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Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan, who features in this story, lived about a century ago in Btsal ba Village. Locals said that he went to Shambhala after he passed beyond suffering. This story illustrates the possibility of love not only between two people, but also between different ethnic groups and religions, while emphasizing Buddhist compassion toward animals – even tiny ants. The story suggests that when all sentient creatures and religions are held in equal respect, the world will be at peace.

Bkra shis was exhausted. He lay on a small bed in his home shrine room. Laymen rarely sat or slept on this bed, because it had been given by a highly respected local reincarnation *bla ma* – Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan – who had spent much of his life meditating alone in a cave. Local elders said that the great *bla ma* passed beyond suffering, leaving nothing behind but his fingernails and toenails, a sign of great spiritual attainment.

Bkra shis tightly gripped his head in his hands and thought, "I have seen the bodies of many great masters much reduced in size as they meditated for several months on their throne after they stopped breathing. Why did Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan only leave hair and nails? Is this enlightenment? Where did he go after his death? Did he go to the Kingdom of Shambhala?" These questions swirled about in his mind as his eyes slowly closed and he drifted off to sleep.

He stretched out on the bed with both shoes on, and after he was deeply asleep, he dreamed...

He was having breakfast at his home while his mother saddled his black horse. Then she went into the garden, pulled up a few handfuls of grass, picked some pears and apples from their fruit

trees, and put the fruit in a knitted woolen bag. She fed the horse with the grass she had just pulled, quickly returned to the second floor, and burned sacred juniper in the stove, which produced much fragrant smoke. She told Bkra shis to let the smoke waft over him and to fumigate himself in the smoke, adding that it would bring him luck during his journey to collect caterpillar fungus¹ on the mountains. She then went to the shrine room, took an amulet, and put it around his neck. They touched their foreheads together to say goodbye.

Bkra shis said, "Mother, I'll miss you! Take care," and then walked to a neighbor's big walnut tree, collected some walnuts, and put them in his leather bag before mounting his black horse and riding off. While riding, he repacked the special gift he had prepared for his girlfriend.

After two hours of riding, the horse was coated with sweat. Bkra shis dismounted, rested in a forest near a small pasture, and watched his horse graze on the fresh grass. Bkra shis climbed up a big pine tree and looked down at his home village, which he could clearly see. The village was surrounded by mountains. A clear brook ran at the southern edge of the village. Terraced fields sprouted corn and buckwheat.

As Bkra shis recalled the doting care his mother had shown him before he left, he wiped away tears with his robe's long sleeves. He slowly climbed down from the pine tree, mounted his horse, and ambled toward the herding area.

After another three hours of riding, he reached the Li shul Grassland where many young people from Btsal ba Village were pitching black tents. Both Bkra shis's brother, Nyi ma, and father, Rgya mtsho, looked up and smiled when they saw Bkra shis and his horse approach. Bkra shis crossed a small stream, quickly dismounted, and greeted his father by pressing his forehead against his father's. When Bkra shis entered the tent, his brother was churning butter tea. Bkra shis's father was sitting cross-legged. After making the tea, Nyi ma sat next to his father. Bkra shis then sat next to Nyi ma. Bkra shis's father handed a chunk of butter and some *rtsam pa* 'roasted barley flour' to Bkra shis and said, "You must be hungry. It's a long journey. Have some *rtsam pa*."

Bkra shis said, "Yes," took his wooden bowl from a leather bag, and began making *rtsam pa*.

His brother Nyi ma said, "How's Mother?"

Bkra shis replied, "She's fine. She gave me some fruit for you and Father."

Nyi ma was delighted to hear this and stood up to take some

¹ A valuable medicinal substance found on the grassland.

from the leather bag. Neighbors began arriving at the tent to see who had arrived and what they had brought from the village. Bkra shis looked around at the people, seemingly searching for something or someone. He responded absent-mindedly when a neighbor spoke to him. It had been a long while since he had seen his girlfriend, Gser skyid me tog. Their relationship was still secret. None of Gser skyid me tog's family members came to Bkra shis's tent, because Bkra shis's family members regarded them as enemies. Gser skyid me tog's grandfather had killed Bkra shis's grandfather ten years earlier. The two families had not talked since.

