yin na/ rang rang gi chas gos lugs mthun ma gtogs/ tshos mdog ma bsgyur ba'i gos skya bo sogs gyon mi mchog gong 'khod de rnams dang 'gal tshe spyi ba'i ngo srung med pa 'os rigs kyi chad pa 'gel/ spyi pa las thog pa su yin de chos khrims kyi go chod kyang yin pas dgon pa'i sgrig rnam gzhag spyi pa'i lag len sogs thag pa khur blangs byed dgos rgyu yin zhing/*

[592] ibid.: *spyi pa'i gtong gzhi sgrig lam kun spyod phra mo sogs 'dir ma gsal ba rnams snga rgyun bzhin mthun phyogs rnams kun gyi thugs la bcangs phyag len la thebs par byas/*

[593] *dPal ri chos sde bca' yig*: 458.

[594] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 307: *gal te spyi khrims la gras kha byas pa'i nyes che ba rnams slar gzhis su spyi par btug*. The word *gzhis*, here translated as base, may either refer to the place the monks have set up camp or the home monastery.

[595] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 282: *spyi pas bskos shing khrims grogs yod na ma gtogs ngo shes sne shan sogs 'pher brgya'i grong 'khyams mi byed/*

[596] Bunnag, 1973: 33.

[597] Ekvall, 1964: 195.

> and to whom to lend wealth at interest to the best advantage, avoiding unprofitable enterprises and defaulters. In addition, they must be effective salesmen, advertising and proffering the religious services of the monastery so as to elicit, if not directly solicit, gifts to the Grwa Tshang. Salesmanship is also required to induce individuals, families, and communities to accept capital funds as an investment from which the Grwa Tshang may be assured of regular income. In Central Tibet, the collection of taxes is one of their principal duties.[598]

The above account is confirmed by the bca' yig for Dophü chökhor ling (rDo phud chos 'khor gling) monastery (in Central Tibet) from 1938. It warns of the temptations that accompany the post of *spyi pa*:

> Those who hold the post of *spyi ba* at the *bla brang* are involved, during their service, in efforts to sustain the general good [such as] farm work, sales and loans, horses and donkeys. They have an exemption, but only up to a certain level. It is not allowed to do more than what's necessary, which would be both contradictory and harmful to the general rules and good behaviour.[599]

It appears that they did not just involve themselves in business but also that they managed the treasury for the general population of monks. It is said in the monastic guidelines for Sera je monastery, that when there were gifts that were unsuitable to divide among the Sangha, they were to be placed in the treasury of the *spyi pa*.[600] In other instances, the *spyi pa* also serve as the liaison for the benefactors who wish to sponsor tea for the monks.[601] Together with the disciplinarians they inform donors on how their money is spent (i.e. how much goes towards buying wood (*shing rin*), etc.). However, when the people fall short, they may not argue with them about it, putting them under pressure.[602]

While previously the word *spyi bso/so* was connected to an institutional office, [603] this term can be equated with that of *spyi pa* in a number of cases, thus referring to an individual post.[604] According to Dakpa, in Drepung the *spyi so*, of which there

[598] Ekvall, 1964: 195, 6. For a more detailed examination of the role of the individual monk within the larger context of monastic economy, see Chapter 6.

[599] *rDo phud chos 'khor gling bca' yig*: 568: *bla brang spyi pa las 'dzin rnams nas kyang las 'khur ring spyi don 'tsho ba'i 'du 'god kyi so nam dang tshong bun/ rta bong dgos nges grangs bcad bcas nas dmigs bsal las de lhag sgrig lam kun spyod la gnod 'gal 'gro rigs mi chog* [..] The translation is a loose one, for the language is elliptical.

[600] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 578: *dge 'dun la bgo ring mi chog pa'i rnyed pa'i rigs spyi ba'i mdzod du 'jog* I suggest emending *ring* to *rung*. This is in accord with the Vinaya regulations on the acceptance of gifts that are either unsuitable or useless to the Sangha. Items that are not of any use to monks, such as perfume, still need to be used in some way. See Schopen, 1995b: 107.

[601] *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 131: *sbyin bdag gi sne len byed dgos rnams spyi pas byed cing* [..]

[602] ibid.: *ma lcogs pa'i rigs la u tshugs kyis rtsod pa mi gtong/* The issue of monks dealing with (lay-) sponsors is further discussed in Chapter 7.

[603] The term *spyi so* as referring to an individual is not attested in the *Tshig mdzod chen mo*, where it is described as the office [of] those who manage the general income of each of the monasteries in the olden days: 1680: *snga dus dgon pa so so'i thun mong gi gtong yong bdag gnyer byed mkhan las khungs*/ While both spellings appear with equal regularity in the bca' yig, *spyi bso*, in which the second syllable *bso* might be the future tense of the verb *gso ba*, i.e. to make grow, to restore, to nourish, appears to make more etymological sense. Literally then, *spyi bso* stands for either an office or someone in charge of caring for the general [welfare of the Sangha]. Elsewhere, the spelling *spyi gso* also occurs, e.g. Karmay and Nagano: 756. Here it is rendered as 'accountant'.

[604] This is also confirmed in Dagyab, 2009: 56; 58.

were two, were responsible for the finances.[605] The same was true for the *spyi bso* at the Kong stod dung dkar monastery in 1943:

> Two people serve as *spyi bso* for a period of three years. They make sure there is no decline by keeping clear account of grains, silver, animals, and household items in the record of income (*sprod deb*) and that what needs to be given and offered, which includes the interest on grains and butter and the income from dairy products (*she 'bab*), accords with the record of expenses (*gtong deb*).[606]

This shows that the *spyi bso* have tasks that are similar to that of a modern-day accountant. The big difference is that, in line with Ekvall's description, the *spyi bso* had to make sure that the monastery would not incur any loss, by managing its income in the *sprod deb* and its expenses in the *gtong deb*. At some monasteries, the *spyi bso*'s assistants were called *mchod gnyer* (keepers of offerings). Together with the *spyi bso* they enjoyed several exemptions. The monastic guidelines the Thirteenth Dalai Lama wrote for Rongpo rabten (Rong po rab brtan) monastery in 1930 state that except for the *spyi bso* and the *mchod gnyer*, no one was ever 'allowed to do farm work, cattle herding, business and the like, whether near or far.'[607] As with other managerial posts, this position was vulnerable to abuse:

> The general office, of which the managers of the offerings (*mchod gnyer*) are the heads, is [to record] meticulously[608] all that is deducted, invested, reduced and subtracted from that which was given by the faithful (*dad rdzas*) to the field of merit, which is the Three Jewels, according to how it is stated in the allowance-ledger (*phogs deb*) that has been issued by the government. No selfish unmeritorious evil actions may ever be permitted. [609]

The above statement reveals a number of important issues, aside from the fact that the *mchod gnyer* were seen to be corruptible. It shows that the things offered by the faithful (*dad rdzas*) were in some cases not exactly voluntary,[610] for these offerings could be increased or reduced by the *mchod gnyer*, suggesting that they were susceptible to bias. Further it indicates that the allowance-ledger (*phogs deb*) contained rules on how to deal with and record offerings and other types of income. Generally speaking, the *phogs deb* stated how much the different classes of monks received.[611] At the same time, this ledger indicates that the monastery was

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[605] Dakpa, 2003: 171.

[606] *Kong stod dung dkar dgon bca' yig*: 597: *spyi bso mi ngo gnyis nas las thog lo gsum ring sprod gsal 'bru dngul/ sems can/ 'dzin chas dngos rigs sprod deb nang gsal rtsis len thog 'bru mar gyi bskyed/ sheb 'bab* [sic: *she 'bab*] *bcas nas mchod gtong 'bul dgos/ gtong deb ltar nyams med byed/*

[607] *Rong po rab brtan dgon bca' yig*: 538: *spyi bso dang mchod gnyer khag la ma gtogs zhing las/ phyugs skyong/ khe tshong sogs nye 'gyangs gang sar nam yang mi chog*

[608] This phrase serves to illustrate that all that is taken out needs to be put right back where it came from. It literally means for the meat-broth to be [re-] absorbed into the meat. *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 2821: *sha khu sha thim: gang nas byung ba de de rang du gtong dgos pa'i dpe/ ... rgyal khab kyis 'gro song gtong rgyur gnang ba de dag sha khu sha thim du gtong dgos pa las/ gang byung 'thor gyar du gyur na mi 'grig*

[609] *Rong po rab brtan dgon bca' yig*: 537: *spyi bsos gtsos pa'i mchod gnyer khag nas gzhung stsal phogs deb nang gsal ltar mchog gsum bsod nams kyi zhing la dad rdzas sha khu shar thim las chad 'jog 'khri 'then sogs rang 'dod bsod nams ma yin pa'i las ngan rigs nam yang mi chog/*

[610] For more on these types of 'offerings' see Chapter 7.

[611] See Jansen, 2013a: 131, 2; *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 306, 7. For more on these ledgers, see Chapter 6.

economically accountable to and dependent of the government, which appears to be part of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's political policies. Presumably, it gave the government the leverage it needed to impose stricter rules regarding 'playing favours' (or simply corruption).

Yet another similar term is *spyi gnyer*, which also may refer to the assistant of the *spyi pa*. In Sera je there were two of them, and they were allowed to keep up to three horses,[612] something that was forbidden for the ordinary monks. This suggests that they had to venture out of the monastery on a regular basis. In the bca' yig for Drigung thil from 1802, the *spyi gnyer* is mentioned together with the disciplinarian (here: *chos khrims pa*), the two then get abbreviated to *spyi chos*. They appear to play an important supervisory role in the monastery. The *spyi gnyer*, as did others who held official positions (*las 'dzin*), had to make sure that their robes were in order, in particular when venturing outside of the monastery.[613] This suggests the *spyi gnyer* had a representative role.

The Steward or the Financial Caretaker (*gnyer pa*)

While the above terms *zhal ta pa* and *spyi pa* appear nowadays largely obsolete, the word *gnyer pa* is in active use in the monasteries today. It indicates a monk who is in charge of the finances of the monastery. A monastic institution could have several *gnyer pa*. mKhan po chos dbyings lhun grub, referring to the contemporary situation in Khampa gar in India, explains that the different sections of the monastery, such as the *bshad grwa*, function more or less independently. They have separate economies and they each have a *gnyer pa*. However, the owner of the whole monastery (*dgon pa'i bdag po*) is Khams sprul rin po che. When the one section faces difficulties the others help out.[614] Similarly, for Sakya Chökhor ling (Sa skya chos 'khor gling) in India, the two *gnyer pa* look after the monks during certain rituals (*zhabs rten*) and other religious congregations. They are also responsible for the food-bill.[615]

In pre-modern Tibet, the *gnyer pa* appear to have filled positions often similar if not equivalent to that of the *spyi pa*. The elderly monk dKon mchog chos nyid, speaking of his time in Yangri gar[616] in the 1950s, notes that in Tibet certain types of incarnations or the richer monks would fill the position of *gnyer pa*. More generally speaking, the monks that worked in the administration, the *bla brang*, needed to be affluent (*rgyu chen po*). They would travel around, making investments, buying and selling things, and do business for the monastery. They needed to have some start-up capital, so this kind of enterprise was not for the poorer monks.[617] Dagyab notes that, at least in the years prior to 1959, in the case of a deficit, such a monk would have to replace the losses himself, whereas he could assume that, in the case there was any surplus, he could keep it.[618] That this post is strongly connected to being both wealthy and business-savvy is highlighted by the fact that in the modern Mongolian language the term 'Jisa nyarab' (**spyi sa'i gnyer pa*) carries a special meaning, namely 'that of a person who has money but is very careful and not willing to use it'.[619]

[612] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 581.
[613] *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig*: 404.
[614] Personal communication with mKhan po chos dbyings lhun grub, Bir, August 2012.
[615] Personal communication with bSod nams chos rgyal, Rajpur, August 2012.
[616] The full name of this monastery is 'Bri gung yang ri sgar thub bstan sde bzhi rab rgyas gling
[617] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos nyid, Phiyang, August 2012.
[618] Dagyab, 2009: 60.
[619] The Mongolian term that is closely related to *gnyer pa* is *hetsuu hun*, meaning 'clever one'. Purevjav, 2012: 262.

This notion that a person who does business on behalf of the Sangha needs to have money of his own does not occur solely in the Tibetan tradition: the rules in the Theravāda Vinaya state that monks were liable to pay damages when their actions lead to the Sangha incurring a loss. From that can be deduced that monks tended to own property.[620] In the Tibetan case, this Vinayic concern for illegitimately using the Sangha's possessions translates into a general rule that the people investing those very goods had to be of some means themselves.[621]

The *gnyer pa* may have also held an important managerial position with regard to managing the lands that belonged to the monastery. In Ganden, the *gnyer pa* had two ways to manage the lands belonging to the monastery (*chos gzhis/ mchod gzhis*). He could let it to others (*gla mkhan*) and set up a contract (*chings yig*) for that purpose or alternatively, he could appoint a subject of the monastic region (*dgon sde'i mi ser*) to look after the affairs and collect the revenue.[622] In the same monastery, before 1959 the individual houses (*kham tshan*) each had three financial managers (*dngul gnyer*)[623] in Lhasa, who would accept repayment from debtees and busied themselves with collecting rent. These managers were supported by two 'pursuers' (*'ded pa*) who would act as debt-collectors.[624] That the *gnyer pa* had to be mobile is apparent in the *'Bras spungs bca' yig*, where it is stated that while the two disciplinarians were allowed to have just one horse each, the *gnyer pa* of Phan bde legs bshad gling college could have five horses and the *gnyer pa* of bDe yangs college could keep two horses and two *mdzo mo*. The tantric ritualists (*sngags sgrub mchod pa*) could have up to one horse and one *mdzo mo*.[625]

Of those who dealt with business that required going out of the monastery, it was not just the *gnyer pa* who had to be of some means. This is witnessed by the bca' yig for Mindröl ling, where it is indicated that a *rtsis 'dzin pa* – someone taking account of loans (against interest) and repayments of those loans – had to make up for any loss that would occur:

> All the things that are given as loans (*rtsis 'khri*) to which the *rtsis 'dzin pa* of the treasury and a suitable assistant are assigned with utmost care – except for when there is an exceptionally great need – may not be loaned out to others. And even if something needs to be used, the official to whose care it was given needs to make sure the value does not get diminished. In the case of loss, he needs to replace it.[626] When the loss is great a replacement and [an extra]

[620] von Hinüber, 1995: 11.
[621] The larger implications for the monastic economy and the Tibetan society as a whole of this 'rule' are explored in Chapter 6.
[622] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 172. Similar to the Tibetan *gnyer pa*, in Korea, during the Koryŏ period the steward (直歲 *chikse*) was in charge of collecting rents from the temple's estates, while the treasurer (典座 *chŏnjwa*) had the function of providing for the material needs of the monastery. Vermeersch, 2008: 217.
[623] Perhaps the difference between the *gnyer pa* and the *dngul gnyer* is simply that the latter only dealt with monetary issues, whereas the former apparently also dealt with farmlands.
[624] Dagyab, 2009: 61. While it does not say whether these people were lay or ordained, there are accounts of monks collecting debts for their monastery. For an account of a monk collecting debts, see Gyatso, 1998.
[625] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 314. As mentioned earlier, ordinary monks were not allowed to keep any animals.
[626] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 309, 10: *rgyan khang gi rtsis 'dzin pa bgres pa re dang rogs 'os pa re dmigs btsugs kyis bskos pa'i rtsis 'khri'i yo byad thams cad dgos nges kyi dmigs bsal rnams su ma gtogs gzhan du g.yar po gtong len sogs mi byed cing bed spyod dgos dus kyang las byed so sor rtsis sprad ngos chud zos mi yong ba'i 'khos khyab dang/ gal te bor ba la tshab pa gang 'os/ chud zos che*

> profit[627] may be taken. When it is minor, recompense should be made. When there is a recollection of who the persons in question are, then they should be held to account. But when they are not identified, the bookkeeper (*rtsis pa*) himself, as it was explained above, needs to carefully make sure that it is taken care of by offering recompense himself .

It is not clear here whether this person loans to monks or to lay-people – but in the light of other accounts,[628] I assume that lay-people would visit the monastery to take out loans. The word *rtsis 'khri* refers to something that has been put in the care of someone else and thus is not necessarily a loan. However, here it is likely that it refers to things that people have taken to the monastery as a security[629] in order to get a loan, or things that have been entrusted to the monastery for safekeeping. The role of the *rtsis 'dzin pa* might be comparable to the post of *gnyer pa* in other monasteries at other times.[630]

The Bon monastery of Menri also had a different term for the persons managing its finances. There two monks had the function of *phan tshun dge rgan*.[631] They were chosen for their abilities and appointed for three years. Each year one of them would go to the Byang thang area (encompassing northern and western Tibet) to collect funds from the nomads there. A rich family would then donate thirty to forty yaks, butter, etc. The donations would be transported to Tsang (in Central Tibet) to sell on. With the money this monk-official then would buy grain. The other *phan tshun dge rgan* had to oversee the production of tsampa (*rtsam pa*). The tsampa was distributed during the daily tea (*rgyun ja*) in the assembly hall.[632] Another term found for a similar position is *kha 'go ba*[633] or simply *'go ba*. According to Nietupski, in Labrang monastery these representatives were chosen because they were natural leaders, good speakers, bold, and publicly aggressive. They had to know 'the fundamental corpus of rituals and doctrines' but they were 'not scholars or even very pious.' They were generally wild and rough and some allegedly renounced their vows temporarily.[634]

The sources dealt with above have clearly suggested that the financial managers were monks. There are some indications, however, that this role was ambiguous in other sources. dKon mchog chos nyid expressly states that in the monastery in Yangri gar a *gnyer pa* had to have either *dge tsul* or *dge slong* vows,[635]

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ba la tshab dang rnying pa'ang len/ chung ba la gun bsab/ dran 'dzin gang 'os rnams so sor 'gel pa dang/ ngos ma zin pa rnams la rtsis pa rang gis gong gsal bzhin gun bsab pa sogs do dam ca gas 'drongs pa byed/

[627] Here *rnying pa* is likely to be a misreading for *rnyed pa*.

[628] According to Cassinelli and Ekvall, all the monasteries in the Sakya polity made loans to the laity on a regular basis. They were handled by the monastery's 'business manager'. See Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 275.

[629] There is a separate term for this in Tibetan *gta' ma*, although it is not regularly used in the materials at hand.

[630] Interestingly, the role of *gnyer pa* in Mindröl ling monastery was more like that of a janitor. 'The jobs concerning the general monastic compound (*gling*), such as the willow fence [are taken care of] in consultation with the *gnyer pa*. According to older custom restoration and masonry work was done in the spring.' *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 311: *lcang ra sogs gling spyi'i bya ba rnams gnyer pa dang bstun nas byed par dpyid dus zhig gso'i ar tshags sngar srol bstar chags dang/*

[631] This may be akin to the post of *phan tshun che mo*: the supervisor of political and economic matters in Bon monasteries, Karmay and Nagano, 2003: 756.

[632] Kvaerne, 1970: 189.

[633] Caple, 2010: 201. This is translated with 'manager'.

[634] Nietupski, 2011: 63.

[635] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos nyid, Phiyang, August 2012.

while Blo bzang don grub maintains that in Spituk, Ladakh, both the *gnyer pa* and the *phyag mdzod* were chosen from among the *dge slong*.[636] Partly because the term *gnyer pa* is also used in secular organizations[637] some confusion remains on the identity of this financial caretaker. Furthermore, in Ladakh, the families that are financially responsible for certain ceremonies also get called *gnyer pa*.[638] Ekvall, however, in describing the role and function of ex-monks (*ban log*; elsewhere: *grwa log*), notes that they 'are the doers of secular deeds when the monastery needs them to be done; they have the time and opportunity for economic and political activity, they often hold managerial positions in the monastery, such as the *gnyer pa* and the *spyi ba*.'[639] While ex-monks were usually fiercely loyal to their monastery and well aware of important monastic issues, in other places it appears that lay-people managed the whole monastery.[640] Likewise, in bSam bde gling, in the first half of the 20th century, the steward (**gnyer pa*?) was also a layman.[641] Michael furthermore notes that managers of monastic estates were often *mi ser* (here: lay-people) and that they could make the monastery rich.[642] These 'managers' could also refer to the people contracted by the *gnyer pa* to manage the fields.[643]

In many ways, the *spyi pa* and the *gnyer pa* had very similar functions. In Dwags po bshad grub gling, the offices that took care of financial matters were split into two: the *gnyer tshang* controlled the agricultural land and the *spyi bso* department controlled the livestock, grain, cash and other donations. The *gnyer tshang* office was responsible for paying the monks their allowance (*phogs*) and also had to provide them with soup (*thug pa*) on a regular basis. In the years before the 1950s, the *spyi bso* fared much better financially, but it was not allowed to help out the *gnyer tshang*.[644] Naturally, not all monasteries had access to income from both land-rent and livestock, and a clear distinction between the *spyi pa* as the head of the *spyi bso* and the *gnyer pa* as the leader of the *gnyer tshang* was not necessary, which may account for the crossover in meanings.

Ex-monks and the Monastery

As briefly alluded to above, ex-monks seem to still have played important roles in certain aspects of the monastery's running. Ekvall, describing the situation as he found it in Amdo between 1925 and 1941, speaks of the so-called *ban log* (*grwa log*), which he translates as 'monk rebel'. According to him, these were individuals who had been debarred from remaining as monks for having violated the basic rules (i.e. the four root vows). However, for various reasons, they continued to live in their quarters in the monastery, wear the garb of monks, and were still in high standing outside the monastery. A *ban log* could engage in extensive trading for himself or the community, often using his residency at the monastery as a storage and trading post.

[636] Personal communication with Blo bang don grub, Spituk, August 2012.
[637] e.g. in Mustang, see Ramble, 2008: 286. Sherring gives a description of his dealing with what he calls 'Nirba', who are unmistakingly lay-administrators. See Sherring, 1974 [1916]: 170 et seq. In Derge the cabinet ministers, usually belonging to the class of aristocrats, were also called *gnyer pa* (or *gnyer chen*), see Thargyal and Huber, 2007: 49.
[638] Joldan, 2006: 73.
[639] Ekvall, 1959/60: 217.
[640] Dargyay, 1982: 74.
[641] French, 1995a: 241.
[642] Michael, 1982: 158.
[643] As found in *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 172, previously cited above.
[644] Nornang, 1990: 250, 1; 256. Separate economies based on the source of the income is not unusual and – as shall be further explored in Chapter 6 – is resonated in Vinayic materials.

He was also able to hold managerial positions such as steward (*gnyer pa*). In some cases, he had a family living outside the monastery. [645] This 'rebel monk' thus bought and sold, collected debts and lent out funds at interest. He was particularly important when monasteries went to war and monks became armed mobs or private armies. A *ban log*, even when he killed during a conflict, would still have a place in the monastery. Ekvall states that 'by his activities he both exercises political power on behalf of the monastery and increases and enhances such power.'[646] This makes the *ban log* the doers of secular deeds when the monastery needed them to be done: they had both the time and the opportunity for economic and political activity.[647]

In Sakya too, a former monk could maintain his official position, provided he made a generous offering to his monastery.[648] In other words, there was little correspondence between religious standards and political propriety.[649] To house ex-monks who nonetheless displayed loyalty to the monastery may have been a practical solution to the limitations holding *dge tshul* or *dge slong* vows could present. This was solved in Sri Lankan Buddhism by employing a *kappiyakāraka* (*rung bar byed pa*, S. *kalpikāra*): a lay-person appointed to procure necessities for the Sangha and make them allowable (*kappiya*).[650] At first glance, the *ban log* that Ekvall describes appears to be a Tibetan (Amdo) equivalent. However, as we shall examine in the next chapter, the handling of money was less problematic for Tibetan monks (or for that matter monks within the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* tradition).[651]

While Ekvall's observations on these ex-monks are no doubt accurate, they are far removed from the ideal scenarios most of the monastic guidelines sketch. The authors of these texts appear keen to remove these blotches from the monastery, or at least to prevent them from partaking in any of the offerings that were divided among the monks.[652] Contrary to what is commonly thought, it was possible for a monk who had been expelled to retake the vows and return to the monastery. This return to the ranks was under strict supervision and with the proviso of certain stipulations.[653] Furthermore, according to the monastic guidelines of Pelyul darthang monastery, these ex-monks that retook their vows could not hold positions of ritual importance such as that of lama (here: teacher), chant-master or teacher of ritual dances (*'cham dpon*).[654]

While in some Tibetan societies disrobing was seen as the greatest shame,[655] it was a common occurrence in others.[656] Often the economic outlook for monks who

[645] Ekvall, 1959/60: 210.
[646] ibid.: 219.
[647] ibid.: 217.
[648] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 144.
[649] ibid.: 69.
[650] Gunawardana, 1979: 99. An interesting parallel is found in Cistercian monasteries in 13th century England. The Cistercian monks had a group of middlemen, who were laymen, to do the business they were not allowed to do. See Madden, 1963: 344.
[651] On the extent of monks handling money in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, see for example: Schopen, 2006: 225-245.
[652] For the case of the Fifth Dalai Lama dealing with these 'vowless' monks, see Jansen, 2013a: 115-21.
[653] On the expulsion of monks and their re-entering see Chapter 8.
[654] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 193, 4: *de rigs rnams tshogs la gzhug kyang bla ma dang dbu mdzad 'cham dpon lta bu'i go sar dbyung du med/*
[655] Gyatso notes that 'The greatest social opprobrium was reserved in Tibet for those who gave up their ordination.' and also that 'Well attested cases do exist where monks would basically be cast into the wilderness, without possession or provision if they were found to have transgressed their root vows. Such unfortunate individuals would end up not only as outcastes from the monastic community, but from society at large as well.' See Gyatso, 2003: 233.

disrobed was bleak and this may have been one of the reasons why relatively few monks returned to lay life. Contrastingly, Dargyay notes that former monks were in demand to become secretaries in the noblemen's household.[657] Naturally this only pertained to the educated monks. When I asked the elderly Sakya monk Shes rab rgya mtsho what happened to monks who disrobed he said:

> Ex-monks would usually go to Kham: they did not stay around. Life must have been difficult for a monk who had given up his vows, because he would not know a lot about work. If you would have a good family to fall back on, it would not be that bad. Otherwise it would be quite difficult.[658]

The role of ex-monks is underappreciated in current scholarship, but mainly because our sources, the monk-authors, are weary to report on them, for obvious reasons. However, the ex-monk's affiliation with the monastery, which was in some cases an emotional bond, in others a pragmatic and financial one, often remained. This contributed to the development of informal networks.

The Abbot: Figurehead or Frontman?

Like most other offices in the monastery, that of the abbot is not straightforward. As mentioned above, the abbot's position is less regularly commented upon in the monastic guidelines, likely because not infrequently the abbots were either the authors or the people who requested the composition of the bca' yig.[659]This is not to say that the guidelines are unable to inform on the role of the leader of a monastery or college. In the Gelug system *mkhan po* is most regularly used to denote the ruling head of a monastic institution, although in some cases the leader was called a *khri pa* or *khri chen* (throne holder), which usually, but not always, referred to this person being an incarnation instated as head of one or more monasteries. In non-Gelug schools the latter position is more akin to what is called the *bstan pa'i bdag po* (or *bstan bdag*): the owner of the Teachings; the highest authority possible.[660] The throne-holder of Sakya is called *khri thog pa*. It is tempting to suppose that, in the case of there being both a temporary head (such as a *mkhan po*) and an incarnated leader-for-life (such as the *khri pa* or *bstan bdag*), the latter has the function of acting as religious figurehead, whereas the former is more involved in practical matters. It does not appear as clear-cut however.

Taking monasticism as it occurs in Ladakh as a starting-point, Mills makes a case for ritual authority being extended over both the monastery and the lay people as the prerogative of the incarnates, and that ritual authority often extended into

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[656] In other Buddhist cultures disrobing is (and was) a very common feature of the monkhood. Bunnag describes how in Thailand when a monk disrobed his personal sponsor, who had given him a monthly allowance when a monk, would equip him for lay life by giving him money and clothes. See Bunnag, 1973: 157.

[657] Dargyay, 1982: 21.

[658] Personal communication with Shes rab rgya mtsho, Rajpur, July 2012.

[659] Cech also notes that the Bon bca' yig she examined does not mention the abbot much. However, she extrapolates from this that he did not have much to do with the enforcement of rules, see Cech, 1988: 85.

[660] In fact, the Sakya author Kun dga' blo gros (1729-1783) refers to the Dalai Lama (*Gong sa mchog*, here in all likelihood the Eighth Dalai Lama) as 'the owner of the complete Teachings' (*yongs rdzogs bstan pa'i bdag po*), the ultimate authority. See *bSam yas lcog grwa bca' yig*: 408.

organizational authority.[661] Nietupski shows a similar presupposition, as he casually mentions that the Fourth 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa served as throne holder (I assume this to be *khri pa* or *khri chen*) of several monasteries and that 'he was thus no stranger to diplomacy, administration, legal or economic matters.'[662] This first of all raises the question of what a 'throne holder' was expected to do: what were his duties?

Presumably a successful throne holder needed to have charisma and religious authority so as to legitimise his exertion of power and diplomacy. The bca' yig of Drigung thil states that its monks, 'in order not to destroy oneself and others by means of disrepute (*kha smras*) and the many grounds for disputes (*kha mchu'i rtsa ba*)',[663] need to look at the acting abbots as role-models and follow their example.[664] Cassinelli and Ekvall state that in Sakya, the abbots of the monasteries were not meant to concern themselves too much with governmental (and thus managerial) affairs and that often officials (presumably those with a 'religious rank' in the monasteries) had less political power than the ordinary monks.[665]

It appears that there was – at least at the larger monasteries – a dual system in place, in which a group of monks would effectively run the monastery, dirtying their hands if necessary, without 'incriminating' the religious figurehead. This arrangement is comparable to that in place in Thailand where 'it is quite common for the real business of running the *wat* [monastery] to be undertaken by the deputy, whilst the abbot preserves his charisma by remaining aloof from these affairs.'[666] It can then thus be argued that it does not necessarily follow that a throne holder, or any religious figurehead for that matter, was also always assigned a practical, administrative or managerial role. This dual system may have its parallel in the way most of the Dalai Lamas related to their regents (*sde srid*).[667]

It is also possible, however, that in smaller monasteries the abbot (or throne holder) held dual functions. This would probably be seen as far from ideal because it meant that the position of the 'spiritual head' of the monastery could get compromised, by being forced to (openly) get involved in semi-secular or worldly affairs. During the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, there was a concerted effort underway to keep the abbots away from governmental affairs.[668] A bca' yig written in 1889 by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama on the occasion of the establishment of an unnamed and unidentified educational college (*mtshan nyid grwa tshang*, possibly in Mongolia) gives the job-description of the abbot (*mkhan po*) as follows:

> An abbot mainly needs to manage affairs. The abbot also definitely needs to be a spiritual teacher who is endowed with the qualities of being learned, disciplined and kind. In the best case, he has already gained higher degrees at

[661] Mills, 2003.
[662] Nietupski, 2011: 140.
[663] In some cases *kha mchu* could also refer to lawsuits.
[664] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig* a: 249a: *kha smras dang kha mchu'i rtsa ba mang pos rang gzhan thams cad phung bar mi mdzad par mkhan po byang mgon dang/ dpon chen byang she'i mdzad pa 'di la ltos la de'i rjes su 'brongs/*
[665] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 318.
[666] Bunnag, 1973: 94, 5.
[667] Notable exceptions here are the Fifth, the Thirteenth and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.
[668] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 318.

> one of the big monasteries. If that is not the case, he should have the qualification of having completed the studies of the five main texts.[669]

Naturally, because the monastic institution in question is one that focused on education, the abbot also needs to be learned. However, here – without going into details – the dual function of the abbot as a 'spiritual friend' and a manager is clearly indicated .

While the size and the function of the monastery is thus a factor, much also appears to depend on whether the appointment is for life or merely temporary. Schram, describing the Tibetan Buddhist Monguor people in the beginning of the 20th century notes that the 'fa-t'ai' (i.e. *fatai* 法臺, for which he gives the Tibetan gloss *m'Kampo* (**mkhan po*)) had in principle the power to address malpractices (in particular by the intendancies; the *phyag mdzod*, who *did* have tenure), but in effect they declined to do so because they were elected by the intendant and after their three-year term they still had to remain in the monastery. Thus, the abbots were in the words of Schram 'practical Orientals' and chose not to introduce reforms. This reduced their powers to 'theoretical and honorary dimensions.' An abbot furthermore had to be a rich man, for he had to be able to entertain the more highly placed inmates of the monastery with sumptuous banquets several times a year. The poorer monks who were put forward as candidates for the position of abbot often declined for that reason.[670]

In the Nyingma monastery of Pelyul darthang in Golog, Amdo, during the first half of the 20th century, the abbot is also held responsible for the upkeep of discipline along with the disciplinarian.[671] A clear distinction is made between the abbot and the disciplinarian, however. The abbot has a supervisory function (*klad gzigs*), whereas that of the disciplinarian is executive (*do khur*).[672] This suggests that the abbot was the one who had the final responsibility. Indeed, when in the early 20th century monks from Sera monastery were found to have cashed in debts by forcefully seizing goods from lay-people, the Thirteenth Dalai lama fined the abbot, making him 'legally' responsible for the conduct of his monks.[673] In Pelyul in Kham, consulting the abbot (here: *bstan pa'i bdag po*) was advised as a last resort. Only when other officials such as disciplinarians could not come to a satisfactory solution was he asked for advice. Alternatively, the officials could come together in council and come to a decision having discussed the matter.[674] In the hierarchy of the monastery, the abbot had the highest authority. It was his name and his deeds that would be taken up in the monastery's abbatial record (*gdan rabs*). Thus the owner of the Teachings (*bstan pa'i gdag po*) was also called the *gdan rabs 'dzin pa'i khri rin po che*.[675]

It is suggested that both in China and in Thailand abbots were expected to be, aside from spiritual leaders, on good terms with government officials and lay-donors and regularly meet with them. The monastery was greatly dependent on these

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[669] *Thor rgod rgyal po bca' yig*: 368: *de ltar mkhan pos gtso bor do dam byed dgos te/ mkhan po yang mkhas btsun bzang gsum gi yon tan dang ldan pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen zhig nges par dgos shing/ de yang rab byung na gdan sa chen po rnams kyi ming btags che khag thon zin dang/ de ltar ma byung yang bka' pod lnga pa bslab sbyangs mthar phyin pa'i mtshan nyid dang ldan pa zhig dgos/*

[670] Schram, 2006 [1954]: 373, 4.

[671] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 199: *sgrigs yig 'di'i nang 'khod tshad mkhan po dang dge bskos gnyis kyi khur thang yin la/*

[672] ibid.: *de dag gi klad gzigs mkhan po dang do khur dge bskos nas mdzad dgos pas/*

[673] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 200.

[674] *dPal yul gdan rabs*: 357: *bka' shag gong gsal mi sna rnams bsdud nas grol mol thog thag gcod bya rgyu*.

[675] ibid.: 358.

relationships for its economic and political survival.[676] While in many regards the Tibetan monastic economy was such that it depended to a lesser extent on sponsors, it is highly likely that the abbot was responsible for the upkeep of relations with important players on the outside world. The bca' yig I have seen do not discuss this, but if the situation in contemporary Tibetan monasteries is a continuation of the past, then – in particular concerning non-Gelug monasteries – the presence, charisma, and amicability of the abbot is indeed crucial for the reputation, discipline, and finances of a monastic institution.

Managerial and Religious Offices: a Two-tiered Institution?

Senatores boni viri, senatus autem mala bestia

There is a perceived relationship between the discipline and the presence of an important master. The contemporary 'lama Tshul khrims' complains that the discipline has deteriorated dramatically in his monastery and when asked to give a reason for this he explained:

> This is because the *bstan bdag* used to always be present in the monastery, making sure the monks would behave well and that they would all go to the assembly. Now both our main lamas travel to the West frequently, and they also have a lot of responsibilities elsewhere. Now there is no one with authority whom the monks will respect. Actually, I think that important lamas need to stay at the monastery to look after its affairs. Previously the lamas lived here, also because they did not really know English and did not have the opportunity to travel. Now this is all different: they speak English and teach all over the world, but the monastery suffers from their absence.[677]

This is also echoed by Mills who, in examining the state of smaller Gelug monasteries in Ladakh, writes that 'the monastic discipline of ordinary monks is in some sense linked to, and constituted by, the activities of incarnates.'[678] While this may be the case in the smaller Gelug monasteries and in the other schools that have a tradition of assigning important administrative positions to the higher incarnations, we find that according to the examples given above concerning his role, the abbot is important for the maintanence of discipline, but only by being an example or an inspiration. The day-to-day matters were (and usually still are) taken care of by the disciplinarians, the chant-masters and the various types of managers. Thus, while the abbot has a degree of what could be called 'ritual authority' over the monastery's inhabitants, it is important to understand the practical limitations of that authority. In other words, there appeared to be a two-tiered institution, in which the abbot was able to maintain the moral highground, while the managers were burdened with the upkeep of the monastery and – when push came to shove – had to take certain measures, which could be preceived as reproachable.

It appears that some bca' yig attempted to close the gap between the behaviour of the managerial and the symbolical powers. In the opinion of their authors, *all* monks should behave in an exemplary way. The monastic guidelines thus address this disjunction between what figures in authority prescribed for a monastery and what the monks actually did. Therefore, when attempting to understand how monasteries were

[676] Reynolds, 1979: 225; Foulk, 2004; 291.
[677] Personal communication with lama 'Tshul khrims', Dehradun, August 2012.
[678] Mills, 2003: 315.

actually organized, not too much should be made of this 'ritual authority',[679] for the bca' yig demonstrate that often not more than lip service was paid to this authority.

Another point is that there existed a high degree of authority, embodied by the offices that have been described in this chapter. This 'combined' authority was hardly ever called into question. According to Kurzman, when 'leaders have a high level of authority and control over resources, this may serve to reduce organizational mobilization, as activists are then not able or not willing to challenge the organizational leadership.'[680] This reduction in the organizational mobilization is in the case of Tibetan monasteries clearly visible: the organizational structures were relatively stable over a number of centuries and any change was viewed with great suspicion. Similar to the Christian monasteries in the Middle Ages described as 'institutions designed to stem the tide of change,' it seems that their Tibetan counterparts too were 'living symbols of immutability in the midst of flux.'[681]

In the context of Tibetan monasticism, the identity of the institution is clearly distinct from that of the individual monk. This may have had further ramifications: when monks act in the name of their monastery, the ultimate (moral) responsibility lies with the inanimate institution. As long as there was no perceived self-interest for the monks involved, monks may not have been held accountable for actions that would have otherwise been seen as 'unethical'. It would have been unimaginable to blame 'the system', i.e. the Sangha as a whole, for any wrong-doing, as this was (and is) seen as bearing severe karmic consequences. Viewed in this way, we can understand how the actions of the monastery as a whole were hardly ever criticized, whereas individual monks, government representatives, and local rulers were more easily reproached. This would in turn have maintained the status quo.[682] The Tibetan system of monastic organization – despite it being in no way entirely homogenous – was geared towards maintaining the monastery and thereby the Sangha as a whole. This outlook also had an impact on the way the monastic institution and its monks dealt with economic issues, to which we turn below.

[679] cf. Mills, 2003.
[680] Kurzman, 1998: 43.
[681] Southern, 1970: 29.
[682] We can see a parallel in the corporate world, as the question of who can ultimately be held accountable or responsible (with all its legal implications) is one that is still very much a matter of debate. For a very interesting discussion of this issue, see Ashman and Winstanley, 2007: 83-95.

6. MONASTIC ECONOMY AND POLICY

Introduction

To date no in depth studies of monastic economy in Tibetan areas have been made, while the economic organization of Tibetan monasteries and their inhabitants has been described as a topic that is in need of addressing. Writing in 1961, Miller questions the validity of the description of Tibetan monastic economies in which the monastery is portrayed as a centralized and corporate institution. This is stated tentatively for he feels that '[we] need desperately a study of the Tibetan and monastic economies before firm conclusions can be drawn.'[683] Dreyfus also notes this lacuna: 'It is quite remarkable that there is still no systematic study of the administrative and financial structures and practices of monasteries, institutions so central to traditional Tibetan culture.'[684] One of the most important reasons that a thorough study has not been conducted to date is that sources indispensable for quantitative research are currently not available to disinterested researchers.

A study of the place of a monastery and its relation with the broader society should be interested less in the mere factual data of the different administrative systems of Tibetan monasteries and their monastic economies, and more on how these were conceived of by Tibetan monastic authors, who held a certain level of moral authority.[685] Phrased differently, according to Durkheimian theory, there are two circuits of social life: 'one, the everyday, is the short-term, individuated and materialistic; the other, the social, is long-term, collective and idealized, even spiritual.'[686] To the minds of many, the topic of economics falls under the first circuit, whereas most societies attempt to subordinate this to their own cultural or religious conditions, i.e. the second circuit. This chapter addresses the circuit that consists of the long-term and the idealized, which in this context is the monastic economic policies and the monastic *attitudes* to economic matters as represented by the monastic guidelines.

Attitudes change when circumstances change, such that changing attitudes – as detected in works that contain allusions to monastic economic behaviour – have the potential to inform us about certain economic developments among the monasteries. According to Sayer, 'economic phenomena both depend on and influence moral/ethical sentiments, norms and behaviours and have ethical implications.'[687] When considering these mutual influences, one can see how attitudes regarding economic behaviour may inform us about actual economic behaviour, both on a macro and a micro-level. Furthermore, with an understanding of the conceptual and moral framework of monastic economic policies, one can better comprehend the socio-economic interrelations between the lay- and monastic societies. Shakya notes in this regard that:

> The Tibetan masses may have resented the wealth and privilege of the lay aristocracy, but the question of the economic power enjoyed by the religious institutions was viewed differently. For non-Tibetans, the economic power of

[683] B. Miller, 1961: 438.
[684] Dreyfus, 2003: 348, n. 54.
[685] In that sense, one could argue that to do this is to return to the roots of economics, as this field was originally a subset of moral philosophy. This is convincingly argued in Sedlacek, 2011.
[686] Hann and Hart, 2011: 94.
[687] Sayer, 2004: 2.

> the monastery was simply exploitation and the position of the lamas and the monks parasitic. But for the Tibetans such thoughts were irrelevant: they were willing to accept the special position enjoyed by the religious institutions and in fact much of the wealth of the monasteries was accumulated over centuries from voluntary contributions from the masses.[688]

The questions that come to mind here are how this privileged position was maintained by the monastery and why lay-people apparently accepted and supported these religious institutions that held such sway over their lives.

There exists considerable misconception on the economic systems of monastic institutions. In particular, in studies that deal with the current state of monasteries in Tibetan areas ahistorical notions abound. In describing the processes in which contemporary monasteries try to find 'alternative' ways of managing financial matters, such as tourism, state funding or shop-keeping, a comment regularly made is that in the olden days monks did not have to resort to such methods. In one such study the author writes that '[u]nlike pre-revolutionary times when the monastery supported its clergy through a feudal system of land rents, the new generation of monks had to be self-supporting.'[689] This generality pertains to 'the monastery,' hence any Tibetan Buddhist monastery, indicating a lack of appreciation of the earlier monastic economic systems.

First of all, it is *not* true that historically monasteries (always) supported monks in their livelihood. We know this from oral accounts of monks who lived in various Tibetan areas before the 1950s. But this is also attested by both very early and rather late Tibetan texts. Dreyfus further confirms this by remarking that in Tibet the large monasteries did not provide for their monks, except at assemblies during which tea was served. This was not enough to live on.[690] Only the very determined, the well connected, and the wealthier studying monks would be able to bring their studies to a successful end and not have substantial financial difficulties. This was at least the case at the Three Great Seats. Local monasteries generally tended to be easier places to live in, not least because monks often had their relatives nearby who could support them.[691] One such smaller monastery was the Phabongkha hermitage during the late 18th or early 19th century and according to its bca' yig: 'During assemblies, generally speaking, every day all are provided with seven rounds of tea and/or soup (*thug pa*), without fail and three assembly sessions are held.'[692] This may mean that monks were relatively well fed there, although the authorities did not necessarily cover other expenses. Secondly, another problem with the contention cited above is that not all monasteries upheld a 'feudal system of land rents', as there were many that did not have land to rent out. It is exactly this diversity in monastic economic systems and in Tibetan monasteries in general that makes it hard, and perhaps impossible, to present the economics of the pre-modern Tibetan monastery in a comprehensive manner.

However, it is certainly essential to make a distinction between local and central monasteries. The local ones were often small whereas the central monasteries were training centres attracting monks from affiliated local monasteries. The large

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[688] Shakya, 1999: 252.
[689] Hillman, 2005: 33, 4.
[690] Goldstein remarks on the Tibetan situation that monks had to provide their own food and that there were no monastery- or college-run communal kitchens. See Goldstein, 1989b: 34.
[691] Dreyfus, 2003: 65.
[692] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 239: *tshogs su spyir btang la/ nyin re bzhin ja thug bdun re chag med gtong bar tshogs thun gsum byed/*

central monasteries were often at the heart of a far-reaching network of smaller, local monasteries.[693] The differences with regard to the economic circumstances were not just necessarily determined by the number of inhabitants, but also dependent on the location, the political circumstances, and the 'purpose' of the monastery. A monastery consisting of monks hailing from a single region would often have a strong ritual function in the local community. The relative prosperity of the lay-people living in the direct surroundings would have an impact on the economic situation of the monastery, regardless of whether the monasteries owned land, or whether they were involved in trade and other financial transactions.

While monks regularly lived on subsistence level, there was a tendency for the wealthier monasteries to hoard their resources.[694] As alluded to in the previous chapter, there was a rather strict division between the monastic corporation and the individual monks. This divide was particularly pronounced when it came to economic matters. This was also noted, but not elaborated on, by Stein:

> We must accordingly reckon with a certain difference between the ecclesiastic community and the individual prelate. The former tended to hoard and accumulate wealth and political power. The latter was often a factor in their circulation, in both a centripetal and centrifugal sense. [695]

This chapter, then, attempts to explain the rules and attitudes at the monastic institutions with regard to financial and economic matters, such as commerce, property, inheritance, investment, and the redistribution of wealth.[696]

Individual Economic Spheres versus the Sangha's Economic Sphere

Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, in describing the developments of Buddhist monastic economy, gives a periodization of its development, starting in India and ending in Tibet. On the monastic economy in India he notes that the monastery had four types of general income (*spyi'i dpal 'byor*).

1) Offerings made to the body, speech and mind,[697] used to repair the temples and so forth
2) That which fell under offerings received for teaching the dharma [given to] those who taught the dharma
3) That which was not to be divided up, but intended as general possession of the Sangha (*dge 'dun spyi'i rdzas su bzhag nas bgo bsha rgyag mi chog pa'i rigs*)
4) That which was to be divided equally among all, regardless of the amount.

These four types of wealth then were not to be moved from one to the other. Not only that but to sell the general assets (*spyi rdzas*) to give loans (*bu lon gtong ba*), to

[693] Dreyfus, 2003: 47.
[694] ibid.: 351, n. 28: 'The monasteries chose to hoard the resources and not distribute them. In local monasteries the circumstances were better.' Cassinelli and Ekvall note that 'Hoarding was a marked feature of Tibetan economic behavior.' Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 330.
[695] Stein, 1972 [1962]: 148.
[696] Here one might expect a discussion of feudalism and serfdom. Because these are such contentious issues, in which semantics appear to play a big role, I do not expect to be able to settle them, neither are they particularly relevant to the picture I try to paint here. I merely intend to describe and analyse the way the monastery dealt, and thought it dealt, with its surroundings. I leave it to the reader to judge whether these circumstances should be considered feudal. For more on this discussion, see Goldstein, 1971b; Goldstein, 1986; Miller, 1987; Goldstein, 1987; Miller, 1988; Goldstein, 1989a; Mills, 2003: 331-47.
[697] i.e. the physical representations of enlightened beings.

collect interest (*skyed kha len pa*), to take sureties (*gta' ma len pa*) and the like were allowed for the sake of the Sangha in general but not for the individual monk.[698]

The above outlined rules, which have their origin in the normative Vinaya, indicate that monks were already involved in property law and other aspects of economy early on in India.[699] While this four-fold schema cannot have been strictly enforced throughout the Buddhist monastic world, it was not just in India where a distinction between different types of property, income and offerings was upheld, at least theoretically.[700] In Tibet, the monastic guidelines demonstrate that the most strictly adhered to division was that between the individual and the Sangha:

> An individual should not come to own the general possessions of the Sangha and use them without this being necessary. Not even the smallest piece of grass or wood should be taken and the general welfare should be taken to heart as much as possible[701]

However, sometimes certain general possessions were used by individuals, with or without permission. According to the *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*, if this happened and the item was rendered unusable, the person who borrowed it had to replace it.[702]

Of course, what belongs to the Sangha and what is owned by the individual monk is not always clear. Therefore some sets of monastic guidelines detail how to deal with offerings: what one had to pass on to the authorities and what one could keep. The Fifth Dalai lama writes in his bca' yig for the Nyingma monastery Gongra ngesang dorje ling (Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling):

> Whatever kind of payment that resulted from having gone to do home rituals, one may only deposit it with the monastic authorities (*grwa tshang spyi thog tu*), one is not to take it oneself. The distributions (*'gyed*) that have been entrusted to hand (i.e. directly given) one can keep for oneself (*so sor dbang zhing*). When there are specific offerings made that serve the general needs, then they should be collected as part of the 'general offering' (*spyi 'bul*).[703]

gTer bdag gling pa, the author of the guidelines of Mindröl ling and a contemporary of the Fifth Dalai Lama is equally specific in maintaining the separation between what is the Sangha's and what can be divided among the monks:

> If there are people who offer valuable gifts such as shrine offerings (*rten mchod*), musical instruments, *yol ba* (cloth-hangings?), canopies (*bla re*), etc, as general shares (*spyi 'gyed*), then these things should not be divided but kept among the general assets (*spyi rdzas*). The things that are suitable to be distributions (*'gyed*) and the general shares (*spyi 'gyed*) that are minor (*phra*

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[698] *Dung dkar gsung rtsom*: 68: *dge 'dun spyi'i don du byed chog pa las/ sger gyi don du byed mi chog*
[699] Schopen, 2001: 131.
[700] For more on these distinctions in an Indian Buddhist context see Silk, 2002: 175-7.
[701] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 286, 7: *dge 'dun spyi'i yo byad la gang zag so sos bdag bzung thes med kyis longs mi spyod cing tha na rtsa shing phra mo tsam yang mi 'khyer zhing spyi tshes* [*sic: tshis*] *kyi bsam pa gang che byed/*
[702] ibid.: 282.
[703] *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 228, 9: *grong chog sogs la phyin pa'i yon gyi ris gang byung rnams grwa tshang spyi thog tu 'jog pa ma gtogs so sos mi 'khyer/ dge 'dun spyi la 'bul ba byung na spyi rdzas kyi thebs su 'jog lag gtog kyi 'gyed* rnams so sor dbang zhing dmigs bsal mchod *rdzas sogs spyi'i dgos byed la dgos nges byung tshe spyi 'bul gyi khongs su bsdu/*

> *mo*) will be divided up by the disciplinarian and/or the officials (*spyi las*) on a case by case basis, taking into account the value and profits [of the things], among the Sangha that has collected it by doing rituals (*rim bsags pa'i dge 'dun*).[704]

Tsongkhapa in his guidelines for Jampa ling (Byams pa gling) states that whenever monks would get hold of any goods or money (*bre srang*) they would need to pass this on to the monastic authorities (*spyi sa skor*),[705] suggesting that monks could not keep anything.[706] The rules given above suggest that the individual monk was not to get hold of the Sangha's public property. However, the reverse practice sometimes occurred:

> It is customary that the monastery's monks' clothing is proper. Aside from that which is proper one is not to wear anything inappropriate. If one is found wearing [something like] this, it will become [part of the] general assets (*spyi rdzas*), once it has been reported to the disciplinarian.[707]

The monastic authorities not only confiscated inappropriate goods in the possession of monks, but according to several bca' yig they also regularly took 'illegal goods' (such as alcohol) away from lay-people when they were caught carrying them on monastic grounds.[708]

With regard to the individual property of monks, it appears that while to own more than what the Vinaya allowed was tolerated,[709] each individual monastery imposed its own restrictions on those possessions. One problematic type of property that features regularly in the bca' yig is that of livestock and horses. The monastic guidelines for Drepung allow certain monk-officials to keep a limited number of horses and cattle, whereas ordinary monks are dealt with pragmatically, as it is stated that: 'if they are offered (such animals) they may take care of them (*tshags byed pa*) for no more than two months until they get sold.'[710] This statement not only shows that monks were given gifts that were – both theoretically and practically – inappropriate, but also that the recipient of such an offering had the freedom to sell it, at least in the Drepung of the late 17th century. This concurs with Vinayic rules that stipulate that monks are not to refuse gifts, but it does not follow the examples given

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[704] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 284: *rten mchod rol cha yol ba bla re sogs rnyed pa 'gangs chen spyi 'gyed du 'bul mi byung na mi bgo bar spyi rdzas su 'jog 'gyed 'os pa'i rigs dang spyi 'gyed phra mo rnams spyi las dang dge bskos kyis rim bsags byas pa'i dge 'dun la khebs gang che 'khos bsdur gyis 'gyed pa sogs skabs dang sbyar/*

[705] *Byams pa gling bca' yig*: 251b: *bre srang sogs bya ba zin ma thag spyi sa skor du bskyal ba dang/*

[706] This is in contrast with the observation that in Buddhist India property rights were not affected by becoming a monk. See Wayman, 1984: 49.

[707] *rNam rgyal grwa tshang bca' yig*: 67: *grwa tshang gi grwa pa gos chas bzang 'khyor srol bcas/ bzang rigs ngan hrul gyon sa med cing gyon pa byung na dge skos kyi rtsis blangs pa'i spyi rdzas su bsdu/*

[708] The topic of the judicial position of the monastery among the lay-population is discussed in Chapter 8.

[709] Even though the possessions of monks are enumerated there is plenty of narrative evidence from the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* that property held by individual members of the Sangha was common, e.g.: Schopen, 2000a: 7.

[710] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 314: *rigs grwa dang dmigs bsal la skabs dang sbyor zhing 'bul bar byung ba tshong ma byung bar zla gnyis tshun tshags byas chog/* This two month period seems relatively lenient compared to the rules given in the 14th century *Byams pa gling bca' yig*, which state that animals may not be kept in the compound beyond three days. *Byams pa gling bca' yig*: 251b: *gling gseb tu dud 'gro zhag gsum min par mi bsten par bcad/*

in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* in which monks are instructed to find a way to use these inappropriate gifts in a certain manner.[711] Furthermore, the above ruling indicates that trade was not only tolerated to a certain extent, but also sometimes seen as necessary.

As pointed out above, the income on the level of the monastery could only be used for certain purposes, and was not used for the subsistence of monks.[712] The bca' yig written in 1909 for all of Sikkim's monasteries specifies how this wealth was to be used:

> The yearly monetary allowance for the monastery,[713] the tax-income from its monastic estates, as well as the income provided by donors in order to bring about merit for the dead and the living, and so on, need to be written in an account book, specifying what came from where, instead of getting whittled away as it has done previously. This [resulting] amount, which is kept in the monastic administration, should be used to restore cracked and aging walls on the in- and outside and to restore the receptacles of body, speech and mind. Also each year one needs to have a roster that shows who does the chores. On the tenth of the month and during rituals the butterlamps are to be filled. The trust funds[714] for the scriptures and other works should be developed without ever letting them deteriorate, by which each and every religious festival can continue.[715]

In Menri monastery in Tibet, the income that the monastic authorities (here: *bla brang*) generated with the herds they owned was also spent only on the upkeep and the adornment of the monastery's exterior.[716] While it, in most cases, could not be spent on the upkeep of the individual monks, we see that the monastery's surplus was meant to be used in a variety of ways. It had to go toward the upkeep and expansion of the physical monastery, toward the financing of religious festivals and rituals,[717] but as it turns out, it was also used to make business investments. This latter type of wealth management was under the auspices of the *gnyer pa* or *spyi pa*, about which Ekvall notes: 'The sPyi Ba serve under a general requirement that they shall so manage the wealth that at the end of their terms of office they may be able to report an increase in holdings and substantial earnings on wealth lent at interest or invested in trade operations.'[718] Hovden informs us that in the 20th century in Limi, Nepal, the monastery there hardly ever used the grain that was collected as levy to feed the monks. Rather, this grain was lent out against interest to villagers in need of seed grain.[719] Regularly however, some of the surplus was left unused.

