

Legs skar / Skar bzang / Sunakṣatra

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0. In his *Tibetan English Dictionary*, Sarat Chandra Das explains the lemma *legs pa'i skar ma* by referring to the second volume of the *Myang 'das* section of the Kanjur: “[name] of a Bhikṣu who had served for about twenty years and committed to memory twelve volumes of Sūtrānta works and is said to have attained the fourth stage of *Dhyāna*.” The *Bod rgya Tshig mdzod chen mo* furnishes a somewhat different interpretation of that name. The Tibetan definition may be rendered as “a bhikṣu who followed a heretical doctrine in the presence of the Buddha Śākyamuni”.¹ Both these explanations lack a reference to the Sanskrit name of the person concerned. In his translation of the relevant passage quoted by Bu ston from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* David Ruegg² gives the Sanskrit equivalent of Legs pa'i skar ma, namely, Sunakṣatra.

0.1 In a paper concerned with Sunakṣatra, Eimer³ collected some of the important notices on Sunakṣatra / Legs pa'i skar ma found in the Buddhist literature of India and Tibet. According to the canonical writings preserved in Indian languages, Sunakṣatra was of noble Licchavi birth. He entered the Buddhist Order and served the Teacher for several years but did not have faith in him. He became enthusiastic for a teacher of another creed and eventually renounced Buddhism. The earliest known Tibetan reference to Legs pa'i skar ma is contained in the most extensive of the three *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtras* which forms a separate section in some editions of the Kanjur.⁴ This text was translated from its Chinese version into Tibetan in the tenth or eleventh century.⁵ The later

¹ *Zang-Han da cidian*, ed. by Krung dbyi sun *et al.*, Peking, 1985, 2801.

² *Le traité du tathāgatagarbha de Bu ston rin chen grub*, Traduction du *De bzin gsegs pa'i sñiñ po gsal zñ mdzes par byed pa'i rgyan*, PEFEO, 88, Paris, 1973, 108.

³ “Die Sunakṣatra-Episode im Kommentar zum *Be'u bum sñon po*”, in Harry Falk, ed., *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, Festschrift für Ulrich Schneider, Freiburg, Hedwig Falk, 1987, 101–111.

⁴ Such is the case in all the manuscripts stemming from the Them spangs rna tradition as well as in the blockprinted editions prepared in Narthang and in Lhasa.

⁵ See J. Takasaki, “On the *Myaṅ 'das*”, in E. Steinkellner & H. Tauscher, eds., *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Philosophy*, Proceedings of the Csoma de Kőrös Symposium held at Velm-Vienna, 13–19 September, 1981. *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, 11, Wien, 1983, 2, 287.

adaptations of the stories about Legs [pa'i] skar [ma] as recorded in the above mentioned paper seem to have originated from this source, namely the Tibetan version of the extensive *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. One of the most recent versions of the Legs pa'i skar ma story, which is retold in a work by O rgya 'Jigs med Chos kyi dbang po⁶ (born AD 1608), was edited and translated by Pema Tsering.⁷ The present paper is meant to draw attention to another Tibetan rendering of the Sanskrit name Sunakṣatra and to give an example of how this figure was utilized to create frictions between the dGe lugs pa and rNying ma pa schools.

1. Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (AD 1653–1705), who acted as regent (*sde srid*) from 1679, in his *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*⁸ answers two hundred and eight questions that are extrapolated from his astronomical treatise *Bai dūrya dkar po*⁹ written in 1683–1685.

1.1 In a paragraph of the second part of the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* numbered forty-five¹⁰ Sangs rgya mtsho rgyas deals with the different Tibetan renderings of the name Sunakṣatra and adds canonical references. The relevant passage in the two-volume Derge edition¹¹ of the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, (composed in 1687–1688), begins on fol. 72a6 of the second part. We find these two pieces of information that seem to be important for the following considerations. One is

⁶ Entitled *rDzogs pa chen po klong chen snying thig gi sngon 'gro'i 'khrid yig kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*.

⁷ “Tibetische Geschichten zur Erläuterung der Drei Formen des Glaubens (dad pa gsum)”, in *SII*, 2, 1975, 133–163, especially, 158–160.

