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# Meanings of Community across Medieval Eurasia

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# Enclaves of Learning, Religious and Intellectual Communities in Tibet: The Monastery of gSang phu Ne'u thog in the Early Centuries of the Later Diffusion of Buddhism

*Pascale Hugon*[1]

### Introduction

The period that Tibetan religious histories call the "Early Diffusion of Buddhism" (*snga dar*), which had started in the beginning of the 7th century under the reign of the emperor (*btsan po*) Srong btsan sgam po (618–49), came to an end in 842 with the assassination of the emperor Glang dar ma, which signalled the demise of the empire. The transmission of Buddhist teachings and their diffusion was resumed in the middle of the 10th century, while Tibet underwent a re-shaping of its whole socio-political landscape. The re-establishment and foundation of new religious structures—monasteries in particular—played a major role in both these processes.

This paper focuses on the monastery of gSang phu Ne'u thog, founded in the 11th century in Central Tibet south of Lhasa.[2] gSang phu became a famous and influential centre of intellectual life, especially famed for the development

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1    Work on this paper has been generously supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, project P23422-G15 "Early bKa' gdams pa scholasticism").

2    On the history of gSang phu, see van der Kuijp, "The Monastery of Gsang-phu ne'u-thog", Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers,* 685–88, and Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog". A recent dissertation (in Japanese) by Fumihito Nishizawa, which includes an extensive survey of the available Tibetan materials pertaining to gSang phu's history, will hopefully be published in the future. It was not available to me at the time of writing this paper. On gSang phu's name and location see Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers,* 116, n. 192 and 182, n. 434. Two articles by Onoda ("The Chronology" and "Abbatial Successions") deal with the succession of abbots. Nishizawa, "gSang phu ne'u thog", presents a four-stage model of the development of gSang phu scholasticism. For a list of the sources containing accounts of the monastery's foundation see Onoda, "The Chronology", 203–04, Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers,* 685, Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 138, and Nishizawa, "gSang phu ne'u thog", 345–46. Note that all these sources are quite late—the earliest one available, the *Deb ther dmar po* by Tshad pa Kun dga' rdo rje (1309–64), post-dates the foundation of gSang phu by almost three centuries.

of a scholastic system embracing specific areas of non-tantric Buddhist learning such as epistemology, logic, the philosophy of the Middle Way, etc.[3] The large number of texts composed on these topics by scholars affiliated with gSang phu gives us a bright picture of the scope of their endeavours and also allows us to appreciate the pervasive impact these scholars had on all further developments in the Tibetan religio-philosophical tradition:[4] in particular, in the field of epistemology, the textual interpretations of the relevant Indian corpus and the individual compositions that stemmed from scholars of this monastery were unchallenged up to the 13th century, and even later remained the building blocks for Tibetan compositions in the domain. On the other hand, the range of historical sources at our disposal only sheds a partial light on the practicalities of the organization of gSang phu as a monastic centre and the learning and teaching activities carried out within its walls, or on its place in the socio-political landscape and its interaction with other monastic structures founded in the same period.[5]

In this paper I focus on gSang phu's activities as an intellectual centre, thereby adopting the concept of an "enclave of learning". In what follows, I first recall some data pertaining to its founding, highlighting factors that contributed to its prosperity and repute. I then consider its functioning as a dynamic entity via two aspects linked with the characterization of gSang phu as an enclave of learning—its operating as a "centre of gravity" and as a "centrifugal point"—and examine how these aspects delineate the enclave's interaction (in terms of teaching and learning practices) with the world *extra muro*. gSang phu's learning horizon promoted an extended intellectual community which largely outgrew the community circumscribed by the monastery as an enclave of learning. In the conclusion, I discuss the question of the inclusion of gSang

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3   On the use of the term "scholasticism" in this context, see Hugon and Vose, "Unearthing the Foundations", 238.

4   In particular, the recent publication, in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*, of manuscripts that had been preserved for the most part in the library of 'Bras dpungs monastery, has opened the way to new research in this area.

5   This shortage of information is due on the one hand to the incomplete materials at hand to conduct such a study, on the other to the very genre of the sources available, such as, typically, religious histories and hagiographies of famous scholars. In this regard see the Section "Textual Evidence and the Current State of Research" in Fermer's article in this section of the volume. While one can hope that future research will make it possible to reconstruct a more complete picture of the history of gSang phu, this falls outside the purpose of the present paper. At the risk of disappointing the reader specializing in the field of Tibetology, here I draw for the most part from published studies of the available materials in order to stress the aspects relevant to the common topic of the contributions in this section of the volume.

phu scholars in the religious community of the bKa' gdams pa school, an inclusion perceived by some Tibetan historians to be at odds with their scholastic endeavours.

## The Founding and Prosperity of gSang phu Ne'u thog

The founding of gSang phu took place at the beginning of the period of the renewed spread of Buddhism in Tibet, a period referred to in the tradition as the "Later Diffusion of Buddhism" (*phyi dar*).[6] The starting point of this process can be associated with a group of men ordained in eastern Tibet and their pupils who, in the late 10th century, returned to Central Tibet, where they organized congregations that promoted the construction and restoration of temples. Among them, four primary groups were active in Central Tibet.[7] Initially based in bSam yas—the first Buddhist monastery to be established in Tibet, around 775, at the time of the Early Diffusion of Buddhism—they then spread to the regions surrounding Lhasa. Although they shared a common goal, the four groups came to constitute rival factions competing for the control of Lhasa's most holy sanctuaries, each group holding a specific zone of influence. These groups benefited from the patronage of local rulers and clans, including descendants and supporters of the former dynasty, a patronage that added to the conflicts and sometimes alliances between them.[8] In return, the patrons gained spiritual and religious repute from the Buddhist communities.[9]

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6   This period has been referred to by some modern scholars such as Davidson as the "Tibetan Renaissance". The outline that follows draws mainly from Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, and Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, and in particular from Sørensen and Hazod (Sect. 5, "Historical background"), 27–30 and the appendix 11 "Control over the Lha-sa maṇḍala zone" by Sørensen on 401–47.