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[711] Schopen, 1996a: 112: '[..] the monks' obligation to use what is "given" to them is, in fact, their obligation to make merit for their donors – they are one and the same.'
[712] This is also mentioned in Goldstein, 2009: 11.
[713] This is the allowance provided to the monasteries by the government of Sikkim.
[714] *'byor 'jags*, read: *sbyor 'jags*.
[715] *'Bras ljongs bca' yig*: 271: *dgon par lo re bzhin (phogs) dngul dang/ yang chos gzhis khral 'bab/ phan tshun sbyin bdag nas shi gson dge sbyor (sogs) babs yong 'di nas 'di byung deb bkod thog sngar laṃ thim zas ma yin pa'i spyi thog tu bzhag nas ma rtsa bzos te phyi nang gad brdar dang / sku gsung thugs rten nyams gsor btang rgyu yin pa dang / de yang lo re bzhin las ka sne re mig ston byed rgyu yod pa dgos rgyu/ tshes 10 dang sgrub mchod mar me'i rkang/ bka' bsgyur 'bum.(sogs) kyi 'byor 'jags (rigs) nyams chag spu tsam med par bskyed thog nas dus mchod re re bzhin chad med dang/*
[716] Kvaerne, 1970: 190.
[717] This was arguably the largest expense, see Goldstein, 2009: 11.
[718] Ekvall, 1964: 195.
[719] Hovden, 2013: 223, 4.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, when monasteries consisted of several semi-independent sub-units (such as *grwa tshang*, but also *spyi khang* and *gnyer khang*), in most cases distinct economies were kept.[720] In a similar way, the economies of the Sangha and the individual monks were also strictly separate – at least this was the ideal scenario.[721] The reasoning that is implicit in both the Vinayic materials and the monastic guidelines is that the monastery is dependent on the donor's decision of how his contribution will be spent.[722] The following section from the 16th century bca' yig for Tshurphu appears to confirm this:

> For this reason, other than what has been decided upon in the discussion of the lamas, disciplinarian and the Sangha, the desirous ones, who hear but not think, may not just hungrily eat the general material of the Sangha. Rather, it needs to continuously be used for whatever it was intended to be used for.[723]

Some donations that were offered to the monastery with a specific purpose were only meant for investment: the monastery could then only use the profits from that investment for that particular goal, which could be religious ceremonies or rounds of tea for the monks. This phenomenon was called *thebs rtsa*.[724]

Financing and Sponsorship

[..] *the ascetic regime of the monk, though intended to remove him from lay society, in fact renders him dependent on that very society for material support*[..][725]

In the case of Tibet, monasteries were both economically dependent on and independent from lay society. In Tibet, the Sangha was not the chief examplar of non-reciprocity, as posited by Tambiah, nor was it a passive symbol of independence, despite its dependence on lay donors.[726] Monasteries would not let their fate be decided by the whims of the laity. In fact, monasteries are regularly described as independent: 'Since monasteries are exempt from tax and services they can be regarded as *independent overlords*, for they own land and serfs yielding them taxes and services, and discharge all the functions of authority (justice, etc.).'[727] Of course, it should be argued further that, in particular in the context of locally oriented

[720] This was equally the case in Bon monasteries. Kvaerne, 1970: 189.
[721] Similarly, in contemporary Theravādin law the difference between property owned by the Sangha on an institutional level and that held by monks individually is recognized. Generally speaking people regard an offering to the Sangha to be more meritorious than when the same is given to an individual monk. Nonetheless, both parties receive donations on a regular basis. Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 161.
[722] I have learnt from personal experience that this is still the case in Tibetan monasteries, both in Tibet and exile: a donation can never be simply given. The monk-officials receiving the gifts always ask the benefactors where their gift needs to go. Individuals may have specific ideas of where they like their money to be spent, but often people ask the monks what the monastery is in need of the most. Separate funds thus are kept, ranging from providing food for the monks, to medical care, to the restoration of halls or the construction of a new stūpa.
[723] *mTshur phu bca' yig*: 708/5a: *de'i ched kyis dge 'dun spyi rdzas bla ma dge bskos dge 'dun bgros pa rnams bgrod nas spyi la ci 'gro ma gtogs 'dod pa can rnams kyis phyir thos mi bsam par glo bur du za rings sogs mi byed cing rgyun ci tshugs kyi chas rgyun du 'gro ba byed pa dang*/
[724] Dagyab, 2009: 108. The author translates this word as 'Zinsverwendungsspende'.
[725] Bunnag, 1973: 30.
[726] Tambiah, 1970: 68.
[727] Stein, 1972 [1962]: 140. Emphasis added.

monasteries, the strict conceptual divide between monastic and lay society was artificial at best.

In parallel to the narrative development of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, the emic Tibetan account of the development of monastic economy tells a tale of monasteries initially being solely dependent on the king and wealthy aristocratic laymen while eventually inadvertently amassing large estates, rendering them largely independent of outside sponsors. Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, for example, remarks that during Srong btsan sgam po's (569-650 or 617-650) reign 'the monks, masters, and disciples were given a yearly allowance (*phogs thob*) from the king's treasury, but other than that they owned nothing like fields, cattle and pasture lands.'[728] Here, the dependency is viewed to have been on the state rather than directly on 'lay society'.[729]

Certain scholars, who research contemporary Tibetan monasticism, see putting monks on a monastic pay-roll as something that has come about in part due to the more recent Chinese overhaul of the economic situation of the monasteries and report that monks see this option as preferable to subsisting on the gifts of lay-people.[730] A contemporary Tibetan language work on monasteries in Central Tibet also notes that these days the more well-to-do monasteries give their monks a 'dharma-allowance' (*chos phogs*), which means they do not need to go to the village to ask for alms or perform home rituals (*grong chog*). The poorer monasteries cannot afford this, which is why their monks wander around[731] the area to collect money.[732]

The sources at hand suggest, however, that this moving away from donation-dependency to a more steady income provided by the central monastic authorities (or government) was a trend that started long before the 1950s. In light of the above citation on monasticism during the early Imperial period, one could even argue that living on a salary given by the ruler is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, monastic modes of subsistence for individual monks. Be this as it may, prior to the mid 20th century there was a gradual shift from monks being dependent on donations and income from ritual services to receiving allowances. Here allowances is a translation of *phogs*, and should not be confused with *'gyed*, which more generally refers to all that is distributed among monks. *Phogs* is what was handed out by the central monastic administration (or the government) often in remuneration for work or services performed and *'gyed* is what was donated by the faithful.[733] Sometimes three categories of 'donations' for the monks are mentioned: *phogs*, *'gyed* and *tsha gra*.[734] In this and similar contexts, the latter term – spelt alternatively: *tsha grwa*, *tsha ra*,

[728] *Dung dkar gsung rtsom*: 74. While it informs on the normative notions on the early funding of monks, the historicity of this claim is of course in doubt. That the monks were in fact subsidized is likely, but that they possessed no fields or cattle is not in line with historical trends among other contemporary Buddhist communities in China and India.
[729] Dung dkar, among others, argues that Tibet was not well suited for alms begging, as the population was too sparse and villages were spread out too far, see *Dung dkar gsung rtsom*: 75. The issue of begging for alms is discussed in Chapter 7.
[730] e.g. Caple, 2011.
[731] The verb used is *myul*, which can carry a pejorative connotation.
[732] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 178.
[733] Both *phogs* and *'gyed* may be handed out as shares (*skal*), which are the actual shares the monks receive commensurate to their position in the monastery. These shares are sometimes called '*phogs skal*' and '*sbyin bdag gi 'gyed skal*', respectively, see *sTag brag dgon pa bca' yig*: 639.
[734] e.g. *rNam rab mthong smon dwags po grwa tshang bca' yig*: 516.

tshwa ra, *tshab ra* – refers to that which is given by the government to the monks who perform prayers on its behalf.[735]

Earlier (pre-Ganden Phodrang) bca' yig tend not to report on allowances, while later works occasionally report management changes concerning payment.[736] In one text, a 'manual for recitation' and a set of monastic guidelines for the practitioners at the big protectors' chapel in Pelpung (dPal spungs) written in 1825 (*shing sprel*), we read that a certain type of allowances (*phogs cha*) was newly introduced in that same year for the purpose of a stable field of merit[737] and in particular for the recitations dedicated to the protectors.[738] The monastic guidelines for Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling written in 1898 (possibly by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, as according to the colophon it was written in the Potala) have the *gnyer pa* hand out the allowances, without fail and in an honest fashion.[739] This indicates that, at least in this case, the supplies handed out were likely to stem from income derived by the monastic authorities (e.g. *gnyer khang*).

These allowances tended to be not monetary but produce, something indicated by the stipulation that 'when one has taken one's allowances, one can only eat it inside the compound and not take it elsewhere.'[740] In later times, this allowance could be money as well. A bca' yig from 1949 states that a certain Grub dbang dge bshes blo bzang bsam 'grub made a donation to the monastery's office (*yig tshang las khungs*), which appeared to have been struggling, consisting of a 'monastic allowance' (*dgon phogs*) of twenty-five silver coins (*dngul srang*) for each monk on a yearly basis.[741]

The allowances some monks received should not be equated with stipends, i.e. income that anyone would get regardless of their status, actions, or behaviour. According to the rules on Tibetan monastic economy that can be extrapolated from the bca' yig, it appears that there was no such thing as a free lunch. While in Benedictine rule (and in Chan monasteries in China) the adage 'he who does not work, does not eat' may perhaps ring true,[742] generally speaking one could say of the

[735] *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 2242: *tsha gra: sngar bod sa gnas srid gzhung gi rtsam bzhes las khungs nas smon lam skabs grwa par gshor sprod byed pa'i rtsam pa*. This refers to the tsampa that was handed out among the monks during prayers by the Office of Tsampa Acquirement, which was a ministry of the old Tibetan government.

[736] Most bca' yig, however, contain information on the pro-rata distribution of donations, e.g. how much an ordinary monk would receive in relation to, for example, the abbot. As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter this was expressed in shares (*skal*). This 'income-disparity' is also noted by Ekvall, who comments that '[..] the lama [here meaning *sprul sku*] may receive a share, which, in recognition of his special status, is five, nine, or even more times the share of the individual monk.' Ekvall, 1964: 197. In Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling monastery in 1898 a lama received ten shares of donations (*'gyed*), a disciplinarian or a chant-master five, whereas the water-dispensers and tea-makers were given one share, see *Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling bca' yig*: 401. Here, what exactly is indicated by the term 'lama' is not clear.

[737] Here I understand *zhing* to mean *bsod nams kyi zhing* (S. *puṇyakṣetra*).

[738] *bSam gtan chos mchog gling gi bca' yig*: 671: *shing sprel lor gsar bzhag gcig gi phogs chas rten sa zhing dang/ khyad par mgon po'i bsnyen 'khor bcas* [..]/

[739] *Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling bca' yig*: 401: *gnyer pas kyang phogs dang ja tshul sogs gtong sgo che phra tshang ma nyams chag dang g.yo zol med par gtong zhing*/

[740] *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 410: *phogs blangs nas gling nang du za ba ma gtogs gzhan du mi 'khyer/* I believe that with this rule the author intended to prevent monks from sharing their allocation of offerings with those who did not deserve them.

[741] *'Chi med grub pa'i byang chub gling bca' yig*: 648.

[742] While this may have been an ideal stance in medieval Benedictine monasteries, the relative self-sufficiency and focus on monastic labour of these institutions seems to have been exaggerated. Raftis notes that 'It has been a romantic notion only with difficulty dispelled by historical research, that the typical (or perhaps ideal) monk laboured in the fields so as to be almost self-supporting. The truth of

Tibetan context that 'he who does not pray, does not eat'. This is not just because the authorities felt that allowances had to be earned by performing religious services and the like, but also because in most cases the tea, food, and allowances were handed out during the assembly and there were strict rules against passing these goods on to people who did not go to the assembly.[743] The exceptions to this rule mentioned in many monastic guidelines are the cases of those who are too ill to go, those who are in retreat, or are away performing duties on behalf of the monastery.

Some sources suggest that certain monastic authorities wanted to move away from payment during prayers in favour of rewarding educational efforts. A recent history of Tshurphu monastery suggests that monks serious about their studies had the right to a grain allowance (*'bru phogs*), but only after they had offered another 'enrolment tea' (*sgrig ja*) upon entering the formal education system.[744] Kvaerne, basing himself on oral history, describes how in the Bon Menri monastery the head of the 'office of education' (*mtshan nyid gzhung*), who was chosen from among the dge bshes, was in charge of taking care of the monks who lived at dByar rtsa, where debates were held. He would do this by going to the Byang thang area to collect butter from their herds. The revenue from this enterprise would also pay for the monks' provisions during the debates in the evenings, five days a week, all year through.[745] Clearly, this type of subsidization was only available to monks who were enrolled in the curriculum.

Srid skyong sprul sku, in writing his monastic guidelines for all Sikkimese monasteries in 1909, rules that the monks interested in learning had to be provided for economically. The text says that those who study diligently should always be given tea and soup (*thug pa*) by the central monastic administration (*spyi sa*) until they complete their studies.[746] The guidelines furthermore state that those who have had some education: 'Unlike before, need to get a position and rewards and relief from tax, corvée duty, transportation duty (*dos*) and so on, commensurate with their achievements.'[747]

In a similar attempt to increase scholasticism certain monastic officials at Drepung in the 1930s created a new rule in which the payment of 'the monastic salaries' was shifted to the debate ground (*chos ra*), rather than the previously favoured assembly hall. This led to protests from a number of administrative monks who claimed that to change the rules was paramount to sacrilege. Eventually this resulted in an outburst of monastic violence. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama ended up expelling the ringleaders of both the factions involved.[748] An account by the once rogue monk (*ldab ldob*) Tashi Khedrup, suggests that in Sera monastery too these changes did eventually get implemented. He notes that on certain days, food and money got distributed at the debate ground and that some of his fellow ruffians would

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the matter was far different. Even in the general recommendations of the rule of St Benedict manual labour was only part and not a necessary part, of a programme of moral culture.' Raftis, 1961: 457. Similarly, the Chan monasteries' self-sufficiency is equally questionable, for as early as the 10th century the 'Pure Rules' written by Xuefeng Yicun convey that most of the monastic income was from donations and the monastic estates on which lay people worked. See Poceski, 2003: 45, 6.

[743] e.g. *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 408.

[744] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 258.

[745] Kvaerne, 1970: 191.

[746] Schuh and Dagyab, 1978: 270: *gong gsal slob gnyer thar ma phyin bar sbyang brtson nan tan bya dgos dang/ de bar spyi sa nas ja thug pa chad med sprod dgos/*

[747] ibid.: *sngar lam ma yin pa'i go sa bdag rkyen dang/ khral 'ul dos sogs yon tan dang bstun yang cha btang rgyu*/

[748] Goldstein, 2009: 13.

go and pretend to be involved in a debate, just so as to receive a share of the donations.[749]

It it clear that what the monks received as allowances was not always sufficient to live off, as evidenced by both oral history and textual materials. Monks supplied this allowance with the distribution of alms (*'gyed*) they received, income from their own efforts (which could be ritual services, farming or commerce), family support – totalling four types of income.[750] Shes rab rgya mtsho, an elderly monk who lived in Sakya monastery before the 1950s notes with regard to the living standards then:

> We monks were given allowances (*phogs*) every year. These days, people understand *phogs* to be money, but in those days money was quite rare: our *phogs* was given in grain (*'bru*). With this we could do what we liked: we could make tsampa or something else. It was enough for a year, but it was not easy to live off just that. Some had help from outside, whereas others had absolutely nothing.[751]

Another monk who used to live in Yangri gar in the 1950s describes what monks received from the monastery:

> All monks would get allowances consisting of grains (*'bru phogs*). We would mostly eat *spag*.[752] It was not much but enough to get by. We would go to do rituals (*zhabs brten*)[753] and we could get some extra money and food. From that we could get butter and other things. At the assembly we would get tea and whatever sponsors (*sbyin bdag*) would give us. We lived from hand to mouth (*nyi ma re re la ldang tsam ldang tsam red*). Some monks also had relatives to sponsor them, but my home was too far away. On a daily basis we would get tea four times a day, sometimes soup (*thug pa*) or rice gruel (*'bras thug*). Nothing nice like what you get these days.[754]

Elderly monks at Khampa gar (Khams pa sgar) monastery in Eastern Tibet told one of my informants how they used to survive in Tibet. They bought butter and cheese from the nomads in a certain season and would sell in a later season to the agriculturalists (*yul pa*, explained as *rong pa*: valley-inhabitants) for profit. They would also go to collect salt and sell it.[755] This informant, mKhan po chos dbyings lhun grub, does not think that this monastery used to have fields or rich sponsors. Monks used to have to take care of their own food; this was the case even when he himself was in Tibet

[749] Khedrup, Richardson and Skorupski, 1986: 79. In fact, the bca' yig for Tashi lhunpo from 1876 also notes these intruders. While it is not explicitly mentioned that these imposter-debaters were after financial gain, it is a likely scenario: 'When the great disciplinarian and the disciplinarian of the debate ground (*chos grwa chos khrims pa*) make their rounds at the debate ground, aside from the few genuinely studious ones, most of them are only those who merely clap their hands, and who discuss goats and sheep (i.e. irrelevant subjects). *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 70: *slob gnyer ba gsha' ma re gnyis las de byings phal cher skor tsho chos grwar dge skos chen mo dang chos grwa chos khrims pa sogs kyis blta skor byed skabs thal mo bsdebs pa tsam dang/ ra thon lug thon gyi skad gcom/*

[750] Goldstein, 2009: 10.

[751] Personal communication with Shes rab rgya mtsho, Rajpur, August 2012.

[752] A dough made with tsampa.

[753] These were performed at the houses of sponsors.

[754] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos nyid, Phiyang, August 2012.

[755] It is significant that the informant never used the verb *tshong rgyag pa* (to do business) but instead calls what the monks did *'tsho stangs skyel ba*: to make a living.

during the 80s and 90s. He notes that this is still the case. When he lived at the monastery sometimes there was food handed out during the assembly, but not all the meals were provided. When prompted for a reason he responded by saying that he thought it was because the monastery was too poor to feed the monks.[756] This may well have been the case, but bSod nams chos rgyal, a junior secretary (*drung gzhon*) at Sakya in India states that in the comparatively wealthy Sakya monastery there was no communal kitchen (*spyi thab*) at the monastery, meaning that the monks had to provide food themselves. When I asked him why, he said that he supposed it was just the custom (*lugs srol*) to do it that way: it was not on account of the monastery being poor.[757] While obviously not all monks are aware of it, this custom is likely to stem from the separation between communal and private income and property.

A bca' yig written in 1934 by the Reting regent (*Rwa sgreng srid skyong*) for Kun 'phel gling notes that on top of the allowances (*mchod phogs*)[758] they received, (prospective) monks had to have secured their parental home's financial support (*skya rtsa*).[759] In Ladakh and Spiti, many monks were partially supported by means of so-called monk-fields (*grwa zhing*).[760] These fields were allotted by the monk's family upon entry to the monastery. The field would be managed by the family or by someone hired by the family. In Spiti, the monk had to provide the seeds and received the whole produce.[761] In Ladakh, however, the monk was given a sufficient amount of grain, while the families retained the surplus.[762] According to Carrasco, after the death of a monk, the field would be given back to his relatives.[763] It is not the case, however, that all monasteries in Ladakh had this system of monk-fields. Blo bzang don grub, an elderly monk at Samkar (bSam dkar) monastery informs us that this existed neither in Spituk nor in Samkar, whereas Hemis and Thiksey were well known for their monk-fields. This suggests that there may be a difference in schools: the former two monasteries are Gelug whereas the latter two are of the Drigung Kagyü ('Bri gung bka' brgyud) school. Spituk did own religious estates, although the revenue of those fields did not go directly toward the sustenance of the monks.[764] This issue requires further investigation.

It can be safely assumed that these monk-fields were not taxed. Particularly in the case in which the family kept what the monk-relative did not need, this system may have been a (rather modest) type of tax-avoidance. This would further incentivize landholding families to make one of their sons a monk, because this would not only mean that, in the case of many sons, the land would not be fragmented; but it would also mean a slight 'tax-break' for those agriculturalists who were relatively well-off. At the same time, one could argue that this arrangement maintained the ties between the household and the monk, on which Mills comments:

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[756] Personal communication with mKhan po chos dbyings lhun grub, Bir, July 2012.
[757] Personal communication with bSod nams chos rgyal, Rajpur, July 2012.
[758] This term *mchos phogs* (literally offering allowances) is most likely the same concept as the homonym *chos phogs* (Dharma-allowances), mentioned previously in this chapter. We see a similar interchangeability in the spelling of *chos gzhis*/ *mchod gzhis*, here translated as monastic estate.
[759] *Kun 'phel gling bca' yig*: 558: *dgon gyi 'char can mchod phogs sngon yod nyams med thog skya rtsa so so nas kyang 'tsho ba'i mthun rkyen ldeng nges sbyar dgos*/
[760] Elsewhere also called 'lama's field', e.g.: Diack, 1994 [1897] III: 88.
[761] Jahoda, 2007: 229, n. 26.
[762] A parallel can be found in Sri Lanka: according to the *katikāvata*s there seems to have been a custom of lay-people granting land to a *vihara* and then using the surplus for themselves. This type of 'tax-avoidance' was possible because people made sure that the monk-population consisted of relatives. Ratnapala, 1971: 227.
[763] Carrasco, 1959: 33.
[764] Personal communication with Blo bzang don grub, Spituk, August 2012.

> This dual economic relationship between monks and household estates reflects the ambiguous status of ordinary monks. Whilst, as ritual performers they are segregated from certain crucial household processes (inheritance, production, reproduction), they also remain members of, and live within, the household estate.[765]

The suggestion here too is that only those boys whose parents owned land could become monks at monasteries in which this system was upheld. However, the word *grwa zhing* may also refer to an arrangement of a rather different nature. dKon mchog chos nyid was made a monk at Phiyang monastery in Ladakh when he was eight years old. His father had died long before and his mother did farming work. When he entered the monastery he was given a *grwa zhing* by the monastery's authorities (*gzhung*). His relatives worked on it for him, something that he asserted was prohibited for monks. He got to keep the harvest on the basis of which he was able to sustain himself.[766] As far as is known, this system was not in place in Tibetan areas.[767] This may in part be due to the nature of the ownership of land: people never actually owned land, they merely used it as – at least nominally – everything belonged to the Dalai Lama.

Other information retrieved via oral history methods suggests that monks belonging to the larger Gelug monasteries in Central Tibet – during roughly the same timeframe: the 1930s to the 1950s – did not have to worry: 'Monks do not have material concerns about the future, about food or money, about taxes, about droughts or floods, for the monastery takes care of their basic needs. Monks get an allowance in kind and money, partly from the monastery and partly from the trust funds set up by laymen for the monks in a particular monastery.'[768]

It may have been the case that monks in the Three Great Seats were given higher allowances, also because of their close relationship to the government.[769] Furthermore, the system of handing out these allowances could also be seen as an attempt to gain greater control over the inhabitants of these massive monasteries. In the same way that, according to Carrasco, it was feared that Ladakhi monks would neglect to look after the welfare of the local population if they gained economic independence,[770] the government may have tried to prevent the masses of monks, of whom the majority were not native to Central Tibet, from securing financial freedom.

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[765] Mills, 2000: 27.

[766] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos nyid, Phiyang, August 2012. This system is very similar to that described as salary-fields (*phogs zhing*) in Tsarong, 1987: 59.

[767] There is, however, an interesting parallel with the Dunhuang of the 9th and 10th centuries, where monks and nuns possessed land that was farmed by hired lay people. This effectively provided the monastic owner with his livelihood. Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 132, 3.

[768] Goldstein, 1964: 137, 8. Dagyab similarly maintains that the Central Tibetan monasteries before 1959 were obliged to supply each monk with his livelihood, regardless of whether one was involved in studying or not. Dagyab, 2009: 22. Textual evidence suggests, however, that this cannot have been universally true. It is more likely that such an obligation was the exception rather than the rule.

[769] Michael suggests, however, that his informants maintained that 'Lhasa financially supported all monasteries of all sects and backed their disciplinary authority.' Michael, 1982: 111. In particular, when taking into account the status of the monasteries in Amdo and Kham, this assertion seems highly unlikely.

[770] Carrasco, 1959: 178.

On the Pay-roll

In connection to the allowances that monks received at certain monasteries, we come across an interesting phenomenon: the *phogs yig* or *phogs deb*. This 'allowance-ledger' appears to be a document in which the names of the monks who were entitled to an allowance were written down. It is likely that the amounts that were handed out were also recorded. One bca' yig from 1737 for the Amdo monastery dGon lung byams pa gling also contains a reference to a *phogs yig*.[771] Here the reform suggested by the monastic guidelines was that allowances were not to be handed out yearly but at the end of every Dharma-session (*chos thog*), i.e. four times a year, to prevent monks from just coming back to the monastery every year to collect what was due to them.

The earliest extant references to this type of records are from the 17th century. The Fifth Dalai Lama appears to use both terms *phogs yig* and *phogs deb* interchangeably. He stipulates who was entitled to this allowance and the order in which people were to receive it:

> When the allowances of the monastic main office are given out, then liaising with a government representative (*gzhung gi ngo tshab*), one gives, according to the seal-bearing document of allowances (*phogs yig*), first to the colleges and their studying monks (*chos grwa ba*), secondly to the residents who are not affiliated (*ldebs 'byar med pa'i gzhi ba*) and those from dGe 'phel[772] and dNgul chu chos rdzong,[773] thirdly, to the rest of the crowd who are in one way or the other affiliated, consisting of the riffraff (*'bags rengs*) such as the kitchen aids. Those who have not gone through three debate classes (*chos grwa*), those who now study medicine and astrology (*gso dpyad rtsis*), and the resident servants of the *dbon chos mdzad* are not taken up in the allowance-ledger (*phogs deb*) of the monastic main office.[774]

The above indicates who, according to the author, was and who was not deserving of financial aid. It perhaps comes as a surprise that the lower stratum of inhabitants, of whom the Fifth Dalai Lama was dismissive earlier on in the text, was included among the beneficiaries while the students of medicine were not. Here, the allowances probably functioned to support those who were the most disadvantaged, those who did not have the opportunity to do some business on the side. People who practiced astrology, medicine, or served an aristocratic monk already received an income and were thus excluded from receiving these allowances.

In 1876, Tashi Lhunpo too appears to have had one of these ledgers, called the Allowance-ledger of the Great Assembly (*Tshogs chen phogs yig*). This document is mentioned in the context of how monks who have served at other monasteries (here: *bla sa*) reintegrate back into the 'mother' monastery after their term has ended. The

[771] See Sullivan, 2013: 195.

[772] This is likely to be dGe'phel hermitage (*ri khrod*), which is situated in the mountains above Drepung monastery.

[773] This originally was an early Kadam monastery in Tsang.

[774] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 306, 7: *spyi so'i phogs rgyag dus gzhung gi ngo tshab dang sbrel nas phogs yig dam 'byar gyi nang bzhin ang ki dang por chos grwa ba sogs grwa tshang khag gnyis par gzhan gyi ldebs 'byar med pa'i gzhi ba dang dge 'phel dang dngul chu chos rdzong pa sogs/ gsum par thab g.yog sogs 'bags rengs skor bab 'brel gang yod rnams la rgyag chos grwa la gsum tsam yang ma 'grim pa'i phyogs mi gso dpyad rtsis sogs bslab mkhan dang dbon chos mdzad lta bu'i g.yog gzhi bar bsnyed pa'i phogs deb tu mi skyel zhing/* Also see Jansen, 2013a: 131, 2.

text notes that upon leaving they had been struck off this allowance-ledger, and explains what needed to be done in order to get back on it.[775]

In the guidelines the Thirteenth Dalai Lama wrote for Thobgyel rabgye ling (Thob rgyal rab rgyas gling, a monastery in Tsang) in 1913, it says that one was not to go against the main directives found in the allowance-ledger (*phogs yig*) and the rulebook (*rtsa tshig*) regarding the distributions (*gtong sgo*) and the like, without any reason.[776] The same author again refers to such a ledger in another bca' yig for Rongpo rabten monastery in 1930. The relevant passage, cited in the previous chapter, demonstrates that this allowance-ledger was used by the various *mchod gnyer*, the managers of the offerings, to make sure that all donations ended up where they were intended to be. The term employed for this ledger is *phogs deb*. It seems that the two terms *phogs yig* and *phogs deb* appear to be used practically interchangeably. What may be surmised from the above is that the presence of an allowance-ledger suggests government involvement of some kind. While references to these ledgers are not uncommon, it is worth noting that none of the monastic allowance-ledgers are currently accessible for research.[777] They would make invaluable additions to our knowledge of the economy, the political relations, and the internal hierarchy of the Tibetan monastery.

The likely scenario is that the monasteries mentioned above,[778] which are all Gelug, received state support, and were therefore obliged to keep a record of their income and expenses. This government involvement is also apparent in the monastic guidelines for Sera je written in the first half of the 18th century. This text suggests that when the monastic authorities (*spyi so*) handed out allowances to the debate monks, which was a process supervised by the *bla gnyer*[779] and the disciplinarians, there also was a government representative (*gzhung gi ngo tshab*) present.[780]

Monastic Sponsorship through Rituals

The strict rules regarding the monastery's economic policy meant that it was not only theoretically forbidden for individual monks to use what belonged to the Sangha but also that sub-units within, or branches of, a monastery could not help each other out: a donation, as already mentioned, needed to be spent according to the donor's wishes. The large-scale sponsorship of certain festivals may have been not only a way to generate merit, but also a way to distribute wealth more evenly. It is well known that the Ganden Phodrang paid for the performance of rituals that were seen to support the state (such as the Great Prayer Festival), but larger monasteries sometimes also paid their branches to undertake certain religious practices. An example of this is the nunnery of Rinchen gang, which was a subsidiary of Sakya monastery. Its monastic

[775] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 83: [..] *bla sar phebs ring tshogs chen phogs yig nas bud pa slar 'jug dgos su song gshis/*
[776] *Thob rgyal rab rgyas gling dgon bca' yig*: 454: *lo mas gtong sgo sogs phogs yig dang/ rtsa tshig rim pa'i 'bru don las mi 'gal bas* [..]
[777] There is a document called *phogs yig lag 'dzin* (Document no. 1709) that is accessible at http://www.dtab.uni-bonn.de. This text, however, appears to contain the allowances allotted to the master and servant (*ngo g.yog*) of the bKras ljongs (*bKra shis ljong) incarnation in 1817. This document merits further research.
[778] With the possible exception of Tashi Lhunpo, which functioned in many ways mostly independent from the Ganden Phodrang government.
[779] Possibly the manager of the *bla brang*.
[780] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 569: *spyi sos phogs rgyag dus/ bla gnyer/ dge skos/ gzhung gi ngo tshab sogs sbrel bas chos grwa ba sogs la gtong lugs dang/*

guidelines suggest that this nunnery and its nuns were financially not well off. Not only did some of the nuns have to go out to collect alms, they are also depicted as having to go out to weave and to work in the fields. Interestingly, those who were involved in doing certain rituals were remunerated by the (presumably Sakya) monastic authorities (*phyag gzhung*) for their activities. [781] This may have been a way of legitimizing Sakya's sponsorship of the struggling nunnery.

The bca' yig names the amounts that had to be given to the nuns during or after events specified on the ritual calendar, such as the *maṇi* retreat (*maṇi 'tsham*), the monthly Tārā memorial service (*rje btsun sgrol ma'i dgongs rdzogs*), and the ritual fast (*snyung gnas*). The text specifies exactly what had to be provided by whom. In some cases, it was the monastic authorities and in others it was the headman (*mi dpon*).[782] It says for example that 'during the ritual fast on the fourteenth [of every month], the headman along with rivers and bridges (*mi dpon chu zam bcas*)[783] hands out what resulted from collecting donations from sponsors.'[784]

This bca' yig then not only contains guidelines for the nuns to abide by, but also serves as a kind of contract in which the economic survival of the nuns was safeguarded. Interestingly, it also involves the co-operation of a headman, who was burdened with soliciting donations from his constituents. Noteworthy is that – as indicated above – none of the contributions the nuns were to receive were given out without there being some kind of religious reciprocation. In many respects, this particular bca' yig resembles documents that contain endowments of funds (*sbyor 'jags*) for particular monasteries. One such text, written in 1728 (*sa spre*) by Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu (1698-1755), details not only with what the donor (here the headman (*sde pa*) of Khyung rdzong dkar po) endowed Nam gling monastery, but also what kind of rituals he expected the monks to perform in return for the donation.[785] This indicates that occasionally bca' yig also functioned as 'contracts' between the donor (here a larger monastery) and the recipient, containing the exact stipulations of the terms and conditions of the endowment.

The *Bla brang*: the Lama's Residency and Estate

No discussion of monastic economy in Tibet would be complete without referring to the institution of the *bla brang*. In Chapter 4 I have pointed out that this word does not always refer to the autonomous units affiliated to a monastery but owned by an incarnation, it can also simply be a term to refer to the monastic office in charge of (economic) management. The *bla brang* that were headed by incarnate lamas usually maintained independent economies. However, most *bla brang* were neither very big

[781] Generally speaking, not much is known about this nunnery, which in 1947 housed 110 nuns. Even then they received 'special distributions.' This number may have simply been an ideal one, for elsewhere in the same source it is reported that there were only 50 nuns living there. Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 397; 404.

[782] Here, when the monastic authorities make the contribution it is called *phogs*, when it is the headman's the word *'gyed* is used.

[783] This undoubtedly is an administrative term of some sort. *Chu zam* may specify the territory of this headman.

[784] *Rin chen sgang bca' yig*: 213: *snyung gnas skabs tshes bcu bzhi nyin mi dpon chu zam bcas nas yon bdag dge bskul las byung ba'i gtong gzhi gtong/*

[785] See *mNga' ris khyung rdzong dkar po'i nye 'dabs kyi nam gling dgon sde'i dkar chag*. In *Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu'i gsung 'bum* vol. 5 (Dalhousie 1976-7): 653-59. This text is partially translated in Michael, 1982: 181, 2.

nor wealthy. The smaller *bla brang* did not hold any estates (*mchod gzhis*).[786] Those incarnated lamas who did manage to get a good reputation often won sponsors. These successful lamas then built their own residences and sometimes even entire monasteries or hermitages, 'all of which were under the direct control of the Lama,' not the affiliated monastery.[787]

A major source of income for Tibetan monasteries was – and is perhaps even more so today – the presence of one or more incarnations. Religious figures of a certain standing often were an object of veneration for the general populace, thereby generating donations on a large scale. After the death of a prominent incarnation, the monastery often not only lost a religious leader but also a significant source of revenue. This appears to have also been the case in Chinese monasteries during the Song dynasty, despite the obvious absence of the incarnation system: according to Walsh, monks who possessed religious authority, usually the abbots who were elected because of their spiritual charisma, attracted large sums of donations that they in turn would donate to the monastery.[788]

While the estates of the wealthier *bla brang* were occasionally the topic of certain political altercations, what can more generally be deduced from the – admittedly scarce – available information is that the presence of a lama and his *bla brang* that managed to attract wealth can be seen as a force of flexibility in a monastic economic system that was resolutely rigid. A lama's wealth could be spent where and when he deemed it most appropriate.[789] Stein also notes this but only connects this feature to more recent times (i.e. post 1950):

> In the modern period [..] the 'living buddhas' (incarnate lamas in Chinese parlance), as opposed to the monasteries, regularly made distributions of alms, once a year, amounting sometimes to half their capital, and contributed to the costs of the religious ceremonies of their monastery and the state.[790]

Thus while one branch was 'legally' not able to give financial aid to another belonging to the same monastery, a lama was at liberty to help out struggling sub-units, in order to help the monastery to which he felt an allegiance.

Monastic Landlordism

Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig was probably written in 1820 (*lcags po 'brug lo*).[791] It was meant for the whole of Sera monastery and authored by the second Tshe smon rgyal thog – the then-regent of Tibet. The work directs itself to the monastic officials rather than to the whole of the monk population.[792] It speaks of how the managers of the subjects on the religious estates have misbehaved:

> To let all the leading positions, such as that of estate-manager (*gzhis gnyer*), be filled by those who are close to oneself and law-abiding, would mean an

[786] Surkhang, 1986: 23.
[787] Goldstein, 1973: 448.
[788] Walsh, 2010: 185, n. 2.
[789] For an account of how a lama meticulously recorded and spent his wealth see Wood, 2013.
[790] Stein, 1972 [1962]: 148.
[791] In the *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs* this is erroneously dated as 1920. The author Tshe smon gling Ngag dbang 'jam dpal tshul khrims reigned Tibet between 1819 and 1844. See Zhabs-dkar, Wilkinson, and Ricard, 1994: 676.
[792] *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 182.

> instatement (*gtong thebs*) that is both wise and encouraging, [thereby avoiding] the oppression that has so far been a cause for the religious estate's subjects to become scattered.[793] One needs to encourage [them] to manage[794] the lands with a good motivation, making sure that the Sangha's income and provisions and so on do not deteriorate. There were a couple of general managers and treasurers with bad habits who were involved in private enterprises and many other things. Having caused many religious estate subject families to abscond, they took hold of their lands and made the few remaining scattered and destitute subjects act as their servants. When these people who just did as they pleased without any regard for the two systems[795] were found out,[796] the only appropriate option was to to banish them to a far away place.[797]

This passage demonstrates that the managerial strategies that Sera monastery maintained were much like those of the lay landlords. It appears that in particular in the 19th and 20th centuries, agricultural labourers were a scarce commodity in Central Tibet. Thus one had to treat them relatively well, if only to prevent them from running away. These monastic guidelines suggest that previous estate-managers had abused their position, ultimately leading to financial losses for the monastery. As punishment they were exiled (*phyogs mthar sa 'dzin la gtong ba*), rather than expelled, which may be an indication that the perpetrators were laymen. Be that as it may, the ultimate responsibility lay with the monks who appointed them, which can be gleaned from the advice given on how to select these estate-managers. The text continues, suggesting that this was not just a one-off incident, but an ongoing problem:

> Those who send out the provisions let the surplus of the harvest and the profits go towards [their] allowance and good tea, and do not send any to the Sangha: they hoard by expanding and collecting it. There seems to be rather a lot of people who do this. From now on, those who do things correctly will have better circumstances for themselves for that reason. But it would not be good if people who utter the 'postscript': [798] 'take however much grain that was secretly kept for oneself from this house' should be treated as exceptional cases. For, in the future – due to memories of the past – it will become a cause for those who behave properly and even for this community of ordinary monks to become useless, and for the harmonious members of the Sangha to maintain a discipline that is impure. Therefore, according to the advice given during earlier reigns, such as in the *dGa' ldan chos 'byung*[799] by Mi dbang 'jam dpal dbyangs sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, other than doing what has precedent, one is

[793] For *'ther skyen* I read *'thor rkyen*.
[794] For *'debs bskol* I read *'debs bskul*.
[795] *lugs gnyis*: the secular (*srid*) and religious (*chos*) systems.
[796] Literally 'occurred' (*byung*).
[797] *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 186, 7: *sha tsha tshul mthun gyi gzhis gnyer sogs 'go byed tshang ma go chod btang nas chos gzhis mi ser dang bcas ji srid bar 'ther skyen du mi 'gro ba'i brdags gsigs med pa'i bskul mkhas kyi gtong thebs sa zhing rnams lhag bsam dag pa'i 'debs bskol bgyis dge 'dun gyi 'du sgo gtong sgo sogs nyams chag med pa dgos rgyu la spyi gnyer phyag mdzod sogs ngan pa lang shor re gnyis nas phyag 'debs las sger zhing mang ba zhig byas/ mchod gzhis mi ser dud kha mang po rtsa 'thor la btang nas de dag gi sa zhing thams cad bzung nas 'thor 'phros ngan hrul mi ser re gnyis yod pa la g.yog bskul 'gel ba lugs gnyis khyad bsad kyi rang snang gang shar byed mi byung tshe gong ltar phyogs mthar sa 'dzin la gtong ba las 'os ma 'das/*
[798] *bsgyur byang*: this usually refers to the translator's colophon found in sūtras and the like. Here perhaps it carries the sense of 'the small print': ways to circumvent certain rules.
[799] Literally *bai ser*, an abbreviation of *Baiḍūrya ser po*, the other name of this work.

> definitely not allowed to deviate[800] from the old to the new and be greedy and belligerent and so on, which will become causes for disharmony, rifts, and fights among members of the Sangha.[801]

Here, the suggestion is that good behaviour by the estate-managers should be encouraged and that accepting to 'take however much grain that was secretly kept for oneself from this house', would be either to comply with the occasional corrupt behaviour of these people, or to be the same as accepting bribes.

The emphasis on precedent is also striking here. While the author of this set of monastic guidelines in effect encourages change, it is change geared toward reestablishing the previously agreed rules. More generally, we learn from the above that the author's primary concern is not the direct welfare of the subjects, who were obviously mistreated by the estate-managers, but the long-term income of the monastic community of Sera.

Property and Inheritance

It is striking that the bca' yig that I have come across do not report on issues of inheritance. This may indicate that when an ordinary monk died there tended to be no noteworthy problems with regard to dividing his property.[802] This leaves us largely dependent on eyewitness accounts. In the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* specific rules were made to keep monastic property 'in the family, to prevent it from falling into lay hands or the state.'[803] Similarly, according to the *katikāvata*s, in Sri Lanka, a monk's property would become the Sangha's after death or giving up robes.[804] In more recent times, in Thailand, it is said that according to Thai state law, upon the death of a *bhikkhu* – unless he has set up a testament of sorts – all his possessions go to the monastery, as it is seen as his home.[805] The willing of one's property to lay-people does not seem to have been an option in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, but a monk's things could go to a layman when they were a 'fiduciary deposit' (*prativastu*),[806]

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[800] For *'go skor* I read *mgo skor*.

[801] *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 187: *gtong sgo gtong mi rnams nas lhag don lo chu lam rgyug gi phogs ja tshul bzang po 'dengs bzhin du dge 'dun la ma btang bar rgyas bsdus kyis nyar tshags sogs byed mi mang dag zhig yod tshod 'dra ba/ phyin chad tshul mthun bgyis na so sor 'di phyir legs tshogs che zhing/ 'di nas so sos lkog nyar gyi 'bru rigs ji yod khang pa 'di nas 'di thon gyis zhes bsgyur byang thog 'don mi ched mngags gtong dgos byung na mi legs pas rjes yong sngon dran gyis spang blang tshul bzhin rigs shing gra rgyun gyi skor 'di yang don med dge 'dun rnams thugs mthun khrims mi gtsang ba'i rgyu zhig yong gi 'dug pa/ des na sngar gyi thob khungs mi dbang 'jam dpal dbyangs sangs rgyas rgya mtsho'i bai ser sogs nas lam ston ltar thob sa thob khungs/ sngar sa sngar gnas gang yod byed pa las/ rnying pa nas gsar par 'go skor dang/ ham rtsod sogs byas pas dge 'dun phan tshun thugs mi mthun pa dang dbyen dang 'khrug slong gi rgyur 'gro ba'i rigs gtan nas byas chog rgyu min/*

[802] Naturally, here the issue is the inheritance of individual 'simple' monks. With regard to the inheritance of whole monasteries during the 12th century for example, the legality of the ownership was often challenged, as witnessed by the instances of a number of early Kadam monasteries. The solution was sought in securing inheritance of religious property from father to son and in the case of celibate masters, uncle to nephew. See Davidson, 2005: 290.

[803] Schopen, 2008: 640. The basic ruling found here is that the attendant of the dying monk received his six standard belongings and in case of there being more than one attendant, all had to get equal shares. The rest was to be divided up and shared with the other monks, see ibid.: 635. For more on Indian Buddhist 'property and inheritance laws' see Schopen, 1995a; Schopen, 2000a: 11, 2, and Schopen, 2001.

[804] Ratnapala, 1971: 170. For more on Sinhalese inheritance and property rights in later times see Evers, 1967.

[805] Bunnag, 1973: 120.

[806] Schopen, 2008: 640, n. 45.

which I take to mean a fund, owned by the monk, but managed by a lay-person. In the Chinese 12th century monastic rulebook, the *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規, it says that the dead monk's possessions were auctioned (presumably among the monks). The profits were then used for his funeral and religious practices for his benefit, such as sūtra readings. The text stipulates that a monk should not have too many things – which would make the auction tedious – nor too few, so that his funeral would have to be paid for by others.[807]

In the Tibetan case, again there does not appear to be one single ruling on what to do with the inheritance of a deceased monk.[808] In Sakya monastery, monks could will their property and in absence of a will their families could claim the monk's possessions.[809] Shes rab rgya mtsho, who used to live in that monastery further specifies this, indicating that the family was indeed involved but that they would usually not keep the things for themselves:

> If an old monk would die his relatives would sell his things and often spend the proceedings on the funeral costs and rituals, and so on. If he had no relatives the monastery would do this. There were very few monks who really owned something; most did not have a lot, much unlike monks these days.[810]

Similarly, a report on Spiti from 1897 informs us that when a lama (here: monk) would die, his property would not go to the monastery but back to his family. The first recipient would be another lama in that same household, but in the absence of someone like this, it would go to the head of the household.[811] In many cases a monk had to 'buy' the living quarters (*grwa shag*) at the monastery, and a younger monk – often his relative – would oftentimes join him there.[812] Regularly when the older monks died, these younger monks would inherit this 'household'.[813]

With regard to monasteries in Eastern Tibet, Ekvall states that a monk's possessions would become the community's after his death.[814] Khedrup, on the basis of his own experiences, recalls that in Sera je when a member of the society of rogue monks (**ldab ldob skyid sdug*) died, one share went to that society, some was used to pay for funerary costs and the rest was given to the college he belonged to.[815]

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[807] Yifa, 2002: 207, 8.
[808] This is also noted by Cassinelli and Ekvall who comment that 'each monastery had different regulations regarding possessions of deceased monks. In most monasteries the things went on to the monastery.' Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 234.
[809] ibid.: 307.
[810] Personal communication with Shes rab rgya mtsho, Rajpur, August 2012. In contrast, Khedrup notes that 'quite a lot of monks' owned land and other property such as livestock. They could become quite rich, in part because they 'did not have to pay much by way of taxation.' However, when these rich monks died most of their property would go to their college and not to their family. Khedrup, Richardson and Skorupski, 1986: 66.
[811] Diack, 1994 [1897] III: 88.
[812] In contrast, in contemporary Ladakh these living quarters are owned and maintained by the 'natal household estates' of the monks. These households are able to sell them on to other estates, if deemed appropriate. Mills, 2000: 27. Nonetheless, the process of 'inheriting' the living quarters was no doubt similar. To complicate matters further, dKon mchog chos nyid reports that the Ladakh branches (*yan lag gi dgon*) of Yangri gar in Central Tibet used to own a hundred living quarters in this monastery, so that the monks sent out to study there would have a place to live. Personal communication, Phiyang, August 2012.
[813] Goldstein, 2009: 6.
[814] Ekvall, 1959/60: 209; Ekvall, 1964: 195.
[815] Khedrup, Richardson and Skorupski, 1986: 51.

Due to lack of primary (and secondary) sources, it cannot be conclusively demonstrated what happened to the property when ordinary monks died. It can be gathered from the above accounts that the average monk did not own much, at least not enough so as to anticipate serious complications with regard to his inheritance. From the textualist's viewpoint this is of course an *argumentum ex silentio*, whereas when one takes into account other sources it is an argument based on a hardly audible murmur. Furthermore, it needs to be noted that the primary use of what the monk left behind was – much like in today's Tibetan communities – for the performance of the necessary death rituals. Thus, regardless of whether it was the family or the monastery spending the money, eventually all flowed back to the monastic community, whether it be into the pockets of the monks or the coffers of the monastic government.

Naturally, inheritance also worked the other way around. That is to say, monks also inherited.[816] Or did they? Again this is not entirely straightforward. According to some, monks were not at all allowed to inherit land.[817] French states that monks and nuns could inherit land, but never the primary family land.[818] According to Cassinelli and Ekvall, monks had the same rights as laymen over 'movable possessions'– which is to say, anything but land.[819] In any case, living off one's parents' inheritance was not a common method of subsistence.

Business and Trade in and around the Monastery

Tibetan monks and monasteries have probably always been involved in trade. Monks and merchants made natural bedfellows: neither was inextricably tied to the land or a locality. They were not bound to stay in one place, as the farmers were. Moreover, monks and traders regularly travelled together for safety reasons,[820] and often pilgrimage and business went hand in hand. Due to their monastic affiliation, monks could have networks that were far-reaching, facilitating trade across the board. Chen, speaking on Kham, supposes that the economics of 'the lamasery' was 'not so much based on land as on trade and usury.'[821] Michael estimates that thirty per cent of the (Central Tibetan) monastery's income came from 'trade, business and banking activities, such as money lending and investment.'[822] This involvement in trade is

[816] For research on monks inheriting in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* see Schopen, 1995b and Schopen, 2001 According to the latter work 'vinayadharas did not want to give up their right to inheritance.' ibid.: 112.

[817] e.g. Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 239. Speaking of Ladakh, Mills notes that 'when monks enter the monastery they lose the right to inherit.' Mills, 2003: 313.

[818] French, 1995a: 174. Interestingly, on page 173 the author details the account of a person 'who did not inherit because he had taken religious vows,' i.e. had become a monk. On page 333, she gives the life story of the monk Thubten Sangye who states that 'monks cannot inherit.'

[819] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 234. Conversely, in Sri Lanka a monk could inherit family land, which would then become monastic property after his death. Kemper, 1984: 408.

[820] Here the most obvious parallel is the way merchants and monks travelled on the Silk route.

[821] Chen, 1949: 100. In contrast, Slobodnik, writing about Amdo, remarks that according to a Chinese (propagandist) source, the main income for the monastery was the taxes paid to them by the people, demonstrating the people's subordination to the monastery. Slobodnik, 2004: 8.

[822] Michael, 1982: 49, 50. In contrast, a source of income for Chinese monasteries during the Song dynasty was the organizing of religious festivals, which were accompanied by market fairs. See Walsh, 2010: 59. This (conscious) attempt to accrue wealth appears not to have been common practice in Tibetan monasteries. Similarly, there are indications that Chinese monasteries occasionally owned shops at the market. In the 9th century the monastery of Da Xiang Si (大像寺) in western Shanxi had such as shop, either as a branch of the monastic treasury or as an outlet to sell the monastery's estates' produce. See Twitchett, 1957: 539, 40. Tibetan monasteries' ownership of shops appears to be a more recent phenomenon, however. See Caple, 2011 and Dagyab, 2009: 127-9.

seen by many as a transgression of monastic vows, as all the different *prātimokṣa*s have a ruling against buying and selling.[823] But was commerce really forbidden? In the beginning of the 18th century Desideri remarks:

> According to their rule monks are absolutely forbidden to engage in trade or commerce. Nevertheless, this rule is commonly – or rather almost universally – disregarded. They are very active and interested in business dealings, and for that purpose they obtain leave from time to time to go on journeys and to absent themselves from the monastery for a certain period.[824]

While this missionary's observations are normally rather well informed, the perceived strict taboo on trade in (Tibetan) Buddhism rests on a misunderstanding or a misinterpretation. Nonetheless, this distorted view on monastic trade has pervaded the thoughts and minds of scholars and non-scholars alike to this day. This notion added to the – once pervasive – view that Tibetan (monastic) Buddhist practices are diluted or debased versions of what was once current in Buddhist India. However, that Tibetan monks obviously engaged in trade does not mean that Indian monks did not: the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, for example, depicts monks storing rice and selling it when it became scarcer.[825] According to the same corpus – being arguably the most lenient of the Vinayas with regard to financial matters – buying and selling is fine, provided one does not seek gain.[826] The relevant passage from the *Vinayavibhaṅga* can be translated as follows: 'There is no transgression [regarding] a *bhikṣu* both selling without seeking gain as well as him buying without seeking gain.'[827]

The monastic guidelines demonstrate a diverse range of attitudes towards trade. Sometimes the Tibetan texts reiterate the Vinaya rules and at other times they diverge considerably. One of the earliest texts in this genre mentioning trade was written by Grags pa byung gnas (1175-1255, also known as sPyan snga rin po che). He was the fourth abbot of Drigung thil, for which this bca' yig was composed. The author held that post from 1235 to 1255, suggesting that this text is likely to have been composed within this timeframe. Concerning monks' business, he writes:

> Those monks who, under the false pretext of going to sKyi shod and g.Yor po and other places for business (*tshong*) or on an alms-round (*bsod snyoms*), are found to drink alcohol (*chang*), should be punished, for they are the enemies of the Teachings. [They] are not allowed back to Thil.[828]

This section is significant for a number of reasons. Going to do business (*tshong*) is mentioned together with collecting alms.[829] It is a casual reference: there is nothing wrong with being involved in trade. The problem here is drinking alcohol,

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[823] Schopen, 2001: 120.
[824] Desideri and de Filippi, 2011: 333.
[825] Schopen, 2004: 32.
[826] Schopen, 2000a: 14.
[827] *Vinayavibhaṅga* (D3 Cha): 156b: *dge slong gis rnyed pa mi 'dod pas nyo bar byed cing rnyed pa mi 'dod pas 'tshong bar byed pa gnyis ka ltung ba med do/*
[828] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 249b: *skyi shod dang g.yor po dang phyogs rnams su tshong dang bsod snyoms la snyad btags pa'i ban sde chang 'thung ba byung na bstan pa'i dgra bo yin pas chad pas chod/ phyis thil la ma gtong*
[829] This issue is further discussed in Chapter 7.

not doing business.[830] Generally speaking, the monastic organization in this earlier period was demonstrably looser and monks were more likely to be self-financed. Often they were also not necessarily attached to one single monastery.

Later bca' yig demonstrate a less casual attitude towards trade. The monastic guidelines for Sera je, written in the 1737, note that:

> While one's body is sound and one has intelligence, it is not permissible to live at ease (*sos dal du mi sdod*) and do business for profit (*tshong khe spogs*) or to give out loans of barley (*nas bun 'dzugs pa*).[831]

This statement simply suggests that the mind is a terrible thing to waste, in particular on something as frivolous as business. It also does not categorically forbid trade and providing loans – activities that perhaps would be more permissible for dull-witted monks. In a similar vein, it is reported that at the Sakya branch monastery of gDong dga' chos sde, ordinary monks were allowed to do business, whereas monks of 'the highest order' were forbidden to engage in these mundane affairs.[832] The detrimental effect of commerce on the mind is also noted by Patrul Rinpoche in the early 20th century who complains that:

> lamas and monks these days see no harm or wrong in doing business; indeed they spend their whole lives at it, and feel rather proud of their prowess. However, nothing debilitates a lama['s] or monk's mind more than business.[833]

Not only was trade seen as debilitating, but by being involved in commerce one also puts oneself on a par with lay-people. The Eighth Panchen Lama remarks:

> These days there are many who – under the impression that they are following in the footsteps of Śākyamuni Buddha – despite having been freed from the household, still have not been freed from householders' activities and thus do much trading for profit (*tshong khe byed pa*).[834]

Interestingly, during the first half of the 20th century, the polymath dGe 'dun Chos 'phel linked the recent rise in monastic commercial activities in Amdo with the inability to keep the vows of celibacy correctly.[835] The monastic guidelines for Drepung by the Fifth Dalai Lama – on which the above cited Sera je bca' yig is based and from which certain sections are taken nearly *verbatim* – give another ruling on trade. This text conveys similar sentiments, but from a slightly different angle:

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[830] It is sometimes argued that, while the other schools were lax in this regard, one of the major accomplishments of Tsongkhapa is that the movement he spearheaded was the only one without a laissez-faire attitude toward alcohol consumption by monks. See for example Norman, 2009:156. The above passage, however, clearly shows that strict regulations toward monastic alcohol consumption were in place some 200 years before Tsongkhapa's time.

[831] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 550: *lus kyis rkyen theg cing shes rab yod bzhin du chos grwa mi 'grim par sos dal du mi sdod cing/ tshong khe spogs dang/ nas bun 'dzugs pa sogs mi byed/*

[832] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 401.

[833] Patrul Rinpoche and Padmakara Translation Group, 1998: 105.

[834] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 116: *deng skabs bdag cag gi ston pa'i rjes 'jug tu rloms pa phal cher khyim las thar kyang khyim gyi bya ba las ma thar par phel cher tshong khe byed pa mang bas/*

[835] Makley, 2007: 191.

> It is not allowed to pretend to be a debate monk (*chos grwa pa*), while being healthy and intelligent, to not study but [instead] to do business for profit (*tshong khe spogs*) and make loans of barley (*nas bun 'dzugs*).[836]

Here it is important to note that the reason why the Fifth Dalai Lama had a problem with debate monks doing business is not just because it would be a waste of their talent, but because earlier on in the text he ruled that registered debate monks were to receive an allowance from the monastic authorities. This means that if they would involve themselves in trade and not study they would be receiving that 'salary' illegally and in addition to the returns of their business enterprise.

A set of monastic guidelines from 1900 states that one needed to have permission to trade: 'Whether the trade is on a big or a small-scale, one is not to engage in trade without asking the monastic authorities (*bla brang*) or the disciplinarian. Do not use bad weights and measures.'[837] Again, what we see here it is not that trade – buying and selling – was forbidden outright: it simply needed to be regulated. Ideally, it served a purpose other than greed.