⁸ Full title *sTan bcos bai dūr dkar po las dris lan 'khrul snang g.ya' sel don gyi bzhin ras ston byed*. See A.I. Vostrikov, *Tibetskaja Istoriceskaja Literatura*, Bibliotheca Buddhica, 32, Msokva, Izdatel'stvo Vostocnoj Literatury, 1962, 160, note 59, and 244, notes 370 and 372. In general the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* is accessible in a blockprint edition from Lhasa/Potala, see e.g., Zuiho Yamaguchi, *Catalogue of the Tōyō Bunko Collection of Tibetan Works on History*, Classified Catalogue of the Tōyō Bunko Collection of Tibetan Works, 1, Tokyo, The Tōyō Bunko, 1970, No. 344–2556.

⁹ Full title *Phug lugs kyi rtsis kyi legs bshad mkhas pa'i mgul rgyan Bai dūrya dkar po'i do shal dpyod ldan snying nor*.

¹⁰ This number is obviously misprinted in the edition used, where we read 57 (?), but going by the numbers of the neighbouring paragraphs it should be 45.

¹¹ The copy utilized was printed for Pema Tsering during his journey to Eastern Tibet in 1989 and brought back by him in 1991. This edition is listed as no. 1176 in Otani University, ed., *Catalogue of Tibetan Works Kept in Otani University Library*, Kyoto, Otani University, 1973. The title pages of the two volumes are reproduced by Joseph Kolmaš, *Prague Collection of Tibetan Prints from Derge*, A Facsimile Reproduction of 5615 Book-Titles Printed at the Dgon-chen and Dpal-spungs Monasteries of Derge in Eastern Tibet, *AF*, 36, Wiesbaden, Otto Harras-sowitz, 1971, Part 1, ser. no. 1568 and 1567.

that Sunakṣatra was a son of Śākya Śuklodana¹² and thus a cousin of the Buddha, like Devadatta. The second piece of information states that the two Tibetan versions of his name, Skar bzang (Rgyu skar bzang po) and Skar legs or Legs skar, differ only in rendering the prefixed syllable¹³ *su* as *legs* and *bzang po* respectively.¹⁴

1.2 The scriptural evidence given by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho for rendering the Sanskrit name Sunakṣatra into Tibetan as Skar bzang comes from the first text in the *Ratnakūṭa* (*Dkon brtsegs*) section of the Kanjur. The introduction to the passage quoted starts in the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* with the words: "... for instance, in the first chapter of the Ratnakūṭa section, [namely] in the *Trisaṃvaranirdeśa* ...".¹⁵ This refers to the Tibetan version of the *Trisaṃvaranirdeśaparivarta*¹⁶ prepared by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi and Ye shes sde, that is, at a time very close to the compilation of the *Mahāvīyūtpatti*. In the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, we find *inter alia* the following statement:

“Kāśyapa, look, the monk Sunakṣatra was my servant, in my presence he was speaking, he was moving and he was sitting. Look, he moved in the air by magical powers. Look, in concord with the Dharma, he over-came [in disputation] a thousand heretics. And look, in spite of this, he did not have faith in me and did not act according to any of my words. He who does not act according to any of my words will get into bad destinies.”¹⁷

¹² The paternal uncle of the Buddha; in the Pali tradition Sunakhatta was not a Śā-kya, but a Licchavi prince of Vesālī; cf. e.g., G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, London, Luzac & Co, 1937, II.1206.

¹³ *Nyer bsgyur* renders Sanskrit *upasarga* which in tum means “preposition”. This refers to the syllable *su-* forming the first part of the compound Sunakṣatra.

¹⁴ The full passage in the *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel* (part II, fol. 72a6) runs as follows: *ston pa dang dus mnyam du shākya zas dkar gyi sras su skar ma rgyal la skyes par brten rgyal lam skar bzang rgyu skar bzang po zhes sam skar legs dang legs skar du nyer bsgyur su legs dang bzang por 'gyur ba'i dbang gis sna tshogs dang | gzhan yang klu skyod du 'ang brjod pa |*.

¹⁵ *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, part II, fol. 72b I: *dper na | dkon brtsegs pa'i le'u dang po sdom pa gsum bstan par ...*

¹⁶ Tibetan title *Sdom pa gsum bstan pa'i le'u zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*. Lhasa Kanjur, no. 45, *Dkon brtsegs, Ka* (I), 1b1–68b3.

