

Identification and Analysis of the First and the Last paintings of dPag bsam 'khri shing: Part 1

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Abstract

This paper initially re-examines the identification of the figures depicted in the first and the last paintings of the dPag bsam 'khri shing, or the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* painting set. This study focuses on four sets of paintings from block prints, widely known as the Narthang set, as well as two sets of 41 paintings each. All of the painting sets consist of one central painting with the rest arranged on both sides horizontally. The first and the last painting contain figures that are not represented in narrative scenes. These figures are those of the donor, author of the text, translator, and teachers, all of whom contributed to propagating the teaching of dPag bsam 'khri shing. The additional figures are from narratives, such as kings and the father and mother of Śākyamuni. Second, by identifying and analyzing the representations of the figures, the differences among and features of paintings from different provenances are elucidated. These differences show the history of the paintings and the donor's motives for making a gift of the paintings. Finally, the sources of these figures are analyzed.

Keywords: Tibetan painting, *dPag bsam 'khri shing*, *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*, Buddhist narrative painting, *avadāna*, life story of Shakyamuni

1. Introduction

The *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* (Tibetan: *Byang chub sems dpa'i rtogs pa brjod pa'i dPag bsam gyi 'khri shing*, hereafter, *dPag bsam*) is a compilation of the *avadāna*, the Buddhist literary narrative that explains the link between the deeds of the past and the present of Śākyamuni (hereafter Shakyamuni) and the persons around him. The author is identified as Kṣemendra, a Kashmiri poet who flourished around the eleventh century, and his son, Somendra, who completed the text by adding the last chapter and the preface. The Sanskrit text was translated into Tibetan in the thirteenth century. It gained so much popularity that many paintings related to it were produced and displayed throughout Tibet. Those paintings are either a set of scroll paintings in the Tibetan style, called *thang-ka*, or wall paintings located in Buddhist monasteries in Tibet. We can still find *dPag bsam* paintings in the wall

paintings of major monasteries and the living spaces for the Dalai Lamas, such as the Potala palace, the dGon dkar monastery, and the Sa skya monastery, all of which have been preserved *in situ*. The set of *dPag bsam* scroll paintings has been widely propagated because the original set of wood-block prints was simply copied and colored, duplicated as a set of paintings, and preserved or displayed in the monastery.

A set of the scroll paintings consists in 21, 31, or 41 paintings, with the first painting displayed in the center, and the rest lined up on both sides. The first painting shows Buddha Shakyamuni in the center, surrounded by the figures of disciples, teachers, authors of the *dPag bsam*, and the characters in the narrative. In the painting except the first one, the narrative scenes are depicted from chapter 1 up to the last one, chapter 108, with each painting reflecting several scenes, approximately five to eight events from a chapter of the text. The first and the last paintings portray figures and divinities irrelevant to the narratives. There are some differences in the selection of the figures depicted among the various series of paintings. Those figures reflect the donor's purpose in creating the painting set, a way of appreciating the *dPag bsam* in itself.

Previous studies that listed the figures in the painting were undertaken, first, by Tucci (Tucci 1999), a genuine pioneer in the examination of the *dPag bsam*, and then, over a decade later, by Lin, who conducted a study for her PhD dissertation (Lin 2011). Further identifications are found in the descriptions in the collection catalogues that accompany the paintings. Nonetheless, most of the identifications are listed without any explanation, and not all the figures in the paintings have been named. Some still lack identification. Moreover, some figures in the first and the last paintings differ according to the set of paintings. For example, some paintings show the figure of the donor in the last painting, while others depict a Buddhist deity positioned in the same place in the set. The present study, therefore, re-examines the figures in the first and the last paintings, with the objective of interpreting the reason why the figures are represented. Then, the differences between the paintings are analyzed. Basically, the block-print paintings are identical as they were simply printed from the original woodcut. The other sets also show features of having been copied from the previous ones, or of having the same prototype painting. However, the figures in the first and the last of those paintings vary, suggesting the donor modified those figures for some reason.

2. Scope of this study: Scroll paintings of the *dPag bsam*

Three painting sets based on the *dPag bsam* text have survived to the present day. The first set, which is based on block-print paintings and is known as the Narthang (sNar thang) series, consists in 31 paintings. This set is the most widely spread throughout Tibet, and we can find a greater number of copies of it at present than of the other sets. Tucci introduced the set with a summary of the text, which was the first study of the *dPag bsam* paintings. Among the complete sets available at this time, the current study focuses on the paintings listed below (Figs. 5 and 6):

- a) paintings from Tibetan Painted Scrolls (Tucci 1999)

b) line drawings from Lani (Rani 2005)

c) paintings from the collection of the Tibet House in New Delhi¹

d) paintings from the collection of the Gugong Palace Museum (故宫博物院) in Beijing (Wang 2003)

As these works are based on xylographies, most of them are identical, with some minor differences, such as the number and quality of the inscriptions. The major differences are found in the first and the last paintings.

