

***mKha' 'gro dbang mo'i rnam thar*: the Biography of the gTer-
ston-ma bDe-chen Chos-kyi dBang-mo**

Donatella Rossi

Volume 48 of the Bonpo *brTen 'gyur* recently republished under the supervision of sMon-rgyal lHa-sras Rinpoche and sPrul-sku bsTan-pa'i Nyi-ma and acquired by IsIAO (Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, ex IsMEO) contains a text with no initial title but with marginal title *mKha' 'gro dbang mo'i rnam thar*, (folios 800–1182). This appears to be the hagiography of bDe-chen Chos-kyi dBang-mo, whose birth is placed by the sMan-ri Abbot Nyi-ma bsTan-'dzin (1813–1875) in the Earth-Dragon Year, *i.e.*, 1868, in Nyag-rong-shod (dKar-mdzes/Sichuan). bDe-chen Chos-kyi dBang-mo was a student of the famous Bon teacher Shar-rdza bKra-shis rGyal-mtshan (1859–1934). She is credited with the discovery in the Earth-Horse Year (1918) of a text containing sixteen hagiographies of female saints, including those of Mandarava and Ye-shes mTsho-rgyal, apparently the only Bonpo *gter ma* revealed or discovered by a woman in recent times. bDe-chen Chos-kyi dBang-mo's discovery is mentioned by Shar-rdza bKra-shis rGyal-mtshan, in his *Legs bshad mdzod*, as *mKha' 'gro' bka' thang*. The text has been the object of a preliminary study by this writer (Eighth Seminar of the IATS, Bloomington, Indiana, 1998). bDe-chen Chos-kyi dBang-mo is also credited with the compilation of a liturgical text on the practice of *gCod* (*Yum chen kye ma 'od mtsho'i zab gsang gcod kyi gdams pa las phran dang bcas pa'i gsung pod*, Tshering Wangyal, TBMC, Dolanji, 1974). The contribution will consist of a report on the study and analysis, based upon an interdisciplinary approach, of the *mKha' 'gro dbang mo'i rnam thar*, a text that can be considered as significant under many respects within the framework of the Tibetan literary genre represented by biographies of holy figures.