7   These groups—Klu mes, 'Bring, rBa, Rag—take their names from the clan-name of their respective leader: Klu mes Tshul khrims shes rab, 'Bring Ye shes yon tan, rBa btsun Blo gros dbang phyug and Rag shi Tshul khrims 'byung gnas. For more details see Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 92–105 and Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 410–13.

8   On this role of clans in the 10th and 11th centuries, see Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 80–83.

9   On the reciprocity of this relation, Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 27, note: "The historical importance of these local rulers, as stated, largely depends on their roles as patrons of the religious movements and settlements that mushroomed in Central Tibet (as elsewhere) during the early Renaissance epoch (*bstan pa phyi dar*)". Further, "The spread and distribution of the communities within the different regions and the distinct patron-priest bonds that were established should slowly lead to increased political influence, with hegemonic implications, since the vital alliances based on patronage conduced to the forging of political unions. This

Another keystone in the re-establishment of Buddhist communities was the invitation of the Indian master Atiśa (982–1054) by the king of Guge (western Tibet). gSang phu was founded in 1073 as one of the four seats set up in the wake of Atiśa's visit to Central Tibet.[10] These seats were held respectively by the four above-mentioned groups,[11] and formed the ground from which the bKa' gdams pa school emerged.[12] Some 30 years after its founding, gSang phu even came to assume the centre stage among the four seats, overtaking Rwa sgreng in this role.[13] On a larger scale within the Tibetan world, gSang phu became a renowned centre, depicted in Tibetan sources as the "uppermost

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process thus went hand in hand with the mobilization of political forces in the country, namely the local aristocratic clans who made themselves felt as patrons behind the distinct groups". (ibid., 28).

10    The alternative dates 1059 and 1071 for its foundation are also found (see van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 106 and Onoda, "The Chronology", 205). Van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 106 reckons that most sources do not provide information on the circumstances of the foundation of gSang phu monastery. Sørensen notes that a biography of Atiśa "appears to tell us that the temples initially had been erected to serve the Jo-bo statues in lHa-sa simply suggesting that the four groups and their main seats originally had been set up as institutions in order to uphold the bKa'-gdams-pa teachings and the maintenance of the Jo-bo sanctum in lHa-sa" (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 405).

11    On the four groups see n. 7. The monastery of sNye thang 'Or was held by the sBa and Rag groups, lHa sdings or Se rdur by the Klu mes group, and gSang phu by the 'Bring. Rwa sgreng, was erected in 1056 as an unifying convent seat after Atiśa's passing (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 404).

12    On the bKa' gdams pa school see Vetturini, *The bKa' gdams pa*, which contains the edition and study of a 15th-century history by Lo dgon pa bSod nams lha'i dbang po (1423–1496). While 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1005–1064), the disciple of Atiśa who founded Rwa sgreng, is regarded as the founder of the bKa' gdams pa school, it is with his disciples or spiritual sons, the so-called "three brothers"—Po to ba Rin chen gsal (1027–1105), sPyan snga ba Tshul khrims 'bar (1033–1103) and Phu chung ba gZhon nu rgyal mtshan (1031–1106) that it took form as a monastic order. On the term itself, Vetturini (ibid., 10, n. 12) notes that the expression *jo bo bka' gdams* is attested as a reference to Atiśa's hermeneutics in the early 14th century, while "by the 15th century, the term *bka' gdams pa* specifically came to denote the endorsement of Atiśa's interpretation of Buddhist thought". For the period that precedes, Vetturini states that: "The life of Lo dgon pa demonstrates the bKa' gdams, or the taught word, was regarded as one of the teaching cycles current in his times rather than a formal school or sect" (ibid., 173).

13    In 1105, after the passing of Po to ba, 'Brom ston's disciple, gSang phu came to assume the centre stage among the four bKa' gdams centres, following a faltering of leadership in Rwa sgreng. Rwa sgreng "came to be seen and administered as a second satellite of the Sangpu enclave" (Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 279).

of Tibetan learning centres" (*bod yol bshad grwa'i thog ma*) and a "second Bodhgaya" (*rdo rje gdan gnyis pa*).[14] Among the factors that may have contributed to this success, I discuss below the support gSang phu received from clans and religious groups, its location, the popularity of its first abbots, and its specialization as an enclave of learning in the philosophical domain.

### Clan and Congregation Support

The background data regarding the foundation of gSang phu exemplifies the interaction between clans and religious factions mentioned above, which provided suitable conditions for the establishment of a stable and successful monastery. gSang phu was founded by rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab, one of the three most famous disciples of Atiśa.[15] This figure benefited from a dual affiliation, as Legs pa'i shes rab was linked on the one hand to one of the four congregations mentioned above, the 'Bring,[16] and on the other hand to the rNgog clan. These constitute two overlapping groups of influence: members of the rNgog clan were associated with various congregations,[17] while the 'Bring group had the allegiance of various clans.[18]

The success of the rNgog clan can be explained by a number of factors: it went back to the old aristocracy of the imperial period,[19] it included

14    Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 685.

15    There is hardly any biographical data available concerning rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab. Kramer (*The Great Tibetan Translator,* 34, n. 12) lists sources providing basic biographical information. See Vetturini, *The bKa' gdams pa*, 97 for that provided in the bKa' gdams pa history by Lo dgon pa, and Onoda, "The Chronology", 204 for that from the *Blue Annals*.

16    Legs pa'i shes rab was ordained in the presence of the leader of the 'Bring group, 'Bring Ye shes yon tan (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 405). In Atiśa's biographies, the monastery of gSang phu is said to have been financially supported by the 'Bring (van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 108). Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 143, specifies that "there is no record of any particular feudal lord who sponsored or owned the monastery of gSang phu".

17    For instance rNgog Byang chub 'byung gnas, who assisted Legs pa'i shes rab in succeeding to welcoming Atiśa, was associated with the Klu mes group, another of the four primary congregations.