The second set consists in 41 paintings, which depict more scenes and in greater detail than do those of the Narthang series, as there is a larger number of paintings in the second set. Two complete sets are accessible for the present study:

e) paintings from the collection of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama at Dharamsala (*Forty-one Thangkas* 1980)

f) paintings from a collection in the Yonghegong (雍和宮) in Beijing²

These two sets are not considered xylographies, but rather were drawn and colored by the artists correspondingly. Apparently, one was produced after the other. Compared to the Narthang series, the 41 paintings share the same stylistic features. Some scenes are identical between the two sets, suggesting the series of 41 paintings is an original or a copy of the Narthang set. The third set was produced under the direction of Situ Panchen, but it is excluded from this study.

3. Identification of figures in the central painting (*gtso thang*)

The first painting (Fig. 1 and 2) shows Buddha Shakyamuni in the center (labeled ⑩ in Fig. 2 by the author), with disciples, teachers, and so on (labeled from ① to ⑳)³. Among the central paintings listed above from a) to f), the individuals portrayed are almost same, with a few replacements of the figures' attributes.

⑩ Buddha Shakyamuni

The central and largest figure in all the paintings of *gtso thang* is Shakyamuni Buddha, although there are some differences in his hand gestures (*mudrā*) and attributes. The figures of Shakyamuni in the Narthang series of paintings, from a) to d), are all the same, suggesting the paintings were not drawn but only colored on block paintings from the same copied or original printing block. The body color of Shakyamuni is yellowish orange, and he is clad in a vermilion monk's robe, with a stole covering

¹ The figures and the study are from the author's fieldwork and are used courtesy of the Tibet House, New Delhi.

² The figures and the study are from the author's fieldwork and are used courtesy of the Yonghegong. Figure 8 is used courtesy of Musashi Tachikawa.

³ Based on the Gugong painting, the author has labeled the paintings with numbers.

both shoulders. He is seated on a pedestal with lions, on which lotus petals in different colors are arranged. In the Narthang paintings, his left hand rests on his crossed legs, and he is holding a bowl with herbal plants. In the Yonghegong (Fig. 5 f) and the Dharamsala (Fig. 5 e) paintings, his left hand is placed on his lap but he is not holding a bowl. His right hand is touching the petals on the pedestal. In front of Shakyamuni, a table is shown, on which lay several objects as offerings to him. In the bowl on the offering table, the inscription in Tibetan can be deciphered as *rNam 'dran sha kya seng ge* in the Yonghegong painting. While the Dharamsala painting also has an inscription in the same place, but it is impossible to read from the figure. Although Shakyamuni could possibly be misidentified as another Buddha, for he has a bowl with an herbal plant, the figure is clearly Shakyamuni, because the main themes of this set of paintings are stories of his deeds from past and present. Moreover, the inscription also supports the identification of him as Shakyamuni Buddha.

① The Fifth Dalai Lama / Amitāyus

Above the main figure of Shakyamuni, the figure on the *garuḍa* can be identified as the Fifth Dalai Lama, except in the Dharamsala painting, which depicts Amitāyus in the same place (Fig. 3 e). In the other paintings (Fig. 3 c, f), the Fifth Dalai Lama is seated in a vermilion colored monk's robe, holding a stalk of white lotus in his right hand and a Tibetan-style book called *dPe cha* in his left hand. The presence of the Fifth Dalai Lama just above the main figure can be explained, because the set of *dPag bsam* paintings originated from the wall painting at the Potala palace, which he commissioned⁴. His presence in the painting set shows that the set is the authentic and a part of his teaching. The inscription of the Tibet House painting also confirms this identification, as it reads *kun mkhyen lnga pa chen po*, or the Omniscient Great Fifth (Fig. 3 c on the right).

In the Dharamsala painting (Fig. 3 e), the figure positioned in the same place shows Amitāyus, and the Fifth Dalai Lama does not appear anywhere. The red-bodied Amitāyus is seated on the lotus seat with his legs crossed. He is simply wrapped in a monk's robe, but he is decorated with a crown, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. Both his hands are placed in the center, showing *dhyāni-mudrā*, and holding a bowl filled with *amṛta*, elixir. Based on the iconography of Tibetan Buddhist art, the figure is Amitāyus, although the painting lacks such an inscription. The presence of Amitāyus here is linked to the same figure of the deity that is seen in the last of the Dharamsala paintings, which is discussed in detail below.

② Āryaśūra (Slob dpon dpa' bo)

The figure at the top center of all the paintings can be identified as Āryaśūra (Slob dpon dpa' bo), based on the inscription on some of the paintings and the preface to the *dPag bsam* text written by Somendra. Previously, some studies and entries in museum catalogues identified this figure as other Indian masters. When Āryaśūra is generally listed, the sources of identification have not been specified.