¹⁷ *Bai dūrya g.ya' sel*, part II, fol. 72b1–3 (corresponding to Lhasa Kanjur, no. 45, *Dkon brtsegs, Ka* (I), fol. 38b4–6): *'od srung | (2) dge slang skar bzang nga'i g.yog byed de | nga'i mdun na smra zhing 'chag pa dang 'dug pa la yang blta (Kanjur: lta) | rdzu 'phrul gyi stabs kyis steng | gi bar snang la 'chag pa la yang blta (Kanjur: lta) | chos dang mthun pas mu stegs can stong tshar bcad (Kanjur: gcod) pa la 'ang (Kanjur: yang) blta (Kanjur: lta la) | de nga la dad par mi byed cing | tshig re re la yang mthun par (3) mi byed pa la (Kanjur: la yang) ltos | gang (Kanjur: gang gis) tshig re re la yang mthun pa (Kanjur: par) mi byed pa de ni | ngan par 'gro bar 'gyur ro...*

1.3 In later Tibetan literature, Skar bzang as an equivalent of Sanskrit Sunakṣatra, is not unknown. We may refer here to the *Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod kyi rgya cher 'grel pa bden gnyis shing rta* by 'Jigs med gling pa (1729–1798). In that work there are quoted a few lines of verse mentioning the monk Skar bzang who knew the twelve Sūtrāntas and who was hit by the power of sin.¹⁸

1.4 The twelfth chapter of the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sutra, styled as an “interlocution with Kāśyapa”¹⁹ is quoted by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in order to exemplify the use of Legs pa'i skar ma as the Tibetan equivalent of Sunakṣatra. This source has been known to the scholarly world since Sarat Chandra Das wrote his dictionary, subsequently it has been referred to by all later researchers dealing with the figure of Sunakṣatra.²⁰

2. Skar bzang, one of the two Tibetan renderings of Sanskrit Sunakṣatra, appears as a separate lemma in Lokesh Chandra's *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*.²¹ The reference given by the abbreviation *sha pam* 113²² leads to the Tibetan version of the commentary to Mātr̥ceṭa's *Śatapañcāśatka*²³ as handed down in the Tanjur. The Tibetan version of the basic text, as well as that of the commentary, was prepared in the XIth century by Śraddhākaravarman and Śākya blo gros.²⁴ Line 113b of the *Prasādapratibhodbhava* reads as follows: (Sanskrit) *asaj-janasamāgamah*, (Tibetan) *skye bo ngan dang 'grogs pa*,²⁵ (English) “contact with evil-doers”.²⁶ The commentary thereon explains this as follows: “[the contact with evil-doers] is the contact with Devadatta, with Sunakṣatra with Ākrośaka-Bharadvāja²⁷ and the like”.²⁸

¹⁸ *op. cit.*, fol. 139b4 (as given in *The Collected Works of Kun-mkhyen 'Jigs-med-gling-pa*, vol. 1: “Bden gnyis shing rta”, The Ngargyur Nyimingmay Sungrab 29, Gangtok, 1970, repr. 278): *sde snod bcu gnyis blo la chub pa yi || dge slong skar bzang sdig pa'i mthus btab nas |*.

¹⁹ Bai dūrya g.ya' sel, fol. 72b3: *myang 'das le'u bcu gnyis 'od srungs kyis zhus pa'i le'ur |*.

²⁰ See above paragraphs 0. and 0.1.

²¹ Kyoto, Rinsen, 1971 (reprint of the New Delhi edition of 1959 sqq.), 126a.

²² i.e. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka of Mātr̥ceṭa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951.

²³ This text is known under other titles as well, viz. *Prasādapratibhodbhava* and *Adhyardhaśataka*, see e.g., Jens-Uwe Hartmann, *Das Varṇāhavarnastotra des Mātr̥ceṭa*, herausgegeben und übersetzt, Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden 12, AAWG, Philol.-hist. Kl., Dritte Folge, 160, Göttingen, 1987, 23.

²⁴ *op. cit.*, 23–4.

²⁵ Quoted from Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka*, 120.

²⁶ *op. cit.*, 173.

²⁷ The Tibetan obviously takes *kun khro dang | ba ra dhva dza dang* for two names, but only one name is meant here (see Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka*, 231); the Pāli tradition confirms this, see e.g. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, I, 4, s.v. Akkosaka-Bhāradhvāja.

