

**PhD DISSERTATION
THESIS**

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BUDDHIST COSMOLOGICAL TERMS OF MONGOLIANS

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1. Subject of dissertation

Since the beginning of time man has interested in the structure of the world and the visible and invisible creatures around them. The descriptions of heaven and hell were known very early in Inner Asia. They often describe similar systems however sometimes with differs considerably. The emergence of Buddhism in Tibet and in Mongolia converts the previous view of the world that includes fusing elements of local belief in varying degrees.

The main aim of this research is to show the progress of this change through Buddhist cosmological. My research is based in one of most important work of Wphags-pa bla-ma which was written in 1278. The title is *Shes-bya rab-tu gsal-ba* [Explanation of the Knowable] and its Mongolian translation *Medegdekün-ibelgetey-e geyigülügči ner-e-tü šastir*. The work is a good basis for Tibetan and Mongolian terminological dictionary.

To illustrate the evolution of Mongolian terminology are selected such texts which were written in the second conversion of Mongolians and show the state of the language at a later stage. The manuscript version of the 17th century *Mahāvvyutpatti* is the closest in time to the basic texts. This is followed by very comprehensive Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary of terminology the *Dag-yig mkhas-pa'i wbyung-gnas / Merged yarqu-yin oron* [The source of wisdom] which was written by Rol-pa'i rdo-rje in 18th century. At the end of list is a revised version of *Mahāvvyutpatti* from Mongolian Tanjur in the 18th mid-century.

Western researchers didn't lay emphasis on testing Mongolian terminology so the publication of Alice Sárközi (*A Buddhist Terminological Dictionary. The Mongolian Mahāvvyutpatti*) is the major breakthrough in this area. However the general Mongolian dictionaries are also be very useful for find buddhist terms. One of the them is the three-volumed Mongolian-Russian-French dictionary by Kowalewski in which there are a number of useful Buddhist terms. Lessing's valuable Mongolian-English dictionary is similarly an important work on this topic, because the Appendix contains a basic Buddhist terminological glossary.

In during the Buddhism reached Mongolia in several waves, the commitment to this religion was become more and more strong. In spreading Buddhism several Tibetan religions order played a significant role. A very important milestone was the translation of Tibetan Buddhist Canon in Mongolian so Buddha's teachings reached Mongila in language of Tibet. Kanjur and Tanjur, the basic collection of Mongolian Buddhism, are translated from Tibetan therefore Tibetan texts are important sources of this research. In addition to philosophical

texts rich Tibetan-Mongolian bilingual or multilingual technical dictionaries are available for testing terminology. Since Tibetan sources played an important role in Mongolian translation, for the changes of Mongol cosmological terminology should be taken into account the changes of Tibetan terms.

Wphags-pa bla-ma's work is in the center of the presentation of the Tibetan cosmological terms. The Tibetan original version is about 50 years earlier than Mongolian translation. For Tibetan part is used the Tibetan division of Ro-pa'i rdo-rje's comprehensive dictionary, the abhidharma-based cosmological basic description of Vasubandhu and two later cosmological descriptions. One of them was written to Sándor Kőrösi Csoma by a monk such an introductory purpose as centuries before Wphags-pa bla-ma's work. The other is a detailed description of world by Khong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas. In addition for footnotes are used works by Sgam-po-pa and Tshong-kha-pa.

2. The structure of the thesis

The first part of dissertation is a preface about thesis and some technical notes. The second part is a brief history of Mongolian writing from the 13th century to the present day. This helps to place the circumstances of creation of sources in a given period of time. The next part of the dissertation is about the translation process of Mongolian Buddhist literature that is closely related to the summary of Mongolian dictionaries. Then Tibetan and Mongolian texts are presented that are used in the dissertation. This part includes a brief overview of cosmology too.