18    The 'Bring group was supported by the rNgog clan, the sNa nam and the gNyos, and possibly the mGar clan (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 407). In particular "most of the 'Bring communities in sTod-lung and Chu-shur eventually were dominated by branches of the gNyos clan" (ibid., 406, n. 6). On the gNnyos clan see ibid. 413–28, and in particular 426 regarding its link with the 'Bring community. See ibid. 427 for notes on the relationships between the various clans.

19    A member of this clan is found among the ministers of the emperor Khri Srong lde btsan (Kramer, *The Great Tibetan Translator*, 33).

individuals who upheld the transmission of a specific Buddhist teaching,[20] and it benefited from high-level patronage from none other than dBang phyug lde, the king of Guge.[21] In addition, there is the popularity of rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab and of his nephew rNgog Blo ldan shes rab as religious teachers, which, besides being instrumental in the development of gSang phu as a famous scholastic centre (see below), certainly counted in the continuity of the clan's status of influence. For the rNgog, as for other clans, the clan's religious allegiances (combined with marriage alliances) were instrumental in securing a leading role, political as well as religious.[22]

The status of the rNgog clan, and in particular the massive patronage it obtained from the king of Guge,[23] was certainly instrumental in the success of the 'Bring group. The latter owed its stability and pre-eminence over the other factions to the rNgog and other clans with which it was also linked.[24]

rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab's leading status is notably illustrated by the fact that he was in the position to invite Atiśa to Ra sa 'Phrul snang. While this is indicative of the pre-eminence of the 'Bring group in the Lhasa area,[25] Legs pa'i shes

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20    For instance rNgog ston rDo rje gZhon nu, Legs pa'i shes rab's father, "came from an unin-
      terrupted line of followers of the Vajrakīla cult, who traced themselves back to a direct
      disciple of the Indian adept Padmasambhava" (Kramer, *The Great Tibetan Translator*, 33).

21    The latter notably financed the stay in Kashmir of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab, Legs pa'i shes
      rab's nephew (see Kramer, *The Great Tibetan Translator*, 38, n. 32 and 113, n. 180).

22    Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 407. On these clans they further say: "Their relative success
      not least was hinged upon an ideal combination of ample military and secular power
      combined with appropriate ancestral prestige and background linked up with necessary
      spiritual and religious repute embodied in a number of prominent hierarch figures and
      their lineages (often born into the same clan to cement loyalty and commitment or to
      ensure adequate patronage) who held their position through sheer religious authority,
      ensured not least by being main propagators and transmitters of both orthodox and eso-
      terically idiosyncratic key cycles" (ibid., 407–08).

23    Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 407, n. 8.

24    This stability and pre-eminence may be surmised by comparing the evolution, over time,
      of the links of the respective communities with the four seats founded after Atiśa's visit
      (see van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 109–10). Sørensen also highlights its dominance by
      the number of 'Bring settlements in the environs of Lhasa in the 11th to 12th century
      (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 408–09). Sørensen notes: "The strong rNgog clan along with
      the sNa-nam [...] and the gNyos, possibly in confederation with the mGar clan [...] either
      were the stout supporters of the 'Bring, or they constituted the political-hegemonic back-
      bone behind the 'Bring themselves" (ibid., 407).

25    Its success in inviting the Indian master took place "clearly to the discomfort and frustra-
      tion of other factions" (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 405).

rab's clan affiliation may also have played a role, as he was assisted by another member of the clan, rNgog Byang chub 'byung gnas, himself affiliated with the Klu mes group, who succeeded in inviting Atiśa to another location.[26]

### Location

rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab's activities started in rGyang mkhar (one of the first establishments of a branch of the 'Bring group)[27] and other seats, seats that fell into oblivion after gSang phu became the main centre of his teachings. The reason for Legs pa'i shes rab's choice of gSang phu's location for the founding of this monastery and whether the location played a role in its success remain to be ascertained.[28] In the available sources this choice is merely justified by a prediction of Atiśa's (which has every chance of being a later invention).[29] It is common in Tibetan sources to adduce predictions and remarks on the auspicious setting of the land to explain the choice of location of monastic units. But surely there are other concerns that must have come into consideration. Likely criteria (which would find an echo in other, non-Tibetan, settings) may have been space for living quarters, the availability of water and food supplies, the proximity of a supporting lay community, access for travellers and pilgrims, etc. These criteria certainly had more or less weight depending on the structure envisaged (a hermitage for isolated monks or larger centres),[30] while in some cases other considerations, such as the auspiciousness of the setting, could prevail. The acquisition of the land itself could be an issue, depending on the interests (spiritual or not) of the owner.[31] Politico-religious issues at

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26    Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 405.

27    See Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 406, n. 7.

28    Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 139, specifies that "While in the beginning this monastery was erected in a lower region of the gSang-valley, later it was shifted by rNgog lo tsa ba Blo ldan shes rab […] to the uppermost region of that valley".

29    As reported by Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 139, when travelling with rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab from sNye thang to Lhasa, Atiśa pointed his finger in the direction of the gSang-valley and prophesied that if he built a monastery there his tradition would flourish. The relevant passage is cited and translated in van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 106–07.

30    In this regard it would be interesting to look more closely at the terminology used for religious centres thorough the sources. For instance, the *Blue Annals* describes gSang phu Ne'u thog as a *gtsug lag khang*, but the monastery previously founded by rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab in Brag nag as a *dgon pa*.

31    For instance 'Brom ston intended to found a temple at Bye ma lung of gNam district, but the land was not granted by the local patron; 'Brom ston therefore erected Rwa sgreng to the north-east, with the sponsorship of the Ber clan of Phrang kha (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 404, n. 5).

a higher level may also have played a role.[32] While Legs pa'i shes rab's priority criteria when founding gSang phu remain in question, it has been noted regarding the centres founded in the 'Phan po area by 'Brom ston (another of Atiśa's disciples), by his disciples, and by subsequent generations of bKa' gdams pa, that over time the locations appear to have changed from the upper part of the side valleys to more travelled places along the trading routes of the main valley of 'Phan po, a change that mirrors modifications in the size of the monasteries and the scope of the masters' teachings, from selected disciples to a broader audience.[33]

### Popular Abbots

While, thanks to its founder's dual affiliation with the rNgog clan and the 'Bring religious faction, gSang phu had promising assets in terms of religious and political influence and monetary patronage, one can discern a further factor in its success: the popularity of gSang phu's founder and first abbot rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab, and of his nephew and second abbot rNgog Blo ldan shes rab. Their popularity as teachers is conveyed in several reports by impressive numbers: around 20,000 students are mentioned, as well as a number of "assistants".[34] These numbers, of course, cannot be taken at face value but are

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32    Although according to Roesler and Roesler (*Kadampa Sites of Phempo*, 3), in the 11th and
      12th centuries "political involvement was still marginal" in the founding of monasteries
      and Buddhist schools.

