

exists, but deprived of administrative and judicial powers. Ladakhi rule lasted till the 19<sup>th</sup> century, except for the years 1729–1748, when Spiti was a part of the dominions of bKra śis mam rgyal, king of Purig.

In the thirties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Guge may have suffered from forays of Sikh forces from Lahore. This was certainly the case for Spiti and Tabo, an event for which we have epigraphic evidence.<sup>13</sup> This was nothing, however, compared with the large-scale expedition led against Tibet by the Dogra general Zorawar Singh, who in 1835 had conquered Ladakh for Gulab Singh, Raja of Jammu and later Maharaja of Kashmir. In 1841 he invaded western Tibet with a small army. He reached Tsaparang and advanced as far as Taklakoth, his soldiers plundering and damaging several temples and monasteries. He was checked, however, by an army sent from Lhasa, and in November Zorawar Singh was defeated and killed, his force was practically wiped out.

For the following 150 years the tale is merely one of increasing economic and cultural decay. In recent times the so-called Cultural Revolution inflicted irreparable damage to the religious life and to the artistic treasures of the country. Only Spiti with Tabo was spared, because in 1846 it was detached from nominal allegiance to Ladakh, to be annexed to British Indian territories. It is now included in the Himachal Pradesh state of the Indian Union.

<sup>13</sup> See E. DE ROSSI FILIBECK's contribution to the present volume.

THE RENOVATION INSCRIPTION OF THE  
TABO GTSUG LAG KHAN  
NEW EDITION AND TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup>

by Ernst Steinkellner & Christian Luczanits

Giuseppe Tucci and Eugenio Gherzi visited the temples in Tabo<sup>2</sup> from July 18th to 21st 1933.<sup>3</sup> The inscription was copied for Tucci by his lama.<sup>4</sup> No photograph seems to have been made of the inscription proper,<sup>5</sup> so that the later edition was entirely based on the lama's copy. Consequently Tucci had no means of knowing the extent of the many gaps in the inscription when he came to prepare his edition. In addition, the lama's copy contains a number of misreadings. For some of these Tucci proposed corrections which now can actually be confirmed as the true readings.

<sup>1</sup> First edition and translation: "Iscrizione di Tabo" in TUCCI 1935: 195–204.

<sup>2</sup> The proper old spelling of modern Tabo and the etymology of the name are unclear. Several different etymologized spellings such as *lta*, *rta*, *sta* can be found, and the variations *po/pho/bo* are also attested in inscriptions and manuscripts. For convenience' sake, we earlier followed the proposal of KLIMBURG-SALTER to use the spelling *Ta pho* (1987: n.9). At the last meeting of the Tabo research group in Vienna (January 19–20, 1996) it was decided to abstain in the future from this or similar differentiations, and to return to the modern spelling 'Tabo'.

<sup>3</sup> TUCCI & GHERZI 1934: 121–132.

<sup>4</sup> According to Tucci's notes in the edition (cf. TUCCI 1935: 197, ns.1,8; 198, ns. 3,4; 200, n.3). This lama joined the expedition on July 7th (cf. TUCCI & GHERZI 1934: 80). He was from Kaze monastery (ibid.) and his likeness is shown in fig. 74, but his name is not mentioned.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. however, Photo Tucci Archives Neg.Dep.L. 6029/38, which shows the inscription in its place below the painting.

During our stay in Tabo in 1991,<sup>6</sup> Luczanits made a careful survey of the inscription, comparing it with Tucci's edition. The state of the inscription in 1991 was such that in a number of places syllables or parts of syllables which were evidently still legible for the lama in 1933 and are contained in Tucci's edition, were no longer extant. Thus Tucci's text is, now, the only testimony for these readings which have been added to our edition in the footnotes. After our return the new readings were checked with the aid of various, usually inadequate photographs and with the only useful colour photograph of the inscription which was taken by Thomas Pritzker,<sup>7</sup> and we gratefully acknowledge the photographer's permission to use it. Since the left side of the inscription was not completely taken, additional photographs were made in 1994 by Luczanits (cf. Pls. 1-8).

The new reading by Luczanits revealed a number of features that decidedly improve upon Tucci's edition. Not only do we now know the extent of the gaps, but a considerable number of syllables and words read differently. In addition, the use of the *śad* and other marks of separation in the inscription which evidently the lama did not pay any attention to, now turns out to be a carefully applied means for graphically structuring the text.

Since the need for a new edition seemed to have arisen, we also present a new translation which we believe also improves upon Tucci's pioneering attempt at its interpretation. No new historical information has emerged. However, the inscription (written in verse except for its *narratio*) proves to be a piece of monastic Tibetan poetry of considerable quality, and, although deteriorated, merits our attention as one of the rare documents of early Tibetan poetry.

This inscription was treated in Steinkellner's seminar in the winter term 1992/93. Besides the students and Luczanits, Deborah Klimburg-Salter, Chizuko Yoshimizu, Helmut Tauscher, and Kurt Tropper took part and contributed valuable suggestions which are gratefully acknowledged. We are also grateful to Prof. Luciano Petech, Jampa L. Panglung, Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, and Paul Harrison for their helpful remarks.

<sup>6</sup> As members of the joint expedition of the Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Rome, and the Institut für Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Vienna. Our participation was supported by a grant from the Austrian Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung.

<sup>7</sup> This photo was put at the disposal of Deborah Klimburg-Salter and was available to us.

It will be a matter of further literary research to interpret the poem in detail, to indicate the lines of association with the Buddhist literary heritage and to analyse the poetic means applied. A list of metaphors and similes is added in the appendix. For the moment, we have to limit our work to offering merely a new edition and translation. But we hope this reconsideration of the inscription after a new examination of the facts will be accepted as a token of the respect due to Tucci's pioneering work.

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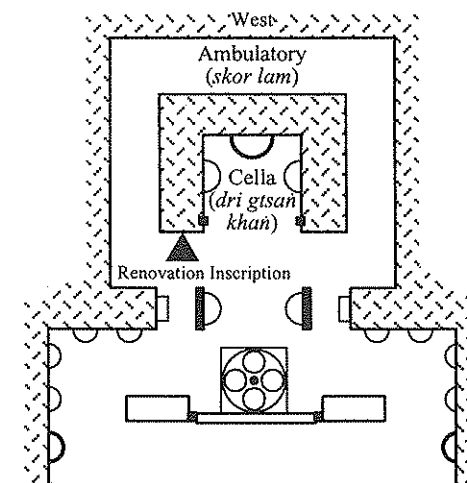


Fig. 2: The location of the Renovation Inscription

The inscription is located on the lower part of the left frontal end of the wall enclosing the Cella (Fig. 2; cf. Klimburg-Salter 1994: fig. 12). It is written on a rectangular panel within a frame between two red lines. It measures approximately 23 x 110 cm and comprises twelve lines.

The colour photograph reveals faint traces of two lines of writing in the space just below the lower edge of the inscription, i.e. not covered by the writing of the inscription.

We did not observe these traces on the spot, and they are illegible in the photograph. All that can be said is that there is a possibility that when the ground for the renovation inscription was applied, it was applied over an older inscription in the same place, whose contents and function are no longer known.

The inscription contains a short historical record and a "transfer of merit" formulated in an elevated style to mark the occasion of the conclusion of the renovation work in the Tabo gTsug lag khañ.

The author of the inscription was a monk of the Tabo community who took an active part in the renovation of the temple. His name, *Phes(?) kha rgyu bdag*, is given in l.2, although the first syllable is highly uncertain. The second and third syllable were still legible when

the lama made his copy for Tucci in 1933,<sup>8</sup> but all that now remains of the author's name is the last syllable: *bdag*.

In the inscription's *narratio*, the author gives the date<sup>9</sup> and states his wish of giving a short historical record as well as expressing a transfer of merit<sup>10</sup> at the conclusion of the renovation works in the gTsub lag khañ.