The next three chapters comprise the three major units of translation: the material world, the living world and the variation of Kalpas. Before the sub-chapters are added supplemental explanations where the translation and footnotes aren't sufficient for presentation of a topic. Before some chapters there is summary about Mongolian and Tibetan pre-Buddhist belief.

The end of dissertation are six appendix and an index. The index is arranged according to European alphabet. Its comprise the Tibetan and Mongolian terms of the basic text and variants in the Mongolian part.

2. The Mongolian and Tibetan sources

2.1. Wphags-pa bla-ma: *Shes-bya rab-gsal* and its Mongolian translation *Medegdekün-i belgetey-e geyigülügči ner-e-tü šastir* [Explanation of the Knowable]

In 1244 Goden, the son of Ogodei khan, who was responsible for Tibetan cases forced the chief of the Sa-skyia dukedom to make a statement. Sa-skyia pandita (1182-1251) started his journey with his two nephews Wphags-pa bla-ma and Phyag-na Rdo-rje and they met Goden near the land of Kukunor. It seems that Sa-skyia pandita made deep impression onto the theoretically tolerant Mongolians, mainly the royal courtyard but task of proselytization and peace maintenance fell on Wphags-pa lama after the death of his uncle (1251). Shortly after the death of Sa-skyia pandita Goden also died and Kubilai khan (1215-1294) inherited the throne.

Wphags-pa bla-ma (1235-1280) and Kubilai khan agreed a new alliance - the so-called *two laws* - sharing ecclesiastical and secular powers. Wphags-pa became the instructor of the emperor and empire. He taught the princes buddhist intellectuality, spirituality and received the title of Viceroy of Tibet. Wphags-pa bla-ma the excellent teacher and a polymath of his time with great expertise of significant number of different subject areas became responsible for the governance of Tibet. He wrote many religious and philosophical treatises for the members of Mongolian royal family.

The most important piece of his extensive life-work is the *Shes-bya rab-gsal*. It had been written in 1278 for Jingim (1243-1286) the third son of Kubilai khan, with the aim of giving a clear and brief introduction to the substance of Buddhism.

The *Shes-bya rab-gsal* discusses the history of Buddhism and the principal tenets in three chapters and two chapters cover the basics of the Buddhist cosmology on 80 pages. The exact name of the summarized work is the following: *A treatise for bodhisattva Prince Jingim is entitled: Explanation of the Knowable*. We know it from the colophon. This work contains five chapters: 1. The worldly environment [ff. 2v-8v], 2. The world of living beings [ff. 9r-26v], 3. The path [ff. 26v-28r], 4. The result [ff. 28r-34r], 5. The unconditioned [ff. 34r-34v], Colophon [ff. 34v-35r].

The work mainly is a compilation but it has a single original part about the history in second chapter. The compilation does not mean that we can not consider it as an independent work. Such a clear overview of the huge and vast literature of the centuries is an excellent and excessively important work.

This dissertation of Wphags-pa differs from the typical methods of citations followed by the methods of tradition. He doesn't identify his sources every time because his aim was to create a comprehensive and logically structured textbook.

The work became so popular in Tibet that some other writers also identified it as the sources of their works. Among others this was the basis of *Rgyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long* [The Clear Mirror: A Royal Genealogy] by Bsod-nams Rgyal-mtshan. His prologue is based on this work and he quoted him later book several times just as *Deb-ther dmar-po* [Red Annals] by Tshal-pa Kun-dga'-rdo-rje.

Later a Chinese translation was made which became a part of the Chinese Canon. We know a Mongolian translation too which was used by Kowalewski in his book about the Buddhist cosmology. Later Uspensky made the Romanized transcription of the Mongolian text and commentated it. The Tibetan text was translated in English by Hoog.¹

The first in Hungary who dealt with the Tibetan scripts was Janos Szerb. He utilized the Mongolian works of Wphags-pa bla-ma in his thesis and in his PhD. dissertation. He did a short and sketchy presentation of *Shes-bya rab-gsal* and made some valuable comments on the first chapter of the Tibetan text in his manuscript.