33    The locations moved "closer to the trading routes from Lhasa and the Kyi Chu valley"
      (Roesler and Roesler, *Kadampa Sites of Phempo*, 5). See also ibid., 7–8. Regarding the
      region of 'Phan po, where monasteries were founded already during the Early Diffusion of
      Buddhism, the authors note that "it offered valleys of recluse for meditation and study,
      but was still easily accessible and close to the more public life around Lhasa" (ibid., 1).
      They say, further, regarding the new locations that "these places were automatically vis-
      ited by travellers and pilgrims passing through, and large numbers of lay visitors were
      guaranteed" (ibid., 8). Roesler and Roesler note that the two monasteries of Po to ba's two
      main disciples together housed around 5000 monks, "a considerable number, compared
      with the modest numbers of yogis and monks that had lived in Radeng in the early days"
      (ibid., 6).

34    According to Yongs 'dzin Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1713–93), "in the wake of the establishment
      of gSang-phu Ne'u-thog in 1073, the number of Vinaya students and followers of rNgog
      Legs-pa'i shes-rab (and eventually of his nephew, the equally erudite rNgog Blo-ldan shes-
      rab—1059–1109) in the late 11th century […] counted over 17,300 students in lHa-sa"
      (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 406). He further gives the number of students attached to
      'Bring communities as 13,000 in bSam yas, 20,000 in rGyang mkhar, and 10,000 in Ngan
      lam. According to Sørensen and Hazod, "these figures probably refer to the sum of Vinaya
      students in the communities within the narrow lHa-sa area including gSang-phu under

indicative of quite a large audience. Note that they are not given as representative of the numbers of students in gSang phu proper (the community had about 500 members at the beginning),[35] but are linked with other religious centres such as Lhasa, bSam yas, etc.

### Specialization

From early on gSang phu specialized as a centre promoting the study of a specific genre of Buddhist non-tantric learning with a strong emphasis on epistemology and logic. It thereby stood apart from other monastic establishments, as well as from the general orientation of other (proto-) bKa' gdams pa monasteries.[36] This orientation appears to be mainly a consequence of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab's endeavours, as attested from the list of the works he translated and composed,[37] and does not seem to have been promoted already by gSang phu's founder Legs pa'i shes rab, whose focus was on the cycle of teachings from Atiśa.[38] It was perpetuated by some of Blo ldan shes rab's students and,

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the 'Bring" (ibid., 406). In 'Gos lo tsā ba's (1392–1481) *Blue Annals* it is reported that Blo ldan shes rab gathered 23,000 monks around him, and that his assistant preachers (*zur chos pa*) numbered 280 specialists of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (a work of epistemology by Dharmakīrti [7th c. or earlier] that was the most influential in Tibet up to the 13th century) and 55 specialists of the *Pramāṇavārttikālaṃkāra* (a commentary on another major work of Dharmakīrti) and of Dharmottara's commentary or commentaries on Dharmakīrti's works, 1,800 teachers of scriptures (*lung chos smra ba*) and about 2,130 preachers of the dharma (*chos smra ba*) (see Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 326). Shes rab seng ge's colophon to Gro lung pa's biography of rNgog Lo gives a similar account with different numbers and, like 'Gos lo tsā ba, relates the numerous students of rNgog Lo not to gSang phu, but to "Lhasa, bSam yas, sGang thog, lHa yangs da lhan and Myug gu sna" (Kramer, *The Great Tibetan Translator*, 114–15).

35  Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 140.

36  As Vetturini, *The bKa' gdams pa School,* 8, notes in his introduction: "After the death of Atiśa in 1054, the objective of the first seats established by the school was to invigorate the traditions of the prātimokṣa and the vinaya, suggesting the fortunes of the bKa' gdams pas initially hinged upon the proliferation of the monastic ideal". The trend favouring dialectic was resisted to some extent (ibid., 172). I come back to the question of the compatibility of gSang phu's specialization in epistemology and its bKa' gdams pa affiliation in the conclusion.

37  See Kramer, *The Great Tibetan Translator*, 103–13 for Gro lung pa's list and appendix 3 for two other lists. Blo ldan shes rab's interests focused on epistemology, Madhyamaka philosophy and the group of texts known as the Five Treatises of Maitreya.

38  See Vetturini, *The bKa' gdams pa*, 145–48 on Legs pa'i shes rab and the advent of the *bKa' gdams glegs bam*. This is not to say that Blo ldan shes rab did not prolong his uncle's legacy to some extent. For instance, in his anthology of bKa' gdams pa literature, Lo dgon

although it was likely not the exclusive teaching activity carried out in gSang phu, it became the trademark of the monastery. The specialization of the monastery in the scholastic domain in the generations that follow rNgog Blo ldan shes rab is revealed notably by its inclusion, along with that of two of its dependencies (bDe ba can and Gung thang chos 'khor gling), in the list of the "six great seminaries" (*chos grwa chen po drug*) of dBus province.[39] gSang phu, we could say in today's terms, had the status of a "centre of excellence".[40]

In these last two aspects—popularity of the leaders as teachers and philosophically oriented specialization—there is a strong contrast between gSang phu and other centres built in the same period, such as Rwa sgreng, whose leaders were not public figures with a large number of students and emphasized the study of contemplative systems.[41] Still, Rwa sgreng also qualified as a famous and successful monastic centre, at least until its demise at the beginning of the twelfth century. The success factors we have outlined for gSang phu thus represent one possible configuration that does not exclude other models at play in other cases.