²⁸ Shackleton Bailey, *The Śatapañcāśatka*, 120: [*skye bo ngan dang 'grogs pa ni | lhas byin dang | skar bzang dang | kun khro dang | ba ra dhva dza la sogs pa dang 'grogs pa'o |*].

2.1 The early Chinese rendering of the commentary on line 140c of the *Śatapañcāśatka* is translated by D.R. Shackleton Bailey²⁹ as follows: “Devadatta and Sunakṣatra are unworthy to receive this teaching”. The Sanskrit version of the *stotra* gives the name of Devadatta only. In the Tibetan translation of this hymn and its Tibetan commentary, this name is rendered by the usual Lhas byin. Skar bzang or any other equivalent of Sunakṣatra are absent. In the Chinese text, the name Sunakṣatra is rendered by the two characters: *shan*³⁰ and *hsing (sing)*.³¹ The same characters are used by the *Bod rgya Tshig mdzod chen mo*³² for rendering Tibetan Legs pa’i skar ma. As we can see, the Sanskrit Sunakṣatra has only one Chinese, but two Tibetan equivalents.

2.2 Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho explains the difference between the two Tibetan renderings of Sanskrit Sunakṣatra by indicating the variant representation of the Sanskrit prefix *su-*. In the Tibetan the rendering Legs pa’i skar ma, the adjective *legs pa*³³ serves as equivalent of the Sanskrit *su-* and adds a case particle to express the relation between the two parts of the compound. This method of rendering Sanskrit terms prefixed with *su-* is met with often. If we look at some examples in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*,³⁴ we find that such Tibetan formations are very common in the case of Sanskrit compounds, the final part of which is a passive past participle. Here are some examples:

svākhyāta | *legs par gsungs pa* (Mvy 1291)
svāgata | *legs ’ongs* (Mvy 1067)
sucarita | *legs par spyod pa* (Mvy 1686)
sucintita | *legs par bsams pa* (Mvy 1099)

²⁹ *op. cit.*, 177.

³⁰ This *shan*⁴ (Pinyin: *shan*) is listed under no. 5657 in R.H. Mathews, *Mathews’ Chinese-English Dictionary*, Revised American Edition, (11th printing). Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

³¹ *Hsing (sing)*¹ (Pinyin: *xing*) is no. 2772 in *Mathews’ Chinese-English Dictionary*.

³² Peking, 1985, 2801a.

³³ H.A. Jäschke, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, London, 1881, repr. London, 1949, gives for this word, *inter alia*, the meanings: “good, happy, comfortable; neat, elegant, graceful, beautiful; clean, pure, clear, fine”.

³⁴ Other indices or dictionaries could have been used for this purpose as well, but the result would not be much different. The references given hereafter are taken from the edition by Ryōzaburō Sakaki, *Honyaku Myōgi Taishū / Mahāvvyutpatti*, Kyoto Teikoku Daigaku Bunka Daigaku Sōsho, 3, Kyoto, 1916, together with [the Tibetan index by] Kyōo Nishio, *Zō-Bon Taishō Honkyaku Myōgi Taishū Chibettogo Sakuin*, BUtten Kenkyū, 1, Kyoto, 1936.

sujāta | *legs par skyes pa* (Mvy 7405).

We may add that in explaining Sanskrit *sugata*, the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* uses *legs par gshegs pa*³⁵ as well, the common rendering of *sugata* being *bde bar gshegs pa* (Mvy 7). To the same grammatical category belongs *su-darśana* | *legs mthong* (Mvy 3420 and 3570), which is obviously derived from the root *ḍrś*.

2.3 The rendering of the Sanskrit prefix *su-* by means of the Tibetan *bzang* [po]³⁶ is typical for Sanskrit *bahuvrīhi* compounds, the final part of which is a noun not derived from a participle. We may adduce the following examples:

sucandra | *zla ba bzang po* (Mvy 508)
sudhana | *nor bzang* (Mvy 5500)³⁷
sunayana and *sunetra* | *mig bzang* (Mvy 3386 & 3429)
subāhu | *lag bzang* (Mvy 1 059)
susārthavāha | *ded dpon bzang po* (Mvy 697).