The Mongolian version was copied for Prince Yunli around 1720 so the original text was born much earlier, probably during the reign of Yuan dynasty. From the text its clear that the copyist didn't understand the original text in many places because can be observed spelling errors even in simple Mongolian words.

In the text there aren't any special notations (mong.: *galig*) which were developed for transcription of Tibetan and Sanskrit words in the 17th century. The 18th-century copyist used *galig* signs in the case of few loan words but often incorrectly.

Mongolian texts were translated from Tibetan in a large measure but Sanskrit names commonly were converted back into Sanskrit. Current text also proves that this kind of tradition have been presented in Mongolian translations since first receiving of Buddhist texts in Mongolia. These Sanskrit forms are often vague and vary from generally accepted form in Mongolian texts. The origins of Sanskrits loan words in Tibetan and Mongolian texts are in the table and in the footnote.

¹ *Prince Jing-gim's Textbook of Tibetan Buddhism: The Shes-bya rab-gsal (Jñeya-prakāśa)* by 'Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan dPal-bzang-po of the Sa-skyapa. Translated and annotated by Constance Hoog. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1983.

2.2. Rol-pa'i rdo-rje: *Dag-yig mkhas-pa'i wbyung-gnas / Merged yarqu-yin oron*

[The source of wisdom]

This work is an extremely comprehensive terminological list relate to various religious, secular and philosophical disciplines which covers the commentary literature of Mongolian and Tibetan *Canon*. The best known printed version was produced between 1742 and 1749 in Beijing, at the behest of Kien-lung emperor. This edition contains the Mongolian analogies that necessary for preparation of Mongolian *Tanjur*. Tibetan version exists separately from this Mongolian edition.

The list was made between 1741 and 1742 with the support of imperial patron of Buddhism. The writer was Lcang-skya kutugtu Rol-pa'i rdo-rje (1717-1786) who known as Ye-shes bstan-pa'i sgron-me. His assistant was Khri-chen sprul-sku Blo-bzang bstan-pa'i nyi-ma dpal-bzang-po (1689-1746) and a Tibetan and Mongolian translator team of scientists helped him to make the Mongolian translation.

In regard of construction this is a bilingual and structured terminological dictionary which was out to create the Mongolian *Tanjur*.

2.3. Vasubandhu: *Abhidharmakośa* and its Tibetan translation

Dbyig-gnyen: *Chos mngon-pa'i mdzod*

[Treasure house of higher knowledge]

This work is a Sanskrit theravāda texts which was written in a 4th century. The author of this work is Vasubandhu, a *vaibhāsika* monk who summarized and took it into poetry of the basic knowledge about phenomenons in eight chapters with a total of around 600 verses. Later in his comments he criticised the theory of the *vaibhāsika* school from the view of *sautrāntika*. This work was widely respected and used by schools of Mahayana Buddhism.

The Tibetan translation was made during the second spread of Buddhism when the Tibetan *Canon* was edited and it is found in the section Mngon-pa of the *Bstan-'gyur*.

This summary book contains 600 poems and 8000 literal comments in 700 pages. Dbyig-gnyen divided his work in eight chapters and an appendix. The third chapter of eight deals with the world and contains the description of the living beings and it's habitats. This

part describes the abhidharma-based cosmology, the most widespread and most often depicted cosmological system.

2.4. Kun-dga' chos-legs: *Rgya-gar rum-yul-pa Sken-dhas dris-lan*

[Answers to the questions of Sken-dha from Europa]

This is one of Alexander-books. Kun-dga' Chos-legs wrote it for Sándor Kőrösi Csoma in around 1825. Kun-dga' Chos-legs was the abbot of the Rdzong-khul monastery where his collected work is still preserved. Here can be found the most important work of his oeuvre which was made for Csoma.