\*

The inscription is clearly divided into three main parts:

- [1.] a short *narratio* in prose which contains the date is followed by
- [2.] a record (*lo rgyus*) (1–7a). This record consists of three parts:
  - [2.1] an introductory call for attention (1–2a),
  - [2.2] the foundation of the temple by Ye šes 'od (2b–4),
  - [2.3] its renovation by Byañ chub 'od (5–7a).
- [3.] a formulation of the transfer of merit (*bsño ba*) (7b–17) which consists of two parts:
  - [3.1] 'primary merit'
    - [3.11] first, the merit accrued from the actual renovation work is dedicated to the main donor, the king, and others (7b–9) and
    - [3.12] extended in particular to all visitors of the temple (10–11).
  - [3.2] Then the 'secondary merit' accrued from dedicating the primary merit to other beings (*gžan la gsños pa las*, 12a) is reflexively dedicated to the author, his friends, and the participants in the work of renovation (12–17).
    - [3.21] This second dedication uses an extended simile (12–14)
    - [3.22] and concludes with final wishes (15–17).

The internal structure of the inscription is corroborated by external features of the inscription. The internally coherent verses 1–7a [2.], 7b–11 [3.1] and 16–17 [3.22] are of 9 syllables while the dedication of secondary merit in 12–15 [3.2] is in verses of 11 syllables. Moreover, *śad*, spaces and ornaments are used to separate these coherent groups. Space and one ornament separate 7a and 7b, i.e. [2.] and [3.]. Space and two ornaments, a double *śad* between, separate 11 and 12,

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Tucci 1935: n.2.

<sup>9</sup> For the dating of the 'monkey year' as 996 A.D. cf. PETECH 1997: 233.

<sup>10</sup> For a survey of studies on the related ideas cf. H. BECHERT, "Buddha-Field and Transfer of Merit in a Theravada Source", *IJ* 35, 1992, (95–108) n.11.

i.e. [3.1] and [3.2]. Three ornaments mark the conclusion. Space and one small ornament additionally separate 9 and 10, i.e. [3.11] and [3.12]. Furthermore, a third *śad*, in addition to the two normal line-separating *śad*, separates 2a and 2b, i.e. [2.1] and [2.2], 4 and 5, i.e. [2.2] and [2.3], 14 and 15, i.e. [3.21] and [3.22].

Because of the extant gaps and other problems the verses containing the two dedications of merit are difficult to interpret. The decisive feature for our interpretation is a clear analogy in the structure of meaning which is reflected in the syntactical structure of the statements:

1. in 7b–9 [3.11], the king and others are the receiver of the results of the merit gained by the monks' co-operation: .... *yon bdag dam pa ni* .... *las stsogs* (8b–c) .... *spyod spyad cin* (9c) .... *bsgrod cog* (9d),
2. in 10–11 [3.12], the results of the same merit are extended to embrace all visitors: .... *ltad mo pa rnam kyañ* (10d) .... *ded dpon yid stund (?) cog* (11d),
3. and in 12–17 [3.2], the results of the secondary merit gained from the dedication of the primary merit to all beings are, finally, received by the monks, their retinue, and the workers themselves: .... *bdag cag grogs bcas las su gtogs pa'i 'khor kun dag* (12c) .... *ñoms pa dañ* (14e) .... *sprad par śog* (14f), and final wishes are expressed .... *'khrus śog* (15d) .... *dsGREñ par śog* (17d).

\*

The text shows those orthographic peculiarities that are typical for the 'irregular' orthographic style which was usual in West Tibet at the beginning of the second spread of Buddhism. The transliterated text of the inscription has not been changed in any way. It therefore even contains spellings that are apparently 'impossible' in terms of Tibetan linguistic possibilities, e.g. *gsños* (12a), *dsGREñ* (17d). Generally it can be said that the writing does not seem to display any flaws of personal idiosyncratic orthographic usage or carelessness.<sup>11</sup> This high standard of its orthographic usage would be quite appropriate to the semi-official function of the inscription. We may assume, therefore, that this document is a paradigmatic case of the orthographic standard at that time and place, and that the 'irregularities' and freedom of choice

<sup>11</sup> The only clear case of an orthographic mistake is *dug* (14f) for *drug*.

found in its orthography can be considered as the norm in this cultural context. For this reason, a list of words spelled differently from the later classical norms is added in the appendix both in order to provide a survey and to facilitate identification and interpretation.

Subscribed *ya* after *m* before *i* and *e* is probably usual. But *m?e* (3d) is an uncertain case, and *mes* (l.1, 6b) definitely does not have a subscribed letter. Superabundant 'a *chuñ* occurs. The *da drag* is regularly used. The use of *pa* or *ba* seems to be free. The letter *ba* seems to be written in two ways: one is written with the head first, while the other is written like the letter *pa* with the left inceptive stroke continuing directly downwards. The right-hand side stroke often comes so close to the inceptive stroke that the letter is nearly or fully closed. However, there seems to be no way of distinguishing this second form of the letter *ba* from the letter *pa*. Since most of the *ba* letters in the text are written in the second way, we transliterate only those letters as *pa* which are clearly wide open. Only the following instances are *ba* letters of the first kind: *skye bo* (1c), *bskul* (l.1), *brgyad* (17b), 'gro *bas* (l.1), <*mth*>*oñ ba* (10d), *gdul bya* (9a), *bdag* (14b), *dbon* (5a).

These peculiar palaeographical features are also known from the West-Tibetan context. Inverted *gi gu* (*i*) is frequent. *s-p*, *s-t*, *s-ts* ligatures of a horizontal kind are seemingly normal usage. But in two cases we find the second letter clearly subscribed (*spañs* in 1b and 3d).

Two further peculiarities of the poem's metrical structure are worth noting: on the one hand the suffixed genitive particle (-'i) is read as an independent syllable in the following verses: 2b, 4d, 5a, 9a, and 17c, and on the other hand the particle 'am, although written separately, has no syllabic value.

*Editorial signs*<sup>12</sup>

All deviations from Tucci's edition are underlined.

<u>a</u>	partly uncertain letter
≡	illegible 'letter'
⊗	'letter' rubbed or broken off
-	illegible letter, when accompanied by legible letter(s)
+	letter rubbed or broken off, when accompanied by legible letter(s)
a/b	both readings possible
?	presence of further 'letters' uncertain
?	presence of further letters uncertain
{1}	beginning of line
*	ornament
<i>i</i>	inverted <i>gi gu</i>

<sup>12</sup> Certain modifications and additions to the system of signs used in classical epigraphy and in the Monumenta Tibetica Historica (MTH) are necessary when editing Tibetan inscriptions in transliteration. We are using a to indicate uncertainty instead of q (MTH). And we differentiate 'letters' which means in MTH any combination of letters in the Tibetan alphabet that occupy in vertical arrangement of the letter sequence the space of a single grapheme, from **letters** which refers to the single signs for consonants or vowel modification only. This differentiation is useful because parts of ligatures, if legible, can be preserved in this way.

## TEXT (Pls. 1–8)

{1}\*// // spre 'u'i lo la sñon mes byañ chub sems dpas | gtsug  
lag khañ 'di bžeñs nas | lo bži bcu rtsa drug gi 'og tu dbon lha btsun  
ba byañ chub 'od kyis byañ chub kyi thugs sñon tu 'gro ≠ ≠<sup>13</sup> | gtsug  
lag khañ 'di gso' ba mdzad de | de'i bka' rin po ches bskul ba sñon tu  
'gro bas dag cag sug ≠ ≠<sup>14</sup> ≠ ≠ ? ?<sup>15</sup> {2} ? ? s[k/t]os te | des na dri  
gtsañ khañ gī ri mo zind pa la dge sloñ ≠ s<sup>16</sup> = =<sup>17</sup> bdag lo rgyus<sup>18</sup> dañ  
bsño ba byed par 'dod pa skyes te brjod pa ni ||

<sup>19</sup> gañ žig thag riñ lam gyis dub 'gyur žiñ ||

grogs dañ mdza' po dag gis rnam spañs pa'i ||

skye bo ñon moñ ltad mo pa rnam la ||

gtsug lag khañ mdzes 'di ni bže≠ ≠<sup>20</sup> ≠ ≠ || (1)

lo rgyus cuñ ≠ ig<sup>21</sup> {3} = =<sup>22</sup> gyis mñand par gyis |||

lha'i rig 'khruñs byañ chub sems dpa'i gduñ ||

<sup>13</sup> bas Tu.

