

Gyi ljang Dbu dkar ba and His Exorcism Manual Found in Kharakhoto¹

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In a recently published collection of Kharakhoto manuscripts preserved in China,² there is a fragmentary Tibetan manuscript related to Gyi ljang dbu dkar ba. Also called Gyi ljang lo tsā ba,³ he was an important translator in the eleventh century and recognized as a master in the Mahākāla tradition. The content of this one-folio fragment corresponds to the beginning of what is usually referred to as the *Sher snying bdud bzlog*, a ritual manual for repelling demons by means of the *Heart Sutra*. Let me first give a transliteration, and an annotated translation of the fragment.

1. The Kharakhoto Fragment

¹I thank Professor Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp for sharing with me some Tibetan manuscripts that were crucial for this study, as well as his many advices.

²Tala, Du Jianlu, and Gao Guoxiang 2013: 149-150. The two sides of the page are numbered respectively M1·141 and M1·142, where M represents Inner Mongolia, the place it is kept. The plate of this manuscript in monochrome and a brief discussion by Prof. Takeuchi Tsuguhito can also be found in Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008: 200-208. I thank Tuchi Maho for this valuable reference.

The folio before it, M1·139 and M1·140 seems to be part of a work titled *Rten brel* [sic] *nyi mani vkebor lo* that was composed by [Dam] pa rgya gar, i.e., Pha dam pa sangs rgyas. But most of it is rather illegible and I am unable to identify the content.

³The first part of his name, Gyi ljang, should be a clan or family name, the etymology of which is still a mystery. It is indicated by the name of Gyi ljang's relative, Gyi ljang Sgur po. In the chapter on Atiśa and his lineages in the *Blue Annals*, the mother of Bya yul pa Gzhon nu vod (1075-1138), was recorded as Gyi ljang gzav Lcam bu, i.e., "Lcam bu, the lady of Gyi ljang," which also suggests that Gyi ljang, referring to the house from which she came, is a clan/family name. See vGos Gzhon nu dpal 1984: 349.

The Inner Mongolia Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics in Hohhot now holds the fragment in question. It is a small folio that measures 10.1 by 7.2cm, with writing on both sides in a flip-up order. The side with the Tibetan pagination suggests that it is the recto of the second folio of the text. It shows no obvious hint of binding, which indicates a loose-leaf format like a Tibetan *pothi. Here, I will focus on the content of the manuscript and leave untouched other aspects such as its paleography, paper, artistry, and other archaeological features,⁴ all of which fall beyond my ability.

The content corresponds to the beginning of a work titled *Yum rgyas vbring bsduḡ gsum gyi don bsduḡ shes rab snying poḡi sgo nas bdud bzlog gi rim pa*, which is often abbreviated to *Sher snying bdud bzlog*, i.e. *Repelling Demons with the Heart Sutra*. Donald Lopez has extensively interpreted the ritual dealt with by this text.⁵ In brief, the ritual requires the officiant, often played by an astrologer, who vitalizes an effigy (*ngar mī*), which represents the patron affected by demons, into a ransom (*glud*). The ransom is then used to exchange back its human double from the demons. This ritual, as Lopez demonstrates, is a pre-Buddhist rite covered with a tantric format and the *Heart Sutra*, which functions as “nothing more or less than a long mantra.”⁶

The transmission of the ritual is traced to Atiṣa, and ultimately to the Buddha in each of the three transmitted texts I consulted.⁷ Gyi ljiang Dbu dkar ba seems to be the one who wrote it down as a ritual manual (*yig cha*),⁸ to which others like vKhon Kumārabuddha (i.e., vKhon Gzhon nu sangs rgyas) added the detailed ritual procedures (*phyag len*). The Kharakhoto fragment only contains material that introduces the ritual, namely, its line of transmission and a trustworthy historical account (*yid ches pavi lo rgyus*) of the lineage. The following are my transliteration⁹ and

⁴ As exemplified in Helman-Ważny 2014.

⁵ See Lopez 1996: 216–238.

⁶ Lopez 1996: 237. But Lopez is probably wrong to identify vByung gnas rdo rje as Steng lo Tshul khriḡs vbyung gnas (1107–90), which caused him to suspect that the lineage might be fabricated.

