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Phabongkha Dechen Nyingpo: His Collected Works and the Guru-Deity-Protector Triad¹

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*Fully complete mandala of love [Jampa (byams pa)] and compassion,
Crowning ornament of the holders of the teachings [Tenzin (bstan 'dzin)],
the source of bliss,
The manifestation of your activities [Trinle ('phrin las)] pervades the earth,
[You are the] lord of an all-pervading ocean [Gyatso (rgya mtsho)] of
victors!²*

he above verse, which in the Tibetan weaves within it the names of the teacher it praises, Phabongkha Jampa Tenzin Trinle Gyatso (byams pa bstan 'dzin 'phrin las rgya mtsho, 1878-1941), also known as Dechen Nyingpo (bde chen snying po), are attributed to Gendun Choephel (dge 'dun chos 'phel, 1903-1951). The praise (*bstod bsngags*) was composed as an inscription (*rgyab yig*) to a drawing that Gendun Choepel made of the teacher, and demonstrates the high esteem in which Phabongkha was once held by one of the most forward-thinking Tibetan figures of the early twentieth century. The writings of Phabongkha contained within his *Collected Works* (*gsung 'bum*) are today widely available in eleven volumes, together with a supplementary volume. The subjects of Pha-

¹ The research for this article was undertaken at the Department of World Cultures, University of Helsinki and was made possible by a grant from the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

² "byams brtse'i dkyil 'khor rnam rdzogs pa/ bstan 'dzin bde 'byung gtsug gi rgyan/ 'phrin las snang bas gser ldan khyon/ kun khyab rgyal ba rgya mtsho 'i mgon" (ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje, ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje, rigs dan dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho 'i khyab bdag he ru kah dpal nur smrig gar rol skyabs gcig pha boñ kha pa bde chen sñin po pal bzañ po'i rnam par thar pa don ldan tshans pa'i dbyans sñan: *The detailed biography of Rje Pha-boñ-kha-pa Byams-pa-bstan-'dzin-'phrin-las-rgya-mtsho*, Vol. 1 of 2, p. 587). For Donald S. Lopez Jr.'s translation of this praise, based on the same stanza as found in Gendun Chopel's biography (instead of Phabongkha's), see Gendun Chopel, *In the Forest of Faded Wisdom: 104 Poems by Gendun Chopel*, pp. 44-45.

bongkha's writings, and of his immediate teachers and students are diverse, reflecting both the conservative continuation of Tsongkhapa's (tsong kha pa, 1357-1419) Gelug (dge lugs) tradition as well as a unique development of the same. Central to his teachings and writings were those of the Stages of the Path (*lam rim*) genre exemplified by his most famous teaching, *Liberation in Your Hand* (*rnam grol lag bcangs*)[11.1].³ These were then supplemented at more advanced levels by tantric practices, which form the bulk of Phabongkha's *Collected Works*, with an emphasis on the secret teachings of the Gelug tradition's orally transmitted Ganden Hearing Lineage (*dga ldan snyan brgyu*), as well as a number of newer revealed teachings, or "pure visions" (*dag snang*).

Phabongkha is undoubtedly a highly contested and perhaps often misunderstood historical figure. As an important lineage holder of the Dorje Shugden (rdo rje shugs ldan)-cycle of teachings within the Gelug tradition, he has been reviled as a sectarian spirit-worshipper by some and lauded as a pivotal guardian and interpreter of Tsongkhapa's lineage by others. The controversy surrounding the deity, who has today been abandoned by most Gelugpas, has already been documented in several important seminal studies by scholars such as Georges Dreyfus and Donald Lopez and thus this article will not touch upon these contemporary issues and developments.⁴ Numerous publications produced by both sides of the heavily polarized debate also exist, however within this article I have largely avoided critiquing or analyzing these, even with regard to accounts of Phabongkha. The historical facts and arguments presented by both are often far too overshadowed by a clearly biased agenda and interpretation or a general lack of usage or citation of Tibetan textual sources, resulting in inaccuracies too numerous to address here.⁵

Phabongkha, due to his promotion of Shugden, is often blamed for attacking the Bon (bon) tradition and fomenting sectarian discord against the Nyingma (rnying ma) lineage, especially in Kham (khams). It remains, however, to be established whether he was personally responsible for ordering any violent or sectarian acts or not,

³ For ease of reference, the titles of texts from Phabongkha's *Collected Works* are noted in-text together with their location in the contents as listed in the Appendix, in the following format: [volume number: work number].

⁴ Georges Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair: History and Nature of a Quarrel", pp. 227-270 and Donald S. Lopez Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-la: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, pp. 188-201.

⁵ Several recent anti-Shugden publications include: The Dolgyal Shugden Research Society, *Dolgyal Shugden: A History* and Raimondo Bultrini, *The Dalai Lama and the King Demon: Tracking a Triple Murder Mystery Through the Mists of Time*, both published by Tibet House US. A widely distributed pro-Shugden publication is the Western Shugden Society's *A Great Deception: The Ruling Lamas' Policies*.

or if these were instead instigated and carried out independently by zealous extremist students.⁶ Certainly many of Phabongkha's students and followers from the period, and many modern Gelug teachers, hold the view that Phabongkha has been unfairly accused.⁷ Thus although they do not deny that cases of sectarian discord may have taken place, they are adamant that these were not instigated or ordered by Phabongkha himself, who they say was a victim of baseless accusations due to his growing popularity.⁸ Phabongkha's direct role with regard to these unfortunate events thus remains unclear due to the lack of unbiased or independent accounts.

Phabongkha certainly held strong views and did not hold back from expressing them. He strongly believed that Tsongkhapa possessed a superior interpretation of the Buddhist path, especially with regard to Madhyamaka. However, whether or not he was uniquely sectarian when considering historical Tibetan religious figures as a whole is arguable, especially as his written works present both cases of polemical attacks on other traditions, while at other times stating the importance of being non-sectarian.⁹ Far more research is certainly

⁶ For an account of such persecution in the Chamdo (chab mdo) region see Chagdud Tulku, *Lord of the Dance*, p. 107. Similar accounts have been recorded by other Khampa Nyingma teachers as well. Gelek Rimpoche (dge legs rin po che, b.1939) however, noted that Trinle Dhargye ('phrin las dar rgyas, d.u.), who worked as Phabongkha's manager (*phyag mdzod*), stated that he and a group of other disciples went around in Kham and "showed their muscles" without the knowledge of the teacher (interview, 2014).

⁷ Lama Zopa Rinpoche (bla ma bzod pa rin po che, b.1946), for example, says that "There's no way he [Phabongkha] could have done the negative things they say he did." (Lama Zopa Rinpoche, "Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Dorje Shugden", in *Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive*). A similar opinion is shared by Gelek Rimpoche (interviewed, 2014). Both teachers have publically renounced the practice of Shugden.

⁸ Anonymous student of Phabongkha (interview, 2014). Due to the sensitivity of the subject, unless I have received explicit permission to reproduce an interviewee's name, their identity has been kept anonymous. Interviews for this article took place in several European countries, the US, Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region, primarily with senior Gelug lamas as well as other Gelug practitioners.

⁹ In *Liberation in Your Hand*, for example, Phabongkha is noted as saying "Firstly, you abandon Dharma when, on account of the Mahāyāna, you deprecate the Hīnayāna, on account of the Hīnayāna you deprecate the Mahāyāna, or similarly when you deprecate sutra, tantra, one the four classes of tantra, or the Sakya (sa skya), Gelug, Kagyu (bka' rgyud) or Nyingma [traditions] on account of your own school... (*dang po chos spong ba ni/ theg chen rgyu mtshan du byas nas theg dman la smod pa dang/ theg dman rgyu mtshan du byas nas theg chen la smod pa/ de bzhin du mdo dang sngags/ rgyud sde bzhi/ sa dge/ ka [sic] rnying sogs rang rang gi grub mtha' rgyu mtshan du byas nas gzhan la smod pa mtha' dag yin/...*)" (pha bong kha bde chen snying po, "rnam grol lag bcangs su gtod pa'i man ngag zab mo tshang la ma nor ba mtshungs med chos kyi rgyal po'i thugs bcud byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i

needed for us to have a clearer understanding of not only Phabongkha's views of other sects, but also about the sectarian discord that took place in the eastern parts of Tibet. What is definitely unique, however, is how this Gelug-protectionism manifested in the belief that Shugden would specifically shield the lineage from being "corrupted" (*log par spyod pa*) by "the views and tenets of others" (*gzhan phyogs pa'i lta grub*) through engaging in often very wrathful activities.¹⁰ Thus apart from the usual functions of a protector, Shugden perhaps also became an attractive deity-figure for those disposed to sectarianism.

Due to the contested nature of Phabongkha's legacy amongst Tibetan Buddhist practitioners, it is perhaps impossible to empirically present a face of Phabongkha that will satisfy everyone. The current controversy is so polarizing that it has led to a distortion of facts from many different sides, especially in regards to what Phabongkha's actual teachings consisted of. These strong and varying views of Phabongkha are certainly rooted in faith and the tantric interpretation of guru-devotion, which demands unfailing loyalty to one's own

nyams khrid kyi zin bris gsung rab kun gyi bcud bsduḡs gdams ngag bdud rtsi'i snying po", p. 172.) However there are numerous textual sources attributed to Phabongkha which appear to present a different view, for instance that presented in a collection of notes based on Phabongkha's talks given in Chamdo (Idan ma blo bzang rdo rje, "skyabs rje pha bong kha pa chab mdor bzhugs skabs snyan sgron du gsol zer ba'i yig rdzus kyi dpyad don mchan bus bkrol ba dpyod ldan bzhin 'dzum dḡod ba'i thal skad rḡga chen bskul ba'i dbyu gu"). The text includes discussions on Nyingma *terma* (*gter ma*) teachings, of which many were considered by him and his followers to be "absolutely false Dharmas that are unworthy of being practiced" ("*mtha' gcig tu rdzun chos yin pas nyams su len mi rung*") (Ibid., p. 26). It thus appears, as also pointed out by one Gelug practitioner (interviewed in Nepal, 2015), that Phabongkha and his students are making a distinction between the Nyingma tradition, its originators and their teachings, who are to be respected, and a selection of *terma* cycles that he considers degenerate. A number of such *terma* are mentioned throughout the text, including the famous *Namchö* (*gnam chos*) cycle, and several cycles of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (*zhi khro*) practice, many of which are accused of corrupting the Buddhist teachings with heretical (*mu stegs*) views derived, for example, from Brahmanical and Bon sources (Ibid., pp. 26, 34-35). These types of accusations and condemnations of specific *terma* cycles as being inauthentic are certainly not unique to Phabongkha and his students and have been expressed in relation to other teachings by previous Buddhist scholars. In this specific work, Phabongkha cites a number of earlier Buddhist scholars who denounced such "false" *terma* cycles. For a discussion of earlier denunciations of *terma* literature by Tibetan Buddhist figures of various traditions see, for example, Andreas Doctor, *Tibetan Treasure Literature: Revelation, Tradition and Accomplishment in Visionary Buddhism*, pp. 31-38.

¹⁰ See the brief description of Shugden's wrathful activities in pha bong kha, "rgyal chen srog gtad kyi sngon 'gro bshad pa'i mtshams sbyor kha skong", pp. 534-535. A section of this has been translated in Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", pp. 249-250.

teachers and their interpretations and presentations of their lineage history.

This article is not concerned with interpreting, refuting or defending Phabongkha's views of other traditions or even with Shugden per se. Instead it aims at presenting an alternative view of Phabongkha's works and what Phabongkha considered, or rather what he didn't consider, as the central emphasis of his teachings. Lopez writes about Phabongkha, that:

"Under his influence something of a charismatic movement occurred among Lhasa aristocrats and in the three major Geluk monasteries in the vicinity of Lhasa..., with Vajrayoginī as the tutelary deity (*yi dam*), Shugden as the protector, and Phabongkha pa as the lama".¹¹

Through introducing and demonstrating the variety and richness of material composed by Phabongkha, this article will present a different view from this often-repeated and held perception, which is certainly an over-simplification, even if Phabongkha did undoubtedly play a seminal role in the dissemination of the practices of Vajrayoginī and Shugden in the twentieth century.¹² I will suggest that Phabongkha's vision was not a simplified trinity, or a revisionist presentation of Tsongkhapa's practice lineages, as is often claimed or suggested. Shugden and Vajrayoginī were part of a wider program, became elevated in importance, but they did not displace or relegate other practices to a lower status, or form a central pool of practices. Although the opposite may be true today in the case of several Gelug or Gelug-derived lineages which claim to follow Phabongkha's lineage, this does not necessarily mean that this was the situation during Phabongkha's lifetime, or in line with his original intentions.

Much information remains to be uncovered about Phabongkha, the understanding of whom this article hopes to make a small contribution to. Indeed how can we presume to understand such a significant historical figure from the very limited published research available today? In order to demonstrate that Phabongkha's emphasis in terms of religious practice lay not only with Shugden and Vajrayoginī, this article will also begin with a brief history of the compilation and a discussion of the rich variety of literature produced by

¹¹ Lopez, *Prisoners*, p. 190.

¹² The same understanding of the Phabongkha-Vajrayoginī-Shugden trinity is observed in Georges Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", p. 246, as will be discussed below, and perpetuated in, for example, The Dolgyal Shugden Research Society, *Dolgyal Shugden: A History*, p. 50 and Simon Francis Stirling Daisely, *Exorcising Luther: Confronting the Demon of Modernity in Tibetan Buddhism*, 2012, pp. 162-163.

this teacher as embodied in his *Collected Works*, which is often ignored or overshadowed by the emphasis placed on the authors' Shugden-related works. It should be noted that considering the breadth of Phabongkha's works and the topic, the current article can only present an extremely brief introduction to his *Collected Works*, which will also be compared to the contents of the collected works of his closest student, Trijang Rinpoche Lobsang Tenzin Gyatso (khri byang rin po che blo bzang ye shes bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, 1901-1981). This brief presentation of these works will serve as a basis for the rest of the article and particularly its discussion of Vajrayoginī and Shugden. Finally, the full contents of the *Collected Works* and the supplementary volume are listed and translated into English in the Appendix. The presentation of the contents in English will allow non-Tibetan readers a chance to browse the titles attributed to this important twentieth-century teacher as well as clearly demonstrate the breadth of Phabongkha's work.¹³

Phabongkha's *Collected Works*

Phabongkha's *Collected Works* in their two most widely available forms are: a reproduced edition published by Chopel Legdan in the 1970s in Delhi and the original Lhasa (lha sa) woodblock edition made available through the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC), both of which make up eleven volumes (see Appendix).¹⁴ A supplementary volume was also later added to the Delhi edition.¹⁵ The Lhasa edition of the eleven volume set comprises of 122 separate titles, a number that could be expanded if several smaller works subsumed under one title are taken into account. For example the second work of the sixth volume (*cha*), *A Collection Regarding the Sādhanas of the Highest Deities such as "Guide to the Lifespan of Kurava" and Other Easy-to-Perform Recitation Practices* [6.2], is composed of ten

¹³ Many of Phabongkha's works, and those of his students, have been translated into English. These works, of which several have been translated more than once by different translators, are largely *sādhanās*, their commentaries, as well as several longer works on the *lamrim*. In the material presented here I have chosen to always refer to the original Tibetan sources cited, when available.

¹⁴ For the Chopel Legdan edition see Pha-bong-kha-pa Byams-pa-bstan-'dzin-'phrin-las rgya-mtsho, *Collected Works of Pha-bong-kha-pa Byams-pa-bstan-'dzin-'phrin-las rgya-mtsho*. For the Lhasa edition see pha bong kha, *khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang pha bong kha pa dpal bzang po'i gsung 'bum*.

¹⁵ For the supplementary volume see Pha-boñ-kha-pa Bde-chen-sñin-po, *A Collection of Supplemental Works of Skyabs-rje Pha-boñ-kha-pa Bde-chen-sñin-po reproduced from blockprints recently found by Ven. Khri-byañ Rin-po-che*.

sādhanas of various deities.¹⁶ Furthermore a number of Phabongkha's compositions are today also missing from both the Delhi and Lhasa editions, as will be shown below.

Included in the *Collected Works* are teachings and notes on philosophical topics such as *pramāṇa* (valid cognition), records of teachings he received, his correspondences, advice and even a biography he composed of his principal teacher [10.1], Dagpo Lama Lobsang Jamphel Lhundrup Gyatso (dwags po bla ma blo bzang 'jam dpal lhun grub rgya mtsho, 1845-1919). Thus, the contents represent a variety of written materials which bring together not only Phabongkha's own writings, but also works and notes on Phabongkha's life, activities and teachings. The most famous example of a text penned by his students based on his oral discourses is *Liberation in Your Hand* [11.1], a teaching of Phabongkha's compiled and edited by Trijang Rinpoche, and which takes up the entire eleventh volume (*da*) of the set.

On top of *Liberation in Your Hand*, around ten other *Stages of the Path*-related titles are listed in the contents of the *Collected Works* and the Delhi supplement, including instructions on the preliminary practices of the *Stages of the Path* (*lam rim sngon 'gro sbyor chos*) [5.2, 5.3], an important set of explanations on the *Four Interwoven Annotations of the Great Stages of the Path* (*lam rim chen mo mchan bu bzhi sbrags ma*) [5.1] and a commentary on a combination of both Panchen Lobsang Yeshe's (paN chen blo bzang ye she, 1663-1737) *Swift Path Stages of the Path* (*lam rim myur lam*) text and Tsongkhapa's *Middling Stages of the Path* (*lam rim 'bring ba*) [9.4].

The majority of Phabongkha's works, however, concern tantric topics, ranging from subjects such as *chod* (*gcod*), for which he composed a text that is still used widely today by Gelug *chod* practitioners [5.10], to quintessential guru yoga texts. In terms of the latter, Phabongkha created an expansion of Panchen Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen's (paN chen blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570-1662) *Six-Session Guru Yoga* (*thun drug bla ma'i rnal 'byor*) [9.3] manual and, for example, composed a secret variant of the standard Gelug guru yoga practice, *Hundred Deities of Tushita* (*dga' ldan lha rgya ma*) [2.9], as

¹⁶ See pha bong kha, "sgra mi snyan gyi tshe khrid kyi 'don chog khyer bde sogs lhag lha'i sgrub thabs skor phyogs bsgrigs", pp. 27-57. The works included under this title include the practice of Amitāyus entitled "Guide to the Lifespan of Kurava" (pp. 28-35), as well as short practices of Sita Tārā (pp. 35-36), Sita Manjuśrī (pp. 36-39), Kurukullā (pp. 39-40), Avalokiteśvara Jinasagāra (pp. 40-42), Vajrapāṇi-Hayagrīva-Garuḍa (pp. 42-43), Samayavajra (pp. 43-44), a combined practice of Clear-dream Tārā (*rmi lam gsal ba'i sgrol ma*) and Śramaṇī (pp. 45-46), Five-deity Cakraṣaṃvara (pp. 49-52) and finally a short daily Vajrayoginī sādhana (pp. 52-57).

well as a related transference of consciousness ('pho ba) practice [2.11]. The *Guru Pūjā* (*bla ma mchod pa*), another essential guru yoga text that is particularly central to the Ganden Hearing Lineage, likewise received Phabongkha's attention. The text was used as a basis for the composition of, for example, a long-life ritual [2.6] as well as a unique rendition of the text focused on the deity Cakrasaṃvara [2.3].

The cycle of teachings related to Cakrasaṃvara was the single most important subject of Phabongkha's writings. For example, one of Phabongkha's additions to Chokyi Gyaltzen's *Six-Session Guru Yoga* text was the inclusion of sixteen lines of praise to Cakrasaṃvara and his consort, Vajravārāhī.¹⁷ While most of Phabongkha's writings on Cakrasaṃvara focus on the body mandala practice of the Ghaṅṅāpa Lineage, he also composed texts on other forms of the deity, most notably the White Cakrasaṃvara long-life practice [3.13-15], an uncommon transmission intimately connected to the Ganden Hearing Lineage and originating from Tsongkhapa's vision-based *Dharma Cycle of Mañjuśrī* ('*jam dbyangs chos skor*), received via his teacher Lama Umapa Pawo Dorje (*bla ma dbu ma pa dpa' bo rdo rje*, c.14th century).¹⁸

The majority of Phabongkha's compositions on the Cakrasaṃvara cycle, however, relate to Vajrayoginī Naro Kechari, a form of Cakrasaṃvara's consort Vajravārāhī. His compositions on the solitary female deity comprise a complete corpus of ritual texts including long and abbreviated *sādhana*s [4.1, 4.2], several *gaṇacakra* texts [4.1, 4.12], a self-entry ritual (*bdag 'jug*) [4.3], burning offering (*sbyin sreg*) ritual texts [4.6-8, 4.10, 4.13], transference of consciousness instructions [4.14] as well as an important commentary on the generation (*bkskyed rim*) and completion stages (*rdzogs rim*) [10.5]. Indeed Phabongkha wrote more individual texts on Vajrayoginī than any other deity, although Vajrabhairava and Cakrasaṃvara come in close second. Cakrasaṃvara was apparently the principal practice of the lineage holders of the Southern Stages of the Path Lineage (*lho rgyud lam rim*), a *Stages of the Path* transmission which was not very widely

¹⁷ The lines are considered a recitation commitment for those who have received a Mother Tantra (*ma rgyud*) empowerment. See pha bong kha, "thun drug bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang /sdom pa nyi shu pa/ bla ma lnga bcu pa/ sngags kyi rtsa ltung sbom po bcas kyi bshad khrid gnang ba'i zin tho mdor bsdus/", p. 115.

¹⁸ The cycle consists largely of different manifestations of Mañjuśrī in his outer, inner and secret (*phyi nang gsang*) forms, as well as other deities such as Krodhakālī (*khros ma nag mo*). Several variant names exist for the Ganden Hearing Lineage, including the "Hearing Lineage of Protector Mañjuśrī" ('*jam mgon snyan brgyud*), which is used in relation to the transmission of this cycle in *bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*, "jam dbyangs chos skor gyi rjes gnang gi zin tho nyung bsdus", p. 3108.

practiced in Central Tibet and which Phabongkha had presumably received from Dagpo Jamphel Lhundrup.¹⁹ This reason may well have contributed to Phabongkha's devotion to the Cakrasaṃvara cycle.

It is interesting to note that although Phabongkha mentions Cakrasaṃvara, Guhyasamāja and Vajrabhairava, the three principal meditational deities promoted by Tsongkhapa, numerous times in his *Liberation in Your Hand*, Vajrayoginī appears to get no mention. Phabongkha's teachings that were subsequently transcribed by Trijang Rinpoche, eventually to be published as *Liberation in Your Hand*, were given in 1921. By this time Phabongkha was already enthusiastic about transmitting Vajrayoginī teaching as is evident from his biography, *The Melodious Voice of Brahma* (*tshangs pa'i dbyangs snyan*), and the colophons of some of his texts. The colophon of Phabongkha's Vajrayoginī self-entry text, *Festival of Great Bliss* (*bde chen dga' ston*), mentions that Phabongkha gave a teaching on the deity in 1910.²⁰ As is also mentioned in Phabongkha's biography, at that time Lady Dagbhrum Jetsunma Thubten Tsultrim Drolkar (*dwags b+h+ruM sku ngo rje btsun ma thub bstan tshul khriims sgröl dkar*, d.u.) and one of Phabongkha's managers (*phyag mdzod*), Ngawang Gyatso (*ngag dbang rgya mtsho*, ?-1936), both requested him to edit several Vajrayoginī texts. Ngawang Gyatso requested for him to review a mandala-rite from the Ngor lineage (*ngor mkha' spyod sgrub dkyil*) and Lady Dagbhrum, who wanted to produce new printing blocks of a Shalu commentary on Vajrayoginī (*zhwa lu khrid yig*), requested Phabongkha to edit this.²¹ Although a date is not

¹⁹ pha bong kha, "rnam grol lag bcangs", p. 76. The lineage is associated with a specific transmission of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso's (*ngag dbang lo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1642-1682) work, *The Words of Manjuśrī* (*'jam dpal zhal lung*).

²⁰ pha bong kha, "rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga bde chen dga' ston", p. 128.

²¹ ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje, *tshans pa'i dbyans sñan*, Vol. 1 of 2, pp. 377-378. It is important to note that both a one-volume and a two-volume edition of the biography composed by Denma Lobsang Dorje (ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje, 1908-1975) exist. The well-known two-volume version cited above is today relatively widely available as it is a Delhi reprint of the original Lhasa manuscript (presumably of the single-volume edition). This Delhi reprint, together with its new introduction by Trijang Rinpoche, contains a number of significant edits, with the majority located in the second volume. For example, letters of correspondence between Phabongkha and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thubten Gyatso (*thub bstan rgya mtsho*, 1876-1933), in which the Dalai Lama chastises Phabongkha for his propitiation of Shugden, and Phabongkha in turn promises to renounce the practice, can be found quoted within the one-volume edition (ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje. *rigs dang dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho'i khyab bdag he ru kah dpal ngur smrig gar rol skyabs gcig pha bong kha pa bde chen snying po pal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa don ldan tshangs pa'i dbyangs snyan*, 1 vol., pp. 939-940), but not in the later edition. In the

given, the colophon of the *Festival* self-entry further adds that Lady Dagbhrum also later requested a new self-entry text to be written.²² This tells us that the daily *sādhana* practice associated with the deity, *Swift Path to Great Bliss* (*bde chen nye lam*), was already composed before this, as it forms a basis for the self-entry text and indeed both the *Swift Path* and *Festival* are mentioned together in Phabongkha's biography, in connection with this story.²³

Phabongkha's controversial Shugden material is all collected into the seventh volume (*ja*) of the set. The specific cycle of teachings associated with Shugden that Phabongkha taught to his students was believed to be based on the pure visions (*dag snang*) of his teacher, Tagphu Pemavajra Jamphel Tenpai Ngodrub (stag phu pad ma ba dzra 'jam dpal bstan pa'i dnogs grub, 1876-1935), more commonly known as Tagphu Dorjechang (stag phu rdo rje 'chang). Tagphu Pemavajra is believed by practitioners of this deity to have travelled to the pure land of Tuṣita and received the complete cycle of teachings related to this protector from Tsongkhapa and Duldzin Dragpa Gyaltsen ('dul 'dzin grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1357-1419).²⁴ The lineage then passes on to Phabongkha and then to Trijang Rinpoche, who then spread this even more widely throughout the Gelug tradition.

Interestingly, out of the complete collection of Phabongkha's writings, only five are concerned exclusively with the propitiation of Dorje Shugden: two texts related to the life-entrustment (*srog gtad*) [7.11, 7.12], or rather life-initiation (*srog dbang*), of the protector, an extensive and middle-length fulfillment ritual (*bskang chog*) [7.14, 7.15]

Delhi reprint this material has been removed and the relevant original wood-block-printed folios replaced by copies of newly edited and handwritten material (*tshañs pa'i dbyañs sñan*, Vol. 2 of 2, pp. 54-57), clearly intentionally missing out this specific uncomfortable exchange. This patch-like editorial work is also evident elsewhere, for example on p. 52, Vol. 2 of the same Delhi reprint, where only several sentences have been removed and clearly re-written. The two-volume edition in its Delhi reprint further demonstrates unusual variation with regard to the illustrations of enlightened beings and protectors (including Shugden) placed at the beginning and end folios of the manuscript. The images of protectors at the end of the biography are the same in both editions, whereas those at the beginning differ, although the actual blocks from which the *text* was printed are clearly the same. From a comparison it is obvious that the images in the initial pages of the one-volume edition are those of the original xylographs, whereas those in the two-volume Delhi reprint are new drawings which were superimposed over the original images.

²² pha bong kha, "rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i dkyi 'khor gyi cho ga bde chen dga' ston", pp. 128-129. The colophon of the self-entry gives a more detailed history of the text than the biography does.

²³ ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje, *tshañs pa'i dbyañs sñan*, Vol. 1 of 2, pp. 377-378.

²⁴ An account of this story can be found in pha bong kha, "rgyal chen srog gtad kyi sngon 'gro", pp. 539-540.

and a presentation of related explanations and ritual activities [7.13]. Fulfillment rituals are the central practices of Shugden, as they are of other protectors, and function to bond the practitioner with the fierce deity and to exhort them to fulfill their role as guardians of the Buddhist teachings. A brief libation (*gser skyems*) is also included under a title that incorporates practices of several deities [7.10]. Phabongkha's actual contribution to the body of Dorje Shugden literature was therefore relatively small when compared to those of his students, specifically that of Trijang Rinpoche, who carried on Phabongkha's lineage by composing nine separate texts uniquely devoted to the protector. This is fractionally a far larger amount considering that Trijang Rinpoche's *Collected Works*, according to the content pages of the volumes, comprise of only sixty-eight titles.²⁵ Although this numerical comparison certainly gives us a rough idea of the relative amounts of Shugden texts composed by these authors, it is also important to bear in mind that Trijang Rinpoche, in the colophons to his Shugden works, in keeping with the concept of lineage in Tibetan Buddhism, often cites Phabongkha as the source of the teachings which form the basis of his writings. It is unlikely, however, that the various texts were placed whimsically within the two collected works. Instead, I would suggest, the process was very much informed by those works that were actually composed, either orally or in writing, by the teacher whose collected works they were placed inside of.

Trijang Rinpoche's works combine with Phabongkha's to create a comprehensive set of Shugden ritual texts. All of these texts are contained within the fifth volume (*ca*) of Trijang Rinpoche's *Collected Works*, which is almost completely devoted to Shugden, although an offering and invocation ritual of Namkha Bardzin (*nam mkha' sbar 'dzin*) who is linked to Shugden's retinue and is a protector of Dungkhar Monastery (*dung dkar dgon*) in Dromo (*gro mo*), is also found, along with the method for performing a life-energy ransom (*srog glud gtong tshul*) ritual of Hayagriva.²⁶ Trijang Rinpoche's works on Shugden include a number secondary ritual texts, for example burning offering rituals related to pacification, controlling, increasing and wrathful activities. He also composed several instructions on the preparation of supporting (*rten*), protective (*bskyang*) and repelling (*bzlog*) thread-cross structures of the deity (*mdos*). These include associated ritual recitations and drawings of Shugden's manifestations,

²⁵ *khri byang rin po che blo bzang ye shes bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, yongs rdzogs bstan pa'i mnga' bdag skyabs rje yongs 'dzin khri byang rdo rje 'chang chen po'i gsung 'bum*, 8 vols.

²⁶ *khri byang rin po che, yongs rdzogs bstan pa'i mnga' bdag skyabs rje yongs 'dzin khri byang rdo rje 'chang chen po'i gsung 'bum*, Vol.5.

retinue and other related paraphernalia needed for the construction of the supporting thread-cross structure (*rten mdos*). Perhaps his most important work on Dorje Shugden, however, was *Music Delighting an Ocean of Oath-Bound Protectors* (*dam can rgya mtsho dgyes pa'i rol mo*), a descriptive text on the activity of the deity that also includes a history of his previous incarnations.²⁷

While the two main deities focused on in Phabongkha's *Collected Works* were Cakrasamvara and Vajrayoginī, the two main deities on which Trijang Rinpoche's *Collected Works* focus are both pure vision teachings stemming from the Tagphu incarnation lineage: Shugden and Tārā. The Tagphu incarnations were famed as *mahāsiddhas* and were believed to have a close relationship to Tārā, especially in her Cittamani, or "Heart-Jewel", form. Trijang Rinpoche himself received the initiations into the practice of the Cittamani Tārā cycle not only from Phabongkha but also directly from Tagphu Pemavajra.²⁸ While Phabongkha is included as a lineage holder of this practice, his *Collected Works* in their current widely available format only contain one single stand-alone work on the deity, *Garland of Cittamani* (*tsit+ta ma Ni'i do shal*) [3.16], a commentary on the generation and completion stages. Trijang Rinpoche's *Collected Works*, however, devote eleven titles to Cittamani Tārā, which, as is the case with his Dorje Shugden works, together form a comprehensive set of ritual texts to complement Phabongkha's contributions and those of past Tagphu incarnations.

Trijang Rinpoche's Cittamani works include a burning offering ritual, a *gañacakra* text, extensive and brief versions of the four-mandala offering and a self-entry ritual amongst others. In the colophon to a set of instructions on how to engage in the Cittamani approximation retreat (*bsnyen pa*) and its preliminary rituals, Trijang Rinpoche notes that this text, which he composed, is based on the works of various teachers, including Phabongkha's instruction manuals on the generation stage of the deity, of which he says there are two, one presumably being the *Garland of Cittamani*.²⁹ Thus, as a con-

²⁷ khri byang rin po che, "dge ldan bstan pa bsrung ba'i lha mchog sprul pa'i chos rgyal chen po rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi gsang gsum rmad du byung ba'i rtogs pa brjod pa'i gdam du bya ba dam can rgya mtsho dgyes pa'i rol mo", pp. 5-159.

²⁸ According to khri byang rin po che, "dga' ldan khri chen byang chub chos 'phel gyi skye gral du rlom pa'i gyi na pa zhig gis rang gi ngag tshul ma bchos lhug par bkod pa 'khrul snang sgyu ma'i zlos gar", p. 99, in 1922 he received, for example, the Cittamani Tārā heart-entry permission initiation (*nying zhugs rjes gnung*) and a long-life initiation from the Thangtong Hearing Lineage (*thang stong snyan brgyud*) called the "Glorious Grant of Immortality" (*'chi med dpal ster*), directly from Pemavajra.

²⁹ khri byang rin po che, "rje btsun ma sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs tsit+ta ma Ni dang 'brel ba'i bsnyen yig 'phags ma snying gi khab tu bsu ba'i yid 'phrog dri za'i

tinuation of a type of successive lineage effort, it was Trijang Rinpoche who brought to completion the textual cycles of these two visionary cycles received from the Tagphu lineage, although Gelug teachers before both Trijang and Phabongkha Rinpoche had already composed works on the two deities concerned.³⁰

Finally, as noted earlier, although here the focus has been on Phabongkha's guru yoga and tantric texts, Phabongkha also taught and authored extensively on many other non-esoteric topics apart from the *Stages of the Path*, including the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* [4.18-20] and the Seven-Point Mind Training (blo sbyong don bdun), of which he released a well-known edition [5.9].

The Compilation and Publication of Phabongkha's *Collected Works*

The compilation of Phabongkha's *Collected Works* took a number of years and was spearheaded by Trijang Rinpoche together with Denma Lobsang Dorje, who was not only the author of Phabongkha's biography, but also his close student and secretary.³¹ Both of these figures also disseminated the oral transmission lineage of the *Collected Works*.

After Phabongkha's death a search began to collect scattered notes based on Phabongkha's oral teachings, and any works penned by him. Various texts were found, although not all of them could be trusted and thus Denma Lobsang Dorje went through all the texts to check their condition.³² Any notes and other writings that were found or believed by the team to be inaccurate were then corrected. Although the texts are included in Phabongkha's *Collected Works*, it was not unusual for the notes of students to form the basis for the creation of works which were then attributed to the teacher, as was the case with *Liberation In Your Hand*.

The creation of the *Collected Works* was also a costly affair, as is evident from Trijang Rinpoche's introduction to the set, which men-

gling bu", pp. 175. I have been unable to locate the other text within the contents of Phabongkha's *Collected Works*.

³⁰ Two works on Cittamani can be found, for example, in 'jigs smed bsam gtan, "mkhas grub chen po khyab bdag stag phu rin po ches gsungs pa'i rje btsun sgröl ma'i bdag 'jug mkhas grub dam pa'i zhal lung", pp. 803-836 and *Ibid.*, "khyab bdag stag phu'i dag snang rje btsun sgröl ma'i me lha'i bsnyen pa dang bsnyen sgrub sbrags ma bcu cha'i sbyin sreg rnams kyi tho tsam bkod pa dngos grub 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu", pp. 851-865.

³¹ See khri byang rin po che, "khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang pha bong kha pa dpal bzang po'i gsung 'bum pod ka pa'i dkar chag", pp. 2-7.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 5

tions donations given during the carving of woodblocks for volumes one to eight (*ka-nya*), the first to be created.³³ Phabongkha's influence and popularity was largely focussed on Lhasa and pockets of Kham and thus sponsors, who included incarnate lamas, geshe and other important religious figures, aristocrats and other officials, tended to be mainly from these regions. Sponsors from Eastern Tibet hailed from areas such as Dragyab (*brag g.yab*), Lithang (*li thang*) and Barkham (*bar khams*). A number of sponsors also came from different parts of both Ü (*dbus*) and Tsang (*gtsang*). The introduction lists with transparency how much each sponsor donated, listing the most illustrious donor first- the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso's (*ta la'i bla ma bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho*, 1935-) senior tutor Ling Rinpoche Thubten Lungtok Namgyal Trinle (*gling rin po che thub bstan lung rtogs rnam rgyal 'phril las*, 1903-1983), who offered 1000 silver coins (*ngul srang*). Trijang Rinpoche includes himself at the end of the list, and donated 4000 silver coins. He also makes a special mention of the aristocrats Lhalu Tsewang Dorje (*lha klu tshe dbang rdo rje*, 1914-2011) and Lhalu Lhacham Yangdzom Tsering (*lha klu lha lcam g.yang 'dzoms tshe ring*, d.u.), who were devoted students of Phabongkha and not only offered 2321 silver coins but also other necessities required for the creation of the new printing blocks as well as earlier work on the collection which took place at Tashi Choeling Hermitage (*bkra shis chos gling ri khrod*). These two central patrons also receive a special dedicatory mention by Trijang Rinpoche, who, amongst many other aspirations, hopes that through the merit the sponsors accumulate through their offerings, they will always be cared for by Guru Vajradhāra (i.e. Phabongkha), and that they may never be parted from Tsongkhapa's "stainless teachings".³⁴

The carving of the wood blocks for volumes one to eight had begun by 1948 and appears to have carried on through until 1951 and beyond.³⁵ This means that the collection and checking of texts, which began after Phabongkha's death in 1941, would have taken more than eight years to complete considering that the remaining volumes following the eighth volume, also had to be prepared.

According to a student of Phabongkha, the original *Collected Works* was composed of more than the eleven volumes which are currently widely available.³⁶ Woodblocks for a twelfth volume (*na*) were carved and texts printed from these. A thirteenth and fourteenth volume was also planned, although these were never published. The twelfth volume, however, appears to not have been included into the public-

³³ Ibid., pp. 2-5.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

³⁶ Anonymous student of Phabongkha (interview, 2014).

ly distributed editions of the *Collected Works* due to the inauspicious connotations related to the term “na”, which in Tibetan is a homonym for the word “illness”.³⁷ This discarded volume and its blocks, along with any of the material intended for the two additional volumes were thought to have been lost during the Cultural Revolution, although it now appears that a copy of the twelfth volume, or rather, what had originally been planned to be released as a twelfth volume, did survive in the Potala Palace's collection.³⁸ Although currently I have been unable to definitely ascertain what works were intended for the never-published thirteenth and fourteenth volumes, it may be that the other of the two works by Phabongkha on which Trijang Rinpoche's Cittamani Tārā approximation retreat manual was based (one being *Garland of Cittamani*) was amongst these texts.³⁹

The twelfth volume's contents are also significant due to the fact that out of eight texts, four are on Vajrabhairava. These include a text for the Vajrabhairava approximation retreat's preliminary ritual [12.6], a burning offering ritual [12.5] as well as a related explanatory work [12.7], and a self-entry ritual [12.8]. Added to the Vajrabhairava works in the other volumes, these come together to create a comprehensive set of practice texts related to this deity, showing how Phabongkha placed a significant emphasis on this particular practice, which had also been emphasised by Tsongkhapa.

Following the upheavals of the late 1950s and 1960s, the eleven volume Lhasa edition-*Collected Works* was eventually republished under the title of *Collected Works of Pha-bong-kha-pa Byams-pa-bstan-'dzin-'phrin-las rgya-mtsho*, between 1973 and 1974 in New Delhi by Chopel Legdan under the guidance of Trijang Rinpoche.⁴⁰ This reproduction was based on surviving copies of the various xylographs printed from the Lhasa woodblocks. Several texts, which had originally been included in the tenth volume, *tha*, but which had been omitted from the republished Delhi edition, were later collected, along with other texts, into an additional volume: *A Supplement to the*

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ For a listing and translation of the contents of the volume see the Appendix. The contents of the volume are catalogued in “pha bong kha rje btsun byams pa bstan 'dzin 'phrin las kyi gsung 'bum (dkar chag)”, pp. 865-874. The Potala's set is the most complete copy of Phabongkha's *Collected Works* that I know of. A twelve-volume edition of the *Collected Works* is listed in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque du Collège de France, however the twelfth volume of this set is simply a copy of Phabongkha's biography, *tshangs pa'i dbyangs snyan*, which is not a part of the actual *Collected Works* set.

³⁹ The retreat manual has already been discussed above (khri byang rin po che, “phags ma snying gi khab tu bsu ba'i yid 'phrog dri za'i gling bu”, pp. 175).

⁴⁰ Pha-bong-kha-pa Byams-pa-bstan-'dzin-'phrin-las rgya-mtsho, *Collected Works of Pha-bong-kha-pa Byams-pa-bstan-'dzin-'phrin-las rgya-mtsho*.

Collected Works of the Lord of Refuge, Phabongkha Dechen Nyingpo (skyabs rje pha bong kha pa bde chen snying po'i gsung 'bum kha skong), published in 1977 by Ngawang Sopa in New Delhi.⁴¹ The contents of the 1977 supplementary volume are as follows:

1. A Collection of The Lord of Refuge, Kyabdag Dorjechang Phabongkha's Minor Compositions and Instructions

khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang pha bong kha pa'i bka' rtsom dang phyag bzhes phran tshogs skor phyogs su bkod pa/

2. Bestowing the Supreme All-Illuminating Wisdom: The Recitation Rituals of the Sādhana of Venerable White Mañjuśrī Set Together Side by Side

rje btsun 'jam dbyangs dkar po'i sgrub thabs kyi 'don chog zur du bkod pa kun gsal shes rab mchog sbyin/

3. Extensively Elucidated Outlines of the Essential Instructions of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment Together with Notes which Easily Point Out the Pith Instructions of the Essential Points

byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i dmar khrid kyi sa bcad rgyas par bkral ba/ nyer mkho'i man ngag 'tshol bde'i mchan dang bcas pa/

4. An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom: An Explanation of the Make-up of the Vairocana-Abhisambodhi⁴²

rnam snang mngon byang gi thig 'grel sher 'byung dgongs rgyan

5. The Way to Perform the Long-Life Accomplishment Ritual Related to Sita-Tārā Cintācakra

sgrol dkar yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgo nas tshe sgrub bya tshul/

6. The Essence of the Nectar of Holy Dharma: The Way to Practice the Profound Instructions of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment, Explained in Verse

⁴¹ The supplement was published as Pha-boñ-kha-pa Bde-chen-sñin-po, *A Collection of Supplemental Works of Skyabs-rje Pha-boñ-kha-pa Bde-chen-sñin-po reproduced from blockprints recently found by Ven. Khri-byañ Rin-po-che.*

⁴² Note that the contents of the volume are as given on the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center's (TBRC) website (Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center. "Outline: skyabs rje pha bong kha pa bde chen snying po'i gsung 'bum kha skong"). However, the website lists another title, *An Appendix to the Composition of the Vairochana-Abhisambodhi (rnam snang mngon byang gi thig rtsa'i zur 'debs)*, following this first Vairocana text. However within the volume itself this text is not given its own title page and is instead incorporated into *An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom.*

byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i gdams pa zab mo rnams tshigs su bcad pa'i sgo nas nyams su len tshul dam chos bdud rtsi'i snying po/

7. Newly Arranged Diagrams for the Stages of Śamatha as Taught in Lord Maitreya's Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra

byams mgon gyis mdo sde rgyan las gsungs pa'i zhi gnas kyi dmigs rim rnams re'u mig tu gsar bskrun/

8. The Calling the Guru from Afar [Practice Entitled] "The Inseparable Three Bodies": A Song of Longing Swiftly Drawing the Blessings of the Guru

bla ma rgyang 'bod sku gsum dbyer med bla ma'i byin rlabs myur 'dren gdung dbyangs/

The three texts that were already included in the tenth volume (*tha*) of the original Lhasa edition of the *Collected Works* but were not included in the 1973-1974 New Delhi edition of the eleven volume set were the collection of minor writings, the Vairocana text (*An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom*), and the Sita-Tārā ritual. This is clear as the folios of each of these works, which were collected by Trijang Rinpoche from surviving manuscripts of the original Lhasa edition, are marked by the letter *tha*.⁴³

Furthermore, two of the works from this supplement, namely the first work, *A Collection of The Lord of Refuge, Kyabdag Dorjechang Phabongkha's Minor Compositions and Instructions* [10.3, 12.2] and *An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom* [10.4, 12.3], are both listed in the Potala's catalogue as being part of the twelfth "na" volume of the Potala's edition. These two texts then, can today be found in three separate volumes: the Delhi supplement, the tenth volume of the widely known Lhasa edition, and the twelfth volume of the rare edition in the Potala's collection. The Sita-Tārā text [10.8], however, is only found in the Delhi supplement and in the tenth volume of the Lhasa edition.