<sup>14</sup> sug pas Tu; -e- is visible above the space of pas, however.

<sup>15</sup> At least three 'letters' missing.

<sup>16</sup> Tucci notes that the first syllable of the name is not certain, while the others are. It could be read as: phe, pha, ne, na, še, śa.

<sup>17</sup> kha rgyu Tu.

<sup>18</sup> rgyus is clearly legible. Tucci's proposal for rgyu in the transcription is thus confirmed.

<sup>19</sup> Verses of nine syllables.

<sup>20</sup> bžeñs Tu.

<sup>21</sup> Long first 'letter'.

<sup>22</sup> The lower parts of two long 'letters' are still visible.

myi rje lhas mdzad mgo' nag yoñs kyi mgon ||  
lhan cig skyes pa'i mkhyen rab phul byuñ bas || (2)

ma riğ mun pa ye šes 'od mdzad des ||

'khor bar 'byord par ?gyurd pa'i rgyal srid la ||

sgyu ma lta bur gzigs pa sñon 'gro bas ||

m?e tog 'phreñ rñis<sup>23</sup> bžin du spañs nas ni || (3)

{4} ? -rid thams cad chos phyir dbul mdzad de ||

mña' ≠ ≠<sup>24</sup> gdu≠ ≠ ms<sup>25</sup> dkar por 'oñs gyurd nas ||

dpal ldan bkra' šis bde gnas gtsug lag khañ ||

rgyal 'khams 'di'i sgron mar 'dir bžeñs so ||| (4)

skyes mchog de'i rigs rgyud dbon ñid ñi ||

gañ žig bslab pa gsum dañ yañ dag ldan ||

šes rab ljon šin dad pa'i rtsa ba zug ||

sde snod {5} gsum gyi mye tog 'bras bu rgyas || (5)

rje rgyal lha btsun byañ chub 'od de yis ||

mes kyis mdzad pa rñiñs par gzigs nas ni ||

mkhan bzo' du ma<sup>26</sup> stsogs<sup>27</sup> te rgyu sbyar nas ||

zab pa'i bka' yis bdag cag bskos nas ni || (6)

legs par byi dor byas nas pcos pa yin || \* ||<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Tucci's proposal for rñes in the transcription is confirmed.

<sup>24</sup> ris Tu.

<sup>25</sup> gdul rnam is Tucci's emendation metri causa. The lama's reading was: gdu ma rnam.

<sup>26</sup> Here Tucci proposes 'dus; 'dul could be read, but metri causa the reading must be du ma.

<sup>27</sup> Presumably Tucci's copy read stsogs too, which was corrected by him to sogs (cf. 202, n.4).

<sup>28</sup> Empty space of about seven 'letters' with an ornament in the centre.

de ltar dge ba'i sems ni sñon 'gro bas ||

b ≠ ≠ ≠ g<sup>29</sup> rnam kyis 'di bya≠ las ≠ ≠ ? {6}

≠ +ge = =<sup>30</sup> myed rab dk/g? zla ba'i 'od || (7)

≠ ≠<sup>31</sup> kundha<sup>32</sup> ltar dkar ≠ ≠ ≠gs<sup>33</sup> pa'i ||

bsod nams de yis yon bdag dam pa ni ||

chos rgyal rje btsun byañ chub 'od las stsogs ||

'gro ba kun kyis skye ba thams cad du || (8)

gdul bya ma lus 'dund par nus pa'i ||

gzugs mchog mtshan bzans du mas rnam spras te ||

≠ ≠<sup>34</sup> ba kun tu byañ chub spyod spyad cin ||

rim gyis bya≠ ≠ ≠<sup>35</sup> {7} ≠<sup>36</sup> par bsgrod sog || \* ||<sup>37</sup> (9)

gañ yañ d m/b ≠ e lam can ds-d pa'i r+yid ||

bde gsegs sras bcas 'gro ba'i mgon d+<sup>38</sup> yi ||

sku gzugs mañ po bris pa 'di dag kun ||

≠ ≠<sup>39</sup> ba 'am reg pa'i ltad mo pa rnam kyañ || (10)

bskal<sub>d</sub> pa bzañ po'i bde gsegs sras p<sub>cas</sub> ky<sub>i</sub> ||

mñon sum žal mthoñ gsu≠ ≠chog thos<sup>40</sup> nas ni ||

<sup>29</sup> bdag cag Tu.

<sup>30</sup> A complex syllable of two 'letters'.

<sup>31</sup> Probably kh and a 'letter' with a straight stroke at the end (b/m).

<sup>32</sup> Tucci proposes ku mud, white lotus, for his reading kund.

<sup>33</sup> lags Tu, more likely is bstags.

<sup>34</sup> skye Tu, more likely is 'gro.

<sup>35</sup> byañ chub Tu.

<sup>36</sup> dam Tu.

<sup>37</sup> Empty space of about two letters with a small ornament in the centre. The preceding line probably only contains eight syllables.

<sup>38</sup> de Tu.

<sup>39</sup> mthoñ Tu.

<sup>40</sup> gsuñ mchog thos Tu.

'jig rten ? ≠ams<sup>41</sup> cad ? {8} ≠ ≠ ≠ ≠ tsho' las ||

sgrol bar byed pa'i ded<sup>42</sup> dpon ≠id stsund cog || \* || \* ||<sup>43</sup> (11)

<sup>44</sup> de ltar dge ba gañ rnam gzan la gsños pa las ||

bsod nams rgya che nam mkha'i gtos ≠ñam<sup>45</sup> gañ byuñ des ||

bdag cag grogs bcas las su gtogs pa'i 'khor kun dag ||

≠ ≠<sup>46</sup> ma myed nas dnos zen rnam rtog 'khruld pa yis || (12)

≠ ≠<sup>47</sup> dregs pa'i rtsig ≠ mtho' brtseg<sub>nas</sub><sup>48</sup> {9} ≠ ≠ ≠

≠ ≠ ≠ ≠ ma rig gziñs pas steñ nas gs/r+eg ≠ pa dan ||

'dod chags ze sdañ ka gduñ brtan par btsugs pa'i ||

de 'dra'i khyim ni srid gsum 'khor ba'i myiñ ldan nas || (13)

ye šes bñan m≠<sup>49</sup> thugs rje chen po'i phyag riñ bas ||

bdag cag myur ba myur bar drañ pa mdzad nas ni ||

≠ ≠ -yis<sup>50</sup> sta/o ≠ ≠<sup>51</sup> don sems khañ khyim m≠ ≠<sup>52</sup> ? ?

{10} ≠ ≠ ≠ ≠ ≠ ñ bde ba'i ≠ ≠<sup>53</sup> stan legs par b g ≠ ≠ d ≠ ||

<sup>41</sup> thams Tu.

<sup>42</sup> Tucci's proposal for sded in the transcription (?) is confirmed.

<sup>43</sup> Two ornaments separated by double sad.

<sup>44</sup> Verses of eleven syllables.

<sup>45</sup> mñam Tu.

<sup>46</sup> thog Tu.

<sup>47</sup> na rgyal Tu.

<sup>48</sup> nas is written below; perhaps a later addition.

<sup>49</sup> mña' Tu.

<sup>50</sup> khyed kyis Tu.

<sup>51</sup> m pa'i Tu.; Tucci proposes dam pa'i.

<sup>52</sup> mchog Tu.