Thinking about the best way to give the gift he had prepared for Gser skyid me tog, Bkra shis asked his father, "Where are our livestock? Are they on the southern grassland?"

His father replied, "Yes, do you want to go find them?"

Bkra shis happily replied, "Sure! I'll go now."

Bkra shis draped the sling that he used to herd livestock over his shoulder, took out the gift he had prepared, and put it inside his robe. Bkra shis whistled as he passed Gser skyid me tog's tent – they used a special whistle to signal it was time to meet – and continued on his way to the grassland.

Bkra shis's gift consisted of a silver ring, a scarf, and a pair of leather gloves. Bkra shis also picked twenty-five lovely red flowers from the many decorating the grassland and thought, "How should I present this ring and these flowers to her? Should I embrace and kiss her? Will she accept my love and the engagement ring?"

Bkra shis sat on the green grassland and gazed into the distance. Some wild blue sheep were frolicking with the yaks and sheep. All Btsal ba villagers were Buddhists and believed that animals and humans were equal, so nobody dare disturb these wild creatures. Bkra shis enjoyed the fragrance of flowers around him, and the azure sky high above.

After a while, he noticed a tall girl with an attractive figure approaching. His nervous heart throbbed and he gripped the bouquet in front of his chest with both hands. Surprised to see Bkra shis with a bunch of flowers, Gser skyid me tog walked slowly toward Bkra shis with her head down. Meanwhile, Bkra shis summoned his courage and handed her the flowers. He murmured, "These twenty-five flowers symbolize your age and love for me."

Gser skyid me tog took the flowers, sniffed each one, and said, "Thank you. They are truly lovely."

Bkra shis replied, "You're welcome. I also brought some other gifts for you. Do you want to see them?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "Yes, I'm eager to see them."

Bkra shis took out the scarf and leather gloves, put the scarf around her neck, and helped her slip on the gloves. She was

delighted and thanked him.

Realizing that if she wore the gloves, she couldn't put on the ring, Bkra shis said, "How do you like these gifts?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "Very much!"

Bkra shis took off her left glove, told her to close her eyes, opened the ring box, slipped the ring on the middle finger of her left hand, and then told her to open her eyes. Bkra shis said, "It's our engagement ring. Will you marry me?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "I'd like to marry you, but our families..." and then she tightly embraced him as tears trickled from her eyes. It was their first embrace. Their two hearts throbbed like pounding drums. Bkra shis moved his hand to her upper back and tried to kiss her. Just as their lips and tongues joined, a melodious folk song seemed to burst forth. Gser skyid me tog felt afraid and covered her head and face with the scarf. They then scrambled up the mountain to tend the yaks and sheep. Before they set off in different directions, they agreed on the place where they should meet the next time.

Gser skyid me tog soon returned home and milked the female yaks, and then went inside the tent where her father was offering butter lamps before Buddha images. Her father asked her to make *mdzo sna*, a dish made from wheat flour, liquefied butter, and cheese, because it was the anniversary of Rje tsong kha pa having achieved enlightenment. This is a day when most Tibetans do not eat meat and make many butter lamps at home. After she finished cooking the *mdzo sna*, she asked her father to come eat. Before eating, her father recited scriptures and filled a bowl with *mdzo sna* as an offering to the Three Jewels. He also used a wooden spoon to offer some *mdzo sna* to the ground so that all who had died could also eat. Then her father said, "Gser skyid me tog, come eat some *mdzo sna*." They began eating. Her father ate three bowlfuls.

After discussing the next day's work, they went to bed. Her father drifted quickly into sleep, but Gser skyid me tog tossed and turned as she recalled Bkra shis giving her the gifts and flowers. The flickering of butter lamps and dancing shadows led her to imagine Bkra shis's presence. When the wind blew the flames grew brighter and moved more quickly, the shadows were more distinct, and her heart beat faster. She finally pulled the quilt up over her head and slept.

Bkra shis got up very early the next morning and finished all the housework. He took his spade, put bread in a bag, and went to the place where Gser skyid me tog usually collected caterpillar fungus. He searched and found ten before Gser skyid me tog came. He made a fire to boil water while Gser skyid me tog searched for

caterpillar fungus. A couple of hours later, Bkra shis called her to come eat.