The Sanskrit term *sumati* is rendered in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* 695 into Tibetan as *bzang po 'i blo gros*. Here the adjective is placed before the noun and furnished with the genitive particle. Commonly the term *sumati* is translated by *blo bzang* which conforms with the formation discussed above. Thus we can see a certain relation between the rendering of Sanskrit *Sunakṣatra* by Tibetan *Skar bzang* and the language as codified in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* which was compiled in Tibet around the beginning of the ninth century.

3. In certain more detailed references, *Sunakṣatra* is generally described as an apostate who, though living in the presence of the Buddha for a long time, did not embrace Buddhism. But in the commentary on Mātṛceta's *Śatapañcāśatka* quoted above, he is put almost on a par with Devadatta who is regarded by the earlier Buddhist tradition as the most wicked person to be imagined. A similar view of *Sunakṣatra* is given in the extensive biography of *Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa* compiled by the Dge lugs pa scholar 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las rnam rgyal between 1843 and 1845.³⁸ In this book,³⁹ the rel-

³⁵ See Nils Simonsson, *Indo-tibetische Studien*, I, Uppsala, 1957, 270.

³⁶ According to Jäschke, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, this adjective means "good (Sanskrit *bhadra*); fair, beautiful".

³⁷ R.A. Stein, "Tibetica Antiqua I, Les deux vocabulaires des traductions Indo-Tibétaine et Sino-Tibétaine dans les manuscrits de Touen houang", *BEFEO*, 72, 1983, 176, has shown that the Chinese rendering of Sanskrit *Sudhana* was the reason for the early Tibetan equivalent *Rin chen legs*. One should also take notice of *legs pa 'i dpal*, *legs pa 'i phan*, *legs pa 'i yon stobs*, and *legs pa 'i don* as given in *op. cit.*, 189.

³⁸ For a brief description with bibliographical references see R. Kaschewsky, *Das Leben des lamaistischen Heiligen Tsongkhapa Blo-bzan-grags-pa (1357–1419)*, Wiesbaden, 1971, part 1, 34, para 24.

³⁹ Entitled *Khyab bdag rje btsun bla ma dam pa thub dbang ngo bo dbyer ma mchis pa 'jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po 'i rnam par thar pa thub bstan mdzes pa 'i rgyan gcig ngo mtshar nor bu 'i phreng ba*. This book is quoted from the following edition: *'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po 'i rnam thar*, (Xining), Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang (1981).

evant passage concerning Legs [pa'i] skar [rna] begins with a hitherto unidentified false prophecy which is allusively connected here with Padasambhava. The living tradition of the Rnying ma pas says that this passage, which is quoted below, cannot be regarded as being genuine:⁴⁰

“A [new] existence [of] Legs skar is coming from Mdo khams. It is told for certain that he is an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara.⁴¹ He is skilled in revolution which in his activity basically damages the Teaching. In putting on the Nirmāṇakāya an ornament of high value, he has taken out from under the threshold the essence of the life of a devil. By the effect of an incorrect consecration of Śākyamuni, sun and moon have descended for [the measure of] a full span and a full cubit [respectively]. Thereby the planets and the stars [do] not [stay] in their original place [and] disorder is growing. A revolution for a year, for thirteen months is coming.”⁴²

3.1 The principal reason for Tsong kha pa being identified as a reincarnation of Legs pa'i skar ma also appears in a second prophecy:

“[Some] time in the future, when benefit for the living beings is coming, I must put a reverse ornament on the picture resembling your figure.”⁴³

3.2 Two more lines are added in the biography, which are to the same effect:

“On the head of the Nirmāṇakāya, he has put the diadem of a Sambhogakāya, [for this reason] sun and moon went down to [the height of] a mile (Sanskrit *yojana*) [above the ground] only.”⁴⁴

3.3 The main reason for connecting the above prophecies with Tsong kha pa is the reference to the decoration of the Nirmāṇakāya, i.e., of Śākyamuni in his physical form as manifested in the Jo khang. During the Smon lam festival of the

⁴⁰ Oral information by Pema Tsering.

⁴¹ Tsong kha pa also is regarded as an incarnation of the *rigs gsum mgon po*, therefore he is not only an incarnation of Mañjuśrī, but of Avalokiteśvara as well.