Commerce: the Individual versus the Wider Monastic Community

In the bca' yig, when restrictions with regard to business are imposed, they are always directed toward individual monks, never toward those who accumulate wealth on behalf of the monastery. As mentioned above, this distinction between the individual personal livelihood and the larger corporation of the monastery is generally very pronounced. This distinction has its roots in the Vinaya.[838] Gernet, who studied the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* in Chinese, remarks that 'commerce is [..] prohibited to the monks but recommended to the Sangha.'[839] In the monastic guidelines this separation of the corporate and the individual is pronounced when they treat the division of donations, but also when it comes to rules on trade and other 'work'. The bca' yig for Ramoche monastery, which was written in the 1740s, states: 'Except for the benefit of the monastery and the monastic official lamas' fields, the monks are not to conduct trade, work in the fields, or give out loans and so on.'[840] A similar sentiment is expressed in the set of monastic guidelines for Phabongkha hermitage:

> Regarding this, except for the officials who work for the general Sangha, no one else, whether high or low, may keep horses and cattle, do business and

[836] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 307: *chos grwa par khag btags nas lus thang zhing shes rab yod bzhin du slob gnyer mi byed par tshong khe spogs ngang nas bun 'dzugs pa sogs mi byed/*

[837] *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 410: *tshong 'gangs che chung ci yin kyang bla brang dang dge skos la ma dris par tshong mi byed/ bre log dang srang log mi 'dzugs/*

[838] On various occasions, the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* paints a picture of 'a Buddhist monk who accepts, handles, and disperses what must have been considerable, or even very large sums of money [..].' Schopen, 2006: 236. However, the money that gets handled is always for the benefit of the larger community.

[839] Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 163.

[840] *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 137: *gwra tshang rang don dang spyi pa bla ma'i shas zhing sogs ma gtogs grwa rigs rnams nas tshong khe zhing las bu lon sogs gtong sa med/* A similar sentiment is expressed in a bca' yig from 1930 written by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, see *Rong po rab brtan dgon bca' yig*: 538: *spyi bso dang mchod gnyer khag la ma gtogs zhing las/ phyugs skyong/ khe tshong sogs nye 'gyangs gang sar nam yang mi chog*.

> give out loans against interest, and interfere in the matters of lay-people that are inappropriate and carelessly wander about and so on.[841]

Similarly, the bca' yig for 'O chu dgon from 1918 states:

> Except for the managers, it is not allowed for the general monk-populace to do business and make loans against profit. It has been said by the Victor(s) that it is impossible for those who have gone forth to be lacking in sustenance. Therefore do not do things that go against the rules.[842]

This is reminiscent of a Bhutanese saying: *grwa pa sgrig gis 'tsho* – monks sustain themselves by means of rules.[843] This proverb reflects the very widespread (and still current) notion that as long as one lives a virtuous life, one need not worry about one's livelihood. A similar sentiment is reflected in the 16th century monastic guidelines for Tshurphu:

> In particular, one needs to give up on fearful thoughts that one will be overlooked,[844] thinking: 'what will happen when I run out of food and clothing?' According to many texts, thoughts that are excessively attached and craving need to be abandoned, because the books (*glegs bam*) state that when one relies on the continuity of the Dharma, shortage will be impossible.[845]

One could wonder, however, whether these statements provided any solace to the monks who truly had difficulty getting by.

Sometimes, the line between the monastery's affairs and the individual monk's business got (intentionally?) blurred. The Drepung monastic guidelines report that on occasion there had been:

> some greedy teachers (*dge rgan ham pa can*), like those who would go to Lhasa on official business (*don gcod*), not hiding the fact that they are of the Gelug school (*dge ba pa*), who would pretend that what they received went solely to their college. They would put a seal on the goods and their own living quarters would be full of them. [Since then] those things have turned up and it is obvious that they should wholly go to the big colleges. These things are a total embarrassment, and should thus not be done.[846]

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[841] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 243: *de mtshungs dge 'dun spyi'i las byed ma gtogs/ gzhan ma drag zhan su thad nas rta phyugs gso ba/ tshong bun bskyed byed pa/ mi 'os pa'i khyim las su the tshogs bag med 'khyams nyul rigs mi byed/*

[842] *'O chu dgon bca' yig*: 177: *mchod gnyer khag rnams las grwa rigs byings nas tshong khe bun sogs mi chog rab tu byung ba rnams 'tsho bas phongs par mi 'gyur bar mi srid pa rgyal bas gsungs pa ltar na/ bcas khrims dang 'gal ba'i las mi byed/* In the *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs* this text is wrongly dated to 1798, in the *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs* 2 this error has been corrected.

[843] Phuntsho, 2004: 572.

[844] *ma phyed*: literally 'not get differentiated'.

[845] *mTshur phu bca' yig*: 708/5a: *lhag par zas gos 'di zad nas ji ltar 'ong snyam ste ma phyed dogs pa'i blo spong ba dang/ dpe cha mang po la ha cang chags sred kyi blo yang spong dgos te/ chos rgyud thog tu khel na glegs bam gyis lag thogs mi srid pa'i phyir dang/*

[846] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 313, 4: *dge ba par bkab mi byed par lha sar don gcod la yong ba lta bur dge rgan ham pa can la las khams tshan thob pa tsam rtags su bkod nas chas pa la rgya sdom byed cing/ gnas tshang du 'tshangs nas dngos po 'don pa sogs byung 'phros 'dug pa grwa sa chen po rnams rlabs kyis 'gro dgos gshis/ de rigs zhabs 'dren kho na yin 'dug pas byed sa med/*

Similarly, the monastic guidelines for Tashi Lhunpo first mention the monks who were trusted to do the monastery's business and then state:

> Also others who are astute will mingle with this crowd [of business monks] and involve themselves in making profits through trade and give out loans of money and grains against interest on a large scale. Also some creditors (*bun bdag*) in dealing with people who are shameless in [repaying] the loans and the interest (debt-defaulters), pretend that it is the 'mother-money' (investment-capital) of the monastic office (*spyi pa*). To pursue them aggressively and the like is to be on the verge of [committing] many wrongdoings.[847]

Again, the problem that the Eighth Panchen Lama, the author of these monastic guidelines written in 1876, articulates is that monks doing business for themselves may become indistinguishable from the monk-officials. When pursuing debt-defaulters then, one could profit from being perceived as a monk-official – only then could one apply pressure by making the debtors believe the money owed was actually the monastery's investment capital (*spyi pa'i ma dngul*). Obviously then, people were more inclined to pay back money that belonged to the Sangha than to an individual monk. The same author is also rather strict about business carried out by individual monks:

> While the elders and their assistants at the college may use the monastic office's mother-money to give out loans against interest, none of the ordinary monks, whether old or young, may ever be involved in such things as loaning out grains and money against interest or things that fall under doing business and making loans for profit, such as hoarding, horse-trade, donkey-trade, or things like managing acquired fields. Rather, they should prioritize the practice of the various stages of dharma: study, contemplation and meditation.[848]

Here the author is strongly against any business conducted on an individual level. Elsewhere in the same text he demonstrates his aversion to the 'worldly' behaviour of his monastery's monks: 'Managing fields, using cattle, hoarding (*'bol nyo dkon tshong*), giving out loans and so on – turning one's back (S. *vaimukhya*) on what a lama[849] is meant to do – should in no case be done.'[850] This is in many ways similar to the rules on trade in Menri monastery: 'Activities that lead one to the worldly life: trading in order to obtain profit, lending money for interest, deceit in making weights and measures and breaking sworn oaths. It is acceptable to make an honest living by petty trade, following the rules of the state.'[851]

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[847] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 117: *gzhan yang lag ldan yod rigs rnams nas 'di la rigs bsgres te tshong khe bed/ 'bru dngul gyi bun gtong rgya cher byed pa dang/ gzhan yang bun bdag khag gis bun ngo skyed khrel min byung rigs la spyi pa'i ma dngul yin tshul khar 'khur nas 'ded gtser byed pa sogs nyes pa du ma'i sgor 'dug cing*

[848] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 118: *de ltar grwa tshang rgan po rgan g.yog rnams nas spyi pa'i ma dngul yin nges bun bskyed gtong byed pa las de byings grwa rigs bgres gzhon su thad nas kyang 'bru dngul gyi bun bskyed gtong dpyad dngos kyi rigs 'bol nyo dkon tshong/ rta khe/ bong khe sogs khe bun tshong las kyi rigs dang bsgrub zhing 'debs skyong sogs gtan nas mi byed par/ thos bsam sgom bsgrub chos spyod kyi rim pa la nan tan du mdzad dgos/*

[849] Here lama carries the sense of ordinary 'monk'.

[850] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 83: *sa zhing 'debs skyong dang/ nor lug gi bed spyod/ 'bol nyo dkon tshong/ bun gtong sogs bla ma'i bya ba las rgyab kyis phyogs pa de rigs gtan nas mi byed/*

[851] Cech, 1988: 77.

We thus find that the bca' yig stipulate rules on *who* could do business as well as on *how* it was to be conducted. As some texts cited above suggest, commercial activities could also give rise to dishonesty, in particular with regard to the measures and weights used. Again the guidelines for Tashi Lhunpo state:

> Considering that the Dharmarāja Srong btsan sgam po has prohibited fraud to do with weights and measures for lay-people, does it need mention that we, who have gone forth, should also not be doing this? Previously, from within the ranks of the monks enrolled here there have been cases of people swindling others by means of incorrect weights. Obviously this brings about very heavy negative karma! Taking into consideration that this is a disgrace to both the general and the specific Teachings, as well as to the community of the Sangha, no one – be they young or old – may do this from now on. If there are people who have done this, they need to be punished severely when the faults that have been established on the basis of investigation by the 'Religious rules office' (*chos khrims khang*). It is said in the collected works of the Kadam masters that: 'Even in the ocean-like community of those who have been instructed, if the rules are relaxed only slightly, hooved and fanged beasts with faulty discipline will appear.'[852]

It is telling that here the author refers to what can be translated as 'secular laws' (*rgyal khrims* or *srid khrims*), namely those that are purported to have been established by Srong btsan sgam po in the 8th century. These thirteen pronouncements (*zhal lce bcu gsum*) were thus seen as applicable to the whole of the population in Tibet, and not just the lay-people. Some texts also comment on *where* commercial activities should take place:

> A lot of unnecessary trading should not be done. When it is done, the price should be according to what is current; one should not go higher or lower than the current rate. One should not be obsessively attached[853] toward business that has not yet been finalized.[854] Trading should be done outside the gate (*gzhung sgo*) and nowhere else.[855]

Schram also notes that when business deals were made by monks, they were not to be made too ostentatiously.[856] Similar rules can be found in Dōgen's (1200-1253) *Eihei*

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[852] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 118: *chos kyi rgyal po srong btsan sgam pos bre dang srang la g.yo sgyu byed pa 'jig rten khyim pa rnams la'ang bkag na rang cag rab tu byung ba rnams kyis byar mi rung ba smos ma dgos kyang/ de snga rang re'i sgrigs grwa'i khongs nas kyang tshul bzhin ma yin pa'i bre srang gis gzhan rmongs par byas pa byung yod 'dug pa rang rgyud la sdig las tshabs po cher 'gyur ba smos ci dgos/ bstan pa spyi bye brag dge 'dun gyi sde dang bcas pa'i zhabs 'dren du 'gyur bar bsam/ phyin chad de rigs bgres gzhon sus kyang mi mdzad/ gal srid byas rigs byung ba la chos khrims khang nas rtsad gcod dang 'brel ba'i 'di khar rgyu mtshan byung bstun slad la 'doms nges kyi nyes pa theg par dka' ba gcod rgyu/ bka' gdams glegs bam las/ bshad tshogs rgya mtsho lta bu na'ang/ khrims ni cung zad lhod par gyur / rmig gcig pa dang mche ba can/ khrims 'chal byol song skyong* [*bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs*: 302: *skye*] *bar byed/* Here I read, in accordance with the version given in the *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs*, *skye bar* instead of *skyong bar*, although the latter reading is not entirely implausible.

[853] For *hab shur* read *hab bshur*.

[854] i.e. do not pursue people.

[855] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 282: *dgos med kyi nyo tshong mang po byed sa med cing/ gang byed kyang rin thang tshong pa so so'i lugs mthun las 'phar chag mi byed pa dang/ snga ma'i tshong thag ma chod bar hab shur mi bya/ tshong sa yang gzhung sgo'i phyi rol ma gtogs gzhan du mi byed/*

[856] Schram, 2006 [1954]: 374.

Shingi, in the section entitled 'Regulations for the Study Hall'. Here it is said that monks were not to talk to tradesmen in the study hall, but to do this elsewhere.[857] This suggests that trade by monks was both conducted and tolerated, albeit outside of a place reserved for the study of the Dharma.[858]

Because the bca' yig indicate that trade by individuals was sometimes seen as a problem and sometimes as being in need of regulation, one may conclude that business was conducted by many monks throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world (and beyond). However, Miller, who did fieldwork in the 1950s in the Himalayas, reports that the Bhutanese saw trade by monks and monasteries as something typical of Tibet. The Bhutanese themselves deny that their monasteries were ever involved in trade.[859]

While, as noted above, some monks managed to exchange butter for grains and made a small profit with that, for extensive trade one needed startup capital.[860] According to Shes rab rgya mtsho, for this reason most monks did not really do business. He adds that to be successful one needed to be savvy (*'jon po*) in making money, which most were not. Monks who had both the capital and the financial know-how were – in his experience – rare indeed.[861]

Overall, when reading these monastic guidelines through a wide lens (both diachronically and synchronically), we can see a shift from being reasonably tolerant with regard to trade to a less understanding attitude. This decreasing tolerance toward commercial activities is, I believe, strongly related to the gradual change in the economic policies of many monasteries (though by no means all). The Ganden Phodrang government greatly increased the state-sponsorship of certain monasteries.[862] Therefore, from the late 17th century onward there appears to have been a greater push, incentivized by the government, toward providing individual monks with their upkeep, at least partially.[863] In particular in the 20th century there were multiple attempts to provide monks with an income, but only in exchange for an interest in education, good behaviour, and allegiance to the Dalai Lama.

At the same time, when we view the rulings on trade in their particular contexts, it appears that the choice of individual monasteries to either restrict or to (tacitly) allow trade also had to do with the specific circumstances they found themselves in. In the case of Tashi Lhunpo in the late 19th century, we learn by reading the monastic guidelines that it was an institution that held great prestige and had no problem with its monk-enrollments. This text contains policies geared towards curbing monastic growth by being selective as to whom to allow in.[864] To

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[857] Dōgen, Leighton, and Okumura, 1996: 110.

[858] Here we see that the problem was the mixing of the sacred and the profane but not the business itself. Similarly, Jesus once chased men buying and selling and exchanging money out of the temple (John 2:14), but he did not pursue them once they were outside of the temple. Sedlacek, 2011: 139.

[859] Miller, 1958: 187, 8.

[860] In the previous chapter the need for the financial managers to possess capital of their own is mentioned. In a similar way it seems that business monks most likely came from the wealthier strata of society.

[861] Personal communication with Shes rab rgya mtsho, Rajpur, August 2012.

[862] For example, the contemporary work *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag* claims that at the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (*rgyal mchog bcu gsum pa*) each monk received about four hundred silver coins (*dngul ḍam rdo*) from him. See *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 269. It is likely that this was a yearly amount. While it is difficult to calculate the value of money, as the value of silver fluctuated greatly, this still appears to have been a substantial amount.

[863] Spencer Chapman, travelling through Central Tibet in the 1920s, claims that: 'Practically half the revenue of the State is devoted to the upkeep of the monasteries, either in the form of grants of land or in gifts of barley, butter and tea.'Spencer Chapman, 1984 [1938]: 178.

[864] As demonstrated in Chapter 4.

categorically forbid commercial activities can also be seen as one of those policies, as one would only attract those monks who were not dependent on trade to begin with. For smaller monasteries, it was simply not feasible to prohibit trade: the only thing that they could do was to regulate it.

Servicing Loans and Loansharking

As has been shown above, trade and giving out loans against interest are often mentioned in the same breath in the monastic guidelines. It has often been remarked upon that in old Tibet the monasteries were the biggest 'money'-lenders.[865] From a financial perspective, this is a logical process as (the monastic) trade provided a surplus that could subsequently be invested.[866] Very similar rules applied to those on trade: individual monks were often discouraged from giving out loans, whereas monasteries often functioned almost as modern-day banks, making investments and giving credit, without monastic authors ever expressing their dismay over these 'usurious' practices. It can even be argued that, when one considers the financial relationships between the donor and the recipient as portrayed (among others) in the Vinaya, giving out credit is a more reasonable and a more widely acceptable method of sustaining the monastery's financial health than trade. Before turning to the above outlined issue, first the role of the individual monks as creditors should be briefly discussed.

One of the reasons why monks are discouraged or even forbidden from being involved in giving out loans[867] is that at a certain point in time one will need to retrieve these loans along with their interest. There is then a danger of monks exercising force in the process.[868] In the earliest sets of monastic guidelines, the issue of monks (aggressively) pursuing their dues is already noted as a problem. The bca' yig for the community at gDan sa mthil was written by 'Jig rten gsum mgon (1143-1217) during or directly after a period of famine.[869] The relative poverty of both the lay population and the monks is pronounced. He therefore warns the monks not:

> to pursue traders for old debts (*tshong pa la rnying phrin snyog pa*); to ally oneself with 'strongmen' (*btsan po*) amid the destitute country-folk (*yul mi kha nyen rnams kyis thog tu btsan po*) and then to chase people who have long-standing debts (*bu lon rnying 'phrin mi*); to pursue them one by one come what may: all that exists ages and dies – do not create many outstanding debts (*dom ring mang po*).[870]

[865] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 174. Naturally, in the context of Tibet, for most transactions actual currency was hardly ever used – to facilitate the discussion the word 'money' is therefore used in a rather broad way.
[866] Chen also notes this logic: the 'lamaseries' in Kham loaned out more cash than the wealthy families, 'due to their involvement in trade.' See Chen, 1949: 138.
[867] Similarly, the Sri Lankan *katikāvata*s show that *bhikkhu*s were not to mortgage or lend on interest, see Ratnapala, 1971: 181.
[868] It is perhaps needless to say that monks not only loaned goods and money out to lay-people, but they also gave credit to their fellow-monks. A number of loan-contracts between mostly higher placed monks can be found at www.dtab.uni-bonn.de.
[869] The text itself states that both the previous year and the year before that famines had taken place. *gDan sa bca' yig*: 127: *na ning gzhe ning gnyis su mu ge byung*/ For some of the historical context, see Martin, 2010.
[870] *gDan sa bca' yig*: 127, 8: *tshong pa la rnying phrin snyog pa dang/ yul mi kha nyen rnams kyis thog tu btsan po 'jing 'gril byas nas/ bu lon rnying phrin mi 'ded pa dang/ ji ltar 'ong ba bags kyis snyogs pa dang/ yod pa kun yang rgas shi dom ring mang po ma 'dzug*.

Due to the abstruse language, the above translation is tentative, but there can be no doubt that this author felt that monks were attempting to retrieve their outstanding loans at a time of great scarcity and chastised them for this.

A somewhat later bca' yig by the Eighth Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507-1554) connects debt, whether on the part of the creditor or the debtor, along with being deceitful, to stealing:

> Furthermore, tying [someone else] up in a loan, not repaying one's debts, and being deceitful when it comes to selling foodstuffs must be abandoned in every way. Then one can prevent the causes that lead to the downfall (*pārājika*) of stealing.[871]

The individual enterprise of both lending and borrowing was, according to Cassinelli and Ekvall, not restricted by Sakya monastery in the first half of the 20th century. Rather, when engaging in these types of practices the monks operated under 'royal law'.[872] This certainly was not universally the case, for in Mindröl ling monastery during the late 17th century, for example, a monk caught privately lending against interest would risk losing that which he had loaned out:

> The giving out of loans by individuals should not be done, because it is a distraction and it is unstable (*'phar bug che*),[873] and because it is a cause for becoming evil minded, without ever being satisfied (*chog shes med pa'i blo ngan*). If you do do this, then the thing that one has loaned out will become communal property (*spyi thog tu song*). However, this is not forbidden if one loans out something to those in need, without getting a profit out of it and as long as it is not an excessive amount.[874]

In contrast with the restrictions individual monks experienced with regard to giving out loans, for the monastery to lend out property on behalf of the Sangha was mostly unproblematic. The *Vinayavibhaṅga*, which the Tibetans had access to, appears to not just tolerate monastic communities collecting interest, it seems to encourage it:

> The Bhagavan decreed that the goods in perpetuity (*mi zad pa*, S. **akṣaya*) [given] to the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha should be given out on loan.[875] The interest resulting from that needs to be offered to the Buddha, Dharma and the Saṅgha.[876]

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[871] *mTshur phu bca' yig*: 708/5a: *khag par g.yar po bsdams pa dang skyin mi gsob pa dang/ lto tshong la g.yo sgyu sogs rnam pa thams cad du spang dgos/ de dag gis ni ma byin len gyi ltung ba'i rgyu rnams bkag zin la/*

[872] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 235. For more on cases in which monks were punished under secular law see Chapter 8.

[873] The phrase *'phar bug che* is unknown to me. The translation is based on reading *bug* as *bugs*: fall. 'Great rising and falling' then becomes 'unstable'.

[874] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 281, 2: *gang zag re res bu lon gtong ba 'di yang rnam g.yeng dang 'phar bug che zhing chos shes med pa'i blo ngan gyi rgyur 'dug pas gtan mi byed/ gal te byas pa byung na dngos po gang btang de spyi thog tu song/ 'on kyang bskyed 'phel med pa'i snga 'phrul tsam skye bo so sor yang mkho bar snang bas rgya che mu med du ma song phyin bkag cha med/*

[875] *rab tu sbyor ba*, S. *pra√yuj/ *prayojayati*. For a discussion of this term see Schopen, 2004b: 56, 7.

[876] *Vinayavibhaṅga* (D3 Cha): 155a: *bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal ba/ sangs rgyas dang/ chos dang/ dge 'dun gyi phyir mi zad pa rab tu sbyor bar bya zhing de las skyed gang grub pa des sangs rgyas dang/ chos dang/ dge 'dun la mchod par bya'o/* The narrative reasoning given for this ruling by the

As is to be expected, here a proviso to lending against interest is given, namely that the profit needed to be offered to, or 're-invested' in, the Three Jewels. We see this 'rule' on giving out loans adhered to in the Tibetan context. In essence it means that all profits from monastic enterprise (be it interest from loans or investment) would flow straight back to the monasteries, but in what form is not entirely clear. In other words, we do not know exactly what the revenue was eventually spent on. Was it to be spent on the monks, to go toward the monastery's upkeep, did it go straight into the monastic coffers, or was it used to make extensive offerings?

The *Kṣudrakavastu* offers a narrative in which a merchant gives the monks capital, which he himself then uses as venture capital and subsequently distributes the profits among the monks.[877] In this instance, then, it is the individual monks, albeit as the Sangha, who profit. From the sources under consideration here it can be gleaned that in the context of Tibetan monasticism, the monks usually did not directly profit from the monastery's entrepreneurship. However, there were certain ways to circumvent this, in other ways than by spending it on specific rituals.[878] The bca' yig for Chab mdo dga' ldan theg chen byams pa gling, written in 1933 by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, gives us a glimpse of this process:

> The monastic authorities, represented by the managers of the private and collective offerings[879] need to give out loans and make business investments and the like using the older offerings for investment (*mchod thebs*) or newly received wealth, in a careful and considered manner.[880] One is to increase and not to let decline [this money] with any changes in the procedures. The distributions (*gtong sgo*), whatever they are, need to be given out, when the recipients of the offerings (*mchod yul*) are thought to be the largest number. One should not let the continuity of offerings decline and be neglected, while the gifts deteriorate and become reduced.[881]

Here the managers are encouraged to invest the wealth and to distribute the profits from these investments among the monks at a time most would be able to benefit. The alternative was to let the offerings go to waste. That the Thirteenth Dalai Lama felt the need to point this out, however, in fact suggests that the reality was otherwise: that, indeed as several other accounts suggest, many monasteries tended to hoard goods, rather than to invest them wisely. The above process is confirmed by an account – based on oral history – suggesting that in the first half of the 20th century the profit from investments was regularly used to buy perishable goods, such as grain and butter. These products were, due to their perishability, thought of as unsuitable to further

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redactors of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* can be found in Schopen, 2004a: 29, 30 and Schopen, 2004b: 48-50.

[877] Schopen, 2000a: 7.

[878] As in the example of Rinchen gang nunnery given above.

[879] Whether these managers were monks is not confirmed, although it is likely that they were. In the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* conflicting narratives exist. In the *Uttaragrantha* the *ārāmika* (often a lay-person) provided the loans, whereas in the *Vinayavibhaṅga* monks themselves are depicted as handing them out. See Schopen, 2001: 102.

[880] The phrase here is *bgri tshag gces thog*, the translation is largely contextual.

[881] *Chab mdo dga' ldan theg chen byams pa gling bca' yig*: 549: *spyi bso mtshon spyi sger mchod gnyer rnams nas mchod thebs sngar yod dang gsar sbyor byung ba rnams la bgri tshag gces spras thog bun gtong dang/ tshong spel sogs thabs 'pho gang yod kyi mi nyams gong 'phel las/ mchod rgyun chad phum zom 'jog bsnyen bkur je zhan je phrar ma song ba'i gtong sgo gang ci chag nar med par mchod yul gang cher bsam pa'i dus gtong dgos rgyu/*

invest.[882] Presumably, this was a way to be able to actually use the profit. Overall, however, this was not the norm: Tibetan monasteries had a tendency to hoard goods – I suspect exactly because of the Vinayic restrictions given above – while not irregularly the monks present at the same monastery experienced relative economic hardship.

The interest rate on monastic loans is reported to have been rather high – the highest interest rate was about twenty-five per cent per year.[883] Chen states that, much the same as in contemporary finance, larger loans carried lower interest rates whereas smaller loans had higher interest rates. The rates on grain loans were higher than those on cash loans. The interest paid per annum on cash loans was around fifteen per cent.[884] In fact, it is claimed that the monasteries tended to charge interest that was higher than that of the government (*srid gzhung*). In Ganden, for example, one would borrow four measures of grain and eventually pay back five measures. But to borrow with the government was to borrow ten measures and to pay back eleven.[885] It is not that the prospective monk-lenders would get lower rates than lay-people, however. A loan contract from an earth dog (*sa khyi*) year,[886] suggests that the Phu khang kham tshan (a house of Drepung Loseling (Blo gsal gling) loaned five hundred silver coins (*dngul ṭam rdo*) against a yearly interest of eighteen per cent (*dgu bskyed*).[887] As with most aspects of pre-modern Tibetan society, loans were not accessible to all. Monasteries often would not deal directly with the poorer households, possibly because this was seen as too risky: for losing out on the monastery's investment made with the offerings of the faithful would amount to squandering the Sangha's possessions. Often the debtors of the monastery were the well-to-do families who occasionally passed on smaller segments of the loans to the less affluent.[888]

That monasteries gave out loans and that they became de facto debt-collectors must have added to tensions between the monastic and the lay-population – particularly the higher strata of society. Above we saw that collecting the interest or the debt posed a threat of violence. The debt-collectors of Ganden in the first half of the 20th century were not permitted to use physical violence. They would visit the families of those in debt to ask them to help with repaying the money. Here then the method was social pressure rather than threatening with punitive action.[889] In Chinese monasteries during the same period, the last resort when dealing with people defaulting on their debts was to hire a couple of ruffians to dismantle the door and take away the furniture. Another option was to take them to court, but this was less common.[890] Similar practices were also employed in the Tibetan monasteries – with the ruffians often being monks.[891] That this occurred did not mean that it was acceptable behaviour. In Tibet in the 1930s, monks from Sera monastery had cashed in debts by seizing goods. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama ended up fining Sera's abbot

[882] Dagyab, 2009: 108: 'Da es sich nicht um dauerhaft haltbare Güter handelt, waren sie als Anlageform denkbar ungeeignet.'
[883] Dagyab, 2009: 179.
[884] Chen, 1949: 139.
[885] *Bod kyi dgon sde*: 174.
[886] Probably written in either 1899 or 1959.
[887] Manuscript 110: 0614_AA_1_1_66_9 at http://www.dtab.uni-bonn.de/tibdoc/termdoc/term2.htm
[888] Chen, 1949: 138.
[889] Dagyab, 2009: 61.
[890] Welch, 1967: 27.
[891] Exercising (any type of) force was not always an option for monasteries that were less powerful. Bunnag, for example, reports of there having been several cases in which tenants refused to pay rent, because they knew the monastery was unlikely to pursue the matter. Bunnag, 1973:124.

for this. This implies that the abbot was held legally responsible for the conduct of his monks.[892]

In contemporary Tibetan monasteries loans and business investments are still made by the monastic management. Until recently the larger monasteries in exile in South India provided Tibetan sweater-sellers with cash so that they could buy their goods. When things one year went awry and the sellers defaulted on their loans, the monks could take no action. The monasteries ended up losing much money.[893] Some monasteries in the PRC still loan grain out to those families who need it, without any interest or deposit. Again, no measures, legal or otherwise, can be taken when it is not paid back.[894] Contrasted with the manner in which the monastic authorities dealt with debt-collecting prior to the 1950s, this is clearly indicative of the changed power-relations between the lay-populations and the monastery.

Usurers or Banks: Monasticism as an Economic Model?

Perhaps Buddhist monasteries [..] *acted as agents of economic development in much the same way as the monastic foundations of medieval Europe*.[895]

I now return to the issue alluded to above, namely that providing loans and making investments were methods of wealth-accumulation that were less problematic for the monastic agents than, for example, trade or owning fields. When reading theoretical works on the ethics of commerce and finance that have a strong focus on Western religious and philosophical discourses, we are informed that, generally speaking, trade is inevitably good, for it is a simple exchange, whereas moneylending is morally reprehensible. This is regularly presented as some sort of universal. The practice of lending money and charging interest is equivalent to the more archaic usage of the word usury.[896] In Christianity, usury has traditionally been seen as constituting a grave sin. It gets described as either theft from people or from God. Thomas Aquinas saw it to be a sin against justice, a notion probably inspired by ancient Greek thought, according to which usury was seen as something despicable.[897] Aristotle contends the following:

> The most hated sort, and with the greatest reason, is usury, which makes a gain out of money itself. For money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest... That is why of all modes of getting wealth this is the most unnatural.[898]

In the case of Tibetan Buddhism, when considering the sources at hand, on the whole commerce is never described as preferable to moneylending: they are seen as equally bad (or good). Moreover, when the Sangha is the moneylender, it is even encouraged. As has been demonstrated above, according to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, the

[892] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 200.
[893] This (purposely anonymized) account is based on what I have heard during my stay in India between 2000 and 2005 and from later conversations with monks. This incident would most definitely merit further research, for it may prove to be very informative on the contemporary nature of monk-lay relations in exile.
[894] Dagyab, 2009: 183.
[895] Strenski, 1983: 474.
[896] Nowadays, this term is used to denote interest rates that are exorbitant. This – much more recent – gloss of the word 'usury' has no place in this discussion.
[897] See Kaye, 2000: 86, 7.
[898] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1258a39-1258b7, as quoted in Sedlacek, 2011: 85.

Sangha is to use money (or otherwise) in a manner that is *exactly contrary* to Aristotle's views: the Sangha preferred *not* to use the offerings of the faithful in exchange, and instead tried to increase the offerings through interest. The Buddhist rationale behind this is that as the interest accrues so does the merit of the original donor.

Even though they are part of a slightly different argument, Walsh's remarks on Chinese monastic matters of economy during the Song Dynasty ring true with regard to the issues at hand, namely that 'monks and nuns [..] did not engage in socioeconomic practices *in spite* of their salvational or devotional dispositions; they engaged in such practices *because* of them.'[899] As far as I am aware, there was no linkage of usury with 'sinfulness' among Tibetan Buddhists, or Indian Buddhists for that matter. This disproves the widespread notion that moneylenders were *universally* despised. In fact, Graeber, in his work that considers the morality of debt in time and place, points out that Buddhism 'is one of the few of the great world religions that has never formally condemned usury.'[900] The proviso here is that this is only with respect to the Sangha as the creditor: the individual monk does get criticized for extracting interest on loans.

Naturally, there is no way of knowing how the debtors felt about their monastic creditors, but we do know that often money-lending was not seen as morally reprehensible by ordinary Tibetans. Caple writes that, when researching the monastic economy in contemporary Rebkong in Amdo, she was told that local people who were relatively poor saw borrowing from the monastery and giving back interest as a form of giving to the monastery.[901] Dagyab reports a not dissimilar instance in which Tibetans complied or even agreed with the economic policy of the monasteries: Ganden monastery, before 1959, both bought and sold grain. The monks in charge of this business had two sets of scales: one for buying (*bsdu rgya*) and one for selling (*gtong rgya*) the wares. The local population was well aware that the scales had been tampered with so that the scales always tipped in the favour of the monastery, but – at least according to oral history – people still preferred to do business with the monastery for the sake of the merit involved. It was even perceived by some as a donation.[902]

It has been argued that the relatively good economic position of the monasteries before 1959 made it possible to help out the local population in difficult times with credit, and that in particular in areas where the infrastructure was poor the monastery was an important giver of credit.[903] However, as has been noted above, often only the wealthier people were eligible to do business with the monastery: the monastic corporation did not give out small loans to 'the little people'. The wealthier families could hand down their loaned money to the poorer families, but the 'ordinary' people may also have been served with loans by the individual monks, filling a niche in the market, albeit one that was not always legal, 'Vinayically' speaking.

The alternative to seeing the monastery's commercial enterprises as usurious practices is to view them as a service. Not the service a charitable institution would provide, but that of, for example, a bank. Gernet, taking various Vinayas as a basis,

[899] Walsh, 2010: 14. Emphasis added.
[900] Graeber, 2011: 496. Similar attitudes to usury can be found in non-Buddhist Indian texts such as the *Manusmṛti*. It is said there that to lend on business is not permitted unless it is for a 'religious purpose' (S. *dharmārtha*). See Schopen, 2004b: 57, 8. In this article it is suggested that Vinaya and Dharmaśāstra materials contain significant parallels in this regard.
[901] Caple, 2010: 210.
[902] Dagyab, 2009: 118.
[903] ibid.: 174.

remarks that prior to the spread of Buddhism there were no lending banks, and that thus 'Buddhist communities must be credited with their creation.'[904] Banks, in turn, are often recognized as the catalysts of wider economic growth. The same parallel is drawn by Ekvall:

> It is the Grwa tshang, or college, however, which, in the office and operations of the Spyi ba, or manager, corresponds most closely to the organization and function of the investment banking in other parts of the world. The analogy, though close, does not hold good in every respect. Although it operates like an investment banker, the monastery bank derives its capital from gifts and not from deposits on which it would have to pay interest or other financial outlay. The self-sacrifice of those who give, in terms of satisfaction derived, has not been ruinously or appallingly great. Nor have the sPyi Ba and others imposed altogether unreasonable interest rates or altogether stifled economic development. The sacrifice expressed in offering and the management of wealth together represent an economic contribution to the culture of Tibet.[905]

The real impact of the monasteries on the economy of pre-modern Tibet is often either ignored by scholars more concerned with issues of political or religious history or is described as a burden on the ordinary people, a mode of exploitation of serfs, and as an obstacle to economic development. The surplus of the Tibetan people is often portrayed as being solely used up by religion. This view is countered when one views Tibetan monastic economic practices from a different perspective, namely as an economic 'model' that was seen by Tibetans as a stable and maybe even a more *just* alternative to the hegemony of feuding aristocratic families[906] and the decentralized government, which actively stimulated local level governance. When put in the historical context of Tibetan political history, the monastic economic model may have been the most viable option. Needless to say, this model has developed organically and gradually from the introduction of monastic Buddhism in Tibet onwards and should not be seen as a model that has been consciously created or adopted at a certain point in time.

To assert that the monastery performed the functions of a bank and that this institution as a main centre of trade was seen as a better alternative is not the same as claiming that the economic practices in pre-modern Tibet were morally sound or just (in particular from the point of view of the Western discourse on morality). However, it does contradict the notion that the reason a large part of the economic power was placed in the hands of the monasteries was due to the blind faith of the uneducated Tibetans, as certain apologists of the PRC's policies toward Tibet would have it.[907]

Tibetans, like many peoples across the world, were – and are – pragmatists at heart. However, as has been demonstrated again and again, pragmatism and religiosity are not mutually exclusive. This is not to say that the opposite is true either. While there are obvious parallels, a distinct difference between Buddhist (monastic) agents in financial issues and their medieval Christian counterparts is that among the latter:

[904] Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 359, n. 73. This remark pertains not just to China but also to India.
[905] Ekvall, 1964: 198.
[906] As some of the examples I have given throughout this study suggest, the aristocracy and the monastic institutions cannot comfortably be seen as separate agents, although the exact nature of this relationship remains opaque. This lacuna in scholarship is in need of further research.
[907] e.g. Parenti, 2003. For an overview of these types of sources see Powers, 2004.

> The price of money, like its analogue, the price of goods, was persistently treated by medieval writers as an ethical issue – they perceived justice rather than efficiency as an appropriate goal of economic policy.[908]

It has been argued that this Christian ideology concerning finance (which includes usury) halted or delayed the development of 'a new economic system'.[909]

The fact that Buddhist monks were committed to certain shared rules as well as to the rule of law, coupled with the fact that monasteries were perceived to be, as well as *devised* to be, stable institutions in what was often a largely unstable political setting, meant that the monastery's management of the local economy was, in the mind's eye of the Tibetans, not undesirable.[910] The question whether 'the openness of the religious economic enterprises [..] demonstrates that this type of Buddhist religious system might have been quite capable of serving a modern economy'[911] is a mere thought exercise and not relevant to the current discussion.

Challenging the Paradox of Monastic Property

While it has been argued that 'profit taking was perfectly compatible with Buddhist philosophy,'[912] the combination of wealth accumulation and religious practice is more often than not seen as a paradox. Weber, for example, notes that:

> The paradox of all rational asceticism, which in an identical manner has made monks in all ages stumble, is that rational asceticism itself has created the very wealth it rejected. Temples and monasteries have everywhere become the very loci of all rational economies.[913]

In reflection on the contemporary economic practices of monasteries in Amdo, Caple comments: 'Yet, the idea that monasteries must improve material conditions and even compete with the economic standards of secular life is in tension with the ideal of the "simple monk".' This increasing material well-being of monks and their engagement with modern life is then seen in contemporary narratives as an element of moral decline.[914] Here it is important to realize that, even though some monks maintain the attitude that hardship is good practice,[915] historically, monks' living standards were on average higher than those of ordinary lay-people.

Whereas hardship among monks was occasionally espoused, large-scale destitution was never encouraged. Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las makes the link between poverty and discipline. He describes that in the time between the passing of the Fifth Dalai Lama up until 1958, certain monasteries that had autonomy (*bdag dbang*), religious estates, workers and high (government) wages (*phogs*) were successful in keeping up the monk-numbers and even in increasing them manifold, whereas the monasteries that relied on just wages and alms-begging (*phogs dang bsod*

[908] Ekelund (et al.), 1996: 116.
[909] Le Goff, 1988: 69.
[910] This is of course not dissimilar to the role of the Christian and the Church monasteries in medieval Europe. See for example Ekelund (et al.), 1996: 175: 'The Church played a critical role in economic development by providing vital human and financial capital.'
[911] Michael, 1982: 50.
[912] Wiley, 1986: 9
[913] Weber, 1978 [1922]: 586.
[914] Caple, 2011: 261.
[915] Dreyfus, 2003: 74.

snyoms tsam) saw their numbers drop no matter what they did. This, Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las asserts, resulted in the monks who were housed there not being able to keep the religious discipline properly.[916]

Despite perceived dichotomies, both in terms of ideology and practice, neither Tibetan monasteries nor Tibetan monks ever rejected wealth *an sich*. This is entirely in line with the Vinaya they adopted. The common overall principle is the nonattachment to wealth, which can be found in most Buddhist traditions.[917] Although there might seem to be some possibility of a conflict between rules on not having property beyond the stipulated items (on which, even in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* itself, the rules seem quite flexible) and the prohibition to refuse donations given to the Sangha (which would mean to deny the layman the accumulation of merit),[918] it can be gleaned from the examples of the bca' yig cited above that concerns about not wasting the offerings given by the faithful and ensuring that they are used in the right way may have taken precedence over an insistence on individual monks living a simple and sober life.

In many ways, the pivotal role of the Tibetan monastery in commercial enterprise was justified in terms of the Vinaya. Additionally, there are also various indications that ordinary people preferred doing business with monks and monasteries on account of the merit involved and the (financial) stability of the monastic institution. Walsh argues that, in medieval China, merit was the most powerful material religio-economic commodity monks produced and disseminated.[919] In the context of pre-modern Tibet, it seems, stability vies with merit for being the most formidable monastic 'product'.

This chapter on monastic economy has attempted to demonstrate the attitudes of monasteries and monks toward business, debts, donations, and expenditures. A recurrent leitmotif is the separation between the individual and the communal. The Sangha, as a corporation, knows hardly any restrictions when it comes to accruing wealth, whereas the spending of that very wealth is deemed more problematic. One could argue that Tibetan monasteries' economic policies were thus motivated by the freedoms *and* limitations that were originally informed by the Indian Vinaya, while they were also heavily coloured by the political situations, the Zeitgeist, and geographical limitations. It needs to be noted here that for practical purposes economic policy has been – at least nominally – separated from social policy.

Ultimately speaking, however, economic policy and social policy amount to the same thing.[920] This may even be extended to religious policy: Gernet notes that there were two types of relationships between the lay-people and the monastery in medieval Buddhist China: one was religious and the other economic. He argues that people did not see these relationships to differ radically from each other.[921] Bearing

[916] *Dung dkar gsung rtsom*: 78: *chos khrims gtsang ma srung mkhan zhig yong thub kyi med pa de red/*
[917] On this issue, see Ornatowski, 1996.
[918] This is what Tambiah called the double negation of reciprocity. Tambiah, 1970: 213. For its occurrence in the Vinaya see Schopen, 1995b: 107. According to the Vinaya, monks are not only to accept whatever they are given, they are also to *use* what they are given (meaning that they cannot trade or sell it). This latter stipulation is apparently disregarded by the authors of certain bca' yig. According to the earlier cited instance from the monastic guidelines for Drepung monastery, for example, monks were required to sell on the gift horses that they were not meant to own; see *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 314.
[919] Walsh, 2010: 14.
[920] This argument is compellingly made in Graeber, 2011: 56 et seq.
[921] Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 247.

this in mind, it is the social and religious policies executed by the monasteries – in particular those that concerned lay-people – to which I now turn.

7. RELATIONS WITH THE LAITY: THE ROLES OF THE MONASTERY IN SOCIETY

Introduction

[..] *put homeleavers first and householders after*.[922]

Monastics throughout the ages – Buddhist and otherwise – have sought to actively distinguish and distance themselves from the lay population; in this respect one can say, that monkhood is 'an alternative culture'.[923] At the same time, one can also safely say that the high percentage of the male population devoted to monastic life made it certain that an overwhelming majority of families in Tibetan society was linked to the monastery as a social group and an institution, making lay-people socially and emotionally involved in the support and perpetuation of the monastery.[924] This is reiterated by Gyatso, who comments: 'So thoroughly are the monks and the idea of monk-hood integrated into the wider society that they are not seen as a separate block, constantly vying with the lay authorities.'[925] Some see the presence of the large number of monks in Tibet as due to the fact that they were perceived to be in a better position to accumulate merit than the laity. According to Kapstein, they were then – by extension – seen to contribute to the merit of society as a whole.[926]

Many monastic guidelines demonstrate great concern for the general standing and reputation that the monks enjoyed in the wider society.[927] The reasoning often given for creating certain rules is that if the monks would not behave properly the lay-people would lose faith in the community of monks and thereby in the Sangha, one of the Three Jewels. Similar arguments are common in Vinayic literature. Due to the position of political, judicial and economic power maintained by the larger monasteries in pre-modern Tibet, the relationships between the donor and the recipient, between the lay-person and the monk was multi-layered and varied from time to time and place to place. By reading the bca' yig one can get a glimpse of the balancing act that took place between monks and lay-society: all had happiness, stability, and continuity as shared goals. The methods to achieve these goals, however, may have differed.

Miller, giving a sociological perspective of Tibetan monasticism, stresses the interrelatedness of the Tibetan monasteries. Commenting on all of Tibet, she paints a picture of

> [a]n area rent by political divisions, sectarianism, and regional conflicts, where some isolated monasteries are independent and powerful and the vast majority of monastics must depend either on the favor of the lay authorities or on the poverty, backwardness, and superstition of the population.[928]

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[922] Dōgen, Leighton, and Okumura, 1996: 159.
[923] Goldstein, 2009: 3.
[924] Ekvall, 1959/60: 217.
[925] Gyatso, 2003: 239, 40.
[926] Kapstein, 2004: 233, 4.
[927] This is in parallel with 'the preoccupation of the compilers of the Buddhist *Vinaya*s with their public image.' See Schopen, 2006: 243. Put in another way, Bailey and Mabbett remark that 'Sensitivity about lay-monk relations is one of the fundamental parameters of the Vinaya.' Bailey and Mabbett, 2006: 181.
[928] B. Miller, 1961: 199.

Although it is true that there were great divergences between the 'landed monasteries' and the landless ones, it cannot be said that the vast majority of monasteries had no say whatsoever in their own lot, as Miller seems to suggest. At the same time, recent scholarship on more peripheral Tibetan Buddhist communities demonstrates that the paradigm of the powerful monastery was by no means all-pervasive.[929] Indeed, the monasteries that were actually powerful and reasonably independent were few. Monasteries that had to negotiate power and services were the norm. Numerically, monastic institutions that stood in the service of the direct community were in the majority. This means that also in 'theocratic' Tibet, just like in other Buddhist countries, more often than not 'the focus of the structure of village life' was the relation between the monastic community and the village population.[930] This relationship was not without tensions.

Many bca' yig contain – implicitly or explicitly – views on the presence of lay-people. A balance had to be struck with regard to the laity's access to the physical space of the monastery. That the monastic guidelines often place restrictions on lay-people entering the monastic compound is indicative of the societal role of the monastery. Related to this is that pastoral services – in the West associated with the duties of ordained members of organized religions – were not necessarily part of the responsibilities of the monks or the monastic institution. Closely connected to the role of the Sangha in society is the issue of identity, a decisive factor when it comes to understanding societal interactions.

Monastic Identity and Monastic Boundaries

Social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat.[931]

Representing oneself as 'other' appears to be essential for the survival of monastic Buddhism. It is well known that monks, from the time of the Buddha onwards, actively distinguished themselves from lay-people. Goldstein and Tsarong make a strict distinction between the identities of lay-people and the clergy:

> Lay people existed to serve monasticism by producing sons and surplus. Tibetan monasticism, therefore, attempts to socialize recruits into an alternative set of norms, values and standards for perceiving and evaluating the world: a cultural template in which love, desire, and wealth were renounced as the source of misery and suffering.[932]

One can wonder whether there is such an 'alternative set of norms' and to what extent it differed from that of lay-people. Furthermore, to present lay-people as merely existing to be of service to the monkhood is to deny the complex interactions that took place. While there may or may not have been an alternative set of norms, there indeed was an alternative set of *rules* that monks had to abide by.

Certain rules in the Vinaya can be explained on the basis of their intention to distinguish the Sangha from the lay-community. These are, for example, not moving

[929] e.g. Ramble, 2008; Hovden, 2013; Ortner, 1989.
[930] Bechert, 1984: 274.
[931] Bourdieu, 1984: 479.
[932] Goldstein and Tsarong, 1985: 17.

one's arms back and forth while walking and not eating noisily.[933] Developing a separate identity from lay-people was essential for the continuation of the Sangha as a separate entity. The monastic guidelines can be read as expressions of this distinct identity, this *esprit de corps*. They serve to remind monks of their behaviour: to adhere to a relatively strict code of conduct, to remain celibate and to abstain from drinking alcohol. They make monks mindful of their attire: one was not to wear lay clothing, and emphasis on the correct manner of wearing the robes features throughout the texts. The texts also emphasize the importance of the kind of daily activities acceptable for monks, namely, to perform religious ceremonies, to study, and to recite prayers and texts as opposed to 'worldly' activities such as farming.[934]

One of the other ways to keep the Sangha from becoming indistinguishable from the laity was to impose restrictions on the physical movements of monks and lay-people alike.[935] As indicated in the Introduction, most monastic compounds had clearly delineated physical boundaries.[936] The bca' yig comment regularly on both monks and laity crossing lines. For the monks, this often had to do with asking permission to leave the monastery's premises, whereas for lay-people entry was in some cases not given at all. The monastic guidelines for Mindröl ling acknowledge that monks sometimes had to leave the compound, but that they could only go provided they had gained permission and were accompanied by another monk:

> Monks are not allowed to go outside of the boundary markers without permission, however important their reason is. In short, if one does need to go out, by way of exception, such as in order to roast and grind [barley], one is not to go without another monk (*khrims su grogs med par*).[937] If one does go to town without company, one needs to offer a butterlamp of seven *nyag*, and if one has crossed the boundaries one offers a butterlamp of three *nyag*, and depending on the situation one should make somewhere between twenty and a hundred prostrations, making one's fault (*nyes pa*) public in the assembly.[938]

The disciplinarian was the one to grant the permission and to punish those who left without authorization. It appears that these regulations were deemed necessary to restrict inappropriate interaction between lay-people and monks. In a similar way, a Sri Lankan *katikāvata* from the 12th century forbids not the exit of the monastery, but the entry to the village between dusk and dawn, unless it was to help one's parents and widowed sisters or in the case of needing to get medical help for a fellow

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[933] For rules on eating see for example: Pachow, 2000 [1955]: 59.

[934] Accordingly, in an ideal Buddhist world, 'there are two "occupations" for a monk: meditation and recitation'. See Schopen, 2006: 241.

[935] This is a feature found throughout the monastic Buddhist world. For example, whereas some of the rules in the 17th century Qing Code (*Da Qing lü* 大清律) enforced the specific religious rules, 'others were intended to distance the sangha from ordinary people.' Dicks, 2014: 237.

[936] For the importance of these boundaries in Pāli Buddhism see Kieffer-Pülz, 2011.

[937] The word *khrims grogs* is frequently mentioned in similar discussions. The 13th century Vinaya commentator mTsho sna ba shes rab bzang po explains that this is a friend who prevents one from committing a *pārājika*, who is not non-human, mute, stupid, insane, a hermaphrodite, or blind. See Jam mgon kong sprul and International Translation Committee, 2003: 378, n. 133. In practice, however, a *khrims grogs* was invariably simply a monk of reasonably good standing.

[938] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 279: *dge 'dun rnams kyang gnang ba ma thob par/ mtho mtshams kyi phyir dgos don ji ltar che yang mi 'gro/ mdor na rngo 'thag sogs dmigs bsal gyi 'gro dgos la yang khrims grogs med par 'gro sa med/ gal te khrims grogs med par grong rgyu byas na mar nyag bdun gyi mar me/ mtho mtshams 'das par nyag gsum gyi mar me 'bul zhing tshogs su nyes pa bsgrags pa'i phyag brgya nas nyi shu'i bar skabs dang sbyar/*

monk.[939] The rules in Tibetan monasteries were tightened during the yearly retreats, when any movement (and thus social interaction) was to be limited, even between monk residencies.[940]

The laity's movement across the monasteries' boundary markers was also regularly restricted. A bca' yig for the Bon Menri monastery states that no lay-people could enter the monastery except those who served the monastic estate (*bla brang*) and those who looked after the animals or brought in the fire-wood.[941] This indicates that lay-workers were employed at the monastery but also that this monastery was not seen to have a direct 'pastoral' function, and as was suggested earlier this was the case for Tibetan monasteries in general. The monastic guidelines of some other monasteries show that lay-people were welcome, provided that their purpose was religious. This was particularly the case when women visitors were involved.[942] Other monasteries had to make rules in order to avoid 'exploitation' by lay-people posing as pilgrims:

> From the end of summer until the beginning of winter, only those pilgrims (*skor ba byed mkhan*) who take refuge without their sheep and goats are allowed to stay in the surroundings of the monastery: not even a single evil lay-person is allowed to stay. They need to be expelled either from the Srib brag rdzong or from the Brag mchu, whichever is more convenient.[943]

The above cited guidelines were written in the late 19th or early 20th century for Pelyul darthang monastery in Amdo, which was situated in a nomadic area. It seems likely that in the past lay-people had been using their visit to the monastery as a pretext to graze their animals on its pastures, which explains why in the autumn people were only allowed to visit without their goats and sheep.

The Jesuit missionary de Andrade, who travelled around the Guge kingdom (Western Tibet) in 1626, also notes that common people did not tend to frequent the temples, which were nearly always closed. He writes that they would visit these places only on two days of the year to attend religious festivals.[944] The above examples serve to point out that in an ideal monastic world contact between lay-people and the Sangha was to be restricted. We know, however, that not all monasteries were created equal. Some monasteries had a function that could be compared to that of Christian churches that encourage believers to visit, whereas others limited contact with the outside world. Currently, certain monasteries encourage pilgrimage, resulting in lay-people passing through the premises, while others strongly discourage or even forbid it.[945] The bca' yig also record such rules, allowing us to identify the kind of monasteries that restricted contact with lay-people.

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[939] Wickremasinghe, 1928: 278.
[940] A lengthy discussion on behaviour and movement during the summer and winter retreats is found in Tsongkhapa's *Byams pa gling bca' yig*: 250b-1a.
[941] Cech, 1988: 75.
[942] The bca' yig are informative regarding monastic contact with women. As the topic of gender is beyond the scope of this study, it is not discussed here: I intend to discuss this in the near future.
[943] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 194: *dbyar ru rdzogs nas bzung dgun du slebs pa'i bar der skor ba byed mkhan skyabs gnas pa ra lug tsam yang med pa lta bu yin na ma gtogs dgon gyi nye 'khor thad dang yan man gang la yang khyim ngan gcig tsam 'jog mi chog pas srib brag rdzong man dang brag mchu man gang bder 'bud dgos/*
[944] Wessels, 1924: 74.
[945] While limiting movements in monastic compounds in more densely populated areas was of course not always feasible or even desired, we can see the often unrestricted access for the Tibetan laity to most monasteries today in both the PRC and exile communities as a significant development.

Unlike the function of the (modern) Christian churches then, the Tibetan monasteries (and their temples) were not places where people in existential need were expected to seek refuge. As demonstrated below, interaction was usually only encouraged for religious purpose and services.

Generosity and Charity

Certainly the most commented upon relationship between the Sangha and the laity is that of recipient and donor of offerings, respectively. In this interaction, the monks are assigned a passive role, as Strenski – in commenting on Theravāda Buddhist giving – remarks: 'ritual giving sits squarely in the centre of the relation between the Sangha and lay society. The monks are always receivers, the laity always givers.'[946] Similarly, to speak with the words of Tambiah, the clergy is 'the paradigm of non-reciprocity.'[947] This type of generosity is well-supported in Buddhist doctrine and takes up a prominent position in most Buddhist cultures. Its prominence has had, according to some scholars, important repercussions for Buddhist societies. For Spiro, writing on Burma, the fact that all acts of generosity were giving to the monks meant that 'nonreligious charity' was not supported, because it was seen as less meritorious. He argues that this translated to less social action, and that this phenomenon was shared with other Theravāda countries.[948]

The phenomenon of giving to the Sangha then could be seen as resulting in less social action on the part of the laity, but what were the monks expected to do with what they received? Christian clergy is often reported to have used its resources to aid those in need. Taken on the whole, this is less apparent among Buddhist monks,[949] and this has, in part, to do with the Vinaya rules. First of all, a monk was meant to use what he was given, even when it was of no direct use to the Sangha. Only when the gift is used does the act of giving generate merit for its donor. For the monks, accepting offerings was not merely a privilege, it was a duty, as Schopen comments on the role of the Sangha as portrayed in the Vinaya: 'A monk here is one who accepts gifts so others can make merit, and he is *obligated* to do so by the authority of the Buddha.'[950] In fact, the monks – according to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* – were also under the obligation to *use* what was given to them: this was 'their obligation to make merit for their donors.'[951] In the Tibetan context, we see for example, that the Zha lu master Blo gsal bstan skyong (b. 1804) states that he has never let the offerings given by others go to waste. He does not specify, however, how he has gone about this.[952] Secondly, only members of the Sangha were meant to use the offerings, and no one else. The Buddha is reported to have said: 'Monks, you must not give to others what was given to you for your own use.'[953]

Thus, the Sangha was obliged to accept most offerings, to use what it was given, and it could not pass on these gifts to the laity. Tensions, ensuing from these rules regarding charity, can be perceived throughout the Buddhist world. Not being able to refuse a gift could be a reason or justification, for example, for monasteries

[946] Strenski, 1983: 470.
[947] Tambiah, 1970: 68.
[948] Spiro, 1971: 465.
[949] As will be indicated below, there are many exceptions to this generalization.
[950] Schopen, 1996a: 115 (italics added). For more on how to handle donations in the Indian commentarial traditions, see Silk, 2002: 129-83.
[951] Schopen, 1996a: 112.
[952] *gzhan gyis byin ba'i dad rdzas chud zos su ma song ba*. See Wood, 2013: 48.
[953] Schopen, 1995b: 108, n. 20.

coming to own lands and even people. While slavery, in the most common sense of the word, was not a feature of Tibetan society, it did occur that a rich donor 'gave' people to a monastery. An example of this is the gift of eighty Amdo families to Labrang monastery in 1712 by the Mongolian prince Erdeni Jinong.[954] Even though the primary sources may state that 'families were donated,' this act sounds more 'inhumane' than it actually was. In practical terms, this simply meant that the tax, in labour and in kind, which the donor previously received from a number of families, would from then on be paid to the monastery. There is unlikely to have been any noticeable change in the circumstances of those so 'gifted': they were not displaced, nor was there any significant upheaval of the social structure of these communities. While the bca' yig do not tend to comment on such transactions, the above outlined issues regarding charity are regularly discussed.