Gser skyid me tog said that she hadn't found a single fungus, because she had slept poorly the night before. She added, "I can't eat now because Father will scold me if I find no caterpillar fungus."

Bkra shis hugged her and said, "It's important to eat. I promise I'll give you some fungus if you don't find any this afternoon."

She smiled and said, "Really? You're so kind to me."

Bkra shis said, "Of course, because you are my future wife." Then they ate together. Gser skyid me tog's eager eyes told Bkra shis what she wanted. Bkra shis then tightly embraced her and kissed her for a long time. Bkra shis was very proud to have finished, at long last, the first passionate kiss of his life, even though Gser skyid me tog had kissed him so hard it had left a small wound on his tongue. Meanwhile, Gser skyid me tog's uncle was peeping at them from behind a clump of bushes. As the sun moved toward the horizon, Bkra shis gave most of what he had collected to his girlfriend.

Gser skyid me tog's father glared at her when she entered their tent and angrily demanded, "How many caterpillar fungus did you bring? Who were you with?"

Gser skyid me tog quietly said, "I got eight fungi. I was alone."

Her father seemed to know something, but he said nothing. Gser skyid me tog picked up her wooden bucket and went to milk the yaks. While milking the last one, Bkra shis suddenly appeared and said, "Are you OK?"

She replied, "I'm fine, but you need to leave – quickly!" Full of curiosity, Bkra shis lingered. Suddenly, they heard a loud voice, and Gser skyid me tog's father rushed at them with a knife. As her father lunged at Bkra shis, Gser skyid me tog grabbed the knife, and her hands immediately began dripping blood. While continuing to grip the knife, she yelled, "Bkra shis! Run!" Bkra shis turned and fled.

Gser skyid me tog's relatives soon came and took her father into the tent. One of the relatives, Sgrol ma, was a doctor who cleaned the wound with alcohol and then wrapped it with gauze. Gser skyid me tog wept, not from the pain, but from heartache. She knew that her father would order her to never meet Bkra shis again.

Bkra shis returned, panting, to his tent. His father asked, "What's the matter? What happened?"

Bkra shis lied, "Nothing." He knew that if he told him the truth that his father would fight Thub bstan, Gser skyid me tog's father.

As Bkra shis poured a bowl of butter tea for his father, Nyi ma entered the tent and said, "Bkra shis, are you OK? I heard Thub bstan beat you?"

Bkra shis's father angrily jumped up, grabbed his rifle from the central tent pole, and said, "We must kill Thub bstan tonight! His father killed my father."

Bkra shis knelt on the ground and grabbed their legs.

Nyi ma said, "Bkra shis, what are you doing? Stop this!"

Bkra shis replied, "It's my fault! I really love Gser skyid me tog. Please forgive me."

Bkra shis's father replied, "What? You love our enemy's daughter? Are you mad? I'll forgive you just this time, but you must stop your relationship with Gser skyid me tog immediately!"

Bkra shis reluctantly murmured, "I will..."

His father told him to stand up and then told Bkra shis the story about Bkra shis's and Gser skyid me tog's grandfathers. Bkra shis pretended to listen carefully, but his heart was with Gser skyid me tog. After he finished, Bkra shis's father told his two sons to go to bed. Under his quilt, Bkra shis took his prayers beads from his wrist and prayed for Gser skyid me tog to recover soon.

The next morning, Bkra shis left to collect fungus while Gser skyid me tog stayed in her tent, nursing her wounds. Bkra shis heard a drumbeat while walking by a steep cliff. He looked around and noticed a cave twenty meters up on the cliff. He slowly climbed up, and as he neared the cave, he saw a tantric specialist with hair in a single long braid beating a drum. Bkra shis happily thought, "I'm very lucky, but he is meditating so I shouldn't disturb him."

The specialist stopped beating the drum and waved to him. Bkra shis took off his hat and made three prostrations. The specialist asked, "How many caterpillar fungi did you collect? How many people are collecting caterpillar fungus? How did you find me?"