Tucci made the first attempt at identifying this figure (Tucci 1999: 441), probably based on the inscriptions in the Narthang block-print paintings. He established the figure as Śāntarakṣita (mGon

⁴ See Lin 2011, in the chapter on "Adapting the Buddha's Biographies."

cen zhi ba tsho), indicating his name is mGon cen zhi ba mts'o, which is misspelled in the painting. Nevertheless, the inscription can hardly be deciphered from the colored paintings from the TPS, which are of poor quality and which Tucci probably referred to. Instead, in other paintings, such as the line drawing of the Narthang block print and the Tibet House painting, the inscriptions read *slob dpon dpa' bo*, whose name cannot be identified as Śāntarakṣita ⁵.

Later studies identified the figure as Aśvaghōṣa (rta dbyangs), as seen in a museum catalogue of the Palace Museum in Beijing (Wang 2003). The name is just given in an entry without any evidence, but presumably, it was identified from the inscription and from the figure named Aśvaghōṣa. Blurred and written in white color, the vague inscription on the Palace Museum painting (Fig. 5 d) can be read as *slob dpon dpa' bo*, because the first and the fourth letter clearly show the vowel o markers *naro*. The way of writing this is identical to that in the line drawing (Fig. 5 b) as well, which is that it is written in two lines with only *bo* in the second line. However, interpreting the inscription is not sufficient to determine who the figure might be, because the name Slob dpon dpa' bo is problematic, as it refers to some personages other than Āryaśūra. Indeed, the identification made by the Palace Museum with Aśvaghōṣa is reasonable in a sense, because Aśvaghōṣa has other names in Tibetan, and one of them is Slob dpon dpa' bo. Aśvaghōṣa was also an Indian poet who composed the *Buddhacarita*, or the Life of the Buddha, some stories of which contain parallel stories with those in the *dPag bsam*, indicating the link between the *Buddhacarita* and the *dPag bsam*.

However, the figures at the top in all the paintings can be identified as Āryaśūra for the following reasons. First, the connection between Āryaśūra's authorship and the *dPag bsam* was already evident in Somendra's preface to the *dPag bsam* text. Second, his illustrations in the different texts show a similar appearance to the *dPag bsam* paintings.

Āryaśūra was an Indian poet who wrote the *Jātakamālā* a compilation of stories on the past life of the Buddha in Sanskrit. The same text, which was translated into Tibetan, is generally known as *skyes rabs so bzhi ba*, and consists of 34 birth stories as the text contains 34 chapters of Shakyamuni's past life stories. In the Tibetan *Tripiṭaka*, there are two translations of the *Jātakamālā*⁶. They are said to have been written by Āryaśūra and Haribhatta respectively. The other *Jātakamālā* is also known as Gopadatta's *Jātakamālā*, as his name is stated in the preface of the *dPag bsam* by Somendra (Hahn 1992)⁷. Somendra was the son of Kṣemendra, who completed 108 stories of the *dPag bsam* and added the preface. The mention of the name of Gopadatta in his preface shows the connection between the *Jātakamālā* and the *dPag bsam* when Kṣemendra and Somendra composed the verses⁸.

⁵ For reading an inscription of the Tibet House painting, I wish to thank the secretary, Tenzin Dhedon, and the museum in charge, Tenzin Chodon.

⁶ Toh. 4150 for Āryaśūra and Toh. 4152 for Haribhatta.

⁷ ācārya-gopadatta-adyair avadāna krama-ujjñitāḥ /
uccitya-uccitya vihitā gadyapadyaviśṛkhalāḥ / 7 /
ekamārga-anusāriṇyaḥ param gāmbhīrya karkaśaḥ /
vistīrṇa varṇanāḥ santi jinajātaka mālīkāḥ / 8 /

The verses above indicate the other author of *Jātakamālā*, which is Gopadatta, whose verses have not been included in Tibetan tripiṭaka (Kṣemendra 1959: 1).

⁸ Although some stories of the *Jātakamālā* overlap with those of the *dPag bsam* as they both contain Shakyamuni's past life stories, modern scholarship has already recognized that the *dPag bsam* has more equivalent elements to other narratives such as *Divyāvadāna* and anecdotes included in *Vinaya*,

Regarding the *dPag bsam* painting set, Aryaśūra's presence at the top suggests the link between the *Jātakamālā* and the *dPag bsam*, which in turn reveals the Tibetan view of the *dPag bsam*. In Tibet, however, the stories found in Aryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* are widely known as part of *Kye rab gya tsa*, or One Hundred Stories of *Jātaka*, compiled by the Third Karma-pa Rang 'byung rdo rje. This literary work and the illustrations are more popular than the original texts of Āryaśūra. The illustrations contain portraits of Aryaśūra and Rang 'byung rdo rje.