<sup>53</sup> mal ?

bsam +tan<sup>54</sup> zas dañ = = grol btuñ pas ñoms pa dañ ||  
pha rold phyin dug grogs<sup>55</sup> dañ rtag tu sprad par śog || |<sup>56</sup> (14)

der ni ci dgar 'khol ba'i ñon moñs bran 'khol ziñ ||  
rnam thar rdziñ la tiñ ne 'dzind kyi chus bkañ ste ||  
d ≠ dag pad ma rgy-s<sup>57</sup> pas kun nas ≠ ? {11} ≠ ≠  
 ≠ ≠ ≠ d g ≠<sup>58</sup> bsam pa dag pa bstand tu 'khuru ≠ ? śog || (15)

<sup>59</sup> +r ≠<sup>60</sup> kh2ims dri ≠ i m/s ñ/-t ≠ d/b ≠ g ≠ n ≠ ñi ||  
 'dze ≠ ≠<sup>61</sup> khrel yod gos kyi mchog bgos te ||  
mtshan dañ dpe' byad bzañ pos legs brgyand cññ ||  
 ?bla myed theg chen mñon śes bzon ba la || (16)

pyañ chub sems kyi kha lo pa yis ni ||  
yan lag brgyad ldan ≠ ≠ {12} ≠ ≠ ≠ e ||  
mya nan 'da = ? zi dbye'i dgond pa ru ||<sup>62</sup>  
byañ chub dkyil 'khor rgyal mtshan dsgreñ<sup>63</sup> par śog || \* \* \* ||<sup>64</sup>  
 (17)

<sup>54</sup> *bsam stan* Tu.; Tucci proposes *bsam gtan*.

<sup>55</sup> Tucci assumes 'dug grogs; the transcription has *grags*.

<sup>56</sup> Three single *śad*. Verse 14 contains six lines.

<sup>57</sup> *skyes* Tu. The reading of the whole phrase is doubtful; one can also read *dspyad ka ba dme rkyas / dam rkyes*.

<sup>58</sup> *dga*'i ?

<sup>59</sup> Again verses with nine syllables.

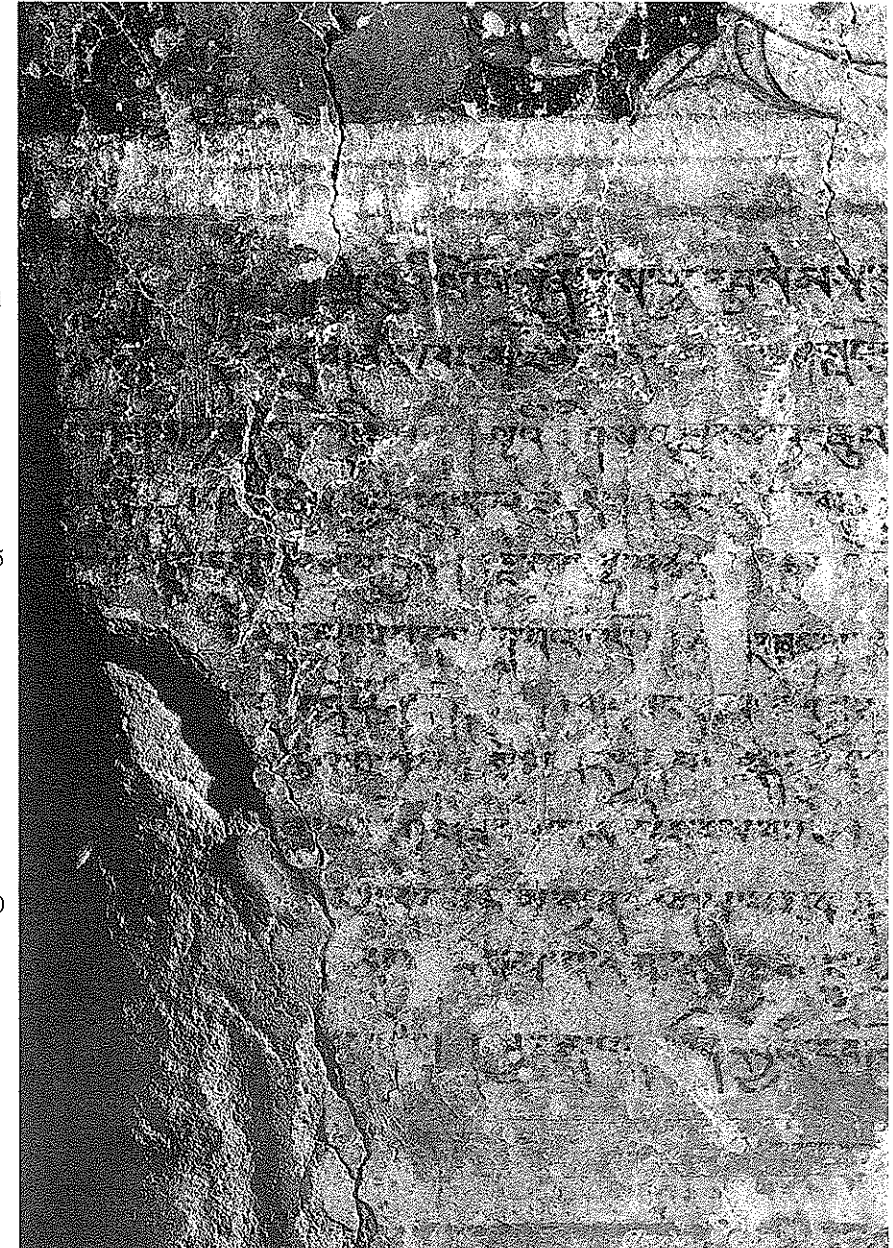
<sup>60</sup> *tshul* Tu.; Tucci's reading here is highly improbable.

<sup>61</sup> 'dzem *dañ* Tu.

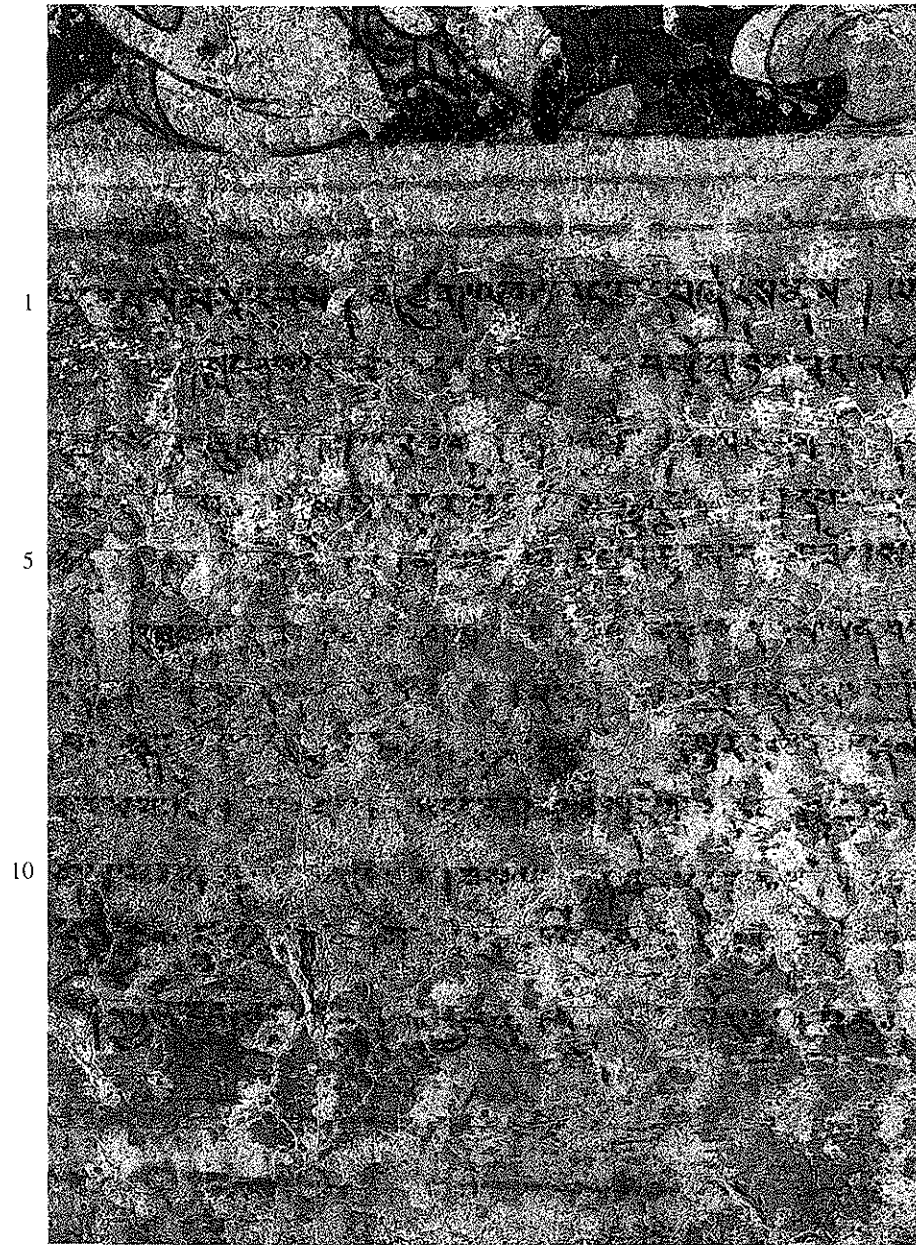
<sup>62</sup> Only eight syllables ?