Bkra shis replied, "I have only collected three caterpillar fungi today. More than a thousand people are collecting caterpillar fungus in this area. I'm just passing by."

The meditator shook his head, sighed, and said, "Even though caterpillar fungi can be sold for a lot of money, it is only brings temporary benefit. Collecting caterpillar fungus damages the environment and harms many future generations."

Bkra shis suddenly changed the topic, and asked the specialist to make a divination for his future with Gser skyid me tog.

The specialist agreed and said, after performing the divinations, "The signs are very good. They indicate that she will recover soon. In terms of your relationship, you should both leave for another place - your families will not agree to your marriage."

Bkra shis said, "Thank you! Where should we go?"

The specialist said, "Go very far away. You will face many difficulties. Are you sure that you want to go with her?"

Bkra shis eagerly said, "Yes, I do! Where exactly should we go?"

The specialist thought for a moment and said, "Go north to a place called Ka IA pa in the Kingdom of Shambhala. If you decide to go there, you must go very soon. Good luck to you and your future wife." The specialist then gave more detailed information about Ka IA pa.

After leaving the cave, Bkra shis made plans to go to Shambhala and returned home with only three caterpillar fungi. Bkra shis desperately wanted to communicate with Gser skyid me tog, but was afraid to go to her tent. Then he thought of Tshe ring, his best friend, who could be a messenger, because Tshe ring was also Gser skyid me tog's close relative. Bkra shis went to Tshe ring's tent who, luckily, was alone. Bkra shis asked him to tell Gser skyid me tog his plan. Tshe ring refused at first, but Bkra shis then told Tshe ring how much he loved Gser skyid me tog and begged, with tears in his eyes, to convey his message to Gser skyid me tog.

Moved by Bkra shis's tears and his obvious sincerity, Tshe ring finally agreed. They then discussed the plan in detail. Bkra shis planned to leave at midnight in two days' time. He wanted Gser skyid me tog to meet him in a place called Rtsed thang. Meanwhile, he would prepare a yak to transport their belongings and Gser skyid me tog could ride the yak when she was tired.

At the appointed time, Bkra shis got up very quietly and went to Rtsed thang. After about a half hour, Gser skyid me tog arrived. Seeing the trace of tears in her eyes, Bkra shis asked, "Did you cry when you left your tent?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "No," while dabbing at her eyes with her sleeve. Then she said, "Will we go to Shambhala? How do we get there? I heard that only highly realized holy people could go there. Is it also possible for laypeople to go there?"

Bkra shis replied, "It is possible. A tantric specialist advised us to go there and gave me detailed directions to Ka IA pa, which is in the Kingdom of Shambhala."

Gser skyid me tog said, "I understand. Shall we start our journey?"

Bkra shis replied, "Yes, let's begin," and then they set off.

After a half-day of travel, they reached Mount Kong btsan. Its peak covered in snow, the mountain resembled a person wearing a white scarf. They cut some juniper branches and took out clean butter, *rtsam pa*, and tea leaves from what Bkra shis had packed. Gser skyid me tog collected dry wood and grass. After Bkra shis had

made a fire, he added juniper branches, wheat flour, *rtsam pa*, and tea leaves and then chanted a prayer dedicated to the mountain deity. Bkra shis broke off a twig from a juniper branch, went to a small stream, put the twig in the stream, and took it back to the smoldering incense offering. He flicked water from the twig onto the smoldering pile of offerings to further purify the area. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog knelt in front of the offering and prayed for the welfare of all sentient beings. They then continued their journey to Shambhala.

Eight hours later, when Gser skyid me tog felt tired, Bkra shis suggested she ride the yak. They then went on and eventually reached a quiet valley through which a river flowed. Bkra shis helped Gser skyid me tog dismount and then he located a good place to pitch their tent. Meanwhile, Gser skyid me tog unloaded the yak and turned it free to graze.

Bkra shis said, "What do you think about this place? Do you regret running away with me? You must be tired. Rest! I'll do all the work here."

She replied, "It's very quiet and beautiful. I love being here. I don't regret coming with you. In my heart, we are inseparable. I'm a little bit tired, but I'll cook for you. It is my first chance to cook for you and I'll do my best."