⁴² *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar*, 353: 14–20: *legs skar skye ba mdo khams phyogs nas 'byung || (15) spyan ras gzigs kyi sprul pa yin nges zer || bstan pa'i mgo nyes mdzad spyod (16) gling log mkhan | sprul pa'i sku la rin chen rgyan 'dogs shing || them (17) pa'i 'og nas dam sri'i srog snying bton || shākya mu ne'i rab gnas 'chug pa'i (18) mthus || nyi zla mtho gang khru gang mar babs pas || dang po'i gza' (19) skar gnas med 'khrug par 'gyur || gling log lo gcig zla ba bcu gsum (20) 'byung |*

⁴³ *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar*, 353, 21–354, 2: *khyod kyi gzugs brnyan bgyis pa'i 'dra 'bag (354, 1) la ma 'ongs dus na 'gro phan cher 'byung tshe | bdag gis log pa'i rgyan (2) cha 'dogs par shog|*

⁴⁴ *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar*, 354, 2–3: *sprul sku'i dbu la (3) longs sku'i prog zhu bskyon || nyi zla dpag tshad tsam gyis dma' ru song |*

year 1409 Tsong kha pa provided the figure of the Jo bo Śākyamuni in Lhasa with a golden diadem and other ornaments.⁴⁵ By this act, the religious rank of the statue was shifted from that of the Nirmāṇakāya, i.e., the manifestation visible to human beings, to that of the Sambhogakāya which is seen by high Bodhisattvas only. According to the ‘theory of the three bodies (*trikāya*)’ this change was regarded by some scholars as most dangerous for the religious system.

3.4 In what follows, ’Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las mam rgyal refers to communications by Mkhas pa’i dbang po Brag sgo rab ’byams pa. This is an authority whose date and works are not commonly known. In the *Tho yig* by A khu rin po che Śes rab rgya mtsho (1803–1875), the name Brag sgo[r] rab ’byams pa Phun tshogs rgyal mtshan appears in the first section dealing with historical works such as biographies, histories of religion or chronicles.⁴⁶ It is obvious from this bibliographical list that Brag sgo[r] rab ’byams pa has written a biography of Tsong kha pa, because he is listed in a series of eight⁴⁷ names which end with the following words: ... *rnams g[!]yis mdzad pa ’I rje ’i rnam thar*. The list of names reads as under:

- 10861 Legs bzang ba [p. 31, §12]⁴⁸
- 10862 Jo gdan Bsod nams lhun grub [p. 31, §10]
- 10863 Gnas mying Kun dga’ bde legs [p. 31, §13]
- 10864 Ku cor rtogs ldan [p. 30, §8]
- 10865 Brag sgor rab ’byams pa Phun tshogs rgyal mtshan
- 10866 Mnga’ ris pa ngag dbang ’Jam dbyangs nyi rna Bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan [p. 32, §16]
- 10867 Chos rgyan slob rna Smar khams ’od zer [p. 32, §15]⁴⁹
- 10868 Bla rna dkon mchog rgyal mtshan [p. 32, §15].

3.5 The exact dates for the life of Brag sgo rab ’byams pa are not yet known. The information that the second Brag gyab skyabs mgon became initiated into the cult of Vairocana by Brag sgo rab ’byams pa in the spring or 1669 is con-

⁴⁵ See e.g., Kaschewsky, *Das Leben*, I, 165.

⁴⁶ No. 10865 in Lokesh Chandra, *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1963, 3, 505.

⁴⁷ Or, of seven if we understand that nos. 10867 and 10868 are the names of one person (see below note 49).

⁴⁸ The references to pages and paragraphs added in brackets are to the bibliography of biographies of Tsong kha pa as given by Kaschewsky, *Das Leben* (cf. above note 38), 30–32, nos. 8–16.

⁴⁹ According to Kaschewsky, *Das Leben*, I, 32, Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan and Smar khams ’od zer bla rna are names of one and the same scholar.

tained in the biography of Ngag dbang bsod nams lhun grub.⁵⁰ So we may conclude that the *floruit* of Brag sgor rab 'byams pa must be assigned to the second half of the 17th century. This date is confirmed by a reference given in the *Bai dūrya gya' sel* of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho who quotes an unfavourable remark by the fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) concerning Brag sgo rab 'byams pa.⁵¹

3.6 The passage on Legs pa' i skar ma in the life of Tsong kha pa by 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las mam rgyal quotes the commentary by Brag sgo rab 'byams pa on the nine-syllable verse (*legs skar skye ba mdo khams phyogs nas 'byung*) which is given at the beginning of the first prophecy quoted above with the following words:

“ ‘In general there are [persons] named Legs pa' i skar ma, but I have not seen any source teaching that there was a monk named Legs pa' i skar ma who lived at the time of the Teacher’, and ‘in the Sūtrāntas it is not taught that there was a servant of the Teacher except Ānanda’ .”⁵²

3.7 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las rnam rgyal regards as correct the statement of Brag sgo rab 'byams pa that there is no scriptural evidence for Legs pa' i skar ma being the Buddha's servant. In his opinion, the only passage where Sunakṣatra is said to be in the Buddha's service is one which can be traced back to “the present *Bka' thang shel brag ma* and other re ate sources.⁵³ It is insinuated by these words and the surrounding text that the lines of verse referred to are spurious, being recent interpolations into a literary work which otherwise is held in high esteem even by the Dge lugs pas. The verses in question from the *Bka' thang shel brag ma* read as follows:

“I have done service [to] you for twenty-five years, [but] I have not seen any quality even of the size of a sesamum seed [with you]. [You,] the son

⁵⁰ Entitled *Rje btsun bla ma ngag dbang bsod nams lhun grub kyi rnam par thar pa zhar byung dang bcas pa rag pa tsam zhig brjod pa dngos grub char 'beb*. See Peter Schwiieger & Loden Sherap Dagyal, *Die ersten dGe-lugs-pa-Hierarchen von Brag-g.yab (1572–1692)*, Monumenta Tibetica Historica, II, 2, Bonn, Wissenschaftsverlag, 1989, 80.

⁵¹ See *Bai dūrya gya' sel*, part II, fol. 219bl–2: 'on kyang brag sgo rab 'byams pa ni 'di nyid ma gzhi x skyabs mgon dam pa 'di' i bka' las gnang ba ltar don du som nyi bral yang rnam (2) pa ...

⁵² 'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po' i rnam thar, 354, 11–14: *spyir legs pa' i skar ma zer ba ni* (12) *los yod kyang | ston pa' i dus su yod pa' i dge slong legs pa' i skar ma zer ba* (13) *gang nas kyang bshad pa' i khungs bdag gis ni ma mthong | zhes dang | mdo sde* (14) *rnams su ston pa' i rim gro ba kun dga' bo las yod par ma bshad |*.

⁵³ 'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po' i rnam thar, 354, 15–16: ... *da lta' i bka' thang shel* (16) *brag rna sogs kyi ris su ...*

of Suddhodana, are unable to keep up the kingdom, wandering about and getting [persons] into disgrace.”⁵⁴

3.8 In what ensues, ’Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las mam rgyal repeats in his own words the conclusion reached by Brag sgo rab ’byams pa, namely, that none of the canonical reports concerning the Buddha Śākyamuni’s life knows of a servant of the Teacher other than Ānanda.⁵⁵ He goes so far as to ask if any of the learned Rnying rna pas would be able to give a canonical source for Sunakṣatra being the Buddha’s servant.⁵⁶ He would have found an answer to this question if he had read the *Bai ḍūrya g.ya’ sel* by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, an eminent Dge lugs pa scholar.

⁵⁴ *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po’i rnam thar*, 354, 18–20 (Corresponding verses are in the *U rgyan ghu ru pa dma ’byung gnas kyi skyes rabs rnam thar rgyas par bkod pa las shel brag ma*, Xeroxcopy of the manuscript kept in the Institut für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens und Tibets, Hamburg in the Indologisches Seminar, Bonn, fol. 74a7–b1; the variant readings are noted in brackets): *lo ni nyi shu rtsa lnga [bzhir] khyod g.yog byas || yon tan til ’bru tsam zhig ngas ma* (19) *mthong || zas [rgyal] gtsang [po] sras [zas] po [gtsang] rgyal srid [sa] ma [74b] zin pa’i || go ma chod kyi mi* (20) *’khyruns rkang ’dren po [pas]*.

⁵⁵ *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po’i rnam thar*, 355, 2–4: ... *shākya* (3) *thub pa’i rim gro pa lam dga’ bo ma gtogs snga phyi gnyis byung bar gang nas kyang* (4) *ma bshad la* |.

⁵⁶ *Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po’i rnam thar*, 355, 11–12: *sngon chad rnying ma mkhas pa su la ’ang khungs ston rgyu ma byung ba ma* (12) *zad* |.