<sup>63</sup> Tucci proposes *bsgreñ*; the transcription has *bsgrañ*.

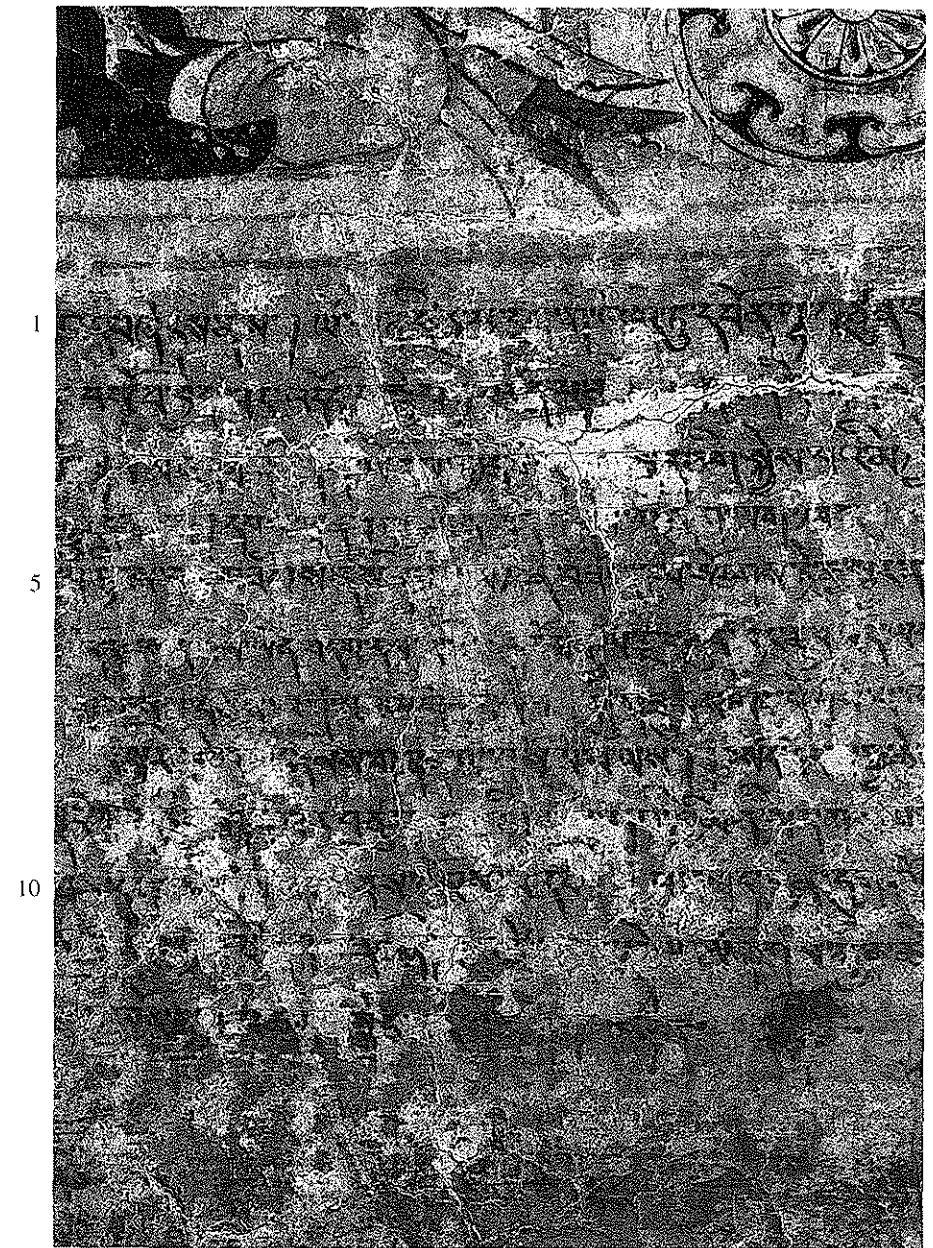
<sup>64</sup> Empty space with three ornaments.



A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 27)

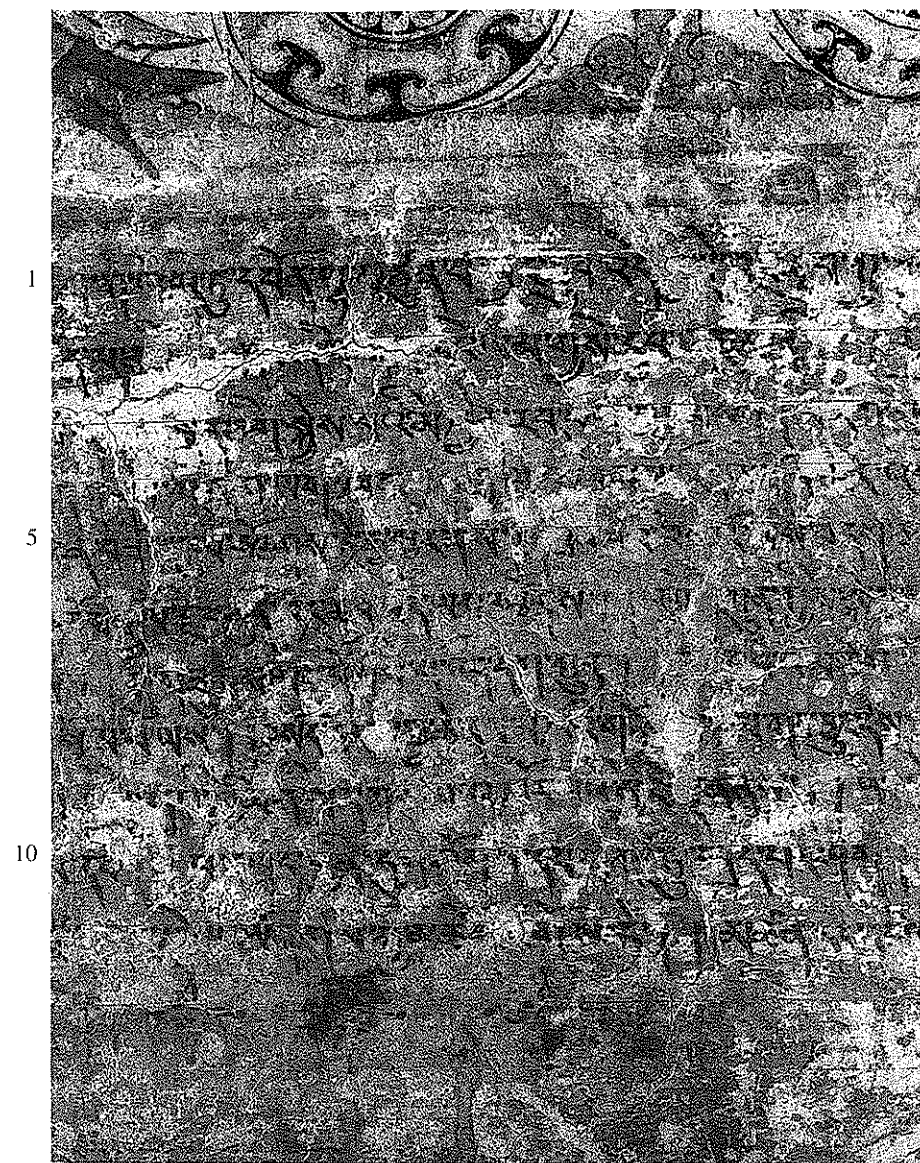


A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 28)