The fact that the *Minor Compositions* and *An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom* are found in the widely known eleven-volume Lhasa edition, gives credence to the fact that the twelfth volume, as held today in the Potala, was never released to a wider audience. For whatever reason, both works were instead selected to be moved from the planned twelfth volume into the tenth volume of the official Lhasa edition, because, as mentioned above, publishing and distributing a "na" volume would have been inauspicious in this case. As a result,

⁴³ Each folio of the Lhasa edition of Phabongkha's *Collected Works* is marked with the Tibetan letter denoting which volume the page and work as a whole is from.

two texts which were already positioned as the third and fourth works of the tenth volume, *The Mirror of the View* (*lta ba'i me long*), a commentary to a Kadampa (*bka' gdams pa*) transference of consciousness practice, and a text entitled *Abbreviated Rites to Protect Harvests from Rain, Frost, Hail, Disease, Drought and So Forth* (*lo tog gi rim 'gro dang/ char 'bebs/ sad ser btsa' than sogs srung thabs mdor bsdus la/*) were removed from the volume, replaced by *Minor Compositions* and *An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom*, and are thus today no longer included in the widely available Lhasa edition. A comparison with the Potala catalogue likewise reveals that a Vajrayoginī *gaṇacakra* ritual text was removed to make place for the Sita-Tārā Cintācakra longevity practice [10.8], although the work did not come from the twelfth volume. The tenth (*tha*) volume in the eleven-part Lhasa set contains no contents pages, the only multi-work volume without one, which also points towards a reconfiguration of the volume's original contents.⁴⁴ We know that the volumes were carved and printed gradually and thus volumes one to nine were probably already printed and set at the time that the *Minor Compositions* and *An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom* were transferred into the tenth volume. The tenth was probably deemed as a more suitable location for these texts than the eleventh volume, which was reserved exclusively for *Liberation in Your Hand*.⁴⁵

The remaining texts in the supplementary Delhi volume were most likely drawn from material which would have been included in the thirteenth or fourteenth volumes, should they ever have been published, and thus the folios do not contain any Tibetan letters marking them as belonging to any specific volume.

Some texts that are in wide circulation and use today may also well have been planned to be included in the never-released thirteenth and fourteenth volumes, but were omitted from both the Lhasa and Delhi eleven-volume editions as well as the Delhi supplement. For example, Phabongkha's re-composition of the common sixty-four part torma offering to the protector Kālarūpa, *The Accomplishment of*

⁴⁴ The eleventh volume also contains no contents page, however this is explained by the fact that the volume is made up of one single text.

⁴⁵ I have not been able to access the Potala's set to ascertain whether or not all the texts in the twelfth volume are marked with the letter "na", which would suggest they were printed as one definitive volume. This is unlikely, however, as it appears that before the official Lhasa edition was finalised and released to a wider readership the texts within the twelfth volume were dispersed, as noted above, with several entering the tenth volume, and being denoted as such with the engraving of the letter *tha*. The Potala's holding thus seems to represent an early working version of the *Collected Works*, one which was acquired by the palace library before the wider release of the set, and the reconfiguration of its final volumes.

the Four Activities: A Recitation Arrangement of the Sixty-Four Part [Torma Offering Ritual] Organised for Easy and Convenient Recitation (drug cu ma'i 'don bsgrigs 'khyer bde nag 'gros su bkod pa las bzhi'i 'phril las myur 'grub), which is widely used and found in numerous Gelug prayer books, appears to be excluded from both the Delhi and Lhasa editions of the *Collected Works* and is not listed amongst the twelve volumes available in the Potala's collection.⁴⁶ Also excluded from the *Collected Works* are polemical notes compiled by Denma Lobsang Dorje based on teachings given by Phabongkha in Chamdo, discussing the views of other Tibetan Buddhist schools, as well as Bon.⁴⁷

Another text that does not appear to have been included in the original Lhasa edition of the *Collected Works*, its later reproductions and reprints, the Delhi supplement, or the Potala edition, is a new initiation ritual manual composed by Phabongkha for the Thirteen Pure Visions of Tagphu (stag phu'i dag snang bcu gsum), also known as the Thirteen Secret Dharmas (gsang chos bcu gsum) or Thirteen Secret Visions (dag snang gsang ba bcu gsum). These "Thirteen Secret Dharmas" refer to a cycle of visionary teachings originating from Tagphu Tulku Lobsang Chokyi Wangchuk (stag phu sprul sku blo bzang chos kyi dbang phyug, 1765-c.1792) and transmitted through his incarnation lineage, down to Tagphu Pemavajra and from him to Phabongkha. The cycle contains practices of deities such as Amitāyus, Vajravārāhī, Hayagrīva, Avalokiteśvara and, most importantly, Cittamani Tārā. The new initiation manual, entitled *The Power to Magnificently Fully Gather The Fruit of the Two Aims: The Rain-fall-Array of Ripening Initiation Rituals of The Thirteen Sealed Secret*

⁴⁶ The fact that the *Sixty-Four Part Offering* was published separately from the *Collected Works* is noted in the colophon of pha bong kha, *drug cu ba'i 'don bsgrigs 'khyer bde nag 'gros su bkod pa las bzhi'i 'phrin las myur 'grub*, 2014, printed as a separate text in Lhasa. The same colophon can be found in several prayer books containing the ritual text. The text's exclusion from the *Collected Works* is also noted in Sharpa Tulku and Richard Guard, *Meditations on Vajrabhairava*, p. 113. It appears that this text was intended to be included in one of the unpublished volumes, as suggested by an anonymous student of Phabongkha (interviewed, 2014). Although the sixty-four part torma offering receives attention in Vol. 3 of the currently available Lhasa edition of the *Collected Works* [3.6], this is not the same text being discussed here. The 2014 Lhasa print of the text adds that it was published by the Sandutsang (sa 'du tshang) family, a Khampa trading family whose members included several government officials.

⁴⁷ The text was published with two other works in a compilation put together by Phabongkha's students, however I have seen or received no indication that this was amongst the texts that would have been destined for Phabongkha's *Collected Works*. See Idan ma blo bzang rdo rje, "skyabs rje pha bong kha pa chab mdor bzhugs skabs snyan sgron du gsol zer ba'i yig rdzus kyi dpyad don mchan bus bkrol ba dpyod Idan bzhin 'dzum dgod pa'i thal skad rnga chen bskul ba'i dbyu gu".

Dharmas of the Glorious Tagphu, however, appears to have been included in the collected works of Tagphu Pemavajra instead, most likely because the work is directly related to Phabongkha's teacher's visionary lineage.⁴⁸ It is recorded in Phabongkha's biography that in the Fire-Horse Year (1906) he requested permission from Tagphu Pemavajra to compose a new initiation manual on the Thirteen Secret Dharmas, the permission-initiations of which he then subsequently bestowed upon a gathering of fifteen high-ranking incarnate lamas over a period of about a week.⁴⁹ The woodblocks for the text were apparently only carved in 1935.⁵⁰

The Guru-Deity-Protector Triad

The life-entrustment ritual of Dorje Shugden, *The Chariot of the Jewel of Faith Drawing Together a Precious Mass of Blessings* [7.11], composed by Phabongkha dates from 1935, when he was visiting Tagphu Dorjechang at the latter's monastery of Tagphu Drubde Geden Lugzang Kunphelling (stag phu sgrub sde dge ldan lugs bzang kun 'phel gling) in Nagshoe (nags shod), Kham. The colophon to the text states that it was both Phabongkha, as well as his visionary teacher, who together brought the "profound words" of the ritual to maturation.⁵¹ Phabongkha's close affinity to Shugden, however, does not appear to have been confined to the final years of his life. In the colophon to *The Melodious Drum Victorious in All Directions* [7.14], Phabongkha's seminal fulfillment ritual of Dorje Shugden, he describes how he had been lovingly cared for by Shugden, who was compassionately attached to him like "the body is to a shadow", since his youth ("lus

⁴⁸ pha bong kha, "dpal stag phu'i gsang chos rgya can bcu gsum gyi smin byed dbang chog chu 'babs bkod pa don gnyis 'bras bus brjid pa'i yongs 'du'i dbang po". The work is also available today as a separate text. The only widely known extant copy of the Tagphu *Collected Works* is in the Potala collection and although this initiation text is listed in the contents given in "stag phu 'jam dpal bstan pa'i dngos grub bam pad+ma bdzra'i gsung 'bum (dkar chag)", pp. 860-861, it has been impossible to compare the contents with the widely available version.

⁴⁹ ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje, *tshañs pa'i dbyañs sñan*, Vol. 1 of 2, p. 359.

⁵⁰ This is mentioned in the colophon of the stand-alone edition of the text, Pha-boñkha-pa Byams-pa-bstan-'dzin-phrin-las-rgya-mtsho, *dpal stag phu'i gsañ chos rgya can bcu gsum gyi dbañ chog chu 'babs su bkod pa don gñis 'bras bus brjid pa'i yoñs 'du'i dbañ po: Initiation texts for the practice of the visionary teachings received by the Second Stag-phu Sprul-sku Blo bzañ-chos-kyi-dbañ-phyug (gar-dbañ-padma-śwara)*, p. 439.

⁵¹ pha bong kha, "'jam mgon bstan srung yongs kyi thu bo mchog/ /rdo rje shugs ldan srog dbang zab mo'i tshul/ /byin rlabs rin chen phung po 'dren ba yi/ /yid ches nor bu'i shing rta", p. 523

dang grib ma bzhin du brtse bas bskyangs bskul").⁵² The composition of the text in question, whose block prints for the *Collected Works* are dated 1948, thus amongst the first to be carved, was begun in the Wood-Ox Year of 1925 when Phabongkha was in his late 40s, but the complete text with its colophon and its verses of auspiciousness appears to have only been finalized by Phabongkha in 1929.⁵³

Shugden, as is obvious from the epithets that Phabongkha used in relation to the deity: "Protector of Lord Mañjuśrī [Tsongkhapa]'s Teachings ('jam mgon bstan srung)" and "Protector of the Virtuous [Gelug] Teachings (dge ldan bstan srung)", was indeed considered by Phabongkha as an important protector of the Gelug tradition.⁵⁴ Without Phabongkha's efforts and writings based on the revelation of the cycle by Tagphu Pemavajra, the cult of the deity would most likely not have become as widespread as it is today. Yet, based on what we can deduce from his *Collected Works*, did Phabongkha lead a "charismatic movement", or similar, centred on Shugden, Vajrayoginī and himself as a sacred triad of esoteric Gelug doctrine, as Donald Lopez suggests? Georges Dreyfus agrees and writes, perhaps more strongly, that Phabongkha "created a new understanding of the Ge-luk tradition focused on three elements: Vajrayoginī as the main meditational deity (*yi dam*), Shuk-den as the protector, and Pa-bong-ka as the guru".⁵⁵ Although this is a commonly held view, here I would like to suggest that Phabongkha created no such understanding.

Despite the epithets that Phabongkha used in relation to Shugden in his works, he was not exclusively focused on Shugden as the only protector worthy of writing on. Most Tibetan Buddhist works bestow superlative epithets to the deities they are focused on and thus these titles alone cannot tell us how important or central a specific deity was. Compiled together with Phabongkha's Shugden works in the same volume is another set of five texts, these being focused on "The Glorious Four-Faced Protector" (dpal mgon gdong bzhi pa), Caturmukha Mahākāla, who in the Gelug tradition is a protector of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle.⁵⁶ These include a long ritual text of permission

⁵² pha bong kha, "dge ldan bstan srung dgra lha'i rgyal po srid gsum skye dgu'i srog bdag dam ldan bu bzhin skyong ba'i lha mchog sprul pa'i rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rigs lnga rtsal gyi sger bskang rgyas pa phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba'i rnga dbyangs", pp. 665-666.

⁵³ Ibid. pp. 666-667.

⁵⁴ These two epithets can be found, for example, in the titles of several of Phabongkha's works. See pha bong kha, "yid ches nor bu'i shing rta", p. 505 and pha bong kha, "rnam par rgyal ba'i rnga dbyangs", p. 611. Also see Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", p. 247.

⁵⁵ Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", p. 246.

⁵⁶ Note that in the content pages to the seventh printed volume, one of the works, *The Increasing and Auspicious Akṣara Garland (ak+Sha ra'i phreng ba)* [7.6] is not

initiations (*rjes gnang*) for the different manifestations of the deity, and various other works [7.5-7.9]. It is not surprising, considering Phabongkha's emphasis on Cakrasaṃvara, that he would compose a substantial set of texts on this form of Mahākāla, which in simple terms of page numbers, is considerably larger than his writings on Shugden. This demonstrates that while Phabongkha himself promoted Shugden as an important protector, the deity nevertheless remained within a wider pantheon of wrathful deities that Phabongkha considered important. Interestingly Phabongkha's writings on Shugden, based on Tagphu Pemavajra's pure visions, prescribe a life-entrustment initiation, usually reserved for more lowly worldly protectors (*'jig rten pa'i srung ma*), instead of a permission initiation, such as those bestowed for the different manifestations of Caturmukha Mahākāla and other deities categorized as enlightened. Clearly Phabongkha did not take that one step further and promote Shugden directly to the level of an enlightened protector, which may well have been too obtrusive a move, but instead kept him ranked at the level of a worldly protector, who nevertheless, in reality, is an emanation of Mañjuśrī simply appearing as a *gyalpo*, or "king"-spirit (*rgyal po*), as a manifestation of his enlightened activities.⁵⁷ Shugden, as numerous textual sources attest, certainly existed within the Gelug and other lineages, specifically those of the Sakya sect, before Phabongkha and his teachers, and appears to have been consistently classed as a *gyalpo*.

Shugden's ranking as a worldly being is clear from a comparison with another popular protector, Pehar (*dpe har*). Like Shugden, Pehar is classed as a *gyalpo* being, and both are often referred to with the titles of either "Gyalpo" or "Gyalchen" (*rgyal chen*), meaning "great king"- although the titles can also be used as an honorific and not necessarily to refer to a class of spirit. The same is true for Pehar's five manifestations, the Five Gyalchen (*rgyal chen sku lnga*), who, like Shugden, have an associated life-entrustment ritual instead of a

listed separately, possibly because it is a very brief work of only three pages. The text is, however, included on the contents listing prepared by the TBRC.

⁵⁷ The belief that Shugden's actual nature is Mañjuśrī is noted for example, in *khri byang rin po che*, "dam can rgya mtsho dgyes pa'i rol mo", p. 7-8, where Shugden is called "Wrathful Mañjuśrī" (*'jam dpal drag po*) and as being indivisible from the meditational deity Yamāntaka (*gshin rje gzhed dang dbyer med*), who is also considered a wrathful manifestation of Mañjuśrī. Nevertheless Trijang Rinpoche still distinguishes between wisdom-being dharma protectors (*chos skyong ye shes pa*) such as Dharmarāja (*chos kyi rgyal po*) and dharma protectors who appear in a mundane aspect (*'jig rten pa'i rnam pa ni chos skyong*), such as Shugden (*ibid.*, p. 15).

permission initiation.⁵⁸ Pehar is a protector of the Tibetan Government hailing from the Nyingma tradition who through his minister, Dorje Drakden (rdo rje grags ldan), makes himself manifest through the Nechung Oracle (gnas chung sku rtan), a human medium who in turn functions as the primary state oracle. Shugden likewise manifests through human mediums, relegating his outward ranking to that of a worldly deity in the eyes of most Tibetan Buddhists, as enlightened protectors are generally understood not to take possession of mediums, an activity reserved for worldly spirits and protectors. Shugden's actual nature as a manifestation of Manjuśrī is likewise highly contested by most Tibetan Buddhists, however a number of other protectors, including Pehar, are also the subject of disagreements (as to whether or not they are truly enlightened), although certainly not as heated.⁵⁹

Phabongkha's promotion of Vajrayoginī as a meditational deity is not unique within the Gelug tradition and has an established history within the lineage. Tagphu Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltzen (stag phu blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1714-1762), for example, composed a commentary on the two stages (*rim gnyis*) and Tuken Lobsang Chokyi Nyima wrote a large collection of practice texts and instructions on the deity that rival Phabongkha's in breadth, and which Phabongkha himself used as a basis for his own compositions, along with the related works of Ngulchu Dharmabhadra (dngul chu

⁵⁸ See, for example, a life-entrustment ritual of the five forms of Pehar by Tuken Lobsang Chokyi Nyima (thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, 1737-1802), whose ritual type (i.e. a life-entrustment) suggests the protectors are worldly deities, but are nonetheless described as being manifestations of Hayagrīva, an enlightened wrathful deity: blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, "rta mgrin gsang sgrub kyi chos skor las/ bka' srung rgyal po sku lnga'i srog gtad bya tshul ches gsal ba/ 'phrin las sgo 'byed/", pp. 775-789. Another example of a protector that is considered outwardly to be a worldly being but in reality believed to be enlightened, is Setrab Chen (bse khrab can), who is generally categorized as a *gyalpo*, *yaksha* (*gnod sbyin*) or *tse* (*bitsan*) spirit, but is also believed to be an emanation of Buddha Amitābha by Ganden *Shartse* Dratsang (dga' ldan shar rtse grwa tshang), for example, who continue to propitiate the deity as their special protector. This is also mentioned in khri byang rin po che, "dam can rgya mtsho dgyes pa'i rol mo", p. 8, along with several other protectors who play such dual roles, including the "Five Gyalpos who Show a Worldly Form" (*'jig rten par bstan pa rgyal po sku lnga*), i.e. the five forms of Pehar, who here are described as actually being manifestations of the heads of the five buddha clans (*rgyal ba rigs lnga*) (Ibid. p. 8-9).

⁵⁹ The Five Long-life Sisters, Tsering Chenga (tshe ring mched lnga) are yet another example of a contested type of protector. See Réne de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*, p. 177.

d+harma b+ha dra, 1772-1851) and others.⁶⁰ Art historical evidence also confirms the existence of Vajrayoginī in the Gelug tradition in the eighteenth century, as can be seen from a number of *thangka* (*thang kha*) paintings and other works produced at the Qing court during the period of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735- 1796), and his guru Changkya Rolpai Dorje (lcang skya ro pa'i rdo rje, 1717-1786), for example, who was also a Vajrayoginī practitioner, as well as many other instances.⁶¹ Thus while the Vajrayoginī Naro Kechari lineage was passed into the Gelug tradition from the Sakya (sa skya) lineage, and all evidence points to the fact that the practice of the deity and all of these works in the Gelug tradition are certainly post-Tsongkhapa, it is clear that Phabongkha was drawing from an already well-established practice within his own lineage. Despite the unique Vajrayoginī lineage stemming from Phabongkha being the most well-known today, it appears that another lineage or lineages of practice stemming from Amdo (a mdo)-based teachers such as Tuken were previously widely practiced, at least in their native regions. Although today these lineages have become rare, they are apparently not extinct.⁶²

Phabongkha's many compositions on Vajrayoginī do not mean that he had a calculated plan for the practice to become an institutionalized central facet of the Gelug tradition. It is obvious from the colophons of a number of his compositions on the deity that requests came from many of his close students, including several high-ranking aristocratic women. A number of female practitioners were understandably attracted to this solitary female deity, whose teachings and

⁶⁰ For the Tagphu commentary see blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal tshan, "rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nA ro mkha' spyod kyi rim gnyis zab mo'i nyams len bai DU r+ya zhun ma'i them skas sogs chos tshan khag cig", for Tuken's Vajrayoginī works see those in blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, *rje bstun bla ma dam pa thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma dpal bzang po'i gsung 'bum*, Vol. 8, and for Dharmabhadra's works, see dngul chu d+harma b+ha dra, *Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of ñul-chu dharma-bhadra*, Vols. 2, 4 and 6. For a mention of how the works of these authors were used by Phabongkha in his own writings, see pha bong kha, "dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga bde chen dga' ston", pp. 128-130. Even the Fifth Dalai Lama composed a work which can be found in his *Collected Works* (ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, "nA ro mkha' spyod kyi rnal 'byor bcu gcig gi nyams len la sgro 'dogs gcod pa dang sems 'dzin zung 'brel du gtong tshul mthong grol lde mig", pp. 355-368.)

⁶¹ Tuken, Rolpai Dorje and Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltzen were contemporaries who also had student-teacher relationships between each other. The Qianlong Emperor himself received the Cakrasaṃvara and Vajrayoginī initiations (Elizabeth Benard, "The Qianlong Emperor and Tibetan Buddhism", pp. 125-126).

⁶² This is according to the late Lama Lobsang Darjy (bla ma blo bsang dar rgyas, 1967-2010), a former vajrācārya of Ragya Monastery (ra rgya dgon). Several sacred sites associated with Vajrayoginī continue as functioning pilgrimage sites in Amdo, although I do not have the space to discuss them here.

practice, furthermore, are relatively simple compared to those of the three main Gelug meditational deities, including Cakrasaṃvara, and in particular the sixty-two deity body mandala (*lus dkyil*) form emphasized by Phabongkha. Women, lay or ordained, did not have access to religious education as monks or even lay men did, and thus Vajrayoginī presented them with a simple and efficacious alternative. Even today all of the Gelug nunneries in Lhasa, as well as many in India and Nepal, continue to practice Phabongkha's Vajrayoginī *gaṇacakra* and/or self-entry rituals communally in their assembly halls on a monthly basis, whereas this is unheard of in male Gelug monastic institutions. This analysis, however, does not exclude men, who would also of course have benefited from such a concise yet profound practice, making the attraction of the deity to a large following of adherents easy to understand. Phabongkha clearly had a connection on a spiritual level with the deity (as he did with Shugden) and the reasons for his composition of works on Vajrayoginī's practice may not have been any more unusual than those of previous Gelug teachers who taught and wrote on the deity, and indeed on any deity- being that they were requested by students and saw a need for new texts. In fact some of these reasons are included within the colophons or introductions to his texts.⁶³ Texts that were written by a teacher out of his own accord or for his own personal practice are often noted as such in the colophon. However it was common for Tibetans to request their own teachers to re-write existing *sādhana*s, usually resulting in minor differences.⁶⁴ Phabongkha's Vajrayoginī *sādhana*, *The Swift Path to Great Bliss (bde chen nye lam)*, was based on existing Gelug examples, most obviously Tuken's *sādhana*, which has the same title, and follows the same schemata and essential visualizations, however Phabongkha clearly expanded on the work.⁶⁵

In relation to Phabongkha's promotion of Vajrayoginī, Dreyfus writes that "The novelty of his approach is even clearer when we consider Pa-bong-ka's emphasis on Tārā Cintāmaṇi [*sic*] as a secondary meditational deity, for this practice is not canonical in the strict sense of the term but comes from the pure visions of one of Pa-bong-

⁶³ As was the case with the history of the composition of the self-entry text *Festival of Great Bliss*, attributed to requests by Lady Dagbhrum and Ngawang Gyatso, as has already been discussed.

⁶⁴ This common practice was confirmed by Gelek Rimpoche (interview, 2014).

⁶⁵ For Tuken's *sādhana* see blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, "nA ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs thun mong ma yin pa bde chen nye lam". Although it is not mentioned in the colophon of Phabongkha's *sādhana* that it was composed based on a request, his biography mentions that it was Lady Dagbhrum who implored her teacher to review the practice text (Idan ma blo bzang rdo rje, *tshans pa'i dbyans sñan*, Vol. 1 of 2, pp. 377-378). These Gelug *sādhana* texts were of course ultimately largely based on Sakya compositions.

ka's main teachers, Ta-bu Pe-ma Baz-ra (*sta bu padma badzra*) [sic]"⁶⁶ Dreyfus goes on to say that although Phabongkha did not introduce these deities into the tradition himself, but rather received them from his teachers, it is his unprecedented promotion of these "secondary practices" by making them "widespread and central to the Ge-luk tradition and claiming that they represented the essence of Dzong-ka-ba's [Tsongkhapa's] teaching" which made him innovative.⁶⁷ This statement is only partly true. For example, Phabongkha appears to have only composed one or two texts on Cittamani Tārā, i.e. the commentary on the generation and completion stages mentioned earlier, which does not suggest an emphasis on the practice.⁶⁸ Vajrayoginī, as has already been noted, was already a very popular deity amongst a number of highly influential eighteenth century scholars such as Tuken, who wrote on the practice extensively. More importantly it is clear from the works of these scholars that Vajrayoginī was already considered by a number of leading teachers as the "uncommon secret dharma hidden in the mind" of Tsongkhapa, i.e. his secret meditational deity.⁶⁹ If this belief was already extant in the eighteenth century amongst high-ranking religious figures, then it is certainly understandable as to why Vajrayoginī was considered so important and why Phabongkha would follow the same tradition and its interpretations. In this sense, Phabongkha was far from innovative.

Dreyfus also repeats, specifically in relation to Shugden, that Phabongkha "transformed a marginal practice into a central element of

⁶⁶ Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", p. 246. It would be worth noting here that no works on a deity known as "Tārā Cintāmaṇi" (i.e. *sgrol ma yi bzhin nor bu*) are listed in Phabongkha's *Collected Works*, although both Sita Tārā Cintāchakra (*sgrol dkar yi bzhin 'khor lo*), the popular long-life deity, and Tārā Cittamani (*sgrol ma tsit+ta ma Ni*) appear. Out of these, Dreyfus is referring to the Cittamani Tārā lineage, which Phabongkha received from Tagphu (n.b. *stag phu*) Pemavajra, and which, although indeed having its origins in the Tagphu incarnation lineage, stems back further than Phabongkha's immediate teacher. The cycle is attributed to the visions of Tagphu Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltzen (*stag phu blo bzang bstan pa'i rgya mtshan*, 1714-1762) and his reincarnation Tagphu Lobsang Chokyi Wangchuk (*stag phu blo bzang chos kyi dbang phyug*, 1765-1792), often considered, respectively, the first and second Tagphu incarnations. Lobsang Chokyi Wangchuk was also known as Gargyi Wangpo (*gar gyi dbang po*) and composed the widely used generation stage *sādhana* of Cittamani Tārā (*blo bzang chos kyi dbang phyug, sgrol ma tsit+ta ma Ni la brten pa'i thun mong ma yin pa'i bla ma'i rnal 'byor thar par bgrad pa'i them skas*).

⁶⁷ Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", p. 246.

⁶⁸ Although only one text is apparent in the contents of the *Collected Works*, as discussed earlier, a second manual composed by Phabongkha on Cittamani may exist.

⁶⁹ *blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma*, "nA ro mkha' spyod ma'i sgrub thabs rgyas pa pad+ma rA ga'i them skas", p. 2a.

the Ge-luk tradition. This transformation is illustrated by the epithets used to refer to Shuk-den".⁷⁰ Although these epithets have already been mentioned above, here it is also necessary to point out that epithets like "Protector of Lord Mañjuśrī [Tsongkhapa]'s Teachings", like the view of Vajrayoginī as Tsongkhapa's secret meditational deity, far predate Phabongkha, and thus do not in themselves prove his elevation of Shugden into a "central element". In fact one of the exact same epithets used by Phabongkha, i.e. "Protector of Lord Mañjuśrī [Tsongkhapa]'s Teachings" can be found in the title of a text by the seventeenth to eighteenth century teacher Dragyab Lobsang Norbu Sherab (brag g.yab blo bzang nor bu shes rab, d.u.), entitled *The Way to Perform the Invocation of Gyalchen Dorje Shugden Tsal, Protector of Lord Mañjuśrī [Tsongkhapa]'s Teachings*, one of the earliest instances of the usage of the title.⁷¹ A number of other later usages of this or similar titles pre-dating Phabongkha do exist, suggesting that Phabongkha was following the example of select previous Gelug teachers in his propitiation of Shugden. It is almost impossible to estimate the popularity of Shugden in the various regions of Tibet and Mongolia before the twentieth century. The major difference with these earlier teachers and Phabongkha, however, was the latter's popularity, which resulted in a wider dissemination of anything he taught, often to an audience of politically and religiously influential figures. This, as with the case of Vajrayoginī, however, should not necessarily be taken to mean that he purposefully conceived of disseminating the practice of the protector more than his predecessors.

While Phabongkha's teachings certainly diffused the practice of Vajrayoginī, as well as Dorje Shugden, making them more popular amongst Gelug practitioners in Central Tibet and Kham than they were before, apart from upholding the traditional view of Vajrayoginī being Tsongkhapa's secret meditational deity, it is unclear to what extent he saw these practices as "central" to the Gelug teachings at large. As has already been noted, Vajrayoginī gets no mention in the *Liberation in Your Hand*, while Phabongkha instead emphasizes the importance of focusing on Cakrasaṃvara, Guhyasamāja and Va-

⁷⁰ Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", p. 246-247.

⁷¹ blo bzang nor bu shes rab, "jam mgon bstan srung rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi 'phrin bcol bya tshul", pp. 241-250. Two other Shugden invocation texts are included in the same volume. Unfortunately the actual works appear to have been removed from the set before the edition was acquired and made available by the TBRC. The titles of these works are still listed on p. 4 of the same volume, in the contents list. Trinley Kalsang, in the introduction to his webpage (Trinley Kalsang, "Among Shugden Texts", in *Dorje Shugden History*), notes that this type of elevated title for Shugden was "coined in the 18th or 19th century". I, however, would suggest that it was perhaps coined even earlier, in the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

jrabhairava numerous times, and recommends these as the initiations and practices for the audience to receive and adopt in their practice of tantra.⁷² In his autobiography, Trijang Rinpoche likewise calls Guhyasamāja the “very pure essence, the most sublime, ultimate pinnacle of all classes of tantra”, suggesting that the cycle, which is most commonly regarded as the mainstay of Tsongkhapa, was at least symbolically central to the lineage.⁷³ Publicly and institutionally there was no obvious effort made to officially elevate Vajrayoginī to the same level as the three principal meditational deities, which remained the focus of study and practice at the two principal Gelug tantric universities, along with the traditional Gelug protectors prescribed by Tsongkhapa. Vajrayoginī, Cittamani Tārā and Dorje Shugden were never incorporated into the curriculums of the tantric institutions and, apart from a few exceptional cases, they had to be studied or practiced privately.

In Rilbur Tulku's (ril 'bur sprul sku, 1923-2006) introduction to Michael Richards' translation of Phabongkha's *Liberation in Your Hand*, he notes that when visiting Phabongkha's residence at Tashi Choeling (bkra shis chos gling) for the first time in c.1937, Phabongkha introduced him to all the statues on the altar of his meditation room: Tsongkhapa, Cakrasaṃvara, Vajrabhairava, Vajrayoginī and Palgon Dramdze (dpal mgon bram ze).⁷⁴ Interestingly, Palgon Dramdze, whose full name is Palgon Dramdzei Zug (dpal mgon bram ze'i gzugs), or Brahmarūpa Mahākāla, is a manifestation of Caturmukha Mahākāla, the protector of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle. This protector, with his *sādhu*-like appearance, takes the form of an elder Brahmin. The manifestation of the deity in this form is apparently an alternative to the actual four-faced wrathful form of Caturmukha Mahākāla, whose actual image was not allowed to be shown to the uninitiated, according to strict tantric prescriptions.⁷⁵ Tashi Choeling was an important retreat hermitage for Phabongkha and his collection of per-

⁷² See, for example, pha bong kha, "rnam grol lag bcangs", p. 758.

⁷³ "...rgyud thams cad kyi snying po rab dang phul dang rtse mo mthar thug pa". khri byang rin po che, "dga' ldan khri chen byang chub chos 'phel gyi skye gral du rlom pa'i gyi na pa zhig gis rang gi ngag tshul ma bchos lhug par bkod pa 'khrul snang sgyu ma'i zlos gar", p. 190.

⁷⁴ Rilbur Rinpoche. "Pabongka Rinpoche: A Memoir by Rilbur Rinpoche", p. 12. It is unclear if the site being referred to is indeed Tashi Choeling or not as Rilbur Rinpoche says the site was a "cave". Tashi Choeling was one of Phabongkha's principal residences, although it did not contain a cave. A separate sacred cave site, associated with Phabongkha and known as Takten Dragphuk (rtag brtan brag phug), however, is located up the mountain from Tashi Choeling. Thus the site being referred to could be either one of these locations, both of which were owned by Phabongkha.

⁷⁵ "Mahakala: Brahmarupa (Brahmin Form)" in *Himalayan Art*.

sonal statues is revealing due to the variety of deities on the altar, especially as the visit takes place in the last few years of Phabongkha's life. Although we cannot know if the account by Rilbur Tulku purposefully omits any deities, his observations cannot be dismissed and thus it is interesting to note that although Vajrayoginī is present on Phabongkha's altar along with two of Tsongkhapa's prescribed meditational deities, Shugden is not. Instead Brahmārūpa Mahākāla takes the place of protector, representing none other than Caturmukha Mahākāla, on whom, as has been noted, Phabongkha composed more pages and larger works than on Shugden. These facts suggest that while Phabongkha did place importance on Shugden, Caturmukha Mahākāla, as the protector of the all-important Cakrasaṃvara cycle, may have likewise been very central to him personally.⁷⁶ Thus while Phabongkha was undoubtedly extremely close to Shugden, he was one of at least several important protectors that Phabongkha propitiated.

Phabongkha's teachings on Vajrayoginī and Shugden were perhaps not intended for a mass audience, and would explain why he did not mention Vajrayoginī, traditionally considered a very secret practice, at the large gathering where he taught *Liberation in Your Hand*. Indeed the nature of the transmission of the Shugden life-entrustment and teachings themselves already place certain restrictions on the full-scale public diffusion of the practice. While the main rituals associated with the deity- the extensive and middle-length fulfillment rituals (*bskang chog*), like the fulfillment rituals of most other Gelug protectors, can be practiced on the basis of having received a Vajrabhairava initiation, in order to fully enter the practice of the approach, accomplishment and various activities (*bsnyen sgrub las gsum*) of the deity one must not only receive a Vajrabhairava initiation, but furthermore on the basis of that one must engage in a full retreat of serviceability (*las rung*), along with concluding practices such as a burning offering, receive the Shugden life-entrustment,

⁷⁶ Caturmukha Mahākāla is commonly known to have been one of Tulku Dragpa Gyaltzen's (*sprul ku grags pa rgyal mtshan*, 1619-1656) important protector deities and was also associated with Shugden in both the Sakya and Gelug traditions (interview, Lhasa, 2015). Dragpa Gyaltzen is the historical figure believed to have arisen as Shugden after his death. Indeed, a statue of Brahmārūpa continues to be displayed today next to the principal statue of Shugden at Lhasa's main Dorje Shugden temple, Trode Khangsar (*spro bde khang gсар*). While these links to Shugden do exist, this form of Mahākāla was also known to Tsongkhapa and indeed far pre-dates Shugden and the Gelug tradition as a whole, with its lineage rooted in India in both Gelug and Sakya traditions. Shugden has also been linked to a number of other mainstream Gelug deities such as Vajrabhairava and Manjuśrī, of whom he is considered a manifestation of, as well as the protector Setrab, with whom he is said to have an affinity with.

keep all vows and pledges, and engage in any given practice commitments.⁷⁷ Although there is again nothing particularly different about this process when compared to other protectors, what is outstanding, however, is the nature of the life-entrustment of the deity, which can only be received by a group of a maximum of "a few" disciples.⁷⁸ Receiving the life-entrustment is of course important for a serious practitioner, but was clearly restricted, and those who were able to receive the Shugden life-entrustment from Phabongkha were thus largely restricted to his closer students, or small groups of followers. This tradition seems to have been closely followed by Trijang Rinpoche, as is apparent from his autobiography. Although Trijang Rinpoche mentions giving the life-entrustment several times, these were given to a maximum of three people at a time, often only one or two.⁷⁹

The guru-deity-protector trinity, which Dreyfus and Lopez state are embodied in Phabongkha, Vajrayoginī and Shugden, is largely a non-Gelug categorization. The guru, meditational deity (or *yidam*) and protector (*bla ma yi dam chos skyong*) or guru, meditational deity and ḍākinī (*bla ma yi dam mkha' 'gro*), both termed the "Three Roots" (*rtsa gsum*), are predominantly Nyingma tantric formulations of the common Three Jewels in which all Buddhists take refuge: buddha, dharma and sangha. Although also found in such refuge groupings in the Kagyu and Sakya traditions, these are generally related to treasure (*gter ma*) cycles and other Nyingma lineages transmitted by the teachers of the two former traditions. While mentions of the "guru, deity and protector" are found in some Gelug texts, these references are largely generic and do not usually specify the names of particular deities.⁸⁰ Indeed Phabongkha does note in one of his Shug-

⁷⁷ The procedure is given in pha bong kha, "shugs ldan gyi bsnyen sgrub las gsum gyi rnam gzhag dgos 'dod yid bzhin re skong phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba'i rgyal mtshan", pp. 543-544

⁷⁸ pha bong kha, "yid ches nor bu'i shing rta", p. 507, explicitly says "*re gnyis tsam*", which could also be interpreted as meaning "one or two". The text itself is sealed (*bka' rgya ma*), and warns that it must not be read by those without pure *samaya*.

⁷⁹ For one of these mentions see khri byang rin po che, "khrul snang sgyu ma'i zlos gar", p. 363. Here, in his autobiography, Trijang Rinpoche specifically notes that he gave the life-entrustment to groups of three monks at a time (*gsum tshan*).

⁸⁰ The most famous such mention in the Gelug tradition can be found in the *Guru Pūjā* (*bla ma mchod pa*): "You are the guru, you are the deity, you are the dakini and dharma protector" ("*khyod ni bla ma khyod ni yi dam khyod ni mkha' 'gro chos skyong ste*") and refers to one's guru in the visualized manifestation of Lama Lobsang Tubwang Dorjechang (*bla ma blo bzang thub dbang rdo rje 'chang*), a form of Tsongkhapa (*blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, zab lam bla ma mchod pa'i cho ga bde stong dbyer med ma*, p. 35). An example of a more exceptional case that does specify the specific figures identified as the guru, deity and protector is a daily practice text by Lobsang Tamdrin (*blo bzang rta mgrin*, 1867-1937) which

den works that all of one's meditational deities, gurus and protectors (Shugden included) should be viewed as indivisible, a common Tibetan Buddhist devotional belief which is widely practiced in the Gelug tradition as well.⁸¹ Although Shugden is also described by Phabongkha as a manifestation of the guru-deity (*bla ma yi dam sprul pa'i rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan*), the implied meaning is that Shugden is a manifestation of the wrathful form of Mañjuśrī, Vajrabhairava, who, as noted above, is also the deity used as the basis for engaging in the protector practice.⁸² Thus it is Vajrabhairava who is the deity-figure associated with Shugden practice by Phabongkha, not Vajrayoginī or even Cakrasaṃvara. Although my reading of Phabongkha's writings has been far from exhaustive due to the sheer magnitude of pages, so far I have not come across a single intentional or even suggested grouping of himself, Vajrayoginī and Shugden into one spiritual guru-deity-protector triad, or indeed into any prescribed "central" doctrinal set.

It would have been unlikely for Phabongkha to have promoted himself as the figurehead of this new trinity. The main guru yoga practices Phabongkha promoted, as is obvious from his *Collected Works*, were those of the *Guru Pūjā* and the *Hundred Deities of Tushita* which focus on Tsongkhapa as the embodiment of the guru- whether this be Phabongkha, Trijang Rinpoche, or any other teacher. There is no evidence that Phabongkha in any way promoted a personality cult focused solely on himself and we know that the vast majority of his eminent students, both lay and ordained, of whose lives we have some kind of record, received both sutra and tantra teachings from a number of teachers, not just Phabongkha.

The concept of Phabongkha having promoted a "new understanding" of the Gelug tradition, circled around the triad of himself, Vajrayoginī and Shugden, is unlikely. Instead he fortified several rarer teachings already present in the Gelug tradition by teaching and composing new textual materials, but certainly not at the cost of abandoning the format and focus of Tsongkhapa's original teachings. As can be gleaned from Phabongkha's *Collected Works*, he composed an array of important texts related to Tsongkhapa's teachings, most importantly those of the three principal meditational deities, but with a clear focus on Cakrasaṃvara and Vajrabhairava. Cakrasaṃvara

gives Tsongkhapa as the guru-figure, Vajrabhairava as the deity and Chamsing (Icam sring) as the protector ("bla ma yi dam chos skyong dbyer med kyi rnal 'byor rgyun 'khyer ma", pp. 71-74). Lobsang Tamdrin was a contemporary of Phabongkha and also composed a number of Shugden ritual texts.

⁸¹ pha bong kha, "shugs ldan gyi bsnyen sgrub las gsum gyi nnam gzhag dgos 'dod yid bzhin re skong phyogs las nnam par rgyal ba'i rgyal mtshan", p. 554.

⁸² pha bong kha, "nam par rgyal ba'i nga dbyangs", pp. 631-632.

appears to have been the deity that Phabongkha had the closest affinity with, which also explains his close affinity to the protector Caturmukha Mahākāla. His biography includes numerous accounts that highlight this relation, including a fantastical incident at a small monastery at Drangsong Sinpori (drang srong srin po ri), located in today's Gongkar County, known for its famous image of the deity (Fig.1), to which Phabongkha had come to offer a *gaṇacakra*.⁸³ Here Phabongkha had a vision of the wisdom beings (*ye shes kyi lha*) of Cakrasaṃvara actually entering the statue, followed by a subsequent flow of nectar ensuing from the statue's mouth. Phabongkha himself is also often referred to in writing as "Heruka", a commonly used name of Cakrasaṃvara, for example in the title of his biography where he is referred to as "Heruka, All-Pervasive Lord of the Ocean of Mandalas and [Buddha] Families (*rigs dang dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho'i khyab bdag he ru ka.*)".⁸⁴

According to one account, Rilbur Tulku stated that Phabongkha himself confirmed that his main practice, on which he spent four hours daily, was none other than the *Guru Pūjā*, performed according to the Cakrasaṃvara rendition mentioned earlier.⁸⁵ The *Guru Pūjā*, a guru yoga text composed by Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltzen (blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570-1662), the First Panchen Lama, focusing on the form of Tsongkhapa as the embodiment of one's guru(s), combines the practices of all three principal meditational deities. The centrality of Cakrasaṃvara as Phabongkha's principal deity practice has been confirmed by another of his direct students as well, noting that Phabongkha's principal practice was the Stages of the Path teachings and his main deity practice was that of the Cakrasaṃvara body mandala.⁸⁶ The practice of the Cakrasaṃvara *Guru Pūjā*, which includes a special aspirational Stages of the Path prayer by Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltzen, thus combines both of these practices.