Bkra shis was sweating after pitching the tent. He said, "Sweetheart, I'll go collect some juniper tree bark to put on the grass under our sleeping mats."

Gser skyid me tog said, "OK. I'll prepare noodles."

Bkra shis went to a nearby forest of juniper trees. Noticing many ants when he peeled bark from one juniper tree, he thought, "Where will all the ants go? If I destroy this ant nest, many ants will die. As a Buddhist, I must not peel bark from juniper trees and injure the ants." Bkra shis then collected some dry leaves instead and took them back to the tent.

Gser skyid me tog was cooking noodles when Bkra shis entered the tent. Gser skyid me tog asked in surprise, "Why didn't you bring bark?"

Bkra shis joked, "The juniper trees were too tall!" and then explained about the ant nests and his reluctance to bring suffering to the ants. Gser skyid me tog applauded his compassion and then went outside to collect nettles to cook with the noodles.

As the nettles and noodles were bubbling in their cooking pot, Bkra shis recalled the great yogi, Rje btsun Mi la ras pa, a student of Mar pa Lo tsA ba. While Mi la ras pa was meditating in a cave he ate uncooked nettles after rubbing them between his hands.

Gser skyid me tog served noodles, playfully pulled Bkra shis's hair, and asked, "What are you thinking? Are you missing

home? Are the noodles OK?"

Bkra shis replied, "The nettles in the noodles made me think of Mi la ras pa. The noodles and nettles cooked together are really delicious."

She said, "I worried that you were homesick."

Bkra shis said, "How do you like this world of two people?"

She said quietly, "I like it very much."

A bit later, Bkra shis made a bed. It was clear he was expecting them to share one quilt.

Gser skyid me tog noticed and said, "I'll give you my virginity only on the night of our wedding day."

Bkra shis was annoyed and quickly made separate sleeping places. Once in bed, Bkra shis rolled over without saying anything to Gser skyid me tog.

Gser skyid me tog thought to herself, "Does love mean we must sleep together? I know he's angry with me, but he should wait until we marry." Then she recited scriptures and soon fell asleep.

At midnight, a furious storm awakened them. Gser skyid me tog called out "Bkra shis! I'm cold and afraid!"

Bkra shis told her to come to his bed and promised he would not bother her. She agreed and they slept together. Bkra shis held her tightly to keep her warm. Meanwhile Gser skyid me tog trembled from nervousness. Thinking she was still cold, Bkra shis asked, "Are you cold?"

She replied, "I'm not cold, just nervous, because it's my first time to sleep with a man."

Bkra shis giggled and kissed her neck. After a while, Gser skyid me tog became more relaxed and held Bkra shis. She was not wearing a bra. Bkra shis tried to touch her breasts by putting his right hand under her T-shirt. Gser skyid me tog then yelled, "Bkra shis! Please keep your promise!"

Bkra shis groaned, rolled over, and went to sleep.

Gser skyid me tog got up early and went out to collect some yak dung, so she could make a fire and boil some tea and wash their faces with warm water. She also heated the leftover noodles. Bkra shis got up and washed with warm water. They then made plans for the remainder of their trip. Bkra shis quickly finished breakfast and then went to find the yak and bring it to the tent. When Bkra shis came back with the yak, they gathered their belongings and loaded them on the yak.

Many months later they came to a large lake that marked the boundary of Shambhala. The only obvious way to cross the lake was to swim, but neither Bkra shis nor Gser skyid me tog could swim. Gser skyid me tog sadly said to Bkra shis, "We could easily cross if there were a bridge."

Bkra shis looked at Gser skyid me tog and said, "Don't be silly!" Then the sky became cloudy, lightning flashed, and thunder rumbled. At this juncture, the yak suddenly dove into the lake, swam a short distance, and then returned to shore.

Bkra shis said, "Look at the yak! He is very faithful and I trust him. He is signaling that he will help us cross the lake. If we drown, at least all three of us will die together."