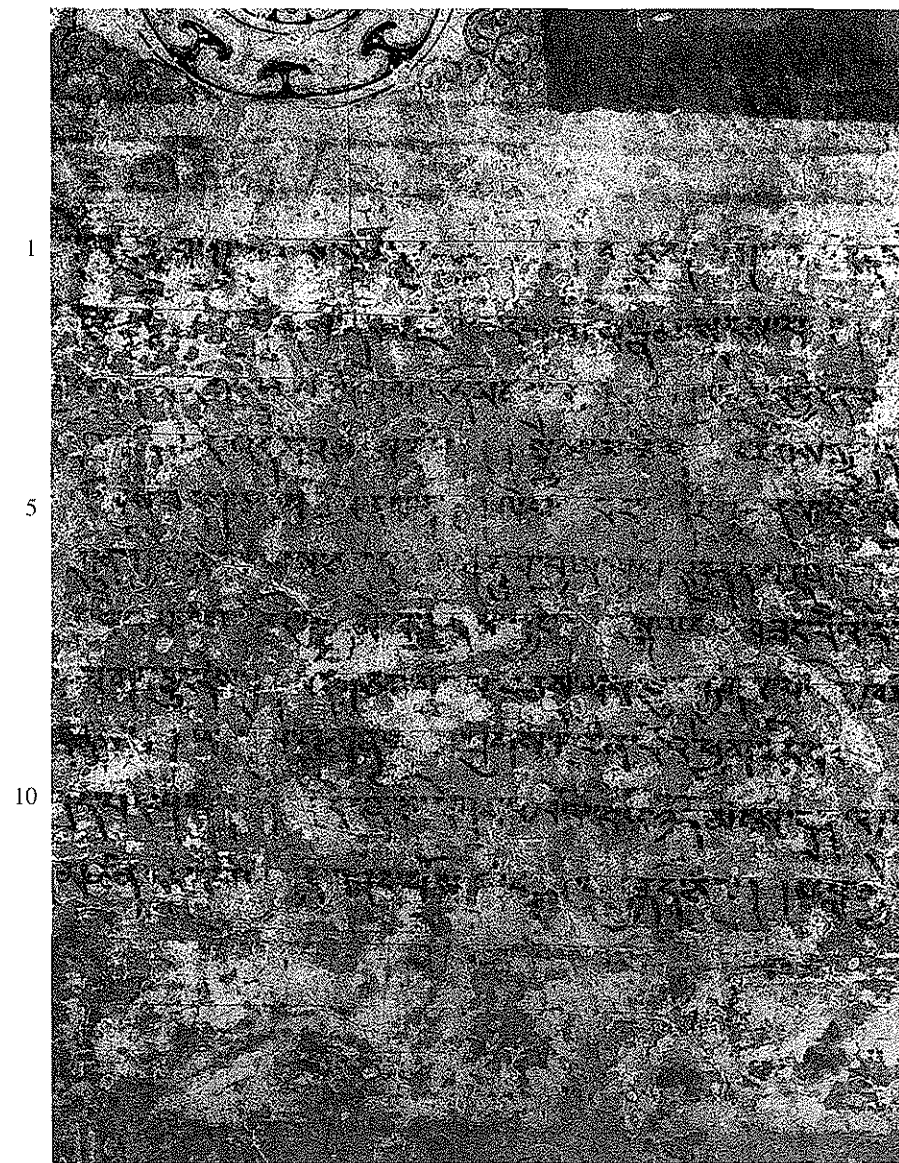


A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 29)





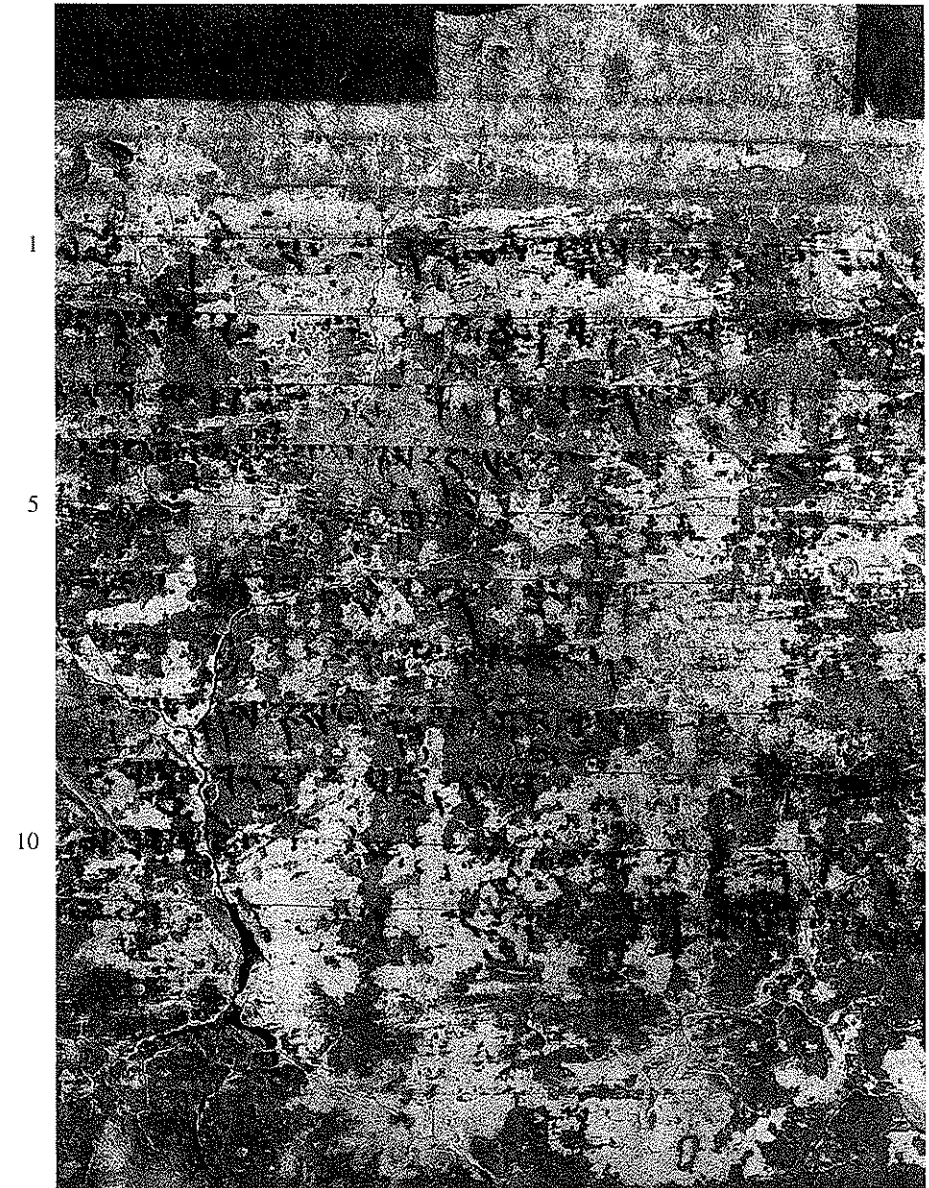
A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 30)



A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 31)



A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 32)



A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 33)



A detail of the Renovation Inscription (C. Luczanits 1994, 123, 34)

TRANSLATION<sup>65</sup>

Earlier, in the monkey year, the ancestor, the Bodhisattva<sup>66</sup>, erected this temple. Then, after 46 years, the grand-nephew lHa btsun pa Byañ chub 'od, motivated by the thought of enlightenment, restored this temple. Exhorted by his precious order we *were commissioned*<sup>67</sup> ... .. as reward.