Charity for Lay-people

The beggar beside the road means nothing to the monk.[955]

Spencer Chapman, who penned the line above, visited Tibet in the 1930s and was critical of the position of monks there. However, it was not just Tibetan monastics who were thought not to give to beggars.[956] In China, during roughly the same period, lay-beggars were not only kept out of the monastery, but were also refused food. The rationale that Welch's informants gave for this is that monks were meant to be the receivers and not the givers of charity.[957] Similar arguments are made in the Tibetan monastic guidelines. One such text, written in 1820 for the whole of Sera monastery by the then-regent of Tibet, Tshe smon gling pa ngag dbang 'jam dpal tshul khrims, contains a justification for the prohibition on monks allowing entry to beggars or to feed them:

> If there are beggar-wanderers – male or female vagabonds – in the monastery asking for food, quickly protect the compound and turn them out. Particularly when the unceasing flow of communal tea and monastic tea is given to those who are not ordained, there is no difference with giving them boiling molten iron. For that reason leftovers need to be thrown away.[958]

Here the author implies that by giving beggars food intended for the monk-population one would be doing them a disservice. This is because karmically speaking they would be worse off. The reference to molten iron undoubtedly refers to the results one is said to experience in one of the hells as retribution to using the Sangha's possessions. The citation from the *Vinayavibhaṅga* often given elsewhere does not refer to boiling molten iron (*khro chu 'khol ma*) *per se* but to blazing iron balls:

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[954] Nietupski, 2011: 20.

[955] Spencer Chapman, 1984 [1938]: 182.

[956] By contrast, Khedrup describes the Tibetan 'fighting' monks (**ldab ldob*) and their proclivity for giving: '[..] they were characterized not only by generosity in their own group, but often by light-hearted, almost reckless charity to those in great material need, the beggars and the poor.' See Khedrup, Richardson and Skorupski, 1986: 241.

[957] Welch, 1967: 16.

[958] *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 185: *dgon nang du sprang chas kyi mi yan/ pho yan mo yan lto slong ba byung na 'phral du gling srung pas phyir 'don/ mang ja grwa ja sogs kyi chu kha ma mnyam pa/ lhag rab tu ma byung ba'i rigs la sbyin gtong sogs byas na khro chu 'khol ma sbyin pa dang khyad par med pas lhag rol rnams 'pho dgos pa yin/*

> It is preferable for one who does not have proper vows [or] whose discipline is faulty to eat iron balls that are ablaze with fire than to eat the alms from [people] in the vicinity.[959]

This citation is more regularly used, however, to refer to monks with faulty discipline making use of the monastery's amenities (and by extension of the laity's donations). Another bca' yig written for sTag brag monastery in 1947 gives exactly the same citation in relation to monks whose vows are not pure, but then goes on to state:

> But, as it is worse if householders partake of the Sangha's food, it would be better not to give them anything. However, the ones who work for the Sangha and the like need to be given tea and soup. There is permission for at most a daily morning tea and a tea and soup at noon. The managerial committee (*spyi so*) is to receive the more important sponsors appropriately but is not to do anything that leads to faith in the Sangha becoming perverted.[960]

Thus, according to this text, the random giving of food to the laity should be avoided, although qualified exceptions are made for workers[961] and significant sponsors.[962] There is the suggestion here that if the benefactors would learn about lay-people receiving food from the monks they would not be pleased. In a rather similar way, the Fifth Dalai Lama also writes of the problem of the wrong people receiving donations in Drepung monastery:

> These days it is increasingly the habit of the monastic houses or the teachers, when they have obtained their share of allowances (*za sgo*), to give handouts to all kinds of lowly drifters (*mi khyams khungs med*). Even the benefactors were dismayed at this, namely that the communal tea (*mang ja*) and the donations (*'gyed*) would not get to each of the colleges and that they would go unrecorded. This is a very great wrong amounting to depriving the general Sangha of income.[963]

The set phrase that the Fifth Dalai Lama uses here, namely: 'to deprive the general Sangha of income' (*spyi'i dge 'dun gyi 'du sgo 'phrogs pa*), is one of the five secondary acts of immediate consequence (*nye ba'i mtshams med lnga*).[964] This served to highlight the gravity of the matter: it appears that monks in Drepung were giving away their donations rather randomly. This seems to have angered the donors,

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[959] This quotation is given by the Fifth Dalai Lama in his bca' yig for Drepung. *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 299: *lung rnam'byed du/ lcags gong me lce 'bar ba dag/zos par gyur pa mchog yin gyi/ tshul 'chal yang dag mi sdom pas/ yul 'khor bsod snyoms za ba min/* Also see Jansen, 2013a: 116. This same quotation is also found in guidelines for Namgyel dratshang written by the same author, see *rNam rgyal grwa tshang bca' yig*: 66, 7.

[960] *sTag brag dgon pa bca' yig*: 631: *khyim pas dge 'dun gyi zas la spyad na nyes pa che bar gsungs pas/ de rigs la ma byin pa legs kyang dge 'dun gyi las byed sogs la ja thug ster dgos mang stabs nyin re bzhin gyi zhog jar nyin gang gi ja thug gnang ba zhu/ spyi so nas sbyin bdag gal cher bab mtshungs sne len byas te dge 'dun la dad log 'gro ba'i rigs ma byed/*

[961] On this more is said below.

[962] The exemption of this latter category is found in *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 409.

[963] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 304: *dus phyis nye phyogs che zhing khams tshan dang dge rgan ci rigs kyis za sgo gtso bor bton nas mi khyams khungs med mtha' dag la bdag rkyen sprad gshis/ sbyin bdag rnams kyang ha las te mang ja dang 'gyed so so'i grwa tshang la mi bsgyur tho med yong yod 'dug pa/ dge 'dun spyi'i 'du sgo 'phrogs pa'i gnod tshabs shin tu che ba 'dug pa* [..]

[964] *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 961; also see Silk, 2007: 265.

but it also went against certain rules. Whereas in the previous example the direct 'karmic' consequences of giving away donations to people who do not deserve them are suffered by the recipients of the donation, (the beggars), in this instance the (presumably monk-) suppliers of the food to the lowly drifters bear the karmic brunt of 'depriving the Sangha of income.'

More in line with the rules for Sera monastery, the Fifth Dalai Lama also warns that if the monastic community had too much tea and soup, the leftovers needed to be made into fodder and nothing else.[965] Presumably this means that the food scraps could not be given (or worse: sold) to beggars and other needy people in the surroundings. Again, the reason for this restriction is likely to be a 'Vinayic' one: what is intended for the Sangha should not end up in the hands of 'undeserving' lay-people.

Interestingly, this is not entirely in line with the view expressed by Tsongkhapa, one of whose monastic guidelines is paraphrased by the author of the above-cited text.[966] In his bca' yig for Jampa ling monastery, probably written in 1417 (*bya lo*), Tsongkhapa takes a clear stance on the issue of redistributing goods beyond the monastic community. He instructs the monks not to let beggars and people who have come to do petty trade into the monastic compounds, but instead to leave them waiting at the boundary-marker (*mtshams*). Food (*kha zas*) could then be given to them there by an *upāsaka* (*dge bsnyen*).[967] A later bca' yig, written in 1943 by the sTag brag regent, for Kong stod dung dkar monastery, echoes Tsongkhapa's ruling. It says: 'Dogs and beggars are not to be let in the monastic compound, but food and drink is to be given outside to individuals.'[968] The bca' yig for Mindröl ling from 1698 also demonstrates close parallels to Tsongkhapa's guidelines: vagabonds (*mi yan*) and beggars should not be allowed in the monastery grounds but instead should be given food outside the gate.[969] Elsewhere in the text, however, it mentions that the Sangha's gifts should not be distributed to the laity:

> It is said that the gifts for the Sangha are not to be given to lay-people. Therefore, during the communal tea-round (*mang ja*), one is not allowed to give anything away without permission from the disciplinarian.[970]

It is clear that a balance had to be struck between keeping to the rules of the Vinaya, the maintenance of the monastery, and the care for other beings. For a monastery to be excessively generous would send out the wrong message and attract unwanted elements, which in turn would put off existing or potential donors. In addition, we can see the importance attached to maintaining a strict separation between the beggars and the monks: for them to mix would upset the equilibrium of the religious community. An 11th century bca' yig for a community consisting of both monk and lay- tantric

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[965] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 310: *ja thug kyang mang skyon gyis dge 'dun rnams kyis bzhes mi thub cing/ snod dpyad sogs la gzan pa las spros pa'i dgos pa gzhan mi 'dug gshis/*

[966] ibid.: 319-20.

[967] *Byams pa gling bca' yig*: 251a: *rtsa shing la sogs pa'i yo byad phran tshegs 'tshong ba dang/ sprang po gling gseb tu mi btang zhing gal te btang na chad pa gong bzhin byed par bcad cing kha zas dge bsnyen gyis bsdus nas mtshams kyi phyi rol tu skyel bar bcad/*

[968] *Kong stod dung dkar dgon bca' yig*: 588: *khyi dang sprang po gling gseb tu mi gtong zhing/ gang zag gi bza' btung phyi rol du ster/*

[969] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 286: *mi yan dang sprang bo gling gseb tu mi gtong zhing kha zas sgo'i phyi rol du ster/*

[970] ibid.: 283, 4: *dge 'dun gyi rnyed pa khyim pa la mi sbyin par gsungs pa'i mtshon byed tsam la mang jar dge bskos kyis gnang ba ma zhus par mi byin/*

practitioners gives very specific instructions on how to treat the destitute, while also keeping them at a distance:

> If there are people who are poor, who out of destitution look for food and things, or if persons are not able to rid themselves of suffering,[971] then all should give [them something]. They should be treated like outsiders without [further] contempt or respect, but they should not be allowed into the community (*dkyil 'khor*, S. *maṇḍala*). They should be considered as mere 'outsider friends' (*phyi rol gyi grogs*).[972]

From the examples given above we can see that there clearly existed different ways to deal with the problem of helping those in need, while keeping to Vinaya rules (where applicable) and maintaining an autonomous community. The perhaps expected tension between the Vinayic limitations on monks giving and the 'universal' Buddhist values of love and compassion and giving (*sbyin pa*, S. *dāna*) as the first of the six *pāramitā*s are nowhere discussed in the texts, but the above passages show that giving to the needy was an issue that demanded regulation, implying that monks showed an inclination towards charity and that this occasionally posed challenges.[973]

The Employment of Lay-people and Corvée Duty

Related to the act of giving to the laity is the employment of lay-people by monks. Not just accepting help from the laity but remunerating or compensating them for their help was common in most Buddhist monastic societies. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* shows that those who worked for the monks were given food and clothing and that sick workers were to be given food, clothing, and medical attention.[974] However, it should also be mentioned that more generally 'Buddhist monastic institutions almost certainly did employ forced labor, and very probably also slave labor.'[975] In the Tibetan context, the question of whether the system in which certain monasteries could order people of the surrounding areas to perform corvée (*'u lag*) for them constituted forced labour is a contentious issue. It is clear, however, that at least during the first half of the 20th century the monasteries employed lay-people as staff,[976] but called other lay-people in only at special occasions. An example of this is

[971] Here I read *sme ba* as *smre ba*.
[972] *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 400: *gal te la la dag phongs pas zas nor la sogs pa'i skyo bas 'tshol zhing/ gang zag sme ba spong mi nus pa byung na ni kun gyis gnang bar bya ste sgro skur med par phyi rol pa tsam du bzhag ste dkyil 'khor du 'jug par mi gnang ngo/ phyi rol gyi grogs tsam ni bya'o/*
[973] Monks giving to lay-people undoubtedly occurs in most Buddhist countries. In recent times in Thailand, the more prominent monks also occasionally help out their poorer relations by giving them money. See Bunnag, 1973: 120. Gernet, in considering earlier Chinese Buddhist communities, detects a development, with monks first being the recipient, and then becoming the donors, as there were a number of documents recording the monastics' generosity to the sick and the poor. See Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 218, 9. One wonders, however, whether there was ever truly a 'development' as such or whether this dual role of recipient and donor always existed synchronously, as equally, monks and nuns as the donors of religious items are well attested in early material culture in India.
[974] Schopen, 1994b: 158.
[975] Silk, 1999: 368.
[976] This is witnessed by Khedrup, who notes that in Sera monastery 'the tea was made in kitchens where the lay servants worked. They were a wild and often dishonest lot and stole as much of the supplies as they could.' Khedrup, Richardson and Skorupski, 1986: 79.

given by a corvée-worker (*'u lag pa*)[977] of Dar rgyas gling monastery in Central Tibet who recalls her corvée duty:[978] 'In the Fifth Month all of us were called to the Dar gling monastery and fed there for three days. We would be given whatever offering the monks received at that time.' On other occasions, when working for the monastery, people would be provided with meals.[979] The elderly monk Blo bzang don grub of Spituk monastery in Ladakh describes the labour-relations with the local people, then and now:

> The people had to perform corvée services (*'u lag*) and worked the many fields the monastery owned. Before, the sponsors gave the workers a salary (*gla cha*) on behalf of the monastic estate (*mchod gzhis*). Also when repairs had to be done or if there was another major work one could call on the people to help, and they would come by rote. If it was your turn you could pay someone to be your replacement. Nowadays, if you do not pay them they will not come. The fields are still there but now the monastery pays the people who work on them.[980]

Both the bca' yig and eyewitness accounts confirm that, in many cases, the 'compulsory labour' was regularly remunerated to a certain extent. Nornang notes that the managerial office called the *gnyer tshang* was obliged to provide one bowl of soup (*thug pa*) and three rounds of tea or chang per day at times when lay-people came to perform corvée for the monastery of Dwags po bshad grub gling.[981] The provision of alcohol 'as compensation' to the workers at the monastery is also attested in the Fifth Dalai Lama's bca' yig for Gongra ngesang dorje ling. The section stipulates that the use of alcohol is only permitted for ritual purposes and then only in very small amounts but that permission should be asked when it is used as a base for medicine (*sman rta*) or for masonry or construction work (*mkhar las*).[982] Apparently construction work was generally paid for with alcohol.[983] Masonry and construction in particular were jobs that, ideally, were handled by laymen and women.[984] In Sakya in the first half of the 20th century, for example, when a considerable part of the monastery collapsed, the then *khri chen* wanted to levy labour from the subjects to restore it.[985]

Tsongkhapa forbids monks from initiating construction work and recommends that they ask the permission of the disciplinarian or the manager (*zhal ta ba*) if an urgent need for it were to occurr.[986] This is not to say that all monasteries were in a position to hand such jobs over to the local population, as some institutions did not have the necessary economic infrastructure. The early 20th century bca' yig for Pelyul

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[977] She explains the origins for this status: 'Tradition said that we were descendants from former monks who had married and had been made to render *'u lag* service for the maintenance of the monastery.' Dhondub and the Information Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama, 1978: ii.

[978] This duty is explained as 'a *khral* or tax in the form of compulsory labour' and as something 'not paid for, as it was seen as a sort of payment for the personally owned land that had been given to them by the monastery.' See ibid.: i, ii.

[979] ibid.: ii, iii.

[980] Personal communication with Blo bzang don grub, Spituk, August 2012.

[981] Nornang, 1990: 257.

[982] *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 226: *nad pa'i sman rta dang mkhar las sogs la dmigs bsal gyis len dgos byung na gnang ba zhu*/

[983] I have witnessed that in some areas of Central Tibet, this is, tragically, still common practice.

[984] For more references to this phenomenon see the sections below.

[985] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 200.

[986] *Byams pa gling bca' yig*: 251b, 2a.

darthang monastery in Amdo for example demonstrates that monks did many things themselves:

> One only gets permission to [not wear] one's robes (*gzan sham*) when the individual *grwa tshang*s need to have work done, such as getting earth to seal the roofs, painting, and making the floor.[987]

It appears that compulsory labour was a feature of politically powerful monasteries and their branches and that at other places – particularly in the monasteries in Nepal – monks either did most types of work (including farming) themselves or the works were undertaken as a (non-corvée) lay community effort.[988] While clearly corvée duty was by no means voluntary, we cannot know whether lay-people deemed the remuneration they received to be sufficient. Nietupski notes that among the communities surrounding Labrang monastery in the 18th century: 'Many, even most sources reported that mandatory labor was not oppressive, simply a fact of community life.' It is furthermore suggested that this mandatory labour was 'broadly publicized as a religious merit-generating activity.'[989] A parallel to this sentiment is given by Welch, who writes that in pre-communist China, laymen who worked in the monastery were all fed by the monastery and sometimes accepted wages lower than the going rate, on account of the merit gained. The difference here is of course the fact that in China compulsory service to the monastery was not in place at that time. When lay-people volunteered to work for the monastery, the phrase used was 'to ask for happiness' (*qiu fu* 求福).[990]

Dargyay reports on the situation of lay-people who lived at a monastic estate (*mchod gzhis*) in Central Tibet in the first half of the 20th century and notes that their behaviour toward the estate was 'to a great extent unemotional, objective and practical' and that 'the submissive demeanour worn by subjects of the nobility was strange to them.' She notes that relationships were cordial toward the individual monks, 'bearers of the Buddhist religion', but that the administration of the monastic estate was viewed sceptically.[991] There is no mention of lay-people viewing their work for the monastery as religiously gratifying, however. Blo bzang don grub describes the relationship in the context of duties toward the monastery more in terms of *quid pro quo*:

> The relations between the people and the monastery have always been very good. They would work for the monastery and the monks would do religious services (*zhabs rten*) for them. These days if there is a special job to be done they do come and help, this is on religious festival days (*dus chen*) and things like that. For example, if there is an important lama coming, and when a lot of people are expected, we ask the lay people to bring mats to sit on.[992]

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[987] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 193: *khang pa'i thigs sa 'khur ba dang/ dkar rtsi 'gyed pa/ zhal ba byed pa lta bu grwa tshang rang rang nas dgos tshe las gang yin de gcig pu'i tshe gzan sham la gnang mtshams yod kyang* [..]

[988] For an interesting account of the division of labour between monks and lay-people in Limi, Nepal in the last hundred or so years, see Hovden, 2013: 216-8; 224-7.

[989] Nietupski, 2011: 89.

[990] Welch, 1967: 33-5.

[991] Dargyay, 1982: 79.

[992] Personal communication with Blo bzang don grub, Spituk, August 2012.

The previously cited corvée-worker at Dar rgyas gling monastery notes that she never saw monks treating the lay-people badly.[993] The monastic guidelines are largely silent about how to treat those in the employment of monks. One of the rare exceptions is the bca' yig for Mindröl ling, which contains rather lengthy regulations on how to behave when travelling.[994]

> All that which is to be adopted and that which is to be abandoned, such as treating the valets and servants continuously gently and honestly, without being pushy and aggressive[995] and without addressing them harshly, is the responsibility of a protector of beings (*'gro mgon*). Thus [one is punished with offering] a butterlamp of one *nyag* when one makes the load too heavy or when one, out of disregard, sends [them] to and fro on the way.[996]

The sense that the above cited passage gives is that individual monks could indeed be forceful at times. The two-tiered system of the monastery and the individual monk, as discussed in Chapter 5, appears to also have been in place with regard to putting lay-people to work: corvée as a sort of tax was seen as unproblematic, whereas when individual monks would apply a similar level of force, there would be implications. Tsongkhapa states this in no uncertain terms:

> Those ordained, who have the wish to stay to receive teachings and [for that purpose] order the people (*mi sde*) from Zangs ri and beyond to do corvée duty (*'u lag*), will accumulate grave negative karma (*sdig kham po che*) 'in relation to the lama'.[997] This should therefore be avoided.[998]

Sponsors and the 'Costs' of Offerings and Religious Services

While lay-people worked to maintain the monasteries and their inhabitants, the service or work monks performed for lay-people was theoretically of a religious nature. People were usually expected to make a contribution in lieu of provided services. The transactions cannot be said to be solely of an economic nature, nor were they mere favours done out of Buddhist benevolence. The negotiation of these transactions is illustrated by rules in the monastic guidelines on religious services, accepting offerings, giving estimates of the cost of services, selling Buddhist images, and so on.

In some cases, the prices of certain offerings were very clearly stated. The Fifth Dalai Lama, for example, even sets lower and upper limits for the sponsors of

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[993] Dhondub and the Information Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama, 1978: ii.

[994] I have no doubt that the author gTer bdag gling pa, who was close to the Fifth Dalai Lama, modelled this section on the bca' yig the latter wrote for travelling government representatives, see Cüppers, 2007.

[995] *'ded gtser* is read as a contraction of *drag 'ded* and *bskul gtser*.

[996] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 308: *dos bskul dang lag g.yog sogs la'ang shed ngom gyis 'ded gtser dang kha ngan med pa'i 'jam 'drongs snyugs bsring nas byed dgos pa sogs blang dor gyi gnas mtha' dag 'gro mgon so sos do khur du lci ba byed pa dang/ gal te rstis med kyis lam la snga 'gros phyi 'then byas na nyag re'i mar me/*

[997] The unusual phrase *bla ma la dmigs pa'i sdig kham po che* in all likelihood refers to a deed so negative that it would disappoint one's teacher.

[998] *Byams pa gling bca' yig*: 252a: *gnas 'dir chos theg re sdod par 'dod pa'i rab byung rnams kyis zangs ri man chad kyi mi sde la 'u lag bskul na bla ma la dmigs pa'i sdig kham pa che gsog par snang bas de mi byed pa dang/*

particular types of offerings.[999] The minimum was paying for soup and tea served six times a day for thirteen days; the maximum was to do the same for twenty-three days.[1000] The cost of offerings was often seen as a possible reason for arguments and therefore rather complex calculations needed to be communicated to the prospective sponsor of a ritual or a communal tea-round (*mang ja*). In Sera je in the 18th century, the possibility of upsetting lay-people by naming different prices at different occasions was taken into account, which is why fixed prices had to be established:

> Taking as a starting point that when there are twenty-five monks and they each drink two bowls of tea – then the maths for 3000 monks is at least sixty *nyag* of tea (*ja nyag*) and three times that for the butter (*mar de'i gsum skor*). The sponsor needs to be honestly informed of the three levels of quality, so that he can make a decision in accord with his wishes and his resources. Do not take more than this. Similarly, with regard to the three greater and the eight smaller offerings and arrangements[1001] and scarves for the protector's chapel (*mgon khang*), there should not even be a hint of dispute about the costs of the offerings.[1002]

The point made here is that by giving a clear and honest price of the offering or religious service to be rendered, misunderstandings and arguments could be avoided. The author of the above cited text, the Seventh Dalai Lama makes a similar point in his bca' yig for the monastic community of Ramoche:

> The managers (*spyi pa*) are the ones who need to receive the sponsors. Regardless of their means or situation, there are four types of offerings that are gifts to the lama(s)[1003] on behalf of the deceased and only these: pole flags (*dung dar*), scarves for the protectors' chapel, the price of wood, and the exceptions contained in the bca' yig.[1004] The price of wood – not counting the 'continuing tea' (*rgyun ja*) consisting of tea or soup – is set at *skar phyed brgyad*[1005] at the minimum. The disciplinarian and the *spyi pa* together explain to the sponsor what they need and make sure the things are given to each of the right recipients. That which they have no means to provide may not be forcefully argued about. The sponsors for the communal tea-round may only be encouraged by the *spyi pa* and not just by any official (*las sne pa*).[1006]

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[999] The phrase used for these people is *'gyed tshar gtong mi*: people who give donations and gifts.

[1000] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 310. Also see Jansen, 2013a: 130.

[1001] *Se ra byes bca' yig* 2 reads *sne gzhag*, which is a likely misreading for *rnam gzhag*. This word can mean offering, although the specific types of offerings mentioned here are not known to me.

[1002] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 566, 7; *Se ra byes bca' yig* 2: 83: *gtan 'khel grwa pa nyi shu rtsa lnga re'i sar ja spor do re dbang du byas nas/ dge 'dun gsum stong gi rtsis la ja nyag drug cu/ mar de' sum skor la ma mtha' byas pa'i bzang ngan 'bring gsum gyi 'gro tshod gang yin drang por bshad pa'i sbyin bdag rang gi 'dod pa sbyor ba las 'os min gyi len che mi byed/ de mtshungs 'bul ba dang sne bzhag che kha gsum/ chung kha brgyad mgon khang snyan dar sogs gang phul bab mtshungs las rtsod pa spu tsam mi byed/*

[1003] *bsngo rten*, literally 'basis for dedication', is a specific term that refers to the offerings made to have prayers done on behalf of a deceased loved one, see *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 720.

[1004] It is not mentioned what kind of bca' yig this is.

[1005] This is a denomination with the value of three quarters of a *zho* or half a 'Tibetan coin' (*bod ṭam*), see *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 115.

[1006] *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 131: *sbyin bdag gi sne len byed dgos rnams spyi pas byed cing sbyin bdag 'byor ba che chung dang phyi nang gang la yang bla ma'i bsngo rten sne gzhag* [*sic: rnam gzhag*] *bzhi dung dar/ mchod khang gi snyan dar/ shing rin/ bca' yig tu dmigs bsal yod rigs ma gtogs ja thug gang*

It appears then that clear rules were seen to be a desideratum when it came to negotiating the price and the types of offerings. As is the case elsewhere, the job is assigned to the disciplinarian and the *spyi pa*, possibly to prevent potential donors from being given contradictory information. Again, bias might also have played a part here, as the bca' yig for Phabongkha monastery suggests:

> One is to follow the established traditions when it comes to [stating] the costs of rituals (*brda 'bul*), such as 'home rituals' (*grong chog*) and the like, be they private or public (*gzhung*). One is definitely not to do what may become a cause for discord in the Sangha, such as being biased toward one's near and dear ones.[1007]

Such statements seem to have been intended to counter a perceived bias with regard to friends and family and to wealthy donors. A set of monastic guidelines for Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling from 1848 warns against treating benefactors differently, presumably on the basis of their wealth, which would be narrow-minded, bad and superficial (*bsam chung dang sgal ral sla bcos*).[1008] As mentioned before, goods that were being offered were often carefully recorded along with their value. In Pelyul darthang the disciplinarian and the *spyi ba* were charged with giving an estimate of the cost of the requested ritual and with recording it, and dividing some of the proceedings (*dung yon*) among the reciting monks.[1009] There were monks who were assigned to make an assessment of the worth of the things given. Again, this was potentially problematic, as the above guidelines state:

> Even though there are people who ascertain the relative quality of goods, the basic value is handed over to the authorities: it is not allowed to haggle[1010] over it.[1011]

Another occasion at which one could expect arguments is during the 'buying and selling'[1012] of religious statues, images, and books. In pre-modern Tibet, presumably there were no shops in which one could purchase Buddhist texts and paraphernalia. Rather, these items were made to order, in most cases by monks. Cassinelli and Ekvall note, somewhat puzzlingly, that Sakya monks were only allowed to do printing

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yin la rgyun jar brtsi med kyi shing rin skar phyed brgyad res chung mtha' byas pa dge skos dang spyi pa zung sbrel gyis sbyin bdag la dgos tshul bshad nas gang byung sprod yul so sor sprod cing/ ma lcogs pa'i rigs la u tshugs kyis rtsod pa mi gtong/ mang ja'i sbyin bdag kyang spyi pas ma gtogs las sne ba su yin gyis bskul sa med/

[1007] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 245: *gzhung sger gyi grong chog sogs brda 'bul lugs rnams sngar rgyun srol lam gang yod byed pa las/ nye dga' phyogs lhung sogs dge 'dun rnams mi mthun pa'i rgyur 'gro ba gtan nas mi byed/*

[1008] *Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling bca' yig*: 401.

[1009] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 194.

[1010] *kha phar skor tshur skor byed*, literally to verbally go back and forth.

[1011] ibid.: 196, 7: *tshong zog nang phan tshun du spus 'jog byed mkhan yod kyang rin rtsa las thog der sbyin pa ma gtogs kha phar skor tshur skor byed mi chog*

[1012] Here it needs to be noted that the verb that is invariably used when referring to buying Buddhist paraphernalia is *blu ba*– a verb signifying respect toward the object being purchased. Its more archaic meaning is to ransom and is also used in rituals. This verb-use indicates that the transaction is not a clear-cut business deal.

and painting for outsiders and they were not to receive payment.[1013] In Mindröl ling in the 17th century, some kind of payment or remuneration was involved, however:

> With regard to printed images of the enlightened body, speech and mind, the original should not go to waste, but be kept in accordance with one's own wishes.[1014] One should not argue and ask for more than the agreed-upon price for the prints.[1015] Half of the leftover offerings (*mchod ro'i phyed cha*) and the materials that were part of the printing price should be contributed toward replacing the butterlamps,[1016] the canopies, tassels (*chu 'dzar*) and door-hangings in the many shrines, mentioned above, etc. improving the upkeep of 'that which vies for approving looks' (*mig ltos bzang 'gran*).[1017]

From the above cited section we learn that monks in this monastery made prints to order. Presumably, the people who made the prints were allowed to keep the other half of the 'offerings' (*mchod*), whereas the rest was to pay for the aesthetic upkeep of the shrines at the monastery, thus contributing toward the 'greater good.'

The bca' yig confirm that prospective benefactors were sometimes given several options, taking into account their relative wealth. However, it is clear that one only got what one paid for. This is in contrast with the medieval Christian Churchs that calculated religious penalties on the basis of 'weighed incomes': richer 'penitents' usually bore a heavier penalty than poorer ones, so that the variation in practice was akin to a discriminatory tax.[1018] The bca' yig that report on the interaction with the sponsors make it very clear that such services were expected to be paid for. They also exhort the monks to be straightforward and honest about the prices of the offerings or services and not to put any type of pressure on the lay-people requesting them.

Collecting Alms and Social Pressure

As a community of 'beggars of alms', the Sangha must physically be located within secular society.[1019]

A number of sources convey that collecting donations was often viewed as problematic by Tibetan authors. Various bca' yig stipulate the circumstances under which money for the monastery had to be amassed. Force is emphatically discouraged and so is begging for alms without permission from the authorities.[1020] In the area

[1013] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 401.
[1014] Presumably the printer's own wishes.
[1015] *par yon gcad* [sic: *bcad*] *thang*. *bcad* carries the sense of something being fixed. For example *bcad gong* means fixed price, *bcad grangs* is a *numerus fixus*. Perhaps *bcad thang* here is a contraction of *bcad pa'i rin thang*: the fixed or the agreed upon value.
[1016] Here this indicates not the butter for the lamps but the actual receptacles.
[1017] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 312: *sku gsung thugs rten gyi par 'debs pa rnams la/ par ngo bor chud zos med cing so so'i 'dod sbyar ngos/ par yon bcad thang las lhag brtsod slong mi byed/ mchod ro'i phyed cha dang par yon gyi dngos po rnams kyis dgong ltar zhal ras* [sic? *yas*] *lha khang du mar me kong bu re dang rtse'i rgyal mtshan chu 'dzar sgo yos le tshen rnams brje ba'i thebs byed pa sogs mig ltos bzang 'gran gyi 'dzin skyong gong 'phel du 'gyur ba byed/*
[1018] Ekelund (et al.), 1996: 85.
[1019] Ishii, 1986: 6.
[1020] By contrast, in China, according to the 'Gazetteer of Qixia Monastery' from 1704, begging for alms was still held as the ideal, while owning property was seen as necessary only if there were too many monks to be fed on alms. See Brook, 2014: 217.

under the administration of Sakya, individual monasteries had to request special permission from the Sakya government to ask the laity for donations.[1021] Similarly, the Bhutanese law-code (*bKa' khrims*) of 1729, written by bsTan 'dzin chos rgyal notes: 'lamas of the monasteries and the representatives of the *rdzong*s[1022] who ask the benefactors for alms, [who thereby] destroy villages, should from now on be stopped.'[1023]

These begging-rounds, occasionally carried out by monks on behalf of the monastery, may have presented a financial burden to ordinary people, partly also due to social pressure and one-upmanship, and it is not difficult to imagine that this occasionally irritated lay-people. The Gazetteer of the Kangra District from 1897, describes the way in which this type of begging occurred in Spiti at that time, namely that after the harvest, the monasteries sent out five or six monks 'on begging expeditions':

> They go round from house to house in full dress, and standing in a row, they chant certain verses, the burden of which is – 'we are men who have given up the world, give us, in charity, the means of life; by doing so you please God whose servants we are.' The receipts are considerable, as each house gives something to every party.[1024]

French describes a legal case reported to her by a former employee at the Lhasa courthouse that concerned the murder of two monks. These monks were part of a group travelling from Kham to Ngor monastery in Central Tibet to receive teachings and along the way they begged for food from the locals. A man reportedly got very angry with the two monks and murdered them – possibly on account of their forceful methods of 'begging'.[1025] In some cases there seems to have been a fine line between soliciting charity, religious blackmail, and straight-out looting. Bell reports in the beginning of the 20th century, that during the Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*) Drepung monks would take over the city of Lhasa and 'loot extensively'. The wealthier people would flee the city and hide their belongings.[1026]

A number of monastic guidelines express concerns about monks going out and pressuring lay-people into giving donations, in particular when the sole beneficiary was the individual monk and not the monastic institution. The restrictions with regard to asking for donations are in tension with the Vinayic ideal of the monk begging for alms: 'One of the most important monastic rules is that the monk obtain food and other bare necessities by begging.'[1027] However, it seems as though this particular practice, so widespread in Theravāda countries, has never been common or entirely acceptable in Tibet as the sole basis for monks' livelihood. Notable exceptions are the members of the Jo gdan sde bzhi. These monks are understood to have solely lived off alms-begging, in emulation of their Kashmiri master Śākyaśrībhadra (1127/40s-1225),

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[1021] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 302.
[1022] Here the word *rdzong* (fort) refers to the local secular authorities.
[1023] Aris, 1986: 150-2 (110b): *rdzong kha sku tshab dgon sde'i bla mas sbyin bdag las bsod snyoms rgyugs rigs grong bshal sogs da nas rbad gcod/* The translation of this passage in a colonial work on Bhutan reads: 'All Jongpens [**rdzong dpon*] and Head Lamas of monasteries shall not try to realise any gifts by going round visiting raiyats [land-holding farmers].' See White, 1971 [1909]: 305. My translation here differs slightly from that of Aris'.
[1024] Diack, 1994 [1897] III: 88.
[1025] French, 1995a: 320.
[1026] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 58.
[1027] Pardue, 1971: 21, 2.

whose epithet was 'the Great Almsman' (*bsod snyoms pa chen po*).[1028] An equally early reference that seems to suggest that the begging for alms by individual monks did occur is found in the bca' yig for Drigung thil written in the first half of the 13th century.[1029]

Although the points on which monastic guidelines and Vinaya rules potentially clash are almost never explicitly remarked upon in bca' yig, the author of the guidelines for Drepung, the Fifth Dalai Lama makes something of an exception here:

> Because going on an alms-round in Tibet proper, during for example the autumn, is in accordance with the intent of the Vinaya, it does not need to be stopped. Except for people who collect offerings for the general good (*spyi don*) in China, Mongolia, and Kham, etc., one is not to go to ask for donations on one's own accord, without it being an exception [on behalf of] the officials and the general good.[1030]

In the above statement the author sees the possible conflict and he knows he cannot contradict the Vinaya rules directly by forbidding the practice outright. He uses the Vinayic term *bsod snyoms brgyag pa*, literally 'to do the alms-round,' which he then allows, albeit reluctantly. However, he limits the practice to Tibet and employs a more pejorative term for the forbidden practice of collecting donations elsewhere, namely *slong mo byed pa*, which can simply be translated as 'to beg'. Interestingly, this section was cited almost verbatim by the Seventh Dalai Lama in a set of monastic guidelines for Sera monastery from 1737. In this text, he merely seems to have adapted the language somewhat, conspicuously leaving out Kham as a place one cannot go to collect donations.[1031] This may have to do with the changed perception of what was seen to be 'Bod'. In the mind of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Kham perhaps did not belong to Bod, but some fifty years later it may have done so in the opinion of his incarnation, the Seventh.[1032]

The author of the guidelines for the – financially struggling – nunnery Rinchen gang also gives some stipulations for those who did go on an alms-round on behalf of the institution:

> Because those who have to go to collect alms are the representatives of the Teachings, their whole behaviour being conducive [to these Teachings] needs to be as good as possible. Mornings and evenings, their meditational deities rituals (*sgrig rim*) and the like need to be performed properly. When going for

[1028] Heimbel, 2013: 224.
[1029] *'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*: 249b. For the translation of this passage, see Chapter 6.
[1030] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 313: *ston ka sogs bod rang du bsod snyoms brgyag pa ni 'dul ba'i dgongs pa dang yang mthun pas dgag mi dgos shing/ rgya sog khams sogs la grwa pa grwa tshang spyi don gyi slong mo byed mi ma gtogs las sne dang spyi don dmigs bsal med par kha mthun sdebs slong mo brgyag par mi 'gro/*
[1031] *Se ra byes bca' yig* 2: 111: *bod rang du bsod snyoms byed pa'dul ba'i dgongs pa dang mthun pas dgag bya mi dgos 'dra yang/ rgya sog gi yul khams sogs la spyi don gyi 'bul sdud slong mo byed mi ma gtogs/ spyi don med par kha mthun gyis slong mo mi byed/*
[1032] This paragraph is largely based on Jansen, 2013a: 130, 1.

> alms, except when it is necessary, do not stay in the areas of one's friends, thinking one will get something [there].[1033]

It is clear that going to collect alms here meant that one had to not only behave in an exemplary manner but also one's religious practices had to be in order, presumably due to the 'karmic weight' that accompanied these received donations.

The biography of Zha lu master 'Khrul zhig tshul khrims rgyal mtshan (1399-1473) reports that he asked his monastic followers to never request donations from sponsors – either directly or indirectly.[1034] This tension with regard to soliciting alms still exists today among monastics, for example in contemporary Amdo. Its economy having improved, Dhitsa monastery prohibited 'begging' in 2008, as it was not seen as necessary anymore.[1035] Caple, in fact, notes that monks at a number of monasteries in Amdo emphasized that the donations they received were *voluntarily* given and that their monastery no longer collected alms.[1036]

While it may be the case that, in particular in Tibetan areas currently in the PRC, all manners of asking for donations are discouraged, evidence from the 13th century suggests that the practice was perhaps not common but also not necessarily regulated by the monastic authorities. Earlier bca' yig show, however, that pressuring people for gifts for one's own sake was generally disapproved of, but that well organized, scheduled, and ordered visits on behalf of the monastery to solicit donations was usually both approved of and encouraged. The 16th century monastic guidelines for Tshurphu make this point eloquently:

> Aside from alms for the benefit of the Sangha, one should not beg and solicit, and particularly one should not read out the scriptures, etc. to get food and clothing with the 'salary and presents' (*gla rngan*) that are intended for the virtue of the dead and the living: do not sell the Holy Dharma.[1037]

Seasonal collective alms-rounds were a common feature of Tibetan monasticism,[1038] but the daily ritualized begging for alms by individual monks that we see in Theravāda countries was largely unknown in Tibet. The pressure that this put on the laity may have been a consideration in regulating these practices.

Accommodating Lay Sensibilities

In the corpus of Vinaya texts, the concern for the reputation of the Sangha is regularly expressed. Behaving badly in full view of the laity is one of the thirteen *Saṅghāvaśeṣa dharma*s (*dge 'dun gyi lhag ma'i chos bcu gsum*), offences that require

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[1033] *Rin chen sgang bca' yig*: 214: *bsod snyoms la 'gro dgos kyi rigs rnams kyang bstan pa'i mig rgyan la phan pa'i kun spyod gang gtsang ngos/ snga dgong thugs dam kyi sgrig rim sogs yang dag pa byed/ bsod snyoms la gang 'gor ma gtogs/ snyed btags kyis grogs yul du mi sdod/*

[1034] Wood, 2013: 43.

[1035] Caple, 2011: 121.

[1036] ibid.: 125. Also see Caple, 2010: 178-219.

[1037] *mTshur phu bca' yig*: 707/4b: *dge 'dun gyi don du bsod snyoms mi gtogs slong ba dang 'tshol ba dang lhag par shi gson gyi dge ba la dmigs pa'i gla rngan gyi bza' gos sogs thob pa'i ched du gsung rab klog pa sogs dam pa'i chos mi tshong ba dang/*

[1038] The sources that refer to these rounds are numerous, e.g.: *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 90 and Zongtse, 1995: 578.

suspension,[1039] listed – among others – in the *Prātimokṣasūtra*. The above referred to term *khyim* (*pa*) *sun 'byin pa* (S. *kuladūṣaka*, P. *kuladūsaka*, C. *wu jia* 污家) is not unproblematic. The Pali and the Sanskrit have been translated as 'to corrupt families.'[1040] Oldenberg glosses the Pali phrase *kuladūsaka pāpasamācāra* as 'Bhikkhus who by their evil conduct have set a bad example to laymen and their families.'[1041] Frauwallner describes it as leading a 'scandalous life, which damages the reputation of the community.'[1042] In this interpretation the *kula*, the family, which gets corrupted is that of the Sangha.

The Tibetan translation prevalent in the *bKa' 'gyur* for this word is *khyim sun 'byin pa*, while a more usual translation of *kula* into Tibetan would be *rigs*. Indeed, the alternative *rigs sun 'byin pa*, or variations thereof, also occur, though more frequently in the Indian commentaries than in the corpus of the Vinaya. The choice of the translators for *khyim* as opposed to *rigs* may indicate their preferred emphasis: not on embarrassing one's own fraternity, but on looking bad in the eyes of householders. In any case, while the act is literally 'to corrupt families' or 'to bring a family into disrepute,' it is explained as making those who previously had faith, lose that faith.[1043] The reasoning given is that this would make the Sangha unpopular among the lay followers, for 'it was considered highly important to propitiate these, to court their admiration, to keep their allegiance, to do nothing to annoy them.'[1044]

In an Indian commentary, the term is explained as causing householders to lose faith when the trainings are transgressed.[1045] Just like most Vinaya rules, according to the tradition, this *kuladūṣaka* rule had to be developed because something had happened. The narrative found in the *Pāṇḍulohitakavastu* describes two members of the band of six, Aśvaka and Punarvasuka, misbehaving. This eventually led to the Brahmans and householders becoming reluctant to give out alms to the members of the Sangha living in the same place as those offenders. They also stopped giving to the monks who came from other places. From this narrative can be deduced that perhaps the primary worry was over economic concerns rather than the possible karmic consequences of householders losing faith.[1046]

In the *Vinayavibhaṅga* the actions that may lead to *kuladūṣaka* are described as eating and drinking from the same vessel as a woman, dancing, picking flowers, singing songs, speaking loudly, making garlands, playing musical instruments, playing games, and a whole range of other behaviour deemed inappropriate. It has

[1039] Literally, 'remnants of the Sangha'. Being guilty of breaking these rules would mean a temporary removal from the monastic community for six days and nights. For more on the technicalities of the *Saṅghāvaśeṣa* in mainly the Pali Vinaya, see Kieffer-Pülz, 2014: 49.

[1040] A non-Vinayic gloss is given as 'to disgrace one's family'; see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*: 294. For another slightly different view see Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*: 188: *kuladūṣika*: 'injurer or spoiler of families': the 'injury' or 'spoiling' consists of the errant monk imposing improper services on lay families. More generally, *dūṣaṇa* (*sun 'byin pa*) is understood to mean corruption, dishonour, violation, etc. Edgerton translates it with 'hatred, malice' see *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*: 268. The basic meaning of the phrase in sūtras and śāstras seems to be 'disparagement' or 'refutation', especially when it is found as a compound with Dharma (*chos*).

[1041] Oldenberg, 1964 [1874] vol. 1: xvii.

[1042] Frauwallner, 1956: 140, 1.

[1043] e.g. in the Pali Vinaya: Horner, 1949 vol. 1: 326.

[1044] ibid.: xxix.

[1045] *Āryamūlasarvāstivādiśrāmaṇerakārikāvṛttiprabhāvatī* (*'Phags pa gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba'i dge tshul gyi tshig le'ur byas pa'i 'grel pa 'od ldan*)(D4125): 158a: *khyim sun 'byin pa ni gang zhig bslab pa las 'das na khyim pa ma dad par byed pa'o/*

[1046] Yamagiwa, 2001: 58, 9. *Vinayavastu* (D1 Cha): 21b; 46a2.

been suggested that (some of) these acts were regarded as 'courting behaviour', and therefore out of bounds for monks.[1047] Another Indian commentary explains this *kuladūṣaka* as something that causes the loss of faith, specifically by interaction with women who 'belong' to Brahmans or householders.[1048] Generally speaking, when regarding the examples given of the act of *kuladūṣaka*, they are related either to an association with or behaviour akin to that of lay-people.

While this Vinayic worry over the Sangha's good name is found throughout the Buddhist world, the kind of monk-behaviour that corrupted lay-people, annoyed them, or caused them to lose faith, varied according to the time and place. Obviously, public opinion was crucial for those monastic communities that were economically dependent on the laity.[1049] But how important was this public opinion in places where monasteries maintained important positions in the local economy? In the previous chapter we have seen that monasteries were sometimes economically largely independent from the local population but also that there always existed a certain degree of dependency – be it on the government, interregional trade-routes or the presence of sufficient farmers to work the fields.

It comes as no surprise that the Tibetan monastic guidelines also echo the Vinaya when it comes to the act of 'annoying lay-people'.[1050] The sources at hand convey the problems that the monks occasionally caused in lay-society and how certain figures in authority sought to solve them. As we shall see, this was sometimes aided by reasoning found in Vinayic texts, but also by coming up with solutions of a more pragmatic nature, thus bringing together orthodoxy and orthopraxy. In the bca' yig, monks are often warned not to do certain things for fear of *khyim pa sun 'byin du 'gro ba*: something leading to lay-people getting annoyed.[1051] Interestingly, this phrase, which is explained in varying ways in Indian commentaries, takes on further Tibetan glosses. Nonetheless, causing lay-people to lose faith remains the principal interpretation. What in fact was believed by the authors of the bca' yig to cause lay-people to become disenchanted with the monkhood varied in time and place.

It is clear that this offence was most feared to occur when monks had to deal directly with lay-people. The bca' yig contain ample examples of these interactions. The most common types of interactions in which the perceived danger of 'annoying lay-people' are: receiving offerings; giving quotes of the cost of a particular ritual to sponsors; levying donations (or begging for alms); performing rituals at lay-people's houses; going on recess, and travelling. The possibility of annoying lay-people was often seen to be more likely when monks found themselves out of the direct sight of the monastery officials, such as during holidays. The bca' yig for Namgyel dratshang from 1727 notes this possibility in the context of monks getting time off:

[1047] Horner, 1949 vol 1: 314-29.

[1048] *Vinayottarāgamaviśeṣāgamapraśnavṛtti* (*'Dul ba lung bla ma'i bye brag lung zhu ba'i 'grel pa*) (D4116) 278b: *khyim sun 'byin pa ni bram ze dang / khyim bdag gi khyim bud med dang bcas pa rnams ma dad par byed pa dag go/ de dag tu ni rnam pa gnyis kyis sun 'byin par 'gyur te/ bud med dang lhan cig khyim gcig dang mal cha dang stan gcig la 'dug pa'i phyir dang / snod gcig tu chang 'thung ba dang zan za ba la sogs pas longs spyod par byed pa las so/*

[1049] In more recent times in Thailand there have been one or two cases in which a monastic community lost its day to day support of the lay-people in the vicinity due to 'the real or alleged misdemeanours of one or more of its members.' Bunnag, 1973: 112.

[1050] In the context of the bca' yig, the phrase is invariably *khyim* (*pa*) *sun 'byin pa* (and alternatives to this spelling) and not *rigs sun 'byin pa*.

[1051] In the *Tshig mdzod chen mo khyim pa sun 'byin pa* is explained as making worldly ones deeply unhappy, or making them become disgusted (with one's actions). *Tshig mdzod chen mo*: 261: *'jig rten pa rnams zhe khrel bar byed pa.*

> According to the tradition, the celebrations at the colleges (*grwa sa*) of the end of the summer retreat (*chab zhugs*) can last for a suitable number of days, and during the new year there is a holiday of seven days. At those periods one should not do anything that causes lay-people to get annoyed, which will cause the worldly ones to lose faith. If there are people who do this, the disciplinarian will impose restrictions (*mtshams tshigs*).[1052]

The most important and most regularly commented upon relationship of monks with lay-people is that of recipient and donor. As mentioned earlier, in Tibet, the monks were not mere passive beneficiaries of offerings. Rather, they were often given a donation in return for the performance of very specific rituals. These could take place in the monastery itself or at the house of the benefactor, or wherever else a ritual was deemed necessary. Thus, 'the gift' was most regularly more akin to a transaction. This posed difficulties for the monks, for they were emphatically not meant to peddle their 'dharma' and to deal with sponsors in an unethical way.[1053] The bca' yig, written in 1888 by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama for bKra shis chos 'phel gling,[1054] notes how monks were not meant to haggle with potential sponsors over the cost of certain rituals:

> Then, even when the sponsor makes a request for any kind of religious service, that is commensurate with his level of prosperity, one may by no means argue about it. One is to, in accordance with the sponsor's wishes, reflect on the Three Jewels at lunch-time and purify the donations and so on. Thus, in all manner of behaviour one is to be a cause for instilling faith in the sponsor. Other than that, one is not to do things that annoy lay-people.[1055]

This 'purifying the donations'[1056] is a ritualised way of dedicating the merit to the benefit of the donor that includes the recitation of a *dhāraṇī*, which can be found in the liturgies (*chos spyod*) of most schools.[1057] Here 'to instill faith in the sponsor' can be read as doing all that was required and behaving in the way lay-people expect of monks. To do the opposite may have invoked their derision. It is noteworthy that here the sponsor's material circumstances were taken into account: being of limited means was not deemed by the author to be a justification for turning him away, although the fact that this is noted in the monastic guidelines may indicate that this indeed happened on occasion. Other ritual services such as the communal tea-round (*mang ja*) were meant to have set fees, again to avoid upsetting lay-people.

The Seventh Dalai Lama recommends set prices and also gives the exact amounts of butter, tea and salt that had to be donated: 'When there are many different

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[1052] *rNam rgyal grwa tshang bca' yig*: 72: *chab zhugs grwa sa phan tshun nas sngar rgyun ltar btang na de mtshungs kyi zhag gang 'os dang/ lo gsar nas zhag bdun gung gseng byed/ de skabs khyim pa sun 'byin gyi 'jig rten pa ma dad pa'i rigs mi byed/ gal te byed mi byung na dge skos kyi mtshams tshigs byed/*

[1053] For an interesting account of one master's attempt to deal with offerings ethically, see Wood, 2013.

[1054] I have not been able to locate this Gelug monastery.

[1055] *bKra shis chos 'phel gling bca' yig*: 358: *de nas sbyin bdag gi 'byor pa dang bstun par bsnyen bkur zhabs tog gang zhus kyang de la rtsod gleng sogs gtan nas mi byed/ sbyin bdag gi 'dod pa ltar dang gung tshigs la dkon mchog rjes dran dang yon sbyongs sogs kun spyod rnams sbyin bdag dad pa skye ba'i rgyu las khyim pa sun 'byin gyi rigs byed sa med/*

[1056] For *yon sbyongs* read *yon sbyong*.

[1057] e.g. in *Kaṃ tshang chos spyod sogs kha ton gces btus*, 2001, compiled by Shes rab rgyal mtshan, Delhi: 653-6.

ways to arrange the offerings for the communal tea-round, it might irritate the sponsors and may also be a cause for annoying lay-people, who then lose faith.'[1058] He continues to give the amounts of tea and butter that was needed to provide the monks with two bowls of tea each. But he also warns that the monks could not take more than the sponsor intended to give and could afford.[1059] In the monastic guidelines for Mindröl ling monastery, written in the late 17th century, arguing with lay-people about donations is represented as being on a par with abusing power and pursuing debts:

> One is not to bother lay-people by misusing power, which may consist of disputing with the lay people over monk's shares (*ban skal*) that are not deserved, [dealing in] loans,[1060] or ordering them to perform 'corvée tax' (*'u lag khral*). If these mistakes are made then a punishment (*chad las*) will be imposed of a fine of butterlamps consisting of one *khal* to three *nyag* [of butter] and prostrations and the like.[1061]

Here what is seen as bothering lay-people is not just arguing over the offerings but also the abuse of power by imposing corvée labour and the like. Later on in the text, the author gTer bdag gling pa forbids the monks who travel in a group from ordering around lay-people:

> The [monks] who are responsible for the baggage (*dos rgyab pa rnams kyis*) should not make it so that lay-people get annoyed by heavily pursuing (*drag 'ded*) [them] and ordering [them] around aggressively (*bskul gtser*).[1062]

In fact, one would expect that the exploitation of people in this way would be counted as annoying lay-people across the board, but this is the only bca' yig that classes this as 'bothering lay-people'. More generally speaking, it appears that what caused lay-people to lose faith had mostly to do with decorum and reputation: the problem here is not unjust institutionalized power-structures but monks not behaving and dressing like monks, often in full view of the laity. As mentioned above, there also was a possibility of monks putting too much pressure on lay-people when they would go out to ask for contributions. A set of monastic guidelines from 1899 for sTag lung brang mang thos bsam bstan gling speaks of the yearly trip used to levy donations:

> When going on the annual alms-round, one needs to go behaving as well as possible, taking with one the six possessions and one's *paṇḍita*'s hat (*paṇ*

[1058] The author repeats this almost verbatim in another bca' yig for the same monastery: *Se ra theg chen gling bca' yig*: 104, 5.

[1059] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 566: *mang ja rnam gzhag* (*Se ra byes bca' yig* 2: 83: *sne bzhag*) *byed lugs sna tshogs pa zhig byung na/ sbyin bdag sogs khag bsun dang/ ma dad pa'i khyim pa bsun 'byin gyi rgyur 'gro ba 'dug pas na/ gtan 'khel grwa pa nyi shu rtsa lnga re'i sar gsol ja bzhes phor do re dbang tu byas nas/ dge 'dun gsum stong gi rtsis la ja nyag drug cu/ mar de'i gsum bskor la dma' mtha' byas pa'i bzang ngan 'bring gsum gyi 'gro tshod gang yin drang por bshad pa'i sbyin bdag rang gi 'dod pa dang sbyor ba las 'os min gyi len che mi byed/*

[1060] The text simply gives the word *bu lon* (loan/ debt) without clarifying whose debt – the lay-person's or the monk's – is referred to.

[1061] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 281: *khyim pa la 'os med kyi ban skal rtsod pa bu lon dang 'u lag khral bskul sogs dbang yod shed ngom gyis khyim pa sun mi 'byin/ gal te 'di dag las nongs par gyur na khal gcig nas nyag gsum bar gyi mar me dang phyag sogs nyes pa dang sbyar ba'i chad las 'bogs/*

[1062] ibid.: 306: *dos rgyab pa rnams kyis kyang drag 'ded bskul gtser khyim pa sun 'byin du 'gro ba mi byed/*

> *zhwa*), one's staff and a *maṇḍala*, without falling in either of the two extremes with regards to clothing. Having given up on resentful arguments with each other and careless behaviour, which are things that cause lay-people to lose faith, one properly observes a mindful attitude and without wasting any of what had been given by the faithful, be it big or small, one collects the effective methods to increase both one's own and others' merit.[1063]

In the Tibetan society the practice of begging for alms was – as we have seen – occasionally problematic and the above section warns the monks to conduct their alms-round in a very careful and correct manner. One other way monks came under the scrutiny of the lay-people was by performing rituals at their homes. As we have seen in the previous chapter, away from the disciplinarian's watchful eye certain types of misbehaviour could occur during these types of outings. The bca' yig for Ramoche monastery from the 1740s points out the potential danger:

> The monks, when they go to do home rituals and the like, listen to the advice of the honourable elders and they make sure they behave in an exemplary fashion, being an inspiration to others, and as a field of merit. One is emphatically not to deceive the sponsors who have put their trust in one and do anything careless, which causes lay-people to get annoyed and lose faith.[1064]

A similar sentiment is expressed by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1664, for the monastery Gongra ngesang dorje ling, yet without using the phrase as found in the Vinaya. Here the concern is with the sponsors and one is not to do anything that would be reason for them to lose faith (*sbyin bdag dad pa log rkyen du 'gro ba mi byed*). The Fifth Dalai Lama further demonstrates concerns with the correct performance of the rituals.[1065] In other cases, such as that expressed in the set of monastic guidelines for Tashi Lhunpo, the problem lay not so much with the proper way of undertaking these rituals but rather with the monks' behaviour and its potential to upset lay-people:

> Those who go to do rituals for the dead or the living, other than reciting the prayers they have been given to do,[1066] should not do things that will make lay-people annoyed (*khyim pa sun 'byin du 'gro ba*) such as drinking *chang* and laughing.[1067]

[1063] *sTag lung brang mang thos bsam bstan gling bca' yig*: 196: *lo dus bsod snyoms la phebs skabs na bza' mtha gnyis su ma lhung ba'i thog yo byed drug dang paṇ zhwa mkhar gsil maṇḍal bcas bsnams te spyod lam gang legs kyi sgo nas phebs pa las phan tshun 'khon rtsod dang bag med pa'i kun spyod sogs khyim pa ma dad par 'gro ba'i rigs spangs te dran shes tshul bzhin du bsten nas dad pas sbyin pa che chung thams cad mi 'dza' bar rang gzhan kun gyi bsod nams spel thabs rlabs po che'i gnad sdus pa* [..]