Phabongkha was, in a sense, a true heir to the illustrious Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltzen's tradition and the Ganden Hearing Lineage, a Gelug oral transmission lineage that both teachers are considered to have been principal lineage holders of. Even more essentially, Phabongkha is commonly believed to have been the possessor of the *Ganden Emanation Scripture* (*dga' ldan sprul pa'i legs bam*), as was

⁸³ ldan ma blo bzang rdo rje, *tshans pa'i dbyans sñan*, Vol. 1 of 2, p. 368. The site is also commonly known as Demchog Sinpori (bde mchog srin po ri). The statue itself is said to come from India and the mountain behind the monastery is considered sacred to Cakrasaṃvara.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸⁵ David Gonsalez, "Translator's Preface", p. 5.

⁸⁶ Anonymous student of Phabongkha (interview, 2014).

Chokyi Gyaltsen.⁸⁷ The *Emanation Scripture* is believed to be a manifestation of Mañjuśrī in the form of a mystic and invisible book, containing all the essential teachings passed on to Tsongkhapa by the bodhisattva, and can only be held and seen by the holders of the Ganden Hearing Lineage, beginning with Tsongkhapa. Chokyi Gyaltsen himself, for example, is said to have been the first person to write down a set of oral instructions on Mahāmudrā passed down in a unique Gelug lineage from Tsongkhapa, which the latter received directly from the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The actual words of the text composed by Chokyi Gyaltsen are believed to have originated from the *Emanation Scripture*. The Ganden Hearing Lineage thus maintains that the teachings of not only the Gelug Mahāmudrā, but other important texts like the *Guru Pūjā* not only represent the teachings and lineage of Tsongkhapa, but that they were drawn by Chokyi Gyaltsen from this mystic text.

Phabongkha was certainly not unique in the Gelug tradition in promoting practices with questionable links to Tsongkhapa's original teachings. Roger Jackson has noted that based on the textual material that he was able to examine, we can not currently attribute the source of the lineage of transmission of the Gelug Mahāmudrā to Tsongkhapa, and that the instructions which were written down by Chokyi Gyaltsen in the form of *The Principal Path of the Victors: A Root Text of the Precious Geden Oral Lineage of Mahāmudrā* (*dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtsa ba rgyal ba'i gzhung lam*), may well have a later origin.⁸⁸ This also calls into question the lineage of a number of other works by Chokyi Gyaltsen drawn from the Ganden Hearing Lineage, such as the *Guru Pūjā*, which are similarly traced to Tsongkhapa, and ultimately to Mañjuśrī, or his manifestation as the *Emanation Scripture*. Thus there is no empirical evidence that a number of central teachings or practices accepted universally as important or even central in the Gelug tradition, originate from Tsongkhapa and it could even be argued that previous Gelug lineage holders like Chokyi Gyaltsen were even more innovative than Phabongkha, as were countless other teachers from the various Tibetan sects.

⁸⁷ For more on the *Emanation Scripture* see Jan Willis, *Enlightened Beings: Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*, pp. 161-162.

⁸⁸ Jackson, Roger R., "The dGe ldan-bKa' brgyud Tradition of Mahāmudrā: How Much dGe ldan? How much bKa' brgyud?", p. 181. Here "dGe ldan" refers to the Gelug oral transmission lineage. See *Ibid.*, p. 165 for other interpretations of the title.

Conclusion

Geoffrey Samuel observes that “P'awongk'a's influence was strongest after his death and that of the 13th Dalai Lama, and particularly after the forced resignation of the regent Reting (Ratreng) Rimpoch'e in 1941 and his replacement by Tagtrag Rimpoch'e, who had been a close associate of P'awongk'a”.⁸⁹ He further notes that it was from then on that the students of Phabongkha gradually managed to obtain a dominant status within the Gelug tradition, which lasted up until the 1970s/80s. Although it is not the aim of this article to trace the development of this lineage, I would like to suggest that the emphasis on Shugden and Vajrayoginī continued to grow during this period, with select aspects of Phabongkha's original teachings becoming conflated, whether intentionally or not, especially in the last quarter of the twentieth century with the emergence of the controversy surrounding the deity.

Phabongkha certainly considered his relationship with Shugden as being extremely close. However, he never promoted Shugden as the sole protector of Tsongkhapa's tradition. If he had truly put tremendous importance on the diffusion of the practice, it could be argued that he would have composed far more texts himself over the years, instead of leaving a large amount of the work to his student. Instead it appears that Phabongkha's few Shugden works were composed over a period of around fifteen years or so—more than enough time to compose a larger body of work. As was mentioned above, *The Melodious Drum* was composed in the mid- to late-1920s and the life-entrustment ritual text resulted from Phabongkha's meeting with Tagphu Dorjechang in Nagshoe in 1935. Out of the Shugden works that he himself composed, the middling fulfillment ritual [7.15] was composed in 1930 and *The Victory Banner Thoroughly Victorious in All Directions* [7.13], was composed in 1939, not long before Phabongkha's death.⁹⁰ It is clear that Phabongkha himself only wrote the basic texts of the practice, drawing from an already existent tradition. An exception to this is, however, the *Preliminaries for the Life-Entrustment of Shugden* [7.12], which appears to have been compiled by Trijang Rinpoche and scribed by Denma Lobsang Dorje based on Phabongkha's teachings, yet included in Phabongkha's *Collected Works*.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Samuel, Geoffrey, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*, p. 546.

⁹⁰ pha bong kha, *khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang pha bong kha pa dpal bzang po'i gsung 'bum*, Vol. 7, pp. 609, 687.

⁹¹ Although this is the case, clearly this work was included into this corpus and not Trijang Rinpoche's *Collected Works*, suggesting that the work was considered fit to be attributed directly to Phabongkha and not to Trijang Rinpoche, most likely as

What took place then, was a gradual growth of the Shugden practice, beginning with Tagphu Pemavajra's pure vision, on which Phabongkha based his own select compositions and teachings, and which, in turn, Trijang Rinpoche expanded. Likewise, whatever his motivation for doing so, although teaching on and composing a number of important works on Vajrayoginī, Phabongkha did not emphasise the practice anymore than previous eminent teachers like Tuken, and was thus drawing from an already existent tradition in the Gelug lineage. There is currently no evidence to suggest that any emphasis placed on Vajrayoginī was aimed at de-centralizing the practices of the three main deities prescribed by Tsongkhapa (Guhyasamāja, Vajrabhairava and Cakrasaṃvara), or to designate her as the main deity practice of a guru-deity-protector triad. Indeed Phabongkha's emphasis on Vajrabhairava and Cakrasaṃvara demonstrate the variety he was inclined to. Similarly, he did not aim at replacing the practices of popular Gelug protectors with that of Dorje Shugden. Shugden was certainly not the only protector that Phabongkha propitiated, as has been demonstrated above, and was not even included amongst the enlightened beings in well-known depictions of the *Guru Pūjā* assembly field (*tshogs zhing*) used today, which trace their layout to Phabongkha.⁹² Vajrayoginī however is included, although she can also be found in a number of different renditions of the *Guru Pūjā* assembly field that pre-date Phabongkha's arrangement (Fig.2 and 3). Furthermore at the moment there isn't sufficient textual evidence to support the suggestion of a reinvention of Gelug tradition by Phabongkha, although he did help to create the conditions for this to eventually happen.

The growing popularity of Dorje Shugden was undoubtedly aided by the composition and printing of Trijang Rinpoche's texts on the practice, which represented a major portion of the growing body of works on the protector.⁹³ Trijang Rinpoche's writings clearly com-

it was considered a true record of an oral teaching of Phabongkha's. pha bong kha, "rgyal chen srog gtad kyi sngon 'gro bshad pa'i mtshams sbyor kha skong", p. 540.

⁹² Today it is possible to find depictions of the assembly field that include Shugden, however these post-date Phabongkha, and to my knowledge, even Trijang Rinpoche. For an oral description of the layout of this assembly field by pha bong kha, *nam grol lag bcangs*, pp. 192-203.

⁹³ The numerous well-known teachers who contributed to this include figures such as the Tenth Panchen Lama Chokyi Gyaltsen (chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1938-1989), who composed a fulfillment ritual (bskang chog) to the deity and his five families (blo bzang 'phrin las lhun grub chos kyi rgyal mtshan, "jam mgon rgyal ba'i bstan srung rdo rje shugs ldan rig lnga drag po rtsal gyi bskang chog las bzhi lhun gyis 'grub pa'i sgra dbyangs", pp. 55-98), adding to the growing corpus of text on this deity.

plement Phabongkha's works but it appears from his autobiography that he was not responsible for any wider or more public dissemination of the practice. Indeed, as has been noted, Trijang Rinpoche was selective in his conferral of Shugden life-entrustments and teachings, suggesting that the wider popularization of the practice appears to have been undertaken by some of his direct students.

Following Trijang Rinpoche's Shugden works, perhaps the most important are those of Zemey Rinpoche Lobsang Palden Tenzin Yargye (dze smad rin po che blo bzang dpal ldan bstan 'dzin yar rgyas, 1927-1996), who further composed several texts on the deity, such as retreat instructions, praises, and of course the infamous 1975 *Sacred Words of the Competent Father-Guru* (*pha rgod bla ma'i zhal lung*), more commonly known as the *Yellow Book*, which caused an uproar due to its sectarian, primarily anti-Nyingma, accounts that subsequently led to the current controversy over the deity.⁹⁴ *Sacred Words*, according to Zemey Rinpoche, was composed based on incidental oral accounts heard from Trijang Rinpoche.⁹⁵ It is important to note that by this time the cult of Shugden was in the early stages of becoming internationally diffused to a growing mass of devotees by Phabongkha's, and especially Trijang Rinpoche's students. As with all living traditions, it continued to evolve. Despite the emphasis placed on an exacting transmission of teachings in all sects of Tibetan Buddhism, there is a tendency for new interpretations, additions, commentaries and other texts to be added to the lineage over time. One cannot however expect the current living tradition to represent fully the intent of its originators.

It is possible that due to the current controversy surrounding Shugden, an even greater polarization has occurred where the most exceptional features of Phabongkha's teachings and his lineage, i.e. those of Vajrayoginī and Dorje Shugden, have been emphasized by all sides of the debate to demonstrate either how much he pushed an extremist pro-Gelug agenda while nonetheless departing from established Gelug tradition, or to demonstrate how he was instead a visionary teacher, promoting the Gelug tradition through his emphasis on a selection of efficacious practices that find their source, one way or another, with Tsongkhapa.

Phabongkha's works were very multifaceted, to the extent that a variety of different approaches and interpretations were and continue to be extracted from his teachings by his direct and indirect fol-

⁹⁴ See blo bzang dpal ldan bstan 'dzin yar rgyas, "mthu dang stobs kyis che ba'i bstan srung chen po rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi byung ba brjod pa pha rgod bla ma'i zhal gyi bdud rtsi'i chu khur brtsegs shing 'jigs rung glog zhags 'gyur ba'i sprin nag 'khrugs pa'i nga ro zhes bya ba bzhus so", pp. 571-650.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

lowers. The almost exclusive devotion to Vajrayoginī and Shugden by some appears to have developed after Phabongkha's death and is an example of this type of selective interpretation. Today the presentation of Phabongkha's complete lineage on both sides of the Shugden debate are arguably often departures from Phabongkha's own original tradition, either because of their complete exclusion of the deity, or by an over-emphasis on certain aspect of Phabongkha's teachings to the detriment of others. This type of over-emphasis on certain aspects is most obvious in relation to Dorje Shugden and Vajrayoginī, which today are synonymous with Phabongkha's legacy, much to the detriment of his other works. Likewise it will simply not do to categorize an emphasis on a simple guru-Vajrayoginī-Shugden triad as being representative of Phabongkha's intentions.

Although Phabongkha did not promote a Phabongkha-Vajrayoginī-Shugden triad, the conception that he did clearly emerged. It is important to note that no Gelug teacher who was a direct student of Phabongkha appears to have grouped or presented Phabongkha, Vajrayoginī and Shugden together as one central doctrinal practice. Trijang Rinpoche taught and passed on the Vajrayoginī and Shugden cycles numerous times, yet in his works there is nothing to suggest that his view and treatment of Phabongkha was anything more than what would result from the usual dynamic between a guru and student. Phabongkha was certainly not elevated to a position in which he displaced Tsongkhapa as the guru-figure of the Gelug tradition.⁹⁶

This conception of a Phabongkha-Vajrayoginī-Shugden triad appears to have taken place during the latter half of the twentieth century and is not traceable to Phabongkha or even to Trijang Rinpoche. It is possible that the designation of this systematic three-fold grouping as the central facet of Phabongkha's teachings by modern scholars and others, may have been informed to a certain extent by the modern praxis of some of the pro-Shugden followers of Phabongkha's lineage, especially the New Kadampa Tradition – International Kadampa Buddhist Union (NKT-IKBU), who David N. Kay notes, "formulate the Buddhist path in terms of the dictum 'one guru, one *yidam* and one Dharma-protector'", and who strongly emphasize the practices of Vajrayoginī and Shugden within this framework.⁹⁷ A

⁹⁶ Although Georges Dreyfus suggests that Phabongkha elevated himself to the position of the guru-figure of the Gelug tradition (Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair", p. 246) Simon Daisley is even more explicit and interprets Dreyfus' statement as specifically meaning that Phabongkha replaced Tsongkhapa (Daisley, *Exorcising Luther*, p. 163).

⁹⁷ David N. Kay, *Tibetan and Zen Buddhism in Britain: Transplantation, Development and Adaptation*, 2004, p. 100. The NKT-IKBU is headed by a student of Trijang

recent publication by the Dolgyal Shugden Research Society does exactly this, rather arbitrarily suggesting that the NKT-IKBU "mirrors clearly" Phabongkha's teachings due to their focus on the guru-deity-protector triad.⁹⁸

The conferring of Shugden initiations, or life-entrustments, to large gatherings of people, instead of a small group of select disciples, is not uncommon today in both Tibet and abroad, and the complete exclusion of other central practices such as Vajrabhairava from the ritual repertoire by some teachers are symptoms demonstrating drastic changes in the tradition espoused by Phabongkha.⁹⁹ Vajrabhairava, after all, was not only one of Tsongkhapa's main practices, but self-generation (*bdag bskyed*) as the deity was prescribed by Phabongkha as the basis for propitiating Shugden. Thus it is important to note that the most popular presentations of Phabongkha's lineage amongst pro- and anti-Shugden groups both in Tibetan communities and amongst large Gelug or Gelug-derived organizations in the west follow selective transmissions of Phabongkha's teachings and thus most cannot be taken to be representative of Phabongkha or even

Rinpoche, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso (dge bshes bkal bzang rgya mtsho, 1931-). Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Heart Jewel: The Essential Practices of Kadampa Buddhism*, p. 90, mentions that "Many sadhanas of Dorje Shugdän state that Dorje Shugdän is the embodiment of the 'Guru, Yidam and Protector'", although no sources are listed. The explanation given by Kelsang Gyatso to this line states that the guru refers to Tsongkhapa, and that Shugden is the embodiment of all dharma protectors. Although not stated in this specific explanation, the meditational deities within this NKT-IKBU triad are Cakrasamvara and especially Vajrayogini, as are clear from Kelsang Gyatso's numerous other writings. Tsongkhapa, in turn, is meant to be viewed as the embodiment of one's own guru, in this case Kelsang Gyatso. This presentation of the triad has been interpreted by at least some of Kelsang Gyatso's students to be representative of Phabongkha's views, as one follower writes on a blog created "for the benefit of Kadampa Buddhist practitioners" ("Purpose of this Website" in *Dorje Shugden Debate*): "One of Je Phabongkha's principal innovations was to reduce our Deity practice into the threefold: Guru (Je Tsongkhapa), Yidam (Heruka or Vajrayogini) and Protector (Dorje Shugden)" ("Claim: Dorje Shugden was not taught by Je Tsongkhapa" in *Dorje Shugden Debate*).

⁹⁸ The Dolgyal Shugden Research Society, *Dolgyal Shugden: A History*, pp. 142-143.

⁹⁹ Amongst its many amendments to the tradition as it was received from Trijang Rinpoche, the conferral of mass Shugden initiations as well as the exclusion of the practices of Guhyasamāja, Vajrabhairava and Cittamani Tārā are also facets of the NKT-IKBU, who nevertheless maintain that that they follow the "pure tradition" of Tsongkhapa, Phabongkha and Trijang Rinpoche. The term "pure tradition" is used commonly in material published by the NKT, see, for example, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Heart Jewel*, p. vii. Non-tantric deviations from mainstream Gelug practice include, for example, a unique NKT-IKBU monastic ordination lineage, as noted on the NKT-IKBU website: "The way of granting ordination within the NKT tradition was designed by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso" (NKT-IKBU, *Modern Kadampa Buddhism*, 2014).

Trijang Rinpoche's original or complete corpus of works and instructions. This is not to be regarded as a criticism of these groups as the selective interpretation and practice of transmission lineages, as well as their continual modification, has existed throughout Tibetan Buddhist history. It is, however, important not to impose current trends in Tibetan Buddhist practice onto our attempts to understand the past.

Evolution and changes in lineage teachings and practice take place naturally and continuously, and certainly do not invalidate a tradition, yet it is imperative to notice what changes have taken place. In the end, the results of these misconceptions about Phabongkha's central teachings form a distorted image of this important figure, causing him to be misrepresented instead of remembered for his most famous teachings, such as those on the Stages of the Path genre. Even in terms of tantric teachings and practice, the number of his works on the three main Gelug meditational deities outweighs those on Vajrayoginī or Dorje Shugden, and the focus of his own practice, disregarding what his students practiced, appears to have been on these as well, with specific attention on Cakrasaṃvara.

Although future research may necessitate a review of the interpretations expressed in this article, we can certainly say that Phabongkha presented and authored a far richer variety of works and practices than he is given credit for. Current interpretations of his legacy, which are often highly selective, owe more to later lineage descendants than to him. These interpretations then contribute to the divisive discourse we see today without, perhaps, carefully looking back at Phabongkha's actual writings. Indeed the contents of Phabongkha's *Collected Works* speak for themselves in terms of the variety of subjects, deities and practices towards which he was inclined.



Appendix

The Contents of the Eleven-Volume Lhasa Edition of Phabongkha's *Collected Works*, Together with the Contents of the Twelfth Volume as Found in the Potala Collection

For the sake of brevity, the titles listed below follow those given in the contents pages at the beginning of each volume in the set (pha bong kha. *khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang pha bong kha pa dpal bzang po'i gsung 'bum* (11 vols.). Lhasa: s.n., 199-.) and those listed by the TBRC [W3834]. For this reason the titles do not always exactly match the

full titles given in the footnotes and body of the article above, or those given in the bibliography, which generally follow those listed on the title pages of the individual works. As Vol. 11 is a single work, the full title of the text is given.

Preference has been given for the TBRC's listing as it is easily accessible and often more extensive, especially as Vol. 10, for example, has no printed listing of contents. Any important discrepancies between the order and contents of the TBRC's listings and those of the contents pages of the Lhasa edition volumes, as well as the catalogue to the Potala edition are noted in square brackets.

In several cases I have expanded the bibliographical titles, usually by incorporating sections of the full headings as presented on the title pages of the individual works, with the additions in question also enclosed in square brackets. The contents of the twelfth volume are also listed following the presentation given in the catalogue to the Potala's edition.

Vol. 1 (ka)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Ka*
pha bong ka pa'i gsung 'bum pod kha pa'i dkar chag/

1. A Compilation of Only Initiations Drawn from Phabongkha's Records of Received Teachings

pha bong kha pa'i gsan yig las dbang rkyang gi skor phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

2. A Compilation of Combined Initiations and Instructions Drawn from Phabongkha's Records of Received Teachings

pha bong kha pa'i gsan yig las dbang khrid sbrag ma'i skor phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

3. A Compilation of Various Oral Transmissions and Instructions Drawn from Phabongkha's Records of Received Teachings

pha bong kha pa'i gsan yig las lung khrid sna tshogs skor phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

4. A Compilation of Only Oral Transmissions Drawn from Phabongkha's Records of Received Teachings

pha bong kha pa'i gsan yig las lung rkyang gi skor phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

Vol. 2 (kha)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Kha*
pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod kha pa'i dkar chag/

1. A Compilation of Permission Initiations Drawn from Phabongkha's Records of Received Teachings
pha bong kha pa'i gsan yig las rjes gnang skor phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

2. A Compilation of Text-collections Drawn from Phabongkha's Records of Received Teachings
pha bong kha pa'i gsan yig las be'u bum skor phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

3. The Method for Practicing the Yoga of the *Guru Pūjā* with Cakrasamvara: A Ritual Arranged for Convenient Recitation
bla ma mchod pa 'khor lo sdom pa dang 'brel ba'i rnal 'byor nyams su len tshul gyi cho ga nag 'gros su bkod pa/

4. The Method for Practicing the *Guru Pūjā* with Bhairava: A Recitation Ritual Arranged for Convenient Recitation
bla ma mchod pa 'jigs byed dang 'brel bar nyams su len tshul gyi 'don chog nag 'gros su bkod pa/

5. A Festival of Emanations: A Skillful Ritual Arrangement for the Extensive Way of Taking the Four Initiations According to the Hearing Lineage
snyan brgyud dbang bzhi rgyas pa len tshul gyi chog sgrigs thabs mkhas 'phrul gyi dga' ston/

6. The Image of the Everlasting Vajra: The Way of Offering a Long-life Accomplishment Ritual Through the *Guru Pūjā: Indivisible Bliss and Emptiness*, Combined with the Long-life Practice of the Drubgyal Tradition
bla ma mchod pa bde stong dbyer med ma dang grub rgyal lugs kyi tshe sgrub sbrags ma'i sgo nas brtan bzhugs 'bul tshul rtag brtan rdo rje'i re khA/

7. A Compilation of Guru Yoga Texts [such as the *Treasury of All Desired Blessings-Guru Yoga*, and Others]
bla ma'i rnal 'byor [byin rlabs 'dod dgu'i gter mdzod sogs bla ma'i rnal 'byor gyi rim pa] phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa/

8. A Compilation of Lineage Guru Supplication Texts and so forth.
bla brgyud gsol 'debs sogs kyi skor phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa/

9. The Storehouse of Precious Treasure: The Way of Practicing the Yoga of *Ganden Lhagyama* According to the Precious Oral Pith Instructions of the Hearing Lineage

dga' ldan lha brgya ma'i rnal 'byor nyams su len tshul snyan brgyud zhal shes man ngag rin chen gter gyi bang mdzod/

10. The Ganden Lhagyama Guru Yoga, [Drawn from the Pith Instructions of the Ganden Hearing Lineage].

[dge ldan snyan brgyud kyi man ngag las byung ba'i] bla ma'i rnal 'byor dga' ldan lha brgya ma/

11. The Staircase for the Fortunate to Travel to Tuṣita: An Instruction Manual for the Recitation-ritual of Consciousness-transference Based on the *Ganden Lhagyama*

dga' ldan lha brgya ma'i 'pho khrid 'don chog skal bzang dga' ldan bgrad pa'i them skas/

12. Fruits of the Wish-fulfilling Divine Tree Which Give Rise to the Two Accomplishments: Notes on Experiential Instructions on *The Way to Rely on a Spiritual Guide*

bshes gnyen bsten tshul myong khrid zin bris grub gnyis 'dod 'jo'i dpag bsam yongs 'du'i snye ma/

13. Notes on the *Graduated Stages of the Tantric Path* [Taken During a Transmission from the Venerable Lama Chone Pandita]

[rje btsun bla ma co ne paN+Di ta rin po che'i zhal snga nas/] sngags rim chen mo'i [bshad lung nos skabs kyi gsung] zin bris/

14. An Amazing Feast of Nectar: Notes of Guidance for Drubde Gegye Thegchog Ling

sgrub sde dge rgyas theg mchog gling gi bca' yig ngo mtshar bdud rtsi'i dga' ston/

Vol. 3 (ga)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Ga*
pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod ga pa'i dkar chag/

1. A Collection of Notes on Both the Guhyasamāja Generation Stage *Ocean of Accomplishment* and the Completion Stage *Lamp that Illuminates the Five Stages*, Arranged Together

*gsang 'dus bskyed rim dngos grub rgya mtsho dang rdzogs rim rim lnga
gsal sgron gnyis kyi zin tho 'ga' zhig phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/*

2. The Supreme Festival: A Condensed Sādhana of the Ārya Tradition of Guhyasamāja

'dus pa 'phags lugs kyi sgrub thabs mdor bsdus mchog gi dga' ston/

3. Victory Over Māra: The Sādhana of Solitary Hero Bhairava, Conveniently Arranged for Recitation

*'jigs byed dpa' bo gcig pa'i sgrub thabs bdud las rnam rgyal gyi ngag 'don
nag 'gros su bkod pa/*

4. The Way to Practice the Succinctly Condensed Self-generation of the Terrifying Solitary Hero

'jigs mdzad dpa' bo gcig pa'i bdag bskyed cung bsdus te nyams su len tshul/

5. The Extremely Condensed Sādhana of Solitary Hero Bhairava Together with an Extremely Condensed Self-entry

*'jigs byed dpa' bo gcig pa'i sgrub thabs shin tu bsdus dang bdag 'jug shin tu
bsdus pa/*

[This work is not listed in the Potala edition's catalogue]

6. The Method for Engaging in the Approximation Retreat of Serviceability of Solitary Hero Bhairava, [Uncommon] Notes on the *Great Retreat of the Solitary Hero* [by Amdo Deyang Rinpoche], and Notes on *The Wrathful Distribution of the Sixty-Four Torma Offerings*

*'jigs byed dpa' bo gcig pa'i las rung gi bsnyen pa bya tshul dang / dpa' gcig
gi bsnyen chen zin tho [thun mong ma yin pa a mdo bde yangs rin po ches
mdzad pa]/ drug cu ma drag bsngos kyi zin tho bcas/*

7. Compiled Notes from the Transmission of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra's *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning* and the Generation Stage of Kālacakra

*'khor lo sdom pa'i rgyud 'grel sbas don kun gsal gyi bshad lung dang / dus
'khor gyi bskyed rim phyag zin thor bu bcas/*

8. The Swift Path to Great Bliss: The Lineage Prayer of the Ghaṇṭapāda Tradition of Cakrasaṃvara and Thoroughly Increasing Great Bliss: The Sādhanā of the Ghaṇṭapāda Tradition of the [Bhagavān] Cakrasaṃvara [Body Mandala]

*dril bu lugs kyi 'khor lo sdom pa'i bla brgyud gsol 'debs bde chen nye lam
dang/ [dril bu zhabs lugs kyi bcom ldan 'das] 'khor lo sdom pa'i lus dkyil
gyi mngon rtogs bde chen rab 'phel/*

9. The Continuous Rain of Camphor that Compassionately Cleanses the Stains of Downfalls: The Vase Generation of the [Bhagavān] Cakrasaṃvara Body Mandala [in the Tradition of Mahāsiddha Ghaṅṭapāda] and the Brief Self-entry

[grub chen dril bu zhabs lugs bcom ldan 'das] 'khor lo sdom pa'i lus dkyil gyi bum bskyed dang bdag 'jug mdor bsdus nyes ltung dri ma 'khrud pa'i thugs rje'i ga pur char rgyun/

10. A Compiled Ritual for the Great Approximation Retreat Based on the Cakrasaṃvara Body Mandala, Arranged for Oral Recitation.

'khor lo sdom pa lus dkyil gyi gzhi bsnyen chen mo'i bsnyen sgrub sbrags ma'i cho ga bklag chog tu bkod pa/

11. The Festival of Highest Virtue: The Method for Engaging in the Oral Recitation Ritual of External Offerings in Dependence on the [Bhagavān] Cakrasaṃvara Body Mandala [in the Tradition of Mahāsiddha Ghaṅṭapāda]

[grub chen dril bu zhabs lugs bcom ldan 'das] 'khor lo sdom pa lus dkyil la brten pa'i phyi rol mchod pa bya tshul gyi 'don chog bsod nams mchog gi dga' ston/

12. Offering Clouds of the Vajra Body: A Tea Offering of Cakrasaṃvara

'khor lo sdom pa'i ja mchod rdo rje'i lus kyi mchod sprin/

13. [Drop of Essential Nectar of the Hearing Lineage: The Pith Instructions for the Way to Practice the White Long-life Deity Cakrasaṃvara,] a Long-life Accomplishment Ritual Sealed in Secrecy.

[sbyor bde mchog tshe lha dkar po dang sbrags ten nyams su len tshul gyi man ngag snyan brgyud bdud rtsi'i thig le/] tshe sgrub bka' rgyal/

14. The Good Vase of Immortal Nectar: The Way of Performing a Long-life Offering Ritual to a Great Being Based on the White Long-life Deity Cakrasaṃvara, Combined Together with the Repellence of the Dakinis

bde mchog tshe lha dkar po'i sgo nas [yul khyad par can la] zhabs brtan 'bul tshul mkha' 'gro bsun bzlog [dang bcas pa 'chi med bdud rtsi'i bum bzang/]

15. The Hook Which Summons Attainments: The Gaṇacakra Offering of the White Long-life Deity Cakrasaṃvara

bde mchog tshe lha dkar po'i tshogs mchod dngos grub 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu/

16. Garland of Cittamani: The Pith Instructions for the Yogas of the Two Stages of Khadiravani Tārā

seng ldeng nags kyi sgrol ma'i lam rim pa gnyis kyi rnal 'byor nyams len gyi man ngag tsit+ta ma Ni'i do shall

17. Offering of the 'Explanatory' Torma on the Occasion of Teachings on the Two Stages of Guhyasamāja, Vajrabhairava and Cakrasamvara, Together with the Unmistaken Offering of the Illusory Body

gsang bde 'jigs gsum gyi rim gnyis bka' khrid skabs 'grel gtor 'bul tsul skor dang / sgyu lus mchod pa sogs kyi phyag bzhes 'khrul med/

Vol. 4 (nga)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. NGA*

pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod nga pa'i dkar chag

1. Swift Path to Great Bliss: The Uncommon Sādhanā of [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs thun min bde chen nye lam/

2. The Way for Meditating on an Abbreviated Version of the *Swift Path to Great Bliss* sādhanā of [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs bde chen nye lam las bsdus te bsgom tshul/

3. Festival of Great Bliss: The Mandala Ritual of Queen [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i dkyi 'khor gyi cho ga bde chen dga' ston/

4. A Staircase for the Fortunate to Travel to Kechara: The Practice of the Approximation, Accomplishment and Activities of Queen [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i bsnyen sgrub las gsum gyi lag len skal bzang mkha' spyod bgrod pa'i them skas/

5. The Messenger Invoking the Hundred Blessings of the Vajra: The Ritual Text to be Recited as a Preliminary to the [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari Approximation Retreat Together with Notes on the Ritual Practiced During the Approximation and the Way to Practice the Long, Middling and Brief "Tenth-day" Offerings

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod ma'i bsnyen pa'i sngon 'gro'i 'don cha bklag chog zur du bkol ba rdo rje'i byin brgya 'beb pa'i pho nya dang/ bsnyen pa 'dug skabs kyi phyag len dang cho ga'i zin tho/ tshes bcu rgyas 'bring bsdus pa bya tshul/

6. Fulfilling the Wish for Attainments: The Peaceful Burning Offering of Queen [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i sgo nas zhi ba'i sbyin sreg bya tshul dngos grub 'dod 'jo/

7. Swift Invocation of Attainments: The Way of Relying on and Practicing the Invocation of the Worldly God Agni to the Hearth in Dependence on Vajrayoginī Naro Kechari

rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nA ro mkha' spyod ma la brten nas 'jig rten pa'i me lha thab tu 'gugs pa'i bsnyen pa bya tshul dngos grub myur 'gugs/

8. Offerings and Gifts Pleasing the Rishis: The Way of Practicing the Tenth-part Burning Offering in Relation to the Approximation Retreat for the Invocation of the Worldly God Agni to the Hearth, in Dependence on Vajrayoginī Naro Kechari

rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i sgo nas 'jig rten pa'i me lha thab tu 'gugs pa'i bsnyen pa'i bcu cha'i sbyin sreg bya tshul drang srong dgyes pa'i mchod sbyin/

9. [The Point of Entry to Kechara Pure Land:] A Recitation Text for the Sindhura Ritual, or Approximation and Accomplishment of Queen [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo la brten pa'i sin+d+hU ra'i sgrub pa'am bsnyen sgrub sbrags ma'i 'don sgrigs [mkha' spyod zhing gi 'jug ngos/]

10. The Meaningful Magical Lasso: The Tenth-part Burning Offering of the [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari Approximation Retreat

[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i bsnyen pa'i bcu cha chen mo'i sbyin sreg don yon 'phrul gyi zhags pa/

11. The Uncommon Golden Dharma: The Pith Instructions for Journeying to Kechara

mkha' spyod bgrod pa'i man ngag gser chos thun min zhal shes chig brgyud ma/

12. Festival of Uncontaminated Joy: The Short Gaṇacakra Offering of Queen [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari

*[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i tshogs mchod mdor
bsdus zag med dgyes rgu'i dga' ston/*

13. The Magical Ritual of Skillful Means: The Way of Performing the Sesame Seed Burning Offering of Vajrayoginī which Purifies All Negativities Without Remainder and The Cloud of Offerings of Virtuous Skillful Means-Food Offering

*rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i sgo nas til gyi sbyin sreg bya tshul sdig ltung lhag
med spyod pa'i thabs mkhas 'phrul gyi cho ga dang/ zas mchod thabs mkhas
bsod nams mchod sprin/*

14. The Iron Hook of Compassion: The Transference of the Solitary Mother, Together with the Way of Performing the Hand Offering

*yum rkyang gi 'pho ba myur 'dren thugs rje'i lcags kyu dang/ lag mchod
bya tshul/*

15. The Painted Mandala Initiation Ritual of the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara of the Palmo Tradition [Arranged in a Straightforward Manner, which is Similar to the Mandala-rite of the Supreme Victor, The Great Seventh [Dalai Lama]]

*thugs rje chen po bcu gcig zhal dpal mo lugs kyi ras bris kyi dkyil 'khor du
dbang bskur ba'i cho ga [rgyal mchog bdun pa chen po'i dkyil chog ltar nag
'gros su bkod pa/]*

16. Some Notes on Madhyamaka and on Transmissions of the Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra and Madhyamakāvatāra

*mdo rgyan sbyar ba'i bshad lung dang dbu ma la 'jug pa/ dbu ma'i brjed
byang nyung ngu/*

17. Notes on *The Essence of True Eloquence*

drang nges legs bshad snying po'i zin bris/

18. Fragmentary notes on *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*

byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa zhes bya ba bka' mchan thor bu/

19. *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* Outline

spyod 'jug sa bcad/

20. *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* Notes

spyod 'jug zin bris/

Vol. 5 (ca)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Cha pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod ca pa'i dkar chag/*

1. Recollective Notes on the *Four Interwoven Annotations of the Lamrim Chenmo*

lam rim chen mo mchan bu bzhi sbrags kyi skor dran gso'i bsnyel byang/

2. [Chariot of the Mahāyāna:] The Way of Practicing the Jorchoe-preliminaries of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment

byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i sngon 'gro sbyor chos nyams su len tshul [theg mchog 'phrul gyi shing rta/]

3. The Excellent Path of the Victors: A Compiled Jorchoe Recitation for the Central Tibetan Lineage's Extensive Commentarial Tradition of the Essential Lamrim Instructions of the *The Sacred Words of Mañjuśrī*

lam rim dmar khrid 'jam dpal zhal lung gi khrid rgyun rgyas pa dbus brgyud lugs kyi sbyor chos kyi ngag 'don khrigs chags su bkod pa rgyal ba'i lam bzang/

4. On Outlines from an Experiential Commentary on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment's Essential Instructions- the *Easy Path* and *Swifth Path*

[byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i dmar khrid bde myur gyi thog nas nyams khrid stsal skabs kyi] sa bcad skor/

5. Pith Instructions Pointing Out the Way to Train According to an Important Experiential Stages of the Path Commentary, Taught in Everyday Language.

lam rim myong khrid gnad du bkar te skyong tshul gyi man ngag phal tshig dmar rjen lag len mdzub btsugs kyi tshul du bkod pa/

6. Advice Spoken to Kongpo Tre Rabchog Tulku Rinpoche

kong po bkras rab mchog sprul rin po che la stsal ba/

[This work is included together with previous title [5.5] and is not listed separately in the contents of the actual printed volume, or in the catalogue to the Potala edition.]

7. Heart Spoon: Practice Instructions to Bear in Mind [Drawn From] Experiences of the Long Path

shul ring lam gyi myong ba lag len dmar bcang snying gi thur ma/

8. Regarding Advice Presented in the Form of Songs of Realization, such as *All Countless Objects of Refuge* and so forth
rab 'byams skyabs kun ma sogs nyams mgur bslab bya'i skor/

9. The Root Text of the Seven Points of Mind Training
blo sbyong don bdun pa'i rtsa ba/

10. [The Common Jewel of the Ganden Practice Lineage:] Enhancing the Experience of Method and Wisdom by the Practice of Dedicating the Collection of the Illusory Body
sgyu lus tshogs su bsngo ba thabs shes nyams kyi bogs 'don [dga' ldan sgrub brgyud spyi nor/]

11. The Emanated Chariot: The Way to Practice the Generosity of Offering the One Hundred Torma [Which Carries to the Jewel of the Three Bodies]
gtor ma brgya rtsa gtong tshul [sku gsum nor bu 'dren pa'i] mchod sbyin 'phrul gyi shing rta/

12. A Textual Collection of Notes by Various Disciples on the Nectar of Dagpo Lama Rinpoche's Speech, which had been Forgotten and Scattered
dwags po bla ma rin po che'i gsung gi bdud rtsi bsnyel thor gnang ba sogs phyag zin thor bu sna tshogs phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa/

13. Brief Notes on Pramāṇa
tshad ma'i bsnyel byang mdor bsdus/

Vol. 6 (cha)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Cha*
pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod cha pa'i dkar chag/

1. A Guide for those Travelling to the Supreme Field: The Profound Instruction for those Travelling to Shambhala in Dependence on White Mañjuśrī
'jam dbyangs dkar po la brten nas sham+ba+ha lar bgrod pa'i gdams pa zab mo zhing mchog bgrod pa'i sa mkhan/

2. A Collection Regarding the Sādhanas of the Highest Deities
lhag lha'i sgrub thabs skor phyogs bsgrigs/

3. The Way of Practicing the Long-life Accomplishment Ritual of Sita-Tārā Cintācakra for the Sake of Oneself and Others

sgrol dkar yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgo nas rang gzhan gyi tshe sgrub bya tshul/

4. Festival of the Nectar of Immortality: Praises and Requests to Sita-Tārā Cintācakra

sgrol dkar yid bzhin 'khor lo'i bstod gsol 'chi med bdud rtsi'i dga' ston/

5. Chone Pandita's Sita-Tārā Long-Life-Commentary, the Collected Activity- sādhanā of White Mañjuśrī and Sarasvatī, Together with Lecture Notes

co ne paN+Di ta'i sgröl dkar tshe khrid dang / 'jam dkar/ dbyangs can ma rnam kyī sgrub thabs las tshogs bcas pa'i gsung bshad zin bris/

6. On Sealed Teachings

gsung bka' rgya ma'i skor/

7. Some Scattered Teachings Compiled Together

gsung thor bu ba 'ga' zhig phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

8. A Compilation of Various Questions and Answers on Sutra and Tantra

mdo sngags skor gyi dris lan sna tshogs phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa/

9. The Permission Initiations of the Dharma-cycle of Mañjuśrī, and so forth, Arranged Together

'jam dbyangs chos skor sogs kyī rjes gnang bca' sgrigs skor/

10. [Festival of the Victory Over the Three Worlds:] The Nine-floored Iron House Torma Ritual *Victory Over the Three Worlds*, Arranged for Convenient Recitation

lcags mkhar zur dgu pa'i gtor chog srid gsum rnam rgyal gyi 'don cha nag 'gros su bkod pa [srid gsum rnam rgyal dga' ston/]

11. [The Machine of Sky-Iron:] A Supplement to *Festival of the Victory Over the Three Worlds*, which is the Nine-floored Iron House Torma Ritual, *Victory Over the Three Worlds*, Arranged for Convenient Recitation

lcags mkhar zur dgu pa'i gtor chog srid gsum rnam rgyal gyi chog sgrigs srid gsum rnam rgyal dga' ston gyi zur rgyan [gnam lcags 'phrul 'khor/]

12. The Inescapable Dark Belly of Yama: A Subjugation Ritual for Ghosts and Demons, in Dependence on Solitary Hero Bhairava

'jigs byed dpa' bo gcig pa'i sgo nas sgab 'dre'am sgrub sri mnan pa'i cho ga thar med gshin rje'i lto khung/

13. A Brief Subjugation of Demons Which Can Be Modified for Use in Relation to Any Meditational Deity or Dharma Protector Based on the Practice of the Subjugation Ritual for Ghosts- *The Inescapable Dark Belly of Yama*, in Dependence on Solitary Hero Bhairava,

'jigs byed dpa' bo gcig pa'i sgo nas sgab 'dre mnan chog thar med gshin rje'i lto khung gi bca' gshom gyi lag len dang /yi dam chos skyong gang la'ang sbyar du rung ba'i sri mnan mdor bsdus/

Vol. 7 (ja)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Ja*
pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod ja pa'i dkar chag/

1. The Sun that Enlarges the Lotus of the Three Types of Faith: An Explanation on the Way of Offering the Mandala
maN+Dal bshad pa 'bul tshul dad gsum pad+mo rgyas pa'i nyin byed/

2. A Collection of Long-life Prayers and Swift-return Supplications to Incarnation Lineages
zhabs brtan dang myur byon 'khrungs rabs gsol 'debs kyi rim pa rnam phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa/

3. [The Melodious Sound of Conviction,] The Roar of Good Faith: An Incarnation Lineage Supplication
'khrungs rabs gsol 'debs skal bzang dad pa'i nga ro [yid ches bden dbyangs/]

4. The Melodious Drum Victorious Over the Terrifyingly Laughter of the Lord of Death: A Long-life Prayer Supplication to Tagtra
stag brag gi brtan bzhugs gsol 'debs 'jigs mdzad bzhad pa'i gad rgyangs 'chi bdag g.yul las rgyal ba'i rnga dbyangs/

5. A Heart Jewel of Offering Clouds of Good Fortune Pleasing the Local Protectors: The Permission Initiation Ritual of the Glorious Four-Faced Protector of Seventeen Expressions
dpal mgon gdong bzhi pa rnam 'gyur bcu bdun gyi rjes gnang gi cho ga zhing skyong dgyes pa'i mchod sprin skal bzang snying nor/

6. The Increasing and Auspicious [Akṣara Garland]: A Ritual of the Glorious Four-Faced Protector of Seventeen Expressions, Together with the Entrustment

dpal mgon gdong bzhi pa rnam 'gyur bcu bdun mngag gtad dang bcas pa'i cho ga spel legs [ak+Sha ra'i phreng ba]

[This work is included together with previous title [7.5] and is not listed separately in the contents of the actual printed volume, or in the catalogue to the Potala edition.]