The illustration in Figure 4 on the right shows Aryaśūra from the Third Karma pa's One Hundred Stories in the block-print illustrations from Shol printing house (Miyasaka and Yoritomi 2001: 440). One hundred illustrations corresponding to the same number of stories supplement the portrait of Āryaśūra and the Third Karma pa at the end. In comparing the Shol figure to that in the *dPag bsam* painting set, the representation on the whole is identical, except his right hand. Shol Aryaśūra shows *abhaya-mudrā* (gesture of fearlessness) by his right hand in this painting, whereas the figure in the *dPag bsam* set touches the scripture. Interestingly, his appearance does not resemble that of an Indian monk in the Gupta period, as he wears a pointed hat and holds a Tibetan-style scripture. This image of Āryaśūra has been formed in Tibet for long time. For these reasons, the figure at the top center can be identified as Aryaśūra.

③ Tsong kha pa, ④ 'Phags pa

On the left in Figure 2, the figure labeled number 3 is Tsong kha pa. He can be identified without difficulty because the inscription reads *rJe bla ma tsong kha pa chen po*, and the representation, in which the figure wears a yellow hat and is shown teaching *mudrā* and holding lotuses on which a sword and a scripture are placed, are part of his image. Generally, teachers are positioned above the central figure, indicating the lineage of the instruction from the teachers to the followers. The shape of the triad evidently shows the authentic origin of the *dPag bsam* and the succession of the instruction passed down through these teachers. It is known that Tsong kha pa himself copied the *dpag bsam* text by hand⁹. The representation of the Fifth Dalai Lama seated at the bottom of the triad also suggests the painting was commissioned by the Geluk sect.

The figure labeled number 4 is 'Phags pa, an abbot of the Sa skya sect, who supported the translation from Sanskrit to Tibetan in the thirteenth century. The inscription reads *sa skya pa 'gro mgon chos rgyal 'phags pa*, and the figure wears a standard monk's robe with a red hat, and holds a scripture in his left hand. For these reasons, the figure is identified as 'Phags pa.

⑤ Kṣemendra, ⑥ Somendra ⑦ Vīryabhadra ⑧ Sūryaśrī

The figures found below are the teachers, the authors, a scribe, and an adviser of the *dPag bsam*, all of whom lived in Kashmir at the same time. The figure labeled number 5 is Kṣemendra, the author of the *dPag bsam*. His counterpart figure to the right is his son, Somendra, who completed the *dPag bsam*. The inscription reads *chos rgyal dge ba'i dbang po* (as dharmarāja Kṣemendra) and *sras zla*

Mūlasarvāstivāda in particular.

⁹ The block print collected from the Potala Palace in Lhasa partly based on the manuscript of Tsong kha pa himself.

ba'i dbang po (the son Somendra), respectively. As shown in that inscription, which states *chos rgyal*, namely a secular king who rules according to dharma, their attire is identical to that of Tibetan kings. Clad in layers of light-colored multicolor clothing with a small dotted pattern and wearing a crown, these appearances are considered a king and prince of Kashmir. In fact, however, they were not kings, but their appearance and the inscriptions on the painting reflect the Tibetans' view toward the father and the son, who were recognized as a king and a prince.

The figures labeled numbers 7 and 8 are the assistant and a scribe who helped compose the text. Next to Kṣemendra on the left is Ācārya Vīryabhadra, known as an authority on a Buddhist text from the preface of the *dPag bsam*¹⁰. As the inscription reads *slob dpon blo gros bzang po*, he looks like a monk with a monk's robe in Tibetan-style. Next to Somendra, on the right, the seated male figure is Sūryaśrī. He is also mentioned in the preface as a scribe of the *dPag bsam*, but we know nothing about him except what is stated in the remark in the preface¹¹. The figure looks like an old monk with a beard and a mustache, with an inscription that reads *slob dpon nyi ma dpal*.

⑨ Shong ston ⑩ Zhwa lu lo tsa ba Chos skyong bzang po

The two figures located above the Indian authors and masters are the Tibetan translators. The figure on the left above Kṣemendra and Vīryabhadra is Shong ston, who translated the text from Sanskrit to Tibetan¹². The seated figure in a monk's robe who holds a rectangular wooden writing board on his lap, and is writing on it with a pen held in his right hand, is probably showing his translation of the text. The inscription on his right reads *shong lo rdo rje rgyal mtshan*; hence, he can safely be identified as Shong ston.

The figure on the right, above Somendra and Sūryaśrī, is Zhwa lu lo tsa ba Chos skyong bzang po, who was a translator and grammarian from Zha lu. This figure is seated and wears a standard monk's robe, and holds a *pe cha*-style scripture in his left hand. The inscription to his right reads *Zhwa lu lo chen chos skyong bzang*.

⑪ Śāriputra ⑫ Maudgalyāyana ⑬ Brahmā ⑭ Indra

The figures on both sides of Shakyamuni in the middle of the painting are divinities and disciples of Shakyamuni. The figures numbered 11 and 12 are Śāriputra on the left and Maudgalyāyana on the right, reflecting the conventional representation of the two disciples as part of a triad.