## gSang phu as an Enclave of Learning

In terms of promoting a specific type of study and teaching within its walls— the passing on of knowledge that took place in the monastery was backed up by scholarly endeavours including the translation of Indian Buddhist texts

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pa attributes a 20-folio commentary on Legs pa'i shes rab's *Lam rim shlo ka drug* to him (ibid., 164).

39    The other three are sKyor mo lung (affiliated to the sBal clan) and two of its dependencies, Zul phu and dGa' ba gdong. These six were all grouped in the sKyid shod area. Note that the term itself is a later dGe lugs pa classification. As Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 685, note: "These seats exerted signal influence on the formation of the ensuing establishments of the dGe-lugs-pa key monasteries in the 15th century, being later incorporated into their network". See ibid., 689 for more details and 700 for a map of their location.

40    See the passage by the 16th-century author dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba comparing gSang phu to a snow mountain from which all streams of reading in Tibet are flowing (cited in Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 139–40).

41    Roesler and Roesler, *Kadampa Sites of Phempo*, 4, note that the followers of 'Brom ston "were not public figures who played any leading political or official role, but were rather monk yogis who stressed the need for seclusion and meditation and transmitted their teachings only to a limited number of selected students". However, this changed over time: "While the first generation of students, i.e., the generation of Potowa, Chengawa and Phuchungwa, passed on their teachings only to selected disciples, the next generation, i.e., of Langtangpa and Sharawa, is said to have started public teachings" (ibid., 7).

into Tibetan and the composition of indigenous commentaries and other treatises—gSang phu can be subsumed under the concept of "enclave of learning" as broadly defined by the contributors of the section. Far from functioning as a closed entity, gSang phu developed a broad range of interaction with the world *extra muro*. Here I distinguish two aspects of this interaction: gSang phu as a centre of gravity, and as a centrifugal point.

### gSang phu as a Centre of Gravity

First, gSang phu functioned as a *centre of gravity* for students and thinkers interested in scholastic learning.[42] One can draw up lists of individuals of all traditions and regional identities who went to gSang phu to study at some point of their training/career.[43] Unfortunately, the sources at our disposal often do not shed light on all the specifics. Religious histories concentrate on the establishment of lineages of transmission of Buddhist scriptures, while biographies/hagiographies notably aim at grounding a scholar's competence by highlighting his background studies. Both typically lack precise and/or exhaustive information pertaining for instance to the date of a scholar's stay at gSang phu, the names of the teachers he studied with, the titles of all the texts he learned, etc. But the very fact that the sources deem it worth mentioning that this or that scholar went to gSang phu to study is significant. Some of them were famous figures. While they were certainly attracted by the renown of gSang phu, it is likely that their presence in gSang phu, in return, enhanced gSang phu's repute.

It is difficult to estimate how early gSang phu achieved its status of centre of renown. But two centuries after gSang phu's founding, an indication of its status as "the place to be" for Buddhist scholastic studies is found in the account

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42    I borrow the expression "centre of gravity" from Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 279, who notes: "The strong intellectual tradition brought to Sangpu by Ngok-lotsāwa served as a center of gravity for monks intent on Buddhist intellectual life. Consequently, those concerned mainly with the Kadampa contemplative system of purifying the intellect (*blo sbyong*) and the related Stages of the Path literature tended to study at Retreng and its associated retreat centers. Conversely, those focusing on the cutting-edge philosophical works were more often at Sangpu or competing institutions in Lhasa or Pen-yül, for these were the sites where the newly translated material, particularly from Kashmir, was disseminated".

43    Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 141, lists famous religious figures belonging to various schools (bKa' brgyud pa, rNying ma pa, Jo nang pa, Bo dong pa) who visited gSang phu between the 12th and the 15th century. Van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 104, mentions that "it was frequented by Bon-po masters in search of scholarship as well". gSang phu students were not necessarily ordained monks (e.g., bSod nams rtse mo).

of the life of Maṅgala Guru (1231–1297) in the *Blue Annals*. Favouring medita-
tive practice over scholastic endeavours, he is reported to have told prospective
disciples: "If you desire to study, go to gSang phu!"[44] In contrast, the rNying ma
teacher Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug (1212–1270/73) writes: "If you wish to be a
scholar, meet the Sa skya pa". This stance is sometimes cited as an evidence of
the decline of gSang phu's fame as a scholastic centre in this period. However,
this interpretation must be tempered by the fact that Chos kyi dbang phyug
was a student of "the Sa skya pa", i.e., Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), a master of Sa
skya monastery who had embarked on an overt generalized refutation of his
predecessors and contemporaries in the field of epistemology.[45] Hence Chos
kyi dbang phyug's remark primarily indicates that a new competitor had
emerged, even though it is known that Sa skya Paṇḍita's criticism did not result
in an immediate or unanimous change in the scholarly community.

After the 13th century gSang phu also hosted "study centres" (*bshad grwa*) of
various religious schools (Sa skya pa and dGa' ldan pa) within its walls and over
time became made up of a cluster of colleges.[46] These colleges, or study cen-
tres, which occupied distinct locations within the monastery's perimeter,[47]
appear as enclaves within the main enclave, with their own religious orienta-
tion and funding. For some time they perpetuated the power of attraction that
the monastic centre had in the preceding centuries.

Later (after the 15th century), even though gSang phu's status had somewhat
faded, the monastery still attracted students on an occasional basis by hosting
mass gatherings for "summer sessions" (*gsang phu dbyar kha, gsang phu dbyar
gnas*).[48]

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44     Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 630.

45     Chos kyi dbang phyug's stance is discussed in van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 104–05.

46     See Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", esp. 142–43, which deals with the rise of the "thirteen
       colleges". Both the terms *grwa tshang* ("college") and *bshad grwa* ("study centre") are
       used synonymously in this regard. See also van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 115f. Onoda,
       "Abbatial Successions", 1050, notes: "By the mid-15th century both monasteries* had
       become organized as a cluster of *grwa tshangs* or almost selfsupported colleges" [*i.e.,
       the upper and lower colleges that resulted from the split of gSang phu, cf. below n. 49].
       The topic is taken up afresh in Nishizawa, "gSang phu ne'u thog", in particular 356–57, who
       refers to this phenomenon in terms of the "inner aspect of the diffusion of gSang phu
       scholasticism" (ibid., 352).