⁷ Thar rtse mkhan chen 2011: 1–65. Gyudmed Tantric College 1982: 309–331. vJam mgon Kong sprul 1976: 59–99. For several other versions, see Lopez 1996: 218. In this paper I will refer to them in short by “Sa skya text,” “Dge lugs text,” and “Kong sprul text.” vJam mgon Kong sprul blo gros mthav yas (1813–1899) appears to have collated more than one transmissions of Gyi ljiang’s original manual, because he sometimes put as the interlinear notes the opinions of the work by vKhon Gzhon nu sangs rgyas.

⁸ This is only clarified in the Dge lugs text.

⁹ Since the transmitted texts that were not available to Prof. Takeuchi are accessible now, some uncertain readings are settled. For his transliteration, see Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008: 200–208.

translation of the manuscript (liaisons like *byaso* [for *byas so*] are emended, and abbreviations like *thamd* [for *thams cad*] are expanded):

Recto:

- [2a.1] ཨོཾ ཨོཾ // des gyi ljang dbu gar la// des dbu pa dgev gser la//
 [2a.2] des mkhan po gu ma ra bo de la// des a nan ta vbhi tya lav//
 [2a.3] des dharma shri la// des bdag la vo// ཨོཾ ཨོཾ // 2 pa yid ches pavi
 [2a.4] lo rkyus¹⁰ ni// gyi ljang dbu gar bas vdi la yid byed cing yod par
 [2a.5] vdug// devi dus su pha spun gyi ljang sgur po zhes bya bas gshin
 [2a.6] rje dmar po dang// mon pa dmar nag la sogspa¹¹// mngon 3 du
 mngag
 [2a.7] nus cing mi mang po mthus bsgral ba la// nyin 1 khong gis
 [2a.8] gos bskon kha da byas pa la kho vkhros ste// khyad kyang sa sting
 [2a.9] du zhag bdun bo mi bzhugs zer ba la// dbu gar bas vdi

Verso:

- [2b.1] yi bsgrub pa la bsdad pas/ sgur po zhag bzhin kho rang gi
 [2b.2] mthuv log nas shi ba byungs ngo// yang rkya yul na pha tshan
 [2b.3] 1 la rkyal po gdon pas// rtsis mkhan gyis bu chung gi ro
 [2b.4] la gto byas pas// ja sig gi nang du bcug nas dbus su bskug
 [2b.5] pala¹²// vphan yul du dbu pa dgev gser gyis nyos pa la//
 [2b.6] rgya po des dgev gser gyi tshang zla thams cad ཱa pa byas so/ lan1
 [2b.7] dgev gyis khyod su la vjig byas pas// gyi ljang dbu gar
 [2b.8] ba vjig zer// dgev gser gyis dbu gar ba ngas bsad pas
 [2b.9] chog// kho gang na yod pavi lam rgyus gyis 1 byas pas/ rgyal
 [2b.10] po dgav nas lam mkhan byas pas// dbu gar ba can du phy[i]n/

...he [transmitted it] to Gyi ljang Dbu gar, he to Dbu pa Dgev gser, he to Mkhan po Gu ma ra bo de [Kumārabodhi = Gzhon nu byang chub], he to A nan ta vbhi tya [Ānandavidyā = Kun dgav rig pa], he to Dharma shri, he to me.

Second, the trustworthy historical account: Gyi ljang Dbu gar ba kept faith in this [teaching]. At that time a relative called Gyi ljang Sgur po¹³ was able to summon

¹⁰ It seems that the manuscript does not differentiate radical *k* and radical *g*. See also *rkyal yul* and *rkyal po* several lines below.

¹¹ The reading of this abbreviated word as *la sogspa* is not certain.