The figures next to the disciples are Brahmā on the left and Indra on the right. The four-faced Brahmā stands surrounded by his retinue, holding a *cakra*, or a wheel, in his hand. Indra also stands

¹⁰ Athā abhyetya svayam tasya gṛhaṃ prajñāprakāśavān /

Ācārye vīryabhadra-ākhyāḥ prakhyāta sukṛta ujjvalaḥ / 12 / (Kṣemendra 1959: 2)

As shown the verse above, Vīryabhadra is a teacher contemporary with Kṣemendra in Kashmir.

¹¹ Yasya hastagataṃ sarva-śāstramāyāti śuddhatām /

ācāryaḥ sa-atra sūryaśrī lipinyāsa artham arthitaḥ / 15 / (Kṣemendra 1959: 2)

As shown the verse above, Sūryaśrī is a teacher and a script contemporary with Kṣemendra in Kashmir.

¹² The *Deb ther sngon po* also stated that Shong ston translated the *dPag bsam* from Sanskrit to Tibetan for the first time. George N. Roerich, trans. 1976. *The Blue Annals* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers), 785.

with his retinue, and holds a white conch in his hand. Both figures show fixed iconographical characteristics of Tibet, as seen in numerous examples in paintings of the life story of Shakyamuni.

⑮ King Śuddhodana ⑯ Māyā

The figures at the bottom in the center are Shakyamuni's father (labeled ⑮) and mother (labeled ⑯), namely King Śuddhodana and Māyā. The attributes of these figures are slightly different among the paintings: Māyā has a stalk of lotus in the Narthang block-print series, whereas she has a ball in the Dharamsala painting, and she merely has her right arm folded in the Yonghegong painting. King Śuddhodana's attributes are likewise different: he has an incense burner in the Narthang block-print series, and a stalk of lotus in the Dharamsara and the Yonghegong paintings. The inscriptions read *rgyal po zas gtsang* and *yum sgyu 'phrul ma* under the figures respectively. Except for the images of them in Shakyamuni's life story, their presence is scarce. Only the inscriptions in these paintings are clues to identifying these figures.

⑰ King Bimbisāra ⑱ King Prasenajit ⑲ King Udrāyana ⑳ Anāthapiṇḍada

The rest of the figures at the bottom are kings and a major devotee of Shakyamuni, all of whom are the main characters in the narratives. The figure on the left above Śuddhodana is King Bimbisāra, a ruler of the kingdom Magadha, who took refuge with Shakyamuni after listening to his instruction. He sits on a cushion, holding an offering object in his hands. He bears the inscription *rgyal po gzugs can snying po*. The figure numbered 18 is King Prasenajit, a king of Kosala, whose capital was in Śrāvastī. The inscription written under the figure, reads *rgyal po gsal rgyal*. The figure below Bimbisāra, in the left corner, is King Udrāyana, a king of Vatsa, who converted to Buddhism, although he was formerly a tyrant. The inscription beneath him reads *u tra yana*, which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit Udrāyana in Tibetan. The last figure in the right corner is Sudatta, or Anāthapiṇḍada by another name, a rich follower of Shakyamuni. He is famous for giving donations to Jetavanavihāra, which shows his devotion and wealth. The inscription reads *mgon med zas sbyin*, and is a translation from Anāthapiṇḍada. All the figures of the kings and the devotee Sudatta frequently appear in the account of the *dPag bsam* text as well as in paintings illustrating the story in the following painting in the series.

4. Identification of the figures in the last painting

The last painting consists in two sections: one is the illustration of the last chapter, chapter 108; namely, the story of Jīmūtavāhana, which occupies almost all of the painting except the center and the right lower corner, and the other is either a portrait of the donor or the seated figure of Brahmā. It is unnecessary, for the purposes of the present study, to discuss the narrative part of the painting; therefore, only the corner part will be explored. As stated above, previous studies have already roughly identified the figures in the last paintings, except the Yonghegong painting, and thus this study examines the Yonghegong painting in detail and investigates the figures that were overlooked in

previous studies of the Narthang series of paintings.

To juxtapose the last paintings (Figs. 6 from a) to f), the Yonghe painting is distinctive from others as it shows the figure of Brahmā in the corner, instead of donor figures. Minor differences can also be found among the Narthang set, such as the figures of divinities, the number of minor figures placed around the donor, and so forth. This variation suggests that the parts that were irrelevant to the narratives were flexible, and were left open to the donor's choice.

4-1. Dharamsala and Narthang paintings

The Narthang series and the Dharamsala painting show the donor figure seated with two other figures: one is a monk with a peaked hat, and the other is a layperson. Around them are monks, male and female figures whose hands hold distinct objects.

