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

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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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[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.