7. The Rain of Treasure Fulfilling All Needs and Wants: The Yellow Increasing Ritual of the Glorious Four-Faced Protector in Dependence on the Nine Deities, the Quintessential Instruction to Fulfill all Desires

dpal mgon gdong bzhi pa'i ser po rgyas byed lha dgu la brten pa'i 'dod dgu dbang du bya ba'i man ngag dgos 'dod dbyig gi char 'bab/

8. Summer Thunder: A Supplement to *The Rain of Treasure Fulfilling All Needs and Wants: The Increasing Ritual of the Glorious Four-Faced Protector with a Yellow [Expression] in Dependence on the Nine Deities, the Quintessential Instruction to Fulfill all Desires*

dpal mgon gdong bzhi pa'i [rnam 'gyur] ser po rgyas byed lha dgu la brten pa'i 'dod dgu dbang du bya ba'i man ngag dgos 'dod dbyig gi char 'bab kyi lhan thabs dbyar gyi rnga gsang

9. A New Fulfillment Ritual of Glorious Four-Faced Protector Based on that Written by Sakyapa Ngawang Khyenrab, with Exceptional Changes

dpal mgon zhal bzhi pa'i bskang gsar sa skya pa ngag dbang mkhyen rab kyis mdzad par dmigs bsal bsgyur ba gnang pa/

10. Exhortations to Entreat Various Protectors of the Teachings: Serkyem, Gaṇacakra Offerings and so forth, as well as the Cycle of the Wealth Deity

bstan srung khag gi 'phrin bskul gser skyems tshogs mchod sogs dang nor lha'i skor/

11. [The Chariot of the Jewel of Faith Drawing Together a Precious Mass of Blessings:] The Life Entrustment of Shugden Possessing the Seal of Secrecy and Notes on How to Draw the Life-energy Cakra

shugs ldan srog gtad bka' rgya can dang srog 'khor bri tshul gyi zin bris/ [byin rlabs rin chen phung po 'dren ba yi/ lyid ches nor bu'i shing rta/]

12. A Supplement on How to Practice the Preliminaries for the Life-entrustment of Shugden

shugs ldan srog gtad kyi ngon 'gro'i mtshams sbyor kha skong/

13. The Victory Banner Thoroughly Victorious in All Directions: A Presentation of the Approach, Accomplishment and Activities of Shugden, Fulfilling all Needs and Wants

shugs ldan gyi bsnyen sgrub las gsum gyi rnam gzhas dgos 'dod yid bzhin re skong phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba'i rgyal mtshan/

14. The Melodious Drum Victorious in All Directions: The Extensive Uncommon Fulfillment Ritual of the Five Manifest Families of Gyalchen Dorje Shugden

rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rigs lnga rtsal gyi sger bskang rgyas pa phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba'i rnga dbyangs/

15. Swift Summoning of the Deeds of the Four Activities: The Middling Fulfillment Ritual of Gyalchen Dorje Shugden

rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi bskang chog 'bring po las bzhi'i 'phrin las myur 'gugs/

16. On [the Way to Perform the *Swift Summoning of Auspiciousness-Incense Offering to Cakrasaṃvara's Assembly of Mandala Deities and Other*] Incense Offerings

[dpal 'khor lo sdom pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi lha tshogs rnams la bsangs mchod 'bul tshul bde chen phywa g.yang myur 'gugs sogs] bsangs mchod kyi skor/

Vol. 8 (nya)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Nya*
pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod nya pa'i dkar chag/

1. A Necklace of Increasing, Beautiful Fresh Flowers: A Compilation of Official Correspondences

chab shog gi rim pa rnams phyogs gcig tu bkod pa spel legs me tog gsar pa'i do shal/

2. A Compilation of Requests, Dedications, Supplications, Aspirational Prayers of Printing Colophons and Introductions, Such as Those of [the Contents of the Dharma-cycle of Cakrasaṃvara, *The Heart-Jewel of the Dakinis of the Three Places and So Forth*]

['khor lo sdom pa'i chos skor gyi dkar chag gnas gsum mkha' 'gro'i snying nor sogs] spar byang smon tshig dang/ dbu brjod / 'dod gsol bsngo smon gyi skor rnams phyogs gcig tu bkod pa/

3. Notes on the Experiential Instructions on [the *Consciousness-transference of*] a Single Day [from a Fully-Ripening Profound Com-

mentary on the Profound Path of the *Guru Pūjā*, the Uncommon Guru Yoga of the Ganden Hearing Lineage]

[*dga' ldan snyan brgyud kyi bla ma'i rnal 'byor thun mong min pa zab lam bla ma mchod pa'i zab khrid smin rgyas su nos skabs 'pho ba*] *zhag gcig ma'i nyams khrid brjed byang/*

4. "The Swift Path for Travelling to Tuṣita Pure Land:" Teaching Notes Taken During a Profound Commentary on the *Ganden Lhagyama* Guru Yoga [of the Segyu Tradition]

[*sras rgyud lugs kyi*] *bla ma'i rnal 'byor dga' ldan lha brgya'i zab khrid gnang skabs kyi gsung bshad zin bris dga' ldan zhing du bgrod pa'i myur lam/*

5. Entryway to the Ocean of Great Bliss: Notes on the First Stage of the Ghaṇṭapāda Cakrasaṃvara Body Mandala

'khor lo sdom pa dril bu lus dkyil gyi rim pa dang po'i zin bris bde chen rgya mtsho'i 'jug ngogs/

[Note that the catalogue of the Potala edition as well as the numbering of the popular Lhasa-edition gives this text as work six of the volume]

6. Opening the Door to the Good Path: Teaching Notes Taken During a Profound Commentary on the *Principal Paths*

lam gtso'i zab khrid bstsal skabs kyi gsung bshad zin bris lam bzang sgo 'byed/

[Note that the catalogue of the Potala edition as well as the numbering of the popular Lhasa-edition gives this text as work five of the volume]

7. The Key of Secrets: Notes on the *Principle Paths*

lam gtso'i zin bris gsang ba'i lde mig/

[This work is included together with the previous title and is not listed separately in the contents of the actual printed volume or in the catalogue to the Potala edition.]

8. The Outline of the Essential Instructions of the Generation and Completion Stages of the Ghaṇṭapāda Cakrasaṃvara Body Mandala

'khor lo sdom pa dril bu lus dkyil gyi bskyed rdzogs gnyis kyi dmar khrid sa bcad/

9. Explanatory Notes on the Root Mantras of Cakrasaṃvara Father and Mother

'khor lo sdom pa yab yum gyi rtsa sngags kyi mchan 'grel/

10. [The Nectar of the Great Bliss-Guru, Droplets of Jamphel Nyingpo's Blessings:] Notes on the Prayer to Meet with the Teachings of Tsongkhapa the Great

tsong kha pa chen po'i bstan pa dang mjal ba'i smon lam gyi zin bris [bde chen bla ma'i gsung gi bdud rtsi 'jam dpal snying po'i byin rlabs kyi zags ma/]

Vol. 9 (ta)

i. Contents of *Phabongkhapa's Collected Works, Vol. Ta pha bong kha pa'i gsung 'bum pod ta pa'i dkar chag/*

1. Verses for Intervals in the Contents of the Kangyur- Volume One.
bka' 'gyur dkar chag gi bar skabs tshigs bcad stod cha

2. Verses for Intervals in the Contents of the Kangyur- Volume Two.
bka' 'gyur dkar chag gi bar skabs tshigs bcad smad cha

3. Brief Notes from a Commentary Given on the Six Session Guru Yoga, the Twenty Stanzas on the Vows, the Fifty Verses on the Guru and the Root Downfalls Constituting a Gross Contravention

thun drug bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang /sdom pa nyi shu pa/ bla ma lnga bcu pa/ sngags kyi rtsa ltung sbom po bcas kyi bshad khrid gnang ba'i zin tho mdor bsdu/

4. [The Essence of the Vast and Profound: A Concise Compilation of] Notes Taken During a Combined Commentary on Tsongkhapa's *Shorter Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* and the Essential Instructions of the *Swift Path*

rje'i lam rim chung ngu dang / myur lam dmar khrid sbrags ma'i gsung bshad stsal skabs kyi zin bris [mdo tsam du bkod pa zab rgyas snying po]

5. Easy to Understand Instructions on the Sequential Performance of the Rite of Generating the Mind of Bodhicitta, as Given on One Occasion at Tashilhunpo

bkras lhun du sems bskyed mchod pa gnang skabs gzhan kyi gzigs bde'i phyag bzhes 'gros bkod du bstsal ba/

6. Notes Marking Out Whatever Discrepancies Were Found in Various Wordings of the Manuscript Made from the New Printing Boards of the *Great Stages of the Path*

lam rim chen mo par gzhi gsar bskrun gyi ma dpe'i tshig sna mi mthun pa byung ba gang rnyed rnam brjed thor btab pa/

Vol. 10 (tha)

1. The Moon-Vine Increasing the Milk-Lake of Faith: The Biography of Dagpo Bamchoe Lama Lobsang Jamphel Lhundrub Gyatso
dwags po bam chos bla ma blo bzang 'jam dpal lhun grub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar dad pa'i 'o mtsho 'phel byed zla ba'i 'khri shing/

2. Compilation of Notes on Experiential Instructions on *The Sacred Words of Mañjuśrī Stages of the Path*, According to The Abridged Commentarial Tradition of the Southern Lineage, Received from the Unequaled Dagpo Lama, Lord of the Dharma
dwags po bla ma mnyam med chos kyi rje las lam rim 'jam dpal zhal lung gi 'khrid rgyun bsdus pa lho brgyud du grags pa'i nyams 'khrid gsan skabs sogs kyi bsnyel byang phyogs bsdebs

3. A Collection of [Kyabdag Dorjechang Phabongkha's] Minor Compositions and Instructions
[khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang pha bong kha pa'i] bka' rtsom dang phyag bzhes phran tshogs skor phyogs su bkod pa/
 [The catalogue to the Potala edition lists the third work of the volume as: "The Mirror of the View: Notes Taken During an Explanation of the Profound Commentary on *The Hero Entering Into Battle* - Transference of Consciousness
'pho ba dpa' bo g.yul 'jug gi zab khrid gnang ba'i gsung bshad zin bris lta ba'i me long/"]

4. [An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom:] An Explanation of the Layout of the Vairocana-Abhisambodhi
rnam snang mngon byang gi thig 'grel [sher 'byung dgongs rgyan/]
 [The catalogue to the Potala edition lists the fourth work of the volume as: "Abbreviated Rites to Protect Harvests from Rain, Frost, Hail, Disease, Drought and So Forth
lo tog gi rim 'gro dang/ char 'bebs/ sad ser btsa' than sogs srung thabs mдор bsdus/"]

5. [The Heart Essence of the Dakinis of the Three Places: Extremely Secret] Notes on the Profound Commentary of the Two Stages of Queen [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari.
[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i lam rim pa gnyis kyi zab khrid zin bris [shin tu gsang ba gnas gsum mkha' 'gro'i snying bcud/]

6. The Clear Essence of the Profound Path of Great Bliss: An Accessory to *The Heart Essence of the Dakinis of the Three Places: Notes on [Vajrayoginī] Naro Kechari's Two Stages*

*[rdo rje rnal 'byor ma] nA ro mkha' spyod ma'i rim gnyis zin bris gnas
gsum mkha' 'gro'i snying bcud kyi zur rgyan bde chen zab lam snying po
gsal ba/*

7. The Way to Perform the Increasing Burning Offering at the End of
the Great Tenth-part Burning Offering of Vajrayoginī

*rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i bcu cha chen mo'i sbyin sreg gi mjug tu rgyas pa'i
sbyin sreg bya tshul/*

8. The Way to Perform the Long-life Accomplishment Ritual [Relat-
ed] to Sita-Tārā [Cintācakra]

sgrol dkar [yid bzhin 'khor lo'i sgo nas] tshe sgrub bya tshul/

[The catalogue to the Potala edition lists the eighth work of the vol-
ume as: "The Way To Perform the Gaṇacakra [of Vajrayoginī]
de'i tshogs 'bul tshul la"]

Vol. 11 (da)

1. [Profound and Completely Unmistaken Pith Instructions for Deliver-
ing Liberation in Your Hand:] Notes on Experiential Instructions on
the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment, [the Heart-Elixir of the Une-
qualed Dharma King,] the Essence of Nectar, Instructions that As-
semble the Elixir of all the Teachings

*[rnam grol lag bcangs su gtod pa'i man ngag zab mo tshang la ma nor ba
mtshungs med chos kyi rgyal po'i thugs bcud] byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i
nyams khrid kyi zin bris gsung rab kun gyi bcud bsdus gdams ngag bdud
rtsi'i snying po/*

[Vol. 12 (na), Present Only in the Potala Collection]

1. The Beautiful Ornament of the Oceans: The Biography of the Yogi
Wangchuk Yabje Dorjechang Lobsang Sangye Palzangpo, Holder of
the Great Unsurpassable Secret Teachings

*gsang chen bla na med pa'i bstan pa'i gdung 'tshob rnal 'byor dbang phyug
yab rje rdo rje 'chang blo bzang sangs rgyas dpal bzang po'i rnam thar rgya
mtsho'i mdzas rgyan/*

2. A Collection of The Lord of Refuge, Kyabdag Dorjechang Pha-
bongkha's Minor Compositions and Instructions

*khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang pha bong kha pa'i bka' rtsom dang phyag bzhes
phran tshogs skor phyogs su bkod pa/*

3. An Ornament Embellishing Arising Wisdom: An Explanation of the Make-up of the Vairocana-Abhisambodhi
rnam snang mngon byang gi thig 'brel sher 'byung dgongs rgyan/

4. Notes Taken During a Profound Commentary on the *Foundation of All Good Qualities*, the Abbreviated Essence of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment
byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i snying po bsdus pa yon tan gzhi gyur ma'i zab khrid gnang skabs kyi brjed byang/

5. The Way to Perform the Amending Burning Offering for the Approximation Retreat of Serviceability of the Glorious Solitary Hero Vajrabhairava
dpal rdo rje 'jigs byed dpa' bo cig pa'i las rung gi bsnyen pa'i kha skong sbyin sreg bya tshul/

6. The Preliminary Practice Text for the Solitary Hero Vajrabhairava Approximation Retreat, Arranged for Convenient Recitation
de'i bsnyen pa'i sngon 'gro'i 'don cha nag 'gros su bkod pa/

7. Notes for *Ocean of Attainments: The Burning Offering for Solitary Hero Vajrabhairava*
de'i sbyin sreg dngos grub rgya mtsho'i zin bris/

8. The Hook Which Summons Attainments: The Self-Entry of the Solitary Hero
dpa' bo gcig pa'i bdag 'jug dngos grub 'gugs pa'i lcags kyul/



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Figures



Fig.1- The Cakrasaṃvara statue at Drangsong Sinpori. According to the caretakers the statue is original and was hidden safely during the Cultural Revolution (Photograph by Matt Linden).



Fig.2- Thangka of the *Guru Pūjā* assembly field with a depiction of Vajrayoginī, ranked among the class of enlightened *ḍākinīs*. This layout of the assembly field differs from that described by Phabongkha. Qing Dynasty, Yonghegong Temple, Beijing (Photograph by Matt Linden).



Fig. 3 - Detail of Vajrayogini from Fig. 2.

The Tibetans in the Making Barley Cultivation & Cultural Representations

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Introduction¹

he Tibet-Qinghai plateau is one of the highest environments on the planet. It comprises an area of approximately 2.5 million square kilometres with an average elevation exceeding 4000 metres above sea level (masl). The Tibetan plateau permits only a narrow range of productive activities. It is estimated that about 1% of the plateau is able to sustain farming practices.² Today, fields of barley are grown everywhere from the alpine steppes of western Tibet to the hilly grasslands and forested provinces of Amdo and Kham in the east, from the large and temperate alluvial plains of the Tibetan heartland to the terrace fields of highland Nepal. In these harsh climatic and topographical conditions, where resources are distributed asymmetrically, human adaptation was rendered possible by a skilful exploitation of pastoralism and agriculture. As a result, farmers and nomads have always constituted the backbone of Tibetan civilization.

Highland barley is a six-rowed naked (i.e., hullless) barley with a spring phenotype. It is particularly suited for harsh environments with extremely high altitudes. It is sown in the spring around the month of April. After a short period of dormancy and germination the crop is generally harvested in August-September. A six-rowed naked barley with a winter habit is also cultivated in lower regions subject to mild winter conditions. It is frost resistant and benefits from a longer period of dormancy. It is usually sown in autumn and ripens in late spring. Due to a longer season, barleys with a winter habit produce higher yields than the spring varieties. Ethnobotanical research conducted within the Tibetan communities of Yunnan in southwest China today shows that the altitude of 2800 masl generally

¹ This research benefited from the generous assistance of the Tise Foundation.

² Kapstein (2006 : 3).

constitutes the limit from which winter and spring varieties are chosen.³ The cultivation of barleys with a winter or spring phenotype, as I intend to discuss, had cultural implications for the Tibetans as early as the 1st millennium CE.

Barley cultivation represents over 65% of the total food production in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) today.⁴ It also constitutes the staple food crop of peoples inhabiting regions bordering the Tibetan plateau such as highland Nepal, Bhutan, and other Himalayan areas in northern India. Barley (Tib. *nas*) is essentially grown for human consumption, while the husk (Tib. *nas phub*) of threshed barley ears (Tib. *nas snye*) and fodder (Tib. *nas sog*) constitute a vital food supply for animals during the winter months. As the main staple food crop, barley grains (Tib. *nas 'bru*) are mostly roasted (Tib. *nas yos*) and processed into flour (Tib. *rtsam pa*). Alcoholic beverages are made of white barley (Tib. *nas dkar po*) or purple barley (Tib. *nas dmar po*). Raw kernels are brewed to produce barley ale (Tib. *chang*) while a slightly less alcoholic beer (Tib. *zan chang*) is made from barley flour and yeast. Tibetan cuisine often includes either roasted barley flour (i.e., *tsampa*) or barley ale (i.e., *chang*) in its preparations, if not both.

Barley also possesses a socio-cultural value that has attracted the attention of anthropologists. Barley, or any of its processed forms, is used during ceremonies and festivals and as part of worship rituals. Several forms of religious offerings involve the use of barley grains, flour, or ale. They regulate the Tibetans' daily life irrespective of their religious affiliation (i.e., Buddhist or Bön followers). *Tsampa* is burnt in portable thuribles (Tib. *spos phor*) or in larger furnaces (Tib. *bsangs bum*) as smoke offerings (Tib. *bsangs*). Barley flour is used to prepare a whole variety of offerings and ritual cakes (Tib. *gtor ma*) in order to appease spirits, accumulate merits, or remove obstacles. It is not unusual to find the floor of protector chapels (Tib. *srung ma lha khang*) carpeted with barley grains, while local deities (Tib. *yul lha*) and dharma protectors (Tib. *chos skyong*) are often propitiated with generous libations of *chang* (Tib. *gser skyems*).

Ethnobotanical fieldwork conducted in ethnic Tibetan communities has repeatedly underlined how the crop performs the function of a 'cultural keystone species'. Barley features prominently in their economy, language, beliefs, and narratives. The relation between agriculture practices, cultural identities, and ethnic boundaries is further exemplified in areas where Tibetan communities have been living in the vicinity of other ethnic groups. The case of the Shuhi, a group in the Tibeto-Burman language family officially included

³ Yali Li et al. (2010).

⁴ Nyima Tashi et al. (2013).

among ethnic Tibetans, indicates how barley acts as a 'cultural-bearing' unit towards the definition of an ethnic identity.⁵ The Shuhi inhabit a subtropical area of South-West Sichuan at an elevation of approximately 2000–2400 masl and rely on the cultivation of rice, barley, wheat, and corn in variable proportions. Although the name Shuhi means 'rice people', the Shuhi display cultural characteristics similar to highland Tibetans (e.g., domestic architecture, material culture, religious beliefs, etc.). They follow Tibetan Buddhism and other local ritualists who perform religious ceremonies and healing practices using effigies and ritual cakes made of barley flour, libations of barley ale, and smoke offerings. Celebrations and festivals are organised based on a seasonal cycle. The Shuhi celebrate two harvests festivals. A barley festival called 'hashing' (i.e., new crop), during which old roasted barley flour is replaced with new tampa and multiple offerings are made to the gods, takes place at the beginning of May each year. It is suggested that "For the Shuhi, the importance of rice as a main staple food and barley as both staple food and a component of daily rituals reflects their position between the two dominant ethnic groups in the region: the Naxi in the south and the Tibetans in the north".⁶

The dual role of barley, as a staple food crop and as a cultural-bearing unit, is also noticeable in the ethnic Tibetan communities of Shangrila, Dequin and Weixi counties in Yunnan Province. As previously observed in west Sichuan, the cultural usage of barley is widely attested during traditional ceremonies, festivals, and religious practices. An ethnobotanical survey conducted by biologists, botanists, and environmental scientists in twenty-seven villages of these areas highlights the socio-cultural value of the crop while documenting the genetic diversity of naked barleys in order to define appropriate conservation strategies.⁷ Due to their cultural usage and symbolic value, some varieties of barley are said to be carefully conserved and pass down from one generation to the next. "In all the communities surveyed", observe the authors of this study,⁸ "some rituals should be performed before sowing, harvesting and eating the new harvested hulless barley to celebrate their cultural links with the crops. Many Tibetans associate the practice of conserving different hulless barley landraces as respect for their ancestors as these resources were preserved by their ancestors from generation to generation and thus should not be discarded. The Tibetan people of these communities

⁵ Weckerle et al. (2005).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Yali Li et al. (2010).

⁸ *Ibid.*

believe that hullless barley was *a gift of that ancestral divinity to their ancestors*".⁹

Fieldwork-based researches conducted on barley cultivation, consumption, and usage in Tibetan communities today call attention to the long lasting relation between ecological opportunism, cultural choices, and ethnic boundaries. This article hence attempts to trace the origin and spread of barley onto the Tibetan-Qinghai plateau and the Himalayas. It succinctly reviews genetic evidence and archaeobotanical data with regard to early agriculturalists and barley domestication from the 4th millennium BCE to the seventh century CE. Secondly, it discusses collective representations of agricultural practices and barley cultivation in Chinese and Tibetan written sources. By moving barley beyond a descriptive and functionalist presentation, I would like to suggest that the Tibetans' staple food crop featured as a cultural marker of Tibetan ethnic identity as early as the first millennium CE.

Origin(s) and dispersal of barley onto the Tibetan Plateau

Plant remains retrieved from archaeological excavations have contributed to enriched understanding of historical food production and agriculture. Additional cytogenetic analyses and taxonomic approaches have also allowed the identification of most wild progenitors from which these cultivated plants evolved.¹⁰ Barley has been cultivated on the Tibet-Qinghai plateau and the Indo-Tibetan marches for more than 3000 years. Recent evidence suggests that Tibet was an independent centre of domestication. It shows that Tibetan wild barley was the likely progenitor of Chinese domesticated barley.

Wild barley (*Hordeum vulgare* ssp. *spontaneum*) is the ancestor of cultivated barley (*Hordeum vulgare* ssp. *vulgare*), a grass grown for its grains on a yearly basis. Barley, together with wheat (*Triticum*), was one of the founder crops of many civilizations.¹¹ It is generally ac-

⁹ Emphasis mine ; see below *Seeds of civilization: the bodhisattva farmer*.

¹⁰ Zohary & Hopf (1993 : chap.1).

¹¹ Pliny offers a compelling account of barley cultivation, consumption, and usage in lands as far apart as India, Egypt, Greece and Spain already in the first century CE. Much to the surprise of modern Tibetans, perhaps, the Roman naturalist shows how the Greeks prepared a roasted barley flour quite similar to the Tibetan *tsampa*.

XIII. The one sown first of all cereals is barley. After explaining the nature of each variety we will also give the date for sowing. India has both cultivated and wild barley, and from it the natives make their best bread

cepted that barley was first domesticated in the Near East, in the Fertile Crescent, circa 8500 BCE. As most self-pollinated cereal crops, barley experienced a rapid success in domestication and contributed to the spread of the Neolithic agriculture to Europe, Africa, and Asia.¹² Barley was cultivated in Greece circa 7000 years BCE. The crop appeared in Central Asia by 6000 BCE.¹³ It is reported in the Indian subcontinent in the third millennium BCE,¹⁴ and reached China between 2600 and 2300 BCE.¹⁵ On the Tibetan plateau, the earliest evidence of cultivated barley was retrieved from an archaeological site located in central Tibet and dated to approximately 1500 BCE.¹⁶

During the past decade, however, genetic research has put forward the hypothesis of the existence of at least two additional and

and also porridge. Their favourite grain is however rice, of which they make a drink like the barley-water made by the rest of mankind. [...] XIV. Barley is the oldest among human foods, as is proved by the Athenian ceremony recorded by Menander, and by the name given to gladiators who used to be called 'barley-men'. Also the Greeks prefer it to any other grain for porridge. There are several ways of making barley porridge: the Greeks soak some barley in water and then leave it for a night to dry, and next day dry it by the fire and then grind it in a mill. Some after roasting it more thoroughly sprinkle it again with a small amount of water and dry it before milling; others however shake the young barley out of the ears while green, clean it and while it is wet pound it in a mortar, and wash it of husk in baskets and then dry it in the sun and again pound it, clean it and grind it. [...] XV. Barley bread was much used in earlier days, but has been condemned by experience, and barley is now mostly fed to animals, although the consumption of barley-water is proved so conclusively to be very conducive to strength and health: Hippocrates, one of the most famous authorities on medical science, has devoted one whole book to its praise. [...] There is a kind in Egypt made of the double-pointed grain. [...] XVIII. Barley meal is used as a medicine, and is remarkable how in treating cattle pills made of it after it has been hardened by roasting at the fire and afterwards ground, sent down into the animal's stomach by the human hand, serve to increase the strength and enlarge the muscles of the body. Some ears of barley have two rows of grain and some more, up to as many as six. In the grain itself, there are some varieties: it is longer and smoother or shorter and rounder, lighter or darker in colour, the kind with purple shade being of a rich consistency for porridge [...] the most prolific kind is the barley harvested at Carthage in Spain in the month of April. In Celtiberia this barley is sown in the same month, and there are two crops in the same year. All barley is cut sooner than any other grain, as soon as it first ripens, because the grain is carried on a brittle straw and contained in a very thin chaff. Moreover we are told that it makes better pearl-barley if it is lifted before its ripening has been completed. (Pliny, *Natural History*, Volume V, Book XVIII.XIII-XV.)

¹² Zohary & Hopf (1993 : 62-63).

¹³ Charles & Boggard (2010).

¹⁴ Fuller (2006).

¹⁵ Xinyi Liu et al. (2009).

¹⁶ Fu Daxiong et al. (2000).

separate domestication events of barley.¹⁷ The first event was situated in Central Asia, to the east of the Fertile Crescent,¹⁸ the second in Tibet.¹⁹ The discovery of a close and wild relative of barely on the Tibet-Qinghai plateau has challenged the monophyletic origin of barley domestication. Phylogenetic analyses performed on wild barleys from the Near East and Tibet, and between wild and cultivated barleys from the Tibetan plateau and China, suggest a split between both progenitors around 2.75 million years ago.²⁰ Based on the analysis of two nuclear genes, the genetic data showed that Tibetan wild barley differs from wild barley from the Near East. It also indicates that Tibetan six-rowed wild barley could be the direct progenitor of both six-rowed and two-rowed domesticated barleys of China.²¹ This close relationship between Tibetan wild barley and other cultivated forms found on the Tibetan plateau and in mainland China addresses the possibility of separate centres of domestication.²² Should it be confirmed, Central Asian wild barley would be uniquely related to Southwest Asian wild barley. It would also question the assumption that the development of a spring habit was necessary to move barley to higher elevations with cooler climatic conditions.

The slow and gradual adoption of cultivation practices resulted in genetic changes under human influence. The cultivation of cereal crops follows clearly defined stages. The first stage begins with the sowing of seeds in a ploughed field. The second stage commences when the crops are ripe. The mature spikes are then reaped and the grains are threshed. Over time, through seed selection, domesticated crops became morphologically, genetically, and behaviourally different from their wild progenitors. The archaeobotanical record for the Neolithic period suggests that farming activities brought about several changes to barely due to selective harvesting. One of the most conspicuous instances of barley domestication was the selection by early agriculturalists of a phenotype with a six-rowed ear (*Hordeum hexastichum* L.) where all the spikelets bear fully fertile and bigger seeds.²³ Compared to the wild-type progenitor, where two lateral spikelets are reduced and sterile, the appearance of six-rowed barley would have multiplied yields by three. Yet, a domesticated two-rowed type (*Hordeum distichum* L.) with a lower protein content was also cultivated and often used for brewing.

¹⁷ Badr et al. (2000).

¹⁸ Morrell & Clegg (2006).

¹⁹ Fei Dai et al. (2012) and Xifeng Ren et al. (2013).

²⁰ Fei Dai et al. (2012).

²¹ Xifeng Ren et al. (2013).

²² Fei Dai et al. (2012) and Xifeng Ren et al. (2013).

²³ Komatsuda et al. (2006).

Barley taxonomy also differentiates two forms of cultivated barley with regard to its caryopsis. One form is a hulled barley where the grains are enclosed within the surrounding chaff. It has a high yield and is generally favoured for the production of beer and animal feed and fodder. The second form is a naked or hulless barley that possesses a greater environmental tolerance, a lower loss of grain, and easier post-harvest processing. This form of barley is usually preferred for food preparation. Based on archaeobotanical evidence and genetic data, the mapping of hulled and naked barley distribution in early times display an east-west trend across Eurasia.²⁴ They also indicate the progressive decline of naked barley from the Neolithic to the post-Roman period. It appears that the rise of naked wheat largely contributed to the replacement of naked barley in dietary consumption, while hulled barley was still grown mainly for animal feed and brewing. However, naked barley cultivation has remained in use in Central and Southeast Asia much longer and is still found at altitudes too high for the cultivation of rice or wheat. Today it is estimated that 95% of domesticated barley cultivated in Tibet and in the Himalayas are of the naked type;²⁵ a trend that can possibly be explained due to the difficulty in cooking hulled barley in a hypoxic environment with low solid fuel procurement.²⁶

Early agriculture practices on the Tibet-Qinghai plateau

Archaeological and paleoenvironmental data suggest that agricultural and pastoral activities began some 7000 years ago. Plant remains and palynological evidence retrieved from prehistoric sites found across the plateau indicate a shift in farming practices. Early agriculturists who settled on the Tibetan plateau did not rely on barley cultivation but adopted a millet-base agriculture. Around the second millennium BCE, however, the inhabitants of the plateau developed an agro-pastoral system based on western crops and mobile herding reminiscent of Central Asian economies.

It has been suggested that resource availability and adaptive strategies facilitated the progressive acclimatisation of low-elevation agriculturists to the extreme environment of the Tibet-Qinghai plateau.²⁷ A progressive sedentarization of some of these groups occurred by 5000 BCE. The excavation of permanent residences and the collection

²⁴ Lister & Jones (2013).

²⁵ *Ibid.* Researchers from TAR report that hulled barley is not being cultivated in Tibet at the moment; see Nyima Tashi et al. (2013).

²⁶ Nyima Tashi et al. (2013).

²⁷ Aldenderfer (2006), Brantingham & Gao Xing (2006).

of ground stone tools, domesticated plants, and faunal remains are clear indicators of the so-called Neolithic package.²⁸ Chinese archaeologists, who have been excavating Neolithic sites distributed throughout Tibet since the 1970s, believed that these sites represent indigenous Tibetan cultures as they display different archaeological contents when compared to other Neolithic settlements located in neighbouring low-elevation areas.

The archaeological complex of Karo (Tib. *mKhar ro*) has been repeatedly presented as the earliest Neolithic site excavated on the Tibetan plateau.²⁹ It is located on a terrace above the Mekong River near Chamdo at an elevation of 3100 masl. Although it is currently the lowest human settlement found on the plateau, it is situated largely above the elevation of other known Chinese Neolithic sites. Three distinct phases of occupation were tentatively put forward based on ceramic typology and calibrated radiocarbon dates run on charcoal and plant remains, ranging from 3966 cal. BCE to 2196 cal. BCE.³⁰ Excavators have retrieved impressive findings that provide a better understanding of the settlers' livelihood.³¹ Most significantly, faunal and archaeobotanical data help to clarify the subsistence strategies of this community. Animal remains comprise several domesticated and wild species such as goat, bovid, pig, red deer, antelope, woolly hare, and macaque. Finally, plant remains include foxtail millet (*Setaria italic*), broomcorn millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), chenopods, and wild fruits.³²

The archaeological complex of Karo marks a milestone in the spread of agriculture onto the Tibetan plateau. The data collected suggest an economy based on the cultivation of millet, pig husbandry, and complemented by foraging activities. It is believed that foxtail millet and broomcorn millet, together with rice, served as pioneer crops in southwest China before being introduced into more challenging environments.³³ Other Neolithic sites found on the plateau, while exhibiting slightly different archaeological cultures, point towards similar subsistence procurement strategies. As of yet, there is no evidence of barley cultivation.

The archaeological site of Changguogou (Tib. *'Phrang sgo lung pa*) in central southern Tibet brings evidence of the introduction of new

²⁸ Aldenderfer & Zhang Yinong (2004).

²⁹ Also known as Karou, Karuo, and Kharup; Chayet (1994 : 37-46), Aldenderfer & Zhang Yinong (2004).

³⁰ Aldenderfer & Zhang Yinong (2004).

³¹ For a detailed list of these artefacts; see Chayet (1994 : 43-46).

³² A summary table of the archaeobotanical material retrieved from Karo is given in d'Alpoim Guedes et al. (2013).

³³ d'Alpoim Guedes (2011).

cultivated crops onto the plateau. Located in Gongkar County (Tib. *Gong dkar rdzong*), about fifty kilometres west of Lhasa, the site of Changguogou yielded significant archaeobotanical evidence suggesting a shift in agriculture practices. In addition to foxtail millet, Chinese excavators identified naked barley, wheat (*Triticum*), rye (*Secale cereal*), common oat (*Avena sativa*), and a single pea (*Pisum sativum*). These new crops are believed to be “western domesticates”, even though the phylogenetic origin and diffusion pattern of some of these plants from southwest Asia to China is not clearly established.³⁴ Of equal interest is the presence of *Argentina anserine* (Tib. *gro ma*), a wild plant whose small bulbous roots are still well known in Tibetan cuisine today. The occupation of Changguogou ranges from circa 1400 BCE to 800 BCE. It represents the development of an agro-pastoral economy based on mixed agriculture, sheep and goat pastoralism, and the gathering of wild plants.³⁵

Archaeobotanical evidence recovered from Upper Mustang in Nepal makes it possible to outline the spread of a barley-based agriculture in both time and space. Between 1990 and 1995, the Institute for Prehistory of the University of Cologne and the Department of Archaeology in Kathmandu excavated funerary caves of Mebrak (3500 masl) and Phudzeling (3000 masl) in the Jhong Valley.³⁶ Several hundred samples of plant remains were collected and subject to carbon dating analyses as a result of which six settlement phases were determined ranging from 1000 cal. BCE up to the present. The first two periods (1000 – 400 cal. BCE and 400 – 100 cal. BCE) attest to a mixed agriculture composed essentially of buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*) and brown, naked, and hulled barleys, complemented with broomcorn millet, wheat, and peas. In addition to cultivated plants, other macrofossils indicate the presence of gathered wild fruits such as apricots (*Prunus armeniaca*) and rose hips (*Rosa sericea*), as well as imported plants including rice, bamboo, lentil, and hemp. Archaeobotanist Karl-Heinz Knörzer remarks that the Jhong valley was likely forested prior to the first millennium BCE. It would have been partially cleared in order to make way for crops cultivation and cattle grazing.³⁷ A similar phenomenon is posited for central Tibet where early agro-pastoralists might have contributed to the making of the Tibetan landscape characterised by a forest decline and desert pastures.³⁸ Likewise, it appears that the agriculturists of the Jhong

³⁴ d’Alpoim Guedes et al. (2013).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Knörzer (2000).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Miehe et al. (2009).

Valley practiced crop rotation alternating the cultivation of buckwheat and various kinds of barley.

Later palaeobotanical evidence from the western margins of the Tibetan plateau contributes to specifying the development of agricultural practices at the start of the Common Era and during the late imperial period. Archaeological excavations and surface surveys were carried out in 2001 and 2004 at Dindun (Tib. *rTing rhum*) and Khyunglung (Tib. *Khyung lung*) in West Tibet in collaboration between the Chinese Institute of Tibetology of the Sichuan University and the University of Arizona. The site of Dindun (4100 masl) comprises a domestic area and three cemeteries situated nearby. Plant remains, animal bones, and potsherds were consistently recovered from four excavated domestic structures with hearth and kitchen area.³⁹ Based on chronometric data, it is suggested that this pre-Buddhist site was occupied between 500-100 BCE by inhabitants whose subsistence strategies relied primarily on barley cultivation and herding of sheep, goats, and yaks.⁴⁰

The site of Khyunglung in the high desert of West Tibet rounds out this series of features. Khyunglung is believed to be the historical location of the ancient capital of Zhangzhung,⁴¹ a kingdom that would have ruled most of the plateau before the advent of the Tibetan empire.⁴² In 2004, an archaeological surface survey was conducted on top of a large mesa situated at the impressive elevation of 4250 masl. The site showed remains of domestic structures and refuse pits. Grinding implements such as stone mortars, querns, and grinding stones were collected *in situ* attesting to intensive milling and farming activities. Analyses of plant material and animal remains retrieved from two different structures suggest a period of occupation ranging from cal. 220 to 880 CE. They include wood, fish, animal bones, barley, wheat, millet, buckwheat, pine nut, and herbaceous seeds. Remains of domesticated barley, which include rachises, carbonized grains and caryopses, would appear to derive from a six-rowed hulled phenotype, although a naked form cannot be excluded.⁴³ The archaeological sites documented in West Tibet bring to term this review of barley cultivation on the Tibetan plateau. They suggest a transition towards a mixed agro-pastoral economy characterised by different types of farming, herding, and fishing, with human foraging component. In this scenario, “western domesticates” (i.e., barley and wheat) and buckwheat become noticeable in the archaeobotanical

³⁹ Aldenderfer (2007).

⁴⁰ Aldenderfer & Moyes (2005).

⁴¹ Aldenderfer & Moyes (2005) and Huo Wei (2008).

⁴² Bellezza (2008).

⁴³ d'Alpoim Guedes et al. (2013).

landscape suggesting a departure from the millet-based Neolithic agriculture.⁴⁴

A growing body of evidence obtained from genetics and molecular biology calls into questions the monophyletic origin of *H. vulgare spontaneum*. Tibet is now considered to be a likely centre of domestication of highland barley, a six-rowed naked cultivated specimen. Likewise, archaeobotanical data has helped to specify the spread of cultivated barley onto the Tibetan plateau and the Himalayan highlands. Two factors appear to be complementary for the intensification, cultivation, and ultimate domestication of wild barley. The first factor involves the genetic adaptations of barley to high elevation, dry environment, frost, and short growing season. In this respect, barley and wheat demonstrate a higher tolerance for frost than broomcorn and foxtail millets.⁴⁵ The second factor suggests that cultural preferences also acted as a natural catalyst for the genetics of crops and the moving of agriculture onto the Tibetan plateau. Based on the limited archaeological sites documented in Tibet, evidence from early Neolithic settlements supports the representation of agriculturists relying on millet cultivation, pig breeding, and foraging activities; an economic system that was predominant in West China about 6000 years ago. In the second millennium BCE, barley and other starch grains make their appearance in the archaeobotanical record. These “western domesticates” are associated with more complex subsistence strategies that include cattle breeding, sheep and goats herding, farming and foraging activities. This mixed agro-pastoral economy, which likely originated in Central Asia,⁴⁶ might have constituted a distinct cultural package adopted by the inhabitants of the Tibetan plateau. In view of the foregoing, it is therefore suggestive that adaptation, evolution, and changes of subsistence strategies might also reflect economic relations and cultural choices.

When the time is ripe: the Tang’s view on the Tibetans

Societies are influenced by what they cultivate and eat. Food choices are not simply determined by ecological availability but may also reflect subjective factors. Early literary sources support the view that

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ It has been shown that the altitude of 2500 masl constitutes the limit from which two types of farming activities were practiced in the second millennium BCE. Human settlements located below this limit relied on broomcorn and foxtail millets, and barley, while sites situated above the altitude of 2500 masl displayed only remains of frost resistant barley with a spring habit; see Chen et al. (2014).

⁴⁶ Wagner et al. (2011).

barley consumption was culturally rooted in Tibetan society in the first millennium CE. Chinese and Tibetan written accounts suggest several instances where the highland crop contributed to delineating the contours of a society in rapid transformation.

The *Old Book of Tang* (Ch. *Jiu Tangshu*), an oft-cited Chinese work of official history written in the tenth century, provides a vivid account of the relations between China and Tibet in the seventh and eighth centuries. The author discusses the land of T'ufan (i.e., Tibet) at length with a mixture of wonder and aversion for its inhabitants who defeated the Chinese forces at the gates of Chang'an, the capital of the Tang, in 763 CE.⁴⁷ The author's description of agricultural practices, food preparation, and commensality comes in handy and offers some challenging insights into socio-economic dimensions of Tibetan society in historical times:⁴⁸

The climate of the country is extremely cold. No ordinary rice is grown, but they [Tibetans] have black oats, red pulse, barley,⁴⁹ and buckwheat. Their domestic animals are mostly yak, pig, sheep, and horses. [...] There is a lot of gold, silver, copper, and tin. Some people follow their flocks to pasture, so there is no fixed place in living; nevertheless, there are some walled cities. The capital of their country is called Lha-sa, and the houses in the city are all flat-roofed and those houses that are high reach up several 10s feet. The nobles live in big felt tents called Fulu. Their living and sleeping places are filthy, and they do not comb their hair and do not wash themselves. They use two hands to receive and drink wine. And with felt (coarse fabrics) they make plates, while by nipping dough they make cups, which they fill with broth and cream together and drink from them.

Many people serve the God of the goat and ram, and believe in Shamanism. The people do not know how to discern the seasons, but reckon the barely-harvest season as the beginning of the year. [...] Bow and sword are never far from the body. The people honour the young and neglect the old.⁵⁰

Overall, the depiction of the people of Tibet outlines an agro-pastoral system with a nomadic component, where farming and animal hus-

⁴⁷ The *Old Book of Tang* is generally attributed Liu Xu (888 – 947) who completed the work in 945.

⁴⁸ Sinologist Paul Pelliot gives a slightly different translation of this passage; see Pelliot (1961 : 2-3).

⁴⁹ The Chinese character used for barley (Ch. *mai*) in this text can also mean wheat. Translators tend to favour the former over the latter when it comes to this passage.