First, an examination of the Dharamsala painting (Fig. 8 e) shows that the largest seated figure on the cushion is Pho lha nas, a secular king who ruled Tibet in the eighteenth century, with his sons positioned on both sides of him. The left one is a monk with a beard and mustache who is holding a rosary and a *dpe cha*-style book, and the right one appears secular, clad in lay clothes, with the same hat and earrings as those of Pho lha nas. In the same larger figure (Fig. 7 e), Pho lha nas is shown as a seated male figure on the throne, holding a rosary in his right hand and a *cakra* in his left, suggesting he is a *cakravartin*, a king who turns a wheel, in other words, an ideal universal king who rules according to virtuous action. He wears luxurious clothes: a yellowish-colored garment trimmed with cloth of different colors and most likely brown fur, and with a dark green gown over it. Furthermore, his red and black hat, earrings, and a brooch signify that he is a rich layperson. Underneath him on the right are his possessions, to indicate again that he is a *cakravartin*, who inherently has seven *ratnas*, or treasures¹³. These are the *cakra* held in Pho lha nas's hand, a minister who offers a mandala, a jewel in the hand of the figure next to the minister, and a queen behind the jewel-holding figure. In addition to these four treasures, an elephant, a horse, and a general appear behind the queen. Other than these treasures, the other figures also show the possessions of a *cakravartin*, such as robes, a rhinoceros horn, and triple-eyed gems placed around the figures of the seven treasures just mentioned¹⁴.

Above Pho lha nas is a seated Amitāyus. The red-colored figure with his legs crossed is shown with the *dhyāni-mudrā* in his hands, and with a vase on his palms. Amitāyus is flanked by Tārā, (Tibetan: sGrol ma) on his right, a seated figure on a roundel, and by Uṣṇīṣavijayā (Tibetan: gTsug tor nam rgyal ma) on his left, the three of whom form a triad of deities for longevity, known as *rtse la rnam gsum*. The first painting of the Dharamsala series also shows Amitāyus above Shakyamuni, instead of showing the Fifth Dalai Lama, which indicates a consistent notion in the production of paintings, and which is discussed in the latter part of this study.

Second, to cite an example of a Tibet House painting, the Fig. 8 c shows the largest seated figure of Pho lha nas, with his sons seated on his left. Similar to the Dharamsala painting, Pho lha nas (Fig.

¹³ The term and the notion of *cakravartin* go back to ancient India and had been introduced into Buddhism. *Cakravartin's* seven treasures are: a minister, a queen, a general, a *cakra*, a jewel, an elephant and a horse.

¹⁴ Regarding the minor motif of *cakravartin*, see Robert Beer. 1999. *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*. (Boston: Shambala), 160–170.

7 c) is clad in secular clothes with earrings and a brooch. In addition to these items, the Tibet House's Pho lha nas wears boots and holds a rosary in his right hand and a *cakra* in his left. Around his head is a white turban and a crown, reminiscent of the representations of ancient Tibetan kings. The inscription from the Tibet House painting reads *chos rgyal bsod nams stobs rgyas la na mo*, meaning "homage to dharma-rāja bsod nams stobs rgyas," which is written on the top board of the offering table placed in front of him. Here *chos rgyal* means a dharma king, who rules according to Buddhist laws, and *bsod nams stobs rgyas* is Pho lha nas's other name. The Narthang bstan 'gyur also contains his illustration with his name underneath (Fig. 7 below)¹⁵. It reads *mi 'i dbang po bsod nams stobs rgyas*, meaning "a lord of humans," and he is not labeled as a *chos rgyal*, or dharma king. Compared to these figures (Figs. 7), the representations of Pho lha nas are slightly different. His attributes, the *cakra* and a rosary, are fixed, but accessories such as a crown and a turban and the clothes he wears vary. All the figures have a nimbus behind them, which gives them an air of hauteur. The two figures on his left are his sons: the one next to him is 'gyur med yes shes tshe brten, and the other is 'gyur med nam rgyal rdo rje by the side. The inscription reads 'gyur med yis tshe brten la na mo in the small space under the same offering table that has the *bsod nams stobs rgyas*' inscription, and 'gyur med nam rgyas rdo rje la na mo under the offering table in front of 'gyur med nam rgyas rdo rje. Around Pho lha nas are figures that are holding distinct objects in their hands, emphasizing that he is not only a secular king but also a dharma king, or even a *cakravartin*. These figures are almost the same as those in the Dharamsala painting, but the Tibet House painting is simpler and contains fewer figures.

In the Tibet House painting (Fig. 8 c) above Pho lha nas is a seated Amitāyus. The red-colored figure with his legs crossed has his hands in the pose of *dhyani-mudrā*, with a vase. The figure, which has the authentic iconography of Amitāyus, appears only in the last painting, because the first painting of the Tibet House shows the Fifth Dalai Lama, instead of Amitāyus. Compared to the Dharamsala painting, that of the Tibet House does not show the figures of goddesses either, but Amitāyus is simply represented. Without two goddesses at both sides, Amitāyus represented singly lost the meaning of the triad for longevity. Presumably, when the paintings were copied, the artists omit the goddess's figures, without knowing the original idea to form the triad.