[1064] *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 130: *grwa rigs rnams nas kyang grong chog sogs la 'gro ba'i tshe rgan pa tshul ldan gyi bslab byar nyan pa'i gzhan dang ba 'dren pa'i mig rgyan dang bsod nams kyi zhing sar gang 'gro byed pa las re ltos 'cha' ba'i sbyin bdag sogs bslu ba dang/ khyim pa sun 'byin gyi dad log tu 'gro ba'i bag med rigs gtan nas mi byed/*

[1065] *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 227: *sger gzhung drag zhan gang gi rim gro sogs grong chog gi ris la'ang bag yod cing cho ga phyag len sogs mtshan nyid dang ldan pa'i gang rgyas ma gtogs sbyin bdag dad pa log rkyen du 'gro ba mi byed/*

[1066] *bgo skal*, more literally 'that which has been allotted.'

[1067] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 81: *gson gshin gyi don du sku rim cho ga sogs su byon pa rnams kyis kyang bgo skal zhal 'don thad skyor mdzad pa las chang'thung bzhad gad sogs khyim pa sun 'byin du 'gro rigs mi byed/*

It would have been well known among the audience of these monastic guidelines that drinking alcohol and laughing out loud were not accepted types of behaviour for monks. It here appears to be reiterated out of appreciation that this would even further upset people who were often already dealing with some sort of bereavement. Elsewhere, the same author also shows concerns regarding the sentiments of lay-people:

> In the future we are to avoid all going [together] to sKyid na[1068]and to the *dGu rtsegs ma'i char 'bebs*[1069] and to reduce the number [of monks]. Because whoever is there may become a real burden (*khral mngon*)[1070] and when only bad omens (*than*) occur in succession, there is a great danger that the lay-people get annoyed. Therefore, taking the welfare of sentient beings and the hardship such as the 'wages' offered by the dependents into account, one needs to go [there] with a motivation that combines compassion and a special intention and recite the various prayers as carefully as possible.[1071]

If my reading of the above section is correct, it indicates that large groups of monks descending on a relatively small community would pose a significant burden on the resources of the locals. If, in addition, what were called bad omens (*than*) would occur, the monks could be in danger of becoming scape-goated. Whether these omens had to do directly with the monks' behaviour or whether they referred to naturally occurring phenomena is not clear here. However, as has been noted in Chapter 4, in the minds of many (Tibetan) Buddhist believers the two were intimately linked.

The same text, however, links the same phrase to issues that have to do more with decorum than with being directly sensitive to the feelings of others:

> Furthermore, to grow garlic in pots within the monastery and to swim carelessly, in a reprehensible way,[1072] in the medicinal waters of for example Dung mtsho[1073] in the summer are actions that annoy lay-people.[1074]

Although it can be conceded that to grow garlic is not in line with Vinayic sentiments and that to swim in medicinal waters can be seen as unacceptable behaviour on many

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[1068] sKyid na was a special school at Tashi Lhunpo that would train civil servants in the Panchen Lama's administration.

[1069] This is in all likelihood a type of festival during which prayers were held, which were sponsored by the local population. *Char 'bebs* is likely to be an abbreviation for a cycle of prayers or a specific prayer. It may refer to the prayers recited during the festival called *bKra shis dgu rtsegs* held at the end of the year. See Tucci, 1988 [1970]: 150.

[1070] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig* 2 (p. 272) reads *phral mngon*

[1071] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 89: *skyid na dang dgu rtsegs ma'i char 'bebs la phyis dus thams cad phebs 'dzem gyi zhal grangs nyung ba dang/ gang yod rnams nas kyang khral mngon lta bur song rkyen gyis nam than sha stag yong 'dug pa 'di rigs stud mar byung na khyim pa sun 'byin du yang 'gro nyen che bas/ sems can gyi bde skyid dang chab 'bangs kyis phogs 'bul sogs dka' sbyong la dgongs snying rje dang lhag bsam zung du 'jug pa'i thugs 'dun gyis phebs te spyan dmigs zhal 'don gyi rim pa sgo gang zab nas mdzad dgos/*

[1072] *khag dkris kyis*, the sense here is not entirely clear to me.

[1073] This is a salt lake to the north of Lhasa.

[1074] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 100, 1: *gzhan yang dgon nang du khogs ma'i nang du sgog rigs 'debs skyong byed pa dang/ dung mtsho sogs su dbyar dus sman chur khag dkris kyis bag yangs su skyed de khyim pa sun 'byin du 'gro ba'i las byed pa dang/*

counts,[1075] unlike the other examples given here the lay-people are not directly involved.

In particular in Gelug bca' yig the phrase *khyim pa sun byin du 'gro ba* takes on a strong formulaic aspect, which leaves one wondering to what extent these rules pertained to actual behaviour in the monasteries. The guidelines enumerate the actions that were seen to annoy lay-people and promise that this type of behaviour would receive punishment. The type of punishment is usually not specified. What follows below is a series of translations of the sections that mention these actions, given chronologically.

A set of monastic guidelines from 1757 remarks, as do a number of other bca' yig, that what is deemed to annoy lay-people has to do with fun and games:

> When one is involved in careless things that annoy lay-people, regardless of whether it is inside or outside [of the compound], such as [using] arrows, slingshots, or throwing stones [competitively], then one's bow will be confiscated and the disciplinarian will impose a punishment for the other ones.[1076]

The bca' yig for Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling from 1898 notes similar sentiments:

> Needless jumping and running, fighting, making noise, calling each other from afar annoy lay-people and should not be done.[1077]

The monastic guidelines for Jampa ling in Dranang (Gra nang, Central Tibet) from 1927[1078] state:

> To do jumping, to swing your arms, have them behind your back, to cover one's mouth with one's upper robe: one needs to restrain oneself from doing these types of coarse behaviour, which lead toward the act of annoying lay-people.[1079]

Some of the activities described here are in fact mentioned in the *Prātimokṣa* (part of the 253 vows), such as jumping, which is the twenty-first *śaikṣa* (*bslab pa*) in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*,[1080] and swinging one's arms, which is the twenty-fifth. The wording here, as is the case elsewhere, can be said to be careful: these actions *may* lead to *kuladūṣaka*, but are not the thing itself.

[1075] To play in the water is the 64th *prāyaścitta* (*sor gshags*), an offense requiring confession.

[1076] *Gangs dkar gling bca' yig*: 148: *phyi nang gang du yang khyim pa bsun sbyin gyi rigs/ mda'/ 'ur rdo/ rdo sgor sogs bag med byed pa byung na mda' gzhu 'phrog cing/ gzhan ma rnams la dge skos kyi nyes chad 'gel/*

[1077] *Theg chen dam chos dga' tshal gling bca' yig*: 397: *dgos med kyi 'chong rgyugs 'thab 'dzings/ ku co rgyang skad sogs khyim pa bsun 'byin du 'gro rigs mdzad pa med/*

[1078] This version is a copy (*ngo bshus*) along with corrections (*zhu dag*) of the bca' yig written by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1926, see *Byams gling grwa tshang bca' yig*: 484.

[1079] ibid.: 482: *mchong rgyag dang/ lag pa g.yugs pa/ rgyab tu bsno ba/ gzan gyi kha btum pa sogs rtsing spyod khyim pa sun 'byin gyi las su 'gro ba' rigs rnams bkag bsdom nan tan byed/*

[1080] In the brief explanation on the 253 'vows' by the Fifth Dalai Lama, this is number 163, explained as 'to skip while going [somewhere].' See *So thar gyi tshul khrims rnam gsal sgron me*: 25: *'gro na mchong nas 'gro ba*.

A bca' yig also by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, written in the same year, mainly connects the potential offence to the monks' attire:

> Even though, in accordance to the time and place, the practice of wearing [items of clothing with] sleeves may be appropriate, it is very important to distinguish oneself from lay-people and, except for those who are exempted, one may not wear an upper garment made of serge (*ther gzan*) and the like. For other items of clothing, aside from those that are suitable, all manner of clothes, which do not feature in the texts and lead to the annoyance of lay-people, are not allowed.[1081]

Here it is exceptional that the author allows the monks of the monastery for which the monastic guidelines were written to wear clothing with sleeves in certain cases. This is in sharp contrast with many other bca' yig, which explicitly forbid sleeves. This exemption may have to do with the fact that the monastery in question was in Central Asia (Mongolia or Kalmykia), where monk-garments with sleeves were (and still are) rather widespread. The monastery in question is called Hor yul dur bde [sic: bed] wang gi bkra shis rdzogs ldan dge rgyas gling.[1082]

In another bca' yig by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, clothes with sleeves (*gos sbubs can*, literally cylindrical clothes) are deemed to amount to annoying of lay-people. This set of monastic guidelines from 1930 was written for Rongpo rabten monastery, a politically important Gelug monastery in Sog rdzong (Central Tibet). Like the bca' yig cited above, it connects *kuladūṣaka* to the monks' attire:

> The Sangha should wear clothing properly; one is not meant to wear, either out in the open or in private, all manner of items that annoy lay-people, such as clothes with sleeves, all kinds of belts, bowl holders,[1083] Chinese shoes, meditation ropes (*sgom thag*),[1084] knives, thumb rings, and other rings.[1085]

Here what is seen to annoy lay-people the most is monks wearing items that are either worn by the laity or practitioners of other schools – here the meditation rope is a clear indication of the latter issue. The same author uses the phrase *khyim pa sun 'byin gyi las* in a different manner when addressing a different monastery. In the bca' yig from 1930 for the monastery of Bya do bkra shis bsam gtan gling in the north of Central Tibet the concept is solely connected to behaviour:

> For all, be they highly or lowly placed, it is important to always avoid all actions that annoy lay-people as if they were contagious diseases, by means of

[1081] *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 495: *yul dus kyi rung mthun sbyor 'os phu rung sogs gyon dgos byung yang khyim pa dang khyad 'byed pa gnad gal che zhing dmigs bsal du ma gtogs pa rnams kyis ther gzan sogs mi gyon/ gzhan gos kyi gzhi dang gang mthun byed pa las yi ger mi 'ongs pa'i cha lugs ya ma zung khyim pa sun 'byin du 'gro ba'i rigs mi chog*

[1082] I have not been able to locate this monastery. *Dur bed* probably refers to Dörbet, a tribe found predominantly in Mongolia, but also in Kalmykia and parts of China. The memoirs of Dorjiev suggest that this Dorbed, as a place, was situated in current-day Kalmykia, see Norbu and Martin, 1991, accessed via https://sites.google.com/site/tibetological/dorjiev. The word *wang* may indicate that the 'king' of this group was the main benefactor of the monastery.

[1083] A *phor shugs* [sic: *shub*] is a cloth sack in which a bowl or cup may fit. It is hung from the belt.

[1084] These were ropes that were meant to tie one's leg in the correct position for meditation.

[1085] *Rong po rab brtan dgon bca' yig*: 538: *dge 'dun rnams kyis kyang na bza' tshul dang mthun par gyon pa ma gtogs gos sbubs can/ ske rags sna tshogs phor shugs/ rgya lham/ sgom thag gri/ mtheb kor/ sor gdub sogs khyim pa sun 'byin du 'gyur ba'i cha lugs ya ma zung dngos shugs su mi spyod/*

> behaviour that is careful and conscientious: thus one is not to engage at all in careless behaviour such as fighting, singing, and playing dice and mah-jong.[1086]

A set of monastic guidelines written by the Reting regent (*Rwa sgreng srid skyong*) for Kun ’phel gling monastery in Central Tibet in 1934 notes the following:

> Apart from a couple of monastic officials, the remainder may not do things, either out in the open or in private, that go against the Sangha’s inner rules[1087] and that annoy lay-people such as wearing the insignia of a householder like clothing with sleeves, leaving hair longer than one finger-width, singing songs, playing games such as dice and mah-jong, using tobacco, snuff and cigarettes (*shig ras*), playing musical instruments at inappropriate times, and being noisy and calling each other from afar.[1088]

Aside from the fact that this text exempts officials from some of these rules – most likely, this refers primarily to the wearing of clothing with sleeves – the above section is also interesting because it combines notions that are very obviously Vinayic with more recent rules, such as those regarding smoking cigarettes,[1089] for which a phonetic rendering of the English word is given. A bca’ yig from 1938 that also combines the Vinayic with issues that are more local in nature was written for Dophü chökhor ling monastery (Central Tibet). This text was written by the same author as the one cited above:

> Not allowed are things that lead toward the annoyance of lay-people, which may be a contributing factor in others losing faith such as to shout on top of one’s own monks’ residence or in the vicinity of the monastery’s compound, to make noise, to do jumping, to throw stones [competitively], to use a slingshot, to sit in a secluded place together with a woman but without one’s monk-friends, to follow[1090] her and go together on the road for more than a *krośa* (*rgyang grags*).[1091]

Elsewhere in the text, he uses the phrase *khyim pa bsun* [sic: *sun*] *’byin* again and notes:

[1086] *bKra shis bsam gtan gling bca’ khrims*: 531: *lhag par ’thab ’dzing glu gar/ sho sbag sos bag med kyi spyod par ye nas mi ’jug par drag zhan tshang mas spyod lam bag yod tshul ldan gyis khyim pa sun ’byin gyi las mtha’ dag ’go ba’i nad bzhin rgyun du ’dzems cha gal che/*

[1087] *dge ’dun gyi nang khrims*: this phrase must here refer to the Vinaya rules.

[1088] *Kun ’phel gling bca’ yig*: 557, 8: *dgon gyi las tshan re zung las de byings gos phu dung ma sogs khyim pa’i rtags ’chang ba/ skra sor gang lhag ’jog pa/ glu gar/ sho sbag sogs kyi rtsed ’jo/ tha mi kha dang/ sna tha shig ras la longs spyod pa/ skabs min rnga rol ’bud dkrol/ skad cor rgyang ’bod kyis mtshon pa’i khyim pa bsun ’byin cing/ dge ’dun gyi nang khrims dang ’gal ba’i rigs dngos shugs nas mi byed/*

[1089] In fact, the smoking of tobacco by monks and lay-people alike had been forbidden throughout Tibet by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1918. For more on this prohibition and further attitudes toward smoking in Tibet, see Berounsky, 2013.

[1090] Here I read *’greng* as its homophone *’breng*.

[1091] *rDo phud chos ’khor gling bca’ yig*: 566: *grwa khang so so’i steng dang gleng [gling] gseb nye ’gram du skad rgyangs/ ku co/ mchong/ rdo sgor/ ’ur rdo ’phen pa khrims grogs med par bud med dang lhan cig dben par ’dug ’greng lam du rgyang grags brgal bar mnyam ’gro byed pa sogs gzhan gyi ma dad pa’i rkyen du ’gro ba’i khyim pa sun ’byin du ’gro rigs mi chog*

> All crude behaviour that annoys lay-people such as planting apricot and walnut tree seeds, beating guard dogs, wearing 'upturned hats' (*gcus zhwa*), and interchanging the upper and the lower robes needs to be avoided.[1092]

The issues mentioned above that are seen as annoying lay-people have to do with the monks' attire, decorum, and – on one count – with actual interaction with lay-people, namely being alone with women. As mentioned above, in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, *kuladūṣaka* appears to consist of inappropriate behaviour that looks like courting behaviour. Other monastic guidelines also make this connection. The monastic guidelines for Thobgyel rabgye ling from 1913 comment:

> The disciplinarian is to impose a fitting punishment to the annoying of lay-people such as by needlessly staying the night at the village having performed a personal or public task or a home ritual, or by sitting with a woman at a secluded place without monk-friends[1093] or by following her.[1094]

The bca' yig for the Phabongkha hermitage written in the early 1800s remarks the following:

> It is not at all allowed to do things that annoy lay-people such as sitting at a secluded, covered place with a woman but without virtuous monk-friends or speaking placating words to a woman. If things like that are done, then there will be a punishment imposed, in accordance to the severity, which ranges from expulsion (*gnas dbyungs*) to confession (*bshags pa*).[1095]

Here we see for the first time that more delineated punishments are given. They resonate with the way in which infractions of the trainings are dealt with in the Vinaya materials. It is important to note, however, that none of the mentions of *kuladūṣaka* in the bca' yig are treated according to the Vinaya rules, i.e. as resulting in temporary expulsion (*skrod pa*, S. *pravāsana*)[1096] lasting six days and nights. Rather, the phrase – merely loosely associated with the one found in the Vinaya rules – serves to denote a variety of bad behaviour, which sometimes also feature in the Vinaya.[1097] When one reads the bca' yig as a genre, the idiom indeed gives a general idea of the

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[1092] ibid.: 569: *kham star gyi rdo 'debs/ sgo khyi brdung ba/ zha mo gcus zha gyon pa/ gzan gsham brjes pa sogs khyim pa bsun 'byin gyi rtsing spyod mtha dag dor te* [..]

[1093] The text has *khyim grogs*, which is likely to be a misreading for the common idiom *khrims grogs*.

[1094] *Thob rgyal rab rgyas gling dgon bca' yig*: 454: *spyi sger gyi don dang grong chog sogs grong gseb tu dgos med zhag sdod/ khyim grogs med pas dben pa skyabs yod du bud med dang lhan cig 'dug 'breng byed pa sogs khyim pa bsun 'byin rigs la dge skos nas chad las yan por ma song ba 'gel rgyu/*

[1095] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 243: *khrims grogs tshad ldan med par dben pa skyabs yod du bud med lhan cig gnas byas nas sdod pa/ bud med la bsnyen tshigs smra ba sogs khyim pa sun 'byin du ''gro ba'i rigs gtan nas byas mi chog/ de dag byas pa byung na 'gal tshabs dang bstun gnas dbyung nas bshags pa babs 'brel gang chags byed 'jug/*

[1096] The commentaries on the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* do not agree on how to interpret when and how the actual act of *kuladūṣaka* is actually committed, however.

[1097] This is not to say that the Tibetan tradition had forgotten what this phrase was meant to signify. The Fifth Dalai Lama explains it in his explanation on the *Prātimokṣa* rules as follows: '*kuladūṣaka* occurs when someone has, due to bad behaviour, caused a householder to turn back on his faith in the Sangha, and when he due to that fault has been banished, disputes the Sangha who has banished him and does not pay heed, despite others' having refuted him.' *So thar gyi tshul khrims rnam gsal sgron me*: 10: *spyod pa ngan pas khyim bdag dge 'dun la dad pa bzlog par byas pa na/ de'i nyes pas rang bskrad pa na skrod pa po'i dge 'dun la skur ba 'debs par/ gzhan gyis bzlog kyang mi nyan pa'o/* This corresponds largely with narratives found in the *Sarvāstivāda prātimokṣa*. See Pachow, 2000 [1955]: 85, 6.

way the authors wanted the monks to portray themselves, not just to the outside world, but also to each other.

Obviously, some bca' yig show more concern for the actual relationships with the surrounding communities, whereas others are more worried about their appearance and – by extension – the reputation of the monks among lay-people. While making generalisations without the whole picture having been fully revealed is problematic, I want to tentatively suggest that there may have been a chronological development – from the phrase actually referring to dealing with lay-people, being afraid of burdening them, to using the same phrase in the context of attire and decorum, making sure one looks monkish enough, and not corrupting oneself (and the Sangha as a whole) by associating oneself with lay-people.

It is not the case, however, that a conscious reinterpretation of the Vinaya rules has taken place, but rather that the phrase, originally derived from the Vinaya, has taken on different meanings in a Tibetan context. In summary then, what – according to the bca' yig - is counted as behaviour that is, or leads to, *kuladūṣaka* is the following:

- To order lay-people around
- To levy donations (and begging for alms) in an aggressive or dishonest fashion
- To be a financial burden to lay-people
- To not perform rituals for the lay-people properly
- To interact with women in secret
- To not behave enough like a monk, by means of clothing, singing, shouting, jumping, or playing games
- To argue among each other and to be careless or unscrupulous out in the open

It is clear that not all texts will use 'Vinayic vocabulary' to convey a similar message. It can be gleaned from the examples given above that they are predominantly written by Gelug authors. This is, I believe, not merely due to the wider availability of Gelug bca' yig, but also because of the more extensive use of Vinaya-related terms by authors belonging to this school. While the wording in the bca' yig is occasionally formulaic, the accommodation of lay sensibilities was not merely symbolic.

More generally speaking, according to Schopen, much of the contents of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* seem to have been made to look as though it is a reaction to criticism by lay-people, so that the Sangha was 'shown as sensitive to and accommodating towards the norms and values of what they took to be their surrounding community.'[1098] The wording used here makes it seem as though the redactors of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* were not truly concerned with what the lay-community thought of them. However, we only need to remind ourselves of the presumed intended audience of Vinayic works to understand that the concern for a good reputation with non-monastics must have been genuine, if not largely for reasons of (economic) survival. The same seems to go for the Tibetan monastic guidelines. Naturally, there are many more expressions of care for lay-people that do not use Vinayic terms. In some cases, the sole objective of making a certain rule is not to go against cultural notions that were seen to be held only by lay-people. For example the 16th century Tshurphu guidelines report:

[1098] Schopen, 2001: 137.

> For the community that live at one place to eat from one single begging bowl[1099] or to mix bowls and so on and – motivated by attachment – to be jealous and agitated and then to desire food[1100] and throw stones: this and other careless behaviour, which in particular well-behaved lay-people cannot bear to see, should never be done.[1101]

Sharing bowls among the monks would be something that people, possibly particularly lay-people, would consider to cause pollution. Interesting here is that the laity said to mind this type of behaviour is well-behaved (*khyim pa ya rab*), which might just refer to the higher strata of society.

The authors of the bca' yig show a genuine concern for the sensibilities of lay-people and the reputation that the monastery enjoyed in the area, despite the fact that in some cases their economic well-being was not necessarily dependent on the correct behaviour of monks. Still, many monasteries depended on the lay-people's opinion in some way or another. One example of this is that families had to be prepared to send their son to the monastery – if that institution in question had a bad reputation they may have been less willing to do so. The prosperity and the survival of a monastery were thus not always dependent solely on finances. This dependency and awareness of lay sensibilities demonstrates that – in contrast to what is sometimes argued – the relationship between the Tibetan monastery and society was not simply hegemonic, but one in which it was crucial to reach a consensus.

Moral Obligations: the Monk and the Sponsor

Perhaps in Buddhist India 'monastic duties were seen as essentially oriented toward the monastic community itself,'[1102] but to what extent is this true for Tibetan monasteries? Naturally, the primary goal of the monastery is to perpetuate itself and rules are made accordingly. However, the laity has an essential role to play in this continuation. As has been indicated above, the concern that monastic authors showed for favourable relations with the lay-people was considerable, although the motivations may have varied. But what were the *duties* monks felt they had? Goldstein claims that the monks are perceived to have 'a moral obligation to attend to the spiritual needs of the lay people.'[1103] To a lesser extent this is also asserted by Miller, who claims that the Tibetan Sangha is seen to have 'at least some minimal responsibility to the lay community as well as to itself,' and that 'this responsibility can be thought of as community service.'[1104]

Much has been written about the position of Buddhist monks particularly in Theravāda communities.[1105] The monk is described as a field of merit and thereby ascribed a somewhat passive role. By keeping his vows properly he is, without any activity from his side, a source of merit for all who give to him. This notion is found in all Buddhist cultures and is eloquently vocalized by the Seventh Dalai Lama who concludes his bca' yig for Sera je with:

[1099] This is also attested in *Vinayavibhaṅga* Cha: 21b.
[1100] *zan hrel* is here read as *zan hral*.
[1101] *mTshur phu bca' yig*: 704/2a: *gdan gcig gi 'khor 'dug nas lhung bzed gcig gi nang du zas bza' ba sogs dang/ kha phor bsre ba sogs dang/ chags pas kun nas bslangs te mig zur log par bskyod de zan hrel dang rde'u 'phen pa sogs bag med pa'i spyod lam khyim pa ya rabs kyis kyang blta ba ma bzod pa de kun ces kyang lag tu mi len pa dang/*
[1102] Silk, 2008: 10.
[1103] Goldstein and Tsarong, 1985: 25.
[1104] B. Miller, 1961: 409.
[1105] e.g. Tambiah, 1970; Spiro, 1971; Bunnag, 1973; Gombrich, 2006 [1988].

> Because the foundation of the Teachings is the purity of the rules of the Holy Vinayadharma, one needs to make sure one becomes a holy field on which merit can be accumulated.[1106]

This passage was probably intended as a further incentive for the monks to behave well. In a similar vein, the bca' yig for Dung dkar bkra shis chos rdzong from 1900 notes: 'Because the faithful sponsor is one who definitely can purify *dkor*,[1107] one needs to strive to become worthy of offerings (*mchod 'os*).'[1108] However, in Tibet the monk's duty in Buddhist societies was seen as something more than just being a field of merit. Naturally, monks in lay-society are performers of ritual, recipients of offerings and thereby providers of good karma. But monks have another role that is not often commented upon. The religious practitioner – which includes the monk – was seen as a pacifying force and by extension so was Buddhism in general. As briefly referred to in Chapter 4, this force served to keep in check the dangers of the local spirits and demons. Just as a number of Buddhist temples were built to pin down the 'supine demoness' in Imperial times,[1109] the monks were seen to be in a position to keep harmful spirits in check. This was not only achieved by performing rituals, but by also their conduct, their following (and thereby maintaining) the Dharma, and keeping the vows.

While the bca' yig frequently invoke the power and authority of the protectors (*chos skyong*/ *chos srung*/ *srung ma*), who were often originally 'local spirits' converted to Buddhism, they do not spell out what is thought to happen when rules are not adhered to.[1110] A legal code for Bhutan from 1729, however, is more explicit:

> By discarding the Dharma rules (*chos khrims*), the main protectors depart to space.
> They are dispersed into the exhalations of the Samaya corrupting demon brothers.
> By discarding the human rules (*mi yi chos*) the deities decline.
> The black devils laugh 'ha ha'.[1111]

The belief in the connection regarding adherence to rules – be they religious or not – local spirits, and the general well-being of the population was, no doubt, widespread. This meant that the local people saw themselves as having a vested interest in the general conduct of the monks in their local monastery. This further complicates the

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[1106] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 582: *bstan pa'i rtsa ba dam chos 'dul ba'i bca' khrims rnam par dag pas 'gro ba thams cad kyi bsod nams gsog pa'i zhing dam par 'gyur ba zhig mdzad dgos/*

[1107] The text reads *skor sbyong*, which I take to be a misspelling of *dkor sbyong*. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, *dkor* refers to monastic wealth, but often has a negative connotation. For example, someone who 'eats *dkor*' (*dkor bza' mkhan*) in colloquial (and written) Tibetan is someone who sponges off the monastic amenities without doing anything in return. Furthermore, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama describes the materials given by the sponsors out of faith as a kind of debt that is to be repaid by being a good monk. See *bKra shis dga' ldan chos 'phel gling bca' yig*: 498: *sbyin bdag khag gi dad rdzas bu lon lta bur* [..]

[1108] *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 408. This is also a word used to refer to Arhats.

[1109] On this see for example Gyatso, 1989.

[1110] The early bca' yig for a tantric community by Rong zom chos kyi bzang po also connects upsetting the protectors with obstacles and unfavourable circumstances, see *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 399.

[1111] Aris, 1986: 140: *chos khrims zher pas ma mgon dbyings su gshegs/ dam sri spun kyi kha rlangs dum bur 'phro/ mi yi chos lugs zher bas lha rnams nyams/ nag po bdud rigs rnams ha har rgod/* The above translation is an adaptation from that of Aris'.

relationship between the lay- and monk-community. Now, the monks are not mere fields of merit: the purity of their vows affects the local spirits and gods, who control the weather, which eventually affects the harvest. This makes the keeping of vows a matter of life and death.

It may then not be entirely correct to call the obligations monks had 'moral' *per se*, but this perceived duty on the side of the monks presumably did have *an effect* on the moral behaviour of the monastics. In the 16th century bca' yig for Pelri chödè, for example, the initial sponsor and political ruler of 'Phyong rgyas (where the monastery is located) was Zhab drung rin po che hor bsod nams dar rgyas pa. The author, Shes rab 'od zer (1518-1584) calls upon the monks to behave in an exemplary fashion and then lists a large number of ways to achieve that, 'in order to bring to perfection the intention of Zhab drung rin po che hor bsod nams dar rgyas pa' and to not let the efforts of his son (Zhabs drung mi'i dbang po), his relatives, and his ministers go to waste.[1112] This then would invoke a sense of indebtedness toward the sponsors, and in the (likely) case of important benefactors also playing some political role, a certain sense of loyalty as well.

The notion of the word for sponsor, *sbyin bdag*, is more complex than is currently appreciated. In the eyes of many today, being a sponsor or a donor does not fully *oblige* one to giving: one gives out of free choice and religious fervour. The much analysed 'patron-priest relationship' (*mchod yon*/ *mchod sbyin*) – that Tibetans found a favourable construction – may feature the word *sbyin bdag*, which is often explained in the context of political macro-narratives.[1113] When operating on a micro-level, however, the connotation of the word appears often very similar. The relationship between a monastery and a (group of) sponsors was often not without mutual obligations, nor was 'giving' entirely optional, despite there being no official tax-collection. For instance, Kvaerne, who conducted fieldwork among monks from the Bon Menri monastery, notes that each college of the monastery used to have a donor (*sbyin bdag*) who was a lay person from the nomadic Byang thang area and who got 'elected' by the monks who were in charge of the revenue derived from donations (*phan tshun dge rgan*).[1114] This 'rotating community sponsorship' (*sbyin 'dzin pa*) was also in place at Labrang monastery.[1115] The purely 'voluntary' nature of this position then is very much in doubt. In summary, from the above, a picture emerges of mutual obligations and duties, both in economic and religious terms. The bca' yig attempt then to negotiate, calibrate, and maintain this fragile relationship.

Family Ties

The most obvious and ubiquitous relationship monks had with the lay-community was the family-tie, which – contrary to popular perception – was not broken when a person became a monk.[1116] Clarke convincingly argues that in Buddhist India a monk's maintaining contact with his family was never directly discouraged, and that upon examining the ideals of authors and redactors of the extant Vinayas 'there seems to have been little, if any, expectation that when one left home for the religious life

[1112] *dPal ri chos sde bca' yig*: 458: *zhab drung rin po che hor bsod nams dar rgyas pa de nyid kyi dgengs* [*sic*: *dgongs*] *pa mthar phyin ps rdzogs thabs la/*
[1113] One of the most complete discussions of this concept is by Seyfort Ruegg, 1991.
[1114] Kvaerne, 1970: 190.
[1115] Nietupski, 2011: 90.
[1116] According to Schneider the actual family is renounced when one enters into religious life. See Schneider, 2011: 56.

one would either reject one's family or sever all family ties.'[1117] Rather, 'all extant Indian Buddhist monastic laws suggest that monks and nuns could continue to interact with family members both lay and monastic.'[1118] The *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* even contains rulings that *made* monks look after their parents.[1119] The *Uttaragrantha* has the Buddha order 'that even a son who has entered the religious life must procure food and clothing for both father and mother.' And not to do so is an offence (*'das pa*, S. *atyaya*).[1120] While generally speaking, monks were expected to provide service to other monks and not to householders, forsaking one's parents was never a requirement.[1121]

In the case of Tibetan monasticism, we can speak of family-relationships being of mutual benefit: sometimes monks would help their family and other times the family would send food and money.[1122] In fact, the monk often depended on his family for his maintenance in the monastery, much like a child sent to a boarding school would.[1123] Nietupski also notes this relationship between the monk and his family, in the context of Labrang monastery. He extrapolates from this fact that monasteries were therefore 'fully integrated with lay society,'[1124] which then makes Labrang 'a community-funded and community-integrated institution.'[1125] This statement is not applicable to all types of monasteries, however, for we know that monasteries actively sought to distance themselves from the lay-community and that monasteries often did not rely solely on donations by generous lay-people, but that they also owned fields, had lay-dependents (or 'subjects'), were engaged in trade, and sometimes were heavily dependent on government funding.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the fact that many families in pre-modern Tibet had sons in a monastery often created a bond that was more than a religious or an economic one. What furthermore has to be acknowledged is that these emotional ties between the lay-community and the monastery were frequently trans-local. This is to say that monks would regularly join a monastery outside of their locality. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 4 several bca' yig even stipulate coming from an area farther away from the monastery as a requirement for entering. The ties thus created show that there was not necessarily an obvious emotional connection of the local community with the local monastery, but that there existed intricate networks of family-relations that often were also economic ones, stretching throughout and beyond Tibet.[1126] What has not been noted by researchers who work on contemporary Tibetan monasteries in the PRC is that this represents one of the biggest breaks with the past: according to current state regulations, people are only allowed to become monks at monasteries in the region in which they are registered.[1127] This has reduced the monasteries in Tibetan areas from being

[1117] Clarke, 2014: 24. While Clarke also looks at the monks' relationship with their reproductive family (i.e. wife, husband, children), I here mainly treat the family-unit in the sense of the monk's parental home. I have dealt with the former type of family in some detail in Jansen, 2014.
[1118] Clarke, 2014: 26.
[1119] Schopen, 2001: 117.
[1120] Schopen, 2007: 123, 4. The translated passage found in *'Dul ba* (Pa): 112b.
[1121] Silk, 2008: 58.
[1122] Goldstein, 2009: 6.
[1123] The comparison between a monastery and a boarding school is also made in Das, 1965 [1893]: 6.
[1124] Nietupski, 2011: 23.
[1125] ibid.: 24.
[1126] The impact that these monastic networks had on politics, trade, and social relations has hardly been researched so far.
[1127] Personal communication with anonymous monks in Pelyul, March 2011.

interregional and sometimes even international institutions to being largely local establishments.[1128]

What changed when a person 'went forth, from home to homelessness,'[1129] was that from that time onwards he usually was no longer a subject of the estate his family belonged to; that he could no longer lay claim to inheriting his family's agricultural lands, and that – by extension – monks were never held legally responsible for the debts of the family.[1130] These changes had legal implications, but were not likely to fundamentally change the obligations a monk felt toward his parents. There is no doubt that the monastic culture discouraged intense contact with householders, regardless of whether there was a blood relation or not. However, exceptions were always made. One example of this is found in the monastic guidelines for Mindröl ling monastery:

> Generally speaking, because the regular visiting of other people's houses is a cause for the very bad condition of increasing worldly desire, one should not go. In the exceptional case that one needs to go, such as when parents and relatives and the like are sick and dying (*na tsha shi tshad*), one should return not beyond the agreed date of return (*'khor zhag*), when it is not farther than a month's march (*zla lam*) away.[1131]

While relationships with relatives were maintained, they were also reasonably well-regulated. As we have seen in previous chapters, monks could not just leave without permission from the monastic authorities and often could not stay at a lay-person's house for more than three nights.[1132] Visits by family members to their sons at the monastery were equally restricted. This was particularly the case for female relatives. Mindröl ling's guidelines are strict when it comes to women entering monastic residencies:

> Except for when they come to do masonry (*mkhar las*) or roof repairs (*thog 'big*)[1133] in the living quarters (*brang khang*), females, even one's mother and sisters, are not allowed.[1134]

Elsewhere, the same text extends this restriction to all relatives: 'Without a special

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[1128] For the international status of Drepung monastery in the late 17th century see Jansen, 2013a: 120-5.
[1129] *khyim nas khyim med par rab tu byung ba*, this sūtric phrase is common to describe the process of becoming ordained.
[1130] The latter point is made by Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 235.
[1131] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 287: *spyir mi gzhan gyi nang du yang yang 'gro ba 'di yang 'jig rten 'dod sred 'phel ba'i mig rkyen ngan shas kyi rgyur 'dug pas mi 'gro zhing/ pha ma spun zla sogs la na tsha shi chad lta bus mtshon pa'i dmigs bsal 'gro dgos shar kyang zla lam gyi thag ring min phyin 'khor zhag gi dus chod las ma 'das par 'khor bar byed/* The text goes on to state the punishments one would incur by arriving back at the monastery later than the agreed upon date.
[1132] While we tend to assume that this regulation served to maintain monastic identity, Ramble's research in Te, Mustang suggests that while monks and nuns were, generally speaking, exempt from communal duties, they were also not to stay at home overnight, so that they could not benefit their families economically, putting other households at a disadvantage. See Ramble, 2008: 67.
[1133] Here *'big* (the imperative of *'bigs pa*: to pierce) does not make much sense. It is likely that this is a spelling mistake or a variant of *'bubs pa*, which can mean to cover. The example the *Tshig mdzod chen mo* gives is *khang pa'i thog 'bubs pa*. In the Tibetan context this means to fortify the roof by adding another layer of clay and stamping it to make it firm.
[1134] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 279: *khyad par brang khang so sor mkhar las thog 'big lta bu las dgos dus ma gtogs bud med kyi rigs ma sring tsam yang gtan du 'gro sa med/*

permission monks are not to allow their relatives (*nang mi*) and the like in the living quarters.'[1135] More problematic was monks helping out their kin by working on the land.

In some cases, monks could go and assist their family or even fellow-countrymen with agricultural work, with the notable exception of ploughing. If necessary, they could even give some of their monk's shares to their relatives.[1136] These types of allowances, however, do not appear to feature in the bca' yig. In many texts all manner of agricultural labour is forbidden, such as in the Fifth Dalai Lama's guidelines for sKu 'bum byams pa gling: 'Because worldly activities, such as harvesting, contradict the holy Dharmavinaya, they should not be done.'[1137] In his bca' yig for Drepung, the same author also forbids monks to work in the fields, but makes an allowance for the monastery's residents who had not taken vows, who then could proceed wearing lay clothes.[1138] Similarly, the 1792 Bhutanese law code states that monks 'who loiter should be engaged in farming work.'[1139] While rules that regulate and restrict farm work by monastics were in place across the board, we know that at least in more recent times these rules were often not adhered to,[1140] for a number of eye-witness accounts describe monks as helping their families and communities out by providing manual labour – a scarce commodity in most Tibetan and Himalayan regions.

Healthcare for All?

As was alluded to above, monks often took care of their ailing parents and relatives, an obligation that remained after 'leaving the family.' The link between the Sangha and medical care is strong in Buddhist narratives. The Buddha is repeatedly shown in the Vinaya to nurse people afflicted by illness. Monks, including senior ones, are also described as caring for the ill, who in some cases were lay-people.[1141] However, the Vinaya forbids practices that are 'not soteriological' such as astrology and medicine.[1142] The Sri Lankan *katikāvata*s state that except for 'the five co-religionists'[1143] described in the Vinaya no medical treatment was to be provided to others.[1144] The reality seemed to be, however, that throughout Sri Lankan history, monks often practised astrology and medicine.[1145] The *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* states that ill monks needed to be taken care of and even if they would have no medicines,

[1135] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 286: *brang khang rnams su so so'i nang mi sogs kyang dmigs bsal gyi gnang ba ma thob par mi gtong/*
[1136] Miller, 1958: 145. This point is also made in Carrasco, 1959: 104. However, here it is pointed out that they could never work the monastery's land. This is contradicted by information provided by Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 402. They note that monks who were not good at their studies became menial workers within their monasteries and, similarly, could not plough but they could reap and sow.
[1137] *sKu 'bum byams pa gling bca' yig*: 10: *so nam sogs 'jig rten pa'i bya bas dam pa'i chos 'dul ba sun 'byung ba mi byed/*
[1138] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 319. Also see Jansen, 2013a: 116, 7.
[1139] Aris, 1986: 158, 9.
[1140] Kawaguchi, travelling in Tibet in the early 1900s, also notes this reality: 'The Tibetan monks do farming and the "young rowdies" do the work of ordinary soldiers.' Kawaguchi, 1909: 434.
[1141] Schopen, 2008: 637.
[1142] Dreyfus, 2003: 36. The Bhutan law code qualifies this restriction and states monks who have no knowledge should not be doctors, nor do divinations (*mo*). See Aris, 1986: 160.
[1143] i.e. *pañca sahā dhārmika*: *bhikṣu, bhikṣunī, śīksamāna, śrāmaṇera, śrāmānerī.*
[1144] Ratnapala, 1971: 181. Also see Seneviratna, 2000: 201: 'Bhikkus are furthermore prohibited to attend sick people and from practicing medicine.'
[1145] Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 156.

the property of the Sangha should be used to pay for his treatment.[1146] At the same time, the workers who were in the employ of the monastery were also meant to be looked after.[1147] This does not necessarily contradict the prohibition on practicing medicine, as it appears to refer to the cost of healthcare.

While access to healthcare was not widely available in pre-modern Tibet and usually restricted to 'urban' areas,[1148] the study of medicine was promoted throughout the country. Initially, entry to the lCags po ri medical college built in the late 17th century was only possible for monks.[1149] In 1696, its founder, sDe srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, wrote the bca' yig for this college, explicitly modelled on guidelines for actual monasteries.[1150] Similarly, a number of monasteries had colleges solely dedicated to the study of (Tibetan) medicine. For example, Labrang monastery in Amdo had a monastic college for medicine (*sman pa grwa tshang*) called gSo rig gzhan phan gling, founded in 1784 in order to promote the study and development of Tibetan medicine.[1151] Medicines were also often produced at monasteries.[1152] While physicians were by no means always monks, in particular after the 17th century the monastic institutions and the Tibetan government increasingly staked their claim on the education of doctors and the production of medicine.

It is not the case that healthcare was provided freely and without restrictions. The way bca' yig deal with the ill is remarkably close to the Vinaya's stipulations on how to manage the financial aspects of medical care. The most common mention of ill health among monks is in the context of attending the assembly. Ill monks, along with the 'very old' monks, are exempted from having to attend, while they still receive their 'shares.' The 1899 monastic guidelines for sTag lung brang mang thos bsam bstan gling explain:

> The permanent resident *bhikṣu*s who are very old practitioners and the ill, who are known to have no assistance or any capital whatsoever may only receive hand-outs based on the agreement from the general Sangha and the *bla brang* but they may not be given a share of 'the continuing tea' (*rgyun ja*).[1153]

The 1947 guidelines for sTag brag monastery give the following ruling:

> And further, if there are monks who have been enrolled here who have been ill for a long time and whose finances have been depleted, then – in consultation

[1146] Schopen, 1995a: 495.
[1147] Schopen, 1994b: 158.
[1148] There is, however, mention of the existence of 'hospices' (*'gron khang*) from around the 12th century onwards, in which the sick were taken care of. They were often set up by lamas. Stein, 1972 [1962]: 147.
[1149] Arya, 2009: 3. This was not the case for all medical colleges, as the bca' yig written by the Fifth Dalai Lama for Drang srong 'dus pa'i gling (in Shigatse) clearly indicates, see *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs* 2: 79. Nonetheless, part of the title of this place was gSo ba rig pa'i grwa tshang (medical monastic college) and the rules this text contains are very similar to monastic bca' yig, although it stipulates different regulations for clothing of the lay- and monatic members, etc.
[1150] Meyer, 2003: 11. A later bca' yig for the same college from 1740 written by Pho lha ba bsod nams stobs rgyal can be found in *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs* 2: 162-5.
[1151] Anonymous, *Labulengsi Monastery*, 1989: 34.
[1152] This was also the case for monasteries in Song-era China, which often produced medicines, both with an intention to help and to make a profit. See Walsh, 2010: 60; 157, n. 31.
[1153] *sTag lung brang mang thos bsam bstan gling bca' yig*: 200: *thun zhugs kyi dge slong shin tu rgan chos pa dang nad pa yin na g.yog dang mthun rkyen gang yang med nges rigs la dge slong spyi dang bla brang nas gros mthun gyis gnang ba thob na ma gtogs rgyun ja'i skal ba mi gtong/*

> with the preceptor, the chanting-master and the disciplinarian – they need to be provided the cost for treatment and the support for their livelihood and so on, from the general assets (*spyi rdzas*).[1154]

The monastery thus had a duty to take care of chronically ill monks, but *only* if they could not do so themselves. Equally, the Mindröl ling guidelines report:

> When someone gets ill, then he needs to be taken care of untiringly, whether he himself has the means [to pay for] a nurse (*nad g.yog*) and necessities or not, in which case he receives all that is necessary such as a suitable nurse, a physician and healing rituals (*rim gro*).[1155]

Here it is not stipulated who ends up paying for the medical bill, but the point made is that monks who cannot afford care should not be left to fend for themselves. The Pelri chödè guidelines by Shes rab 'od zer from the late 16th century note that monks should not only be cared for in sickness but also in death. The text stipulates not only what prayers needed to be done and for how long, but also what mind-set needed to be maintained. However, it does not mention any sort of remuneration for the received care.[1156]

The Fifth Dalai Lama is more informative on this matter in his bca' yig for Gongra ngesang dorje ling:

> When there is a monk without supplies who becomes ill, the healing rituals need to be done[1157] with the assets of the Three Jewels and/ or of the Sangha.[1158] When he recuperates and he has the means, he should repay all. Also, destitute ill people who are not from here should be helped by means of things like food, clothing, medical examination and instructions (*'dams ngag*).[1159]

Interestingly, here – unlike the rulings in the *katikāvata*s – the monks are also to help people who are not (necessarily) monks and who come from elsewhere. The bca' yig for Kong stod dung dkar monastery in 1943 has the following to say about the topic of illness:

> If there is someone who is ill and if he has no possessions, then he needs to be taken care of by means of the assets of the Sangha and the Three Jewels (*dge 'dun dang dkon mchog gi rdzas*). Once he has recovered, if there are materials

[1154] *sTag brag dgon pa bca' yig*: 639, 40: *yang grwa pa 'di kha'i sgrig 'grim rigs gzugs po mi thang ba'i nad yun ring po byas nas 'tsho ba bkras nges rigs 'dug na slob dpon dbu chos bcas nas bgros bsdur thog sman rin dang 'tsho thebs sogs spyi rdzas nas sprod/*

[1155] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 284: *nad pa byung na de la nad g.yog dang yo byad sogs rang rkyen 'byor ba 'dug na dang/ de min nyer mkho'i chas blo mthun gyi nad g.yog sman pa rim gro sogs rkyen gang 'byor gyis mi ngal bar bskyang/*

[1156] *dPal ri chos sde bca' yig*: 457.

[1157] *rim gro byed*, this phrase is ambiguous as it could merely refer to any type of help or more specifically to 'healing rituals'.

[1158] Not clear here is whether the assets of the Sangha and the Three Jewels are conceived of separately or as one unit.

[1159] *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 228: *grwa ris yo byed med pa'i nad pa byung tshe dkon mchog dang dge 'dun gyi rdzas kyi steng nas rim gro byed/ nad sos nas dngos po 'byor ba yod na kun bsab/ sde 'dir mi gtogs pa'i nad pa nyam thag pa byung yang zas gos sman dpyad gdams ngag sogs kyis phan gdags/*

> that can be taken from, for example, his own region, then the deficit of the Three Jewels' assets can be replaced. But if there are not any, his relatives and countrymen[1160] should not be held accountable. If there are people in the vicinity who do not belong to this region (*sde*), lay or ordained, who are ill, they should be helped by means of assistance, food, clothing, medicine and the like. If you have been to a place where there is a contagious disease, do not go among the general Sangha, as this will be harmful.[1161]

This text clearly ascribes an important task to the monastery to take care of ailing lay-people and – if they are truly destitute – to pay for their treatment. This treatment did not turn out to be necessarily free of cost for all poor monks, however. The bca' yig for Ramoche monastery from the 1740s offers an interesting way to repay the medical debts:

> Some ill people, who have no wealth at all, are looked after by the monastery officials (*las sne pa*) and supported by the monastery. Monks like these who, after having been provided for by the government and the monastery due to their financial destitution, have not yet settled their debts, should be made to compensate this by doing home rituals, by way of exception.[1162]

Unfortunately, this text does not give a justification for this. It might be argued that this rule was created in the interest of fairness – that all monks pay equally for their healthcare regardless of their level of wealth. It is more likely, however, that the encouragement to repay the costs – and as witnessed by the other bca' yig, to have the monastery pay only when it is absolutely necessary – has to do with the fact that the wealth used would (in most cases) be drawn from the Sangha's assets. We have seen in the previous chapter that the depletion of these assets was to be avoided at all cost – in the interest of karma, not of fairness.

Monasteries, aside from the medical colleges, do not appear to have made efforts to develop any type of structural healthcare[1163] or geriatric care.[1164] This stands in contrast with the recent efforts by monasteries in exile and in Tibet alike to build public clinics, which often provide very affordable (primary) healthcare to people of all walks of life. While the history of Tibetan medicine currently receives scholarly attention, an investigation into actual medical care (of monks and lay-people) in pre-modern Tibet still remains a desideratum. For now, from the above may be gleaned that, if monks were generally speaking expected to pay for their treatments

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[1160] I suggest emending *gnyan pas* to *gnyan par*.

[1161] *Kong stod dung dkar dgon bca' yig*: 589: *nad pa byung na yo byed med tshe dge 'dun dang dkon mchog gi rdzas kyi steng nas de la rim gro byed/ nad sos nas rang yul lta bu nas rdzas len rgyu yod na dkon mchog gi rdzas la 'bag tshe gun gsab/ med kyang nad pa yul gnyan pas nyes par mi 'gyur/ sde 'dir mi gtogs pa'i skya btsun nad pa'i ris nye 'khor du byung na nad g.yog zas gos sman sogs kyis phan gdags/ nad rim yod sar phyin na dge 'dun spyi la gnod pas mi 'gro/*

[1162] *Ra mo che bca' yig*: 130, 1: *dngos chas gtan nas med pa'i nad pa'i rigs la las sne pa rnams nas lta rtog ngos grwa tshang nas 'tsho skyong byed/ de mtshungs grwa rigs dngos chas 'khyer zhan pas gzhung dang grwa tshang nas bsgrubs rjes skyin tshab ma 'grig par grong chog la dmigs bsal gyis btang ba'i gun gsab byed 'jug/*

[1163] The bca' yig for Drepung, however, does mention the post of *sman sbyin pa*, the giver of medicines. This person may have been a chemist of some sort, but unfortunately no information is given. See *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 304.

[1164] Khedrup notes that in Sera it was usually the 'rogue' monks who would take care of the aging. He recounts that they had come across an elderly monk who had died in his room a long time before, without anyone noticing. See Khedrup, Richardson and Skorupski, 1986: 78.

themselves, lay-people were too.

The Monastery and the Education of Lay-people

Attitudes to education in Buddhist countries have varied a great deal throughout the centuries. According to one of the Sinhalese *katikāvata*s, it is maintained that: 'without intending to ordain them Bhikkhus should not teach the children of lay-people.'[1165] However, Gombrich notes that in Sri Lanka, monks were the primary educators as they taught reading and writing as well as moral values and literature.[1166] Spiro states that in pre-modern Burma all education was provided by monks and that children only attended the monastery school. During Spiro's fieldwork in Burma the monk continued to serve as schoolmaster in the rural areas.[1167]In China, a temple ordinance of 1915 made all Buddhist monasteries and temples open schools that would provide a general and a religious education, but the text does not suggest that monks or nuns were to function as teachers.[1168]

In Tibet, the level of literacy has been traditionally comparatively low and an educational system, comparable to modern times, only started to develop properly in the early 20th century. While perhaps not applicable across the board, one could say that literacy was largely in the hands of the monastics. Kawaguchi notes in this regard that only at religious schools could one obtain even 'a comparatively advanced education' and as has been alluded to in Chapter 4, the doors of those schools were, 'of course, shut to those of humble origin.'[1169] The sons of the nobility and of wealthy subjects were either sent to the monastery to get an education or tutors were hired.[1170] These were often 'retired monks',[1171] who would live in the same house or 'active monks' who would make house calls.[1172] The educational contribution that the monastic institution made was also apparent in Spiti in the 19th century. The Gazetteer of Kangra reports:

> Nearly the whole of the male population of Spiti receives some education at the monasteries; the heir to the family estate goes when a boy in the winter to the ancestral cell with his younger brothers, who are to spend their life there, and passes two or three winters there under instruction. Consequently, nearly every man can read [..][1173]

An unstructured educational arrangement as apparently once existed in Spiti could only be maintained in the case that the monastery and the local community were a close-knit society. In Central Tibet, this was often not the case, in particular when it came to the larger monasteries. However, according to Cassinelli and Ekvall, even the poorest in the Sakya principality could get an education at a neighbouring monastery. The reason given for this is that 'Tibetan Buddhism implied that the extension of literacy was beneficial because it enabled more people to participate in an additional

[1165] Ratnapala, 1971: 156, 7.
[1166] Gombrich, 2006 [1988]: 147.
[1167] Spiro, 1971: 307.
[1168] Dicks, 2014: 242.
[1169] Kawaguchi, 1909: 435.
[1170] Spencer Chapman, 1984 [1938]: 95.
[1171] Presumably, this refers to monks who did not live in the monastery.
[1172] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 271; French, 1995a: 329.
[1173] Diack, 1994 [1897] III: 91.

degree of religious observance.'[1174] Be that as it may, such notions have not resulted in any efforts to set up a well-organized school-system. Another manner in which education could be had was by sending one's son to the monastery for just a short period of time. This is also noted by Miller, who remarks that many young novices returned to their families after having received a nominal education.[1175]

Certain politically significant institutions did set up schools that allowed lay-people to study there. Das mentions the 'boarding schools in Tashi Lhunpo' in the late 19th century and notes that the monastery maintained a school called *labrang lobra* (**bla brang slob grwa*) for the education of the advanced students, both monk and lay. People who wanted to pass the government exams[1176] went there; it was not set up for beginners. Das mentions that there were no fees as the teachers were provided by the state. Furthermore, the school was not open to women, because women were not allowed in the monastery compound. Upon completion, the students were required to serve the government and those who were unable or unwilling to do so had to pay a large sum to be exempted.[1177]

It is important to note here that all types of education available to laymen (for women were hardly ever formally educated) were dominated by Tibetan monastic culture. This means that monastic education left a mark on society that went far beyond the direct sphere of influence of the monastery. The contemporary author Re mdo sengge, a monk from Kirti monastery, notes the following:

> These monasteries are the foundation on the basis of which Tibetan education, moral behaviour, arts and crafts have developed and flourished. Therefore, the Tibetan system of monastic learning within the history of Tibetan education can be compared to a very precious jewel rosary bead.[1178]

While monk-authors would naturally be keen to emphasize the importance of the monastic education, there can be no doubt about it being something that we need to keep in mind when trying to understand Tibetan societies from a historical perspective.[1179]

Concluding Remarks: the Social Position of the Monk in Tibetan Society

The bhikṣu is the best, the śrāmaṇera is in between, and the resident of the household is the lowest.[1180]

[1174] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 323.

[1175] Miller, 1958: 141. In particular among Tibetan Buddhist families in Nepal, the practice of sending young boys to the monastery only to call them back when they reach adulthood or are needed to help the family is widespread.

[1176] Presumably, those of the 'Tashi Lhunpo government', not the Ganden Phodrang.

[1177] Das, 1965 [1893]: 9, 10. The Ganden Phodrang also set up similar schools: the rTse slob grwa for aspiring monk-officials and the rTsis slob grwa for aspiring lay-officials. See Travers, 2011: 167. These schools were generally accessible only to the elite.

[1178] *Bod kyi shes yon*: 67: *dgon sde 'di dag ni bod kyi shes yon dang/ bzang po'i kun spyod/ bzo rig lag rtsal sogs gang las byung zhing 'phel ba'i gzhi rtsa gcig bu yin pas bod kyi dgon sde khag gi gsan bsam gyi lam srol ni/ bod kyi shes yon lo rgyus nang shig tu rin thang che ba'i rin po che'i phreng rdog lta bu zhig yin/*

[1179] Again, the education of lay-people in historical Tibet is very much understudied, which, in part, may have to do with the lack of sources.