They unloaded the yak, Gser skyid me tog and Bkra shis mounted it, and it began swimming across the lake amid the thunder and lightning. The yak did its best, despite a high wind that created huge waves. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the yak swam faster and panted desperately. Suddenly, when a gigantic wave came near, the yak shook itself, throwing its two riders up on the shore. Meanwhile, the yak was pulled back into the lake by the receding waves. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog gazed at the yak, tears streaming from their eyes. Gser skyid me tog said, "The yak is now part of our lives. He sacrificed himself for us." She clasped her hands together and chanted, "*oM ma Ni pad+me hUM.*"

Bkra shis comforted her and also recited some mantras while sitting crossed-legged.

After chanting for a while, they walked up to the top of a small mountain. From there they could see Ka IA pa City in Shambhala. Both travelers joyfully knelt and prayed for the benefit of all sentient creatures. Snow covered the mountain peaks ringing Ka IA pa. Wild animals ambled through the town amid the melodious twittering of various birds. There were neither cars nor tall buildings. The highest building was, what seemed to be, a magnificent monastery in the center of Ka IA pa.

Gser skyid me tog said to Bkra shis, "Look! The Kingdom of Shambhala truly resembles a Tibetan place."

Bkra shis said, "Let's enter the town, and see more."

Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog walked to the main street of the town. Everyone came out and greeted them with big smiles, even though they were strangers. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog were amazed to see that practitioners of different religions lived in this beautiful town. A tall man with brown hair took them to a beautiful house. Gser skyid me tog said, "You have a really nice house."

The man replied, "I will give you this house. I'm glad to meet you."

Gser skyid me tog said, "Thank you very much. I can't believe that people of Shambhala are so kind and generous. We are very glad to meet you, too."

Bkra shis added, "Thank you. Thanks very much."

A bit later, a Muslim woman wearing an open veil came and

gave them a big cooking pot. She said, "I'm sorry that I didn't come earlier."

Next, a monk wearing a red robe came and gave them a lot of food, and kindly greeted the other gift-givers. The monk and those bringing gifts were very friendly with each other. It seemed that they had known each other for a long time. The monk said, "My name is Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan. I'm happy to see people from my home village here."

Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog shed tears and knelt before him.

Gser skyid me tog said, "We are very lucky to meet you. You are the main *bla ma* of Btsal ba Village. Everyone there is waiting for your return."

Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan replied, "I also miss the villagers. I will return to Btsal ba to teach the Dharma after your wedding party."

After their conversation, Bkra shis went to wash vegetables in the stream near their home. Everyone in Shambhala was vegetarian, even though they practiced different religions, in the belief that the lives of animals and humans had equal value. Gser skyid me tog and the Muslim woman they had met earlier cooked the vegetables Bkra shis had washed. They then ate at one table and had an interesting conversation. When Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog suggested that they hold a wedding party two days later, Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan agreed. He said, "The wedding party will be on Sunday, which is an auspicious day." Then they all toasted with tea, because none of them drank alcohol.

After their guests left, Gser skyid me tog and Bkra shis felt tired and prepared to sleep. Gser skyid me tog said, "What happened today that you found to be the most interesting? People here are very friendly, warm-hearted, and respect each other's beliefs."

Bkra shis replied, "I also noticed that. If everyone in the world respected each other's beliefs and cultures, then the whole world could be just like Shambhala. There would be no conflicts created by different religious beliefs."

The next day, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog overslept. When Gser skyid me tog got up and opened the windows, she saw many people waiting outside. They had come to help Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog prepare for the wedding party. Gser skyid me tog went to the bedroom and awakened Bkra shis. After getting dressed, Bkra shis opened the door. Many people gave flowers and other gifts to Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog, who were moved by such kindness.

After many hours preparing for the wedding party, Bkra shis

and Gser skyid me tog were exhausted and went to bed early.

The next morning, a clanging bell awakened Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog. They got up quickly and dressed. Bkra shis found the wedding ring and put it inside his robe. They then went to the monastery garden, where they saw many people wearing beautiful clothing.

After breakfast at the monastery, Bkra shis said, "Let's go inside the main temple and pray."

When they went inside, they saw an image of Jesus Christ and the crescent moon symbol of Islam. Bkra shis said, "This doesn't look like a Buddhist temple. I guess we're in the wrong place."