From the Narthang series, to take another example, the painting from the Gugong Palace Museum (Fig. 8 d) shows Pho las nas in the center with his two sons at his left. In other words, they are depicted in the same way as in the Tibet House painting. Nonetheless, in the Gugong painting there are fewer figures, because the small figures under the triad, as seen in the Dharamsala painting, have disappeared. The Gugong painting represents Pho las nas and his two sons on his left, the seven treasures of a *cakravartin* on Pho las nas's right, and Amitāyus above Pho las nas. Instead of presenting figures with minor *cakravartin* treasures, a background such as clouds, mountains, and trees with fruits are depicted to fill in the gaps, as well as three monks who appear in the center below. The monk in the middle, however, looks upward toward Shakyamuni, turning his back to Pho lha nas and the sons, which implies that the monks are unrelated to Pho lha nas. They are seated in front of an offering table on which a *cakra*, triple-eyed gems, and a pair of elephant tusks are placed. These

¹⁵ Pho lha nas sponsored the printing of *bstan 'gyur* and *bka' 'gyur*, known as Narthang edition.

objects are the minor treasures of a *cakravartin*, though these are not for Pho lha nas but rather are dedicated to Shakyamuni above. The monk in the center is rather large for an attendant of the other figures as he is almost the same size as Pho lha nas, which suggests that the monks here are present not to show their tribute to Pho lha nas, but rather that they are as important as the donor, and most likely, they are the donors of the set.

These two paintings (Fig. 8 c and d) are based on a block print, so they were copied and reproduced exactly the same, but the donor probably made some changes to the original by inserting the figures, in many cases, including himself as a donor, or by removing the figures and objects according to his preference or beliefs. Buddhist deities represented with donors imply a certain expectation or intention on the part of the donor, such as hope for his longevity, his recovery from illness, and so forth. Therefore, the donor figure and his tutelary deity could be replaced when a new donor copies the other painting of the previous donors. However, these changes are not found in the narrative scenes, which are based more strictly on textual descriptions.

4-2. Yonghe painting

The last painting of the Yonghe set has been displayed in the space next to the entrance door to the right of the Wanghe Pavilion in the Yonghe temple complex. Similar to the Narthang series of paintings, most of the painting space around Shakyamuni is occupied by the narrative scenes of chapter 108 of the *dPag bsam*. The right corner at the bottom is irrelevant to the narrative, corresponding to the Pho lha nas figure of the Narthang paintings. The fig. 8 f) shows the lower part of the right hand side, representing a four-faced Brahmā seated on a lotus pedestal. He is facing the center, holding a *cakra* in both hands. In front of the figure is a table on which several offerings are placed, such as a musical instrument, vases, and an animal skin. Underneath are also treasures: a pair of elephant tusks, a triple-eyed gem, and jewels. The Brahmā is represented with an orthodox Tibetan iconography and can be identified without difficulty, even without inscriptions.

The presence of Brahmā in the last painting is linked to the same figure in the first painting of the Yonghe set. In terms of iconography, they are almost identical except for the pose: the first one is standing, and the other is seated. The fact that Brahmā was inserted and that Pho lha nas was excluded indicates the lack of a donor figure in the paintings, which has to do with the fact that this set was not donated by Pho lha nas, but by the Seventh Dalai Lama, to the Yonghegong, which is written on the back of the paintings (Wang 2003). Therefore, the donor of these paintings, the Seventh Dalai Lama, deliberately replaced the figure in the corner of the last painting by inserting the Brahmā, a Buddhist deity, as a pivotal figure in the life of Shakyamuni, as it was no longer necessary to represent a previous donor.

5. Conclusions of the first part

The first paintings of the *dPag bsam* represent Shakyamuni in the center, and in the upper part appear the figures who contributed to writing, translating, and transmitting the text throughout Tibet,

such as an author, a translator, a scribe, and teachers. Above that, the author of the *Jātakamālā*, who had written a previous classical text, is shown, which reinforces the notion of the proper lineage of the *dPag bsam*, which goes back to Indian Buddhist narratives. Moreover, it indicates that the *dPag bsam* is a successor of the *Jātakamālā*.

In the middle part of the painting, a conventional triad is represented, comprising Shakyamuni and his disciples, flanked by Buddhist deities. This configuration is standard and a preparation for the narrative depiction starting with the following paintings from chapters 1 to 108 that would be displayed on both sides of the first painting. The central images of Shakyamuni and his disciples are the key and focal figures of the subsequent narratives in the paintings.

The lower part is occupied by images of the characters in the narratives. They are kings, queens, the mother and father of Shakyamuni, and a devotee. *Avadāna* includes tales not only of the life of Shakyamuni but also of the connection between the past and present life of these characters. The sources of their images are discussed in a later part of this study.

The figures in the right corner of the last painting vary. Some show Pho lha nas as a donor, or Pho lha nas and other donor figures, while others represent Brahmā with offering objects. The Dharamsala painting shows Pho lha nas and Amitāyus at the top flanked by two goddesses, suggesting his desire for longevity. This is the main purpose of donating the painting, which is discussed in depth in a later part of the study.