This compendium consists of four booklets and six numbered chapters in 189 pages. It includes four theoretical and two historical chapters. The first part of the historical chapters is a short summary about the arrangement of the various worlds within the universe and how those worlds come into existence in 40 pages. This title is *Wjig-rten mngon-par grub-pa'i rgyu wbyung-ba chen-po bzhi* [The reason for the formation of the world that is the four major elements].

2.5. Khong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas: *Shes-bya mtha'-yas-pa'i rgya-mtsho*

[The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge]

Shes-bya mtha'-yas-pa'i rgya-mtsho is constituted by ten books and is itself a commentary on the root verses *Shes-bya kun khyab* [The Encompassment of All Knowledge] which is as well the work of Khong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas (1813-1899). *Shes-bya kun khyab* are the root verses to Khong-sprul's autocommentary *Shes-bya mtha'-yas-pa'i rgya-mtsho* and these two works together are known as *Shes bya mdzod* [The Treasury of Knowledge].

Khong-sprul was one of the most prominent outstanding Buddhist scholar of nineteenth-century Tibet. Khong-sprul was an extremely prolific writer who composed more than ninety volumes on theory and practice according to the *rnyig-ma-pa*, *bka'-gdams-pa*, *sa-skyapa*, *bka'-rgyud-pa* and *bonpo* tradition.

Shes-bya mtha'-yas-pa'i rgya-mtsho touches on every topic within the range of Buddhist knowledge, is one of Khong-sprul's most ambitious projects, for which he requested translators, scholars and meditation masters of various Tibetan traditions to work together.

Shes-bya kun khyab and the corresponding commentary's first volume represents cosmology, cosmography and the genesis of beings who inhabit the universe with different

approaches: the numerically definite abhidharma-cosmology, the cosmology of the wheel of time tantra (*kālacakra*) and the non-cosmology of the *rdozgs-chen* system. Each corresponds to the level of spiritual maturity of the individual.

**2.6. *Ilyal-i ilete uqayulun üiledügči-yin jerge delgeregülün sudur orosiba*
[The Great Volume of Precise Understanding]
on the basis of edition of Sárközi Alice (ed.): *A Buddhist Terminological Dictionary.*
*The Mongolian Mahāvyutpatti***

The Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary of Buddhist terminology, the *Bye-brag-tu rtogs-par byed-pa chen-po* [skt.: Mahāvyutpatti, The Great Volume of Precise Understanding] was originally compiled in Tibet as early as 801 or 812 by a committee of Indian and Tibetan scholars for a special imperial order, providing a dictionary composed of thousands of Sanskrit and Tibetan terms designed as means to provide standardised Buddhist texts in Tibetan. It is included as part of the Tibetan *Bstan-wgyur* and the earliest substantial bilingual dictionary known.

The original dictionary contained 9 565 lexical entries divided into 277 chapters, arranged according to certain subject matters under general headings. Later on Chinese was added to the Sanskrit and Tibetan. By the 17th century versions were being produced with Chinese, Mongolian and Manchurian equivalents

The Mongolian part of the *Mahāvyutpatti* was prepared as a result of the renaissance of Buddhism in Mongolia in the 17th and early 18th centuries, when the demand to translate and adapt canonic works flourished. The large-scale translation activity was sponsored by Manchu Emperors, especially by Kangxi and Kien-lung.

The tables of dissertation presents some old, rare words, preserved from Middle Mongolian, make the vocabulary interesting. The *Bstan-wgyur* version in footnotes gives a reformed stage of the language. Around 30 chapters of 277 deals with terms of Buddhist cosmology.

3. Methods

The core of the dissertation is the Romanized transcription of the Tibetan and Mongolian versions of *Shes-bya rab-gsal* as well as its Hungarian translation. If there is different between translation of the Tibetan and Mongolian version, it is marked in the footnote. Each

chapters are followed by a table wherein are brought all terms of the main text into prominence and under the terms from other Tibetan and Mongolian sources. When a version is the same as the term of the main text, after the term there an abbreviation of title in square brackets. In the main text is only one kind of expression but in the table there is the transcript and translation of all different variant. If in text isn't clear what a name mean it is found behind the Hungarian translation in parentheses.