Therefore, when the painting of the cella (*dri gtsañ khañ, gandhakuṭī*) was completed, the wish to make a record [of this] and a transfer (of merit) arose in the monk Phes(?) kha rgyu bdag<sup>68</sup>, and he said:

To the short<sup>69</sup> record of the erection<sup>70</sup> of this beautiful temple for all those beings who are tired from [having walked] distant paths and are abandoned by friends and beloved ones, and who perceive the misery [in this world], listen with ... <sup>71</sup>. (vv.1–2a)

<sup>65</sup> Complements implied by phrase or term are given in round brackets. Complements of interpretation are given in square brackets. Words in *italics* are uncertain proposals of meaning.

<sup>66</sup> I.e. Ye śes 'od. Verse 3a alludes to his name (cf. TUCCI 1935: 198,n.7). He is considered to be a bodhisattva (cf. KARMAY 1980a: 150–51). This appositional term was used by his descendants as his name but seemingly not by himself. It may go back to the phrase *byañ chub sems dpa'i gduñ (brgyud)* ascribed to earlier kings (KARMAY 1980b: 9; 1981: 209) which is used here as well (cf. v.2b).

<sup>67</sup> Read *bskos* (cf v. 6d).

<sup>68</sup> The first syllable of the name is highly uncertain. Petech (letter Oct.19<sup>th</sup>, 1996) supposes that *kha* is a nominal particle of belonging, *Phes(?) kha* meaning “the man from Phes(?)”.

<sup>69</sup> Read *cun žig*.

<sup>70</sup> Read *bžeñs pa'i* (two syllables) ?

<sup>71</sup> “interest” ? (read perhaps *nan* ?).

This king, personification of a god<sup>72</sup>, born of divine race, of the lineage of bodhisattvas<sup>73</sup>, lord over all black-headed (people), who by (his) perfect innate insight brought the light of wisdom (*ye śes 'od*) to the darkness of ignorance, abandoned (his) reign, which is connected with samsara, like a withered garland of flowers because he regarded (it) as an illusion. [He] then offered the whole kingdom<sup>74</sup> for the sake of the Dharma. When the lay people<sup>75</sup> of the realm (*mña' ris*) had become white, [he] erected here the temple dPal ldan bkra' śis bde gnas as a lamp for this kingdom. (vv.2b-4)

The same grand-nephew, in the family lineage of this excellent being, truly provided with the threefold training, planted the root of faith of the tree of insight and spread the flowers and fruits of the Tripitaka. (v.5)

<sup>72</sup> The interpretation of the attribute *myi rje lhas mdzad pa* is problematic. Tucci says "La formula è intensiva ed onorifica: corrisponde a *myi rje mdzad pa*" (1935: 199,n.4). He seems to be referring to the 'Phyoñ rgyas inscription (6f.) where Li-Coblin translate it as "acted as ruler of men" (LI-COBLIN 1987: 246; cf. also *rje mdzad pa las*, 58: "he served as lord" 1987: 249). An exact parallel to this formula is to be found in the Žwa'i lha khañ inscription, E.1: *myi'i rgyal po lhas mdzad pa*, translated as "king of men, personified by a god" (LI-COBLIN 1987: 291). The phrase *lhas mdzad pa* as part of royal attributes is also known from Tunhuang materials: *myi rje lhas mdzad pas* (P.T. 16,33b1) which Macdonald translates as "parce qu'il est un dieu devenu souverain des hommes" (MACDONALD 1971: 337), *myi rje lhas mdzad pa* (P.T. 16,25b3), and *myi rje lha mdzad* (P.T. 1290,r2f) the latter of which she translates as "un dieu devient souverain des hommes" (MACDONALD 1971: 320). Finally Karmay translates the phrase *myi rje lhas mdzad pa* from a colophon connected with Ži ba 'od as "the god who reigns over man" (KARMAY 1980b: 8). The problem lies in the instrumental particle of *lhas*, since the occurrence of *lha* in P.T. 1290 is unique. In their interpretation of the formula in the Žwa'i lha khañ inscription, Li-Coblin understand it as an agent "king of men, personified, made, represented by a god". This interpretation seems to be the best so far.

<sup>73</sup> A similar phrase occurs in P.T. 840: *lha'i rigs la byañ c[h]ub sems dpa'i rgyu[d]* (corrections according to Karmay). This text is datable to the early tenth century (cf. KARMAY 1981: 194-96,209).

<sup>74</sup> Read *rgyal srid* ?

<sup>75</sup> *gdul rnam*s for *gdul hya rnam*s.

When this sovereign, the lHa btsun Byañ chub 'od, regarded the work of the ancestor as old, he gathered many masters and craftsmen, and provided the materials. When we, then, were commissioned by (his) profound order, we purified [the place] well and [the work] was done. (vv.6-7a)

May through this merit which we, motivated in this way by good thoughts, *gathered*<sup>76</sup> [as] white as jasmine .... the light of a very white moon .... , because of the work which was done<sup>77</sup> here, the noble donor, the king in the Dharma rJe btsun Byañ chub 'od, and others<sup>78</sup> in all births in all forms of existence<sup>79</sup> be adorned with excellent bodies with many good features that may be desired by all lay people, and then practice the conduct of a bodhisattva<sup>80</sup> in all forms of existences, and in due course proceed towards highest enlightenment! (vv.7b-9)

May also all the visitors who see or touch all these many painted images of the lords of (the five kinds of) existence, the Sugatas together with their sons .... , after seeing in person the Sugatas of the good age and their sons, and hearing the best teaching *identify*<sup>81</sup> [their] minds with<sup>82</sup>.... the guides who rescue all living beings from the ocean of *samsara*!<sup>83</sup> (vv.10-11)

<sup>76</sup> *lags pa'i* Tu. Read (*b*)*stsags pa'i* ?

<sup>77</sup> Read *'di byas las* ?

<sup>78</sup> "Others" may refer to all other beings. Then "all the visitors" mentioned below are emphasized in particular as a special group of beings. On the other hand, it may refer to the masters and craftsmen gathered together who, like the king, gained merit by working on the temple. The latter alternative would, however, be contradicted by 12a (*gžan la gšnos pa las*) where *gžan* would refer to the "king and others" of 8bc. The most likely interpretation would be "other donors".

<sup>79</sup> Tucci proposes *kyi* for *kyis*, but a modal interpretation seems to be appropriate.

<sup>80</sup> *byañ chub spyod* short for *byañ chub sems dpa'i spyod* ?

<sup>81</sup> Luczanits reads *stsund/shund*, while Steinkellner reads and proposes *stund*.

<sup>82</sup> Read *yid* ?

<sup>83</sup> <*khor ba'i rgya m>tsho' las*.

By this great merit, as extensive as space, which came about from dedicating all the good to others in this way, may we, together with our friends (and) the whole retinue attached to (this) work be very quickly pulled out from such a house, .... having the high walls of pride and intoxication piled up through [our] erroneous conceptions which take, since beginningless (time), as real [what is not real] (*dños zen*), and which is .... down from a ....<sup>84</sup> .... and has firmly established the pillars and beams of passion and hatred and thus bears the name of the circle of the three existences, by the long arms of wisdom, expert in distinguishing (*bśan mñā*'), and great compassion! [May we] then be .... [in] the excellent house, the house of the thought of truth, *which was taught by you*<sup>85</sup>, .... well furnished<sup>86</sup> with the seat<sup>87</sup> of happiness .... and<sup>88</sup> be satisfied by the food of meditation and the drink of *liberation*<sup>89</sup>, and be brought together always with the friends of the six<sup>90</sup> perfections! (vv.12–14)

In this [excellent house] the defilements are used as servants which [we] employ as [we] please, and the pond of release is filled with the water of meditation .... with the lotus of .... spread .... from all .... may [we] be *bathed*<sup>91</sup> in the teaching of good thoughts ...! (v.15)

<sup>84</sup> *gzins* ?