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Figure1 Central Painting of d) Gugon Palace Museum painting

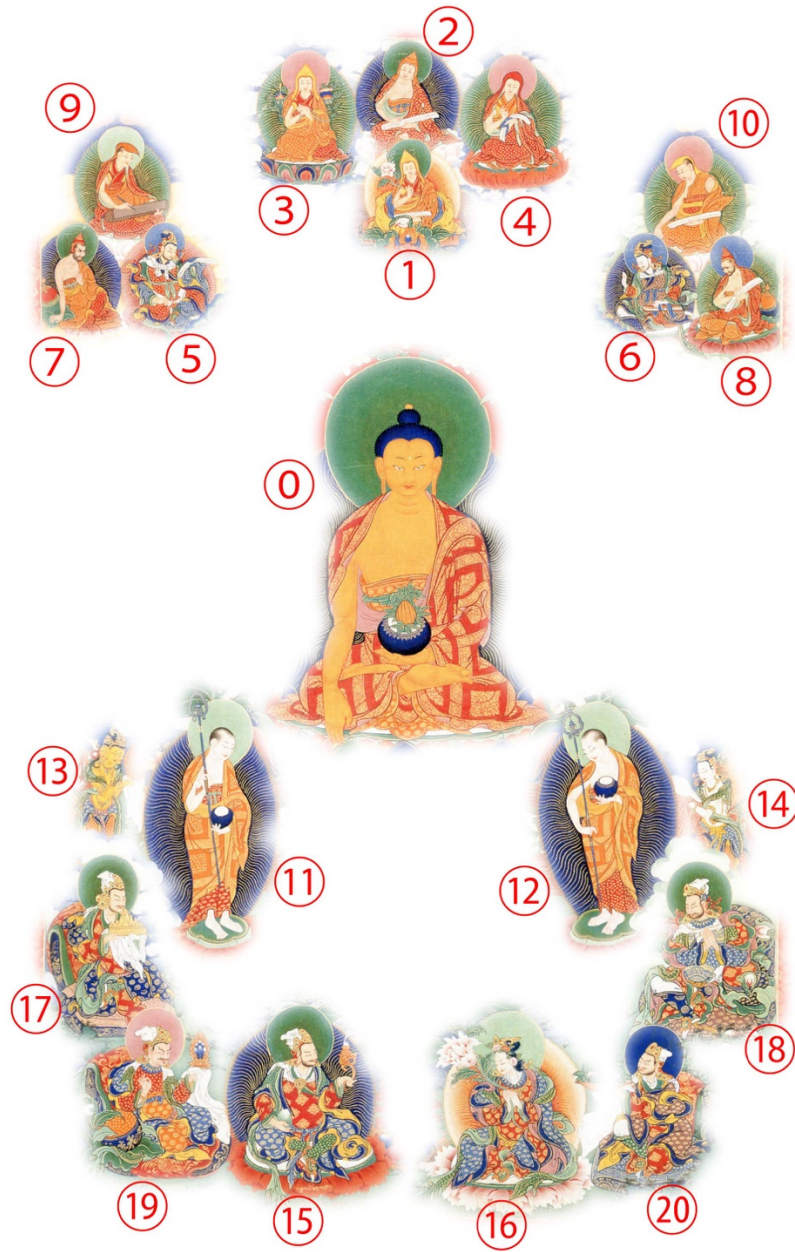


Figure 2 Central Painting of d) Gugon Palace Museum with labeled figures by the author

c)



The fifth Dalai Lama from c) Tibet House Museum painting with inscription on the right

f)



The fifth Dalai Lama from Yonghegong

e)



Amitāyus from e) Dharamsala painting

Figure 3 Figures above Shayamuhi, c), f) and e)



Āryaśūla from f) Gugong painting



Āryaśūla from Zhol block print

Figure 4 Figures at the top center f) and Āryaśūra from zhol block print



a)

drawing from Lani

TPS



b) Line

Figure 5 Central paintings from a) to f)



c) Tibet House New Delhi



d) Gugong Museum



e) Dharamsala



f) Yonghegong

Figure 5 Central paintings from a) to f)



a) TPS



b) Line drawing from Lani



c) Tibet House New Delhi



d) Gugong Museum

Figure 6 Last paintings from a) to f)



e) Dharamsala



f) Yonghegong

Figure 6 Last paintings from a) to f)



e) Pho lha nas from Dharamsala painting



c) Pho lha nas from Tibet House painting

Figure 7 Figures from last painting and Pho lha nas from Narthang bstan 'gyur



Pho lha nas from Narthang bstan 'gyur

Figure 7 Figures from last painting and Pho lha nas from Narthang bstan 'gyur



c) Tibet House



d) Gugong



e) Dharamsala



f) Yonghegong

Figure 8 Right Corner of the final paintings from c) to f)