This appears in the following way:

SHES [ff. 6r-7r]: wdi-nas steng-du dpag-tshad bzhi-khri wphags-pa'i nam-mkha'-la dangs-shing sgrib-pa-med-la shin-tu brtan-pa'i rlung-gi dkyil-wkhor g.yas phyogs-su wkhor-ba-la nyi-ma dang | zla-ba dang | rgyu-skar-la sogs-pa brten-zhing de-dag-la ni nam-mkha'-la rgyu-ba'i lha-rnams gnas-so | de-la nyi-ma'i dkyil-wkhor ni me-shel-las grub-pa | dkyil-gyi thad-kar dpag-tshad lnga-bcu-rtsa-gcig dang | mtha'-skor-du dpag-tshad brgya-linga-bcu-rtsa-gsum-gyis wkhor-zhing | wphan-du dpag-tshad drug-dang bco-brgyad-kyi cha yod-la |

MEDE [ff. 7v-8v]: basa ende-eče dörben tümen bere ülegs-en-ü deger-e köke oytaryui-dur asuru batu türidkel ügei gegegen kei tögürig tebsiyerküy-e orçin bükü buyu: tegün-dür naran saran yabuqun odud bügüde sitüjü ayu: teden-ü deger-e anu oytaryui-tur yabuyçin tngri-ner sayuyu: naran sibari erdeni-ber bütügsen bolai: жүг dumdayun inu tabin nigen bere buyu: [8r] orçin inu jayun tabin çurban bere bolai: жүjayan inu jiryuyan ber-e kiged basa nigen bere-yin arban naiman qubi-aça nigen qubi buyu:

Translation - SHES [ff. 6r-7r], MEDE [ff. 7v-8v]: Above in the space, on a shining, flawless and very stable ring of wind whirling to the right are placed the Sun, the Moon and the stars that are populated by the divinities running on the sky. The Sun made from firecrystal, its diameter is 51 yojana, circumference is 153 yojana and thickness is 6/18 yojana.

	Tibetan	Hungarian	Mongolian	Hungarian
	nam-mkha' [SHES, RGY]	space	köke oytaryui-dur asuru batu türidkel ügei gegegen [MEDE]	irresistibly shining blue sky
	nyi-ma [SHES, RGY, CH, DAG]	Sun	naran [MEDE, MERC]	Sun

			naran / T adiy-a [MAHA]	Sun / T Sun
	zla-ba [SHES, RGY, CH, DAG]	Moon	saran [MEDE, MERG]	Moon
			saran / T sumiy-a [MAHA]	Moon / T Moon
	rgyu-skar [SHES, RGY]	star	yabuqun odud [MEDE]	planet
	rgyu-skar-gyi dkyil-wkhor [SHES]	constellation		
	nam-mkha'-la rgyu-ba'i lha-rnams [SHES]	divinities running on the sky	oγtaryui-tur yabuyč'in tngri-ner [MEDE]	divinities running on the sky
	mkha'-la rgyu-ba'i rgyal- chen bzhi ris-kyi lha-rnams [RGY]	Four Kings the divinities running on the sky	oγtaryui-dur yabuyči / T oγtaryui-dur yabuyči [MAHA]	running on the sky / T running on the sky

The translations in tables are word-for-word translations of texts and in case of Sanskrit words there are the original Sanskrit versions, even both have the same meaning.

ma-ga-dha [SHES]	<i>Magadha</i>	magad [MEDE]	<i>Magadha</i>
yul dbus [SHES]	Middle land	magad / γajār-un dumda [MEDE]	<i>Magadha</i> / Middle land

3. Results

The aim of research is to prepare a terminological dictionary of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhist cosmological sources.