⁵⁰ The translation is Don Y. Lee's. Chinese characters have been omitted in the quotation. A recension of the Chinese text is given in his edition; see Don Y. Lee (1981 : 4-5).

bandry remain the main livelihoods, in terms that largely match the archaeological record of the previous millennium. As for the Tibetans' eating habits and table manners, they are described in less reliable terms. The inhabitants of that marginal land use their hands for drinking alcohol, felt plates for food, and cups made of dough to drink a creamy broth that is oddly reminiscent of a mixture of tsampa and butter tea.

Reading between the lines, it appears that the ethnographic content of the *Old Book of Tang* is subordinated to the Tang's prevailing ideology. Choice of cultivated cereal crops becomes indicative of strong cultural preferences and food habits. Tibetans do not grow rice, the staple food crop of their Chinese neighbours, and thus depart from societies that favour boiling, steaming, and sticky food.⁵¹ In contradiction with material evidence, the apparent lack of vessels and pottery attests to the primitive nature of these uncivilized and malodorous individuals of hirsute appearance. To the fine palates of the Tang China, which produced delicacies such as turtle flesh boiled in mutton soup with ginger, spring onion, and the bark of a lily magnolia tree,⁵² Tibetans' dietary habits made of porridge-like dough and broth must have reeked of barbarism. Though partially subjective, this depiction of Tibetan society has the merit of underlining cultural traits that may have gone unnoticed otherwise.

According to the Tang Dynasty Chinese perspective, Tibetans were ignorant of seasonality and relied on their favourite food crop to determine the beginning of the year. The ripening of golden fields hence signalled the arrival of a new year and the barley harvest conversely fulfilled a calendrical function. A similar observation is also reported in the *Tongdian*, an encyclopaedic work on economics and political governance composed a century earlier.⁵³ In this work, the author indicates in comparable terms that "they [Tibetans] regard the time when barley ripens as the start of the year".⁵⁴ The repeated reference in Chinese sources to a season-based calendar year is noteworthy.

⁵¹ Fuller & Rowlands (2009).

⁵² Benn (2002 : 128).

⁵³ The *Tongdian* was composed by Du Yu (735 – 812) who completed it in 801. His discussion on the fundamental relationship between agriculture and economics is indicative of a highly centralised state: "grain is what governs people's fate, land is what produces the grain, and people are what the ruler governs. If one has the grain, then the needs of the state are complete. If one delineates the land, then people have enough to eat. If one examines the people, then the labour service will be equitable. Understanding these ideas is called governing"; citation given in Hartman & DeBlasi (2012).

⁵⁴ Yamaguchi (1984).

Different calendrical systems were introduced and replaced in Tibet during the last two thousand years of its history. Tibetan historiographical sources suggest that the Tibetan year was first established based on a seasonal system before the adoption of a twelve-year cycle. It was followed by a sexagenary cycle from China,⁵⁵ and eventually replaced by the Buddhist Kālacakra calendar in the eleventh century.⁵⁶ During the imperial period the Tibetan year was divided into four seasons and three intermediate periods, to which an intercalary month (Tib. *ldab ma*) was sometime added. The Tibetan year ended in the middle spring month (Tib. *dpyid zla 'bring po*) and began anew in the last spring month (Tib. *dpyid zla mtha' chung*), a period of time which corresponds roughly to the months of March and April.⁵⁷ Incidentally, the Pelliot Chinois 2762 recovered from Dunhuang specifies that the first month of the Chinese calendar corresponded to the Tibetan first spring month (Tib. *dpyid zla ra ba*).⁵⁸

Despite the swift condemnation in the *Old Book of Tang* of the Tibetans' inability to distinguish seasons, the Chinese testimonies have the merit of drawing attention to a seasonal and agricultural calendar year that begins in late spring when barley ripens. This observation crucially points to the fact that the type of barley upon which Tibetans elaborated their calendrical system had a winter habit. This variety of barley, as we have seen, was sown in autumn and harvested in April (i.e., the last Tibetan spring month and beginning of the year). It would benefit from a longer maturing period than the spring type and would produce higher yields. The established connection between the Tibetans' early seasonal calendar, spring harvest, and winter-type barley has consequences poles apart with regard to barley cultivation. It suggests that the development of a spring phenotype was not an absolute condition in order to move barley onto the Tibetan plateau. Yet it does not exclude the possibility that barleys with spring and winter habits were both cultivated while only the latter determined an agricultural calendar. Alternatively, it could also entail that the spring harvest-based Tibetan calendar had first been used by populations cultivating barley in low elevation areas before being adopted throughout the plateau. In this regard it is significant that the Shuhi of southwest Sichuan mentioned in the introduction still celebrate a barley festival called 'New Crop' at the beginning of the month of May.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Cornu (2002 : 49-84).

⁵⁶ Uray (1984).

⁵⁷ Yamaguchi (1984).

⁵⁸ Pelliot (1961 : 143-44).

⁵⁹ Weckerle et al (2005).

Whilst it is difficult to discuss the annual events that were celebrated during the early imperial period, it is yet certain that the old Tibetan year was punctuated with religious festivals and agrarian rituals. The Tibetan words for year (Tib. *lo*), harvest (Tib. *lo tog/thog*), calendar/almanac (Tib. *lo tho*), and New Year (Tib. *lo gsar*) are all etymologically related. Like the Shuhi's Hashing festival, the Tibetan word for New Year can equally mean 'new crop' and is therefore indicative of agricultural practices and agrarian celebrations that likely survived in the Agricultural New Year (Tib. *so nam lo gsar*). Of lesser importance nowadays, this festival has persisted in regions such as Tsang (Tib. *gTsang*), Ladakh (Tib. *La dwags*),⁶⁰ and Bhutan (Tib. *'Brug yul*).⁶¹ The reason why the Agricultural New Year is nowadays celebrated in the tenth or eleventh lunar month still remains unclear. Incidentally, the adoption of the Mongolian (Tib. *hor*) calendar in the thirteenth century was also accompanied by the introduction of a King's New Year (Tib. *rgyal po lo gsar*), which is often simply referred to as Tibetan New Year.⁶² Some have suggested that the Mongolian lunar-based calendrical system (Tib. *hor zla*), which is still in use as the official Tibetan calendar, is yet unsuitable for timing agricultural seasonal work.⁶³ Despite the adoption of several calendrical systems over time and the possible displacement of the Agricultural New Year within the current calendar year, both Tibetan New Year festivities are still entrenched in celebrating harvest and prosperity. Among the New Year paraphernalia none are as important as *gro so phye mar*, a wooden vessel (Tib. *'bo*) containing wheat grains (Tib. *gro*) on one side, barley flour (Tib. *phye*) mixed with butter (Tib. *mar*) on the other, and on top of which are stuck spikes of wheat and barley (Tib. *gro nas snye ma*).⁶⁴

The Tang views on their culturally differing neighbours draw attention to some fundamental characteristics of early Tibetan society in historical times. Among the various crops cultivated in Tibet, barley became sufficiently widespread and culturally relevant to determine a seasonal calendrical system based on its harvest. By fixing the beginning of the year to sometime in the months of March-April, it indicates that the qualifying phenotype was that of cultivated barley with a winter habit. Yet it does not rule out the possibility that early agriculturists may have adopted a barley-based calendrical system along with domesticates that had initially originated outside the plateau as a result of cultural exchanges and influences. It is finally sig-

⁶⁰ Khoo (1997).

⁶¹ Aris (1976).

⁶² Stein (1972 : 117, 213).

⁶³ Khoo (1997).

⁶⁴ bsTon-pa'i sgron-me (1999 : 12-13).

nificant that concepts such as harvest, calendar, and New Year are etymologically closely related. Observing that the Tibetan words for crop (Tib. *lo*) and year (Tib. *lo*) are the same, Rolf Stein concludes that “such a concept would not have been expressed in its language by a society of nomads”,⁶⁵ suggesting perhaps that the agricultural component of Tibetan society predated its nomadic development.

Seeds of civilization: the bodhisattva farmer

Ancient Tibet relied heavily on farming and the same can be said for Tang Dynasty China. Whilst environmental circumstances might have contributed to the selection of specific crops, most cultivated cereals in Tibet were equally grown in China yet did not perform the same alimentary functions nor did they occupy the same position in their respective economy. Barley and wheat became the highlanders' staple food crops whereas Tang China distinctively preferred rice and millet.⁶⁶ The Tang's view on the Tibetans has already shown that cultural markers of ethnic identity were based on perceptions of agricultural practices, food habits, and calendrical systems. To what extent collective representations on agriculture contributed to define Tibetan society is further exemplified in early Buddhist historiographical writings.

It would be no exaggeration to say that it took about five hundred years for Buddhism to adapt to the old and odd ways of the Tibetans and finally pervade all levels of their society.⁶⁷ Buddhism was little more than an elitist enterprise at the court of Srong-btsan sgam-po (r. 618 – 649) when it first reached Tibet in the seventh century CE. Whilst it was eventually established as the state religion by King Khri-srong lde-btsan (r.756–797/804) a century later, the assimilation of Buddhism continued for approximately four hundred years during which the Tibetan literati reformulated part of their history, casting an outlandish but relevant gaze on the origin of farming.

The introduction of agriculture is recorded in several literary works that all present the same mythological narrative with some variations. The simplest version is found in the *Mañi bka' 'bum*, a treasure text (Tib. *gter ma*) ascribed to the King Srong-btsan sgam-po himself, which was later revealed in the twelfth or thirteenth century.⁶⁸ As a heterogeneous collection of Buddhist teachings, mythologi-

⁶⁵ Stein (1972 : 117).

⁶⁶ Benn (2002 : 32, 120-21).

⁶⁷ On the various aspects related to the assimilation and propagation of Buddhism in Tibet; e.g., Kapstein (2000).

⁶⁸ Kapstein (1992).

cal narratives, and rituals, the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* was instrumental in engineering a unifying representation of Tibet under the influence of Buddhism. In this process, the pacification and conversion of the Land of Snows is realised through the agency of bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Tib. *sPyan ras gzigs dbang phyug*) as part of a kingly cosmogony.⁶⁹

The relevant passage recalls how Buddha Amitābha appoints Avalokiteśvara as the tutelary deity of Tibet and instructs him to father the first Tibetans. The bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara kindly complies and produces an emanation of a bodhisattva-ape (Tib. *spre'u byang chub sems dpa'*). The latter settles in the forest of Tibet where he engages in deep meditation. He is soon met by a lascivious rock demoness (Tib. *ma brag srin mo*), who is also the Buddhist goddess Tārā in other versions of the same story. The bodhisattva-ape attempts to resist her repeated calls for intimacy but eventually succumbs, we are told, out of compassion for the ogress. Together they spawn six monkey-like children who would become the chiefs of the first six tribes of Tibet (Tib. *bod mi'u gdung drug*).

In the following episode, the bodhisattva-ape takes his progenies to a fertile valley in central Tibet and unites them through the gift of material goods (Tib. *zang zing*) and religion (Tib. *chos*):⁷⁰

The father ape escorted the children to a forest in the south called the Assembly of Peacocks where there were monkeys. After a long time he returned to take a look [at them], he noticed that there were many more, neither monkeys nor humans. Some of them had turned into their father's kind: very honest, assiduous, intelligent and compassionate and so on; never contented with small roots of virtue. [They] had become of the bodhisattva's line. Some had turned into their mother's kind: murderous, blood thirsty, very strong and brave. [They] had become of the restless Piśāca [and] Yakṣa's line. Thereupon the Noble Avalokiteśvara gave the ape precious stones and five kinds of grain. "Make this the portion of food for your offspring!", he commanded, "When your progenies have reached manhood, they will eventually also live off gems, gold, silver and so forth. and from time to time this source of precious substances will even open up". [He then] blessed the earth as a source of the precious stones. Thereafter, the bodhisattva-ape sowed the grains in the region of central Tibet in the Land of Snows. [When] they were ripe, he summoned the monkey-children and said, "Feed!", whence that region came to be known as the Feeding Plain. These are the earthly goods by which he brought them together.

⁶⁹ Davidson (2003).

⁷⁰ The translation is mine. For the Tibetan see Appendix A.

As the tutelary deity of Tibet, it was Avalokiteśvara's responsibility to establish the means of livelihood of the first Tibetans. This happened in central Tibet (Tib. *Bod kha ba can gyi yul dbus*) where the monkey-children were reared by the bodhisattva-ape. As instructed by Avalokiteśvara, the father brought them five kinds of grain (Tib. *'bru sna lnga*) that will ensure food supply for many generations to come. As a result, the place of their upbringing was called the Feeding Plain (Tib. *Zo thang*). As a toponymic designation and a literary pun, it recalls that the plain was the place where they had been directed to eat (Tib. *zo dang*).⁷¹ In this first version, the fertile valleys of central Tibet, where Tibetan history reportedly originated, are intentionally portrayed as the country's breadbasket and a source of wealth that never gets dry.

A second version of this mythological narrative is found in another treasure-text. The *bKa' chems ka khol ma*, which is said to have been retrieved this time by Atiśa (982 – 1054) in the eleventh century, is putatively King Srong-btsan sgam-po's hidden testament. The same passage reads:⁷²

The hermit bodhisattva-ape said, "O Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara, as I [am unable to] nourish [and] nurse them, I suffer great distress." Mahākāruṇika Avalokiteśvara responded, "Hermit ape, this is the portion of food for your children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Make use of it!". The five kinds of grain bequeathed were barley, wheat, hulled barley, peas, and pulses. Having taken the five kinds of grain, and as he was ready to set off for Tibet, the Land of Snows, the Lord put two handfuls of gold dust in his hands [...]. Thereafter the hermit bodhisattva-ape took the five kinds of grain. [As] the earth of central [Tibet], the Land of Snows, is firm, pleasant, propitious, imbued with all natural qualities, various grains grow, [the climate] is temperate, and it possesses the nine aspects of desirable things. Because of the similarities with the region of Magadha in the Land of India, he went to the heart of the Land of Snows, planted the five kinds of grains, and left [them] there. Then, [in] the third summer month, he nourished and nurtured [his] children and grandchildren in the forest teeming with birds.⁷³ Leading [his] children and grandchildren, he went to the place where he had sown the five kinds of grain on top of gold. There were the five kinds of grain with heavy ripening ears.⁷⁴ Then he told [his] brood, "This is the portion of food bestowed by the Āryapāla, Lord Mahākāruṇika, to you [my] children.

⁷¹ The first farming plains of Tibet are all located in today's rTse thang side valley in Yarlung.

⁷² The translation is mine. For the Tibetan see Appendix B.

⁷³ Alternatively *nags rma bya tshogs can*; see Sørensen (1994 : 130, n.342).

⁷⁴ I am grateful to Dr Sha-bo mkha'-byams for explaining the phrase *kham shar re smin* as "bent over ripening ears"; personal communication 14th May 2014.

Feed [upon it]!". Thus, the hermit ape's four hundred offspring were very pleased. This primeval land [where they settled] is the Feeding Plain [of] Yarlung. Then, as they ate [those grains], [they] turned out to be as delicious as the untilled harvested crops. They reckoned the number of spikes [and found out that] there were hundred millions of grains whence it should also be known as the Ten Million Plain of Yarlung. Furthermore, as [the grains] were supremely delectable, [they] ate [them] and became satiated. As [he told them], "Go frolic!" [they] had fun whence the name the Amusement Plain of Yarlung originated. Again [they] ate the yields and became satiated. [The hermit ape] told [them], "Run!" and thus the name Running Plain of Yarlung 'Ol kha occurred.

As the narrative unfolds from one version to the next, the details of the story take shape albeit allegorically. Avalokiteśvara's civilizing mission now draws increasing attention to place names where the gift of agriculture was bequeathed. The rich and fertile plains of the myth are to be found in the valley of Yarlung in central Tibet. This, of course, is hardly surprising considering the literary commitment of these narratives to the glorification of the imperial period. From the Buddhist historiographical viewpoint, Yarlung was not only the seat of the sPu rgyal dynasty but also the centre from which Buddhism was propagated under the aegis of Srong-btsan sgam-po, to whom the authorship of these texts is ascribed. The symbolic value of this mythological narrative, written in the eleventh century, echoes an archaeological reality dating 1400 BCE, as the plant remains retrieved from Changguogou on the plain of Yarlung testify.

As the cradle of Tibetan civilization, the ancient valley of Yarlung is depicted as the birthplace of agriculture. The large alluvial plain and side valleys described in the narrative are naturally imbued with natural qualities (Tib. *rang bzhin gyi yon tan*). This promised land is said to share similarities with the holy land of India and is therefore suitable for the practice of agriculture. Overlooked in the *Mañi bka' 'bum* the five kinds of grain are distinctively listed in the *bKa' chems ka khol ma*. The pentad is composed of barley (Tib. *nas*), hulled barley (Tib. *so ba*), wheat (Tib. *gro*), peas (Tib. *sran ma*), and pulses (Tib. *sran chung*). These civilizing seeds are carefully deposited in the soil and become fully-grown in the third summer month, sometime between the end of July and the beginning of August, when they are finally partaken.

A final version of the same passage is expressed in the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, a large-scale historiographical work composed by bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1312 – 1375).⁷⁵

⁷⁵ The translation is mine. For the Tibetan see Appendix C.

The Noble [Avalokiteśvara] replied, "I shall nurture your progenies". The Noble One then rose and took barley, wheat, peas, buckwheat, and hulled barley from a crevice of Mount Sumeru, and scattered it on the ground. Thus the land became filled with untilled harvest. Thereafter, the bodhisattva-ape led the monkey-children there [to that place] and presented them with the unfarmed crops, ordering, "Feed now!" whence it is called the Feeding Assembly Hill.⁷⁶ Then the monkey-children ate the yields and felt satiated. [Their] hair became shorter, and so did [their] tails. [They] learned how to speak and became human.⁷⁷

The unexpected evolutionary development of the Tibetans' ancestors as set forth above is not short of a scientific prowess considering that it was formulated in the fourteenth century. Perhaps more to the point is the metaphorical hominization of the first inhabitants of the Land of Snows through the gift of agriculture. Leaving their forested habitat for the cultivated plains of Tibet, the monkey-children reap the fruits of humanness. Losing their body hair and tails, they acquire language and finally become human, the most favourable state of existence from a Buddhist perspective. In this process, their paternal filiation appears to be the precondition of their humanisation. As a reminder, Avalokiteśvara's civilizing mission had been expressed in no uncertain terms in the first place:⁷⁸

The truly and completely Awakened One, Amitābha, thus spoke: "The Bhagavān Śākyamuni had not set foot in the country called Snowy Tibet, the light of [his] word had not spread, and [his] mind had not blessed it. You are going to tame [them], O Bodhisattva. Thus at first you shall populate [it] with human beings. Thereafter, gather them through the gift of earthly goods and Dharma, and bring their stream of consciousness into maturity".

A comparison of these passages clearly shows the persistence of a set of five grains (Tib. *'bru sna lnga bo*). Within the two given lists barley, hulled barley, wheat, and peas constitute the core set to which buckwheat or pulses are occasionally added. All these plants are consistent with what we know of Tibetan agriculture, both past and present, and barley still occupies the position of preferred staple crop. The earliest and most complete version of this narrative is found in the *bKa' chems ka khol ma*, which is most informative insofar as the

⁷⁶ The word *gong po* can be rendered as "meeting/assembly" or "heap/mass". For his part, Sørensen understands the phrase *Gong po ri* as a place name; see Sørensen (1994 : 132, n.349).

⁷⁷ For a different translation of this passage; see Sørensen (1994 : 131-132).

⁷⁸ The translation is mine. For the Tibetan see Appendix D.

growing season of these plants is concerned, placing their ripening in the third summer month (i.e., barley with a spring phenotype).

In these accounts, the civilizing forces of Buddhism appear to be coupled with a tendency towards the standardisation of indigenous practices and representations. Accordingly the five grains are seen suitable for the plains of Yarlung based on an analogy with the land of India, a literary contrivance supporting the Buddhist dissemination logic rather than ecological considerations. Furthermore, a striking feature of Avalokiteśvara's commitment to the introduction of agriculture is his gift of unsown and uncultivated crops (Tib. *ma rmos pa'i lo thog/tog*). It seems reasonable to argue that the gift of agriculture bequeathed by the Tibetans' *pater genitor* could have generated a certain discomfort, or cultural unease, among ecclesiastical circles as it would constitute a breach of monastic code to till the earth (Tib. *sa rko ba'i ltung byed*) and harvest the crops (Tib. *skye ba gcod pa'i ltung byed*).⁷⁹ The normative use of Vinaya literature (Tib. *'dul ba*) consequently superseded the civilizing logic of these narratives,⁸⁰ and the Buddhist authors eventually resolved the issue by placing considerable emphasis on the fact that the primeval harvest was composed of unsown or uncultivated crops.

Even more challenging is the similar presence of a set of five grains in traditional Chinese culture. The introduction of agriculture in ancient China is equally attributed to a mythological hero and civilizing figure. This legendary ruler is known as the Devine Farmer (Ch. *Shennong*), who is said to have lived some five thousand years

⁷⁹ Among the ninety simple or mere downfalls (Tib. *ltung byed 'ba' zhis pa dgu bcu*), the downfall of cutting what grows is number eleven. The text specifies that the downfall of destroying a seed or a plant is established when "A gelong [bhikṣu], personally or by delegating someone, with the wish to so damage, damages a seed or a plant that has not been made suitable". The downfall of digging in the earth is numbered seventy-three in the same list. It states, "A gelong [bhikṣu], personally or by delegating someone, digs more than four finger-widths down into what is reckoned in the world as solid earth" is at fault; see Dalai Lama (2009: 32,73).

⁸⁰ The ambivalent relation between the Buddhist clergy and farming has been expressed in a much later work composed by the Tibetan master rDza dPal-sprul (1808 – 1887): "As for roasted barley flour (tsampa): when the fields are tilled at first, all the underground worms and the seeds are exposed on the surface of the soil. [Then] all the grains above are pushed underneath. Wherever the oxen plough, crows and small birds and so forth go after them frenziedly feeding [upon them]. Likewise, when the fields are irrigated, all the aquatic creatures run aground on dry land and all the beings living in the arid soil endure the flooding. Similarly, at the time of sowing the seeds, harvesting and threshing [the crops], countless [beings] are slaughtered. Having all these in mind, eating dry flour is nothing but eating mouthfuls of insects." The translation is mine. For the Tibetan see Appendix E. For a different translation of this passage; see Kapstein (2006 : 17-8).

ago. He is traditionally credited with the invention of hoe and plough but most noticeably for bestowing five sacred crops (Ch. *wugu*) and is therefore also known as the Emperor of the Five Grains (Ch. *Wuguxi-andi*). His deeds are reported in *materia medica* and philosophical treatises that significantly predate the Tibetan sources discussed above. For instance, the Devine farmer's agrarian society is praised in the *Huainanzi*, a work composed in the second century BCE:

Ancient people ate grasses and drank water. They gathered the fruits from trees and ate the meat of clams. They frequently suffered from disease and poisoning. Then Shen Nong taught people for the first time how to sow the five grains, to observe whether the land was dry or wet, fertile or rocky, located in the hills or lowlands.⁸¹

The complete list of the five grains bestowed by Shennong varies over time. Compiled before the third century BCE, the Confucian *Five Classics* (Ch. *Wu Jing*) traditionally list broomcorn and foxtail millets, wheat, hemp, and soybeans. Among these works, the *Zhou Li* specifies that millet is the principal crop as it was the first to be cultivated.⁸² In a seventeenth-century work, the set of five crops is alternatively composed of sesame, legumes, wheat, and the established pair made of broomcorn and foxtail millets.⁸³ While the composition of the list is subject to variations, the occurrence of a pentad remains constant.

Conversely, some Chinese Buddhist authors did not follow this traditional classification. In early Tang Dynasty China a work composed by the Chinese Buddhist master Dao Xuan (702–760) offers further reflection on plant taxonomy. In his *Liangchu qingzhong yi*, Dao Xuan classifies all monastic properties in order to determinate their value, ownership, and utilisation.⁸⁴ In addition to cash contributions, donations made to monasteries occasionally include plants and animals, even though Buddhist monks do not traditionally engage in farming and breeding activities. For that matter, Dao Xuan's administration of monastic properties relies heavily on his reading of Vinya literature as an ethical guideline, while equally consulting Chinese botanical sources. His classification of plants includes five kinds of vegetables, five fruit trees, and five grains. The latter pentad is equally attested in Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures and is composed of the house grain (Ch. *fanggu*), the loose grain (Ch. *sangu*), the horn grain (Ch. *jiaogu*), the beard grain (Ch. *manggu*), and the cart

⁸¹ Yang Shou-zhong (2008 : i-ii, n.1).

⁸² Biot (1851 : tome 1, 349).

⁸³ Sung Ying-Hsing (1966 : 3).

⁸⁴ Huaiyu Chen (2009).

grain (Ch. *yugu*).⁸⁵ To compound matters, Dao Xuan's ritual text offers an alternative list of grains.⁸⁶ In all cases, the eighth century Buddhist classification of the *wugu* discussed in the *Liangchu qingzhong yi* moves away from traditional Chinese taxonomy and agricultural representations.

In the light of the above, it seems reasonable to suggest that Tibetans must have been aware of, if not influenced by, a system of classification and a mythological theme widely conspicuous in China prior to the writing of the Tibetan texts discussed. To the best of my knowledge, no similar narrative featuring a divine invention of agriculture coupled with a taxonomic pentad is found in early Indian literature that could suggest an alternative origin of cultural influence. In fact, it is surprising that historiographical works committed to promoting the spiritual legacy of the holy Buddhist land did not attempt to develop an agricultural theme in connection with the Indian Buddhist literature.⁸⁷ As a result, I would suggest that the idea of a specific set of grains, which constituted the foundation of Tibetan agrarian society, was already a key element of cultural identity when the authors of these texts compiled their grand narrative of Tibet.

The introduction of agriculture, as exemplified in Buddhist works composed between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, reveals multiple cultural influences. The Avalokiteśvara's cycle worked towards a unifying and civilizing representation of Tibet which is accomplished through the glorification of a revisited past. In this endeavour, the devout King Srong-btsan sgam-po and the figure of Avalokiteśvara, who are often conflated with one another, acted as the driving forces behind the conversion of Tibet to Buddhism. The syncretic nature of the narrative suggests that Tibetan authors reformulated parts of their history and cultural milieu. In this process, indigenous elements offered the bedrock on which the demoness and the bodhisattva-ape gave rise to the myth of the first Tibetans. Farming activity presented the means to reaffirm the inalienable dimension of traditional Tibetan economy. The consumption of barley, wheat,

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ One may think of the *Aggaññasutta* in which the Buddha discusses the creation of the universe, the beginning of life on earth, and the metamorphosis of beings, similar to luminous gods (Pal. *abbhasara*, Tib. *'od gsal gyi lha*), into humans. This early Buddhist discourse explains that the development of sexual organs was caused by a strong desire for taste, which resulted in the consumption of fungus, creepers, and uncultivated rice. While this text does not seem to have been translated into Tibetan, similar tropes are reported in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (Tib. *Chos mngon pa'i mdzod*). A clear reference to these celestial beings can also be found in the *Blue Annals* (Tib. *Deb ther sngon po*). I am indebted to Prof. Ulrike Roesler for drawing my attention to these passages.

buckwheat, and peas constituted by then a well-established diet, and barley consistently appeared in both its hull (Tib. *nas so ba*) and hullless (Tib. *nas*) forms. Although pentad-based taxonomies were used elsewhere in Inner Asia,⁸⁸ the appearance of a set of five grains in the Tibetan narrative seems highly indicative of a cultural adaptation of the traditional Chinese view on the invention of farming. The gift of agriculture bestowed upon the Tibetans by Avalokiteśvara is strongly evocative of the ancient Chinese myth of Shennong, the Devine farmer. Finally, Avalokiteśvara's gift of five crops that do not require any kind of farming activities is suggestive of the Tibetan historiographers' tendency to suffuse their writings with Buddhist ethos and normative monastic views. It prefigures the homogenization of Tibetan society operated by Buddhism and the difficulty for scholars to trace back indigenous elements predating the first millennium in Tibetan written documents.

Discussion

Barley is one of the founding crops of many civilizations in the Ancient World. The emergence of farming activities and crop domestication instigated fundamental changes in many early societies. As a result, economic systems, social organisations, and collective representations elaborated by agriculturists often reflect some of these changes. The Tibet-Qinghai plateau is one of the latest environments peopled by agro-pastoral groups in prehistoric times. Although barley became the staple food crop of ethnic Tibetan communities over time, pervading all aspects of their economic, social, and religious life, the crop is significantly absent from the earliest sites documented on the plateau.

In view of the current archaeological evidence it is yet possible to assess that Neolithic sites located on the plateau, whilst displaying distinct and indigenous material cultures, relied on farming practices similar to those of groups located in the river valleys and foothills of northern China and western Sichuan between the fifth and the fourth millennia BCE.⁸⁹ Cultivation of broomcorn and foxtail millets dominated their economies, which were often complemented with pig husbandry and foraging activities.

Evidence of barley cultivation on the Tibetan plateau exists from the second millennium BCE onwards. The grass progressively appears in the archaeobotanical record of sites located in central Tibet,

⁸⁸ Huaiyu Chen (2009).

⁸⁹ Xinyi Liu et al. (2009).

highland Nepal, and in the western Himalayas from approximately 1400 BCE to 880 CE. While phylogenetic analyses performed on barley support the view that Tibet was a possible centre of barley domestication, the presence of other western domesticates such as wheat, buckwheat, and peas is suggestive of contacts and exchanges with the Central Asian steppe. Likewise, wheat and barley became established in South-East Asian agricultural practices by the middle of the second millennium BCE when these western crops presumably moved to China through the Hexi Corridor,⁹⁰ a route that had already facilitated the introduction of bronze metallurgy.⁹¹

Aside from the introduction of new crops other archaeological evidence affirms a shift in subsistence strategies and food procurement. Faunal remains comprising bones of caprids (i.e., sheep and goats) and yak are indicative of a growth of mobile herding. These observations suggest a transition to a mixed agro-pastoral system reminiscent of Central Eurasian economies. Striking similarities also include the recovery of skeletal remains of disarticulated horses at mortuary sites. Equine utilisation, which is largely prevalent in social groups composed of mobile pastoralists and warlike mounted élite, will soon become an essential characteristic of early Tibetan society. Tibetan historiographers report that the reign of a Tibetan monarch (Tib. *btsan po*) was limited to the moment his son reached maturity, when the prince was able to ride a horse.⁹² Likewise, horse sacrifices are documented on the plateau where several dozen of horse skeletons were recovered from pits and tranches located in the vicinity of burial mounds.⁹³ The presence of horse remains in mortuary context does not only complement the representation of Tibetans' agro-pastoral economy in the first millennium BCE but is also evocative of changing belief systems and political complexity across the plateau.⁹⁴

Barley remains were equally retrieved from mortuary sites. Whilst early Neolithic sites display a large number of tombs with little funerary deposit, later burial places such as cave tombs and burial mounds show a greater social and political complexity.⁹⁵ The presence of cultivated plant remains attests to a variation in the content of later tombs. The analysis of barley in funerary contexts pertaining to the early Tibetan period has been intentionally excluded from this research. Admittedly the study of mortuary sites and funerary practices will certainly prove to be the most valuable source of infor-

⁹⁰ Flad et al. (2010).

⁹¹ Xian Wan (2011).

⁹² Richardson (1989).

⁹³ Chayet (1997) and Heller (2006).

⁹⁴ Aldenderfer (2013).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

mation with regard to the emergence of a Tibetan society. To date the archaeological record and the scant literary evidence available provides no solid foundation for further elaborations. Suffice to note the appearance of barley in domestic and funerary archaeological cultures that are characterised by new forms of economies and social structures. Overall, the adoption of western domesticates by the inhabitants of the Tibetan plateau must be considered in terms of ecological opportunism, economic relations, and cultural choices.⁹⁶

Determining the amount of innovation, contact, and exchange to produce significant social changes within ethnic groups and generate new traits of cultural identity was the underlying question of this work on barley cultivation and collective representations. One can safely speculate that the period ranging from 1500 BCE to circa 500 CE was instrumental in engineering dominant traits of Tibetan cultural identity. The emergence of a late Tibetan script in the seventh century and the paucity of written documents pertaining to the first half of the first millennium CE is a major obstacle to the understanding of this formative period. As a result, we are left with protohistoric archaeological evidence on the one hand and sources written after the tenth century on the other to infer cultural markers of ethnic identity and collective representations prior to the advent of Buddhism.

It is yet clear that the expanding Tibetan empire relied heavily on its agrarian society between the seventh and ninth century CE. The *Old Tibetan Annals* and other written documents discovered in Dunhuang provide first-hand information with regards to territorial demarcation, land taxation, and barley cultivation. Several entries detail how officials kept register of agricultural fields (Tib. *phying rild*) and register of fodder fields (Tib. *sog ril*) on behalf of the emperor who was the nominal owner of all cultivated lands of Tibet.⁹⁷ Taxes of grain were levied from various economic units (e.g., estates and households) by governors in charge of water (Tib. *chu mngan*) and crops (Tib. *stsang mngan*).⁹⁸ Contracts for the borrowing of grains (Tib. *stsang*) or seeds (Tib. *sa bon*) – principally barley, wheat, and millet – constitute the bulk of loan contracts (Tib. *chags rgya*) regulating the agro-economic life of Dunhuang under Tibetan imperial jurisprudence.⁹⁹ These documents, which are concerned with borrowers and creditors from various ethnic groups (e.g., Chinese, Khotanese, Sogdians, Uighurs, Sumpa), involve loans of grains obtained from personal properties, monastic storehouse, and government granaries. Barley grains were usually borrowed in the spring and the

⁹⁶ Jones et al. (2014).

⁹⁷ Dotson (2010 : 33, 36).

⁹⁸ Dotson (2010 : 41).

⁹⁹ Takeuchi (1993).

repayment was due after the harvest time in the middle autumn month (i.e., September).

Grain economy was undoubtedly at the centre of the Tibetan empire preoccupation and so was its territorial expansion. In addition to the levying of grain taxes, each district of Tibet – if not household – might have been responsible for supplying soldiers to the Tibetan army.¹⁰⁰ A mutilated passage on the south side of the Zhol Pillar erected circa 764 recalls how following the sack of Chinese dByar mo thang, the mighty Tibetan troops led by general Klu-khong possibly seized “granaries, barley and so forth in the direction of Tsong ka”.¹⁰¹ Food resources, animal feed and fodder were needed to ensure the expansion of the Tibetan empire and barley cultivation in a sense supported the war effort.

It is easy to see why Chinese historians of the Tang Dynasty readily associated the Tibetans with their Spartan lifestyle and barley-based diet. The descriptions of the Tibetans depicted in the *Old Book of Tang* and other Chinese sources are essential to approach the cultural identity of these two powerful neighbours in the first millennium CE. The ancient Chinese perspective on Tibetan agriculture and seasonality offered the means to re-evaluate the harvest-based calendrical system in use on the plateau. The Tibetan calendar year hence started in late spring when barley fields were reaped as a result of which it was possible to assert the development of a calendrical system based on the cultivation of barley with a winter habit. A first harvest around the months of March-April likely contributed to the elaboration of agrarian festivals as reflected in today’s Tibetan New Year. There is yet evidence for the agricultural practice of alternating crops as early as the first millennium BCE.¹⁰² In addition, Tibetans were able to produce two crops a year, with a second yield in August-September, with the direct effect of creating enough food surplus and fodder to sustain their expansionist views and military campaigns.

Combing through written documents about Tibetans, agriculture and barley, it was eventually possible to formulate preliminary observations on indigenous (agri-) cultural representations in mythological narratives composed after the tenth century. Buddhist literary works such as the *bKa’ chems ka khol ma* and *Maṇi bka’ ’bum* recount how a set of five grains was first brought to the Land of Snows by the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the context of a civilizing undertaking. As part of a Buddhist glorification of the imperial period, the intro-

¹⁰⁰ Dotson (2010 : 25).

¹⁰¹ Richardson (1985 : 10-13).

¹⁰² Knörzer (2000).

ལ་སྐྱེས་པ། རྒྱུ་ཚུལ་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ལ་འཕགས་པ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཚེན་པོ་ལྷུ་རྩུ་པ་ལོས་གནང་བའི་ཟས་སྐྱེལ་འདི་ཡིན་ནོ་ཟེ
 དང་བྱས་པས། སྤྱི་ལོ་སྐོམ་གྱི་ཡུ་གུ་བྱ་ཚུ་ལོ་བཞི་བརྒྱ་ལོ་འིན་ཏུ་དགའ་ལོ། ཡུལ་འཛིན་པ་ལ་སྲུ་བ་ཡར་ ལུངས་ཟོ་ཐང་
 འདི་ཡིན་ནོ། དེ་ནས་ཁོང་རྣམས་ཚོས་ཟོས་པས་མ་རྗེས་པའི་ལོ་ཉོག་ལྟར་ཞིམ་པར་གྱུར་ནས། ཁོང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་སྟེ
 མའི་གངས་བགངས་པས་འབྱུང་གི་ཁྱི་ཁྱི་འདུག་ནས་ཡར་ལུངས་ཁྱི་ཐང་ཞེས་ཀྱང་བྱུངོ། དེ་ཡང་རོ་མ་ཚོག་ཞིམ་
 པར་གྱུར་ནས་ཟོས་པས་བརྒྱགས་པར་གྱུར་ཏེ་བརྗེས་དང་བྱས་པས་རྗེད་མོ་རྗེས་པས་ཡར་ལུངས་རྗེས་ཐང་བྱ་བ་བྱུང་རོ།
 ཡང་འབྱུང་ལོ་ཉོག་ལ་ཟོས་ཏེ་བརྒྱགས་པར་གྱུར་ནས་རྒྱུག་དང་བྱས་པས་ཡར་ལུངས་འོལ་ཁ་རྒྱུག་ཐང་བྱ་བ་བྱུང་རོ།

C. *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (1981 : 53)

འཕགས་པའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྱོད་གྱི་རིགས་རྒྱུད་རྣམས་ངས་བསྐྱུང་ངོ་གསུང་ནས། འཕགས་པ་ཡར་བཞེངས་དེ། ནས། མྱོ།
 སྤན་མ། བྲ་ཤོ། སོ་བ་རྣམས་རི་རབ་གྱི་ཁོང་སེང་ནས་གྲངས་ཏེ། ས་ལ་གཏོར་བས་ཡུལ་དེར་མ་རྗེས་པའི་ལོ་ཐོག་གིས་
 གང་བར་གྱུར་ཏོ། །དེ་ནས་སྤྱི་ལོ་བྱུང་རྒྱུ་མེས་སེང་དཔལ་དེས་སྤྱི་ལོ་སྤྱི་ལོ་རྣམས་དེར་ཁྱིད་དེ།མ་རྗེས་པའི་ལོ་ཐོག་ལ་གཏད་
 ནས། ད་ཟོ་དང་བྱས་པས། ཟོ་དང་ ཤོང་པོ་རི་ཡིན་ཟེར་རོ། དེ་ནས་སྤྱི་ལོ་སྤྱི་ལོ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ལོ་ཐོག་ཟོས་པས་ཚོམ་པར་
 གྱུར་ནས། སྤྱ་ཡང་ཐུང་དུ་སོང་། མཚུག་མ་ཡང་ཐུང་དུ་སོང་སྟེ་སྟེ་སྟེ་ཤེས་ནས་མིར་གྱུར་ཏོ།

D. *Mañi bka' 'bum* (2011 : 267-8)

ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པས་བཀའ་སྤྱུལ་པ། བོད་ཁབ་ཅན་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་རྒྱལ་ཁམས།
 བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་ལྷུ་ཐུབ་པའི་སྐྱའི་ཞབས་ཀྱིས་མ་བཅུགས། གསུང་གི་འོད་ཟེར་གྱིས་མ་ཁྲབ། ཐུགས་ཀྱིས་བྱིན་གྱིས་
 མ་བརྒྱབས་པ་དེ། བྱང་རྒྱུ་མེས་སེང་འོད་ཀྱིས་འདུལ་བར་འགྱུར་བས། ཐོག་མར་འགྲོ་བ་མི་སྤེལ་ཏེ།
 དེ་ནས་ཟང་ཟེང་དང་ཚོས་གྱི་སྤྱིན་པས་བསྐྱེས་ལ་དེ་དག་གི་རྒྱུད་སྤྱིན་པར་གྱིས་ཤིག

E. *sNying thig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig* (1988 : 123)

རྩམ་པ་ཡང་། དང་པོ་ཞིང་ལ་སྐོག་བརྒྱབ་པའི་གནས་སྐབས། ས་འོག་གི་འབྲུ་འབྲུ་ཐམས་ཅད་ས་སྤྱིང་དུ་བྱུང་།
 ས་སྤྱིང་གི་འབྲུ་ཐམས་ཅད་ས་འོག་ཏུ་མ་ཚན། རྗེས་སྐྱུང་གར་སོང་གིས་རྗེས་སུ་བྱ་རོག་དང་བྱེད་སོགས་ཁ་དལ་འོམས

མིད་པར་འབྲུ་སྐྱམ་གྱིན་འགྲོ་བ་དེ་ཡིན། དེ་བཞིན་དུ་ཞིང་ལ་རྒྱ་འདྲིན་སྐབས། རྒྱ་ལ་གནས་པའི་སྲོག་ཆགས་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱམ་ལ་བཀམ། སྐྱམ་ལ་གནས་པའི་སྲོག་ཆགས་ཐམས་ཅད་གཤེར་གྱིས་བཟད། དེ་བཞིན་དུ་ས་བོན་འདེབས་པ་འབྲིག་པ་བརྒྱུད་བ་སོགས་ཀྱི་དུས་བསད་པའང་གུངས་གྱིས་མི་ཚོད། དེ་དག་ལ་བསམ་ན་འབྲུ་སྐྱུང་ཁོན་ཕྱིས་བྱས་པ་འགས་པ་དང་འདྲ།

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sNying thig sngon 'gro'i khrid yig (by rDza dPal-sprul Rin-po-che)

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“Through Whose lens?” Notes on Competing Representations of Lurol

Valentina Punzi

“Our eyes are socio-culturally framed and gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world.”¹

inghai Province has for centuries been a peripheral borderland between the Tibetan and Chinese political ‘centres’. The presence of different linguistic, ethnic and religious groups, namely Tibetan, Hui, Han, Monguor and small Muslim groups like the Salar, has historically shaped the syncretic profile of the region, which Tibetans refer to as Amdo. Nowadays, attempts carried by the Chinese nation-state to promote social inclusiveness and ‘harmonious relations’ (Chinese: *hexie guanxi*) are ideologically motivated strategies to pursue larger plans concerning the modernization and economic development of China’s western regions. However, the clash between the Chinese national and the Tibetan local understandings of modernity and development emerges in multiple ways that deny a single broad-spectrum interpretation for the variety of social and political changes that are taking place in China’s contemporary minorities’ areas like Amdo.

In this context, religious rituals, revitalized after the reforms of the 1980s, have become an important ground to negotiate modernity through opposing and competing representations of Tibetan ‘tradition’ and religious life. Recent scholarship on rituals in Tibetan societies² has increasingly challenged the assumption of a monolithic Tibetan Buddhist world and has highlighted how rituals are adaptively transmuting in the specific socio-political milieus of contemporary Tibetan societies. Rather than being the reiterated expression of immutable religious beliefs, rituals are a privileged way to explore Tibetan communities’ transformative encounters with the national and global forces of modernity.