<sup>85</sup> Read *khyed kyis (b)stan pa'i* ?

<sup>86</sup> Read *legs par bg[os pa]* ?

<sup>87</sup> Read *mal stan* ?

<sup>88</sup> Read *dañ* ?

<sup>89</sup> *rnam grol* ?

<sup>90</sup> Read *drug* for *dug*.

<sup>91</sup> Read *'khrus* ? for *khrus* ?

*Fumigated*<sup>92</sup> [with] .... *the perfume*<sup>93</sup> of morality<sup>94</sup>, dressed in the best clothes of shame and modesty and well adorned with the good primary and secondary characteristics (of the body) [may we] with the charioteer, the thought of enlightenment, in the chariot of supernatural knowledge of the highest great vehicle, raise the banner of the bodhimaṇḍala<sup>95</sup> in this monastery, .... connected with the eightfold [path] .... in which nirvana and tranquility are beginning to bloom! (vv.16–17)

<sup>92</sup> Read *bdugs nas ni* ?

<sup>93</sup> *dri* ?

<sup>94</sup> Read *tshul khrims* ?

<sup>95</sup> The meaning of bodhimaṇḍala (*byañ chub dkyil 'khor*) is unclear to us. It seems to be used here as a synonym of bodhimaṇḍa (*byañ chub sñān po*) which refers to the seat of the Buddha's enlightenment.

## APPENDIX

1. SPELLINGS DIFFERENT FROM THE 'CLASSICAL  
NORM'

For convenience, spellings and their variations attested in Jäschke's dictionary are considered as the 'classical norm'. Differences in *b/p*-spellings are not recorded.

Superabundant 'a *chuñ*: *bkra*' (4c) *mgo*' (2c), *mtho*' (13a), *dpe*' (16c), <*m*>*tsho*' (11c), *bzo*' (6c), *gso*' (1.1).

Other: *dsgreñ* (17d): *bsgreñ*, *gsños* (12a, but *bsño* 1.2): *bsños*, *tu* (1.1): *du*, *stan* (14d): *gtan*, *gdu*<*l*> (4b,9a): *dul*, *spre* 'u (1.1): *spre*'u, *moñ* (1c, but *moñs* 15a): *moñs*, *stsogs* (6c,8c): *sogs*.

The *da drag* is regularly used: *bskald* (11a), 'khruld (12d), *gyurd* (3b,4b), *dgond* (17c), *brgyand* (16c), *mñand* (2a), *stund*(?) (11d), *bstand* (15d), 'dund (9a), 'byord (3b), *stsund*(?) (11d), 'dzind (15b), *zind* (1.2), *rold* (14f).

## 2. METAPHORS AND SIMILES

'dod chags ze sdañ	<i>ka gduñ</i> (13c)
	<i>kundha</i> ltar dkar .... <i>bsod nams</i> (8ab)
gdul rnams(?)	<i>dkar por</i> 'oñs gyurd (4b)
byañ chub sems kyi	<i>kha lo pa</i> (17a)
<dam pa>'i don sems	<i>khañ khyim</i> (14c)
	<i>khyim ni srid gsum</i> 'khor ba'i myiñ ldan (13d)
'dzem dan khrel yod	<i>gos</i> (16b)
pha rold phyin d<r>ug	<i>grogs</i> (14f)
	<i>mgo</i> ' nag (2c)
	<'khor ba'i
byañ chub dkyil 'khor	<i>rgva m&gt;tsho</i> (11c)
	<i>rgyal mtshan</i> (17d)
	<i>sgyu ma lta bur</i> (3c)
gtsug lag khañ ....	<i>sgron mar</i> (4cd)
tiñ ne 'dzind kyi	<i>chu</i> (15b)
śes rab	<i>ljon śiñ</i> (5c)

<rnām> groi	<i>btuñ pa</i> (14e)
thugs rje chen po'i	<i>phvag riñ ba</i> (14a)
ñon moñs	<i>bran 'khol</i> (15a)
ma rig	<i>mun pa</i> (3a)
rgyal srid ....	<i>m?e tog 'phreñ rñis bzin du spans</i> (3bd)
sde snod gsum gyi	<i>mye tog 'bras bu</i> (5d)
dad pa'i	<i>rtsa ba</i> (5c)
ña rgyal dregs pa'i	<i>rtsig ≠ mtho</i> ' (13a)
rnām thar	<i>rdziñ</i> (15b)
bla myed theg chen mñon śes	<i>bzon ba</i> (16d)
bsam gtan (:stan)	<i>zas</i> (14e)
ye śes	'od (3a)
ye śes	<i>bśan mña</i> ' (14a)
khyim ni	<i>srid gsum</i> 'khor ba'i myiñ ldan (13d)

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## THE «ADMONITORY INSCRIPTION» IN THE TABO 'DU KHAN

by Helmut Tauscher

### INTRODUCTION

#### LOCATION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The inscription edited and translated in this paper<sup>1</sup> is located on the face of the south wall separating the Assembly Hall from the Cella (cf. Figs 3 and 4). Inclusive a frame of 2–2,5 cm it measures ca. 63 x 103 cm, starts immediately below the statue of Vajrapāśa (rDo rje źags pa), the gate-protector of the South,<sup>2</sup> and ends ca. 50 cm above the floor.

The left side of the inscription starts less than 1 cm from the edge of the wall, and, although the whole face of the wall has been prepared with yellow priming paint and the lining for inscriptions, it covers only slightly more than the left half of it, leaving the right half blank. This part shows only the drawing of a wishfulfilling gem on a lotus in the

<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to my colleagues J. Chu, H. Hu von Hinüber, K.N. Mishra and J.L. Panglung, who contributed essentially to this paper with their valuable suggestions, comments and corrections.

An abbreviated version of the introductory part is to be published under the title "An introduction to the «Admonitory Inscription» in the Tabo 'Du Khan" by the Karuna Foundation, Delhi, in the proceedings of the "International Seminar on Rinchen Zangpo and his Works", Tabo, June 28 to July 3, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Identified by LUCZANITS (forthcoming); cf. TUCCI 1988: 34 – Vajrahāsa (rDo rje bźad pa), HANDA 1987: 92 – Vajrasphota (rDo rje phāt) [1994: 104 – Vajraphota (rDo rje phat)].

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LXXXIII

INSCRIPTIONS FROM  
THE TABO MAIN TEMPLE

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Edited by

Luciano Petech and Christian Luczanits



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As a result of Klimburg-Salter's research in Rome and her teaching in Vienna the President of then IsMEO Gherardo Gnoli, and the head of the Institute of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, Ernst Steinkellner in 1990 formalised the co-operation regarding research in the western Himalaya and the scientific publication of its results. The success of this co-operation owes much to the continuous efforts of Luciano Petech and Maurizio Taddei; our sincere thanks also go to the Director of the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, Donatella Mazzeo, who has always supported the co-operation by providing working space, photographs and help. Without the encouragement and the personal initiatives of all of the above mentioned, this publication would not have come about.

Tabo Monastery also played a decisive role. The extensive studies carried out on the spot since 1989 have profited from the tolerance, interest and support of the abbot of Tabo Monastery, Geshe Sonam Wangdu (bSod nams dbaṅ 'dus) and the monks, Zangpo and Yeshe Puntsok, among others.

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*the editors*

As other major results of this co-operation the following publications may be mentioned:

*East and West* 44 (1), 1994, is dedicated to a joint mission at Tabo in 1991.

D.E. KLIMBURG-SALTER, *Tabo, A Lamp for the Kingdom. Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*. London–Milan 1997.

*Abbreviated Inventory of the Tucci Himalayan Photographic Archive 1928–1935. Synopsis of the Complete Catalogue kept in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale Photographic Archives*. Compiled by D. KLIMBURG-SALTER, O. NALESINI & G. TALAMO, Rome 1994.

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*Ernst Steinkellner & Christian Luczanits*

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