47     For a map see Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 144.

48     Onoda, "The Chronology", 208, notes that "most of those students who belonged to the
       dGe lugs pa and Sa skya pa monasteries in the Lhasa area had special summer sessions
       at gSang phu". According to Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 146, for the 15th to the 17th

### gSang phu as a Centrifugal Point

In addition to being a centre of gravity, gSang phu also functioned as a *centrifugal point*, in that the type of learning carried out within the enclave was exported and reproduced elsewhere. Here I distinguish several vehicles of diffusion in terms of "satellites" of gSang phu:

The first type of vehicle consists in "itinerant satellites", namely abbots/scholars of gSang phu going on "teaching tours". We have seen that this activity was carried out notably by rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab and rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (see above).

The second type consists in "fixed satellites" of gSang phu. Rather than travelling teachers, these are establishments founded as extensions of gSang phu and maintaining an official or acknowledged link with the "mother-monastery". One can distinguish two types of fixed satellites: the first are independent centres and peripheral monasteries that begin to be founded by the end of the 12th and in the 13th century.[49] One can give bDe ba can (founded in 1205) as an example, which was also one of the major scholastic centres of the time and figures in the list of the "six great scholastic centres" mentioned earlier. "Fixed satellites" of the second type consist of "study centres" (*bshad grwa*) established by gSang phu scholars within other bKa' gdams pa monasteries (e.g., sNar thang,[50] gNas rnying), or monasteries of other Buddhist schools, such as Khro phu and Tshal gung thang (bKa' brgyud pa), Sa skya (Sa skya pa), Zhwa lu (Zhwa lu pa).[51] In the centuries that follow, some of these satellites preserved

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century, this tradition was designed to preserve some continuity in gSang phu's scholastic tradition in spite of the split within the monastery. Everding, ibid., 141, cites a source that reports that from the 17th or 18th century onward, gSang phu was empty except for the time of the summer-session, when members of the *bla khag bcu* ("the group of ten monastic divisions") gathered there. Such sessions were reintroduced as the monastery regained in activity and were still held in the first half of the 20th century.

49    Their foundation follows the splitting of gSang phu into an upper and lower college. On the reasons of this separation see van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 112–13 and Onoda, "The Chronology", 206–07.

50    Vetturini, *The bKa' gdams pa*, 35, writes: "sNar thang monastery, the seat of the bKa' gdams pas of gTsang, reached its scholastic apogee after an important school of dialectics was established during the life of the seventh abbot mChims Nam mkha' grags (c.1210–1285) by the gSang phu dialectician sKyel nag Grags pa seng ge".

51    Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 143. The establishment of *bshad grwa* by the disciples of gNyal zhig 'jam dpal rdo rje (c. 1150–1220) is investigated in Nishizawa, "gSang phu ne'u thog", 352–54. Nishizawa refers to this phenomenon as the "outer" aspect of the period of the diffusion of gSang phu scholasticism (352).

their original link to the mother enclave through their participation in the summer gathering held in gSang phu.[52]

I would like to propose that scholars who at some point studied at gSang phu and then settled as teachers in another location also qualify as "satellites" insofar as they functioned as proxies of gSang phu provided that they promulgated teaching activities on the same corpus and along interpretative lines that bore a strong family resemblance with those upheld in gSang phu. These are "intellectual satellites" rather than "institutional" ones. The category could even be extended to scholars who had not actually studied in gSang phu but were schooled in a teacher-student lineage going back to a gSang phu scholar. Note that the paucity of biographical information often makes it difficult to determine the degree of an individual's link with gSang phu.[53] Another question is whether these individuals would be willing to identify themselves in terms of their direct or indirect affiliation with gSang phu or a gSang phu-scholar. Nevertheless, the substitutability of such informal satellites for the mother enclave appears to be illustrated in the account of the scholarly careers of bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182) and his nephew Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251). These two scholars are major figures of the Sa skya pa school (which, as mentioned before, became a competitor to gSang phu in the field of epistemology). The grandson of Sa skya's founder dKon mchog rgyal po (1034–1102) and son of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), bSod nams rtse mo first studied with his father. But obviously there were areas of Buddhist scholarship he could not study "at home". At the age of 17 he went to gSang phu to study with Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169), who remained his teacher until his death in 1169.[54] A generation later, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan likewise started his religious and scholarly training under his father and his uncle Grags pa rgyal mtshan (bSod nams rtse mo's brother). But when it came to philosophical training, like his uncle bSod nams rtse mo (who had passed away the year of Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's birth) he went outside of Sa skya. But unlike his

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52    See Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 141 on the *bla khag bcu*, and 143 and 146–47 on the Sa skya-affiliated centres of Dwags po grwa tshang and 'Phan po Nalendra.

53    For instance rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags, who is known to have held a teaching centre in sTod lung (Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 420, n. 25), studied with two of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab's disciples, but we do not know whether this took place in gSang phu or while they were travelling or established in a fixed satellite type of institution. We can also note that Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169), the sixth abbot of gSang phu, often mentioned as a paragon of gSang phu scholarship, first studied with rGya dmar ba in sTod lung before coming to gSang phu.