[1180] This citation is found in a bca' yig by the Fifth Dalai Lama, *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 222: *dge slong mchog yin dge tshul 'bring/ khyim na gnas pa tha ma yin/* This is cited from an unnamed text (*gzhung*). The quote is generally attributed to the *Śrīkālacakragarbhanāmatantra*. It can be located in *bsDus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad / rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su*

The social position of monks fluctuated a great deal throughout history, both in Buddhist and in Christian contexts.[1181] That of the Tibetan monks seems to have been comparatively stable, largely due to the fact that there was generally more religious homogeneity in Tibet. Furthermore, while monasteries regularly found themselves in a position of power, this did not mean that monks were seen to be infallible or standing above the law: there are various instances in which people are reported to protest against the actions of monks. Miller remarks that acute dissatisfaction with the monastery's handling could cause the community to switch to a rival monastery. This means that the lay-community thus could potentially influence the monastery through its personnel and by granting or withholding funds.[1182]

As shown above, the bca' yig make continuous implicit references to the danger of losing the support of the laity. In this regard, the texts function similarly to the Vinayas. Horner's remarks on early Buddhist monasticism ring equally true for the Tibetan context: 'Historically, the success of the Early Buddhist experiment in monasticism must be in great part attributed to the wisdom of constantly considering the susceptibilities and criticisms of the laity.'[1183] At the same time, the more mundane types of contact with lay-people had to be discouraged,[1184] and as identities needed to be kept separated, the layman tended to be portrayed as the opposite of what a monk needed to be, and vice versa.[1185] In reality, however, 'the Tibetan monastic world defies both idealistic and cynical expectation: neither do we have here a world of pure spirituality nor of Machiavellian intrigue. It exists not on the community's periphery, but very much in the thick of it.'[1186]

When examining normative Tibetan works that only implicitly address issues of social justice, we see that for the authors, the interests of lay-people are taken seriously, without being sentimental. In other words, while the monastic institution in pre-modern Tibet was most definitely not a charitable institution, like other religious institutions in Europe and beyond, it held 'the function of a social safety net'.[1187] However, as has been established previously, rules often had to be created only in order to right certain wrongs, and I suspect that many prescriptive (and indeed proscriptive) pronouncements, often made by incarnates and other figures of religious authority, were – to a certain extent – ignored by the managerial 'establishment' and individual monks. These monks had to be continuously reminded of the importance of the laity.

The importance of the monkhood for the laity is – due to lack of sources – less well documented. In this chapter, the ritual role of the Sangha has been mentioned:

'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od ces bya ba (D845): 262a: *gsum las dge slong mchog yin zhing/ 'bring ni dge tshul zhes bya ste/ khyim gnas de las tha ma'o/* and alternatively in *Trisaṃvaraprabhāmālā* (*sDom gsum 'od kyi phreng ba*) (D3727): 55a: *rten ni gsum las dge slong mchog /'bring ni dge tshul yin par 'dod/ /khyim na gnas pa tha ma'o/* It is usually cited in the context of the quality of vows, but here it is more like an encouragement for monks to keep the vows. It may, however, have contributed to a sense of 'moral superiority,' possibly giving rise to a sense of entitlement.

[1181] For Christian monasticism in a comparative perspective, see for example, Silber, 1985: 264. From a diachronic perspective, perhaps the social (and legal) position of Chinese Buddhist monks was most subject to change, see for example, Barrett, 2014.

[1182] Miller, 1958: 138.

[1183] Horner, 1949 vol 1: xxix.

[1184] This point is also made by Miller, 1958: 149.

[1185] Bailey and Mabbett, 2006: 181.

[1186] Gyatso, 2003: 243.

[1187] Sedlacek, 2011: 78.

monks and nuns are needed to perform rituals, in the case of death, sickness and other important life-events. Significantly, the view that for the Buddhist Teachings to survive the Sangha needs to be maintained is common among both lay and ordained Buddhists. Wangchuk provides the rationale for this argument, noting that the Vinaya is part of the Buddhist Teachings and that 'without monk- or nunhood the Vinaya would be dead.'[1188]

In more recent times, the monks are seen to have been given additional responsibilities toward the laity and to 'Tibetan society' as a whole. The monks Schwartz interviewed showed a strong sense of being bearers and preservers of tradition, 'serving Tibetans by setting an example.'[1189] With Tibetan traditions under threat, the monks are not just the preservers of religion, but have also become culture-heroes of sorts. In addition, with the power structures that were in place in traditional Tibet having disappeared, the relationship is viewed by many Tibetans in Tibet as a cooperative and complementary one, 'where both people and resources are willingly committed by the community to the monasteries because the benefit is understood in general social terms.'[1190] One could perhaps speculate that political developments since the 1950s have strengthened the bond between the laity and the monkhood. In particular, the restrictions regarding religious practices and the PRC's control over monastic affairs are seen by many Tibetans as 'directly interfering with the traditional relationship between the monastic community and the laity.'[1191]

This traditional relationship was bound to restrictions of its own. The legal and judicial aspects of this bond between the laity and the monkhood in pre-modern Tibetan Buddhist society are equally drastically different from the current circumstances. It is this, and more generally the legal position of the monastery, that I turn to below.

[1188] Wangchuk, 2005: 228: 'ohne das Mönchs- oder Nonnentum wäre der Vinaya tot.'
[1189] Schwartz, 1994: 733.
[1190] ibid.: 731.
[1191] ibid.: 730.

8. JUSTICE AND THE JUDICIAL ROLE OF THE MONASTERY

Introduction

Beneficence [..] *is less essential to the existence of society than justice. Society may subsist, though not in the most comfortable state, without beneficence: but the prevalence of injustice must utterly destroy it.*[1192]

The judicial position of the monastery in traditional Tibetan society is not well known. The numerous examples given in previous chapters suggest that indeed the monastic authorities had the power to discipline and punish their resident monks. It has furthermore been noted that 'the monastic estate was a legal unit.'[1193] Unknown, however, is how this legal unit functioned. To what extent were monasteries autonomous in terms of jurisdiction? Speaking of Buddhist monasticism in general terms and without relation to a particular cultural setting, it has been suggested that 'monks are under no authority but their own order'[1194] and that '[t]heoretically, the monk is no longer subject to the secular authority and answers only to the Buddhist code of discipline, the Vinaya.'[1195] However, there is historical evidence that monks in Tibet did occasionally get tried on the basis of state law.[1196] My informants, in answering the question as to how the bca' yig relate to the secular law, are unanimous in their understanding that the monastic guidelines – and thus the behaviour of monks – need to be in accord with the law of the land. A scholar-monk from Kirti, Re mdo sengge, responded in the following way:

> Generally speaking the bca' yig falls under the state law (*rgyal khrims*): the contents of the monastic guidelines can never be in contradiction with the general law. In old Tibet there was never any such problem. Nowadays it is quite difficult, because we are focussed on education, our own system of education. China does not want the monks to study, they want them to stay put and just pray.[1197]

The issue that this scholar refers to is that of the minimum age set by the Chinese authorities to enter the monastery – it is currently higher than is customary or ideal in Tibetan monasteries and this policy is seen as a serious limitation to the education of monks. It presents a large number of monks in contemporary Tibet with an ethical problem, although taken on the whole, prioritizing is not difficult: the monastic customs are seen as more important than state policy.

If, in pre-modern Tibet, monastic estates were indeed legal units, could monasteries try and punish lay-people who committed crimes within their jurisdiction? And, for what 'crimes' would a monk be left to the secular authorities? How sharp was the distinction between secular and monastic law? These are crucial questions, the answers to which are important to determine the overall position of the monastery, and by extension, monastic Buddhism in Tibetan society.

[1192] Smith, 2002 [1759] II. ii 3.3: 86.
[1193] French, 1995a: 169.
[1194] Carrasco, 1959: 121.
[1195] Vermeersch, 2008: 151.
[1196] French, 1995a: 47.
[1197] Personal communication with Re mdo sengge, Dharamsala, July 2012.

According to Ellingson, bca' yig were based on 'secular' law codes.[1198] A preliminary comparison of the bca' yig and the extant legal codes of Tibet indeed indicates that – in particular, terminologically and linguistically – there are striking similarities between the two genres.[1199] However, it appears more likely that these similarities are due to the fact that the authors of the two types of texts were often one and the same, and as indicated in the previous chapter, the educated few were almost always heavily influenced by monastic training, in one way or the other. There are even instances of law codes that were explicitly based on monastic guidelines, of which the code of conduct issued by the Bhutanese state (*sGrig lam rnam gzhag*) that is in current use is a case in point.[1200] The question as to how exactly monastic guidelines and legal documents are related requires further investigation,[1201] but in this chapter the focus lies on the way in which the bca' yig inform us about monastic legal policies and practices, and the Buddhist sensibilities that may be embedded within these.

Such a discussion belies larger issues, such as the relation between Buddhism and the execution of justice. According to French, the two are intimately related as she maintains that: 'Mind training and inner morality are also the center of the legal system for Tibetan Buddhists because it is the afflicted mind that creates the conflict and unhappiness that brings about legal disputes.'[1202] She argues in her anthropological study of the legal system in traditional Tibet that ultimately '[a]ll laws were understood as religious.'[1203] And following that, all punishment 'was meant to promote a return to inner morality.'[1204] This, whether it concerns the secular or the monastic legal policies, seems highly questionable.

The many punishments enumerated in the monastic guidelines suggest that the aim of such measures is only to a very limited extent to purify negative karma. Rather – comparable to legal systems all over the world – the goal of punitive measures and rules *an sich* is to keep the peace and maintain a balance. Authors of regulations were not so much concerned with the individual's karma, mind training, or morality, but with protecting the monastery, the Sangha, and thus the Dharma against the threat of lawlessness. The bca' yig then, when they note the importance of adhering to the rules, do entreat the monks to heed their vows, but at the same time in the practical application of the rules (or monastic laws), karma, mindfulness, and morality play a minor role.

The Judicial Position and Jurisdiction of Monks and Monasteries

According to a narrative found in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya*, a separation of the secular and religious law is ideal: the king must acknowledge that lay law does not apply to the monks and, more obviously, monastic law does not apply to the laymen.[1205] In the Tibetan case however, it is obvious that this strict division was seen as neither practical nor desirable. However, clear distinctions *were* made. Early on in

[1198] Ellingson, 1990: 205.
[1199] A brief overview of their similarities was given in Chapter 2.
[1200] Penjore, 2011: 23.
[1201] In terms of chronology, naturally 'Tibetan secular law preceded ecclesiastic law,' which only began with the first ordinations at Samye in the middle of the second half of the 8th century. See van der Kuijp, 1999: 289.
[1202] French, 1998: 519, n. 40.
[1203] French, 1995a: 345.
[1204] ibid.: 344.
[1205] Schopen, 1995b: 117.

the history of Tibetan monasticism, monks were granted a legal status distinct from that of lay-people. The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, citing the sKar chung edict which is purported to have been issued by the ruler Khri lde srong btsan (a.k.a. Sad na legs, r. c.800-815), records this position of privilege:

> Those who have gone forth may not be given as slaves to others. They may not be suppressed [by tax]. Having placed them on the protection of householders, they are not subject to lawsuits (*gyod*).[1206]

The lCang bu Inscription, issued by Khri lde srong btsan's son, Khri gtsug lde btsan (r. 815-841), chronicles the foundation of the lCang bu Temple and displays similar sentiments. The edict states that the gifts given in perpetuity (*sku yon rgyun*) should not be lost and also that the great temple (*gtsug lag khang chen po*) and its subjects cannot be taxed or punished.[1207] This edict places the judicial authority, over both the Sangha and the laity, firmly in the hands of the monks residing there.

An early law code ascribed to Khri srong lde btsan, despite having been only poorly preserved in secondary sources, makes a distinction between monks and tantric practitioners (*sngags pa*). It stipulates that people are to venerate and bow to monks and suggests harsh punishments for those who insult or harm them.[1208] While monks clearly enjoyed a privileged position, it did not mean that they were above the law. In fact, legal regulations from Imperial times, as preserved in later historicographical records, show that punishments of crimes against the king were harsher than those committed against the *Triratna*, which of course included the monkhood.[1209] By contrast, the *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* states that in 988, the then-ruler over Western Tibet, Lha bla ma ye shes 'od issued a 'religious edict' (*chos rtsigs*), which prioritized religion over the 'secular'. The text reports that his whole entourage swore an oath to uphold this, calling upon the protector Pehar as a witness.[1210] The (legal) authority of the ruler with regard to the monasteries seems to have been greater in earlier times than later on.[1211]

It appears that the priviledged legal status of Tibetan monks established in the beginning set the stage for centuries to come. Monasteries, together with their estates, seem to have been 'judicial islands': the monastic authorities had the power to try and punish whomever was seen to be in the wrong, be they monks or lay-people. Dargyay reports that, in the first half of the 20th century, monastic estates (*mchod gzhis*) even had two levels of (monastic) judicial authority: The lowest judicial court was headed by the steward of the monastery (**gzhis sdod pa*), the higher one by the manager (*gnyer pa*).[1212]

At the same time, the monks were supposed to keep to the secular state-laws as well as regional laws, which were often not more than customs. Many of these

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[1206] As found in Tucci, 1950: 53; 102: *rab tu byung ba'i rnams gzhan gyi bran du mi sbyin/ nan gyis mi dbab/ khyim pa'i khrin la gtags te gyod la mi gdags shing /*

[1207] *khral myi dbab pa dang/ khwa dang chad ka myi bzhes pa.* Richardson, 1985: 94-9.

[1208] Stein, 1972 [1962]: 143, 4. The text Stein used is recorded as *Bod kyi rgyal po khri srong lde'u bstan gyis chos khrims bsdams pa'i le'u*, and is found in the *Padma bka' thang*: 397-402.

[1209] Uebach, 1989: 829.

[1210] Vitali, 2003: 57.

[1211] Similarly, in Sri Lanka, the monasteries were at first under direct jurisdiction of the king, while from the 10th century onwards monasteries were allowed or perhaps even required to manage their own property. Gunawardana, 1979: 4.

[1212] Dargyay, 1982: 74.

customs were seen to be already included in the vows and rules that monks were committed to in the first place, such as not killing and not stealing.

The most basic and widespread 'secular' legal code is 'The Sixteen Pronouncements' (*Zhal lce bcu drug*). A number of variations and adaptations exist resulting in there being various numbers of pronouncements, but the text is traditionally attributed to Srong btsan sgam po. The colophon of one relatively early variation, 'The Thirteen Pronouncements' (*Zhal lce bcu gsum*), mentions king Ādarśamukha (*me long gdong*) as the one making the pronouncements. This king features in the Jātakas as a previous birth of the Buddha, who was known as a just king.[1213] The ascription to him maintains thus the secular nature of the code while granting it the authority of the Buddha. This textual genre had a mainly symbolic function, but nonetheless was deeply engrained in the 'legal consciousness' of the Tibetans.[1214] A relatively late set of monastic guidelines for 'O chu dgon from 1918 connects these sixteen rules with keeping monastic discipline and basic ethical behaviour:

> Because the purity of the Sangha's discipline, the foundation for the well-being of the region, and the practice of the ten virtues is dependent of the sixteen pure 'human rules' (*mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug*), monks and lay-people all need to be mindful and conscientious of not engaging in actions that go against these.[1215]

Equally, the guidelines for Mindröl ling note that monks had to adjust their behaviour according to the contemporary and contextual 'human rules' (*mi chos*).[1216]

When monks went against those by committing particularly heinous crimes, such as murder and treason, they tended to get tried under state law.[1217] Bell writes that a monk who committed a murder would first be flogged and expelled from the monastery and then tried according to secular law.[1218] A similar type of legal ideology is attributed to Emperor Xuanwu 宣武 (r. 500-516), who attempted to regulate the Chinese Sangha in an edict:

> Since black and white [monk and lay] are two different things, the laws (法 *fa*) and Vinaya (律 *lu*) are also different [..] From this moment on, let all Buddhist monks who commit the crime of murder or worse be judged in accordance with secular laws. For all other crimes, let them be judged according to the Vinaya.[1219]

While in Tibetan society there occasionally was a rather strict theoretical divide between state and religious justice, in practice, the two were often intertwined. This,

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[1213] Schuh, 1984: 298.

[1214] Variations of this text were reproduced and circulated widely throughout Tibet, well into the 20th century. See Pirie, 2013: 239-41.

[1215] *'O chu dgon bca' yig*: 178: [..] *yul khams bde skyid 'byung ba'i gzhi rtsa dge 'dun rnams kyi tshul khrims rnam par dag pa dang dge bcu'i spangs blangs/ mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug la rag las pas ser skya tshang mas 'gal ba'i las la mi zhugs pa dran shes bag yod kyi zin pa byed dgos/*

[1216] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 312: *dus skabs dang sbyar ba'i mi chos kyi gnad dang yang bstun/* Here *mi chos* is more likely to refer to local lay-sensibilities, customs or rules.

[1217] According to Goldstein, this was also the case for Drepung. See Goldstein, 1998: 19.

[1218] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 201. This is reiterated by French, 1995b: 103. This issue is discussed in further detail below.

[1219] Heirman, 2006: 73.

of course is also related to the fact that politics and religion were combined (*chos srid zung 'brel*), the most notable expression of this being the office of the Dalai Lama. Bell mentions that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama would occasionally try legal cases when he was a novice (probably *śrāmaṇera*) but that he stopped this practice later on,[1220] likely when – or because – he became a *bhikṣu* (*dge slong*). Within existing Buddhist ideologies, there are many justifications for why a ruler should bring a wrongdoer to justice.[1221] In the bca' yig, the implementation of rules is often portrayed as being crucial to the (social) order. This sentiment is found in the set of monastic guidelines for Sera monastery from 1820:

> For the teachers and the disciplinarians and the like not to implement the rules is to undo the Teachings from their base. Therefore, from now on, being biased and not upholding of the rules, be they big or small, without being concerned with the consequences, which is irresponsible, need to be vigourously and continuously suppressed.[1222]

Golden Yokes: Religious Laws and Secular Laws

The secular and religious 'law-systems' are regularly described as 'the golden yoke' and 'the silken knot' respectively. In post-dynastic sources the terms were used to describe the government of Khri srong lde btsan and Khri gtsug lde btsan. Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192), in his description of the Era of Fragmentation (*sil bu'i dus*), notes that during this time 'the silken knot of the rule of the Dharma unravelled and the golden yoke of the rule of the king broke.'[1223] The most common descriptions attached to this imagery convey that the golden yoke of secular law is heavy and that the silken knot of the religious law is tight,[1224] implying that both are tied around and resting upon the necks of citizens.

Interestingly, at least two sets of monastic guidelines have 'golden yoke' (*gser gyi gnya' shing*) in their title. The set of guidelines written by the Seventh Dalai Lama for Namgyel is called: 'The Golden Yoke: the Monastic Guidelines Written for Namgyel Monastery.'[1225] The bca' yig for Tashi Lhunpo from 1876 also carries this phrase in its title and 'explains' it in verse:

> This magnificent golden vajra-yoke
> That evokes joy among many intelligent ones,
> Clamps down on foolish people who behave badly,
> While it strengthens the two good traditions[1226] and spreads joy.[1227]

[1220] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 157.

[1221] Arguments found in various canonical sources are given in Zimmerman, 2006.

[1222] *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 183: *bla ma dge skos sogs nas sgrig lam ma mnan na bstan pa 'go nas bshigs pa yin pas da nas bzung phyogs lhungs dang/ rgyu la ma bltas par sgrig lam che phra tshang mar 'khur med ma byas par tsha nan rgyun chags su dgos rgyu yin/*

[1223] *Chos 'byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi'i bcud*: 446: *chos khrims dar gyi mdud pa dra ba grol/ rgyal khrims gser gyi gnya' shing chag*. Also see Davidson, 2005: 71 and Wangdu and Diemberger, 2000: 91, n. 349.

[1224] This imagery is also found in Aris, 1976: 623: *chos khrims dar gyi mdud pa bzhin du bsdams/ rgyal khrims gser gyi gnya' shing lta bu'i ljid kyis gnon te/*. In the Bhutanese governmental decree that Aris treats in this article the two are said to make up 'the good legal system' of the country, which is presented as a prerequisite for happiness in the land.

[1225] *rNam rgyal grwa tshang bca' yig*: 64: *rNam rgyal grwa tshang la bstsal ba'i bca' yig gser gyi gnya' shing* [..]

[1226] i.e. religious (*chos lugs*) and worldly traditions (*rjig rten gyi lugs*).

Here the phrase 'golden vajra-yoke' appears to suggest that both the Dharma and secular authority (the two orders) were represented by this text, and indeed by its author, the Eighth Panchen Lama, whose political position had to be asserted and reasserted so as to prevent the Lhasa government from overpowering the monastery and its significant domains and assets.[1228] In other cases, however, the golden yoke only refers to the internal rules of the Sangha, such as in a bca' yig written by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1927:

> The internal rules of the Sangha, which are in accord with place and time and which are in fact an abbreviated form of skillful means, are clean like the stem of a lotus and suitable to carry[1229] like a golden yoke.[1230]

For the Fifth Dalai Lama, the golden yoke belongs to religious imagery, though this does not necessarily exclude a possible secular affiliation. The closing verses of his monastic guidelines for Drepung convey that he sees the combination of the two traditions as leading to the happiness of all, with the Dharma (here: *bka' khrims*) being the primary factor:

> By means of the extremely heavy golden yoke
> Of the Buddhist law [upheld] at the palace that possesses the two traditions
> That rules every single beautiful area of the golden ones (?),
> May beings be led towards glorious happiness.[1231]

The combination of secular and religious traditions was seen by many as the ideal way to rule a country. The legal code for Bhutan from the 18th century expresses a similar view, while using different imagery: 'By placing the bejeweled parasol of the Buddha's Teachings on the spokes of the wheel of the state law, the field of merit will remain for long.'[1232]

The picture that emerges from the above examples portrays the need to uphold the law – be it religious or secular – for the sake of the general well-being, in which social order could be said to be implied. This suggests that both types of law

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[1227] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 38: *rab mang blo ldan mgu ba skyed byed pa'i/ brjid ldan gser gyi rdo rje'i gnya shing 'dis/ blun rmongs 'chal por spyod rnams gnya' mnan te/ bzang po'i lugs zung spel la spro dga brtas/* The title can be translated as 'The magnificent golden vajra-yoke that adds and makes up for deficiencies of the life-force of the two orders: a work definitely necessary for the whole central population of the Sangha and the subsidiaries, such as the internal estates of Tashi Lhunpo.' *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 35: *bKra shis lhun po dpal gyi bde chen phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i gling gi dge 'dun dbu dmangs dang/ bla brang nang ma sogs lto zan khongs gtogs dang bcas pa spyi khyab tu nges dgos pa'i yi ge khrims gnyis srog gi chad mthud rab brjid gser gyi rdo rje'i gnya' shing dge/*

[1228] Elsewhere in the same text, however, the imagery of the golden yoke is used, quoting the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, in the analogy of the blind turtle, to describe how rare attaining a precious human life is. See *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 60.

[1229] This is a play on words: *bkur ba* means both 'to carry' and 'to respect'.

[1230] *bKra shis dga' ldan chos 'phel gling bca' yig*: 498, 9: *thabs mkhas mdor bsdus kyi rang bzhin yul dus dang bstun pa'i dge 'dun nang khrims padma'i sbubs ltar gtsang ba dang/ gser gyi gnya' shing ltar bkur bar 'os la/*

[1231] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 321: *gser ldan dga' ma'i khyon kun ma lus par/ dbang bsgyur lugs zung ldan pa'i pho brang che'i/ bka' khrims gser gyi gnya' shing rab lci bas/ 'gro rnams bde skyid dpal la 'god par shog/*

[1232] Aris, 1986: 126; 102b: *rgyal khrims 'khor lo'i rtsibs su rgyal bstan nor bu'i gdugs dkar bkod pas dge zhing yun ring gnas pa*

implemented punishments for similar reasons and in similar ways.[1233] As previously alluded to, this implementation of the rules, as contained in the monastic guidelines, concerned both monks and lay-people. We now turn to the way, and the extent to which, monasteries were involved in lay-people's justice.

Justice, the Monks and the Laity

A number of bca' yig make it clear that the extent of jurisdiction was not necessarily based on the division between lay-people and monks, but rather that it was geographically determined. The moment one found oneself on monastic territory – this could be an estate (*mchod gzhis*) or the monastery-ground – one needed to abide by the rules belonging to that institution. This is in fact a more general Tibetan notion, as captured in an often used proverb: 'One should abide by the laws of the land of which one drinks the water.'[1234] Here the notion of law should be understood to have a rather broad meaning.

The Tibetan secular laws appear to have been viewed as 'reliable suggestions',[1235] rather than records of case law, and it is likely that this was also true with regard to local laws or customs. Many, assumedly, were passed on orally. This was in most cases, also true for monastery-level jurisdiction: most of the laws or rules would have been understood by the local populations, but not physically accessible. The bca' yig then only address those instances in which the rules were regularly broken, when the rules were seen to be in need of clarification, or when they concerned activities that the monk-authors felt particularly strongly about. The most common example is the killing of animals – either by hunting or slaughter – on monastic territory or within view of the monastic grounds.

The connection between territorial control – in particular with regard to hunting – and the bca' yig has been noted previously by Huber. He discusses the 'sealing' (*rgya sdom pa*) of specific areas, at specific times, while: 'In the individual monastic regulations, sealing was applied to a generally smaller, well defined unit of territory over which the monastery had rights and control.'[1236] The descriptions of monastic territory given in the bca' yig are sometimes very detailed, while others are vaguer. The guidelines for Sera je note that in the areas to the east of Sera:

> One is not to buy or sell chang or slaughter animals. One may not burn black things (*nag bcangs mi bsreg*),[1237] or keep pigs and chickens. One is not to hunt for birds and wildlife in the mountains behind the monastery and in the vicinity.[1238]

[1233] In contrast, in Sri Lanka in the 1970s, a high-ranking monk is quoted as saying that monastic law, 'unlike secular law, is not strictly enforced if it is not suitable for the specific occasion.' Ferguson and Shalardchai, 1976: 126. Equally, Tibetans monks in exile are said to have a 'remarkably pragmatic approach, such that whenever a clash between (at least minor) religious observations and some practical imperative occurs, the latter prevails.' Gyatso, 2003: 237. To the extent that contemporary monastic tradition is a continuity of previous practices, this may indicate a divergence between theory and practice.

[1234] *lung pa de yi chu btung/ de yi khrims zungs.* Incidentally, John Locke conveys a similar notion namely that there is tacit consent to the laws of the country, which is to say, that anyone who travels on a highway implicitly consents and is bound by the local laws. See Locke, 1980 [1690]: 38.

[1235] French, 1995a: 101.

[1236] Huber, 2004: 133.

[1237] The meaning of *nag bcangs* is not clear to me. It may refer to cremating the bodies of lay-people.

[1238] *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 581: *se ra shar rnams su chang nyo tshong dang/ bshar ra mi byed/ nag bcangs mi bsreg bya phag mi gso/ dgon pa'i rgyab ri dang nye skor du bya dang ri dwags mi brngon/*

The monastic guidelines for Phabongkha are rather detailed on the area where hunting was not allowed, which then could indicate the parameters of monastic jurisdiction.[1239] Dung dkar monastery in upper Kongpo (Kong stod) forbid hunting and fishing in the hills and valleys up to one *krośa*[1240] from the monastery. If these types of activities were to take place the area had to be 'sealed'.[1241] While this 'territorial seal', according to Huber, became a 'legislative act',[1242] it is not known here how exactly this legislation was enforced. In other bca' yig, various punishments for killing animals within monastic territory are suggested. Perhaps the most common punishment was 'the offering' of a communal tea-round (*mang ja*). The monastic guidelines from 1903 for Pelkhor chöde (in Gyantse) give a punishment to those hunters and traders who were found to have killed animals within the stipulated parameters that consists of offering one of these tea-rounds.[1243]

Huber notes a more intriguing punishment, given by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama for Rongpo rabten monastery. The bca' yig rules that: 'When itinerant game hunters appear, they should be punished by gathering their weapons in the protector's [*sic*] temple and in addition exhorted once again to observe lawfulness.'[1244] According to Huber, other bca' yig mention that hunters and the like should be made to recite religious texts in the protectors' chapel (*mgon khang*).[1245] Vows not to reoffend are still regularly made by the laity in the presence of the protectors. Often the chapels are laden with (ancient or now defunct) weaponry, possibly, in part for the above reasons. According to the traditional narrative, the protectors at the monastic territory were often the original chthonic inhabitants of the area, who got 'converted' to Buddhism – thus to harm their land, and everything on it, would equate upsetting these spirits.

Punishing lay-people for killing animals within the vicinity of the monastic territory was not just seen as a prerogative of the monasteries, but also as their *duty*. Monks, the bca' yig tell us, were handed the responsibility to patrol the area and catch the lawbreakers. In the case of Phu lung monastery[1246] in 1947, it even came with extra paperwork:

> When illegal activities committed by a couple of evil people take place, the lamas and the monks all need to – by means of starting a vigorous investigation – create a written agreement, in which a promise is made not to

[1239] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 244.
[1240] *rgyang grags*, this is about two miles.
[1241] *Kong stod dung dkar dgon bca' yig*: 589: *dgon pa nas rgyang grags gcig tshun gyi ri klungs su ri dwags dang nya gshor ba sogs byung na dgag pa'i ri rgya klungs rgya byed/*
[1242] Huber, 2004: 133.
[1243] *dPal 'khor chos sde bca' yig*: 433: Interestingly, the wording describing the territory of the monastery and the rules concerning killing is identical to that found in the 15th century bca' yig for the same monastery (here named rGyal rtse chos sde), as cited in ibid.: 134. This suggests that not only the – anonymous – authors of this 20th century text used older bca' yig, but also that, presumably, the territory described in so much detail had remained the same for almost 500 years.
[1244] *Rong po rab brtan dgon bca' yig*: 538: *nges med kyi ri dwags bshor rigs byung na mtshon cha mgon khang du bsdus thog khrims mthun mig lar 'doms pa'i chad pa 'gel/* The translation is Huber's, see ibid.: 135.
[1245] ibid.: 136.
[1246] The full name of this monastery is sPo stod phu dgon chos lding rin chen spungs. Interestingly, the monastery is affiliated with the Karma Kagyü school and is a branch of Tshurphu, while the bca' yig was presumably written by someone at the central government.

> reoffend upon a previously established punishment, such as three bricks of tea, soup, flags, communal tea-rounds, scarves, and the like.[1247]

Monastic grounds – often not agricultural land, and thus without much economic value – were for the monks to protect. The bca' yig for Tashi Lhunpo even notes that monastic officials had to guard against animals in the hills nearby, because their presence or their overgrazing could cause landslides, from which the monastery had to be protected.[1248]

For the monks of Reting, however, the reasons for protecting the area around the monastery were formulated differently:

> The birds and wild animals in this forest of Reting, the essence of enlightenment, and the source for the Kadam, are said to be the emanations of bodhisattvas. Therefore, no one – be they Mongolian, Tibetan, Hor, or nomads – may do them any harm, steal or kill them.[1249]

Sometimes, the impending paperwork, occasionally associated with protecting the monastic lands, was compensated by there being certain perks, either for the monastery as a whole or for the individual monks. The monastic guidelines for Pelyul darthang describe the 'borders' of the monastery and then state:

> From where one can see the monastery, inside or outside, there abattoirs may not be maintained. If slaughter takes place, there is the punishment of the price attached to the meat. And if the buyers are still there then the meat *and* the price paid for the meat need to be both taken away.[1250]

This means that both the seller and the buyer of the meat would be punished for being complicit in the maintenance of an illegal slaughterhouse. At the same time, of course, both the meat and the money could be confiscated, which may have served as an incentive for the monks to patrol the area. This early 20th century bca' yig also suggests a similar type of punishment for the selling of alcohol on monastic grounds: 'When people buying and selling alcohol find themselves on monastic grounds (*gling*), the alcohol and the profit of the alcohol need to be taken away.'[1251] In other sets of guidelines it is more common to punish those carrying alcohol to the monastery by actual destroying their wares. The Mindröl ling bca' yig states: 'Even when a layman simply carries a vessel of chang beyond the border-marker, he needs

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[1247] *Phu lung dgon bca' yig*: 610: *mi ngan bshan pa re zung gis 'gal rigs byung na/ bla ma gra rigs thams cad kyis 'phral du rtsad gcod drag po 'gugs sbyang gis sngar lam ja 'khor gsum/ thug dar cog mang ja snyan dar sogs gcod dras kyi phyin chad sdom pa'i gan rgya len cing/*

[1248] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 124: *khyad par rgyab ri nas dgon nang la rbab nyen yod rigs la rbab g.yul byed pa dang/ dbyar dus rgyab ris dud 'gro che chung gtong du mi 'jug pa sogs rang 'khri'i las don lhag bsam hur bskyed thon pa dgos rgyu dang/*

[1249] *Rwa sgreng bca' yig*: 498: *bka' gdams kyi chu mgo ra (rwa) sgreng byang chub snying po'i nags tshal 'dir/ bya dang ri dwags sogs kyang byang chub sems dpa'i sprul par gsungs pas/ sog bod hor 'brog sus kyang gnod 'tshe dang rkun gsod sogs mi byed/*

[1250] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 188: *mtshams dgon pa mthong ba'i phyogs phyi nang gang nas kyang bshas ra 'dzin mi chog gal te bshas tshe sha rin non pa'i chad pa dang nyo mi yod tshe sha dang rin rtsa gnyis ka 'phrog nges dgos/*

[1251] ibid.: *chang nyo tshong byed mi gling nang du byung tshe chang dang chang rin gnyis ka 'phrog dgos/*

to be punished, for example by breaking the vessel.'[1252] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag* marks a similar situation, with the difference being that here there actually needed to be an intention to break the rules:

> When local people (*zhol mi*), pretending to be newly arrived visitors, turn out to be carrying vessels of alcohol back and forth to the *bla brang* within the monastic compound (*gling gseb*), then the guards (*sgo ra ba*) of the *bla brang* have to take the discovered (*mgo byar mi bskos kyi*) alcohol vessels and destroy them without trace.[1253]

Interesting here is also the mention of guards (*sgo ra ba*), who were likely to have been charged with 'policing' the monastic compound. The destruction of wares may have been the lightest of punishments, as a government decree (*rtsa tshig*) from 1882 specifically intended to tackle the 'use' of alcohol and women (*nag chang*). This decree, written for all the major Gelug monasteries in the Lhasa area,[1254] states:

> It is customary that when a lay-man or alcohol-sellers are in any way seen, heard or suspected of giving[1255] alcohol to monks, a punishment according to secular law, which is heavy as a mountain, is given, so as to set an example.[1256]

In other cases, it was the trespassing itself that had to be punished. Women caught fetching water within the monastic compound had to be given a suitable punishment, such as being required to offer a butterlamp of a *zho* each.[1257]

It appears that monasteries, when it concerned the wider territory for which they were responsibile, exercised their judicial authority regarding lay-people only in the most serious cases (such as killing), but when laws were broken 'closer to home' the rules became stricter. It could be said that the laity and monks had to heed the same authority as soon as they found themselves within the gates of the monastery itself. The *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag* remarks the following:

> Once within the gates of the monastery, whether one is lay or ordained, high or low, male or female, young or old, everybody needs to heed the instructions of the three, the disciplinarian, the master (*dpon*) and his aides (*g.yog*), which is in accord with the contents of the *sGar chen gyi bca' yig*.[1258]

[1252] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 283: *mtshams mtho yan la chang snod khyim pas 'khur yang snod gcog pa sogs kyis tshar gcod/*

[1253] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 281: *zhol mi nas mgron por sne len yin khul gling gseb tu chang snod phar khur tshur khur byed pa byung ba bla brang gi sgo ra ba nas mgo byar mig bskos kyi chang snod 'phrog gcog gis shul med bzo rgyu ma zad/*

[1254] i.e. Sera, Drepung, Ganden, Gyütö and Gyümè.

[1255] Note that the verb *sbyin pa* here denotes religious giving.

[1256] *dGon khag gi dge 'dun pa rtsa tshig*: 345: *khyim pa dang chang ma'i rigs nas btsun par chang sbyin pa'i mthong thos dogs rigs cir gyur yang rgyal khrims ri ltar lci ba'i chas las drag po mig bltos la phan pa gtong lugs dang/*

[1257] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 435: *chos sde'i nang du bud med kyis chu len pa byung na/ dkar me zho re sogs kyi chad pa ji ltar 'os pa 'gel/*

[1258] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 280: *dgon gyi lcags ri'i nang tshud la ser skya mchog dman pho mo rgan gzhon tshang ma nas sgar chen gyi bca' yig dgongs don ltar dge bskos dpon g.yog gsum gyi bka' bkod la brtsi 'khur zhu dgos shing/*

In the monastic guidelines for Drepung from 1682, the ordinary lay-people and monks are to comply with the same basic rules: 'Ordinary lay-people and monks may not ride their horses within the monastery. Loud songs and shouting at each other from afar and any loud noises may not be uttered.'[1259] In Jampa ling too, the laity was expected to behave more like monks when visiting the monastic compound:

> Within the boundaries of the monastery, it is inappropriate even for lay-people to fight, to sing, to smoke, to use snuff,[1260] or to play mahjong, and so on. Therefore those who knowingly make such mistakes should be punished appropriately.[1261]

Similar kinds of typical lay-behaviour were also forbidden when people visited the monastery of Tengpoche in Nepal and it was the disciplinarian who was given the task to make sure that these rules were upheld: 'The disciplinarian is to enforce [the rule] that outside guests do not do things that are forbidden such as drinking chang, fighting, being loud and laughing.'[1262]

Justifications why lay-people were not allowed to behave in a certain way tend not to be given in the sources at hand. A copy (*zhal bshus*) of *Rwa sgreng bca' yig*, written or copied in a wood-monkey year (*shing sprel*), according to *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs* 2 by a Dalai Lama,[1263] takes issue with people, lay or monk, fighting on the circumambulatory route (*bskor lam*) around the Reting (Rwa sgreng) area. Whoever was involved in this:

> would, despite the fact that fundamentally legal debts should be dealt with by courts (*khrims sa*), have to do practice by [giving] butterlamps and scarves to the Atiśa image (*jo bo rin po che*), by changing the textiles in the main temple and by [giving] a communal tea-round to the assembly.[1264]

The guidelines from 1913 for Thobgyel rabgye ling by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama lists things that neither laity nor monks could do in the vicinity of the monastery (*dgon pa'i nye 'dab*) such as riding horses, singing, and having hairstyles that incorporate fabric, as these 'are things that are disrespectful to the Sangha.'[1265]

[1259] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 312: *dgon nang du skya ser dmangs kyis rta zhon nas mi 'gro zhing gyang bzhas phud rgyangs 'bod dang ku co'i sgra che ba mi sgrags/* Again the bca' yig for Sera je by the Seventh Dalai Lama uses near identical wording, except that in this version only lay-people are addressed, see *Se ra byes bca' yig*: 578.

[1260] *kha snar dud 'then*, literally: to draw smoke into mouth and nose.

[1261] *Byams gling grwa tshang bca' yig*: 482: *dgon pa'i mtshams nang khyim pas kyang 'thab 'dzin dang/ glu gar/ kha snar dud 'then sho rgyag sogs nam yang mi rung bas rtogs 'jug gi byed 'dzol la chad las bab bstun gtong/*

[1262] *sTeng po che bca' yig*: 463/ 6a: *phyogs mgron skor mi sogs kyis gling nang du chang dang/ 'khrug rtsod / ku re bzhad gad che ba'i rigs byas mi chog pa'i bkod 'dom dge bskos nas bya zhing/*

[1263] The text states that it is a reworking of a written order entrusted to the Dharma-protectors by the Fifth Dalai Lama, to prevent the monastery from disintegration, see *Rwa sgreng bca' yig*: 499: *gong sa lnga pa chen pos kyang dgon gnas 'di nyid mi nyams pa'i ched du chos bsrung la gnyer bcol gyi bka' shog gnang 'dug pa nas 'di ga nas kyang yang bskyar byas pa yin pas/*

[1264] ibid.: 493: *bskor lam nang du rgya (rgyag) 'dres dang 'thab 'dzings ('dzing) ser skya drag zhan sus byas pa byung kyang (yang)/ khrims kyi bda' 'ded khrims sa nas byed pa gzhir bcas kyang/ jo bo rin po cher dkar me snyan shal/ gtsug lag khang gi thugs dar lcogs (lcog) spo ba/ tshogs su mang ja rnam bzhag sogs sgrub/* The bracketed words are corrections carried out by the editors of *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs* 2.

[1265] *Thob rgyal rab rgyas gling dgon bca' yig*: 454: *dge 'dun la ma gus pa'i rigs*.

The above selection of examples that show laity being affected by the monastery's rules strongly suggests that many Tibetan monastic institutions – at least from the 17th century onwards and likely before that as well – held judicial authority over their own territories and were able to punish lay-people for killing animals, trespassing and treating the monastic grounds as a playground.[1266] Not only did rules pertaining to the laity exist, they also appear to have been exercised. The bca' yig are the documents par excellence that indicate these local laws and whom they pertained to. The *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag* explains this level of jurisdiction succinctly:

> In short, all the monks (*ser mo ba*), high or low, who are part of this monastery (*gdan sa*), as well as the faithful sponsors who live in the mountains surrounding the monastery, as well as the pilgrims – basically all, monks or lay, man or woman, good or bad – need to take into account the contents of the precious bca' yig that establishes the law of the disciplinarian, the masters, and their assistants (*dge dpon g.yog gsum*).[1267]

Mediation, Disputes, and Communal Violence

Able monks were often employed as intermediaries, often on a voluntary and individual basis. In particular, highly regarded monks were seen as ideal candidates for the job of 'go-between' or mediator (*gzu ba*). Tibetan historiographical accounts abound with narratives of revered monks preventing battles and the like.[1268]In other Buddhist cultures, the 'holy man' is often seen to mediate between various social groups.[1269] The Vinaya limits the extent of this mediation: the monk is not to act as a matchmaker, nor is he to engage in marriage counselling. In the case of Tibetan Buddhism, mediation of legal or violent disputes was not out of bounds for monks. In Labrang, it seems, people even 'preferred adjudication by the monastery.'[1270]

According to Goldstein, adjudication was the first resort for civil disputes and it was 'only when this failed that cases were brought to the lord for adjudication.'[1271] This was also the case outside of political Tibet. In Spiti in the 19th century, people rarely had 'recourse to the law courts, or even to the primitive justice dispensed by their chief the Nono.' When someone's word was not trusted, he was made to swear an oath.[1272]

[1266] There is a possible parallel with the regulations in place in the 840s in China. The *Tiwei boli jing* 提謂波利經 was one of the main texts written to provide rules for lay-people who were under the authority of monks. See Barrett, 2014: 209.

[1267] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 291: *mdor na gdan sa 'dir gtogs pa'i ser mo ba mchog dman thams cad dang dgon gyi lcags ri'i nang tshud du dad sbyin khag dang/ gnas mjal ba sogs gzhis byed nas 'dus pa'i ser skya pho mo drag zhan thams cad bca' yig rin po che'i dgongs don dge dpon g.yog gsum gyi khrims bkod la brtsi bkur zhu dgos shing/*

[1268] Stein, 1972 [1962]: 146-8.

[1269] For information about monastic mediation and reconciliation in 'early Buddism', see Bailey and Mabbett, 2006: 219-31.

[1270] Nietupski, 2011: 81. More generally, monks appear to have been seen as more trustworthy. Bell reports that when there was a legal dispute between a lay man and a monk, justice was usually in favour of the monk. Bell, 1998 [1946]: 199.

[1271] Goldstein, 1971: 175. Goldstein notes that the term for 'mediation' is *bar zhugs* and for adjudication *bka' bcad gnang*, ibid.: 177. A similar process is described in *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*. This contemporary work notes that going to the *phyag khang* (presumably the monastery's treasurer's office) was a step only taken when all else had failed. See *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 583.

[1272] Diack, 1994 [1897] III: 92.

Trusted, 'disinterested' men were thus often called upon to intervene in disputes. In areas where monastics had good relations with the local population, these men were often monks. Of course, mediation and adjudication took place both in- and outside of the monastery's walls. In some cases, monks are even reported to have pleaded for a reduction of a punishment involving mutilation on behalf of certain criminals.[1273] When bca' yig report on monks' acting as conciliators, it is often not specified who their 'clients' are. The Mindröl ling bca' yig mentions that this role was to be taken seriously: 'People who are strong in giving council should communicate sincerely and decide matters in accordance with the truth.'[1274]

For internal monastic matters, the obvious candidate for mediation would be the disciplinarian. The guidelines for Pelyul darthang indicate that this person was not handed an easy task:

> From now on, the disciplinarian should not, when quarrels and suchlike occur, oversee major or minor disputes – whether internal or external, general or specific, large or small – that are not relevant. Surely, one needs to continue to treat all the external and internal rules of the Teachings (*bstan pa'i bca' khrims*) with priority. Therefore, no one should encourage him to act as go-between for others, whether they be high or low, in disputes (*gyod 'khon par*).[1275]

From the above can be gleaned that the disciplinarian was asked to adjudicate various, perhaps personal, disputes and that that was, strictly speaking, not part of his job description. The involvement of the disciplinarian could easily lead to him losing the impartial stand many bca' yig implore him to take.

Disputes – the bca' yig demonstrate – seem to have been a common feature of monastic life in pre-modern Tibetan societies. Occasionally, these arguments became violent. Precautionary measures had to be taken, which is one of the reasons why no kind of weaponry could be taken into the monastery. The rules regarding this issue for Pelyul darthang monastery are like those of many other monasteries: 'It is not allowed for anyone, whether oneself or others, to ride a horse, wear a knife, carry guns and the like within the monastic grounds (*gling*).'[1276] For this monastery, it cannot have been very uncommon for monks to carry arms *and* to use them, for it is stated:

> Those monks (*dge tshul slong*) who have never used knives and guns may assemble during *poṣadha* (*gso sbyong*) and the summer retreat (*dbyar gnas*).[1277]

One of my informants, a Ladakhi monk who lived in Yangri Gar in Central Tibet

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[1273] French, 1995a: 324.

[1274] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 312: *gros dbang can rnams zol med kyi 'phros mol byad te thag yin thog tu chod/*

[1275] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 198, 9: *deng phan dge bskos nas grwa tshang nang 'khon pa lta bu byung na dang/ spyi khag che chung rnams kyi don ma yin pa'i phyi nang gyi gyod che phra gang la yang gzigs mi dgos/ bstan pa'i bca' khrims phyi nang thams cad la nan tan gzigs pa mtha' 'khyongs nges dgos pas gzhan mtho dman sus kyang gyod 'khon bar bzhugs bcol mi chog*.

[1276] ibid. 189: *gling bar du rang gzhan sus kyang rta bzhon/ gri 'dogs/ me mda' 'khur ba sogs mi chog pa* [..] The text goes on to mention that the more important incarnations and 'owners of the Teachings' (*bstan bdag*) are exempted from the rule on horse-riding.

[1277] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 190: *gri mda'i sbyor ba byed ma myong ba'i dge tshul slong rnams gso sbyong dang dbyar gnas la 'tshog dgos/*

before 1959, confirms that monks fighting was a rather ordinary occurrence: 'In Tibet there were punishments for fighting, and there was a fair amount of fighting going on, but not here in Phiyang. If you would fight here, you would get expelled.'[1278]

The most dangerous types of disputes were seen as those involving various groups of monks, pitted against each other. This often led to communal violence. One of these clashes is actually mentioned in the Drepung monastic guidelines. Apparently a Mongolian had fired a gun, thereby killing a monk who – to judge from his name – must have been a scholar-monk (*dpe cha ba*). This episode seems to have occurred in the context of inter-collegial feuding, for the text states:

> Even though previously, when the monastic houses (*khams tshan*) fought over people and possessions, arrows and catapults (*mda' rdo sgyogs*) used to be employed, other than the Mongolian dNgos grub rgya mtsho firing a gun and killing Glu 'bum rab 'byams pa, nothing else has occurred. Still, from now on firearms should not be used.[1279]

The author goes on to warn that, in the case of illegal actions (*khrims 'gal rigs*) such as causing a rift in the Sangha and bringing down the Teachings by, for example, colleges and houses fighting each other, the ringleaders together with their gang were to be punished according to state law (*rgyal khrims*).[1280]

It was worse when conflicts did not remain within the monastery, but when a third party was invited to participate. The same author of the Drepung monastic guidelines, the Fifth Dalai Lama, also wrote the bca' yig for Gongra ngesang dorje ling in 1664. His remarks highlight the volatile situation this recently 'converted' monastery found itself in. He saw it as a breeding-ground for communal violence:

> When one has solicited the help of one's close friends or country-mates, who come into the compound as an army and act as accomplices and aides with regard to joining in as avengers (*dgra sdebs la*), and when the lama, the chant-master and the disciplinarian behave very badly by not considering it important to impose order, then the original ringleader needs to be expelled.[1281]

Interestingly, monastics these days are still seen to take the side of their fellow-country-men when arguments arise:

> On the down side, there is no doubt that misplaced local loyalty often leads monks unquestioningly to throw their weight behind someone in a dispute just

[1278] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos nyid, Phiyang, August 2012.

[1279] *'Bras spungs bca' yig*: 311: *khams tshan rnams mi nor sogs kyi don du 'thab 'dzings kyi dus mda' rdo sgyogs sogs kyi mtshon pa ni sngar nas byed srol 'dug kyang sog po dngos grub rgya mtsho me mda' brgyab nas glu 'bum rab 'byams pa bsad pa tsam las ma byung 'dug pas slad nas kyang me mda'i srol mi byed/*

[1280] ibid.: *grwa sa phan tshun dang khams tshan 'thab rtsod kyis mtshon dge 'dun gyi dbyen dang bstan gshig khrims 'gal byas rigs la gte po sde tshan dang bcas par rgyal khrims kyis tsa ra skabs thob byed pa 'dir gsal ma dgos/* Also see Jansen, 2013a: 122.

[1281] *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 226: *yul dang thab grogs sogs sde tshan du bcad pa'i mi dpung dgra sdebs la brten pa'i ngan rgyab kha 'dzin byas pa/ bla ma dbu chos sogs kyis sgrigs mnan par mi brtsi ba'i log sgrub tshan chen byas pa byung na gte po ngo bo gnas nas dbyung/*

> because he is from their locality, disregarding the right or wrong of the situation.[1282]

This strong sense of local loyalty was compounded by the fact that monastic houses (*kham tshan, mi tshan*) were (and are) usually organized on the basis of regional origins. For monks who were a regional minority, this could result in getting bullied, as the bca' yig for Pelyul darthang suggests:

> No monk of this monastery, whether big or small, high or low, is to disturb the monks who have come from elsewhere by teasing, calling them names, or insulting them.[1283]

In this regard, the guidelines for Mindröl ling warn: 'Do not start fights that divide the community by slander, out of bias for one's own house (*mi tshan*).'[1284]

The Seventh Dalai Lama, as usual very much in agreement with the Fifth, notes in his guidelines for Namgyel dratshang the following on communal fighting:

> Fights between colleges (*grwa sa*), regional groups (*yul tshan*), older and newer [monks], or mass fights with monks (*mi dpung grwa sdebs*) are all against the law and constitute 'causing a rift in the Sangha' (*dge 'dun gyi dbyen*) and 'bringing down the Teachings' (*bstan bshig*). Because the ringleader with his gang (*gte pos de tshan dang bcas pa*) will then be punishable under the secular law, there is no need to clarify this here.[1285]

Thus, monastic in-fighting was deemed to be a crime that was to be tried according to secular law, while this also was judged to cause a rift in the Sangha and to bring down the Teachings, thus merging religious and secular policies *and* ideologies.

Internal Justice: Crime and Punishment

Throughout this study, references to different types of punishment for various monastic misbehaviour have been made. The most common one is the 'offering' of something. This can be offering prostrations, butter, scarves, or money. Other punishments are doing menial tasks, getting expelled, or getting expelled as well as tried according to secular law.[1286] More sporadical are mentions of corporal punishments. It is important to note that the severity of penances varies greatly amonst the bca' yig, and there is thus no overarching understanding of what punishments fit which crimes. Furthermore, the manner in which monks are punished is often left to the discretion of the monk-officials (usually the disciplinarian). In some cases, however, the penalties given are rather detailed. The bca' yig for Drigung thil

[1282] Gyatso, 2003: 231.
[1283] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 194: *phyogs nas 'ong ba'i bla grwa rigs la dgon pa'i grwa che chung mtho dman sus kyang brnyas bcos ming 'dogs 'phya smod sogs yid sun du 'jug mi chog*
[1284] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 281: *dge 'dun sde nang du mi tshan phyogs khyer sogs khra mas dbyen bcos pa'i bkrug sbyor mi byed/*
[1285] *rNam rgyal grwa tshang bca' yig*: 71: *grwa sa phan tshun dang/ yul tshan/ gsar rnying/ mi dpung grwa sdebs kyi 'thab rtsod/ dge 'dun gyi dbyen dang bstan bshig khrims 'gal byas rigs la gte po sde tshan dang bcas par rgyal khrims kyi rtsa ra skabs thob byas 'gro bas 'dir gsal ma dgos/*
[1286] The last three ways of punishing monks are similar to the three possible penalties for monks described by the *Daoseng ge*: 1) to be made to do odd-jobs inside the monastic community 2) to be forced to return to lay life 3) to get referred to the civil authorities for trial. See Heirman, 2006: 77 n. 83.

from 1802 has a long section on crimes and punishments. It first addresses communal violence:

> Because this monastery consists of a large area (*gling*), it would be wholly inappropriate to hold biases towards the upper or the lower part: all need to uphold the same ideals (*bsam pa gru bzhin*). If there are any quarrels, arguments, or physical fights, then [the punishment is] a communal tea-round, a hundred prostrations, three sets for the lama (*gsum tshan*),[1287], and a ceremonial scarf (*dar kha*) for the manager and the disciplinarian.[1288] If implements are used such as stones, sticks or claws (*sder mo*),[1289] then [the punishment is] a communal tea-round, three hundred prostrations, pole-flags (*dung dar*) and scarves (*snyan dar*), five sets for the lama, and three sets each for the manager and the disciplinarian. If knives are drawn and blood is shed, then [the punishment is] a communal tea-round, a thousand prostrations, pole-flags and scarves, seven sets for the lama, and five sets each for the manager and the disciplinarian.[1290]

Here we see a gradual increase in the severity of the punishment, as the harm inflicted on others gets more serious: the punishment is about three times more severe when one hurts someone with a knife than when one hurts another with one's hands or words. The text then goes on:

> When people drink alcohol or smoke tobacco, because it smells bad and falls under intoxicants, or when someone arrives beyond the black pile of stones (*nag mtho*)[1291] riding a horse, [the punishment is] a communal tea-round, three thousand prostrations, pole-flags and scarves, nine sets for the lama, and seven sets each for the manager and the disciplinarian.[1292]

This means that drinking, smoking, and riding horses into the compound are punished more heavily than stabbing a person with a knife! There may be a number of explanations for this, but it is likely that, while the previous penalties in all likelihood involved only monks, the latter penalty also affected lay-people. Perhaps the general consensus was that they could be fined more heavily than monks. The text goes on to describe 'crimes' that could only be committed by monastics:

> If something illegal happens that is an obvious defeat (*pham pa*, S. *pārājika*) such as sexual conduct (S. *abrahmacārya*), then [the punishment is] a communal tea-round, ten thousand prostrations, pole-flags and scarves, ten

[1287] It is not clear what needs to be paid here.
[1288] *spyi chos*, here this is an abbreviation of *spyi gnyer* and *chos khrims pa*.
[1289] This word usually refers to animal claws, but here it might indicate a specific type of weapon.
[1290] *'Bri gung byang chub gling bca' yig*: 403: *dgon pa 'di gling rgya che bas gling stod smad zhes phyogs khyer kun slong byas na gtan nas mi 'thus pas gsam pa gru nang bzhin dgos/ gling gseb dang spyil bu sogs kyi nang du kha 'thab tshig rtsod lag thug byas pa byung na/ mang ja brgya phyag bla mar gsum tshan/ spyi chos la dar kha/ rdo dbyug rder mo sogs kyis khrab bton pa byung na/ mang ja brgya phyag gsum/ dung dar snyan dar/ bla mar lnga tshan/ spyi chos la gsum tshan re/ gri bton pa dang khrag phyung ba byung na/ mang ja ston phyag dung dar snyan dar/ bla mar bdun tshan re/ spyi chos lnga tshan re/*
[1291] This must refer to a specific boundary marker.
[1292] ibid.: *chang 'thung ba dang tha ma kha 'di dri ngan myos gyur du gtogs pas 'then mi dang/ nag tho'i yan rta zhon nas yong ba sogs byung na/ mang ja stong phyag gsum re/ dung dar snyan dar/ bla mar dgu tshan/ spyi chos la bdun tshan re/*

> sets for the lama, and nine sets each for the manager and the disciplinarian. Having offered this, then if he stays in the monastery, he needs to [first] give back the remainder of his vows and if he does not genuinely abide by the trainings he then has retaken, he will be expelled.[1293]

It seems here that, contrary to what is often thought, sexual conduct did not necessitate the expulsion of a monk. Rather, the text explains what 'reparations' needed to be made, which included the retaking of the monk's vows.[1294] The text concludes its section on punishments with:

> If one talks back to the lama, or if one [physically] retaliates[1295] against the manager and the disciplinarian, then all this person's things need to be neatly collected[1296] and he then gets expelled.[1297]

The suggestion here is that answering back to the lama or punching a disciplinarian was potentially punished more heavily than breaking one's root-vows, for here the option of staying in the monastery is not given. Possibly, this type of rebellious behaviour was seen as more heinous than sex – the most un-monk-like behaviour of all. However, in Mindröl ling in the late 17th century, talking back to the disciplinarian was punished according to the severity of the occasion:

> When there is backtalk the punishment is [the offering of] butterlamps consisting of one *khal* up to five *nyag* of butter. If there is physical resistance he is either expelled from the monastery or made to give a communal tea-round, scarves or butterlamps of one *khal*, depending on the gravity of the offence.[1298]

Merely verbally retaliating or resisting the disciplinarian was, in Phulung monastery in 1947, punished relatively lightly:

> When one, while having done all sorts of things, still utters talk such as 'I am important, I am powerful' – out of disregard for the disciplinarian – and talks back at him, [that individual] needs be punished by doing prostrations, ranging from fifteen hundred through twenty-five hundred, depending on the gravity of the offence.[1299]

[1293] ibid.: 404: *mi tshang par spyod pa sogs pham pa dngos su 'gal ba byung na/ mang ja khri phyag re/ dung dar snyan dar/ bla mar bcu gsum/ spyi chos la dgu tshan re phul nas dgon du sdod na/ sdom ro phul nas bslab bskyar tshad ldan dang mi sdod na gnas nas dbyung/*

[1294] The topic of what actions incurred expulsion is addressed below in this chapter.