Based on participant observation of the celebration of Lurol (Klurol) in the three villages of Sa-dgyid, Sgo-dmar and Gling-rgya in

¹ Larsen 2006: 245.

² Cabezon 2010; Buffetrille 2012.

Rebgong County in 2014, this paper aims to define how the growing attendance of Han Chinese tourists to this particular ritual event triggers new tense dimensions of meanings, mediated by the use of camera in the space of the temple courtyard. This delimited and self-contained spatial frame hosts a dynamic interaction between the local and the national, which characterizes Lurol as the simultaneous enactment of the Han Chinese and Tibetan agencies' divergent ways of appropriating and representing Tibetans' religious lives.

Lurol is a propitiating ritual that takes place in many villages in the area of Rebgong County (Qinghai province) during the sixth lunar month. It is celebrated by each village according to a different time arrangement and lasts for three to six days. Because of its spectacular features, Lurol has acquired a special reputation in Amdo and every year it attracts an increasing number of Han Chinese tourists from inland China, along with foreign tourists.

Epstein (1998) provided a detailed description of the preparation and the sequence of group dancing, offerings and 'shamanic possession' that he witnessed during Lurol in Sa-dgyil village in the early 1990s. In his analysis, he defined the ritual as the celebration of the local Tibetan community identity, but he also foresaw that the impact of modernity could come to pose a threat to the performance of Lurol and its participants in the future. Nevertheless, he confidently concluded that the value of Lurol for the community of Rebgong would have for a long time prevailed over the commodification of the ritual:

"For the moment, therefore, the luröl ritual for the people of Rebgong is a vital and important religious act that links them to their place, their gods, and their Tibetanness. And no matter how colorful the attraction, or how important a financial factor it may become in Rebgong's modernized future, it has not yet, nor is it likely soon to become, a pure commodity. The luröl ritual clearly retains powerful local cultural significance. Its meanings will continue to be negotiated among the ritual actors, but as modernity continues to make its inroads on the people of Rebgong, its very performance may condemn its participants to a form of second-class citizenship in which they must choose between their ethnic or their national identities. Or worse, it may be transformed into a meaningless theatrical performance. But at present, Rebgong's luröl ritual reflects the breadth of the revival of Tibetan religion in China."³

³ Epstein 1998: 138.

Drawing on my fieldwork, undertaken in the same village more than twenty years later, at a first sight the aesthetics of Lurol have survived the passage of time without leaving any appreciable trace. Before the ritual began, each household in the village prepared offerings of alcohol, bread, sweets, fruits, and flowers that were collected and disposed in front of the entrance to the temple of Sa-dgyil. Afterwards, in faultless accordance with the sequence of actions outlined by Epstein, different members of the community participated into the gendered group dance. The unquestioned protagonist of Lurol was the *lhawa* (Tibetan: lha-ba), a figure found through Tibetan society, entrusted by the community to be a spirit-medium. During Lurol, he is possessed by the local mountain god, supervises the performance of the dancers and makes the appropriate offerings to the gods by pouring alcohol, yoghurt and rice on the ritual ground.

In Sgo-dmar and Gling-rgya villages, Lurol follows a similar sequence of events but it also includes some peculiar features. In Sgo-dmar a real-size sheep made of barley flour and butter is burnt on the fire arranged on the stone altar in front of the temple entrance, a reminiscence of the once performed sacrifice of a sheep that used to be burnt alive before 1950s.

In Gling-rgya the dancing culminated in the dramatic cutting of the *lhawa's* forehead and the offer of blood directly spread on the *thangka* of the mountain god. Chinese noisy fireworks accompanied the conclusion of the ritual and sent a bus of foreign tourists off.

As for 2014, no major change has apparently occurred in the ritual performance of Lurol in these three sites: on the surface, it can be still considered a Tibetan community event untouched by the pressuring force of modernity, the kind of well-preserved and unspoilt local tradition that tourists search for. Or not. The outside influence of tourists is in fact preponderantly penetrating into the local context of Lurol in subtle ways that are likewise affecting other Tibetan cultural phenomena in Amdo. Overall, Lurol ritual is increasingly fitting into the range of 'authentic' Tibetan traditions that have been assimilated into the logic of tourism-oriented cultural consumption in all Tibetan areas in China.

Epstein noticed how "the rush toward a market economy in China has created incentives to package and market ethnic culture for profit in China's ever-growing tourist industry."⁴ During the last decade, this trend has become a dominant model in orienting the development of Han Chinese tourism in Amdo. One most recent example is the mushrooming of tent restaurants set up during summer time. These odd colourful tents meet the tourists' expectations

⁴ Epstein 1998: 137.

for spending an unforgettable one-day immersion among Tibetan food delicacies stirred into loud music and stage dancing. Horse riding, butter tea and photos with locals in traditional costumes are also at hand in the surrounding grassland.

The image of Tibetans portrayed by this pervasive model of Han Chinese tourism clusters around a few stereotyped clichés and is reduced to be static, monolith and suspended in time. Tourists themselves demand and conform to this type of totalising, though fabricated, experience of Tibetan culture that not only romanticizes the natural environment and the people but also turns any manifestation of religious beliefs and rituals into an exotic attractive phenomenon.

The folklorization of Tibetan traditions for tourism consumption reflects the state's attitude to represent Tibetans as partaking of a supposed common standard core of values and images that define them. This model of homogenisation, which overlooks Tibetan local diversified cultural and religious expressions and promotes a monovocal narrative dominated by the state, anticipates the time and pre-determines the modalities of Han Chinese tourists' encounter with Tibetans in situ. By oversimplifying and even erasing Tibetan local diversity in history, social formations, beliefs and cultural expressions, Tibetans are merged into a totalizing stereotype, which urges them to occupy a subordinate position into the national frame.

Rituals like Lurol pose the local Tibetan community in direct confrontation with this imposed discourse of culture objectification and tourism consumption of their traditions. As we shall see, rather than passively accepting the role conveyed to them, Tibetans in Rebgong have developed their own symbolic references to self-represent their identity and, within this renewed framework, they are independently reflecting on the significance of Lurol in terms of cultural authenticity, beyond its religious value.

In summer 2014, among the green fields at the entrance of Rongwo township, the administrative centre of Rebgong County, a trilingual poster, realized by the Environment Protection Department of Rebgong County, advertised in Tibetan, Chinese and English a collage of photos as diverse as a glimpse of the annual bicycle racing around Kokonor lake and close-ups of participants to Lurol: the visual impact explicitly combined the two events into a single attractive message for the tourists and visitors alike.⁵

⁵ Photo by the author.



The written message that accompanied the photos, “The Month of Rabgong Costume Festival of Tibetans”, further suggested how to interpret the already clear visual message. Notably, despite portraying Lurol through photos, the poster didn’t mention it by name and didn’t feature it as a religious event: Lurol was only visually represented as an aesthetic, carnivalesque and entertaining festival. By combining the national sport event of the bicycle racing around Kokonor, the biggest lake in the region and a must-visit destination, with a local traditional festival, the local administration of Rebong is consciously exploiting a good occasion for becoming more integrated into the regional and national networks, by bringing outsiders to the local festival.

Nowadays, Lurol is framed as one among other leisure activities organized in Qinghai during the summer, when also the annual bicycle racing takes place. In this way, the poster adheres to the standard mode of representation implemented by the national and local government administration to promote a Tibetan festival in a simplified fashion that contributes to attract tourists, while eliminating its original religious significance.

The change of meaning of Lurol from a local religious festival to a tourist event entails an intentional act of appropriating Tibetan culture and charging it with a previously absent politicised dimension,

installed by the state. In Amdo, the representation of Tibetan traditions is a fertile terrain where the tension between the state and the local is articulated through contrasting ways of portraying Tibetans, their traditions and religious lives. Lurol, as a traditional ritual perpetuated in the contemporary setting, enhances new forms of hybrids and reflections about modernity from both the Tibetan and Chinese perspectives.

Ritual change can be particularly challenging to identify. As Bell pointedly noted: "Part of the dilemma of ritual change lies in the simple fact that rituals tend to present themselves as the unchanging, time-honoured customs of an enduring community."⁶ Immunity to transformation over time is often misunderstood to be an inherently connotative feature of rituals and research tends to focus on the traits of continuity with the past, whereas it overlooks the social and political context that makes rituals change.

Although Lurol has remained substantially unchanged in its formal aesthetic aspects, and for this same reason it has grown in popularity among tourists, its context of performance is changing: tourism has prompted its folklorization and is causing a gradual shift in the Tibetans' understanding of the ritual itself.

Although contemporary Tibetans quite obviously are not conforming to the outsiders' pressure to turn Lurol into a stage event, they have surely been troubled by the policies regulating it. Following the advent of Chinese army in 1958, Lurol has been at once affected by and responsive to the sociocultural and political context of Amdo that in the past sixty years have swung between central directives and local regulations, in a continuous reorientation of political campaigns towards the practice of religious rituals. First condemned and forbidden as 'superstition' during the Cultural Revolution and afterwards (1960s-1980s), then slowly authorized to be re-appropriated by the local community as a religious festival (1980-1990), Lurol has recently been exploited as a resource for tourism (1990-present). In every step of this process, Tibetans have been required to constantly adjust to the changing circumstances that were determined by political decisions taken very far away from Rebgong and implemented in loco.

Nowadays, Lurol reflects Tibetans' encounter with the modernity of consumption, embodied by the presence of Han Chinese in a Tibetan area, which is peripheral to the core of the Chinese nation. This centre-periphery dynamics is observable in all minorities' regions in China where Han Chinese tourism is the vehicle for what Oakes defined, in the context of Guizhou province, as "a ritualized

⁶ Bell 1992: 210-211.

encounter with modernity, [...] a staging of modernity, in which all the contradictions of a new political and economic order were served up for interpretation, understanding, and ultimately, reclamation by the villagers themselves."⁷

The encounter with Han tourists at Lurol provides local Tibetans with a specific venue to reflect onto their role in the local and national setting and onto the meaning of modernity itself. Bell observes how "despite many popular preconceptions and a number of anthropological models of ritual, ritual is not primarily a matter of unchanging tradition. On the contrary, some analysts now see ritual as a particularly effective means of mediating tradition and change, that is, as a medium for appropriating some changes while maintaining a sense of cultural continuity."⁸ Contemporary enactment of Lurol indeed displays this dynamic. By preserving a line of continuity with the past and at the same time digesting contemporary changes according to Tibetan terms, Lurol is a space rooted in Tibetan tradition but open to actively interact with Chinese modernity. While some Tibetans are gaining profit from this seasonal tourism economy, the very presence of tourists, their strolling around the town in fancy clothes, their disinhibit public behaviour, their expensive camera equipment and so on are important part of the direct daily confrontation with the symbols of Chinese modernity that all Tibetans are experiencing in Rebgong.

As a spatial movement from the eastern coastal area, Chinese tourism in Amdo is a relatively recent phenomenon, rooted in the post-80s economic growth of the country. The presence of Chinese tourists as de facto new participants to the ritual of Lurol is not explicitly welcomed or rejected by the local Tibetan community. However, tourism and video recording are interrelated activities in the experience and consumption process of Lurol that are undeniably playing a significant role as a major outside agent of transformation for the people of Rebgong. Lurol can be understood as a space where the Tibetan and Han Chinese involved parties negotiate the representation and reproduction of traditional and new meanings and rearticulate their power relations.

The unprecedented availability of videotaping tools has turned cameras into an essential part of the tourist's equipment, with the ambiguous result of documenting one's own memories, while violating others' own present. Despite having become more affordable, cameras still embody a Chinese economic status symbol, translated and reproduced through the hegemonic power of generating visual

⁷ Oakes 1998: 6-7.

⁸ Bell 1992: 251.

representations of Tibetans. At the same time, since Tibetans have still a comparatively limited access to sophisticated and expensive video technology, cell phones are becoming an efficient cheaper substitute to produce independent videotaping and react to the outsiders' representations.

In the context of Lurol, videotaping emerges as a versatile expression of applied narratology, an example of "what happens to narratology if it is imported into disciplines concerned with non-literary and non-fictional narratives."⁹ The symbolic role of cameras at Tibetan rituals and religious festivals is constructed and perceived in distinctive ways: the projection of different sets of Tibetans and Chinese imaginaries not only activate contrasting portraits of Tibetans' religious life but also reveals how camera is an emblematic narrative tool to explore the political changes occurring in post-Maoist Amdo from the micro-perspective of Lurol ritual. Being inspired by different documenting purposes, cameras reflect and negotiate unequal power relations in the confrontation between the Tibetan minority and the Han majority.

When tourists from inland China use their personal cameras to narrate Lurol, their eye has already been exposed to a variety of its visual representations, from those sponsored by the local government, like the poster mentioned above, to TV documentaries, blogs, and travelling experiences retold by acquaintances: having seen others' photos encourages to take more. When they come with their camera, tourists are likely to have already acquired some familiarity with what they will see and their photographing behaviour is very much conditioned by this set of interiorized images. Familiar visual representations become a reference model for *being there and taking photos* in conformity with previously consumed images of Lurol. Moreover, by adding their own memories to the existing material corpus of photos, they also authenticate and store their experience for sharing it with those who will see the photos back home.

Looking at some concrete examples from Lurol in Sa dgyil village, I noticed how Han Chinese tourists overlooked the progressive development of ritual activities and preferred to photograph isolated elements like details of Tibetans' dressing, jewel ornaments, and face portraits, especially of women and children. The choice of giving priority to these context-extrapolated elements has the effect to reduce the ritual to a background scene for their selected shots. Even when their lens was glazing at the *lharwa* or at individual dancers, the collective dimension of the dancing and the offering and the larger space of the courtyard with its Tibetan public were remarkably miss-

⁹ Heinen 2009: 196.

ing.

During informal conversations with Han Chinese professional and amateur photographers, who accidentally or purposely gathered in the temple courtyard to see Lurol, I repeatedly heard their enthusiastic comments about the spectacular combination of costumes and dancing that made Lurol so primitive (Chinese: *yuanshi*) and mysterious (Chinese: *shenmi*). However, none of my interlocutors knew more than some scarce and fragmented information about the primarily religious purpose of Lurol. This lack of sympathy for the Tibetan emic significance of the ritual performance can also partially account for the careless behaviour of tourists and photographers alike, both Han Chinese and foreigners, that were apparently unconscious that freely moving in the temple courtyard among the dancers, climbing on the roof surrounded by the smoke of juniper fumigation, and standing at the temple entrance facing the procession led by the *lhawa* to get a closer shot or a better frame were not sensitive behaviours. Although the Tibetan public sitting along the perimeter of the courtyard didn't openly manifest to be bothered by the invasive behaviour of tourists, the *lhawa* in Gomar village was less tolerant and when tourists started to deliberately invading the space inside the circle described by the dancers, he angrily asked them to step back, with the scarce result that they still stood in-between the public and the ritual performance, in a way that their presence could not be ignored.

Based on actual observation, it won't be farfetched to claim that Han Chinese tourists' experience of Lurol means essentially to photograph it. Visual reproduction canalizes the tension toward appropriating this Tibetan ritual by turning it into the stable form of a photograph. In this respect, it is worth reporting the following passage, where Larsen poignantly comments on the co-emergence of experience, tourism, photography and objectification and cites a well-known early work of Sontag:¹⁰

"Sontag made the case that photography dramatically transformed the perception of the world by turning it into a 'society of spectacles' where circulating images over-power reality: 'reality' becomes touristic, an item for visual consumption. The ability of photography to objectify the world as an exhibition, to arrange the entire globe for visual consumption." In Sontag's words: *"It would not be wrong to speak of people to have a compulsion to photograph: to turn experience itself into a way of seeing. Ultimately, having an*

¹⁰ Sontag 1977.

experience becomes identical with taking a photograph of it, and participating in a public event comes more and more to be equivalent to looking at it in photographed form. [...] Today everything exist to end in a photograph."¹¹

In any cultural setting tourism inevitably brings along a critical discussion on the objectifying role that photography acquires in the relationship between the photographer and the photographed. By videotaping Lurol as the performance of a 'costume carnival' representation, Han Chinese tourists condense a set of ethnic and social hierarchies in a visual format that portrays Tibetans as traditional and cut off from modernity in the broader national context. The camerawork of tourists also contributes to objectify Tibetan as statically inscribed in their travel experience, wherein they acquire all the characteristics of a fixed exotic Other in dichotomous opposition to the mobility to which Han are entitled, thanks to unrestrained freedom of movement within the country and better economic conditions.

Chinese tourism is indeed a product of the economic development of the past thirty years that followed the opening up of a market economy. Its growth as a social phenomenon is increasingly reflected by photography, which has become an emblematic expression of the contrasting dimensions of Chinese modernity in its Han Chinese centres and minorities' peripheries. Already defined as "a ritual practice of tourism,"¹² photography is the utmost ritual of Chinese modernity that inevitably clashes with traditional Tibetan rituals like Lurol as well as with other religious manifestations.

The process of imagining and defining Tibetans precedes the photo and, to a considerable extent, predetermines its content. The intrusive usage of cameras, accompanied by tourists' inappropriate behaviour during Lurol, characterizes many Han Chinese visual misrepresentations and misappropriations of Tibetan religious objects and symbols. Prayer flags give one example. Being a must iconographic component of photos taken near mountains, lakes and other natural sites, prayer flags are not only framed as a colourful spot in the background of portrait photos but are also held, stepped on, and sit on by Han Chinese tourists, like we can see in the photos posted and commented by Tibetans through the social network of wechat with these words: "Prayer flags blown by the wind embody Tibetans' wish for peace, favourable conditions, happiness and health. There are reli-

¹¹ Larsen 2006: 242.

¹² Larsen 2006: 241.

gious scriptures printed on prayer flags which, in the Tibetan view, are read when prayer flags are blown. Despite being so holy, prayer flags are stepped on by stupid tourists. I just want to say to the uneducated and unmannered tourist in the photo: please have a sufficient understanding of a local customs and bring respect when you travel.”¹³



Rather than being passive subjects of photographing objectification, Tibetans are actively reacting and engaging with the representation of their religious lives. Bell observes that “the modes of social interaction afforded by the ubiquity of television and video, by the unprecedented levels of tourist travel, and by the increasingly multicultural societies are having an effect not only on why, what, and when people ritualize but also on how we conceive of ritual itself.”¹⁴ During Lurol, the very presence of tourists and their videotaping activity is indirectly encouraging Tibetans to use a local eye to produce their own visual documentation of the ritual through the use of cameras and cell phones. In this respect, Chinese tourism has played the quite paradoxical role of empowering Tibetans’ agency in Rebgong by fostering the production of their alternative competing represen-

¹³ The photos reproduced hereafter were anonymously posted on wechat in spring 2014.

¹⁴ Bell 2009: 242.

tations of Lurol, in opposition to its carnavalization as an event for tourists' consumption. "Photographers and films acquire even greater autonomy when the camera is handed over to 'the natives'"¹⁵ and in Rebgong videotaping has turned from an objectifying modern technique monopolized by Han Chinese tourists to a possible approach handed by Tibetans to actively deal with and represent modernity instead of submitting to it.

In 2014, when engaging in the activity of videotaping Lurol from the perimeter of the courtyard, no Tibetan walked inside the dancing circle or too close to it. Holding their cameras and cell phones at its margins, they displayed a totally different involvement and purpose from that of Han tourists: Tibetan zoom was in fact not anonymous, it focused on their children, nephews, grandchildren, and children of their friends and neighbours taking part in the dance. Handing a camera became a way to reinforce community solidarity through the personal choices of what to photograph, which may be interpreted as a more or less conscious response to tourists' standardized videotaping.

Interestingly, Tibetan videotaping was not limited to the moment of the Lurol ritual enactment but covered the entire chronological stretch from the days that preceded Lurol to the afterwards celebration. By visually documenting the temporal development of the ritual, its domestic atmosphere becomes effectively incorporated within its larger public context: the preparation and decoration of offerings, the naphthalene-smelling clothes worn only on special occasions, the fabrication of ritual objects to substitute those already consumed by use (like the sheep skin drum in the photo) but also the relaxing scene of family and friends' gathering for eating and drinking for hours after the ritual was over.¹⁶ The subjects of all these photos embody a Tibetan cohesive and coherent vision of Lurol as a community event, an annual celebration for all its members, and in this perspective the divergence with tourists' videotaping is evident.

¹⁵ Chaplin 1994: 212.

¹⁶ I am grateful to the families who hosted me during Lurol. The following photos were taken by Tsering Rgyal.





Beyond its exclusively religious significance, Tibetans are starting to elaborate Lurol as an important cultural event, a manifestation of the uniqueness of Rebgong and its celebrated Tibetan authenticity and legacy inherited from the past as the centre of thangka painting, the seat of Rongwo monastery, the second largest monastic institution in Amdo, the hometown of Gedun Chopel, the founder of Tibetan modern literature, and finally as a fast-urbanising town where locals demand that pure Tibetan is spoken.

This new cultural dimension of Lurol can be partly related to the national and international discourses on the recognition and preservation of cultural heritage linked to local discourses of ethnic pride. The urgency in documenting Lurol emerges also from some Tibetans' search for western researchers' theoretical and methodological knowledge to explain it as a cultural phenomenon and not something primitive to be ashamed of. In the effort to reframe what they are familiar with since they were born and rearticulate it in different terms to fit into modernity, Tibetans seek anthropology, folklore and any other subject label alike to provide 'scientific legitimacy' for a renewed approach to Lurol and its evaluation not only as a religious festival but also as an expression of local culture.

As a counterbalance to this laic trend, monks and part of the educated Tibetans in Rebgong insert Lurol within a discourse of primitivism and neglect its religious efficaciousness as superstition and folk religion. During informal conversations with a group of young

monks from the Gelukpa monastery of Mgo-dmar, they insistently repeated that monastic vows forbid them to attend Lurol because it celebrates the low pantheon of mundane gods. Not only that. In the attempt to make his thoughts more explicit, one monk asserted that the symbolic offer of human blood at Lurol in Gling-rgya or its substitutive substances in Sa-dgyil and Sgo-dmar are clear signs of the primitiveness of Lurol, which he further defined as a spectacle for the villagers, similar to the performance of African shamans...

Orthodox Buddhism and the Chinese state embody two distinct discourses of official authority, which tend to coincide in downplaying the religious significance of Lurol. Buddhism undermines its very ritual validation by more or less explicitly relegating it to an expression of folklore; similarly, the Chinese state, represented by the local administration, highlights and exploits Lurol for tourism consumption. However, bringing Lurol back to the perspective of the laic village community, this ritual still fully preserves its religious significance and is now also appreciated and celebrated as an expression of local culture.

Tibetans in Rebgong reinterpret their traditional religious activities and festivals like Lurol to generate discourses on their community identity, alternative to those imposed onto them by outsiders' representations. The process of creating a space for preserving the authenticity of Lurol in a modern setting is enacted through Tibetan multivocal responses that challenge the imposition of cultural standardization, pursued by both the state and the tourist. Tibetans indeed insert Lurol within an inclusive frame made of common memory of the past, common geographic origin, and family connections: these concrete reference marks support their persistence in renovating corporate local identities. An array of ethnic and cultural marks of Tibetan self-representation, such as religious festivals, material culture, traditional food and clothing, strengthen the existing social networks and promote its unity.

The movement towards corporate identities is an answer to the State's homogenising stereotypization of Tibetans, who depart from their diversified local settings to establish their own set of symbolic and material culture that are alternative from those imposed onto them. Clothes worn at Lurol are a case in point. Villagers expect everyone to wear traditional Tibetan clothes at Lurol, no matter if they come to participate in the ritual or to sit in the public. Failing to do so is criticized and perceived as a lack of participation and sense of community belonging, to the point that the few Tibetans wearing western clothes were afraid to be beaten by the *lhawa* and sit in the corner to be less visible.

For lay Tibetans Lurol is still and foremost the celebration of the community ties, an essential part of their local identity that needs to be re-articulated to fit modern challenges, among which the main one is Han Chinese tourism and its visual representation. However, tourism is not passively accepted but it prompts Tibetans' own encounter and ways of dealing with modernity and its tools. Overall, in the context of Lurol, Tibetans and Han Chinese make their respective use of camera as a tool to foster two opposite arrays of representations: primitiveness, stereotypization and exoticization versus local pride, community identity and income.

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The Discourse of Tibetan Women's Empowerment Activists¹

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Introduction

Since the 1980s, the discourse of *suzhi* (素质), or 'human quality,' has been pervasive in China (Kipnis, 2007; Murphy, 2004). According to this discourse, individuals' quality, or *suzhi*, is linked to the nation's strength, and is a product of the extent to which individuals are civilized and modern (Jacka, 2009; Judd, 2002; Murphy, 2004). According to *suzhi* discourse, improving one's quality requires discipline and single-minded diligence; high quality is associated with the educated, wealthy, and urban; and those with high quality are the ones who succeed in a competitive market economy (Jacka, 2009; Judd, 2002; Kipnis, 2007; Murphy, 2004). Moreover, as Kipnis states, "the notion of 'lacking quality' is used to mock or discriminate" (2007, p. 388). As Jacka further describes, "The supposed low *suzhi* of migrants...is read from their speech, clothes, and bodily comportment" (2009, p. 531).

Judd's analysis of the work of various branches of the All-China Women's Federation in the 1990s reveals the Federation officers attempted to raise the quality of rural women by providing rural women with training in vocational skills. Federation officers understood education and training, leading to "competitive entrepreneurial success," as raising women's quality (Judd, 2002, p. 44). Federation officers additionally believed that "increasing women's quality will win respect for women and thereby raise women's social status" (p. 24). Other state discourses around women's status have similarly

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asserted women's emancipation is a matter of women's own individual skills, ability, and effort. According to this notion, women must abandon "the old attitudes of subservience and doubt about their own abilities" while "self-emancipation involves women improving themselves based on their individual skills and effort." Self-confidence on the part of women as well as effort and skill, obtained via a process of "self-development through education," are thus considered necessary for women's emancipation (Leung, 2003, p. 371).

In a line of argument similar to the *suzhi* and state discourses described above, the Tibetan women's empowerment activists interviewed for the current study argue that women's empowerment is a matter of individual women's skills and professional, intellectual, or economic competence. The activists focus on improving women's education, health care, and training as prerequisites or a means to obtaining this competence. Like the Federation officers described by Judd, the women's empowerment activists of the current study believe economic and professional success will automatically improve women's standing in society. In fact, many of the activists argue this is the *only* factor that is crucial to the question of Tibetan women's social status. Like *suzhi* discourse, the women's activists of the current study elide structural and wider societal factors in oppression, preferring instead to argue that if women suffer from low status, this situation has resulted from individual women's lack of competence. The arguments of some of the activists, like many of the proponents of *suzhi* discourse, then, include a heavy dose of victim-blaming, associating poor economic success, lack of prominence in society, and powerlessness within the household with individuals' own character and competence flaws rather than with structural and power-based inequalities (Jacka, 2009; Kipnis, 2007; Murphy, 2004).²

² It may be important to note that the women's empowerment activists of the current study did not use the Chinese term *suzhi*, nor did they, for the most part, use a term which might be considered its Tibetan equivalent (ཐུ་སྤྱོད་). Secondly, while there are many similarities between *suzhi* discourse and the discourse of the current study's women's empowerment activists, the activists do not hold to the priorities of the Chinese state nor are they focused on exactly the same social problems. Since *suzhi* discourse has been used as a tool to mask and promote unfair economic practices, as well as a tool to enhance citizens' acceptance of governmental policies they might otherwise resent (Jacka, 2009; Kipnis, 2007; Murphy, 2004), it should be noted that the current study's activists do not fall in line with *suzhi* discourse in these ways. Thus, rather than a wholesale appropriation of *suzhi* discourse, the women's activists have drawn on a Chinese discursive environment which emphasizes civilized, modern behavior as well as individual discipline (Jacka, 2009) to arrive at similar but not entirely identical conclusions.

Recent Chinese history has seen women's emancipation tied with both the modernity of the Chinese nation and its strength. During the late Qing dynasty, the Republican era, and the May Fourth movement, women's emancipation was deemed necessary to counteract the nation's weakness and to enhance the nation's ability to ward off colonizers and govern itself. Hershatter describes the turn of the twentieth century in China as "an atmosphere of national crisis" (2004, p. 1029). The activists of the current study express a sense of crisis for Tibetan society as well. Tibetan communities have found themselves in a rapidly modernizing world in which urbanization and Sinicization are ever-present realities. According to informants, these forces are threatening to cause the disappearance of Tibetan culture, to annihilate the basis for a distinct Tibetan identity altogether. Activists describe a social context in which Tibetans' awareness of traditional forms of knowledge is on a precipice, in danger of irreversible decline and in need of emergency protection measures.³ A prevalent feeling appears to be that social change is often indicative of Sinicization, rather than indicative of development in a Tibetan way and on Tibetan terms. In this context, activists appear to believe women must join men to become professionally successful, because this will help to strengthen Tibetan society as a whole, allowing Tibetans to compete in an increasingly marketized and Han-dominated world, and thereby have the power to survive as a distinct ethnic group which preserves Tibetan culture and identity.

In the context of crisis in which Republican-era reformers found themselves, women's education was promoted, because educated women were deemed to make good mothers, and good mothers were considered necessary for a strong nation (Hershatter, 2004). Similarly, in the context of crisis in which the Tibetan activists of the current study find themselves, women's education is advocated as a means of strengthening the nationality by creating mothers who are competent in instructing the next generation. Republican-era reformers also tended to subordinate feminist priorities to those of the nation at large (Hershatter, 2004), a pattern which is found among the current study's activists as well.

The discourse of the women's empowerment activists repeatedly revolve around deep contradictions, contradictions which are at times so glaring that they involve, for example, an activist defending the very forms of women's oppression which she is trying to change. Literature on discourses prevalent in recent Chinese history also reveal deep contradictions, such as Maoist state discourse asserting

³ The disappearance of the Tibetan language is a particular point of concern that is commonly voiced by many.

women are equally competent to men coupled with “the widely shared belief that women were suited for lighter and less-skilled tasks” (Hershatter, 2004, p. 1021; Leung, 2003) or the promotion of gender equality coupled with the confinement of women to positions of lesser power (Hershatter, 2004). Claiming equality when true equality is not exactly what is promoted is likewise a common pattern found within not only the accounts of the women’s empowerment activists but the accounts of many other interviewees of the current study as well.

However, the women’s activists reveal an additional type of contradiction, one that is not as readily found in state-driven Chinese discourse. This contradiction results from activists’ attempts to improve women’s status while at the same time attempting to preserve Tibetan culture, defend Tibetan culture against accusations of backwardness, and maintain Tibetan social unity and cohesiveness. The need to preserve Tibetan culture has been discussed above. Additionally, in a world in which state discourse portrays Han as more modern, progressive, and enlightened than the more backwards societies of ethnic minorities (Barabantseva, 2009; Yi, 2005), the activists appear acutely aware that acknowledgement of Tibetan women’s low status could lend credence to notions of Tibetans as backwards and uncivilized. As a result, they tend to deny, justify, or sidestep discussion of practices within Tibetan society that create gender inequality, apparently in an attempt to maintain a dignified face of Tibetan society to outsiders. Finally, the activists’ fear of social disharmony within Tibetan communities is another reason behind their opposition to claims that Tibetan cultural practices have caused gender inequality, as such claims could instigate conflict between women and men. At a time when Tibetan culture is felt to be in decline, Tibetan political protesters have emphasized that unity among Tibetans is vital. While the activists of the current study made no political statements whatsoever, their concerns appear to mirror those of protesters in this one regard, that is, in their concern with maintaining unity within Tibetan communities.

The following discussion is organized around the principal concerns of the women’s empowerment activists, as voiced in their accounts, namely (1) Tibetan cultural preservation or a return to traditional values, (2) community unity, and (3) advancement, particularly economic and educational advancement, of Tibetan society. We shall additionally look at the contradictory pressures faced by activists, leading to tensions and contradictions in their descriptions of Tibetan women’s status.

Methods

This paper is based on a 15-month period of fieldwork in one region of Amdo. The paper is drawn from research looking into domestic violence among Tibetan households in the study region, involving in-depth, unstructured interviews with 76 women and 24 men. Interviewees were purposively sampled for a range of age and education levels as well as both rural and urban-based residence. Not all interviewees were victims or perpetrators of domestic violence, but a significant minority of interviewees were. For ethical reasons, the research project did not focus on one particular village or township. Rather, various farming villages, nomadic settlements, and towns on the northeastern edge of the Tibetan plateau were visited.

None of the research interactions were conducted through a translator. All interviews were conducted directly in Tibetan, or in Chinese if the interviewee was more comfortable speaking Chinese. Interview recordings were also transcribed directly in their original language, so as to avoid the changes of meaning that come with translation into English.

While in-depth unstructured interviews with women and men were the core of this research, this research was additionally informed by many years of personal experience and interaction with the study region, as well as by participant observation of family life, conducted while staying with local families.

Please note that while the research giving rise to this paper is a research project focused on domestic violence, this paper is not in fact discussing the dynamics of family life or of domestic violence. Rather, while women and men were interviewed regarding their personal marital relationships and personal experience of domestic violence, an additional group of interviewees termed 'women's empowerment activists' were also interviewed. This group of interviewees have provided the data upon which the current paper is based. Women's empowerment activists are individuals who have engaged in activism to enhance gender equality or to improve women's opportunities and the prominence of women in Tibetan society.

The accounts of six women's empowerment activists are discussed within this paper. The women's empowerment activists are Tibetan women and men residing on the northeastern edge of the Tibetan plateau. They are individuals who have undertaken independent, private initiatives by which they have created spaces dedicated to women's writing and publishing, published articles on the topic of women's status, led seminars in which women university students were urged to become independent and self-reliant, given lectures on the importance of treating women well, or expanded ed-

educational opportunities for girls.⁴ In particular, this paper looks into the activists' views on Tibetan women's rights and status, in an attempt to understand why these individuals have worked to empower women, and why violence against women has not been part of the focus of their work.

For this paper, information from participant observation and informal conversations conducted during fieldwork is drawn upon for supplementary or background information, as is information from interviews with those individuals who are not women's empowerment activists.

Tibetan Cultural Preservation or a Return to Traditional Values

Activists felt that modern changes to Tibetan society have been accompanied by deeply troubling consequences. They therefore spoke of a general context in which Tibetan culture and identity are facing the prospect of disintegration. As described by one activist, "Tibetan people are deteriorating, and so is our nationality. Now everyone is thinking about how our culture is deteriorating. In general, culture is something to be developed, but now we don't even think about development. It is deteriorating" (male activist). As this activist further explained, "if people continue to deteriorate, our nationality will turn into a race only and everything else, our culture, will be common [i.e. shared or indistinct]" (male activist).⁵ As stated by another activist:

[Many people don't pay attention to traditional Tibetan forms of knowledge because] they don't know about traditional culture. And secondly they have studied the culture which opposes traditions...Many people say that you can't send kids to school because they come back home and don't like religion or their ethnic group

⁴ Please note that a total of 14 women's empowerment activists were interviewed for the current study, but only the accounts of 6 of these individuals were analyzed in depth for this paper. The conclusions of this paper, however, follow a number of similarities found in the accounts of most of the 14 women's activists.

⁵ Accounts of declining Tibetan traditions are common. According to one account, for example, an elderly traditional Tibetan medicine doctor was brought to tears by losses within the Tibetan medical tradition, whereby medical students in current times do not understand the basic values underpinning medical practice (conference entitled "The Transmission of Tibetan Medicine: Spiritual Growth, Questions of Method and Contemporary Practice," 2014). Other accounts, including those of one of the women's activists, refer to loss of language and traditional knowledge due to nomad resettlement policies.

or their traditional culture. But the students aren't to blame, because it's actually the parents' responsibility. If you send your kid to the monastery, he would turn into a religious person. If you send them to a place where they only study Tibetan knowledge, they will care about this. If you send him to a place where he will only learn Han Chinese culture, then if this culture does not become a part of his thinking, it means he didn't really study. If he comes home and says he is not interested in Tibetan traditions, it is a sign that he has studied [Han Chinese] culture. (male activist)

This negative impact of schooling was felt by this activist to accrue from both those schools which educate students primarily via lessons conducted in the Chinese language as well as from Tibetan-medium schools (male activist). External reports have also criticized education in China, including Tibetan-medium education, as giving Tibetan students "little insight into their own culture and history" (*State Department Report on Human Rights: 2013, 2014*). Likewise, one activist spoke about the younger generation's lack of awareness of Tibetan traditions, and of a decline in the morality of Tibetans' behavior. He is therefore intent on promoting a return to traditional Tibetan values.

Some of the activists in fact feared that further freedoms for women would lead women down the negative path men have already begun to travel in modern times. As modern life has caused men to drink more, gamble more, abandon their household responsibilities more, and engage more in extramarital affairs, the fear is that women will simply follow along this negative path if they are allowed more freedom and rights. Additionally, in the case of both women's activists and other interviewees, a fear that improvements in women's status might go too far or in some cases has already gone too far is apparent. This fear caused interviewees to voice worries that men may become subordinate to women, mothers-in-law may become subordinate to daughters-in-law, women may give up their family responsibilities once they become successful, women may begin believing they do not need to work hard, and women may begin to drink and gamble and fight. One informant noted a common fear is that rises in women's status will cause women to begin engaging in marital infidelity.⁶ Other possibilities, whereby the focus shifts from controlling women's freedom to a change in community norms or practices such that more pressure is placed upon men to act responsibly and respectfully, are not voiced by the activists.

⁶ Some of the interviewees indicated men are far more likely to engage in marital infidelity than women, and that men's infidelity is more acceptable than women's.

We can see in the above accounts that some of the activists hold to notions that women must sacrifice by working hard for their families and should not become 'too' dominant within the household. It is not surprising, then, that the activists believe the traditional roles of women and men should not see a radical shift or equalization, a belief that appears to be built upon an inherent fear that women's rights could cause women to take on the harmful behavioral traits of men, could upset the balance and structure of Tibetan families, and could cause an unwelcome decline in behaviors by which Tibetans remain distinctly identifiable as 'Tibetan.' One activist, for example, believes patrilocal marriage, the most normative type of marriage in the study region, is more desirable than matrilineal marriage because men should not be expected to adjust to a family other than their own, while such pressures on women are acceptable and proper. Activists also argued that women's modesty and respect for others, and their ritually-sanctioned humility vis-à-vis others, must always be maintained. Some of the activists therefore emphasized that no matter how highly positioned a woman becomes professionally, she must maintain a distinctly and identifiably Tibetan mode of behavior, particularly within the home. Thus, according to one activist, "Tibetan women have their own wonderful way of doing things, and this cannot be destroyed, like taking care of guests, being respectful to your husband and the elderly...Even if you are the chairman of the country, you still can't destroy this" (female activist). Another activist likewise stated that "even if you are the president of a country, women should not change the appearance and manner they have always had" (female activist).

Community Unity

The activists appear to feel a deep-seated anxiety that a feminist push for women's rights and vocal calls for a change in the treatment of women will cause cleavages and conflict, thereby causing detriment to the unity of Tibetan society. Activists' dislike of complaints around women's household labor burden likewise appears to come from a belief that such complaints will cause marital discord, thus undercutting the unity and harmony of families. As a result, the activists tended to voice a certain disregard for those who openly and vocally push for women's rights or an improvement to women's status. As one activist explained:

I like to do the work of my family and office myself, because if I do everything myself, I do not harm others a lot. I think no matter

what work you do, sincerity and good intentions are primary. Good intentions and demeanor are the key to the door of rights. There is no meaning in struggling for rights in a way such that women and men argue with jealousy towards each other. (female activist)

As stated by one activist:

When those women from my home area who have some learning argue for women's rights, they talk about how women from my area are not allowed to touch race horses and how they have to do the dishes...Riding horses is by nature men's role and women don't need to touch the horses...Doing the dishes is the work of women. Men also have their work, so it's right for women to do this work. If everyone undertakes their own responsibility, it's beneficial for the happiness of the family. Otherwise by arguing for rights you just cause conflict with your husband. (male activist)

The point is not to refrain from promoting an improvement in women's status altogether, but to promote women's rights in the correct way. The correct way, for the activists, involves maintaining social and family cohesion even whilst attempting to empower women. This maintenance of cohesion requires refraining from accusing men or pointing the finger at many specific social practices.

A number of self-immolators and political protesters in Tibetan areas have called for unity among Tibetans, or have stressed the importance of strengthening Tibetan culture and identity⁷. "Don't forget you are Tibetans," states a message left behind by one self-immolator⁸, implying in this case the self-immolator's belief that the current period is a critical juncture in Tibetan history in which the very identity of Tibetan people is in danger of disintegration. The women's activists' concerns around pre-empting any discourses that could lead to conflict in Tibetan society therefore echoes self-immolators' and protesters' concerns, and is likely derived from the notion that the strength and continued existence of Tibetan culture and identity requires unity.

⁷ Reference: "Hundreds of Tibetans Detained in Chamdo Over 'Unity' Campaign," 2014, *Labrang monk Jayang Jinpa reflects on his daring 2008 protest*, 2013, "Self-immolator leaves message of 'unity and solidarity' among Tibetans," 2012, "Tibetan Comedian Released from Jail in Poor Health," 2014.

⁸ Reference: "17-year-old self-immolator's last note calls for the Dalai Lama's return and Tibet's independence," 2012.

Economic and Educational Advancement of Tibetan Society

In their activities to empower women, the activists are primarily concerned with enhancing women's educational and professional attainment. Thus, the women's activists have focused their activities on projects in the sphere of women's education, women's health, writing and publishing opportunities for women, and improving women's confidence to strive towards educational and professional goals. On the one hand, activists indicated, intelligent and capable women make for intelligent and capable mothers who can raise their children to succeed. Additionally, women joining men in the sphere of professional achievement appears to be seen as a means for Tibetans to thrive, to not be left behind in an economically developing world.⁹

Thus, one activist made the point that women must begin achieving as much as men for the benefit of Tibetan society as a whole. She therefore stated the following:

Every couple is equal, both members of a couple have PhDs, both have knowledge, both are office workers, both are bosses, or both have the exact same status. If all families are like this then society gets better, and if society gets better so does the ethnic group. This level has not been reached yet. [We are] still far below [this]. (female activist)

This activist is saying it is no longer acceptable to allow only men to achieve in extra-domestic spheres while women do not achieve prominent positions and visible success. Rather, both men and women need to achieve equally so that Tibetan society as a whole can advance.

According to another women's activist:

To improve the capability of people, the capability of women first needs to improve...For [economically] developed places, from the time a woman is pregnant, [people from those places] have a lot of methods and knowledge regarding instructing children...The person who stays with children is the mother, and so mothers are key. Mothers' behavior, manner of speaking, and lifestyle influence their children...As the child is growing up, until he/she starts going to school, the most important person is the mother. (male activist)

⁹ One activist, however, focused on the importance of better religious education for nuns.

Here, women's role as mothers is a crucial site upon which to advance the entire community, not only because mothers' instruction fosters the next generation, but also because 'economically developed' communities are particularly knowledgeable about how to train children well. An inherent sense of competition, and the felt need for Tibetans to keep up in a world in which other communities are more advanced, is therefore implied.