¹² There seems to be a lack of dot (*tsheg*) between *pa* and *la*.

up the Red Yama, the Red and Black Mon pa,¹⁴and so forth, and delivered [i.e., killed] many people with the power. One day, Gyi ljang put on clothes, and counseled him. He became wrathful, and said [to Dbu gar ba], “you will not live on the earth more than seven days.” Dbu gar ba remained in practicing this sādha, therefore Sgur po received his own magic and died as the set time arrived. Furthermore, in *rkya yul* [read: *rgya yul*], a paternal relative¹⁵ was afflicted by a [spirit] king. So an astrologer did the *gtor* ritual¹⁶ to the corpse of a young boy, and put it in a tea box and sent it to Dbus. In vPhan yul, Dbu pa dgev gser bought it. The [spirit] king inflicted disease on all the families and friends of Dgev gser. One time, Dgev [gser] said [to the spirit king], “Whom do you fear?” [The king] said, “I fear Gyi ljang Dbu gar ba.” Dgev gser said, “I can kill Dbu gar ba. Show me where he is!” The [spirit] king was delighted and guided the road, so [Dgev gser] went to the place of Dbu gar ba ...

The story continues in other transmitted texts: Dgev gser went to the place of Dbu dkar ba and explained the situation. He was then given the sādha and repulsed the demon. Then the spirit king returned to Sgur po, who then also found his way to learn the rite from Dgev gser and finally got rid of the spirit king.¹⁷ After the stories, the real ritual procedures begin.

The lineage, unfortunately fragmented, nonetheless shows a noteworthy divergence from other transmitted texts:

¹³ All the transmitted versions have *ku* instead of *sgur po*. See Thar rtse mkhan chen 2011: 1, Gyudmed Tantric College 1982: 310, and vJam mgon Kong sprul 1976: 61.

¹⁴ The Dge lugs text has *mun pa*, which might make more sense, as in the Mun pa dmar po (*Raktandhika). See Gyudmed Tantric College 1982: 310.

¹⁵ In both Dge lugs and Kong sprul texts, he is called Pha vtsho. See Gyudmed Tantric College 1982: 311 and vJam mgon Kong sprul 1976: 61. In Sa skya text, he is named Pha co. See Thar rtse mkhan chen 2011: 2.

¹⁶ The term *gto* often refers to the rite of the ransom exorcism, an indigenous religious practice and later assimilated into Buddhist practice. See Lopez 1996: 237. For a literature review of the previous studies on the *glud* practice, see Barnett 2012. Here in our story, the boy is obviously used as the human ransom to pay the spirit king for curing the disease.

¹⁷ Lopez 1996: 219-20.

Kharokhoto Manuscript	Sa skya text ¹⁸	Dge lugs text ¹⁹	Kong sprul text ²⁰
[missing]	Sangs rgyas	Sangs rgyas	Sangs rgyas
	Spyan ras gzigs	Spyan ras gzigs	Spyan ras gzigs
	Thugs rje chen po blo gros rin chen	Thugs rje chen po blo gros rin chen	Thugs rje chen po blo gros rin chen
	Gser gling pa	Gser gling pa	Gser gling pa
	A ti sha (972/82-1054)	A ti sha	A ti shā
	Dge bshes ston pa ba ²¹	Dge bshes ston pa	Dge bshes ston pa
	Pu to ba Rin chen gsal ²²	Po to ba Rin chen gsal	Pu to ba Rin chen gsal
	Rin [sic] mo vByung gnas rdo rje	Stong lovByung gnas rdo rje ²³	Ring mo vByung gnas rdo rje
Gyi ljang Dbu gar	Gyi ljang dbu dkar ba	Kyi ljang Dbu dkar ba	Gyi ljang dbu dkar ba
Dbu pa Dgev gser			Mchims chen Nam mkhav grags pa
Mkhan po Gu ma ra bo de	Khyab bdag chen po vKhon Ku ma ra buddha	Mkhas pa chen po Ku ma ra buddha	vKhon ku mā ra buddha

¹⁸ Thar rtse mkhan chen 2011: 3.

¹⁹ Gyudmed Tantric College 1982: 310.

²⁰ vJam mgon Kong sprul 1976: 60.

²¹ vBrom ston Rgyal bavi vbyung gnas (1004-1064).

²² Po to ba Rin chen gsal Phyogs las rnam rgyal (?1027-1105).

²³ Lopez is probably wrong to identify his as Steng Lo tsā ba Tshul khrims vbyung gnas (1107–90). See Lopez 1996: 237.