[1295] *lag slog pa*, literally 'to return a hand'.

[1296] The language is not entirely clear, but it seems to suggest that the monk's things are taken away, which correspond to what we find in other bca' yig.

[1297] ibid.: *bla mar kha lan slog pa/ spyi chos las lag slog pa byung na kho rang gi dngos po thams cad gtsang mar blangs nas gnas dbyung byed/*

[1298] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 281: *khas ldog na khal gcig nas nyag lnga'i bar gyi mar me dang bgya phyag lag gi ldog na gnas nas dbyung ba'am mang ja snyan dar khal gcig gi mar me sogs nye byas che chung gi skabs dang sbyar ba 'gel/*

[1299] *Phu lung dgon bca' yig*: 612: *gcig rgyab gnyis snon gyis chos khrims pa la rtsis med kyi nga che nga btsan shed gtam shed 'gros kyi ma zung do brtos kha len byas na bgya phyag bco lnga/ lag len byas na dngul srang bco lnga nas/ nyi shu rtsa lnga re'i bar 'gal tshabs dang bstun pa'i gcod dras dgos/*

When punishment is mentioned in the bca' yig, flexibility of the rules is often emphasized and, in most cases, the type of punishment is left to the local monastic officials. In Phabongka monastery too, when actions not in accordance with the Vinaya were committed, the severity of the punishment had to fit the misdeeds: this could be the offering of butterlamps (*dkar me*), scarves, up to one or two communal tea-rounds.[1300] By contrast, in Thailand in the 1960s, offences incurred by the monks were punished by making them doing domestic chores, such as sweeping the compound or cleaning the latrines.[1301]

More in line with the Tibetan way of punishing, in early 20th century China, punishments were often physical, but also fines of two to ten Chinese dollars were common. If the offender did not have the money he would be beaten. Expulsion was rare and could only be executed by the abbot. In monasteries where the emphasis on meditation was less strong, penalties were milder. To judge from anecdotal information, in the case of Tibetan monasticism the opposite seems to have been the case. In China, the offending monks were sometimes made to do three prostrations in front of a Buddha image. Monks with no money to pay the fine would have to do a greater number of prostrations. The mildest type of penalty was chanting a sūtra,[1302] something I have not come across in the Tibetan context.

While in the Chinese monasteries the emphasis was on monetary punishments, this was relatively unknown in Tibet, partially also due to the relative scarcity of cash money. However, in recent times, it is more and more common for monks to have to pay a fine. In 2000, Sera Me monks in India were fined 25 rupees every time they skipped a debate-session.[1303] In the scholastic college (*bshad grwa*) of Drigung monastery in India, getting involved in a fight would cost three hundred rupees.[1304] It is unclear what the 'proceeds' of these fines are spent on.

A Note on Forced 'Offerings'

All in all, the above given penalties are relatively light and – at first glance – appear to be stimulating a wrong-doer to 'pay' for his bad actions by giving him a chance to accumulate merit, perhaps similar to doing penance. The prostrations, which were also the punishments of choice in 6th century Chinese Chan monasteries,[1305] suggest that this was an opportunity for the individual to generate good karma on the one hand (although this is *never* reasoned in this way). Additionally, as these prostrations appear to have most frequently taken place in the presence of all the other monks, this punishment could also have been used as a way to put a rebellious monk in his place.[1306] It has been noted that '[f]ines in kind were common, but they were always described as "offerings".'[1307] This is complicated by the fact that, although the verb that is most often used when fines of any sort are suggested is '*'bul ba*', this, in its most basic meaning, is a self-deprecating honorific verb denoting 'to give'. In the case of ordinary, misbehaving monks being made to do prostrations in front of the

[1300] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 242: *'dul ba dang mi mthun pa'i rigs su thad nas byas byung tshe 'phral du 'gal tshabs la dpag pa'i dkar me snyan shal lam/ mang ja gcig gnyis tshun gyi nyes pa brnag thog btsag 'gel gtong/*
[1301] Bunnag, 1973: 95.
[1302] Welch, 1967: 119-20.
[1303] Lempert, 2006: 23.
[1304] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos skyabs, Rajpur, August 2012.
[1305] Yifa, 2002: 19.
[1306] In Sri Lanka, a similar type of 'public humiliation' as punishment for an injunction was carrying a hundred boxes of sand to the assembly. See Ratnapala, 1971: 177.
[1307] Huber, 2004: 135.

assembly, it would be the *only* correct verb to use. Furthermore, the texts conceptualize punishment very much as punishment (and not necessarily as offerings), since the word *chad pa* (punishment) is also employed, often in the same line.[1308] Nonetheless, butterlamps, scarves, and prostrations are first and foremost thought of as offerings.

The counter-intuitive status of these punishments is also remarked upon by Ngag dbang dpal sbyin:

> The internal rules (*nang khrims*) talk about how first to tell someone he made a mistake, and that when it happens again he needs to do a hundred prostrations or give a hundred butterlamp offerings with his own money. Normally, butterlamps are offered out of faith, but here the person *has* to offer, whether he has faith or not.[1309]

The offerings then, while by no means voluntary, were a way to practice generosity – although it can be debated how much merit would accrue if the giver gave against his will. An important feature of the prostrations is that they were often done during the assembly: all the monks present would know that the monk did something wrong. It can also be seen as a way of making repairs with a community whose reputation the misbehaving monk had potentially damaged. Here we see that, while not unproblematic, referring to punishments as *'bul ba* is not entirely comparable to the 'papal rhetoric' employed by the Christian Church in medieval Europe, when referring to something like interest as 'gifts'.[1310]

The forced offerings that the authors of the bca' yig recommend to be given as punishments are not primarily focussed on the individual's morality or karmic status. However, there may have been an element of these punishments restoring a balance, within the community but also among the deities to whom the offerings were given. The monastic punishments were not in all instances easily rationalized from a Buddhist viewpoint. Corporal punishment, according to eyewitness accounts rife in Tibetan monasteries, is one such example.

On Physical Punishment

The information on physical punishment in Buddhist cultures is diverse. For some, the case is quite clear-cut: 'First of all we must note that there was no corporal punishment in monastic Buddhism.'[1311] Pachow, in a similar vein, comments that the Buddhists 'do not inflict upon anybody any corporal punishment nor impose any fine, their punishments are comparatively very light.'[1312] More nuanced is the observation by Gethin, namely that 'the use of physical violence as a punishment for breaking the rules of the monastic code seems nowhere to be endorsed in the early Buddhist vision of monastic life.'[1313] While indeed in the Vinaya materials there are no known references to structural physical punishments for monks breaking rules or vows, textual material and oral history from a wide range of Buddhist cultures from different

[1308] Huber cites the following example from the *rGyal rtse chos sde bca' yig*: *mang ja 'bul ba dang bcas pa'i chad pa 'gal* ('the punishment of having to offer a communal tea service [to the monks] will be imposed'). ibid.: 134, n. 20.
[1309] Personal communication, Dharamsala, July 2012.
[1310] Ekelund (et al.), 1996: 118.
[1311] Wijayaratna, 1990: 143.
[1312] Pachow, 2000 [1955]: 62.
[1313] Gethin, 2007: 64.

eras suggest that – as was (and is) the case in the domestic sphere – physical 'violence' was not unheard of in monasteries. The British explorer Pereira, who visited Labrang monastery in Amdo in the early 20th century, describes in some detail the monastic punishments he was told about:

> For discipline, there is a president (Jewa).[1314] He has powers of punishment. For grave offences a sheet of paper is put over the monk's face and he is branded on the forehead with a red-hot key and is then led to a small door and banished from the monastery. Another punishment is cutting off the ears and nose, but this is rarely, if ever, practised. Another punishment is to suspend a monk by the hands from a tree, either entirely or with his toes just touching the ground, and he is kept suspended for different lengths of time up to two or three days. The commoner punishments are beatings, or else being fined. Even lamas are liable to be punished in these ways, though generally they are given the opportunity of getting away.[1315]

Another traveller-account is that by Schram, who visited the border areas of Amdo and China in the 1920s:

> At night, the disciplinarian with some of his lictors, armed with rawhide whips, makes a tour of the lamasery. Lamas found brawling, quarrelling, or fighting are brought to the court of the intendant, where penalties are meted out in various brutal forms.[1316]

While earlier authors, with their orientalist tendencies, may have been keen to point out the 'brutal' punishments Tibetan monks bestowed upon each other, the most commonly heard reports are of physical punishments that – though not excessive – were also not merely a slap on the wrist. Rogue monks tended to get punished by having to do prostrations or by getting beaten – neither for a prolonged time nor severely – by switches on the backside.[1317] In Tibet, according to one of my informants, often only the young monks would receive these types of punishments; it was not considered an appropriate punishment for monks who were more mature.[1318] Blo bzang don grub, an elderly monk from Ladakh who spent a number of years in Drepung in Tibet in the 1940s and 50s, recounted how discipline was maintained there:

> If you would do something against the rules, the house-teacher (*kham tshan dge rgan*) would beat you with a stick.[1319] There were several people who would keep order in the monastery: the disciplinarian, the abbot, the disciplinarian's assistants (*dge g.yog* and *chab ril*): if you would do something bad they would report you (*rtsis sprod pa*) to your house-teacher. He would then beat you or give you some kind of punishment. Prostrations were also a

[1314] Presumably *spyi ba*.
[1315] Pereira, 1912: 417.
[1316] Schram, 2006 [1954]: 374.
[1317] Goldstein, 1964: 137.
[1318] Personal communication with Shes rab rgya mtsho, Rajpur, August 2012.
[1319] The same informant also told me that it was this house-teacher who initially told the new monk all the 'local' regulations they had to adhere to.

> punishment, but it was mostly the stick. We never had to pay monetary fines or anything like that.[1320]

In some monasteries, fines, rather than offerings, were an accepted way to penalize a monk. The bca' yig for the Nyingma monastery Tengpoche in Nepal from 1918 states the following:

> When a small number of evil people are involved in improper things that are a disgrace to the Teaching, disregarding what is right, then by means of investigation,[1321] strict punishments that befit the wrong-doings need to be imposed, which may be physical or material (*lus dang longs spyod*).[1322]

In some cases, the type of corporal punishment is specified, such as in the guidelines by Thirteenth Dalai Lama written in 1927 for a Central Asian monastery:

> Arguments and fights should be definitely punished relative to the wrong-doings, setting an example (*mig lar 'doms*), ranging from having [first] offered butterlamps and scarves to the protectors, to doing either a hundred or a thousand prostrations up to getting beaten with the whip upon one's body.[1323]

According to one informant, elderly monks could often be overheard exchanging 'war stories' of their youths spent in the monasteries in pre-1950s' Tibet, saying 'I did this and this, for which I got thirty strokes with the whip (*rta lcag gis shar ba*)'.[1324] Currently, in Tibetan monasteries beating is less and less an acceptable form of discipline and one could say that these practices are being gradually phased out.[1325] Some monk-administrators, however, talk about how the old ways were more effective. Lama 'Tshul khrims', a monk high up in the administration of a large monastery in exile, is highly critical of current-day discipline:

> The monks these days go everywhere. In the old days you needed to ask the disciplinarian for permission before you could go outside of the monastery. If you would get caught you would get fifty strikes on the backside. Now there is no physical punishment any more. Now the monks are all over the settlement (*gzhi chags*) and wander about at night.[1326]

There are some bca' yig that seem to suggest that lay-people too were liable to get punished physically. The guidelines for Tashi Lhunpo for example outline the rules with regard to the use of alcohol. The 18th century text states that no one, not even the lay-officials, could drink or even carry alcohol in Tashi Lhunpo and those people who would get caught buying or selling intoxicants would get a suitable corporal

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[1320] Personal communication, Blo bzang don grub, Spituk, August 2012.
[1321] This translation is contextual; it is not entirely clear what '*gcig rgyab gcig zin gyis*' here means.
[1322] *sTeng po che bca' yig*: 464/ 6b: *mi ngan re gnyis kyis bstan pa'i zhabs 'dren tshul min zur gyes bltos med byed pa byung rigs la/ gcig rgyab gcig zin gyis 'gal 'tshabs dang bstun pas nyes chad lus dang longs spyod du yan por ma song bar btangs thog* [..]
[1323] *bKra shis chos rdzong bca' yig*: 496: *kha 'dzings sogs la srung mar mchod me snyan shal thog tshogs su brgya phyag stong phyag nas lus steng lcags 'bebs bar nyes mthun chad pa mig lar 'doms nges gcod/*
[1324] Personal communication with the director of Drigung Jangchub ling, Rajpur, August 2012.
[1325] Also see Dreyfus, 2003: 58.
[1326] Personal communication with Lama 'Tshul khrims', Dehradun, August 2012.

punishment to make them see the error of their ways, but they could not be asked for a pay-off (*za 'dod*) instead.[1327] A later set of monastic guidelines by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama for mDo khams sho mdo dgon dga' ldan bshad sgrub gling[1328] from the 1920s also suggests physically punishing anyone breaking the rules, be they lay- or monastic:

> In accord with various relevant legal decrees, which resulted in hunting being illegal in the [previously] established areas (*thob khungs*), such as behind and in front of the main monastery and its branches, when people do not uphold this, they need to be physically punished.[1329]

Corporal punishment is mentioned only infrequently in the monastic guidelines. It is important to bear in mind that the Tibetan bca' yig, as other Buddhist monastic guidelines, often merely portray a normative picture: the way procedural justice was imagined by the authors. Oral accounts and the like then show us to what extent these rules were put into practice and the extent to which the general monastic attitude to justice accords with that found in written sources. With the information at hand, it is difficult to ascertain the degree and manner of physical punishment that took place in the monasteries. A set of monastic guidelines for the Sakya Mang spro monastery in Ladakh, written by the King Nyi ma rnam rgyal in 1711, threatens physical and even capital punishment, but only as an instrument of state law:

> As it would not be right to become worse than householders, by taking into consideration the honour (*la rgya*) of the Teachings and the beings based on the religious rules and the state law, a lama should not diverge from this path. A doer of great misdeeds is confined to his monk-quarters[1330] and all that he has is confiscated by the *bla brang*. The matter having been carefully investigated, he is expelled by the *gaṇḍi* being beaten, thereby preventing any reoccurrence among the pure ones. When this is done, one is not to be his accomplice. After this, no one, be they high or low, monk or lay, in whatever capacity, is allowed to act as his support, his accomplice. As it is possible that there are those who innocently disregard this, these people will be penalized heavily by means of punishments of body and life through the secular law. Therefore, it is important for everyone to be unmistaken with regard to what is right and wrong.[1331]

[1327] *bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*: 99: [..] *nyo tshong byed mi gang yin la za 'dod tsam ma yin pa'i lus steng rang du nyes pa rnag thog gtsag khel gtong rgyu/*

[1328] This monastery is in Sho mdo, Lhorong country, in Chamdo prefecture. While it is currently included within the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama considered it to be in *mDo smad* (commonly understood to refer to Eastern Tibet).

[1329] *Sho mdo dga' ldan bshad sgrub gling bca' yig*: 527: *rtsa tshig rim 'brel ltar dgon ma lag gi rgyab mdun sogs sngar thob khungs su rngon 'gal khrims 'bras la mi gtugs pa byung tshe lus steng du chad pa gtong/*

[1330] *grwa shag la/ sgo the* [sic: *them*] *sbyar ba*. Literally, to attach a threshold to the monks' quarters. It means either that he is locked into his room or out of his room.

[1331] *Mang spro dgon bca' yig*: 63, 4: *khyim pa las zhan par gyur na mi rung bas/ chos khrims dang rgyal khrims kyi sgo nas bstan 'gro'i la rgya la dgongs pas bla ma nas de lam du ma bor ba* 44*) nyes chen byed po de nyid grwa shag la/ sgo the sbyar bas rgyu dngos gang yod bla brang du bzhes, ngo bor bsgyur sbyang sed bkrol nas gaṇ* [*gaṇḍi*] *rdung gis gnas nas dbyung nas gtsang dag phyis lam khegs pa gnang ba dang, de ltar gnang ba la gtso bor 'di* [*kha*] 45) *kha nas ngan rgyab mi byed cing/ de rjes mchog dman ser skya dbang yod su'i kyang rten skyob ngan (rgyab) byas chog rgyu min/ de la yang nyes med kyi rtsi med byas srid na 'di kha nas kyang (rgyal) khrims kyi sgo nas lus (srog gi) steng*

Within the Tibetan secular courts, physical punishments and even the maiming of convicted criminals were not uncommon practices. These types of punishments did pose a challenge to monastics involved in legal issues. French's monk-informant who used to work at the courthouse in Lhasa, stresses that he 'as a monk' was not allowed to have anything to do with this.[1332] By contrast, the people who punished the monks in the monasteries must have always been monastics themselves.

The Punishment of Expulsion: *Pārājika* and Other Reasons

Among the lists of punishments that feature in most bca' yig, expulsion (*gnas dbyung*) is often given as the last resort, the highest possible penalty. But what crimes deserved such punishment, and what did it actually mean to get expelled? The threat of expulsion has been alluded to a number of times before. According to information on the basis of oral history, actual expulsion was rather rare. In most, but not all, cases, people were expelled when one of the four 'roots' were broken. The procedures of expulsion, as they are described in the monastic guidelines, are rather intricate. The 1947 guidelines for Phabongkha elaborate on the process:

> When it turns out that someone has gone against [any of] the four roots, he will definitely be expelled from the Sangha. He – whoever it is – should offer a hundred prostrations in the back row during assembly. After that, he kneels and the disciplinarian sternly relates his misdeeds in public. Then, his monastic robes are taken away from him. He is made to wear white clothes and he is justly given two hundred lashes of the whip in order to make him an example for everyone to see. After that, as settled on paper and established in the sūtras,[1333] he is expelled.[1334]

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama suggests a slightly milder approach and recommends a fine for transgressing monks in Jampa ling in Chamdo:

> Those who have incurred defeats need to first give scarves to the people of their own college and then they give a fine of twenty-five official silver *srang*. After that, as settled on paper and established in the sūtras, they are turned out.[1335]

A similar type of rigorous approach was suggested by the bca' yig for Menri monastery. Cech translates:

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du chad pa drag po gtong nyes 46) *yin pas so so nas spang blang 'dzol med gal che/* The bracketed words here indicate contracted writing forms.

[1332] French, 1995a: 324.

[1333] *shog thod* [sic?: *thog*] *mdo sgrub*, this seems to be a set phrase used when announcing expulsions, but the meaning is not exactly clear here.

[1334] *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 609: *gal srid rtsa ba bzhi dang 'gal rigs shar tshe dge 'dun pa'i gnas nas nges par 'byung/ de'ang nyes can su yin nas tshogs dbus gral gsham du brgya phug* [sic: *phyag*] *gcig phul rjes/ pus mo btsugs/ chos khrims pas de nyid kyi byas 'dzol rnams tshogs gtam drag gtong dang 'brel rab byung gi chas gos rnams phud/ gos dkar g.yogs te lus steng du lcang* [sic: *lcag*] *dbyugs nyis brgya tham pa/ tshang ma'i mig lar 'doms slad gnad 'phrod btang thog shog thod mdo sgrub dang 'brel bar gnas nas dbyung/*

[1335] *Chab mdo dga' ldan theg chen byams pa gling bca' yig*: 548: *pham pa byung ba rnams nas so so'i grwa tshang khongs su kha btags/ nyes chad rgya dngul srang nyi shu rtsa lnga sgrub rje shog thod mdo sgrub dang 'brel bar gnas nas bskrad/*

> If the four root vows are weakened, then there should be no delay in expelling the monk from the monastery. He should leave naked with ashes thrown on him. He should not settle in the same area.[1336]

Even more detailed is the account given in the recently written *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*. The author here reconstructs the bca' yig that was in use in his monastery before it went missing:

> If something occurs that necessitates someone being expelled from the monastery's community (*grwa sa'i skyid sdug*), the chant-master and the disciplinarian (*dbu chos*) report the culprit to the treasury (*phyag mdzod khang*) of the *bla brang* to which he belongs (*do bdag*). The treasury then dresses him in white. It is appropriate that he gets a punishment (*rtsa ra*) in front of everyone consisting of two hundred lashes of the whip, without protesting (*ka kor med pa*). He then needs to give, as an offering, a communal tea-round for the collected monks, which can be elaborate, average or limited, as well as scarves for the throne. He then is again placed among the ranks of the menial servants,[1337] clerks (*nang zan*), and tax-payers (*khral bzo*),[1338] of the person who was lord when he was a lay-person. Whether he is taxed or not is generally decided upon, depending on how he has been punished and the gravity of his offence.[1339]

According to the above text, the monk who breaks his vows is suitably 'laicized', punished physically and financially, and is returned as a subject of his previous 'lord'. The passage that follows elaborates on what vows were broken and discusses the object of the monk's downfall.

> The girl also needs to give two communal tea-rounds, as a confession (*bshag pa*) to the assembly of monks, either elaborate or limited. According to the earlier *bCa' gsal*,[1340] there was a custom of giving the girl two hundred lashings with the whip as a punishment, but after some time doing this went out of practice (*mdzad brtas*) and it was substituted by the punishment of offering communal tea-rounds and by giving beautiful and expensive materials (*sbyor 'jags*) for a throne, pillar decorations or offering-materials and the like, which were honestly acquired. Withdrawing her from the community (*skyid sdug 'then pa*) also occurred, having made an example [of her], whether [she was] higher, lower or the same [social status]. In the place of each lash of the whip one kilo (*rgya ma*) of gathered wood had to be given, and the two-hundred kilos of wood then needed to be offered to the general assembly of

[1336] Cech, 1988: 73.
[1337] *rta thab*. This is an abbreviation of *rta thab g.yog*, servants who take care of the horses and the fire.
[1338] The exact meaning of this word is not clear; it may also denote 'tax-collector'.
[1339] *mTshur phu dgon gyi dkar chag*: 285: *gal te grwa sa'i skyid sdug nas 'dgos pa'i gnad don byung na dbu chos lhan rgyas nas nyes can do bdag bla brang gi phyag mdzod khang du rtsis 'bul thog phyag khang nas gos dkar bkon te kun gyi mig lam du 'doms pa'i lus steng du rtsa ra rta lcag nyis brgya tham pa zhu re ka kor med par gnad 'phrod thog dge 'dun 'dus tshogs rnams la mang ja rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum khri dar rnam gzhag dang bcas pa 'bul sgrubs dgos pa'i thog slar yang skya rtsa rang bdag gis gzhis khag gi rta thab nang gzan dang/ khral bzo khungs 'jug khral snon mi snon sogs nyes chad ji gnang nyes 'gal che chung la gzhigs pas bka' dpyad spyi khur zhu rgyu dang/*
[1340] Presumably, this is the name of the text that is deemed lost.

> monks – this is what it said in the bca' yig. Having consulted with various guiding materials (*lam ston yig cha*), things differed according to the specifics of the personal inclinations of the person in charge (*do bdag so so'i babs*). The custom was that the treasury decided on either a heavy or a light punishment that was fitting, making sure that [the offence] would not again occur in the future.[1341]

The other instance that mentioned the female party getting punished can be found in a bca' yig written for another Kagyü monastery. In this bca' yig for the Sikkimese Phodang (Pho ldang) monastery from the 18th century, it is suggested that the woman would be punished by making a confession and giving offerings, similar to those of the monk. She also had to vow not to reoffend. If the monk and the girl continued their practices, they needed to do the same types of confessions and in addition pay twenty-five coppers coins (*smar zho*).[1342]

Sometimes, even allowing the mere presence of women in the monastery was enough to get expelled – at least, according to the warning given in a text directed to the population of Sera monastery:

> Even if it is one's own mother, she may not get permission to stay unless it is during the 'Great Giving ceremony' (*gnang chen*). If there are women in the monastery without permission, then the one responsible along with his accomplices will be expelled and the instigators each have to carry out the punishment of one communal tea-round and five hundred prostrations each.[1343]

Breaking the vow of celibacy is the most commonly mentioned 'defeat' in the monastic guidelines.[1344] While sometimes bca' yig took a more pragmatic approach towards sexual conduct, in particular in Himalayan regions,[1345] for a monk to have sex *always* was tantamount to a loss of vows. A monastic community then could decide to either let the person retake his vows or to expel him. It is important to note that many other, and I dare say most, bca' yig – if they mention sexual conduct at all – do *not* take a tolerant stance with regard to issues of celibacy. To cite an example from the guidelines for Mindröl ling monasteries, written in 1698:

[1341] ibid.: *de'i bu med nas dge 'dun mang tshogs rnams la bshag pa mang ja rgyas bsdus gnyis dang/ de snga bca' gsal la bu med kyi lus steng du rta lcag nyis brgya tham pa re'i rtsa ra chad pa gcod srol 'dug kyang bar lam kha cig la mdzad brtas byung ba'i dbang gis mang ja rnam gzhag rgyugs dod sogs chad las rnams gtsang bsgrubs thog 'du khang gi gdan khri dang/ kha 'phan mchod rdzas sogs spams mtho sbyor 'jags zhus te skyid sdug 'then pa sogs kyang byung stags mig ltos rim shas kyi phyis mchog dman mos snyoms dbang gis rta lcag re'i dod du tshogs shing rgya ma re la bsgyur ba'i rgyugs dod sing rgya ma nyis brgya re dge 'dun spyi'i tshogs shing du 'bul lam zhu rgyu bcas bca' yig gi dgongs don dang/ lam ston yig cha rim pa la go bsdur/ do bdag so so'i babs kyi dmigs bsal zor lci yang sogs phyag khan nas 'os shing 'tshams la phyis lam 'doms pa'i dpyod rgya mdzad srol yod pa dang/*

[1342] Schuh and Dagyab, 1978: 246: *bud med des kyang gong gyi bzhugs bshags ltar sgrub ste phyin chad sgrigs lam ras su mi bor ba'i mtha' 'dom dang/ sngar tshig rjes 'gal mi yong ba'i gan sdom tha gtsang blang/ de min byed lte kho rang gnyis ka'i las smon dbang gi chos skal zad pa (lta bu) tshod med sdig can du shar tshe gong gsal bshags brten thog smar zho (nyi shu) rtsa lnga sgrub/*

[1343] *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 187: *rang gi ma yin na 'ang gnang chen gyi skabs ma gtogs rgyun gtan gnang ba zhu sa med/ gal te dgon nang du bud med gnang ba ma zhus pa'i rigs byung tshe byed gte khag theg dang bcas gnas dbyung dang 'go byed so sor mang ja phyag lnga brgya re'i chad las 'gel/*

[1344] It can be no coincidence that this is also the case in the Vinayas. See Clarke, 2009b: 116.

[1345] For an example of such a bca' yig, see Jansen, 2014.

> When someone is suspected of having had intercourse, he needs to be investigated and if it is found to be true, he is to be expelled (*gnas nas dbyung*) under the sound of the very loud *gaṇḍi*.[1346] Even if his [case] seems to have supporters, it needs to be put an end to, for it has been determined that it was 'the first *pārājika*'.[1347]

A recurring myth, upheld by scholars even today, is that celibacy was only enforced in Gelug monasteries and that the attitudes towards sex in other institutions were more *laissez-faire*. While it is not possible to make claims on the actual practices of these non-Gelug monastic institutions, on the basis of the textual sources at hand it can be stated in no uncertain terms that on the level of monastic *policy and ideology*, sexual conduct was never simply tolerated. In fact, the emphasis given on celibacy is found as often in non-Gelug bca' yig as it is in Gelug bca' yig. Thus, unless the topic is the extent to which celibacy was practised in Tibet based on eye-witness or personal accounts and such like, the myth that monastic institutions other than Gelug monasteries displayed a general, or even ideological, disregard for upholding the vow of celibacy needs to be put to bed once and for all.[1348]

Another set of guidelines for a Nyingma monastery, this time for Tengpoche from 1918, is equally intolerant of vow-breakers:

> As soon as a defeat of the four roots has occured, the person who has broken his promise (*dam*) to his lama is expelled under the sound of the *gaṇḍi*. Not being allowed to leave behind his boot,[1349] he has to survive in the [lay-] community himself and in accordance with state law.[1350]

The guidelines written in 1938 for Dophü chökhor ling give a reason why these monks may no longer stay at the monastery:

> If a *dge tshul* or *dge slong*, however good he is, has transgressed the four roots, as there is no more partaking in either Dharma or material goods together with the Sangha, he should be expelled.[1351]

[1346] A *gaṇḍi* is a piece of wood used in the monastery to signal both daily activities and exceptional circumstances. See Helffer, 1983: 114.

[1347] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 279: *de dag gang rung dang khyed par mi tshangs spyod kyi nyes pas gos pa mthong thos dogs gsum dang ldan pa la dogs pa chod nges pa' i rgyu mtshan yang dag mthong na 'chal pa'i klad pa 'gems pa'i gaṇḍi'i sgra drag po dang bcas pas gnas nas dbyung/ de'i rgyab snon pa snang yang tshar gcod/ pham pa dang po'i mtha' 'gegs phyir/*

[1348] e.g. Willis, 1989: 101: 'Of the four schools, only the dGe-lugs-pa enjoins strict celibacy [..].' In other instances, a similar sentiment is couched in more innocuous terms, such as that the Gelug monasteries 'emphasize celibacy and purity.' See Samuel, 2013: 11. Another recent reiteration of this myth can be found in Clarke, 2014: 116.

[1349] *zom nyer bzhag*. While this exact phrase is not attested in the dictionaries, *zom lus* (leaving one's boot, i.e. leaving something behind unintentionally) does occur, see Goldstein, *The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*: 963. Here it must refer to any business the ex-monk may have in the monastery. The phrase may have some parallels with the well known narrative of Hwa shang Mahayana leaving one of his shoes behind at Samye, i.e. some of his views remained current in Tibet.

[1350] *sTeng po che bca' yig*: 464/6b: *rtsa ba bzhi'i pham pa byung ba dang/ bla mar dam nyams pa'i rigs gaṇḍi'i sgra dang bcas gnas nas dbyung ba las zom nyer bzhag mi chog pa sogs 'dus pa'i sde dang/ rgyal po khrims kyis 'tsho zhing/*

[1351] *rDo phud chos 'khor gling bca' yig*: 565: *dge tshul slong gang yin kyang rtsa ba bzhi las 'das na dge 'dun dang lhan cig chos dang zang zing gi longs spyod byar med pas gnas nas dbyung zhing*

Regularly, the monastic guidelines imply that monks who break their vows may not take their material wealth with them. The South Monastery of Sakya did not allow the expelled monk to take his possessions with him, and his things would be passed on to a monk relative in the same monastery. In other places around Sakya, however, an ex-monk could take his things, provided he admitted his transgression and offered the monk-community a 'big tea' (**mang ja*). The monk who tried to hide his faults, however, would be entirely dispossessed.[1352]

Naturally, it was not just breaking the vow of celibacy that was punished by expulsion. The bca' yig for Jampa ling from 1927 notes the range of 'crimes' that could possibly result in getting sent away:

> When there is someone who has been stained by the faults of the four roots and alcohol, by for example having hurt [another] by stones, knives and weapons, then the wrong-doer gets expelled without chance for appeal.[1353] Examining the severity of the misdeeds he is punished by the lama and the officials with, for example, a communal tea-round by general rule or by being returned to lay-life as before (*skya rtsa snga srol ltar*). And when the monastery has done its task for the general benefit independently, the general populace should then take [this] lay-person as their responsibility.[1354]

As mentioned previously in this chapter, violence was a problem in many monasteries, throughout the ages. A teacher at the Drigung monastic college in India acknowledges that sometimes this type of violence still occurs.

> If weapons, like knives, are involved, the monks get expelled. One has to always look at the circumstances, though. If someone gets into trouble again and again and when this is addressed he talks back to the teacher, then sometimes there is no way other than to expel him. Most of the time, however, someone like that leaves before he can get expelled. Once they are expelled they cannot come back.[1355]

The bca' yig written by the Fifth Dalai Lama for Gongra ngesang dorje ling lists intercourse (*mi tshangs spyod kyi skyon*), killing a person, stealing something of value, and hurting others as crimes that could lead to expulsion, but adds the smoking of tobacco (*tha ma kha'i du ba rngub pa*) and stealthily using the Sangha's general possessions for oneself (*dge 'dun spyi'i rdzas la sbas shubs*).[1356] The latter issue of using the monastic community's possession is also seen by the author of the bca' yig for Dophü chökhor ling written in 1938 as a reason to send a monk away: 'If it

[1352] Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969: 234.
[1353] *zhu ngo mgron brgyud med pa*. This is a 'government' term for reporting to a higher official through an aid. See Goldstein, *The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*: 933.
[1354] *Byams gling grwa tshang bca' yig*: 482, 3: *gal te rtsa bzhi chang gi nyes pas gos pa dang rdo gri mtshon gyis rmas pa sogs nyes can zhu ngo mgron brgyud med par gnas dbyung thog mang ja nyes chad sogs bab che chung la gzhigs pa bla ma las snes spyi bcad dang/ skya rtsa bcas snga srol ltar grwa tshang spyi phan rang bdag chog rgyur 'di skor mi skya 'go dmangs rnams nas kyang theg pa khur len bgyis/*
[1355] Personal communication with dKon mchog chos skyabs, Rajpur, August 2012.
[1356] *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 225.

transpires that a person has taken additional donations and salary, he will be expelled.'[1357]

Throughout this section, the technical term 'expulsion' has been used to translate the Tibetan *gnas dbyung*, without explaining what this actually entailed. Was a monk permanently expelled, banned from the monastery, or was there a way to make amends?

Re-entering the Monastery

Clarke has criticized the translation of 'expulsion' for the Sanskrit *asaṃvāsa*. He argues that, according to the Vinayas, being no longer in communion – the actual meaning of *asaṃvāsa*, did not equate expulsion.[1358] It is argued that in the Indian case, it was not entirely clear what happened to a monk who committed a *pārājika*. The examples given above, however, make it rather clear that in the Tibetan context, *gnas dbyung* meant becoming dislocated, being made to physically leave the monastic grounds rather than simply to no longer be in communion. According to the *Mahāvyutpatti*, *gnas nas dbyung* is a translation of *utkṣepanīya*: to get thrown out.[1359] As far as I am aware, the more Vinayic *gnas par mi bya ba*, which is a translation for *asaṃvāsa*, is not used in the bca' yig. Thus, while it is clear that expulsion was a punishment given to monks, what happens after that is not. Clarke counters the widespread notion that monks who, for example, had sex were 'immediately and irrevocably expelled from the Buddhist order.'[1360] He argues that this equation of sex with permanent expulsion has been created by 'modern commentators', though not supported by Indian Buddhist monastic law codes.[1361]

In the Tibetan situation, we have seen that the punishment of expulsion, be it for a *pārājika* or otherwise, was not always immediate. Rather, many bca' yig recommend a process of careful investigation. Furthermore, in some cases there was a way back to the monastery. While many bca' yig state that monks who have been expelled elsewhere may not be allowed in to the monastery,[1362] the return to monkhood was technically not impossible. This is in line with the fact that all Vinayas, except the Pāli Vinaya, allow men to remain members of the monastic community 'if truly remorseful.'[1363]

An example of a bca' yig in which re-entering the monastery is possible is the set of monastic guidelines for the Sikkimese Phodang monastery by the Fourteenth Karmapa Theg mchog rdo rje (1797-1868?), composed in 1846. In this text, he – possibly taking the specific circumstances of Sikkim into account – mentions inmates of the monastery who have had sex (here: *mi tshangs gyid pa*). They can, he states, remain in or perhaps 're-enter' the monastery and the monastic group to which they belonged.[1364] This can only take place after the person in question has made extensive reparations in the form of offerings to the Three Jewels and the monastic community, has confessed his faults, has made prostrations in the assembly and 'renewed his

[1357] *rDo phud chos 'khor gling bca' yig*: 565: *'gyed phogs 'phar blangs sogs ra khrod na gnas nas dbyung/*
[1358] Clarke, 2009b: 116-9.
[1359] Via: Lokesh Chandra, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*: 1369.
[1360] Clarke, 2014: 162.
[1361] Clarke, 2009a: 30.
[1362] See for example: *rDo phud chos 'khor gling bca' yig*: 564: *de yang dgon sde gzhan nas gnas dbyung rigs sgrigs su mi 'jug*. This is also stated in the guidelines for sKu 'bum's Tantric college. See *sKu 'bum rgyud pa grwa tshang bca' yig*: 276.
[1363] Clarke, 2014: 103.
[1364] The wording is: *sngar rgyun skyid bsdug* [sic: *sdug*] *la bcug*. Schuh and Dagyab, 1978: 246.

seat'[1365] in the assembly. What is made clear is that the monk, having had intercourse, effectively loses his monastic vows and therefore has to retake them.[1366] However, this does not deny the perpetrator future monkhood. Risley, who may have had direct or indirect access to a bca' yig in use in 'Pemiongchi' (Padma yang rtse) monastery in the late 19th century, makes a similar observation in his *Gazetteer of Sikhim*:

> The regulation which is most frequently violated is that of celibacy; but in most of the institutions other than Pemiongchi celibacy is not observed. Should it be proved that a Pemiongchi monk consorts with women, he will be expelled by a chapter, unless it be his first offence and he prays publicly for forgiveness, and then is awarded some penance and pays a fine of 180 rupees according to the rules of the lChags-yig [sic: bca' yig].[1367] He must also pay over again the entrance fees and presents as before.[1368]

Clearly then, the Tibetan monastic guidelines cited above, seem to follow Clarke's findings regarding Vinaya, in that they imply that sex does not *need* to lead to expulsion, and that retaking the vows was possible. Pelyul darthang monastery's guidelines show a willingness to let even murderers back among the ranks:

> Those who have been dismissed from the yellow ranks, such as those who have started a family, have killed a man, who have done things like robbing and deceiving people by, for example, taking their wealth (*rgyu brgyags pa*), or otherwise, those who have insulted others by having caused fights, arguments and strife, when they re-enter the assembly, may only enter after having developed the preliminaries, having been engaged in various practice-sessions, and having confessed.[1369]

As has been indicated above, the people who re-enter are, in terms of their vows, new monks and thus need to take a junior position:

> When they do enter the assembly, they only sit in the lowest row, and not in the higher rows without having taken vows. When they enter the assembly they need to have quit their previous bad behaviour. If they have not, then they

[1365] This means that the person in question loses seniority.

[1366] Schuh and Dagyab, 1978: 246: *mi tshang gyid pa byung na bla ma las 'dzin dbu chos nas zhib bcod thog 'dzin bzung kyi byed lte kho pa rang la rgyal khrims rtsa bar bzung ba'i thog mar rten gyi drung du snyan bshal steng mchod 'dus sder zho drug gi tshogs 'khor mang ja sbyor brgyad bla ma la maṇḍal brten gsum mtshan grangs bab stun dbu chos las 'dzin so sor phyi mdzod kyi mtshon pa'i sne bshags lag ldan yod med gyis bshags brten smar steg 'gres ma'i dmar zho bcu gnyis sgrub ste tshogs bshams nas brgya phyag dang tshogs gdan gsar rjes thog slar sdom sems gyis na gan tshig blang ste sngar rgyun skyid bsdug la bcug.*

[1367] This rendering of the spelling Risley explains as the 'the iron letter', in the sense of the 'inflexible rule'. This may have been a local etymology or merely Risley's flight of the imagination. See Risley, 1894: 300.

[1368] ibid.: 302.

[1369] *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 193: *ser gral nas bud de khyim 'dzin pa dang/ mi bsad pa/ rgyu brgyabs pa sogs jag khram gyi las byas pa/ gzhan yang de mtshungs kyi khyim thabs rtsod snog byad pa sogs gzhan gyis 'phya smod gshe ba'i rigs rnams slar tshogs su zhugs tshe sngon 'gro nas chos thun la rim zhugs bcas sgrigs bshags byas ma zin par* [sic: *bar*] *tshogs la mi gzhug.*

> need to be dismissed from the rows of the assembly and unless they are punished suitably, they may not be allowed back in just like that.[1370]

The text furthermore states that these people, even if they are allowed into the assembly, may not be promoted to lama, chant-master (*dbu mdzad*), or teacher of ritual dance (*'cham dpon*). This effectively means that monks 'with a past' could not occupy positions in which they had to fulfil an exemplary or public function.

State Involvement in Monastic Legal Processes

As we have seen above, the bca' yig occasionally recommend handing over a monastic culprit to the 'secular authorities'. Particularly regarding the issue of murder, the case is almost always referred to 'secular law' (*rgyal khrims/ srid khrims/ spyi khrims/ nag khrims*) – which may have meant different things at different times, but always indicated a legal authority outside the monastery. In the same way, Goldstein comments that 'murder cases were always considered to be under the jurisdiction of the government; the government retained ultimate control over the taking of human life.'[1371] Thus when rogue monks were invloved in fights that ended in death, there would have been both monastic and secular punishment.[1372] According to the Mindröl ling bca' yig all crimes that fell under general law (*spyi khrims*) needed to be reported to the headman (*spyi pa*) at the estate.[1373] It is unfortunately not specified what crimes these were and what was to happen next.

We do know that in the early 20th century, it was not only murder for which monks were punished under secular law. Bell reports that the Drepung ringleaders who tried to start a rebellion against the Tibetan government were beaten, expelled and subsequently punished under secular law.[1374] Furthermore, a picture taken during Bell's mission to Lhasa in 1920-21 shows a Drepung monk with his head in stocks. The note accompanying the photo states that this was his punishment for forging currency notes.[1375] Naturally, the closer both the author of the bca' yig and the monastery were to the central government the more likely the threat of secular punishments.

A set of guidelines directed to the whole of Sera monastery, of all large monasteries physically the closest to the Ganden Phodrang government in Lhasa, written in 1920, attempts to add an extra layer of state control:

> When there are reports of people who have the reponsibilities of scholars but whose colour and smell do not accord, who disgrace the Dharma or

[1370] ibid.: *gal te tshogs su gzhug skabs kyang gral smad las mtho sar rab byung ma zhus par sdod mi chog /tshogs la gzhug phyin bya ngan snga ma rnams las ldog dgos/ ma ldog tshe tshogs gral nas phyir phud de gang 'tsham gyi nyes chad gcod pa ma gtogs rang dgar mi 'jog pa nges dgos/*

[1371] Goldstein, 1968: 234, 5. In Thailand too, homicide was the concern of state authorities. Unlike in Tibet, however, also all 'criminal' cases that involved lay-people were to be reported to the state as well. See Bunnag, 1973: 53.

[1372] Goldstein, 1964: 133.

[1373] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 307: *gal te spyi khrims la gras kha byas pa'i nye che ba rnams slar gzhis su spyi par btug*

[1374] Bell, 1998 [1946]: 332.

[1375] See http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/photo_1998.286.53.2.html (viewed: 30-10 2014).

> practitioners of the Dharma, they should be suppressed according to secular law, without relenting.[1376]

Elsewhere, in the same text, there is a relatively long section on the occurrence of people in the vicinity posing as monks, or – to be more specific – on those who seem to be neither lay nor monks and set on doing bad things.[1377] The work states that it was not allowed to count these people among the Sangha:

> And if there are still people who stay on pretending, like summer grass pretends to be a winter worm and a rabbit pretends to be a rock, then the officials who have agreed to let them stay may not act as if they did not know, because they themselves were in charge. After they [the officials] have been expelled, they are punished heavily for this according to secular law, and then they are banished.[1378]

Here, it is not just people who pretend to be monks who get punished according to state law, but also those monastic officials who allow them to stay, in all likelihood accepting bribes in return for this favour. This shows that having these people live in the vicinity was probably seen as a sort of security threat. Sera monastery's great power also meant being responsible for keeping imposters at bay. The 'purifcation' of the Sangha was thus, contrary to what was the case in for example Sri Lanka, Thailand, and occasionally even in Mongolia,[1379] not directly the responsibility of the state but of the monasteries that were guided and, perhaps, goaded by the ruler, but only when this leader was in a position to assert himself, as was the case during the rule of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. In light of the contents of a number of bca' yig, the picture of Tibet as a centralized state ruled by a theocratic government in Lhasa is not convincing.[1380] Monasteries were, for the most part, self-regulating bodies. The threat of secular law was merely a last resort.

More research is needed to establish the relationship between the secular and the monastic laws in Tibetan culture, in particular in regard to the influence of monastic rulings and punishments apparent in governmental regulations. An interesting example of this is the description of the way government officials were punished for faulty behaviour. They were to make prostrations, and if their position had become untennable they were made to wear white clothes and driven out of the premises on a donkey.[1381] This is more than vaguely reminiscent of how monks get expelled from their monasteries according to the descriptions given above.

Another noteworthy issue is that of the legal status of the monastery as a safehaven for others. In Sri Lanka, in the 10th century, wanted criminals could seek

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[1376] *Se ra theg chen gling rtsa tshig*: 184: *mdog dang bro ba mi mtshungs pa'i mkhas pa'i 'khur 'dzin pa'i rigs nas chos dang/ chos pa'i rkang drangs pa'i go thos rigs byung tshe rgyal khrims kyi rje gnon yan por ma song ba gtong rgyu dang/*

[1377] ibid. 186: *skya min ser min las ngan pho tshugs pa 'di rnams*

[1378] ibid.: *gal te da dung dbyar rtsa dgun 'bu ri bong rdo rdzus byas nas sdod mi byung tshe/ chu gram mnyam sdod kyi las sne rnams nas mi shes pa'i rgyu mi 'dug pa so so'i 'go byed nas gnas dbyung byas rjes/ 'di nas rgyal khrims kyi nyes pa drag pa dang bcas phyogs mthar sa 'dzin la gtong rgyu yin/*

[1379] The relationship between the Sangha and the state in Mongolia is a complex one, and seems to have fluctuated greatly over time. Wallace's article on law and the monkhood in Mongolia is very informative on this matter, but a further investigation, particularly with a comparison to Tibetan practices, is a desideratum. See Wallace, 2014.

[1380] Here I am in agreement with Samuel, 1993: 33.

[1381] Travers, 2009: 372, 3.

refuge in the monasteries from where they could not be extradited. During that time, the king had transferred the judicial authority he previously enjoyed over the property of the Sangha to the monastery, and from then on the monasteries were allowed and required to manage their own property in all aspects.[1382] Several remote monasteries in 8th century China exercised a similar level of autonomy: they seem to have regularly sheltered less savoury characters.[1383] Considering that certain Vinaya rules, such as that of not letting wanted criminals become monks, appear to have been created to appease the secular authorities, it is puzzling that monasteries would offer amnesty to these people, to say the least. One does not expect the Tibetan monastic guidelines to offer wanted criminals an escape from justice, but the bca' yig for Gongra ngesang dorje ling contains some surprising information. This text was written by the Fifth Dalai Lama for a monastery that had previously sided with those who opposed the Mongolian troops who had helped the Dalai Lama gain temporal power. While the text does not call on the monastic authorities to undermine state law, it does declare: 'When there are 'criminals' (*nag chen*) who have broken other [people's] laws and ask for refuge, one should be of benefit.'[1384] The text, unfortunately, offers no context for this statement, making it difficult to explain. What can be noted from this remark, however, is that in the late 17th century even the highest political authority, the Dalai Lama himself, was aware that his government did not have the power to submit all wrong-doers to justice, thereby acknowledging the legal plurality that Tibetan areas had known for centuries.

While state interference in monastic affairs has clear historical precedent, current governmental regulations in Tibetan areas are perceived by monks as going against monastic rule,[1385] in particular with regard to the expulsion of monks. The set age-limits of monks entering the monastery and the appointment of those to high positions are further examples of this. With the exception of murder, treason, and forgery, on the whole, the historical bca' yig demonstrate that monasteries themselves had the authority to make these types of decisions; something exemplified by the fact that the individual monastic guidelines contain such varying regulations with regard to these issues.

Concluding Remarks: Monastic Buddhist Notions of Justice

This chapter has given a number of examples informing us about the legal position of the monks and monasteries in Tibetan areas. The distinctions between the monastic law and the secular law, which need further scrutiny, are occasionally clearly demarcated in the text and at other instances left unclear. Both the Dharma and law are concerned with keeping a balance of power, which ultimately brings about wide-reaching effects, the primary of which is the happiness and welfare of sentient beings. A Bhutanese law code lays bare the connections that are less visible in the monastic guidelines:

> Whether there is happiness or not in all the lands
> Depends on whether there is a state law created in accord with the Dharma
> The prophecy of the Dharma-cakravartin on governing the state

[1382] Gunawardana, 1979: 4.
[1383] Gernet, 1995 [1956]: 223, 4: 'officials denounced the remote Buddhist establishments as hideouts for convicts and draft-evaders.'
[1384] *Gong ra nges gsang rdo rje gling bca' yig*: 228: *gzhan gyi khrims las 'gal ba'i nag chen skyabs zhu bar byung tshe phan pa sgrub/*
[1385] Schwartz, 1994: 730. This is further confirmed by Re mdo sengge's remarks noted earlier.

> Can be truly seen in the Teachings of the Buddha; other than that what else is there?[1386]

In many ways, law may be seen as promising justice and social order, but within Tibetan society there seems to have been awareness that secular law is not separable from cosmic effects and that social order thus is not dependent on this type of justice alone. A passage of a bca' yig from 1918 cited earlier, connecting the purity of the Sangha, the happiness of the land, and the adherence to the sixteen pure 'human rules' further illustrates this point.

Monks, we know from other sources, were part of the legal system in Tibet, but the influence of monastic ideology on legal structure has not yet been established, while there are indications suggesting that this influence was substantial.[1387] The bca' yig that have stronger links to the state authorities tend to show more involvement in the execution of justice, but on the whole most monasteries, regardless of their affiliation, demonstrate an awareness of both their rights and responsibilities. Meting out punishments was one of those responsibilities, which clearly never had 'a return to inner morality' as an objective,[1388] but rather, according to the texts, penalties served 'to make an example' (*mig lar 'doms*) of the perpetrator, preventing others from doing the same in the future. Failing to carry out that duty of punishing led to further punishment. This may have some correspondences to descriptions of the ideal behaviour of Bodhisattvas that feature in some Indic Buddhist texts. In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, for example, the Bodhisattava is not only required to correct the behaviour of others by punishing; he commits a fault if he neglects to do so.[1389] The emphasis in the monastic guidelines also lies on a fair but pragmatic application of the rules: justice is not done at all costs. It should be noted that karma, the *law* of cause and effect, is not engaged at any level in the bca' yig.

Notions of fairness and justice – if at all mentioned in Buddhist Studies literature – are often addressed in terms of the workings of karma. Tempting though it may be to then conclude that for Buddhists the natural law of karma can be equated with all types of justice, such as social, punitive and conciliatory justice, it is clearly mistaken to conflate a doctrinal issue with actual practice. Collins argues this point in the following way:

> In the European-Christian case, everyone is intimately aware, as a matter of day-by-day experience, of the continuous and changing way ideals and the *Lebenswelt* coexist, of their sometimes stark, sometimes subtle and nuanced relations of contradiction, complementary opposition, or agreement; and so it is easy to see immediately that such an abstract and simplistic deduction from universal and ideal premises – God will punish, therefore there should be no need for law – is quite inappropriate for historical understanding, however

[1386] The translation is after Aris, 1986: 124; 101b: *rgyal khams kun tu phan bde 'byung mi 'byung/ rgyal khrims chos bzhin bca' la rag las phyir/ rgyal srid chos kyi 'khor los bsgyur ba'i lung/ rgyal bstan tshad mar 'dzin las gzhan du ci/*

[1387] Further research might, for example, shed light on whether the situation was anything comparable to the Western European one, where ecclesiastical courts were the first modern legal system. See North and Gwin, 2010: 136.

[1388] French, 1995a: 344.

[1389] Naturally, the text, along with its commentary by Tsongkhapa, states the usual caveats. See Tatz, 1986: 82; 238.

> admirable the ideals may (or may not) be. The Buddhist case is just the same.[1390]

The way in which monastic law is understood by monastic authors themselves is rather similar, if not identical to law outside of the Tibetan monastery. Laws, and by extension justice, serve to secure social order. As Pirie put it: 'The legal form promises justice and appears to guarantee order. This is what makes it particularly effective as an instrument of government.'[1391] In the Tibetan societies, where the government has traditionally been a symbolically prominent yet a functionally absent factor, the distinctions between law and custom,[1392] or law and morality are less easily made.[1393] Buddhist morality and secular law ultimately are both 'normative social practices that set standards for desirable behavior and proclaim symbolic expressions of social values.'[1394] Religion is often seen as providing a means of social control, which implies 'a system of rewards and punishments, either internalized during socialization or externally supplied by institutions, or both.'[1395]

The bca' yig emphasize externally supplied punishments, but not because karma is not part of the equation, or not believed in. In other words, the goal of promoting justice – by, for example, making a monk do prostrations – is not in order to let the monk accumulate merit, thereby cancelling out his misdeeds, but rather to keep the peace, to restore the reputation, to promote the sense of cohesion and to strengthen the identity of the monastic community. While Buddhism is regularly both praised and vilified for its individualist tendencies, on a monastic level, the execution of justice was a communal exercise and karma played only a minor part. This notion of justice as being communal and for the sake of social order is strongly connected to the perceived responsibility of the monastic community in society.

[1390] Collins, 1998: 435.
[1391] Pirie, 2010: 228.
[1392] Ramble, 2008: 41.
[1393] A similar remark can be made with regard to Burma. See Huxley, 1995: 81.
[1394] Wallace, 2014: 332.
[1395] Gombrich, 1975: 218.

9. MAINTAINING (THE) ORDER: CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Monastic Institution and Tibetan Society in an Age of Decline

This study has a focus on Tibetan monasticism in pre-modern times. Many issues or themes that are addressed here are, however, widespread among Buddhist cultures. One of these is that, as we live in the *kaliyuga* (*snyigs dus*), the degenerate age, the Buddhist Teachings are seen to be in decline. Of course, over the course of history Buddhists have always seen themselves as living in an age of decline. Another important issue that many cultures that have monastic Buddhism share is the notion that the Sangha, the community of monks and nuns is the guardian, the protector of the Buddhist Teachings. There are many Buddhist texts written in different times and places that could be cited, which contain a message similar to 'as long as the Sangha remains, so will the Dharma.' The Tibetan monastic guidelines also motivate their audience to behave well employing similar rhetoric. It is even suggested, among others in the 1918 bca' yig for Tengpoche, that keeping to the rules of (monastic) discipline could extend the Buddhist Teachings' limited lifespan ever so slightly:

> One should, solely motivated by the pure intention to be able to extend the precious Teachings of the Victor even a little bit in this time that is nearing the end of the five hundred [year period],[1396] take the responsibility to uphold one's own discipline.[1397]

In the Mindröl ling bca' yig, maintaining and protecting the Teachings of the Buddha and striving for the enlightenment of oneself and others were seen to depend upon whether individuals knew restraint based on pure moral discipline.[1398] Clearly, the Dharma and the Sangha were perceived to have a strong symbiotic relationship. While I am convinced that the two concepts mentioned above – that of the decline of the Dharma and that of the Sangha's role as the custodian of the Teachings – in fact greatly influenced Buddhist societies and their notions of social policy and justice, the sources at hand only substantiate this for the case of Tibetan societies.

Often, when speaking of justice or social justice in a Buddhist context, the finger is pointed to karma. It is seen as an explanatory model for the way a Buddhist society dealt, and still deals, with societal inequalities and injustices. Spiro sums up this view succinctly: 'inequalities in power, wealth, and privilege are not inequities,' as these inequalities are due to karma, and thus 'represent the working of a moral law [..]'[1399] While karma indeed works as an explanatory model for how things became the way they are now, it does not explain why things *stay* the way they are. In the

[1396] Nattier notes the various mentions of this five hundred year period in different sūtras. She questions the translation 'the last five hundred years' given by Conze for *paścimāyāṃ pañcaśatyāṃ*, which appears in the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*, arguing that *paścima* can also mean 'that which follows'. See Nattier, 1991: 33-7. In Tibetan this word, usually rendered *tha ma* (or alternatively *mtha' ma*), definitely means 'last' or 'the end'. When the whole phrase (*dus*) *lnga brgya mtha' ma*, which features widely in the *bKa' 'gyur*, is mentioned in later Tibetan texts, it most definitely points to the last five hundred year period or to the end of a five hundred year period.

[1397] *sTeng po che bca' yig*: 464/6b: *lnga brgya mtha' mar nye ba'i dus 'dir rgyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che cung zad tsam re yang bsrings thub pa'i lhag bsam kho nas kun nas bslangs te/ rang khrims theg pa khur len bya zhing/*

[1398] *sMin sgrol gling bca' yig*: 274,5: *rgyal ba'i bstan pa 'dzin skyong dang/ rang gzhan mtha' dag gi mthar thug gi 'bras bu don du gnyer dgos pa kho na'o/ de gnyis ka'ang gzhi tshil khrims rnam par dag pas yongs su bsdams pa'i gang zag la rag lus par* [..]