Since modernization is the primary aim, activists have attempted to improve women's belief in their own capacities, particularly in the realm of modern economic and professional success. Activists therefore place a lot of emphasis on enhancing women's self-confidence to strive professionally and academically. For some of the activists, this means working to provide women with spaces separate from men in which they can practice or improve their academic skills or skills in writing and expression.¹⁰ As stated by a Tibetan woman who was not interviewed for the current study but who produced a video promoting Tibetan women's rights, "[Women] are always lowering themselves, saying 'I can't do anything because I'm a woman.' We need to say 'I can,' and then we can help our people" ("Radio Interview with T. Drolma," 2010). One women's activist described her advice to female university students that it is important "to take initiative..., [to] study hard, and [to] reject the idea that...one should always depend on a husband or that men should support women." This activist went on to state that "women should have their own ability and competence. And on top of being a great woman, if you have compassion, then you can be of benefit to society, your ethnic group, and to human beings" (female activist). Women's confidence, independence, and achievement is therefore promoted, with concerns for the strength or benefit of Tibetan society at large never far from activists' minds.

When activists present examples of successful women, as a means of enhancing Tibetan women's self-confidence, they focus primarily on modern forms of success. Thus, a women's activist who conducts educational training programs for Tibetan girls stated the following:

¹⁰ One activist, for example, stated that women need their own space to write in order for women to get the chance to catch up to men in skill and to think that they are capable of publishing. Another activist conducts educational training programs for girls, which he conducts separately from his educational training programs for boys. He explained the reasons behind his actions as follows: "By specifically separating women,...it makes you think that girls could rival the boys in singing or leading or any way that your potential is revealed. The girls can speak courageously. They are even better than [other girls] in playing ball games. Everyone's the same and equal because boys aren't there to keep the girls down."

I brought a Tibetan at Harvard to my [area to talk to the female students attending my training program]..., and I told the students to work hard, that this woman is a Tibetan and she came from the most famous school in the world, that she is the same as my students...Then I brought the head of Motorola in Asia, and I introduced this woman to my students and told them she was the head of one of the famous companies of Asia, that even though she is a woman she has this much capability, that the only reason other women are not like her is because of a lack of opportunities and lack of study...I also invited the head of education in the American embassy, a woman with a PhD...to my [area] and told my students...she is a leader in the embassy. Nobody can go to America to study without [her] permission. When schools cooperate with each other, they have to go through her office. [She] has all that power. [I told the students] the only difference [between people like her and my students] is whether or not they study, whether or not they get opportunities, and whether or not they work hard. I told them there is no reason for them to think that they are just women, Tibetans, or nomads. (male activist)

Similarly, the above-mentioned woman who produced a video promoting Tibetan women's rights stated the following in her video: "I'd like to say that like foreign women who can even be leaders of their nations, who are independent and educated – I hope we could be like that...Our hope is all Tibetan female students will aspire to these things" (Drolma, 2010).

Given the many examples of strong Tibetan women that exist within Tibetan history, it is surprising that the activists prefer to look largely to the example of Han and Western women as proof that women can be as capable of success as men. While the activists are clearly intent on improving the self-confidence of Tibetan women, it is surprising they do not additionally choose to emphasize the great achievements of women in Tibetan history. Instead, rather than the historical achievements of Tibetan women religious masters (Allione, 2000; Diemberger, 2007), female historical figures who displayed strength in adverse family circumstances (ལྷཱེ་བཟ་རྒྱ། [GyayeTrabo], n.d.), or Tibetan women who have been involved in politics within the royal court (Diemberger, 2011), it seems the activists need successes more associated with modern educational and professional achievement to use as examples. In an article published by one of the women's activists, for example, the author emphasizes the publishing, academic, and non-profit public health activities that women have

been undertaking in recent years as evidence for her argument that women have the capacity to succeed.¹¹

The activists' drive to economically and professionally modernize Tibetan society is not necessarily in contradiction to their concern for cultural preservation, as the two may be seen as mutually reinforcing goals rather than disparate aims. If Tibetans as a group are strong, they not only maintain a dignified face to the outside world, as a group they also gain the skills to compete economically with other ethnic groups and therefore gain the necessary strength to survive in a world in which Tibetans as a community are in danger of being consumed and subsumed by both decadent urban values and Sini-zing forces. As described above, activists spoke of the loss of Tibetan culture and decline in morality of Tibetans brought with urbanization and economic development. In this context, what we see here is a drive to modernize or change only as much as necessary to gain the strength to withstand forces that could bring about the decline of Tibet. According to the activists, therefore, women should succeed educationally and professionally, and become intelligent and competent, while at the same time holding to Buddhist values and maintaining their traditional role within the household.

Blaming Women for Their Own Low Status

Activists voiced the argument that women need not struggle for rights by arguing or debating about this topic. Rather, they argued, women should simply diligently study and work, becoming successful in extra-domestic spheres, and this will automatically bring status and esteem to individual women who deserve it. The implication, then, is that women are not to attain status by calling for men's behavior to change, or by calling for norms and patterns of household or social power relations to shift. Rather, despite their heavy workload, despite socialization teaching women they will be incompetent from a young age, and despite active disparagement of women's voices and women who express strong opinions¹², the activists still indicate that any problems of women's low status are the individual problems of women themselves. This argument is in part a means by which to sidestep a focus on issues that could instigate community divisions, a concern of the activists that was described above. This

¹¹ This Tibetan language article is not cited here for the purpose of maintaining the anonymity of the interviewee.

¹² The gender-unequal social phenomena listed in this sentence were phenomena described by the women's activists as well as by other interviewees. The activists, however, refrained from labelling these phenomena with the term 'inequality.'

argument also serves the purpose of focusing on only those limited aspects of women's empowerment which the activists wish to focus on, so that Tibetan traditions can be maintained while the ethnic group is simultaneously strengthened. Finally, this argument is in part the result of beliefs held by the activists that are in some ways deeply conventional and therefore uninterested in altering attitudes towards women in society.

While activists referred to women's heavy burden of household labor as problematic, the significant amount of labor which women undertake for their households was not in itself deemed sufficient to entitle women to equal attention and respect as men, or equal say in household decision-making. Rather, the activists argued that women should display exceptional capacities in order to be worthy of treatment equal to that which men receive. As described by one activist:

You have to admit it when you are not competent. If you are competent, you automatically get respect. If you can do all the work and get all the money for the family, then the whole family will respect you and listen to you...For example, if you are a woman without achievement in your work, who doesn't know how to manage the family, who doesn't know how to cook well, then these women are just saying empty words if they say they need rights. Those women do not have much right to talk about rights...Women should elevate their own capacity and foster self-respect...If you can develop your own ability in study, work, family, and connections, the members of society will believe in gender equality...When this level has been reached, there won't be much necessity to struggle for rights. (female activist)

As this activist further explained, "if you have capability, needless to say you will get respect from your family, and at the same time you will get rights and equality. For example, everyone will look upon an athlete who is impressive at running and jumping...as an example to follow" (female activist). Several other activists of the current study likewise voiced the notion that rights or status is not something that can be given to women by others. Rather, they argued, women should simply work hard and become successful if they want more rights.

This argument, like *suzhi* discourse, individualizes the problem of low status to individuals' own capacities. In so doing, the activists pre-empt the potentially painful realization that broader, deep-seated problems within Tibetan society, extending to the attitudes of all community members, can harm women. The picture we are left with is one in which men automatically deserve decision-making

power¹³ and attention within the household, while women must prove exceptional capabilities beyond the heavy burden of labor they are already undertaking in order to prove they are worthy of an improvement in the respect and attention they are given by family members.

The activists appear to have come to this conclusion in part because so many more educational and professional opportunities are extended to women currently than was the case in the recent past. As stated by one women's activist, for example, "now women are sent to school as often as men, so women should grasp this opportunity and not allow it to get lost...If you don't make use of this opportunity, then you are to blame" (female activist).

Other victim-blaming attitudes of the activists likewise follow those aspects of *suzhi* discourse that tie poor treatment or low status to individuals' own inferior characters. One activist, for example, stated, "Since women are meek, they suffer a loss when they are given away in [patrilocal] marriage. People think...even if men [marry matrilocally], they are courageous and so do not suffer a loss" (male activist). According to this activist, then, women's poor treatment in patrilocal marriage is a result of their own inferior character traits. Men, according to this activist, are treated better in matrilocal marriage because of their inherently superior characters. In another example, some activists justified men's higher status as being the natural product of men's physical or mental superiority to women.

Defending Tibetan Culture and Avoiding the Label of Gender Inequality

Activists appeared acutely aware of the possibility that, if Tibetan women were labelled as suffering from low status, Tibetan society could be labelled backward and inferior to other ethnic groups. Many activists therefore denied that gender inequality is a major problem within Tibetan society. The activists stressed that women's heavy work burden or parents' tendency to send only sons to school are not mean-spirited activities undertaken in the spirit of deliberate cruelty to girls and women, but are instead the unintended products of historical circumstance. Practices in Tibetan society deemed better for women than the practices of Han or other ethnic groups were also emphasized, as was the variability of practices within families

¹³ The prototypical scenario in the study region, as described by both activists and other interviewees, is that men hold primary decision-making power within families.

and communities, a variability which activists argued leaves some or many Tibetan women treated well. While it is important to note that Tibetan women's treatment or standing is better in some ways than that experienced by women of other ethnic groups, activists stressed this point because it is a way to sidestep the very real problems that the activists themselves described, so as to maintain a dignified face of Tibetan society to outsiders. Thus, despite at times providing eloquent descriptions of patterns of gender-based oppression, the women's activists wanted to convey that Tibetan society is no worse than any other, and that any problematic phenomena that do exist within Tibetan society do not constitute major problems. Despite describing problematic phenomena, then, the activists were determined not to label those phenomena with the stigmatizing term 'inequality.'

Moreover, activists' descriptions of condescending or restrictive treatment of women were not followed by the indignance and opposition to these phenomena which one might typically expect from feminist discourse. For example, in his description of nuns' far fewer opportunities for religious education than the opportunities which monks receive, one activist said, "We Tibetans say people have suffered a loss, but we don't say people don't have rights" (male activist). This activist is therefore pointedly refusing to tie the situation of nuns' lack of opportunities to an indignant, critical, or vociferous call for women's rights. Even when acknowledging unfair practices or outcomes for women, he chooses to use phrases such as 'suffering a loss' so as to avoid tying the phenomenon in question to the stigmatizing terms 'lack of rights' or 'gender inequality.'

Activists also stressed that Tibetans' treatment of women does not come from a place of deliberate cruelty. For example, one women's empowerment activist stated the following:

Nowadays no group in the world spends more time working than Tibetan women...

Q: ...Is women's larger work burden a sign of gender inequality?

A: No. Each nationality is different and has its own way of doing things. So it's not that women had to do most of the work because women were [deemed to be] bad. It was because traditionally food preparation was women's work and heavy labor was men's work...When it came to difficult things like hunting animals, men had to go...This was the way of life of our ethnic group. Also, for example, in the past...you had to fight wars, and it was men who fought wars...Though [women's] work was not hard, it is work you do constantly without much time off...Some people say husbands sit around, eat food, and then go out, but this is totally untrue. It's not that husbands are sitting around to deliberately make all women work. This is an opinion that is only looking at the issue from

one angle. This is not a disparagement of women, but is rather the way of life of our ethnic group. (male activist)¹⁴

This activist is emphasizing that women's heavy burden of labor is a product of historical circumstance, and therefore not deliberately designed to discriminate against women, and that individual Tibetans are also not actively or consciously attempting to disparage women but rather following the traditional ways handed to them by previous generations. This activist's point, therefore, is to stress that Tibetan society and people are not terrible, and in so doing he feels the need to not only refrain from vocal criticism of women's heavy burden of labor, but to counteract and deny such criticisms from others as well.

In another defense of Tibetan culture, one women's empowerment activist stated the following:

Men are sent to school more often than women. This is not because parents are differentiating between men and women. In my village, there probably isn't anyone who commands a girl not to go to school. But in the past, Tibetan livelihood was based on the natural world, and...there wasn't a lot of industry or farming. Since men were better at struggling with nature, like taming wild animals and hunting, the impression that even if you send girls to school they won't be able to do anything has seeped into the character of all Tibetans. So a lot of women weren't sent to school. (female activist)

This is a rather convoluted argument which, by claiming parents did not 'command' women *not* to go to school, attempts to obfuscate the obvious fact that it is parents who decide whether or not to send their daughters to school, and to only send boys to school is an example of unequal treatment. However, this activist's point is that inequality is not the result of a deliberately mean-spirited attempt to be cruel to women and girls. Rather, it is a less conscious product of history and tradition. By emphasizing this point, she is attempting to defend the nature of Tibetans as a people.

Other activists also spoke in direct contradiction to themselves, often in convoluted ways. One activist, for example, made the following statement:

¹⁴ In his defense of women's lack of educational opportunities, this activist further stated that "if you forcibly go and look for reasons and say this [lack of opportunities] is a sign that women are scorned, there might be things to say on that front, but...it's not that women have been deliberately denigrated. It's because traditions formed that way" (male activist).

In religion, it is said that women's bodies are dirty and men's bodies are cleaner. Although at the beginning that was said to a particular person or group, I think that actually it is absolutely not the view [in religion] that women's and men's bodies have a difference in cleanliness. (male activist)

This is a curious statement, in which an assertion is directly followed by a negation of the first assertion. In this case, the activist appears to be attempting to obscure the existence of inegalitarian portrayals of women so as to defend Tibetan culture. Similarly, one women's activist said patrilocal marriage is not difficult for women because women no longer have much work to do. At another point, she said she feels sorry for rural women because they must work so hard. In this case, it appears the activist was attempting to hide her awareness of the harms caused by women's heavy burden of labor, because her aim is to sidestep and obscure the existence of this social problem.

The contradictions found within activists' accounts tend to rest on the dual but sometimes contradictory goals of women's advancement on the one hand and Tibetans' unity and cultural preservation on the other. That is, activists face the sometimes competing pressures of, on the one hand, their work to ameliorate the effects of socialization which hampers women's achievement and confidence while, on the other hand, needing to refrain from openly opposing unfair social pressures on women so as to defend Tibetan culture and maintain social cohesion (see figure below).¹⁵

¹⁵ As the above-mentioned woman who has produced and distributed a video on Tibetan women's rights states, "I am only claiming rights for Tibetan women but not demanding destruction of Tibetan tradition" (Drolma, 2010). Her statement reveals the tensions and opposing forces and priorities which Tibetan women's empowerment activists must contend with.

Similarly, while this activist argued that rights derive from women's own competence and hard work, and therefore that rights cannot be given to women, she also listed the practice of polyandrous marriage, occurring in some Tibetan areas, as a positive aspect of Tibetan culture because the women in these families are 'given' rights. "So for these people there is no reason to talk about freedom and rights. Their families give it to them and they're happy," she said (female activist). Yet this activist also argued that rights are not something which can be 'given' to women at all. Thus, this statement is in direct contradiction to her earlier argument. Despite the contradiction, however, both arguments are in line with activists' goals. The first point, that women must become successful because rights cannot be given to women, argues for women's rights in a way that focuses on women's individual achievement, therefore refraining from instigating women's conflict with men or threatening men's position in society. The second point, that some Tibetan women are given all the rights they might need or want, is attempting to emphasize that Tibetan society has no problem of gender inequality, and is therefore a statement counteracting stigma for Tibetan society.

A Representative Example

Let us look in some detail at one portion of an activist's account, as this account can be taken as a representative example displaying the various concerns of the women's empowerment activists. This activist spoke about King Songtsen Gampo, a revered figure in ancient Tibetan history. It is well-known that King Songtsen Gampo established a rule that women should not be listened to. The activist defended this ruling by arguing that, in ancient times, Tibetan women did not travel, stayed at home, and "had absolutely no opportunity to study or go outside [their home areas]" (female activist). As a result, she argued, women's lack of experience and travel made them short-sighted. Therefore, according to this activist, not listening to women was appropriate in ancient times, and is even sometimes appropriate today. This activist further argued that women's biology causes their mental inferiority to men, and that women prefer to be dependent on husbands because "Tibetan women have lazy thinking." Women's inferior mental capacities and women's inferior opinions are, according to this activist, a result of women's biology as well as of historical patterns by which Tibetan women relied on men to earn money. The conclusion of this activist's arguments is that women should stop 'having lazy thinking' and instead grasp the opportunities for study and professional work which they have re-

cently been given; women should therefore study hard and work hard to earn money on their own.

Thus, while this activist aims to enhance women's independence and success, she also clearly believes women to be innately inferior to men. In addition, it may be important to note that this activist's arguments are factually inaccurate. Firstly, women work incredibly hard for their households. The material welfare and prosperity of a household is largely dependent on women's work. Thus butter and cheese made by women is sold for money, women are often at least partially involved in the care of livestock, a primary source of wealth for Tibetan nomads, while in some farming areas women are considered to be better at digging for the lucrative medicinal plant known as 'caterpillar fungus,' and are therefore the individuals doing the hard labor of collecting the fungus. One might easily describe this as a situation in which household prosperity depends on women, and household men in fact depend on women. Moreover, while some of the above-mentioned activities, such as digging for caterpillar fungus, have grown increasingly common and lucrative in current times, interviewees consistently stated that certain activities, such as making butter and cheese, or weeding farming fields, have always been undertaken by women. Thus, it is rather inaccurate to claim women's material prosperity has been entirely dependent on men within Tibetan history. While men are primarily responsible for travelling to towns and cities so as to sell household products for cash, women have been significantly involved in producing those products in the first place.

Furthermore, this activist's argument that historically Tibetan women had no opportunities to study or travel appears patently false, as she herself reveals at other points in her interview. Thus, she mentioned that, in ancient times, the daughters and wives of kings and famous people had the opportunity to study. Other examples within Tibetan history of women's travel, study, involvement in politics, or even engaging in warfare are easily found. Examples of renowned female religious practitioners and teachers are many, such as A-yu Khandro, Machig Lapdron, Yeshe Tsogyal, and Nangsa Obum, some of whom studied with religious masters and also travelled widely (Allione, 2000; Diemberger, 2007; Kemmerer, 2011; Schneider, 2010). Although we must point out that many of these historical figures faced many barriers at the hands of parents, husbands, and elders who tried to restrict their freedom to undertake a religious life (Allione, 2000; Diemberger, 2007), to claim that women never had the opportunity to study or travel, and thereby learned to be lazy, intellectually weak, and dependent, is not borne out by the evidence. Moreover, women historical figures, including those alive

in the 1950s and 60s, have been involved in political intrigue and even battle, proving themselves astute and conniving in these activities, though they were not always celebrated for their feats (Diemberger, 2011; Karmay, 1998; Schneider, 2010; Van Schaik, 2011; ལྷོ་ལྷོ་[GyayeTrabo], n.d.). Thus, a dependent and inferior mentality has by no means been universal among Tibetan women.

We might consider the above examples to be exceptional cases of unusual or unusually positioned women. However, even in the case of more ordinary women, the above-mentioned activist's argument does not seem to hold. For example, an 84-year-old interviewee of the current study spoke about independently undertaking a long and dangerous journey of pilgrimage to Lhasa when she was 20 years old, joining a group of other pilgrims for the journey and begging for food or working for rich families along the way to earn her subsistence. This interviewee said many young women travelled the way she did at the time. Moreover, the fact that the study region has a long history of banditry, tribal rivalry, and shifting political alliances (Costello, 2008; Jabb, 2009; Nietupski, 2011; Pirie, 2007, 2012), as well as poor roads and means of transport in the recent past, suggests that young men were likely to have been away from home for extended periods of time for warfare or trade. Women, then, would have potentially been left to care for all household matters with relative independence at these times. At least around the year 1958, as older interviewees and informants revealed, in some villages only women and children were left behind after men were killed and imprisoned in the fighting of the time. This would also suggest that women undertook a lot of independent responsibility for their families' livelihoods at this time.

The reasons contradictions and inaccurate assessments exist in the above-mentioned activist's account are twofold. One, King Songtsen Gampo is a highly revered figure within Tibetan history and the interviewee likely feels it unthinkable to criticize him, as to do so would be to go against an honored and revered symbol of Tibetan civilization. Thus, she must find an argument to defend the king's rule prohibiting listening to women. Such a defense is in fact a defense of Tibetan culture and civilization. Therefore she must claim the rule is neither unfair nor unjust even though it is clearly inegalitarian. Secondly, this interviewee's adherence to beliefs that women are mentally and emotionally inferior to men is strong and therefore colors her assessment of Tibetan society and history. Such beliefs can easily reinforce the tendency, found among the other activists as well, to individualize the problem of women's low status such that a lack of rights is deemed to result from the faults of individual women rather than from larger societal structures. This activist's views, then,

are representative of the main themes emerging from the group of women's empowerment activists, in that she does not adhere to a strong feminist ethic, believes opportunities and esteem for women are a product of modern times and modern forces, blames women for their own disempowerment, is intent on defending Tibetan tradition and culture, but is also intent on promoting the value that women grasp educational and professional opportunities and become successful in these spheres.

Conclusion

While the women's activists draw on a Chinese discursive environment to understand and respond to the problems they apprehend within Tibetan society, their objectives are not entirely unique. As described by Dawa Lokyitsang, for example, Tibetans' advocacy for women's empowerment in exile in India has until recently been characterized by a focus upon access to educational opportunities and development of skills while largely ignoring issues such as violence against women (2014). Moreover, the ideas espoused by the activists bear similarities to global discourses (often termed 'neoliberal') which frame individual economic success as contingent on the development of professional skills and flexible responses to shifting economic environments. These discourses can have the effect of masking the disadvantages of broader structural factors such as race and class, as well as the vulnerabilities brought about by a fluid and changing economic landscape (Freeman, 2007; Roberts & Mahtani, 2010).

Along the same lines, the women's empowerment activists of the current study mask the existence of broader social patterns of gender-based oppression by contending that women's status is a product of individuals' capabilities alone. They describe a social environment in which gender-based oppression is alive and well, but do not express indignance towards this context. In response to my questions, the activists described and explained problems of gender inequality inherent in social norms and practices. Yet they were not particularly concerned with dismissive or belittling treatment of women. This is not surprising, since the activists' primary aim is *not* improving the treatment of women, but rather strengthening the Tibetan nationality. For the activists, this strengthening is to be achieved by enhancing the prominence and professional success of women, while at the same time refraining from actions that may cause conflict with men, disrupt community unity, change women's household roles, or threaten men's position in society. Rather than criticize a social envi-

ronment that serves to dampen women's confidence, therefore, the activists prefer to refrain from criticizing society at large, while at the same time instructing women and girls to believe in themselves more. They therefore are active in attempts to improve the prominence, educational opportunities, and self-confidence of Tibetan women and girls, but do not support open complaint or vocal calls for change.

The late Qing and early Republican-era reformers described above were operating during a time of national crisis. The overwhelming issues at hand, for the reformers, were pressures which had "helped weaken China and expose it to the danger of enslavement by global colonizing forces" (Hershatter, 2004, p. 1029). Similarly, the women's empowerment activists of the current study express a sense of crisis in which Tibetans, as an identifiable and distinct ethnic group claiming a living culture, living traditions, and a proud history, face the danger of obliteration. Therefore, like the Chinese reformers of an earlier era, they subordinate feminist priorities in order to emphasize the task of strengthening the nationality. In the process, they draw upon state discourses of individual discipline, modernity, and civilization to argue for a conception of women's rights that individualizes women's low status, framing it as a reflection of individual women's own capacities. For the activists, the paramount objective is strengthening the nationality, rendering their conception of women's rights both limited in scope and victim-blaming in thrust.

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Shifting Memories and Changing Allegiances: Tracing the Descendants of the Tibetan Minister mGar through Chinese Funerary Inscriptions*

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Introduction

The mGar was probably the most influential clan in the history of the Tibetan Empire (7th-9th centuries CE). Despite the fact that its origins have not been clearly confirmed, the rise and decline of this clan have been relatively well established by Tibetan and Western historiography; what has not been deeply investigated is its legacy. Many works have been dedicated to the most celebrated minister in the whole of Tibetan history, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung (?-667), in particular to his career at the Tibetan court and his exploits as ambassador in the Chinese capital during the reign of Tang Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626-649). Among these studies, those of Hugh Richardson (1998) and Thomas Kerihuel (2011) are the most complete: the former is an introduction to the mGar clan according to Tibetan and Chinese sources, while the latter is a complete investigation on the clan and its evolution through the 7th century, according to ancient and classical Tibetan sources. Concerning the descendants

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of the mGar, researchers have mainly concentrated their studies on the claims by the royal family of Sde dge to be the offspring of the minister mGar; van der Kuijp (1988), for example, examined this issue in detail. What remains obscure is the destiny of the mGar clan members who escaped to the Chinese court in 699. What happened to the descendants of the most influential Tibetan minister mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung? It could be assumed that this branch of the clan disappeared from history. This article provides some insights into the further history of this branch of the clan; with the help of Chinese documents, and especially funerary inscriptions of some members of the mGar clan who went to Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-705) to seek shelter, it details the clans' history in China. These kinds of documents, recently reevaluated by Sinologists, are of inestimable value in understanding what happened to the later generations of mGar in China because they provide useful information on their activities during the Tang dynasty, right up to the second half of the 9th century. In particular, these epigraphic documents tell us that the mGar descendants continued to play an important role in Chinese history: they contracted marriages with members of the Chinese aristocracy and obtained posts as well as official titles from rulers. This preliminary prosopographic study not only shows how this family continued to play an important role during this period but also constitutes a further example of how foreigners were integrated into the Chinese military and political system during the Tang dynasty.

mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung and his Family in the 7th Century

The origins of the mGar clan are difficult to establish.¹ In the Dunhuang documents, the first mention of their name is in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, in the section "Royal Genealogy", Pelliot Tibétain (here after PT) 1286. This document includes a catalogue of principalities in which a mGar is mentioned as minister (*blon po*), along with a person named mNyan, of dGug gri'i Zing po rje, in Ngas po.² Addi-

¹ On the significance of this family name and its variants see Stein 1963: 330-333 and Richardson 1998: 121-122. On the history of the clan mGar, his origins and evolution in Tibet, see also the PhD dissertation in Tibetan of Zhaxi Dangzhi 2005.

² Cf. PT 1286, l. 11 *yul ngas po 'i khra sum na / rje dgug gr'i'i zing po rje / blon po mgar dang mnyan gnyis*. "In Khra sum, in the land of Ngas po, the lord [is] dGug gri 'i Zing po rje and the ministers [are] mGar and mNyan the two [of them]." All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. Transliterations of the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts are taken from the internet database of the Old Tibetan Documents Online (OTDO), available at www.otdo.aa-ken.jp and from the original Dunhuang documents.

tional mentions of the mGar name can be found in other early passages of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* beginning with the reign of Srong brtsan sGam po (c. 617-649) and his minister, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung.³

mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung's date and place of birth are not mentioned in the Old Tibetan documents.⁴ What we do know is that he and his family probably came from Central Tibet, most probably from Ngas po where PT 1286 mentions a member of the mGar clan as minister. According to later accounts (written and oral) the mGar may have come from the area corresponding to the modern 'Phan po region, which roughly corresponds to the northern bank of the gTsang po River in Central Tibet.⁵ The first reference to mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung is found in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*; in this text, after having denounced a *coup d'état* plot by Khyung po sPung sad Zu tse, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung was appointed chief minister by Srong brtsan sGam po. In accordance with this promotion, his name is also given in the lines 95-96 of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* in the list of the chief ministers of the Empire, after Khyung po sPung sad Zu tse.⁶ From this point onwards, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung seems to have played a major role at the Tibetan court; in particular, he was dispatched to Chang'an 長安 in order to bring the Princess of Wencheng 文成公主 to Tibet.⁷ According to the Tibetan sources and later studies, including Kerihuel's work, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung would have been appointed chief minister only around 644, meaning that he was not yet a minister when the Tibetan emperor sent him to the Chinese

³ For more information on the succession of the family lineage up to the time of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, see Kerihuel 2011: 106-107.

⁴ Richardson states that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung was probably born around the end of the 6th century. Cf. Richardson 1998: 117.

⁵ Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 112. Guntram Hazod elaborated a series of detailed maps of ancient principalities of the central Tibetan region during the Empire. Cf. Dotson 2009: 170-174.

⁶ The facts related to the betrayal of Khyung po sPung sad Zu tse are described by Bacot, Thomas and Toussaint 1949, pp. 143-149 which is the translation of PT 1287, ll. 299-327.

⁷ In Chinese sources his name is Lu Dongzan 祿東贊. He is not mentioned in the previous deputations to the Chinese court but he was charged of bringing a bride from Chang'an to Tibet. Cf. CFYG: 11325. In another passage, the CFYG states that the Chinese emperor offered mGar one of the granddaughters of the Princess of Langya 瑯邪公主 as a wife but that mGar declined this proposition. The Chinese sources are not clear if the Chinese emperor accepted the refusal of the Tibetan minister or not. Cf. CFYG: 11153. Sam van Schaik affirms that mGar came back to Tibet with two women, one wife for Srong brtsan sGam po and one for himself, cf. van Schaik 2011: 9; however, the author does not mention any sources for this assertion. For more information on the journey back to Tibet of minister mGar and the Princess of Wencheng as well as the legends arising from this episode, see Warner 2011.

court.⁸ Nevertheless, it was only after the death of Srong brtsan sGam po, in 649, that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung assumed a truly powerful role. The Chinese sources confirm that when they say: "[...] Nongzan [Srong brtsan sGam po]'s son died at a very young age and his grandson took the throne, officially adopting the title of *zanpu* (*btsan po*). Since he was very young, the kingdom's affairs were delegated to his minister Lu Dongzan. [...]"⁹ mGar Stong rtsan Yul zung's regency is also described in PT 1288, the *Old Tibetan Annals*, which as Kerihuel has pointed out, states that in 653/654 mGar led the hunt (he did it again in 656/657); in 654/655 he was in charge of the separation between *rgod* and *g.yung*;¹⁰ the next year, 655/656, he compiled a code of law. Both the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the Chinese sources also confirm that between 659 and 666 mGar journeyed to the 'A zha territory,¹¹ and that in 662/663, he travelled to Zhang zhung to "perform the administration".¹²

According to the *Old Tibetan Annals*, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung died in 667/668, in Ris pu.¹³ These events were not, however, the end of the mGar family; his descendants went on to play a fundamental role in the Empire's administrative and military affairs for years to come.

The descendants of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung

The Old Tibetan sources, in particular the *Old Tibetan Annals* and the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, describe various descendants of the mGar clan. It seems that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung had several children, but the texts do not give a precise list of their names. The texts do mention two people that are most likely to be the sons of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung: mGar bTsan snya lDom bu and mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod.¹⁴

⁸ Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 108, n. 13.

⁹ Cf. CFYG: 11190.

¹⁰ For more information about the separation of civilians and soldiers, see Uray 1971.

¹¹ Kerihuel 2011: 107 and CFYG: 11531.

¹² PT 1288, ll. 41-42. Translated by Dotson 2009: 87.

¹³ PT 1288, l. 48. Guntram Hazod localizes this toponym in the Upper dBu ru, in the North from Lhasa. Cf. Hazod's map in Dotson 2009: 222. Some local stories in Dulan 都蘭 area say that *blon po* mGar died in Qinghai while he was in the 'A zha lands and that he would be the occupant of the big tumulus called M1 in Reshui 熱水 funerary site.

¹⁴ Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 108. We should also add mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab who, according to the *Old Tibetan Annals*, committed fratricide. See the list of the mGar clan members at page 161 and the family tree in this article.

The members of the mGar clan that are listed in different passages in the *Old Tibetan Annals* as performing major duties at court and being employed as military chiefs are:¹⁵

- In 673/674 mGar bTsan snya lDom bu became a minister after a political struggle. The *Old Tibetan Chronicle* confirms this promotion.¹⁶ In the same year he convened the council. In 675/676 he took care of Zhang zhung's administration. The following year he led an army in Western Turkestan and between 680 and 685, having become chief minister, he convened the council every year in a different place. He eventually died in 685/686, probably a victim of his own brother mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab.
- mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab convened the council in 681/682 and killed his own brother in 685/686.¹⁷
- mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton acted as the governor of Khotan until 695, when he was judged disloyal, and after a trial in the same year, executed.
- mGar sTag gu Ri zung was a minister and convened a council in 687/688. He apparently held his position until 694, when he was captured by the Sog dag and lost Khotan.
- mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong was in charge of levying taxes in 690/691.
- mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod was in charge of the council in 673/674, along with mGar bTsan snya lDom bu. He is not mentioned again until 680, when he again convened the council, twice. He was appointed *blon chen* in 685/686 after his brother mGar bTsan snya lDom bu; in the same year he convened the council. Between 687 and 689 he was in Western Turkestan for a military campaign. He was in the 'A zha lands in 689 and again in 693/694; in 695 he was in the Tsong ka area.¹⁸

mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod was by far the most famous son of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung. He is also remembered, in the Chinese

¹⁵ Those persons seem to be of the same generation, so they could all be brothers or cousins.

¹⁶ PT 1287, ll. 102-107. Translated by Dotson 2013: 273.

¹⁷ On the question of the fratricide, cf. Dotson 2009: 95. The *Old Tibetan Annals* l. 29 states also that mGar Mang zham sTag tsab convened a council. We do not have any other information about this person and we can therefore assume that his name is a misspelling/miswriting of mGar Mang nyen sTag tsab.

¹⁸ All the events concerning these people are included in the *Old Tibetan Annals* ll. 4-75. They are translated and commented on by Dotson 2009: 90-100.

sources, along with his brothers where they are described as being particularly gifted in administrative and military affairs.¹⁹

According to the Tibetan sources, during the whole second part of the 7th century, the mGar clan continued to occupy the most important political, military and administrative positions at court. They eventually left the scene in 698/699 when, as attested by the *Old Tibetan Annals*, the *btsan po* decided to put an end to their hegemony. Their problems started in 695 when mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton was executed and, according to Kerihuel, the issues between the mGar and the royal Tibetan power worsened during the negotiations with the Chinese over the control of the Four Garrisons on the Silk Road, the 'A zha lands and the whole Kokonor area. These negotiations also included a request for a matrimonial alliance with the Chinese court, and they failed; this fiasco put mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod in a difficult position.²⁰ The *Old Tibetan Annals*, line 78, describes what happened the mGar: "That winter the punishment descended on the mGar. [...] Thus one year" (*de'i dgun mgar la bkyon phab ste [...] [*lo] chig*). These events are explained in more detail in the *JTS*: the text reports how, in 699, the Tibetan emperor, taking advantage of the fact that Qinling 欽陵 (the Chinese name of mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod) was not in Central Tibet, invited the whole clan for a hunt and put them all to death, killing more than 2000 people. He then sent an envoy in order to summon Qinling, Zanpo 贊婆 and other members of the family, but they did not reply. In the ensuing battle, during which the loyalist forces were led by the Tibetan ruler, Qinling and many other killed themselves, while Zanpo, along with Mangbuzhi 莽布支 and others, fled to China.²¹

Khri 'Dus srong celebrated his victory over the mGar clan with a song which became famous and was preserved in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*.²² At the same time, the surviving members of the mGar family reached the Chinese capital.²³

¹⁹ Cf. CFYG: 11151.

²⁰ Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 110 and Beckwith 1987: 59-60.

²¹ *JTS juan* 196, translated by Pelliot 1961: 11.

²² PT 1287, ll. 456-481. For the translation of the whole song, see Dotson 2013: 298-300.

²³ The Chinese sources report Zanpo's arrival at Wu Zetian's court. The CFYG, p. 11275, states: "During the 10th month of the 2nd year of the Shengli era of Zetian [699], the chief of the Tufan, Zanpo arrived at [court]. We sent the cavalry [...] to welcome him outside the city. On the day gengxu [27/9/699], we offered, with great joy, a big banquet in honour of Zanpo in the Wuwei palace."

mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung's Sons According to the Chinese Sources

Several different Chinese sources state that mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung had four or five sons:

<i>JTS juan 196 上</i> <i>CFYG juan 962</i>	<i>XTS juan 216 上</i> <i>ZZTJ juan 201</i>
贊悉若 Zanxiruo 欽陵 Qinling 贊婆 Zampo 悉多于 Xiduoyu 勃論 Bolun	/ 欽陵 Qinling 贊婆 Zampo 悉多于 Xiduoyu 勃論 Bolun

The lists include the same names, except for Zanxiruo, who the *JTS* states died very young.²⁴ Tshe ring gives the following correspondences between the Chinese names and the original Tibetan names:²⁵

贊悉若	Zanxiruo	mGar bTsan snya lDom bu
欽陵	Qinling	mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod
贊婆	Zampo	mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong
悉多于	Xiduoyu	mGar sTag gu Ri zung
勃論	Bolun	mGar bTsan nyen Gung ston

The person identified with Zanxiruo, the brother who is said to have died quite early, corresponds to mGar Btsan snya lDom bu, who was in fact killed by his brother in 685. For the others, there are no further details given in the Chinese sources.²⁶ The name Qinling corresponds, from a phonetic point of view, with the Tibetan name mGar Khri 'bring (bTsan brod).

²⁴ Cf. *JTS juan 196*: "[...] the older was called Zanxiruo, he died early [...]" [...] 贊悉若早死 [...]. Later historical texts lost trace of Zanxiruo, probably because of his premature death. It is interesting to underline, however, that, on the contrary, the *JTS* and the *CFYG*, which was also compiled using a previous version of the *JTS*, both mention Zanxiruo.

²⁵ Cf. Tshe ring 2010: 94.

²⁶ mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton is absent from the Chinese documents. He was executed in 695 for having been disloyal; what "disloyal" means in this context is unclear. Dotson hypothesizes that mGar bTsan nyen Gung rton could have surrendered to the Chinese. Cf. Dotson 2009 : 98, n. 199.

According to the Chinese sources, Zampo is then one of the persons who escaped to China in 699.²⁷ Nevertheless, the identity of the second person who went to China with him needs further clarifications.²⁸ According to the Chinese sources, two persons escaped to Chang'an: Zampo and Mangbuzhi, son of Qinling.²⁹ Zampo is described in the Chinese sources as having died soon after his arrival in Chinese territory, after having been rewarded for his submission.³⁰ However, in other sources, there is almost no mention of Mangbuzhi, a name that corresponds, in Tibetan, with mGar Mang po rje sTag rtsan.³¹ The only other reference to his name occurs in the *XTS*, where he is said to have received the title of Duke of Anguo 安國公 and to have been appointed General-in-Chief of the Forest of Plumes Army 羽林大將軍.³² The name as well as the posts and titles of Mangbuzhi can be identified with the person of Lun Gongren 論弓仁.³³ Lun Gongren is the recipient of the first funerary inscription that will be examined in this article. The other two persons are: Lun Weixian 論惟賢 and Lun Boyan 論博言, also members of the mGar family.³⁴

The identification of the Chinese name *Lun* with the Tibetan term *blon* and, by extension with the mGar clan, has been confirmed, besides by the funerary inscriptions presented here, by Pelliot who, in his article of 1915, established that the Chinese character Lun is a transcription of the Tibetan *blon*.³⁵ Another source for this identification is the Chinese dictionary *Zhonghua xingshi yuanliu dacidian* 中華姓

²⁷ The *JTS* and the *XTS* mention Zampo in several passages. In 695, when he is described attacking the Chinese at Lintao 臨洮. He is also said to have been in charge of the eastern part of the Tibetan Empire for many years and to have caused many problems for the Tang. *XTS*, *juan* 216, translated by Pelliot 1961: 92-94. In the *CFYG* Zampo is called Xue Zampo 薛贊婆. Stein discusses the issue of Xue as family name in his article, cf. Stein 1963: 331.

²⁸ Kerihuel described the arrival of three persons in China: Gongren, Zampo and Mangbuzhi. Cf. Kerihuel 2011: 111.

²⁹ The genealogy of the family will be clarified below.

³⁰ The *XTS* says that Zampo was welcomed and gifted with rich presents and titles such as the Prince of the Guide 歸德 commandery, in modern northern Henan. In this reference, the *JTS* and the *XTS* are similar. Cf. Pelliot 1961: 11.

³¹ Cf. Richardson 1998: 32 and Beckwith 1987: 61.

³² Cf. Pelliot 1961: 94. The present article uses the dictionary of Charles Hucker for the translation of Chinese titles and official posts.

³³ This is confirmed by Tshering 2010: 106 and by Beckwith 1987: 61.

³⁴ There is another funerary inscription of a Tibetan arrived at the Tang court. His name is Luzan Saluo 祿贊薩羅. This inscription is not examined here because it presents some difficult points: even if there is clear mention of the fact that Luzan Saluo is a member of the mGar clan, the dates and circumstances of his arrival at the Chinese court are not clear. This inscription will be discussed in another article.

³⁵ Cf. Pelliot 1915. See also Laufer 1914 and Demiéville 1952: 240.

氏源流大辭典, which, under the name Lun, gives the example of the mGar clan and its Tibetan origins.³⁶ Finally, Han Rulin, in his article, clearly states that Lun is the Tibetan word *blon*.³⁷

Chinese Funerary Inscriptions as Historical Sources

Funerary inscriptions are currently being rediscovered by Sinologists; they represent, when examined together with their context, complete historical and archaeological documents that can provide a different perspective on prosopographic studies and on a certain historical period, since they can contain important information on events and personalities.³⁸ Under the term "funerary inscriptions" we can include a series of epigraphic documents such as tomb steles (*mubei* 墓碑), entombed epitaphs (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘), inscribed steles for the tomb alley (*shendao beiming* 神道碑銘) and so forth.³⁹ The tombs of the Chinese elite were not composed of a simple pit where the coffin was placed, but rather they "consisted of an underground chamber, often built of bricks and sealed with a stone door on top of which was erected a large dirt mound".⁴⁰ If the steles were put outside the tomb, as standing documents attesting the identity of the deceased to the outside world and paying homage to his life, the entombed epitaphs, usually made in slabs or limestone, were buried in a flat position in the grave near the head or the foot of the coffin itself, or in another pit close to the main chamber.⁴¹ The entombed epitaphs were composed of two parts: one stone, usually square in shape, carved with the inscription itself and another one used as a cover, presenting the name of the recipient and decorated with figures and geometrical or floral patterns, as in the entombed inscription of Lun Boyan which presents a cover adorned with floral ornaments and with twelve male

³⁶ Cf. *Zhonghua xingshi yuanliu dacidian* 2014: 345.

³⁷ Cf. Han Rulin 1940: 106.

³⁸ Tackett speaks even of a re-examination of the Tang aristocracy thanks to this genre of documents. Cf. Tackett 2014: 13. There can be a debate on the reliability of funerary inscriptions. According to some researchers, the version carved on stone and the one on paper often present big differences due mainly to the desire of the author to praise the deceased and exaggerate his exploits on the stone version of the text. Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 5, n. 5. On the other hand, other researchers affirm that the differences between the several versions of inscriptions present only minor discrepancies in the content and can thus be considered as reliable documents. Cf. McMullen 2013: 110.

³⁹ This article considers the funerary inscriptions from the Tang period. For a comprehensive study of this kind of document and their evolution, see Davis 2008.

⁴⁰ Tackett 2014: 18.