54    Cf. van der Kuijp, *Contributions*, 97–98.

uncle, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan did not go to gSang phu. Instead, when he was 19 years old, he went to rKyang 'dur in upper Nyang to study with mTshur ston gZhon nu seng ge (ca. 1150–1210).[55] The latter had been a student of Phya pa's and of Phya pa's student gTsang nag pa (although we do not know where and when he studied with them), a student-teacher affiliation which comes out clearly in the epistemological work he composed and that Kun dga' rgyal mtshan studied with him. He thus qualifies as a "satellite" of gSang phu at least in the second degree. Why did Kun dga' rgyal mtshan not go to gSang phu instead of studying with mTshur ston, who was not an especially famous figure? One hypothesis is that gSang phu was no longer "the place to be" to study epistemology. However, the epistemological tradition at this time must have been kept alive by gNyal zhig 'Jam dpal rdo rje—who had been a student of Dan bag pa sMra ba'i seng ge, himself one of the foremost students of Phya pa—who would have been the abbot of the upper college of gSang phu at that time. Another explanation suggests itself: location. Indeed, gSang phu is situated much further from Sa skya than rKyang 'dur. rKyang 'dur thus represented a valuable alternative to gSang phu in the form of a satellite enclave, although it was probably not an institutional one at this time.[56] It offered a similar possibility to gain access to a given corpus of texts, while having the advantage of a greater proximity to Sa skya.[57] In bSod nams rtse mo's case, the choice of going to gSang phu may have been driven either by the fame of the monastic centre or the fame of its foremost scholar in residence, Phya pa. For Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, access to learning a given set of texts in a functional location seems to have supplanted the search for a famous teacher or a famous enclave of learning.

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55    On Sa skya Paṇḍita's early scholarly training, see van der Kuijp, *Contributions*, 99 and Jackson, *The Entrance Gate*, 25–26.

56    In the *Blue Annals* (Roerich, 335), gNyal zhig's disciple 'Jam (dbyangs) gsar ma is credited with founding a study centre (*bshad pa'i grwa*) that many monks attended in sKyang 'dur (which I take to be an orthographic variant or a typo for rKyang 'dur). The existence of a monastic college (*chos grwa*) in rKyang 'dur is mentioned in the *Blue Annals* (Roerich, 771) in the account of the life of Kun spangs thugs rje brtson 'grus (born in 1243). Provided it is the same thing as the study centre mentioned previously, it gives us a *terminus ad quem* for its founding, for which no precise date is otherwise available. It is likely however to have post-dated Sa skya Paṇḍita's stay in 1202–1203.

57    According to some biographers, Sa skya Paṇḍita had already spent the previous year in upper Nyang (in 'Phrang) studying with Zhu ston rDo rje skyabs, who was a disciple of his uncle Grags pa rgyal mtshan (Jackson, *The Entrance Gate*, 25) and is probably to be identified with Zhu ston Hral mo, who had been an abbot of the Upper College of gSang phu (Jackson, "Madhyamaka Studies", 23).

"Satellites", whether fixed or itinerant, illustrated and reproduced gSang phu's scholarship outside its walls, thereby expanding the impact of the learning activities carried out within the enclave. At the same time, to a certain degree they duplicated gSang phu's function of centre of gravity.[58] As such they contributed to some extent to the power of attraction of gSang phu itself.[59] However, in the long run they were part of the factors that led to the demise of gSang phu, as they replaced it as centres of gravity.[60]

### On the Practicalities of Learning

As seems to be the case for other monastic centres in this period as well, the mother enclave and its satellite enclaves constituted an open network where prospective students were taught irrespective of their school affiliation, and might even not be ordained monks. However, "laymen" in the sense of "the non-specialized" were not included in this process. In particular the type of teaching considered in this paper, relative to the Buddhist scholastic tradition, was not designed to educate the masses. How were learning activities organized for the individual students attracted to gSang phu and its satellites? While we are well informed about the organization of the monastic curriculum

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58  For an example see Sørensen and Hazod, *Rulers*, 230 on the activities of 'Jam dbyangs śākya gzhon nu, sixteenth abbot of gSang phu, who founded the college of Chos 'khor gling (he directed it for six years, before ruling in gSang phu for 27 years), and the list of savants that went to Chos 'khor gling during this period.

59  In Everding's opinion ("gSang phu Ne'u thog", 143), the second type of "fixed satellites" I defined above particularly promoted gSang phu's power of attraction. He proposes that "we may assume that slowly even at this period traditions came into being, to send monks and scholars of these monastic branches to gSang phu, at least for a limited period of studies".

60  See van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 115: "In course of time, its position was in part usurped not only by Sa-skya monastery and its affiliates, but also by such institutions as had been founded by its students which began to attract potential staff members and students away from it". Regarding gSang phu's demise, Everding, "gSang phu Ne'u thog", 151, points on the one hand to the internal quarrels and individuation of the groups of monks within the monastery, and on the other hand to political and cultural changes in Tibet, notably linked with the rise of the dGe lugs pa school and the appearance of new seats of learning linked with the latter. Similarly, the Sa skya pa side of gSang phu and its colleges gave way to the new seats of learning established by Sa skya scholars such as Rong ston Śākya rgyal mtshan and Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po. gSang phu's prior fame as an enclave disappeared at this point, and the monastery lost in prestige and activity, finally becoming a ruin. It was revived in the 20th century thanks to the efforts of the 13th Dalai lama, but later destroyed during the "Cultural Revolution" (see van der Kuijp, "The Monastery", 118–19). On this issue, see also Nishizawa, "gSang phu ne'u thog", 357–58.

and methods of teaching in modern and pre-modern Tibetan monasteries, one cannot *prima facie* assume that they have been perpetuated unchanged from the earlier, medieval period. Many features may have been retained. But, against the myth of an enduring continuity, evidence is lacking for some prominent features (such as the use of debate for pedagogical purpose, hinted at at the earliest in the 13th century), or contradicted by the available materials (e.g. the hypothesis that teaching was based on textbooks modelled like *bsdus grwa* manuals). Nothing is known of an established curriculum, potential standard texts or scholastic degrees in the early days.[61] It is unclear whether teaching was carried out on an individual basis or whether scholars taught classes to small or large groups of students *in situ*.[62] Recently rediscovered philosophical texts authored by gSang phu scholars offer a promising alternative perspective to learn about teaching curriculum and techniques in this context. Indeed, through an examination of their form and content, as well as features of specific manuscript exemplars, these treatises can shed light on the context of