From the table of Mongolian terms can be reveal that they tried to create a uniform system of terminology in every historical era but they didn't have a universally accepted basis for it. The main reason is the long time for adoption of Buddhism. Despite the fact that the Mongolian historical sources traditionally consider only two conversion, in the course of time Mongolians developed relations with different Tibetan orders.

Medegdekün-ibelgetey-e geyigülügči ner-e-tü šastir was written during the first conversion and this was one of the firsts among Mongolian cosmological résumé which could be a good basis for create a universally terminological base but this work was used only in the court of Kubilay. Therefore the new terminological system didn't built on this work in the second conversion.

Beside the Tibetan terms the Uyghur terminology had an effect on Mongolian words. Uyghurs also translated several books on Buddhism and their language used a large number of Sanskrit words and phrases, later many of them were incorporated into the Mongolian vocabulary.

In case of Mongolian words is easy to follow the changes in translation method. In tables we can follow the transformation of the Sanskrit terms because in the course of time the Mongolian authors increasingly shaped these special words into their language, often were based on the translations of Tibetan terms. . The translated phrases are disparate but the meaning is usually similar and the understanding of these text without foreign words become much more easier, as the example shows: *kidasudar* → *qara ĵiruqai* → *qar-a siqui-tu*.

The Tibetan terms of dictionary are relatively similar in spite of centuries of differences. During the first conversion they put through a language reform due to be finalize the system of Buddhist terms and to be accepted these to all Tibetan orders. After this time to this days the Tibetan autors adhere to this system. The large part of the changes are abbreviations as example shows: *rtag-tu myos-pa'i lha-rnams* → *rtag-myos-pa'i lha-rnams* → *rtag-myos*.

I plan my linguistic research in the long run. Initially I choosed a basic cosmological description with other texts from different times to illustrate the linguistic changes about first part of dissertation.

My research work has not yet finished, I purpose to go on analysing many other Tibetan and Mongolian texts on cosmological subjects with the purpose to extend this terminological dictionary.

The main results of my research in brief:

- [1.] processing of a Tibetan and Mongolian basicwork within theme of cosmology;
- [2.] reconstruction of Mongolian Buddhist cosmological terminology;
- [3.] comparison of Tibetan and Mongolian cosmological terms;
- [4.] an index for Tibetan and Mongolian cosmological terms.

4. Related publications

Comparison of Two Tibetan Compendiums on Buddhist Cosmology dating from the 13th and 19th Centuries. *Acta Orientalia* 2012.

- A Bölcs és a balga* gyűjtemény egy meséjének filológiai elemzése a tibeti, a mongol és az ojrát változatok alapján. [Philological analysis of a tale of the Tibetan Sutra of *The wise and the fool* according to Tibetan, Mongolian and Oirad versions] In: Birtalan Ágnes–Yamaji Masanori (eds.): *Orientalista Nap 2007*. MTA Orientalisztikai Bizottság–ELTE Orientalisztikai Intézet, Budapest 2007. pp. 116-125.
- A bSam-yas kolostor története Sa-skyapa bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan: A királyok származását megvilágító tükör című műve alapján. [The circumstance of building of bSam-yas Monastery according to Sakyapa Sonam Gyaltsen: *The Clear Mirror of the Royal Genealogies*] In: Birtalan Ágnes (ed.): *Bolor-un gerel. Kristályfény. The Crystal-splendour. Tanulmányok Kara György professzor 70. születésnapjának tiszteletére. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor Kara György's 70th birthday*. Vols I–II. ELTE Dept. of Inner Asian Studies, Budapest 2005. pp. 607–620.
- Buddhista kozmológia az Abhidharma tükrében Kőrösi Csoma Sándor hagyatéka alapján (Alexander-könyvek no. 4.)* [Buddhist cosmology in the light of Abhidharma on the basis of the legacy of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (Alexander Books, no. 4)] Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Institute of East-Asian Studies, Department of Inner-Asian Studies, Tibetan philology - unpublished M.A. Thesis, Budapest. 2006.