As they started to leave, a monk shouted and gestured at them. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog turned and went in the direction the monk was pointing. They soon saw a huge image of the Buddha, and made three prostrations. The monk explained that Shambhala had only one place for all religious practitioners, who lived in harmony without conflict, hatred, ignorance, jealousy, or selfishness.

After worshipping, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog entered the monastery garden. The leaders of the various religious groups in Shambhala were seated and did as was appropriate for a marriage in their respective religious traditions. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog finished the wedding that morning with the help of an old man.

That afternoon, all the people of Shambhala danced hand in hand, clad in their various ethnic costumes. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog also danced and were delighted to see so many people participating in their wedding, and also happily received blessings from Shambhala's various spiritual leaders.

After everyone went home, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog sat in the garden of their home. Bkra shis asked, "What did you think of today?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "I'm very glad that so many people attended our wedding. If our parents had been here, I would have been even happier."

Bkra shis said, "I feel the same," and then they went into their house. Bkra shis took a bath while Gser skyid me tog prepared the bed. When Bkra shis finished bathing, Gser skyid me tog also took a bath. Bkra shis lay under a single quilt as Gser skyid me tog dried herself and then slipped into a long, sleeveless gown. After getting into bed, Bkra shis kissed her cheeks, lips, and neck. She seemed to enjoy this, though she said nothing. Slowly, she became more passionate and returned Bkra shis's kisses. They slept very little that night.

The next morning, Gser skyid me tog pointed to blood on the sheets and proudly said, "Bkra shis, this shows my love for you."

Some years later, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog had two children and were a happy family. Meanwhile, Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan returned to Btsal ba and taught the Dharma. The villagers thus all gained a better understanding of Buddhist concepts and became kinder to each other. The villagers stopped eating meat, stopped hunting animals, stopped smoking, began protecting the environment, and respected different religions and cultures. They realized that the earth was their home and that all people, regardless of ethnicity, were their brothers and sister.

Later, Bkra shis's and Gser skyid me tog's families regretted their conflict, exchanged *kha btags*,² and apologized to each other. Bkra shis was so moved by this that he shouted, "Love in Shambhala! Love in Shambhala!"

In the shrine room, Bkra shis twitched and muttered in his sleep shortly before his mother came and awakened him. As Bkra shis slowly woke up, he found himself murmuring, "Love in Shambhala! Love in Shambhala! ..."

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

'Ba' thang འབའ་ཐང་།

'bri འབྲི།

Ba. Lobsang Gonbo, Ba' blo bzang mgon po འབའ་ལྷོ་བཟང་མགོན་པོ།

Bkra shis བཀ་ཤིས།

bla ma ལྷ་མ།

Btsal ba བཅའ་བ།

Dkar mdzes དཀར་མཛེས།

Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan དོམ་མགོ་ལྷ་མ་ཚེ་རིང་ཨོ་རྒྱན།

Gru ba lung ལྷ་བ་ལུང་།

Gser skyid me tog གསེར་སྦྱིད་མེ་ཏོག།

Ka la pa ཀ་ལ་པ།

kha btags འ་བཏགས།

² An offering scarf presented to religious personalities, guests, and friends to show respect.

Kong btsan ཀོང་བཙའ་ན།

Li shul ལི་ཤུལ།

Mar pa lo tsA ba མར་པ་ལོ་ཙ་པ།

Mdzo sna མཛོ་སྤ།

Mi la ras pa མི་ལ་རས་པ།

Nyi ma ཉི་མ།

oM ma Ni pad+me hUM ཨོཾ་མ་ཉི་པདྨེ་ཧུཾ།

Qinghai Normal University མཚོ་ལྗོངས་དགེ་ཐོན་སློབ་ཆེན། 青海师范大学

Rgya mtsho རྒྱ་མཚོ།

Rje btsun mi la ras pa རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལ་རས་པ།

Rje tsong kha pa རྗེ་ཙོང་ཁ་པ།

rtsam pa རྩམ་པ།

Rtsed thang རྩེད་ཐང།

Sgrol ma སྐྱོལ་མ།

Shambhala ཤམ་བུ་ལ།

Sichuan སི་ཁོན། 四川

Thub bstan ཐུབ་བསྟན།

Tshe ring ཚེ་རིང།