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61  In his paper dealing with the life of Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449), Jackson speaks of the "ten scriptures from the standard monastic curriculum" in which scholars were being tested, noting that "Such a testing in ten scriptures had become a fixed practice for advanced scholars in the reputable seminaries of dBus province in that time, i.e., in gSang phu, its branches and those seminaries following its traditions" ("Rong ston bKa' bcu pa", 346). This title, which Rong ston bore, "arose in the late fourteenth century as a further extension of the previous almost universal *geshe* degree, 'master of four scriptures' (*bka' bzhi pa*)" (ibid., 346). The latter title (given for instance to Tsong kha pa), which had emerged by the early 14th century, refers to the four subjects of Perfection of Wisdom, Epistemology, Monastic disciple and Buddhist metaphysics (ibid., 346–47). It was "upgraded" "from about the 1390s" to "master of the ten scriptures"—it is not exactly known which texts this included, "they must have been a standard group of four scriptures augmented by six more basic Indian treatises that had by his [i.e. Rong ston's] generation recently come into common use at gSang phu" (ibid., 348). The title lasted about two generations before the emergence of the title *rab 'byams pa* "short for *bka' rab 'byams pa smra ba'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen*, 'religious teacher who expounds all scriptures'. The 'all scriptures' (*bka' rab 'byams pa*) here must have designated the entire agreed upon corpus of about eighteen texts" (ibid., 347).

62  For the time of Gro lung pa (rNgog Blo ldan shes rab's disciple), the 16th-century Tibetan historian of the Karma-Kagyu dPa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–66) speaks of a configuration of four teachers with teaching quarters in the four directions devoted, respectively, to epistemology, monastic discipline, Abhidharma (Buddhist philosophy/metaphysics) and Maitreya-texts (van der Kuijp, "The Monastery of Gsang-phu ne'u-thog", 111). This information should be treated with caution: in addition to the fact that this author was writing some four centuries after the events, his description appears too symbolically loaded to be taken at face value—it evokes both a maṇḍala configuration, and the configuration occurring in the description of Indian monastic universities.

their production and dissemination, and on their use in learning processes. The form of these indigenous texts would in particular undoubtedly benefit from a comparison with the literary forms of European medieval philosophy, especially because we know more in the European context about the way these forms were used in teaching at universities. The manuscript exemplars of these early works can also provide some hints regarding learning practices through manuscript colophons and marginal notes made by students, which for instance reveal the input of oral information and of other works used in parallel. Such sources, which are usually studied for their philosophical content, become relevant to a historically oriented inquiry insofar as these texts allow us to draw tentative inferences about the context of which they are the product and in which they were designed to be used.

## Conclusion—Intellectual and Religious Communities

This paper has focused on the status of gSang phu as an enclave of learning specializing in the philosophical aspects of the Buddhist corpus. But in terms of the purpose underlying its foundation, we have seen that it was founded by one of the main disciples of Atiśa and was presumably intended to uphold his teachings. This makes it a proto-bKa' gdams pa seat, and thereby part of a religious community which, at that time, was defined by its adherence to the teaching cycle of Atiśa rather than as a monastic order. But it is not certain whether the preservation of Atiśa's teachings remained a priority in the generations that followed rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab. Clearly, however, the "philosophical turn" promoted by the second abbot, rNgog Blo ldan shes rab, was not in phase with the usual orientation of other proto-bKa' gdams pa and bKa' gdams pa centres. This led to a disagreement in the Tibetan tradition as to whether rNgog Blo ldan shes rab and his disciples are to be classified as bKa' gdams pa, and whether the philosophical treatises they composed are to be counted as bKa' gdams pa works.[63] Further research would be required to

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63    The *Blue Annals*, whose author, 'Gos lo tsā ba, was ordained in a bKa' gdams pa monastery
      and studied in gSang phu (Vetturini, *The bKa' gdams pa*, 13–14), states that gSang phu
      scholars should not be considered to be bKa' gdams pa (see ibid., 25). A mes zhabs's
      (1597–1662) history also supports this claim (Vetturini, ibid., Part 2, 9). However, this was
      not an opinion shared by the author of the above-mentioned history, see Vetturini, ibid.,
      10: "Reflecting views of the earlier dGe g.ye ba history, Lo dgon pa differs with the *Blue
      Annals* by considering it one of the local traditions inspired by Atiśa". See also ibid., 25 and
      144. However Lo gdon pa does not include any epistemological treatise in his compendium of bKa' gdams pa literature, whereas modern Tibetan scholars chose to include

establish to what extent the teaching cycle of Atiśa was kept alive by Blo ldan shes rab and his successors, and whether this aspect had any weight in drawing students to gSang phu in the centuries that followed. To my knowledge, it is commonly the status of gSang phu as a a scholastic enclave of learning that is stressed rather than as a place devoted to the teaching cycle of Atiśa. This aspect of the activities carried out in the monastery (even if it was co-existent with other teaching orientations) did not define an affiliation to a religious community, but delineated an intellectual community that extended well beyond the walls of gSang phu and pervaded other monasteries through its spread via the various "satellites" discussed in the previous section.

For monastic centres or individual scholars, belonging to this intellectual community was merely a matter of sharing an orientation (in terms of the corpus of predilection and topics of study) and a method of analysis, without necessarily agreeing on all points of interpretation. The intellectual tradition that stemmed from gSang phu and its satellites was indeed far from being a monolithic one. The study of the texts of the various authors that have recently become available shows the need to temper the notion of a homogeneous trend by doing justice to the diversified contribution of individual thinkers over the concept of a mainstream textual interpretation.[64] As mentioned earlier, the very spread of gSang phu's intellectual tradition via its various satellites was one of the factors in the decline of the monastery. But through them the intellectual community that had stemmed from gSang phu also continued to flourish even after gSang phu had lost its initial prestige.

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such works in the recently published collection of bKa' gdams pa texts (*bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*) (ibid., 26 and 177).

64    The internal divisions that appeared within this tradition, even when they are strongly expressed, were in the beginning essentially a matter of interpretative disagreements. It is only in later times that they became entangled with conflicts between individuals, monasteries and schools that were more of a religio-political nature than a philosophical one.

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