[1399] Spiro, 1971: 439.

context of Tibet, the limited degree of societal change throughout history is remarkable[1400] and the influence of monastic Buddhism on this phenomenon is great, as Gyatso remarks: 'The principle task that monks set themselves is self-perpetuation of their traditions and the institutions that safeguard them.'[1401] It can be argued that the monasteries were 'extremely conservative' and that, while there was a pressing need to 'adapt to the rapid changes of the twentieth century, religion and the monasteries played a major role in thwarting progress.'[1402]

The dominance or, in other words, the religious monopoly of the monasteries meant that they had – theoretically – the potential to use their organizational power and skills towards the development of things like education and healthcare accessible to all, poverty relief, and legal aid. However, history teaches us that the institutions that political scientists and others generally see as promoting social justice were never established in Tibet.[1403] It is too simplistic to explain the urge for self-perpetuation and the lack of institutional social activism in terms of the greed and power large corporations are often seen to display. Rather, I propose that the two very pervasive notions alluded to previously – that of the Dharma in decline and the Sangha as the protector of Buddhism – are much more nuanced explanations as to why certain things often stayed the way they were.

Connecting the decline of Teachings to a penchant toward conservatism is not new. Nattier suggests that the perspective that the Teachings will once disappear from view 'could lead to the viewpoint we actually find in much of South, Southeast, and Inner Asian Buddhism; namely, a fierce conservatism, devoted to the preservation for as long as possible of the Buddha's teachings in their original form.'[1404] East Asia is excluded from this list, because, as Nattier argues, there the age of decline meant that one had to just try harder. Tibetan understandings of this notion are varied and not sufficiently researched, but generally they seem to vacillate between the idea that the Teachings *will* disappear and the belief that being in an age of decline meant that being good was more challenging.[1405] Indeed, the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. Pointing to the notion that we live in the age of decline (*kaliyuga*), which makes life (and thus maintaining discipline) more difficult, or emphasizing the belief that the Dharma will one day not be accessible to us anymore, are pervasive tropes and even justifications in Tibetan culture, both in pre-modern texts and among contemporary Tibetan Buddhists, be they lay-people or monks.[1406]

Further contributing to the conservatism induced by living in an age of decline, is the monopoly position of Tibetan Buddhism. Throughout the documented history of Tibet, monks and monasteries have played dominant roles. They hardly ever had to compete with other religions or obstinate rulers. Not having any

[1400] Only aristocrats are known to have tried to implement major societal changes. The sole attempt at a revolution – i.e. changing the system and not the people in charge – was masterminded by an aristocrat in 1933. See Goldstein, 1973: 455.
[1401] Gyatso, 2003: 237.
[1402] cf. Goldstein, 1989b: 37.
[1403] This is not the same as saying that there was no social justice in pre-modern Tibet. My research has shown that on an institutional level there were no policies promoting issues of social justice in place, but that on an individual level people generally took good care of each other.
[1404] Nattier, 1991: 136, 7.
[1405] Gyatso also points out this notion regarding contemporary Tibetan monasticism in exile: 'Standards in discipline are perceived to have slipped. But this is perceived to be indicative of a more general "natural" process of corruption.' Gyatso, 2003: 235, 6.
[1406] There is no consensus in Buddhist canonical texts on the finality of this decline. See Nattier, 1991: 223. On the whole, however, in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition there is the understanding that the Teachings will merely *appear* to disappear.

competition means one does not have to adapt or change. In that sense, Tibetan Mahāyāna monasticism is more akin to the monasticism of Theravāda countries such as Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka and less like that of the Mahāyāna countries like China, Korea and Japan, making the categories of Mahāyāna and Theravāda less meaningful when looking at monastic Buddhism in a comparative way. While only the Tibetan situation has been examined in some detail, it is likely that this theory explaining why societal change was rare, slow, or difficult is also applicable to most Buddhist societies where monasticism was widespread and where Buddhism had a monopoly position. It is for scholars of other types of Buddhism to test this theory.

Monastic Guidelines for and against Change

If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.[1407]

The monastic guidelines presented in this study show the internal organization of the monastery: where to sit, what rituals to perform, who to appoint as monk-official, and how to punish bad behaviour. More importantly, these monastic guidelines convey the position of the monastery in society and its perceived role. The texts display a strong need for the monasteries to maintain their traditions. The changes that the monk-authors implement in these texts are mostly geared toward the monastic institution remaining the same.

The guidelines show that the monastic authorities would take measures that, in the current day and age, could appear at times rather harsh or perhaps even unjust. Some examples of these measures are given in this study: people from the lowest classes were sometimes barred from becoming monks, thereby preventing those classes from employing the monastery as a vehicle for social mobility. At other times, boys were levied from families as a sort of 'monk-tax.' Often monasteries gave out loans against rather high levels of interest (between ten and twenty per cent), which in some cases caused families to be indebted for generations to come. Some monastic institutions contained lay-residents, who worked their monastic estates. The monasteries had the prerogative to have these people perform corvée labour on monastic grounds. In other instances, the institutions were able to penalize the laity for not adhering to the rules in place on monastic territory.

While I have argued that the reasons for proposing or implementing these policies were not primarily motivated by greed but by the urge for self-perpetuation and by the adherence to the Vinaya rules, at the same time, the existing levels of inequality were often maintained and enforced in this way.[1408] The close association of religion with the status quo is of course neither exclusively Tibetan nor Buddhist; it is a feature of organized religions all over the world. Martin Luther King, expressing his disappointment with the Church, famously remarked: 'Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world?'[1409]

Throughout the recorded history of Tibet, the dominant position of the monastery was hardly ever openly challenged by ordinary people. Is this because, both monks and lay-persons perceived the societal structures in place as just? One can only hypothesize. In order to do that we need to return to the two concepts mentioned

[1407] Tomasi di Lampedusa, 2007 [1958]: 19.
[1408] According to Goldstein, 'almost all the elements in the ruling elite had crucial vested interests in maintaining the basic status quo.' See Goldstein, 1968: 254. Naturally, this ruling elite also included the aristocracy. The relationships and networks between the two types of 'elite' are in need of further research.
[1409] King, 1964: 96.

before: the age of decline and the Sangha as the custodian of the Dharma. If the Dharma is in danger of decline and the members of the Sangha are the only ones that can safeguard it, is it not right that the monastery does everything in its power to continue itself, even if that means making sure that lower class people do not become monks, because their presence in the community would deter potential upper-class benefactors (and potentially upset local deities)? Even if it means forcing boys to become monks when the monk-population was seen to drop? Surely, desperate times call for desperate measures. And in the *kaliyuga*, the age of decline, times are almost always desperate. It appears that most, if not all, policy was ultimately focussed on the preservation of the Sangha, which in practice translated to the maintenance of the monasteries that facilitated the monkhood.

Was this safeguarding of the Sangha seen as serving society as a whole? And if so, how? These are equally difficult questions to answer, because almost all Tibetan authors were products of Buddhist monasticism – alternative voices are hardly ever heard. We do know that –despite the fact that there was a degree of force and social pressure – the ordinary population has always willingly contributed to the continuation of the monkhood. Ultimately, even the simplest Tibetan farmer would be aware that Buddhism – in any form – contributed to his happiness and his prosperity. If the Sangha, then, was as pivotal in the upkeep of that vehicle of utility, ordinary people knew they could contribute by making sure that the Sangha survive the test of time. Thus, the monks were (and are) a field of merit (*bsod nams kyi zhing*, S. *punyakṣetra*), not just because they allowed others to give – on the basis of which people could accumulate merit – but also because the monks perpetuated this very opportunity of accumulating merit. The way monks maintained their status as fields of merit was by upholding the Vinaya rules, their vows. This highlights the fact that, while it is often thought not to have had a clear societal function, the Vinaya *did* impact Tibetan society, albeit implicitly. This makes the view that Tibetan monasticism existed solely to perpetuate itself one-sided to say the least.[1410]

Aside from being a field of merit, Tibetan monks were also involved in other ways to serve lay-people, namely by performing rituals to appease the many spirits that were seen to reside in Tibet and the Himalayas. These worldly deities would wreak havoc when angered and could cause untimely rains, hail and earthquakes. Important here is that these spirits particularly disliked change. The author of the monastic guidelines for the whole of Sikkim, Srid skyong sprul sku, who introduced many religious and economic reforms, met with an untimely death in 1914 at the age of thirty-four. A highly placed Sikkimese Buddhist related the account of his death to Charles Bell and explained this unfortunate event by saying that Srid skyong sprul sku, at that time the Mahārāja of Sikkim, had angered the spirits by his new ideas, resulting in his passing.[1411]

Spirits, often addressed as Dharma-protectors but also occasionally as local protectors (*sa bdag*, *gzhi bdag*), also feature prominently in the monastic guidelines. Often in the closing lines of the bca' yig they are called upon to protect those who follow the rules set out in the work and to punish those who go against them,

[1410] Goldstein views the reasons for the monasteries' opposition to change in ideologies of a more materialist kind: 'Furthermore, the mass monk ideology and the annual cycle of prayer festivals led the monasteries continually to seek more land and endowments and vigorously to oppose any attempt on the part of the government to decrease their revenues. It also made them advocates of the serf-estate economic system and, thus, extremely conservative.' Goldstein, 1989b: 37. I have called the ideology of mass monasticism into question elsewhere, see Jansen 2013a.
[1411] Bell, 1931: 20.

according to one work, 'both financially and by miraculous means.'[1412] Some of the surviving scrolls containing the monastic guidelines depict the school's or lineage's most important protectors at the bottom.[1413] It has been suggested in this study that the spirits warranted the maintenance of traditions and purity in the monasteries. This is probably one of the reasons why some monasteries did not admit aspiring monks from the lower classes. To please the protector-deities was to keep things as they were.

Again, the monks' role in all of this was to preserve the balance, to maintain the status quo. And again, the preservation of the Vinaya vows was as important – if not more important – than performing the right kinds of rituals. A Bhutanese legal code, written in 1729, for example, presents a prophecy that says:

> When the discipline of the Vinaya declines vow-breakers fill the land,
> With that as its cause the happiness of beings will disappear.[1414]

Viewed in this light, lay Buddhists and monks both had a stake in the maintenance of the Vinaya and in the appeasement of the spirits. Commenting on the situation in Ladakh in recent times, Mills remarks that 'the tantric powers of a monastery which lacked firm discipline were occasionally questioned by laity.'[1415] While the laity is clearly underrepresented in Tibetan sources, a number of scholars and travellers report the hold the spirits had on the life of ordinary Tibetans. Tucci notes: 'The entire spiritual life of the Tibetan is defined by a permanent attitude of defence, by a constant effort to appease and propitiate the powers whom he fears.'[1416] Ekvall mentions the soil-owners (*sa bdag*) as the spirits who exercised 'the most tyrannical control over the activities of the average Tibetan.'[1417] This presented monks and lay-people with a common cause: to preserve Buddhism at any cost, thereby maintaining equilibrium. This contrasts with Mills' contention with regard to Gelug monasticism that the monastery's religious and ritual authority is conceived of primarily in terms of 'subjugation' or disciplining the surroundings, which – according to him – includes the lay-people.[1418] In the light of the information presented here, it appears less problematic to think of the monasteries' religious authority as geared toward *negotiation* rather than subjugation. The monks' role was to negotiate the spirits, the lay-people, and change in general. Monasteries did not just have power and authority; they were also burdened with the responsibility to take care of their surroundings.

Perhaps the Tibetan monastic institutions were, just like the early Benedictine monasteries, perceived as 'living symbols of immutability in the midst of flux.'[1419] However, the overall reluctance to change did not mean that there was no change. To present past Tibetan societies as static would be ahistorical. Throughout this study, I have pointed out when the monastic guidelines indicate organizational and societal changes. At the same time, change – the focus of most contemporary historical research – has not been the main concern of this research. In this, I am in agreement

[1412] e.g. *'Chi med grub pa'i byang chub gling bca' yig*: 655: *mngon mtshan can gyi rtags dang 'cho 'phrul gyis tshar gcod pa dang/* Also see *Pha bong kha bca' yig*: 244; *'O chu dgon bca' yig*: 178; *Sho mdo dga' ldan bshad sgrub gling bca' yig*: 528, and *dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*: 201.
[1413] For a picture of such a bca' yig, see http://www.aaoarts.com/asie/VDL/ (viewed 17-11-2014).
[1414] Translation is after Aris, 1986: 138 (107a): *'dul khrims nyams pas dam nyams lung pa gang/ de yi rgyu las skye 'gro'i bde skyid nub/*
[1415] Mills, 2003: 317.
[1416] Tucci, 1988 [1970]: 187.
[1417] Ekvall, 1964: 79.
[1418] Mills, 2003: 330.
[1419] Southern, 1970: 29.

with Dumont who states: 'The modern mind believes in change and is quite ready to exaggerate its extent.'[1420]

The Tibetan situation echoes Welch's observations of the situation of Chinese Buddhist monasteries during the early 20th century: 'the monastic system was always in the process of slight but steady change.'[1421] While slight change is more difficult to ascertain, no doubt detecting and understanding continuity has a greater effect on our understanding of any given society.

Miller has argued that many of the institutional roles commonly attributed to the monastic system in Tibet were not really inherent to it, but that it varied in accordance with the differing social, political, and economic contexts.[1422] While these varying contexts have been remarked upon throughout this study, it needs to be noted that Miller's statement is not entirely correct. When looking at the monastic guidelines, themes and roles that are shared in common can be distinguished. Possibly the most pervasive cause for this remarkable level of continuity and relative homogeneity throughout time and place highlighted here is the Vinaya that all monks in Tibet share.

To sum up, I have argued that the perceived need to protect the Dharma in the age of decline has influenced Tibetan societies for centuries, resulting in a comparatively low level of social change. The general motivation to do so is, I believe, ultimately based on wanting the good for all members of society – all sentient beings. While the question of whether pre-modern monasteries promoted social justice should remain unanswered,[1423] I invite the reader to consider the information this study provides in the light of the parameters for social justice set out by Palmer and Burgess:

> Social justice concerns [..] include beliefs and practices by which peoples and individual persons express concern for weak and vulnerable members of the community; sustain the community; treat each other fairly; resolve disputes and grievances; distribute community resources; uphold the dignity of the human person; promote peaceful interaction; enhance political or economic participation in the community; or encourage a sense of stewardship for the natural world.[1424]

When trying to understand issues of social justice or, more broadly, social phenomena in pre-modern Tibetan societies, one can never neglect the influence of religious practices and sentiments. It is therefore not good to simply reduce policy, be it governmental or monastic policy, to being solely politically or economically motivated.

For Tibetan Buddhists, and it appears that this is also the case for many Buddhists elsewhere in Asia: what is seen as morally just, or socially just – or in other words simply the right thing to do – is ultimately connected to what is believed to

[1420] Dumont, 1980: 218.
[1421] Welch, 1967: 107.
[1422] Miller, 1958: viii.
[1423] The question of whether monasteries were just is an even more contentious one. In this regard, Hayek notes that only human conduct can be perceived as just or unjust: 'If we apply the terms to a state of affairs, they have meaning only in so far as we hold someone responsible for bringing it about or allowing it to come about. A bare fact, or a state of affairs which nobody can change, may be good or bad, but not just or unjust. To apply the term "just" to circumstances other than human actions or the rules governing them is a category mistake.' Hayek, 1976: 31.
[1424] Palmer and Burgess, 2012: 3.

maximize the highest level of utility or well-being. A question political scientists and philosophers have attempted to answer is whether a just society promotes the virtue of its citizens. The current view – endorsed by, among others, Rawls – is that a society should stimulate freedom, not virtue.[1425] Based on the monastic guidelines, the Tibetan monastic understanding regarding this issue is that a just society *requires* virtue: the two, virtue and justice cannot exist without each other. These are then seen to bring about the well-being of sentient beings. To maintain the Dharma is to stimulate virtue and justice and thus well-being. The Sangha is charged with the important task of keeping the Dharma intact. Accordingly, while there can be no doubt that karma is a factor *implicitly*, the authors of the sources at hand *explicitly* mention preserving the Dharma against the test of times as absolutely vital in bringing about the welfare of all.

[1425] See for example Sandel, 2009: 9.

APPENDICES

I. Postscript: Matters for Future Research

This study has focused on pre-modern Tibetan monastic organization, policy, and ideology, for which the bca' yig are superb sources. However, there are many more facets of Tibetan society that these works could shed light on. As they contain numerous references to quantities of goods, measurements, weights and money, they might be useful sources for an analysis of a more quantitative nature. The absence of a trustworthy resource that informs us about how much, for example, a *nyag* of butter cost in the market, or what one could buy with one *dngul srang* has hindered my research somewhat. The texts will also be of use when employing methods of network analysis. The often still ill-understood relations between 'mother-monasteries' and their branches may be clarified by looking at the respective monastic guidelines and their authors. Related to this is the political employment of the bca' yig that has been hinted at in this study, but is in need of further research.

Moreover, there exist many more bca' yig than have been discussed here. Some of these are gradually being made available by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre (TBRC),[1426] whereas others may remain in their original monasteries in various states of decay. Collecting and cataloguing these texts is an important task to be carried out sooner rather than later. Toward the end of the writing-process the online repository TBRC made the collection of mainly Gelug bca' yig, referred to in this work as *bCa' yig phyogs bsgrigs*, available in a searchable format. The further digitization of more sets of monastic guidelines of different schools will yield important information on, for example, monastic organizational positions and the citing of canonical texts and so on.

During my fieldwork, I was able to collect a number of recently composed bca' yig. To study them was beyond the scope of this project however. To examine contemporary bca' yig, on their own but also in the light of older 'versions', will help us better understand contemporary Tibetan monasticism, inside and outside Tibet. The way in which contemporary monasteries are now studied emphasizes change and not continuity and tends not to engage with the often less easily perceivable or understandable Buddhist ideological frameworks. Reading both the old and the new monastic guidelines may, to a certain extent, remedy these limitations.

For this study it was important to look at Vinaya works – preferably materials that Tibetans themselves read and wrote. While of course these texts are plentiful and straightforwardly available, they are not easily consulted. Unfortunately, very limited scholarly attention has been paid to native Tibetan Vinayic works and their usage. This study has demonstrated the lasting relevance of the Vinaya for monastic life. It is my hope that this will stimulate others to examine these Tibetan texts in more detail – possibly in conjunction with the monastic guidelines.

Another topic hardly touch upon is the position of women, nuns, and nunneries in pre-modern Tibetan monasticism. Admittedly, this study has hardly engaged the topic of gender. Even in the instances that the subject was lay-society, this almost always referred to just half of the population: men. This is mostly due to the nature of the sources I was able to consult. While these texts mention women reasonably frequently,[1427] works written for or mentioning nunneries and nuns are

[1426] www.tbrc.org

[1427] I am in the process of preparing an article on the position of women in Tibet according to the bca' yig.

few. Hopefully, more pre-modern bca' yig written for nunneries – for I am sure there are many – will come to light in the future.

Last of all, as briefly mentioned earlier, the influence of monastic rule-making on secular laws in Tibet has not yet been established. The scantily studied Tibetan legal texts need to be viewed with the understanding that monastic thinking greatly affected their authors and their work. Such a study would shed further light on the relationship between the monastics and the state and between the religious and the secular in Tibet.

II. Fieldwork: the Informants and their Backgrounds

The fieldwork referred to in this study was mainly conducted in July and August 2012 in North India and Ladakh, while a disastrous 'pre-fieldwork' trip to Kham in March 2011, which included a not quite voluntary 'free' trip back from Derge to China proper provided by the Public Security Police, showed me what was and – more importantly – what was *not* possible regarding doing research in Tibet. All interviews were held in Tibetan without the use of interpreters or field assistants. Most, but not all, interviews were recorded: it was up to the informant to state their preference. In total, I conducted twenty interviews, although not all informants were equally informative: only those who have been referred to in this work are mentioned by name. The names of the monks are given in alphabetical order and for some their titles are given, while the names of others who did not introduce themselves along with their titles, or were not introduced by others as having a certain titles, are left as is.

BLO BZANG DON GRUB

Blo bzang don grub, around seventy-five, normally lives at Samkar monastery (Gelug), but at the time of the interview he had temporarily moved to Spituk for the rain-retreat. When he was eight he was made a monk at Samkar, a branch monastery of Spituk. It was obligatory for young monks from Spituk and affiliated institutions in Ladakh to study in Drepung Loseling for at least three years. Between his fifteenth and twentieth year he lived in Drepung monastery in Lhasa, until he was forced to go back to Ladakh in 1959.

THE DIRECTOR (*DBU 'DZIN*) OF DRIGUNG JANGCHUB LING MONASTERY

This monk, in his fifties, did not give me his name. He did disclose he was born in Kham Gawa and first became a monk in a branch monastery of Drigung called Kham Gyog gonpa (Khams mgyogs dgon pa). He had been a disciplinarian there before he arrived from Tibet fourteen years previously.

RGAN RIN CHEN

rGan Rin chen was introduced as the director (*dbu 'dzin*) of Dolma ling (sGrol ma gling) nunnery (Rimè) in Dharamsala. He was originally from Kandze in Kham and his mother monastery was Sera je. At the time of the fieldwork, he was in his mid-fifties.

MKHAN PO CHOS DBYINGS LHUN GRUB

mKhan po Chos dbyings lhun grub did not fulfill any identifiable official post at Khampa gar (Khams pa sgar) in Bir (Drugpa Kagyü, official name: dPal phun tshogs chos 'khor gling), but was referred to by his peers as being the most knowledgeable on the topic of bca' yig and discipline. When I interviewed him he was in his early

thirties. He was born in Lhatho in Chamdo district (Kham), where he became a monk at the original Khampa gar. He arrived in India in 2004.

MKHAN PO DKON MCHOG CHOS SKYABS

mKhan po dKon mchog chos skyabs, at the time of fieldwork in his mid forties, was the abbot of the educational college (*bshad grwa*) of Drigung Kagyü monastery at the time of fieldwork. He was born in Ladakh and was made a monk at Phiyang when he was eleven. To further his education he went to Drigung Kagyü in Rajpur.

LAMA 'TSHUL KHRIMS'

This senior monk, who explicitly requested anonymity, was working as, in his own (English) words, the 'spare tire' of a Nyingma monastery in India, meaning that he was asked to do various (organizational) jobs when there was a need for them. He was in his fifties at the time of fieldwork. He was born in India and had travelled abroad a number of times. He interlaced his Tibetan with a fair amount of English.

DKON MCHOG CHOS NYID

dKon mchog chos nyid, around seventy-five, was a retired ritual specialist (*slob dpon zur pa*) at Phiyang. He was born in the area around this monastery. His father had died when he was very young and his mother did not remarry and worked as a farmer. He was made a monk when he was eight. When he was fourteen he, along with a group of young monks, travelled to Central Tibet to study at Yangri gar, a Drigung Kagyü monastery specializing in ritual practices. He was forced to leave in 1959, when he was twenty years old.

NGAG DBANG DPAL SBYIN

Ngag dbang dpal sbyin was the disciplinarian at Nechung monastery (non-affiliated) at the time of fieldwork. He was in his mid-forties and originally from Central Tibet. He was a monk in Drepung in Tibet.

NGAG DBANG SANGS RGYAS

Ngag dbang sangs rgyas was the disciplinarian at Gyütö (Gelug) in Dharamsala, who had just been appointed one month previously. He was in his early forties and originally from Arunachal Pradesh. Prior to his position as disciplinarian he was a monk-official (*'gan 'dzin*) at a branch monastery of Gyütö in Arunachal Pradesh.

DGE BSHES NGAG DBANG BZOD PA

dGe bshes Ngag dbang bzod pa was not an informant during my fieldwork, but is a teacher of Buddhism currently residing in the Netherlands. Currently in his late forties, he was born in South India and was made a monk at Sera je when he was twelve. I have been one of his regular interpreters since 2006 and we occasionally discuss my research and monastery life in general.

DGE BSHES PHAN BDE RGYAL MTSHAN

dGe bshes Phan bde rgyal mtshan was the abbot of the nunnery dGe ldan chos gling (Gelug) at the time of fieldwork. He was in his late fifties and from Lithang in Kham. His home monastery is Sera je in South India.

RE MDO SENGGE

Re mdo sengge was born in Re mdo, Amdo. He became a monk in 1984 at Kirti monastery in Amdo Ngawa. He received his *dge bshes rab 'byams pa* degree in 1997. He was a teacher at the Kirti monastery in Dharamsala and one of the authors of the new bca' yig for both the Tibetan and exile Kirti monasteries. He is also the author of *Bod kyi shes yon lam lugs dang srid byus* (The Tibetan Education System and Its Policies). At the time of the fieldwork he was in his late thirties.

SHES RAB RGYA MTSHO
Shes rab rgya mtsho was an elderly monk who lived in Sakya Chökhor ling (Sa skya chos 'khor gling) in Rajpur. He was in his late seventies at the time of fieldwork. He was born near Sakya in Tibet and his parents had been farmers and were occupants (*mi ser*) of the Sakya estate. He became a monk at Sakya when he was around seventeen years old. When the Chinese took over power he was made to undergo re-education for two years. He went into exile in 1962.

BSOD NAMS CHOS RGYAL
bSod nams chos rgyal was a junior secretary at Sakya Chökhor ling in Rajpur. He was in his late twenties at the time of the fieldwork and did not disclose any personal information.

BSTAN 'DZIN 'BRUG SGRA
bsTan 'dzin 'brug sgra was the serving disciplinarian at Tshechog ling (Tshe mchog gling) (Gelug) in Dharamsala at the time of the fieldwork. When I interviewed him he was in his early thirties. He was born in India.

THUB BSTAN YAR 'PHEL
Thub bstan yar 'phel was the general secretary (*drung spyi*) at Namgyel dratshang (Gelug) in Dharamsala at the time of the fieldwork. He was in his forties and originally from Shigatse but had also lived in Lhasa for some years. Previously, he served the monastery as a secretary (*drung yig*) for many years and was a teacher of written Tibetan language at Sara College in Himachal Pradesh.

III. Glossary

The words in this list pertain to Tibetan monastic organization and mainly feature in the bca' yig and related materials. Words are included in this glossary when they, though common, have different meanings or glosses from those found in dictionaries or when they are particularly important for the understanding of Tibetan monasticism. When words are found in multiple bca' yig the source is not given. Some of the more complex terms have been explained in the study itself, thus some of entries refer to the relevant chapters. The translations of certain words are tentative and await confirmation from other sources. While the vocabulary given here may aid in the study of Tibetan monastic texts such as – but not limited to – bca' yig, naturally, this glossary does not intend to be exhaustive in any way.

Abbreviations

BG	*Bod kyi dgon sde*
BL	*Byams pa gling bca' yig*
BP	*'Bras spungs bca' yig*

BT	*'Bri gung mthil bca' yig*
cont.	contemporary usage
DT	*dPal yul dar thang bca' yig*
GD	*The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibet* by Melvyn Goldstein
JC	José Cabezón (2004)
lit.	literally
ML	*sMin grol gling bca' yig*
ND	Namri Dagyab (2009)
PY	*dPal yul gdan rabs*
RG	*Rin chen sgang bca' yig*
S.	Sanskrit
SB	*Se ra byes bca' yig*
TC	*Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*
TD	*mTshur phu gdan rabs*
TL	*bKra shis lhun po bca' yig*

ka

dkar chag	1. genre of works containing historical information regarding a particular monastery 2. index of a text
dkon gnyer	caretaker of the shrines
dkor	possessions of the Sangha, see Chapter 6
bka' khrims	religious rules, the Dharma
bka' chen	1. elected position, one level up from *dge bskos* 2. monastic educational degree at Tashi Lhunpo
skal	share, usually of offerings
sku gnyer	TL: caretaker
sku rten	the medium of an oracle
sku mdun pa	TD: secretary, attendant
sku yon rgyun	gifts given in perpetuity, see Chapter 8
skyed kha len pa	to collect interest
(*d*)*skyed*	the rate of interest
bskrod pa	S. *pravāsana*, temporary removal from the monastery

kha

kha 'go ba	monks in charge of supervising financial matters, see Chapter 5
kha btags	ceremonial scarf, offered and used during a large variety of occasions
khag theg dge rgan/ khang theg dge rgan	BG; TD: a senior monk who acts as the new monk's guarantor
khang chen	Spiti: tax-paying class, similar to *khral pa*

	in Tibet
kham tshan / khams tshan/ khang tshan	'house' in a monastery or a college (*grwa tshang*), its population is regularly from the same region
khams tshan dge rgan	headmaster of the *kham tshan*
khams pa	BP: people of the same *khams tshan*
khyim bdag	S. *gṛhapati*, householder, layperson
khyim pa	householder, layperson
khyim (*pa*) *sun 'byin pa*	S. *kuladūṣaka*, to annoy lay-people, see Chapter 7
khra ma	formal written documents containing decisions taken with regards to a dispute
khral pa	tax-payer
khral bzo	tax-payer, same as *khral pa*
khri pa/ khri thog pa	throne-holder, often the spiritual head of the monastery, above the *mkhan po* in rank; usually not part of the *bla spyi*, see Chapter 5
khrims	rules, law, see Chapter 8
khrims grogs	a monk-companion, see Chapter 7
khrims yig	law-books, legal documents
khrims sa	'court'
mkhan po	1. abbot 2. someone with a monastic educational degree
mkhan slob	BT: monastic officials; contraction of *mkhan po* and *slob dpon*
mkhar las	construction work; masonry
'khor zhag	(official) leave of absence
'khrol tham	seal of release

ga

gad pa	ML: janitor, lit. sweeper, in charge of maintenance of the monastery grounds
gral bshags	TD: lit. 'rows confession', a way of buying off the *gzhon khral* duties for a new monk
grwa skor ba	monks enrolled in formal study
grwa khral	1. GD: a tax that made families send one of their sons to the monastery 2. TD: duties that had to be fulfilled by a junior monk
grwa gral	the seating arrangement of monks in the assembly (*tshogs*)
grwa rgyun	a monk whose initial monastery (*gzhis*/ *gzhi dgon*) is elsewhere
grwa pa	monk, see Chapter 1
grwa dmangs	the monk-population
grwa zhing	fields, the harvest of which was used to

	support a monk (mainly in Ladakh and Spiti)
grwa log	ex-monk, similar to *ban log*
grwa sa	a term indicating 'monastery', possibly referring to monastic places that are either small or less significant
grong chog	home rituals, village rituals
gral rim	cont.: class, class-system
gyod don	BG: judiciary issue
dGa' ldan pho brang	the Tibetan government established in 1642, headed by the Dalai Lama
dgag dbye	S. *pravāraṇa*, closing ritual to mark the end of the summer retreat
dge (*b*)*skos*	1. disciplinarian, see Chapter 5 2. S. *upadhivārika*, a monk in charge of the physical properties of a *vihāra*
dge bsnyen	S. *upāsaka*, a layperson with certain vows or an aspiring monk, see Chapter 1
dge 'dun pa	monk, a member of the Sangha
dge rtsam	a tax towards the feeding of monks, previously payable in *rtsam pa*, but later on also in money
dge tshul	S. *śrāmaṇera*, see Chapter 1
dge gzhon	TL: pupil, young monk
dge g.yog	assistant to the *dge bskos*
dge slong	*S. bhikṣu*, see Chapter 1
dge bshes	the highest educational degree of the Gelug and Bon monastic systems
dgon gnyer	BP: monastery steward
dgon sde	monasteries
dgon pa'i gzhung	cont.: monastic management
dgon phogs	allowance given by the monastery
mgon khang	protectors' chapel, shrine
rgyal khrims	royal law, secular law, the country's law
sger pa	(lay-) nobility
sger rigs	the class of private land-owners, lower nobility
sgo khra them gan	household register
sgo 'doms	TL: leader, person in charge
sgo ra ba	guard (at a monastery)
'go ba	monks in charge of supervising financial matters, see Chapter 5
'gyed	1. donation 2. GD: a present of cash (one or two *srang*) made to the monks, usually given at ceremonies
'grig yig	alternative spelling of *sgrig yig*
rgyun ja	'continuing' tea
gling	monastic compound
gling gseb	monastic compound, similar to *gling*

gling srung pa	someone in charge of safeguarding the monastic buildings and its contents, possibly similar to *sgo ra ba*
sgrig rgyugs pa'i rigs	those enrolled at the monastery (or nunnery)
sgrig ja	tea served at the time of enrolment provided by the new monk or his family
sgrig rnam gzhag	a monastery's regulations
sgrig lam kun spyod	behaviour and rules
sgrig gzhi	(monastic) rules and regulations, see Chapter 2
sgrig yig	rulebook, see Chapter 2
sgrig zhugs	TD: enrolment (in the monastery's register)
bsgrub gnas	place of formal ritual practice, sometimes part of the monastery
gling sre	a type of *dge bshes* degree

nga

dngul gnyer	financial manager

ca

bca' khrims	internal rules of a monastery, which are not necessarily recorded
bca' tshig	'secular' constitution, decree, short for *khrims su bca' ba'i tshig*
bca' yig	monastic guidelines, short for *khrims su bca' ba'i yi ge*, see Chapter 2
bcad mtshams	TL: final ruling, (legal) agreement

cha

chad las	punishment
chab zhugs	celebrations at the end of the summer retreat (*dbyar gnas*)
chab ril	disciplinarian's assistant
chings yig	contract
chos khrims	religious discipline, religious rules
chos khrims pa	disciplinarian, similar to *dge bskos*
chos grwa	1. debate ground 2. studying monk(s)
chos grwa chos khrims pa	TL: disciplinarian/ overseer of the debate ground
chos sgar	religious encampment, often where monks and lay-people reside together
chos thog	doctrinal or religious session or 'terms', some monasteries had up to eight of these a year
chos don u yon khang	cont.: religious affairs committee
chos/ mchod phogs	'Dharma' or 'offered' allowance, see Chapter 6

chos mdzad	a monastic rank; this rank guarantees freedom from 'domestic' duties and promises certain privileges, regularly held by aristocratic monks, see Chapter 5
chos/ mchod gzhis	religious estate; an estate held by a monastery
chos ra	debate ground, also *chos grwa*
mchod gral pa	rank held by monks who have completed certain retreats
mchod thebs	offerings for investment, possibly similar to *thebs rtsa*
mchod dpon	TL: a monk in charge of keeping the assembly hall and shrine-hall clean
'cham dpon	teacher/ overseer of the ritual dances (*'cham*)

ja

ja dpon	TL: tea-master, a monk in charge of distributing tea
ja ma	a tea-maker/ server
rje drung	1. TL: a monk who has an aristocratic background 2. GD: an attendant of a lama

nya

nye logs	partnership between *kham tshan* (?)
nyes pa	1. fault 2. technical term regarding monks' vows
gnyer pa	steward or treasurer, sometimes a rank below the *spyi bso*, responsible for the finances, see Chapter 5
gnyer khang	similar to the first gloss of *gnyer tshang*
gnyer phyag	PY: a contraction of *gnyer pa* and *phyag mdzod*
gnyer tshang	1. office in charge of the estates owned by the monastery 2. JC: a person: each college (in Sera) had two *gnyer tshang*, who were appointed by the government for five years. At Sera me these monks had to invest the college's money to produce income for the winter tea service and for the tsampa offerings to the monks
bsnyen par rdzogs pa	S. *upasaṃpadā*, the full gamut of monastic vows

ta

gta' ma	surety, 'collateral', deposit of which the worth is about the same as the amount borrowed
gtan tshig	title or official status granted by the Tibetan Government

gtug bsher	litigation, lawsuit
gtong sgo	1. the cost of offerings 2. the gifts handed out by a monk who has become a *dge bshes* to the assembly 3. the ceremony of becoming a *dge bshes*
gtong gnyer	pay-master, appointed by the *sde pa* who issued the 'salaries' (*phogs*) to the monks, of the rank of *bka' chen* or *dge bshes*
gtong deb	record of expenses
rta'u	transport tax, provided for the government, also to be paid by certain monasteries
rten thebs	start-up capital, similar to *ma rtsa*
bstan pa'i bdag po (*bstan bdag*)	'owner of the Teachings', often the religious highest authority in a monastery

tha

tham ga	1. seal 2. contract
thug dpon	TL: soup-master, a monk in charge of handing out thug pa
thebs rtsa	ND: donations meant for investment, see Chapter 6
thobs khungs	ND: loyalty to the monastery
'thus mi	lit. representative; monastery's officials

da

dad 'bul	offering made to the monastery by its subjects, which was sometimes more like a tax and occasionally confused with one
dad rdzas	donations, things offered by the 'faithful'
dam tshig	S. *samaya*, tantric vows
dung mkhan	hornblower
dung yon	income gained from performing rituals or recitations
do dam	1. manager of the herds (*ru ba*) owned by the monastery 2. member of *lhan rgyas*
do dam pa	BP: a type of low level manager or supervisor
do dam u yon khang	1. GD: control committee 2. cont.: financial management committee
don gcod	SB: lit. a decision maker, a government official (?)
drung dkyus	a type of middle-rank government official
drung spyi	general secretary
drung gzhon	junior secretary
gdan gnyer	seat steward, a monk who manages the seating during assembly
gdan rabs	a monastery's abbatial record, a genre of texts
gdan sa	monastic establishment, monastery,

	monastic seat
gdan sa gsum	The Three Great Seats, referring to the three large Gelug monasteries in Central Tibet: Drepung, Ganden and Sera
gdol pa	S. *caṇḍāla*, outcaste, see Chapter 4
'das pa	S. *atyaya*, an offence
'du sgo	income
'dul ba	S. Vinaya, control, discipline,
'dul ba 'dzin pa	S. *vinayadhara*, someone who is a holder/ maintainer of the Vinaya
'ded pa	a monk who ensures the repayment of debts
brda 'bul	the cost of rituals
ldab ldob	GD: rogue monk
sde pa	1. (lay-)steward in charge of the *gnyer tshang* 2. headman (of a community)

na

nag khrims	BP: lay law, lay rules
nag chang	1. women and alcohol 2. alcohol (pejorative)
nags khrod	(forest) hermitage, similar to *ri khrod*
nang khrims	internal rules (of a monastery)
nang zan	1. BL: domestic servant, worker (not clear whether this is a lay-person or a monk) 2. TD: a lay-clerk
nor gnyer ba/ pa	TL: a monk in charge of taking care of provisions and the necessities for offering (*mchod rdzas*)
gnas dbyungs	expulsion, see Chapter 8
sne mo ba	BP: leading officials (of the government)
sne len (*pa*)	cont.: liaison, someone who receives sponsors

pa

dpe cha ba	scholar-monk
dpon las	BT: 'lower monastic official' (not attested in any dictionary)
sprod khongs yig	TL: ledger (TC*: dkar chag nang bkod de rtsis len rtsis sprod byed dgos pa'i yig cha'i rigs*), perhaps similar to *sprod deb*
sprod deb	record of income
spyi khang	office of the *spyi pa*
spyi khyab pa	provincial governor
spyi khrims	general law
spyi rgan	JC: the head of a *kham tshan*
spyi gnyer	caretaker of general affairs
spyi thab	communal kitchen
spyi don	the general good

spyi pa/ ba — 1. the *phyag mdzod*'s assistant; 2. steward, custodian of funds; 3. DT: monastic administrator; 4. lay-headman

spyi 'bul — offerings given to the general Sangha

spyi rdzas — general possessions (of the Sangha)

spyi g.yog — assistant to the *spyi pa*

spyi sa — BL: same as *spyi so*, see Chapter 5

spyi bso/ spyi so/ spyi gso — 1. monastic office, in charge of controlling grain, livestock, cash and donations. In Ganden, this office is included within the *bla spyi*; 2. monastic official, for the appointment of this office the monk in question needed to possess substantial private funds, sometimes these monks were responsible for all the financial affairs of the monastery, see Chapter 5

spyi sor — BP: alternative spelling of *spyi so*, a monastic official of which there were two

spyi las byed pa'i dge bsnyan — BL: lay or 'novice' worker (?)

spyil po /bu — thatched hut; separate monk-residence

pha

phan tshun dge rgan — monk in charge of supervising financial matters, see Chapter 5

pham pa — S. *pārājika*, defeat, the breaking of one of the four root-vows (*rtsa ba gzhi*), see Chapter 8

phog(*s*) *zhing* — GD: field assigned (by the lama/ *bla brang*) to a monk for his subsistence, in some cases similar to *grwa zhing*

phogs (*phogs cha*) — wages, salary, see Chapter 6

phogs deb — allowance-ledger, see Chapter 6

phogs yig — same as above

phyag the ba/ phyag bde ba — tea server, similar to *lag bde ba*

phyag sbug — management committee of a college (*grwa tshang*)

phyag mdzod (*pa*) — treasurer, sometimes of the *spyi bso*. In some cases texts stipulate that he must have been a disciplinarian

phyag mdzod khang — treasury, TD: where the monastic register is kept

phyag gzhung — monastic authorities (in Sakya)

ba

ban skal — monk's share

ban de — monk, probably from S. *bhadanta*, see Chapter 1

ban rtsa — family from which a monk in a monastery

	comes from
ban log	ex-monk, similar to *grwa log*
bar shar ba	monks who sit in the middle row, not *dge slong* – with intermediate vows
bu lon gtong ba	to give out loans
bun skyed	1. debts and interest 2. an interest on a loan
bun bdag	creditor, 'owner of debt'
bogs sgrub pa	to pay the monastery an annual fee in lieu of herding the monastic herds
byang 'dren (*pa*)	chant-master, similar to *dbu mdzad*, see Chapter 5
brang khang	living quarters for monks
bla gnyer	steward/ treasurer of a *bla brang* or equivalent to *gnyer pa* (?)
bla spyi	general monastic office, monastery committee, executive council, also called *tshogs chen*, see Chapter 5
dbu chos	1. contraction of *dbu mdzad* and *chos khrims pa* 2. TD: 'ritual officials', which includes the *rdo rje slob dpon*, the *dge bskos* and the *dbu mdzad*
dbu byed	RG: chant-master (*dbu mdzad*)
dbu mdzad	chant-master, ritual overseer, 'cantor', see Chapter 5
dbu mdzad chos khrims	PY: contraction of *dbu mdzad* and *chos khrims pa*, the same as *dbu chos*
dbu mdzad lag bde	BP: chief chef, head of the kitchen
dbu 'dzin	cont.: director
dbyar chos pa	JC: administrator, there were three for each college of Sera, similar to *gnyer tshang* except for that they focused on raising funds for tea during the summer sessions and provisions during the winter debates
dbyar gnas	S. *varṣā*, summer-retreat
'bab yongs	TL: income (profit from enterprise)
'bol nyo dkon tshong	hoarding and selling with a profit
'byed phra sher dpang	land register held by the Tibetan Government
sbug pa	manager of a storehouse or treasury, sometimes the *bla spyi* had two *sbug pa*
sbyin bdag	S. *dānapati*, donor, sponsor, see Chapter 7
sbyor 'jags	endowment of funds, see Chapter 6
'bags rengs	BP: a profiteering monk, 'riffraff' (not attested in any dictionary), see Chapter 5
'bru khang	granary (of the monastery)
'bru phogs	wages paid in grain (to the monks)

bla sgam	box in the monastery in which official documents are kept
bla brang	1. a lama's estate 2. the monastic office in charge of economic matters, see Chapter 6

ma

mang ja	communal tea service
mi chos	human rules, good behaviour
mi dpon	(lay-) headman
mi rtsa	1.'human resources': people over whose labour monasteries had a demand-right 2. hereditary servants (kept by lay people)
mi tshan	1. division in the monastery, smaller than *kham tshan* and *sde tshan* 2. similar to *kham tshan* in some non-Gelug contexts
ming tho	TD: register in which the names of monks were kept
me 'bud	someone in charge of kindling the stove's fire
sman sbyin pa	BP: dispenser of medicine, possibly a physician

tsa

gtsug lag khang	S. *vihāra*, temple, see Chapter 1
gtso drag	(lay-) hereditary official position chosen from estate-holders, who reports to the government
btsun khral	'monk tax', the same as *grwa khral*
btsun pa	S. *bhandanta*, monk, see Chapter 1
rtsa 'dzin	TL: ground rules, basic rules
rtsa tshig	1. 'secular' constitution, decree 2. TL: rulebook
rtsam pa	roasted barley flour, a Tibetan staple food
rtsis pa	book-keeper, accountant
rtsis 'khri	articles given on loan
rtsis 'dzin pa	ML: someone taking account of loans, etc.
rtse drung	a monastic government official, chosen from the monks of the Three Great Seats

tsha

tsha gra (*tsha grwa*, *tsha ra*, *tshwa ra*, *tshab ra*)	a specific type of donations, see Chapter 6
tshogs	assembly
tshogs chen	1. great assembly 2. alternative term for *bla spyi*
tshogs chen phogs yig	TL: the allowance-ledger in which all

	monks' names were recorded
tshogs chen dbu mdzad	TL: the chant-master for the great assembly
tshogs ban	PY: high ranking official in the monastery, the same as members of the *tshogs chen*/ *bla spyi* (?)
tshogs gtam	BP: public speech in the assembly made by the disciplinarian, see Chapter 2
tshong bskur	business investment
mtshan nyid grwa tshang	educational college
mtshams bsdams	BL: retreat-commitment

dza

'dzugs rgyab pa	ND: debt collector (?)
rdzong dpon	district commissioner

zha

zhabs brten	rituals
zhabs pad	1. a high managerial position in Sakya 2. the position of minister at the Tibetan government
zhal ngo	1. similar to *dge bskos* 2. JC: In Sera this was the disciplinarian at the great assembly hall *(tshogs khang chen mo*) 3. TC: monastic proctor, see Chapter 5
zhal ngo pa	PY: another word for *dbu mdzad chos khrims*
zhal ta pa/ba/ dpon	1. S. *vaiyāpṛtyakara*, manager 2. a senior member of the *lhan rgyas* 3. supervisor of kitchen and staff 4. kitchen worker, see Chapter 5
zhal ta'i las byed	ML: kitchen staff (in charge of the *rung khang*)
gzhi(s) *sdod pa*	a monk-steward who manages the monastic estate (the name suggests he lived there), he presided over the lower judicial court
gzhi(s) *gnyer*	estate managers (usually lay) whose salary was paid by the *gtong gnyer*
gzhi gsum cho ga	'the three basic requirements for a functioning monastery': 1) fortnightly confession (*gso sbyong*, S. *poṣadha*) 2) summer-retreat (*dbyar gnas*, S. *varṣā*) 3) the closing ritual after the summer retreat (*dgag dbye*, S. *pravāraṇa*), see Chapter 1
gzhis/ gzhi dgon	subsidiary monastery, sometimes attached to a larger monastic estate (*mchod gzhis*)
gzhis sdod	SB: estate dweller, not clear whether monk or lay

gzhis pa	resident at a *gzhis dgon*
gzhis byed kyi grwa pa	TL: monk from a subsidiary or village monastery
gzhung (*gi*) *ngo tshab*	SB: government representative at the monastery
gzhon khral	menial tasks that had to be carried out by new monks, similar to *gsar khral* and *grwa khral*

za

za sgo	(edible) allowance
gzim khang	SB: an incarnation's residence
gzim khang sde pa	JC: representative to the Tibetan Government, responsible for administering law (both religious and secular)
gzu ba	mediator

'a

'u lag	corvée service, usually performed by lay-people, though not exclusively so
'os tho	a list of nominated candidates for an official position
'os mi	candidate for an official position

ya

yig tshang/ yig tshang las khung	office
g.yung po	S. *pukkasa*, outcaste, see Chapter 4

ra

ri khrod	hermitage
rigs grwa pa	scholar-monks
rim gro	(healing) rituals
rung khang	ML: storage room in a monastery

la

lag bde	kitchen-staff
lag bde dbu mdzad	BP: supervisor of the kitchen-staff
lag 'don	tax obligations in kind; payments in kind
lag 'dzin	land tenure documents
las khral	TL: corvee duties for monks at their *mi tshan* or *kham tshan*, similar to *gzhon khral*
las thog pa	monk-official
las rdor (*pa*)	PY: shrine keeper
las sne	1. ML: a monk worker 2. TL: a monk official, presiding over *las tshan*
las byed	employee, worker
las tshan (*pa*)	a monk with an official position, e.g. *chos*

	khrim pa, *dbu mdzad*, etc.
las ’dzin	monk-official

sha

sha khral	meat tax, sometimes paid to the monastery
shag	monk-quarters, also called *grwa shag*
she dpon	lay-manager of the herd
she ma	lease of herds (by the monastery)
bshags pa	confession
bshad grwa	scholastic collage, educational collage

sa

sa tho	‘census’: an extensive report of a village for tax-purposes
sa tshig	stations within the transportation network (connected to each other)
ser khyim pa	‘yellow house-holder’; a married and robe-wearing religious specialist, see Chapter 1
gsar khral	similar to *gzhon khral*
gso sbyong	S. *poṣadha*, fortnightly confession
gsol kha ba	BP: attendants of a protector, here the gNas chung oracle
bsod snyoms	alms-round, see Chapter 7
srid khrims	secular law, secular rule
bslab pa	S. *śaikṣa*, precepts, training

ha

lha chos	religious rules, monastic rules
lha khang	temple, shrine
lhan rgyas	1. cont.: monastic steering committee 2. council consisting of the *dbu mdzad* and eight monks, who are in charge of appointing the new abbot

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, CURRICULUM VITAE, AND SUMMARY (IN DUTCH)

Acknowledgements

I realize I am fortunate, not just to still be alive, but also to have met so many people who have been valuable to both my research and my private life – the two are becoming more and more intertwined. Being part of the research project Buddhism and Social Justice has made me realize that to be in the same office with scholars working on different Buddhist traditions is a pain-free way of getting different perspectives on this elusive thing we call Buddhism. For this I am grateful to the NWO for financing the project and much thanks and appreciation goes out to my fellow-project members, Vincent Breugem, Thomas Kim, and Vincent Tournier. Our former project-assistant Roxanne van Beek also deserves mention for her support regarding all things administrative. The Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) where this project was housed, along with its thriving PhD community, has been, and still is, a very supportive research environment and thanks goes out to all who make it so.

Another project that I was involved in, albeit in a less prominent manner, is 'Social Histories of Tibetan Societies', which is jointly funded by the ANR and the DFG. I was invited to give papers at this project's conferences, during which the feedback, input, and friendships have been invaluable. For that I thank the core-members and the 'passers-by' (such as myself): Jeannine Bischoff, Patrick Booz, John Bray, Christoph Cüppers, Astrid Hovden, Fabienne Jagou, Kalsang Norbu Gurung, Saul Mullard, Fernanda Pirie, Charles Ramble, Peter Schwieger, Alice Travers, Maria Turek, and Liu Yuxuan.

Conferences, it appears, are ideal places to meet those who not only do fascinating research, but also are willing to discuss and share their findings, references, and copies of obscure articles. For this I am thankful to numerous people, some of whom are: Chris Bell, Jane Caple, Marc-Henri Deroche, Mathias Fermer, Ann Heirman, Christian Lammerts, Dan Martin, Jann Ronis, Brenton Sullivan, Tashi Tsering, Markus Viehbeck, and Dorji Wangchuk. I also thank dGe bshes Ngag dbang bzod pa for getting me a rare publication from Sera je monastery.

During my fieldwork in India the following people were always there to lend a hand, share food and tea, and simply be wonderful company, come rain or shine (mostly rain, as the monsoon was in full swing): Gazellah Abdullah, Mona Bruchmann, Ani Dawa Dolma, and Karma Sichoe. The staff of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) in Dharamsala has also been very helpful. I am especially grateful to my fiancé Jonathan Samuels (Sherab Gyatso), who has made valuable suggestions and corrections, and whose support, in all matters, I could not do without.

Last of all, I am deeply indebted to my monk-informants, who have shared their knowledge, stories, books, and buttertea so generously. Without the monastic community, the Buddhist Teachings would not only die, but this dissertation would also never have been born. This study is therefore dedicated to the Sangha – of the present, the past, and the future. May it live forever more.

Curriculum Vitae

Berthe Jansen is geboren in 1980 te Amsterdam. In 1998 behaalde zij haar diploma aan het Barlaeus Gymnasium. In hetzelfde jaar vertrok zij naar Dharamsala, India, waar zij begon met het bestuderen van het Tibetaans boeddhisme. In 2000 vertrok zij opnieuw naar India om de Tibetaanse taal, literatuur en religie te leren, met Tibetaans tolk worden als doel. Tussen 2003 en 2005 volgde zij een opleiding tot tolk van het boeddhistische Tibetaans aan de Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo Translator Program te Dharamsala. Na terugkeer naar Nederland, deed zij tussen 2005 en 2008 de BA studie 'Languages and Cultures in India and Tibet' aan de Universiteit Leiden, terwijl zij in deeltijd als tolk werkte voor het Maitreya Instituut (FPMT). In 2008 vertrok zij naar Oxford University om in 2010 de Mphil graad in 'Tibetan and Himalayan Studies' cum laude te behalen. In 2010 kreeg zij een aanstelling als PhD kandidaat binnen Professor Jonathan Silks VICI-project 'Buddhism and Social Justice', gesubsidieerd door het NWO, wederom aan de Universiteit Leiden (LIAS). Tussen 2010 en 2014 publiceerde Jansen zes artikelen en bleef zij werkzaam als free-lance tolk voor o.a. boeddhistische leraren (onder wie Z.H. de Dalai Lama), advocaten en documentaires. Het proefschrift met de titel *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-modern Tibet* werd in november, 2014 ingeleverd. Op het moment is Berthe Jansen werkzaam als post-doc binnen hetzelfde project.

Samenvatting

Deze studie, genaamd *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-modern Tibet*, bespreekt de positie van boeddhistische kloosters in de Tibetaanse samenleving in de periode voor 1950. Het kijkt naar de mate waarin die positie zich had gevormd volgens monastieke ideologie. Het uitgangspunt in dit onderzoek is de grote invloed van het monastieke Boeddhisme op de samenleving, de economie en het recht en ook op een groot aantal aspecten van de Tibetaanse cultuur en (populaire) religie. Terwijl voor het christendom de kloosterorde slechts van bijrol speelt, is de kloostergemeenschap van primair belang voor het boeddhisme. Zowel de boeddhistische doctrine als de praktijk getuigen van het belang van de kloosters en de Sangha, in het algemeen. Dit resulteert in het feit dat de monastieke instellingen niet alleen een belangrijke religieuze drijfveer vormden maar ook dat zij organisaties waren die zich met meer dan alleen het geloof bezighielden. Dit is niet verbazingwekkend, te meer omdat in alle landen waar het boeddhisme de voornaamste religie was (en is), kloosters belangrijke spelers in de politiek, economische, culturele en sociale arena werden.

Dit onderzoek kijkt naar de impact van boeddhistische monastieke instellingen op de premoderne Tibetaanse samenleving door het beleid van de kloosters te onderzoeken dat betrekking had op de organisatie, economie, rechtvaardigheid en de omgang met de leken. De primaire bronnen die van dit soort beleid getuigen zijn de klooster-richtlijnen (*bca' yig*). De vroegste werken komen uit de twaalfde eeuw, hoewel het grootste deel van de bronnen uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw stamt. Deze literatuur is niet eerder in enig detail bestudeerd en dusdoende bevat deze studie een uitgebreid onderzoek naar dit genre, een vergelijkening met soortegelijke teksten uit andere boeddhistische landen, de verbanden tussen de Vinaya (vaak vertaald als 'de boeddhistische monastieke wet') en dit genre, en de sociaal-historische waarde van deze teksten.

De informatie verkregen door middel van onderzoek naar deze teksten is verder verrijkt met belangrijke feiten en ervaringen, gebaseerd op meer dan twintig interviews met monniken in India en Tibet. Velen van hen waren betrokken bij hun

kloosters in formele functies, terwijl sommigen konden vertellen over hun leven in het Tibet van voor 1950. Met behulp van methodes uit de disciplines geschiedenis, filologie, en antropologie toont deze studie aan dat het klooster als instituut een belangrijke invloed had op de Tibetaanse maatschappij en dat het wars was van verandering. De voornaamste reden voor het aanhangen van de status quo was de plicht die de monniken hadden, namelijk het zorgdragen voor het voortbestaan van de Boeddha's Leer. Om dit te bewerkstelligen moesten de kloosterlingen zich goed gedragen, ook om het respect van de lekengemeenschap te behouden. Dit betekende dat monniken, en dus ook kloosters, hun positie continu moesten aanpassen aan de omstandigheden en dat ze de manier waarop ze met zichzelf en anderen omgingen moesten bijstellen. De klooster-richtlijnen getuigen van deze aanpassingen, omdat deze teksten regels bevatten die voornamelijk gericht zijn op het teweegbrengen van verandering opdat de kloosters te behoeden van de ondergang. Aan de hand hiervan toon ik aan dat, in tegenstelling tot wat vaak gedacht wordt, de aanzienlijke invloed van de kloosters op de samenleving in stand werd gehouden niet slechts omwille van bestaande machtsverhoudingen maar ook doordat men er bepaalde diepgewortelde boeddhistische opvattingen op nahield.