⁴¹ Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 15, n. 5.

figures carrying the Chinese zodiac animals. Both those stones had the same dimensions and were sealed and buried together. The inscriptions, as we will see in the three examples given below, contain a lot of information: they normally begin with a list of titles and positions held by the deceased himself, followed by the names and titles of his predecessors, as well as the origin of his clan. In some cases, these two parts are inverted, but they are both related to the origins of the recipient; a paragraph is then centred on the figure of the deceased and his military and political exploits. This pattern is followed in the three funerary inscriptions presented here. Since the text is meant to draw a positive portrait, in this section the author describes the capabilities of the deceased: loyalty, military and political capacities are often emphasized. In this paragraph the author may also recall events from the past in order to underline the merits of the deceased.⁴²

The purposes of the inscriptions were several: a first practical function, sometimes clearly expressed by the author in the inscription, was to mark the identity of the deceased in perpetuity in case of an exhumation or in case of changes in the landscape.⁴³ Also, the inscriptions served as a permanent record in order to preserve the memory of the deceased. Nevertheless, there was also another kind of purpose, mainly related to the entombed epitaphs: the *muzhiming*, placed close to the coffin itself, would preside over the after-life of the deceased.⁴⁴

Chinese funerary inscriptions were composed of two parts: the first called 誌文 *zhiwen* "to record, to remember, to describe" and the second 銘 *ming* "to inscribe, to engrave, to make it unforgettable". The first portion of the text gives all the information concerning the deceased and it is written in prose; the second one is in verse and, during the late Tang, was heavily influenced by poetry.⁴⁵ The two parts of the text are complementary in the sense that the second part summarizes the first one, even if in verse, and contributes to the praise for the deceased: in this sense, the *ming* part is a eulogy.⁴⁶

In order to create such complex documents, the family of the deceased needed to appoint a writer capable of composing prose and

⁴² Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 23.

⁴³ Cf. Ditter 2014: 32, n. 46.

⁴⁴ Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 26. There is also another kind of "non-conventional objective" mainly related to the author of the inscription who could, through his text, convey personal opinions on the contemporary political situation or other topics. Cf. Ditter 2014: 31, n. 41.

⁴⁵ Cf. Meng Guodong 2012: 54.

⁴⁶ Cf. Nivison 1962: 459. Because of their complexities and since they do not provide more information on the deceased, as well as the fact that they are more examples of poetry than of historical prose documents, the *ming* parts of the three funerary inscriptions are not translated in this article.

poetry. The author would then write, with the information provided him by the family of the deceased, the inscription on paper, and this version, before being carved in the stone by an artisan, would then circulate among the friends of the deceased;⁴⁷ a copy of it would also be given to the Board of History at the capital.⁴⁸ According to social convention, it was the son of the deceased person who solicited an inscription for his father, and the author was then usually a renowned literatus or literatus-official.⁴⁹ Sometimes the author of the inscription was close to the family and would then compose the text in memory of his late friend. Two of the funerary inscriptions examined here were composed by high officials, probably on commission, while the last one was composed by a friend – also a highly renowned poet – of the deceased as explicitly stated in the text of the inscription. The commission of a funerary inscription was the most expensive part of the funeral rituals, and only families who were part of the elite could afford it;⁵⁰ among them, there was the Lun family.

The Funerary Stele of Lun Gongren

As seen from Chinese sources, the two Tibetans who arrived at the Chinese court were Zanpo, mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong, and his nephew, Mangbuzhi, who is to be identified with Lun Gongren 論弓仁.⁵¹ As said, if mGar 'Bring rtsan rTsang stong passed away soon after his arrival in Chang'an, Lun Gongren had a quite successful career under the Tang and his descendants continued to be close to the Tang court and had tight links with the aristocracy. The information we have on Lun Gongren comes from his funerary inscription, a stele, *bei* 碑, which was erected outside his mound. In the text, the tomb of Lun Gongren is said to be situated in the southern part of the capital, South of the city of Xi'an 西安 and it can be identified with a

⁴⁷ The five steps in producing a funerary inscription are described in detail by Liu Ru 2013: 247.

⁴⁸ Cf. Nivison 1962: 460.

⁴⁹ Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 16. During the Tang period there were some entombed epitaphs that were self-authored. See Huang Zhen 2006.

⁵⁰ The costs of funerary inscriptions, in particular *muzhiming*, have been studied by Ditter 2014 and Tackett 2014. It seems that the authors of funerary inscriptions were rewarded with money but also with silk bolts and, according to Tackett, the cost of an inscription was determined by the number of its characters. Cf. Tackett 2006: 14.

⁵¹ This question of two different names could be explained by the fact that this person probably had a common name and a personal name. Mangbuzhi could have been his personal name, of clear Tibetan connotation, and Lun Gongren could be then his common name that became Chinese.

mound still located nowadays behind the ancestral temple of Dufu 杜甫祠. The *Zhongguo wenwu dituji Shaanxi fence* (*The Chinese Atlas of Cultural Relics, Shanxi volume*), gives a quite accurate description of it: "Tomb of Lun Gongren [...]: dome-shaped mound; 15 meters bottom diameter, 7 meters high, 15 centimeters thickness [of the walls] [...]." ⁵² Even if it is not possible to locate the tomb with accuracy, the inscription on the stele, which is supposed to have been located outside the tomb, is available through the *QTW*. ⁵³

The inscription was composed by Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730), an official from Luoyang 洛陽 in post under the reign of Wu Zetian and the successive emperors. ⁵⁴ From the title, "Composition written upon emperor's request for the stele of the Commandery Prince of Bochuan" *Bochuan junwang bei fengchi zhuan* 撥川郡王碑奉敕撰, ⁵⁵ it is clear that the inscription has been made in order to show Lun Gongren's merits and exploits and that he was supported by the imperial power. It is probable that the court paid for Lun Gongren's funeral as well as for this inscription, something that was not exceptional at that time. ⁵⁶ The text follows a quite standard pattern of funerary inscriptions; it begins with identifying the deceased: "The Prince of Bochuan is Lun Gongren, native from Piweicheng (?), and coming from the royal family of the *zanpu* of Tufan. [His] great-grandfather was Zan, ⁵⁷ [his] grandfather was Zun, [his] father was Ling; generation after generation [they] administered the kingdom of [Tu]fan. [Was] called Dongzan. ⁵⁸ [Since] in the barbaric language Zai is named Lun, there-

⁵² *Zhongguo wenwu dituji Shanxi fence, xia*: 108. The *Atlas* also gives a map of the surrounding area with all the cultural relics and shows the location of the tomb. In the area behind the Dufu temple, a mound, that has been visibly looted and restored, is still present. Nevertheless, this mound is not mentioned in any excavation reports conducted by the Shanxi Archaeological Research Institute based in Xi'an. It is therefore not possible to conclusively identify it with the tomb of Lun Gongren.

⁵³ The complete text of the inscription is given in the *QTW*, *juan* 227. This article uses this version of the inscription.

⁵⁴ His biography can be found in the *XTS juan* 125.

⁵⁵ The title "Commandery Prince" was a high title of nobility, prefixed with a place-name designating the noble's real or nominal fief.

⁵⁶ This happened when the deceased had particular merits or had distinguished himself for his political or military exploits. The court would then offer an official funeral in order to show that the authority was able to recognize loyalty but was also able to appropriately reward it. Alternatively, the court could bestow financial support to the family for the burial rituals. Cf. Davis 2008: 157.

⁵⁷ According to the inscription Qinling/mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod was the grandson of Lu Dongzan/mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung and not his own child.

⁵⁸ This last part of the passage is difficult to understand: it is not clear from the text to whom this name Dongzan is referring to. Normally it identifies Lu Dongzan, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, which is said to be the great-grandfather of Lun

fore, it became [their] clan name."⁵⁹ There is then no doubt that Lun Gongren is coming from the Tibetan kingdom and that he was a descendant of Lun Dongzan, mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, and was a son of Qinling, mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod. Tackett states that this tradition of giving details about the previous generations, in particular the famous officeholders of the deceased's forebears, was widespread and he defines it as "distant genealogy". It is followed by the immediate ancestors of the deceased and begins with the account of when and how the clan name was acquired.⁶⁰ In the case of Lun Gongren, this would serve two purposes: first, to show that even the Tibetans, enemies of the Tang Empire, were willing to come and submit to the court and, second, that the Lun family was composed of brilliant people who were in charge of high posts at the Tibetan court but who became loyal and talented officials of the Tang dynasty as well.

Another detail that can suggest the identification of Lun Gongren with the mGar who escaped in 699 is the following sentence: "Since [he was] very perspicacious, [he] has foreseen the dark days; [he] despised the [clothes made] of leather and fur and aspired to the garments of our country. During the 2nd year of the Shengli era [699], he gathered 7000 Tuyuhun tents and surrendered to us."⁶¹ The inscription confirms the *Tangshu* in giving the details about what was going on in Tibet at the end of the 7th century with the purge carried on by Khri 'Dus srong and, with a metaphor, affirms that Lun Gongren, intelligently, left his own land for a better one. For this courageous act, he was "rewarded with the post of General of the Guard of the Jade strategy of the Left and received the title of Principality-founding Duke of Jiuquan [in modern Gansu 甘肅 province] with benefit of 2000 homes."⁶² The General of the Guard of the Jade strategy was a military charge in a unit included in the guards of the capital, which allows us, once again, to identify Lun Gongren with the Mangbuzhi of the *XTS* who was rewarded with the charge of General-in-Chief of the Forest of Plumes Army; this was also a unit guard of the capital. Lun Gongren, according to the funerary inscription, had a brilliant military career: during the 3rd year of the Shenlong 神龍 era (707/708), he was commissioned to patrol the vanguard troops of the North, and the following year, in the 2nd year of the Jinglong

Gongren. Demiéville gives the following translation: "Their true name [...] was Dongzan", cf. Demiéville 1952: 380.

⁵⁹ 撥川王論弓仁者。源出於疋末城。吐蕃讚普之王族也。曾祖讚，祖尊，父陵。代相蕃國，號為東讚，戎言謂宰曰論，因而氏焉。

⁶⁰ Cf. Tackett 2014: 62-63.

⁶¹ 公有由余之深識，日碑之先見，陋偏荒之韋毳，慕上國之衣冠。聖曆二年，以所統吐渾七千帳歸於我。

⁶² 授左玉鈐衛將軍，封酒泉郡開國公，食邑二千戶。

景龍 era (708/709) he was appointed as Cavalry General of the Courageous Guard of the Right. After ten years, in the 5th year of the Kaiyuan 開元 era (718) he was also made Commander-in-chief of the Guide prefecture 歸德州. In 721, during the 8th year of the Kaiyuan era, he was transferred from the post of General-in-chief of the Guard to the post of Vice Commissioner of the Military Commissioner in the Fujun region 斧餒方. He is described as being very gifted in dealing with the soldiers and as being a righteous leader: he believed in rewards and punishments and could discern gentleness and bitterness.⁶³

Late in his life, having fought many battles and accumulated several injuries, he fell ill. The director of the imperial pharmacy was sent to examine him but could not heal his disease. On the 5th day during the 4th month of the 11th year (13/05/723), he passed away; he was sixty years old. The court granted him the title of Prince of Bochuan and the Chamberlain for Ceremonials conferred on him the posthumous name Zhong 忠 (loyal).⁶⁴ His eldest son, named Lu 盧, inherited the official posts and continued the functions of his father. His second son, Jiujiu 舊久, was appointed Vice Commandant.⁶⁵

During the 4th month of the 22nd year, in May 723, the emperor ordered to bury him in the southern part of the capital.⁶⁶ The Chamberlain for Ceremonials played some instruments and the officials hung the dragon banners. The funerals were organized by the court: "several military tents made with animal furs were set up and yak and horses were sacrificed. The good and the bad fortune were evoked and Chinese and barbarian objects were prepared."⁶⁷ This paragraph is probably the most interesting part of the inscription. It shows the will of the court to underline the foreign origins of Lun Gongren and to honour him in offering a funeral at the capital. In the ceremony, the origins of Lun Gongren are represented by the choice of animals for the sacrifices: yak and horses. The yak is a typical ani-

⁶³ 神龍三年以為朔方軍前鋒遊奕使，景龍二年換右驍騎將軍，開元五年兼歸德州都，使皆如故。八年遷本衛大將軍，改朔方節度副大使。公之理兵也，堅三革，利五刃，偶拳勇，齊足力，信賞罰，分甘苦，六轡如手，千夫一心。

⁶⁴ 積戰多瘡，纍勞生疹，恩命尚藥，馳往診之，晉豎已深，秦醫無及。十一年四月五日，薨於位，享年六十。制贈為撥川王 [...] 太常議諡曰忠。

⁶⁵ 長子盧，襲官封，繼事業。次子舊久，特拜郎將。Tshe ring affirms that Lu was also known under the name of Lun Chengjie 論誠節 and Jiujiu was also named Lun Chengxin 論誠信. Cf. Tshe ring 2010: 107. The charges and titles of Lun Chengxin are given in the *QTW juan* 413. This is not his funerary inscription but a decree bestowing him the title of Commander Unequaled in Honour 授論誠信等開府儀同三司制. This was a prestige title for civilians as well as for military officers.

⁶⁶ [...] 十二年四月，詔葬於京城之南。

⁶⁷ [...] 太常鼓吹，介士龍旆。[...] 虎帳貔裘，封犛殉馬，吉凶之儀舉，夷夏之物備。

mal of Tibetan culture, and horses were also used as sacrificial animals in Tibetan funerals; moreover, the Chinese were used to sacrificing horses during peace agreements with foreigners.⁶⁸ The use of tents of leather and fur also signifies the desire to underline the foreign origins of Lun Gongren: Chinese sources often speak about the big Tibetan tents made of yak fur where the population lived but also where the Tibetan *btsan po* resided.⁶⁹

The inscription goes on by relating that the magistrate of Chang'an took over the case and the Chief Minister of the Court of State ceremonial wrote the list of the guests who could take part in the ceremony, making this burial an even more official event. According to the text of the inscription, Lun Gongren had two sons: Jiujiu/Lun Chengxin and Lu/Lun Chengjie, this last person, according to the following inscriptions, had three descendants: Weiming 惟明, Weizhen 惟真 and Weixian 惟賢.

The Funerary Stele of Lun Weixian

The text of the funerary inscription for Lun Weixian has been written on a stele located in the alley going to his tomb, as its Chinese designation, *shendao beiming* 神道碑銘, attests. The title is "Inscription for the tombstone in the tomb alley of the Honorable Lun, Cavalry General-in-chief".⁷⁰ It was composed by Lü Yuanying 呂元膺 (749-820), a minister of Xianzong 憲宗 (r.805-820).⁷¹ The inscription starts with a presentation of the deceased's origins and his ancestors: "His personal name was Weixian; his public name was Weixian. His predecessors were people from the western lands, his great-great-grandfather was called Dongzan, and he was administrator of the barbarians of the West. Since this was their public name, the family has the clan name Lun."⁷² As in the inscription of Lun Gongren, it is clearly stated that Lun Weixian was part of the mGar clan. His origins are even more contextualized with the details relating to the contacts between the Tibetans and the Tang court: "During the Zhenguan era [626-649], [...] the barbarians Fan [the Tibetans] submitted and presented treasures [...] They admired the Chinese customs and desired a matrimonial alliance; they ardently hoped [for it] and came to the imperial palace. Emperor Taizong accepted their sincerity and promised a

⁶⁸ Cf. Stein 1988: 120, n. 5.

⁶⁹ Cf. CFYG: 11136 and 11232.

⁷⁰ In Chinese, the title is 驃騎大將軍論公神道碑銘. The text is included in the *QTW*, *juan* 479. This article uses this version of the inscription.

⁷¹ His biography can be found in the *XTS* *juan* 162.

⁷² 公諱惟賢，字惟賢，其先西土人也。高祖諱東贊，作相於西戎，因官立姓，遂為論氏。

princess. When the ruler of the barbarians sent Dongzan as ambassador, he was welcomed at our court. Without disconcert and without delay, he was summoned by the emperor in order to be questioned [...] The emperor decreed that the granddaughter of the Princess of Langya had to be given as [his] wife. Dongzan personally explained that he already had a wife in his country and, also, that the *zanpu* did not obtain his own princess yet. The minister did not dare to accept this special favour. Taizong congratulated him and, being surprised by this reply, fulfilled his request."⁷³ Chinese funerary inscriptions often begin with a paragraph full of allusions to historical events in order to enhance the truthfulness of the content and to place the inscription's recipient in a specific historical context.⁷⁴ These references to events of the past and historical figures are meant to focus the reader's attention on a particular background in order to underline a point like, in this specific case, the fact that Lun Weixian came from a foreign family who submitted to the Chinese court. This is confirmed by the list of Lun Weixian's predecessors, who have charges and titles granted by the court: "His great-grandfather was Ling that, with [his] father Gongren, came together in the East. [...] They brought back in the kingdom more than 7000 [Tuyuhun] tents."⁷⁵ The text mentions the titles and charges of Lun Gongren, as we have seen in the previous inscription, and his posthumous name, Zhong. The family is then praised for its merits and capabilities: "From the ancestors to the grandfather, they acquired all merits from great service; they were outstanding men of their times."⁷⁶

From the text it is also possible to complete the genealogical tree of the family, since the inscription gives the name of Lun Weixian's father: Lun Chengjie 論誠節. Lun Chengjie also obtained several honorific titles, such as: "Vice Commissioner-in-chief of the Military Commissioner of the northern regions, Commander Unequaled in Honour, General-in-chief of the Imperial Insignia Guard of the Right,"⁷⁷

⁷³ 貞觀中，威懷四夷，翦滅北虜，蕃戎款附，萬里獻琛，慕嚮華風，欲為和親，延頸企踵，心馳闕下。太宗皇帝覽其誠至，遂許之公主，時戎王遣相東贊為使來迎，不忒其儀，不愆於素，召見顧問，進退合旨，詔以琅琊公主外孫女妻之。東贊自陳以本國有妻，又以贊普未謁公主，陪臣不敢先受殊寵，太宗嘉之，又奇其對，撫以厚恩，遂有歸化之心。

⁷⁴ Cf. Schottenhammer 2009: 17.

⁷⁵ [...] 曾祖陵，與祖躬仁同總眾於東，至高宗朝，拔部落七千餘帳歸國。There are three inaccuracies in this passage of the inscription: the author says that Ling (Qinling) arrived at the Chinese court with Gongren; the name of Gongren presents a character *gong* 躬 which is not the one, *gong* 弓, used in other texts; the fact that it is said that Gongren (and the others) arrived at the court during the reign of Gaozong 高宗 (r. 650-683). His reign ended in 683 and was not on the throne on 699/700 when the Tibetans arrived at court.

⁷⁶ [...] 自高曾至大父，皆有勳烈，著於當時。

⁷⁷ This is a distinguished unit of the imperial bodyguard.

Commandery Prince of Wuwei with functions in Jiezhou [ancient name for the modern Gansu province]. He was conferred the title of Grand Mentor of the Heir Apparent."⁷⁸ The court granted him these titles in order to reward him for his participation in the repression of the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion from 756 onwards. Lun Chengjie is said to have fought with Geshu Han 哥舒翰, the famous general of Turkic origins who is celebrated for having defended from the rebels the strategic Tongguan 潼關, in modern Shanxi 陝西 province; it is probable that Lun Chengjie was fighting in that area with him. Afterwards, with his late father and younger brother, they "accomplished many feats that cannot be described in detail here".⁷⁹ Thus the whole Lun family was involved in the war against the rebels in the mid-8th century and gained the favour of the court. Lun Weixian was "granted the title of Escort Brigade Commander."⁸⁰ Then, he received the title of Commandant of Guard of the Left and was granted the golden-fish bag.⁸¹ He was then promoted to Gate Guard Command of the Left and also changed to General of the Metropolitan Guard of the Left. Moreover, he was especially promoted to General-in-chief of the Metropolitan Guard of the Right and Commandery-founding Duke of Xiping [in modern Sichuan 四川], with a benefice of 3000 houses."⁸² Besides obtaining titles of charges related to the capital, it seems that Lun Weixian, like his grandfather Lun Gongren, was given the benefice of exacting taxes from a certain number of households. The name of his younger brother, Lun Weizhen 論惟真, is also mentioned.

On the 2nd year of the Shangyuan 上元 era, in 761, Lun Weixian was specially appointed as General-in-chief of the Metropolitan

⁷⁸ 父誠節，朔方節度副大使開府儀同三司右金吾衛大將軍知階州事武威郡王，賜太子太傅。The title of Grand Mentor of the Heir Apparent indicated one of the three preceptors of the heir apparent, in charge of his education.

⁷⁹ [...] 與先父泊乎昆弟，立勲成效，不可備述。

⁸⁰ This was also a charge in post at the capital.

⁸¹ The golden-fish bag *jinyu dai* 金魚袋 was a special object normally granted by the Chinese court to ambassadors coming to the court from abroad but was also granted to Chinese officials. It was composed of a token with the shape of a fish in a small purse made in leather or brocade and its function was to identify the people coming to court through the following system: the fish-token was composed of two parts, one given in the purse to the official and the other kept at court; the two would perfectly match once presented at the court gates. The token could be made of different precious stones or metals and the purse itself would present the name of the official and his rank. For more information on this kind of object see Schafer 1963: 26 and Des Rotours 1952. Richardson wrote an article on the fish-bag and the Tibetan ambassador, Mingxilie. Cf. Richardson 1998.

⁸² [...] 府典軍，次授左衛郎將，賜紫金魚袋，俄轉左監門率，又遷左領軍衛將軍，又特進右領軍衛大將軍西平郡開國公，食邑三千戶。

Guard of the Right and as Vice Military Commissioner in Fengxiang 鳳翔 (in modern Gansu province) as well as Commander of the Cavalry.⁸³ A few years later, during the Dali 大曆 era (766-780) he "received the title of Commander Unequaled in Honour, appointed in the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, and appointed Supreme Pillar of State."⁸⁴ [...] He received the benefice of 3000 houses. Moreover, he received the title of Military Commander-in-chief of Weichuan [southern Gansu] and Commander [of the cavalry]. For a long time, he pursued an administrative and a military career."⁸⁵ However, even if "his teeth and hair were not in decline yet", he was several times struck by illnesses.⁸⁶ Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 726-779) allowed him to retire and come back to the capital, where he was appointed with the title of "General-in-Chief along with the leisure that this title granted."⁸⁷ This happened at the end of the Jianzhong 建中 era, in 783/784. Lun Weixian managed to recover and went back to his career, as the text states: "He recovered day by day. In the 15th year of the Zhenyuan era [800], he was appointed Cavalry General-in-Chief, General of the Militant Guard of the Right, Supreme Pillar of the State. He could then fulfil his functions at court and was rewarded for his acts."⁸⁸

Lun Weixian suddenly decided to resign from his duties, probably because he was ill, as the text says: "On the 10th day of the 7th month in the 4th year of the Yuanhe era [24/8/809] he remained in his private residence having a peaceful rest until [he passed away on] the 1st day of the 10th month of the year [11/11/809]."⁸⁹ While there is no reference to his date of birth in order to attest his age, there is mention of what could be his birthplace. According to the tradition in imperial China, people were buried in the place of their family origins.⁹⁰ Exceptions could be made for capital elites: because of their high mobility, the death of such persons often occurred while they were serving in other provinces; therefore they were often buried far from their home. However, in order to respect the tradition of burying a member of the family in the family cemetery, people could be entombed in "temporary" burials before being inhumed in their

⁸³ [...] 授特進行大光祿兼右領軍衛大將軍，充鳳翔節度副使馬軍兵馬使。

⁸⁴ This was the highest merit title awarded to officials.

⁸⁵ 大曆中受開府儀同三司，太常卿，上柱國，進封成國，食邑三千戶，旋受渭川節度，都知兵馬使。

⁸⁶ [...] 雖齒髮未衰，而疾疢屢作。

⁸⁷ [...] 同大將軍，俾其優閑。

⁸⁸ [...] 累日而瘳。貞元十五年授驃騎大將軍，行左武威衛將軍，上柱國公，斯實朝廷獎舊勛矣。

⁸⁹ 元和四年七月十日，寢疾終於靜恭里之私第，以某年十月一日。

⁹⁰ Tackett speaks about a "primary geographic attachment", cf. Tackett 2014: 77. This place was where the family lived most of the time.

homeland.⁹¹ Lun Weixian is said to be buried in Guyuan 古原, in the village of Hongu 洪固鄉, in Wannian county 萬年縣,⁹² which seems to be not far from modern Chang'an; thus this could be the place where his family resided. Lun Weixian was married to a woman of the clan Wang 王 from Taiyuan 太原, but her name is not given.⁹³ Just like his own ancestor Lun Gongren, Lun Weixian was granted imperial honours; a decree was issued to "give the imperial retinue and play instruments [for his funeral]."⁹⁴ This meant that the imperial authorities held him in great esteem and that they probably covered the expenses of the funeral as well for the writing and the carving of the stele.

The funerary inscription also gives a list of Lun Weixian's sons: the older one, called Fuding 輔鼎, was appointed in Baishui county in Tongzhou 同州白水縣 (in modern Shanxi province); another son, called Ti 倜, was Commandant in Jiangyin county 江陰縣, in Changzhou 常州 (in modern Jiangsu 江蘇 province); another son was named Chu 俶 and was Administrator in the section of the Cavalry of the Metropolitan Guard of the Left. Lun Weixian's youngest brother was called Weiming 惟明.⁹⁵ Weiming and Weixian were great-granduncles of Lun Boyan, son of their nephew Can 慘.

Lun Boyan's Entombed Epitaph

The third and last inscription is the entombed epitaph, *muzhiming* 墓誌銘, of Lun Boyan 論博言. This inscription is found in the *QTBWBY* but is also available in its original form.⁹⁶ The entombed epitaph was excavated in 1995 in Shijingshan 石景山 in the western suburbs of Beijing 北京 and has been stored with other archaeological findings in the Tianyimu 田義墓, in the same area.⁹⁷

⁹¹ "Temporary" burials were explicitly stated as such in the funerary inscription. Cf. Tackett 2014: 81.

⁹² [...] 葬於萬年縣洪固鄉之古原.

⁹³ [...] 故夫人太原王氏祔焉.

⁹⁴ 詔給鹵簿鼓吹, 所以褒寵也.

⁹⁵ 嗣子輔鼎, 同州白水縣丞。次曰倜, 常州江陰縣尉。次曰俶, 右領軍衛騎曹參軍。[...] 公之季弟惟明。

⁹⁶ Cf. *QTBWBY*: 141. In the *QTBWBY*, the text of the inscription is in the section dedicated to the writings of Zhang Jianzhang 張見章. Nevertheless, this version on the inscription lacks some characters. This article uses the stone version of the text which is complete.

⁹⁷ Cf. Chen Kang 1999: 62. The Tianyimu is the tomb of the eunuch Tian yi 田義, official of the Ming dynasty 明朝 (1368-1644).



fig. 1. Lun Boyan's entombed epitaph (original photograph, copyright Emanuela Garatti)



fig. 2. Lun Boyan's entombed epitaph - Detail of the stone cover (original photograph, copyright Emanuela Garatti)

The text of the entombed epitaph opens with a reference to the foreign origins of the recipient: "Very far in the extreme West, the steep lands, the spacious territory of mountains [...]"⁹⁸ Nevertheless, there is no mention of the events of the Tibetan Empire or of the relationships between the Tang and the Tibetan court. It is also interesting to note that the author evokes the western lands in very general terms

⁹⁸ 西極金方地勢峻山域廣面統萬里肘加百蠻. The term *zhoujia* 肘加 is not clear in this phrase. The lack of punctuation in this inscription is due to the stone version of the text.

and does not use the names Tufan or Xirong 西戎, which usually are reserved for the barbarians of the West and already seen in the other two inscriptions for defining the Tibetans. Instead, he employs the term Baiman 百蠻, which normally refers to the barbarians of the South. This somewhat poetic and certainly short evocation of Lun Boyan's origins is followed by his "distant genealogy": "[...] he was the descendant of Lun Qinling, he was the great-grandson of Wang Buzhi, General-in-Chief of the Guard of the Left of Dangzhou and Commander-in-Chief in Lintao [in modern Gansu province] for the Tang. [Lun Boyan] was the grandnephew of Weiming, Military Commissioner of Weibei, Commander Unequaled in Honour, with functions of Imperial Secretary in the Minister of Justice; [...], Prince of Jiaochuan and posthumously nominated at the Minister of Works."⁹⁹ Once again, the genealogy allows the identification of the recipient: Lun Boyan was a descendant of the mGar clan, in particular of the members arrived in China. In this inscription, even Qinling, mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod has the name Lun. It is interesting to note that there are no more references to the great figure of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung, who has always been identified as the ancestor of the clan. It seems that the origins of the family have shifted from mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung to mGar to mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod, a more recent forebear. His predecessors are then listed: "[Boyán] was the granchild of Weizhen, valorous Military Commander, [...], Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon,¹⁰⁰ with functions of Policy Adviser of the Right,¹⁰¹ Regional Inspector of Yingzhou, as well as Censor in Chief,¹⁰² Prince of Yuxi [in modern Shanxi province] and he was offered to be Grand Preceptor of the Heir Apparent.¹⁰³ [Boyán] was the distinguished son of Can, Defense Commissioner of Ningzhou,¹⁰⁴ Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon with functions of

⁹⁹ [...] 論欽陵之裔孫唐左衛大將軍宕州都督臨洮王布支之曾孫渭北節度使開府儀同三司檢校刑部尚書奉天定難功臣交川王贈司空惟明之姓孫。Weiming's title 奉天定難功臣 is not clear. This part of the text is preceded by the posts and charges of Qinling at the Tibetan court. Since there is no evidence that these correspond to the actual posts of mGar Khri 'bring bTsan brod at the Tibetan court, and since they use a terminology that is strictly Chinese, they are not translated here.

¹⁰⁰ Prestige title for high civil officials.

¹⁰¹ Post in the Secretariat. The Policy Adviser was in charge of attending and counseling the Emperor daily.

¹⁰² The Censor-in-chief was the head of the Censorate. It was one of the most eminent officials of the central government. During the Tang it was borne by regional dignitaries such as Military Commissioners.

¹⁰³ One of the three preceptors of the heir apparent.

¹⁰⁴ This toponym could refer either to a prefecture in modern Gansu province or to another one in modern Yunnan 雲南 province.

Chancellor of the Directorate of Education,¹⁰⁵ Regional Inspector of Ningzhou, as well as Vice President of the Censorship Court and nominated Supreme Pillar of the State."¹⁰⁶ These details allow us to fill the gaps in the family tree of the Lun family: Lun Boyan was great-grandchild of Lun Gongren, grandchild of Lun Weizhen, child of Lun Can and also grandnephew of Lun Weiming. The text goes on saying that "his personal name was Boyan, his public name was Zhi Huai."¹⁰⁷ His titles and official charges are then given: "At the beginning of the Dahe era [827], [...] appointed [Boyan] as detached Commander of the Military Commissioner of Youzhou,¹⁰⁸ as Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver Seal and Blue Ribbon with functions of Adviser of the Heir Apparent and Investigating Censor."¹⁰⁹ Other functions were later added to his duties: "He [...] was promoted to the post of Military Commissioner and also to the post of Attendant Censor in charge of the Palace Administration. [...] [Boyan] was then promoted from the post of Guard of the Military Commissioner of Lulong to the post of Guard of the Military Commissioner of Youzhou. He also obtained the post of Attendant Censor and he was appointed with functions of Chancellor of the National University [...]."¹¹⁰ His paternal cousin, Elian 鏢連, Prefect of Youzhou 宥州, is then mentioned.¹¹¹ In this inscription there are few references to historical events: in a quite difficult passage, the author speaks about a rebellion of the Man barbarians in the modern Assam region, at the beginning of the Xiantong 咸通 era (860-873); it is possible that Lun Boyan distinguished himself in the repression of this rebellion.¹¹² It seems that he was then rewarded with the title of Prefect of Tan-

¹⁰⁵ This person was the head of the Directorate of Education, a central government agency that was in charge of the schools at the capital as well as the National University and other education institutions.

¹⁰⁶ [...] 英武軍使奉天定難功臣銀青光祿大夫檢校右散騎常侍潁州刺史兼禦史大夫榆溪王贈太子太師惟貞之孫寧州防禦使銀青光祿大夫檢校國子祭酒守寧州刺史兼禦史中丞上柱國諱儻之令子。The name of Boyan's grandfather, Weizhen is written in this text with a different character: 貞 *zhen*, instead of 眞 *zhen* given in Weixian's inscription.

¹⁰⁷ 公諱博言字知遠。

¹⁰⁸ This term indicates a prefecture in the south-western part of modern Beijing.

¹⁰⁹ [...] 大和初 [...] 署幽州節度散兵馬使奏銀青光祿大夫檢校太子賓客兼監察禦史。The title of Adviser of the Heir Apparent indicates a post held by high court dignitaries. This person was in charge of the guidance in government affairs for the heir apparent. The Investigating Censor, in post in the Censorate, was in charge, among others things, of gathering complaints from the people and of impeaching officials for misconduct.

¹¹⁰ [...] 兵馬使奏兼殿中侍禦史 [...] 自盧龍節度押衙遷幽州節度押衙以兼侍御史加檢校國子祭酒。

¹¹¹ [...] 堂弟宥州刺史鏢連。

¹¹² This is confirmed by Tackett 2014: 152, n. 21.

zhou (in northern Hebei 河北, not far from Youzhou 幽州) and that he excelled in his duties.¹¹³

In June 865, Lun Boyan suffered a heatstroke on his way back from a visit to the Imperial Chancellery and passed away in September 865 in the southern part of Sucheng 蘇城. He was 61 years old.¹¹⁴ Lun Boyan was tied, according to the inscription, to an important family: his wife was the daughter of Liu Xi 劉驥 (785-829), Defense Commissioner with functions of Chief Minister of the Court of the Imperial Treasury and Vice Censor-in-chief.¹¹⁵ Lun Boyan, according to the text, had at least one son, Congli 從禮, who probably commissioned the inscription and organized the funeral of his father. Congli was in a post at the headquarters of the Military Commissioner of Youzhou and, on the 25th day of the 1st month of winter that year (17/11/865), decided that Boyan and his wife would be buried together in the family tomb.¹¹⁶ The tomb of Boyan is said in the text to be situated 30 *li* West of Youdou 幽都, in a place called Xin'anyuan 新安原.¹¹⁷ This corresponds to the modern western periphery of Beijing, where the entombed epitaph of Lun Boyan has been found.

The Lun family relations with the aristocracy of the late Tang are also attested by the fact that the author, Zhang Jianzhang 張見章, was a close friend of the deceased. Before offering his eulogy, Zhang Jianzhang says in the inscription: "Boyan and I were old family friends and old good brothers at the Imperial Offices. I feel deep sorrow [because of his departure] and I am concerned and affectionate for his orphan."¹¹⁸

The Descendants of mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung - the Family Tree

According to the names and dates given in the inscriptions and in the Tibetan sources, the following family tree can be drawn:

¹¹³ [...] 檀州刺史優其俸也.

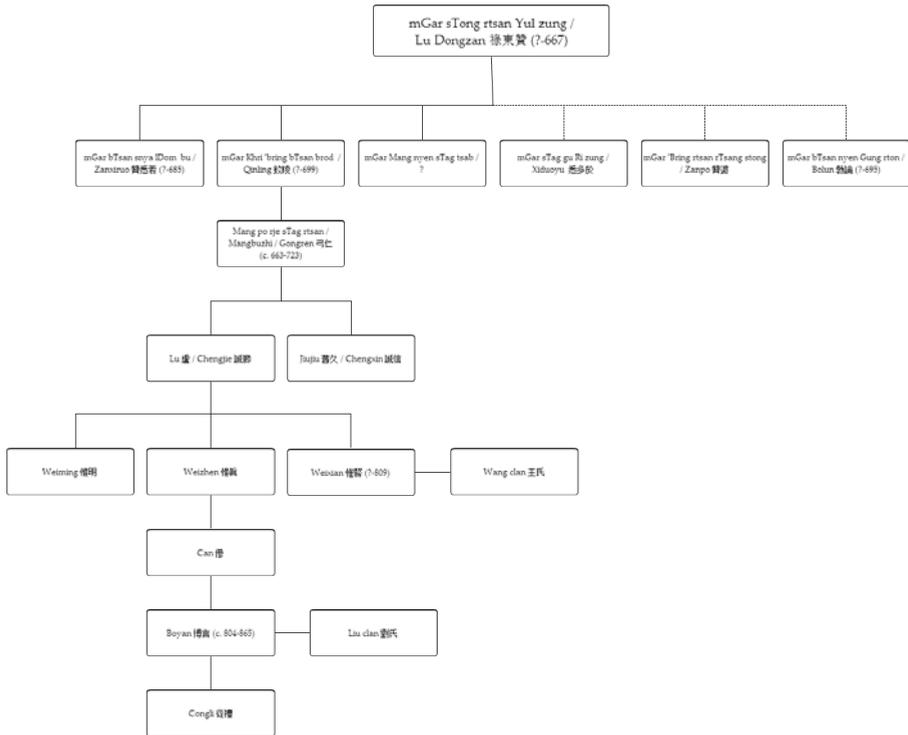
¹¹⁴ [...] 咸通乙酉重五聘東垣回喝疾於路迄秋分永逝於蘇城南郭析津坊壽六十一.

¹¹⁵ [...] 夫人防禦軍使檢校太府卿兼禦史中丞中山劉驥長女.

¹¹⁶ [...] 至是嗣子幽州節度牙門將從禮卜以其年孟冬廿五日合祔故室塋陬.

¹¹⁷ [...] 墓於幽都之西三十里新安原.

¹¹⁸ 鯁以世舊通家衙幕兄弟痛深嘆逝念極恤孤.



Conclusion

The above analysis of the funerary inscriptions had allowed us to draw a preliminary image of the legacy of the Tibetan Minister mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung's descendants in China. Khri 'Dus srong's purge of 699 did not spell the end of the famous mGar clan: these funerary inscriptions prove that the branch of the clan, including Zampo and Lun Gongren, that escaped to Wu Zetian's court in 699 prospered during the whole Tang dynasty period. From the point of view of the style and the support of the funerary inscriptions we can see that the Lun clan was part of the elite of the Tang Empire: from an economical point of view their importance is underlined by the fact that the Lun could afford to organize funerals and to hire writers to compose eulogies for their deceased relatives, as in the case of Lun Boyan's entombed epitaph. Likewise, their political importance is highlighted by the fact that the court offered funerals to Lun Gongren and Lun Weixian, a privilege only granted to distinguished officials. The political and military role of the Lun clan is also clear from the inscriptions' content: since their arrival at the Tang court, the mem-

bers of the mGar clan were recognized for the role they played in the Tibetan Empire, and they were entrusted with important posts and titles; both at court and in different provinces of the Empire, the Lun held highly renowned charges. From charges in the imperial guards at the capital to the military responsibility over prefectures in different parts of the Chinese Empire, the Chinese rulers appreciated and rewarded the military skills of the Lun. This esteem seems to get bigger one generation after the other; the last generation of the Lun clan we have seen held very prestigious posts at the Chinese court like the charge of Supreme Pillar of the State but also posts at the head of the Censorate as well as in different ministries. This trend toward increase in rank was accompanied by a tendency to have more and more administrative charges rather than military ones. Lun Gongren had essentially military responsibilities, while his successors received important titles, beginning with his own son Lun Chengjie who, after having taken part in the repression of the An Lushan rebellion, was named Commandery Prince but also Grand Mentor of the Heir Apparent. Lun Chengjie's descendant, Lun Weixian, was made Supreme Pillar of the State and was appointed to the Court of Imperial Sacrifices while he had the military charge of the Fengxiang prefecture. Lun Boyan, the recipient of the last inscription, was Prefect of Tanzhou and was Military Commissioner of the same area.

This increase in the quality of titles and posts coincided also with a geographical shift. Lun Gongren's responsibilities were strictly connected with the western part of the Chinese Empire or the control of the frontiers and it seems that his foreign origins were exploited in military confrontations with the barbarians. His son, Lun Chengjie, was still in charge of the northern regions and was appointed Commandery Prince in Wuwei, in modern Gansu. In the same province was also the charge of Lun Weixian, who was Military Commissioner of Fengxiang prefecture. Things seem to have changed with Lun Weixian's son, Ti, who had a military charge in Jiangsu province and with Lun Boyan who was Prefect and Military Commissioner of the north-eastern area, around Beijing. The Chinese court was probably using the Lun family's experience and knowledge of the Gansu and Qinghai lands and people in order to deal with the northern foreigners. However, this is no longer the case with the last generations of the family. The barbarian origins of the family are also gradually forgotten. This is highlighted by the way in which their origins and their clan are described in the funerary inscriptions, as well as the way their funerals were organized. While Lun Gongren had a ceremony that included strong references to his Tibetan origins, Lun Weixian and Lun Boyan's inscriptions do not mention this kind of ritual at all.

Along with the improvement in the importance of charges and a

movement towards the eastern part of the Tang Empire, there is another kind of shift that could be observed in these inscriptions: it concerns the origins of the Lun clan. From the first inscription to the last one, we can observe that the memory of the clan is gradually replaced. In the first text we can still observe how the origins of Lun Gongren were strictly connected to his birthplace and the ancestor of his clan: mGar sTong rtsan Yul zung. In Lun Boyan's inscription, the figure of *blon po* mGar is no longer mentioned. The memory of the mGar origins is also only vaguely evoked and the Tibetan lands were just mentioned as the western lands, inhabited by the barbarians.

As the political and military posts got more and more important and the family relocated far in the East, the memory of the mGar clan shifted. The implication based on these inscriptions, the genre of which must be taken into account, is that in the second half of the 9th century, the Lun clan was entirely Sinicized.

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The *rDzogs chen* Doctrine of the Three Gnoses (*ye shes gsum*): An Analysis of Klong chen pa's Exegesis and His Sources¹

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Introduction: *rDzogs chen* Gnoseology and its Role in Tibetan Intellectual History

The view of *rDzogs chen*, or Atiyoga, the ultimate vehicle of both rNying ma pa and Bon po, describes the Absolute, the Primordial Base (*gdod ma'i gzhi*), as endowed with "Three Gnoses" (*ye shes gsum ldan*): the Essence which is empty (*ngo bo stong pa*), the Nature which is clear (*rang bzhin gsal ba*) and the Compassion which is unobstructed or all-pervading (*thugs rje ma 'gags pa / kun khyab*). Within the three series of *rDzogs chen* (*Sems sde*, *Klong sde*, *Man ngag sde*), it is especially in the third one, the "Series of Secret Instructions" (*Man ngag sde*), that these topics have been fully developed.²

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² The names of Essence and Nature are sometimes used reversely in *Sems sde* literature such as in the *Tantra of the All-Accomplishing King* (*Kun byed rgyal po'i rgyud*) (Achar 2005: 64, n. 3). In this paper we focuses on Klong chen pa's exegesis of the Three Gnoses. And as a matter of fact, he relies essentially on *Man ngag sde* sources. Thus, the genesis of the doctrine of the Three Gnoses within the Three Series of *rDzogs chen* remains for a future investigation. We should note that the Three Gnoses have also been used to categorize the Three Series. In the Bon po tradition, Yongdzin Lupon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (2012: 190-193) equates *Klong sde* with the empty Essence, *Sems sde* with the clear Nature, and *Man ngag sde* with their inseparability. We have not found yet such an interesting and straightforward model in Klong chen pa but in GThDz 1131.2-1132.4, the latter defines the Three Series as an ordered progression from (1) the "gathering [of all perception] into the Expanse in the great freedom of extremes, non-duality" (*gnysis med mtha' grol chen por dbyings su sdud pa*) (= *Sems sde*), (2) "the entrance into the great Primordial Purity, pure and equal Expanse (*dbyings dag mnyam ka dag chen po la 'jug pa*) (= *Klong sde*), and (3) "how to remain in the pure Expanse of the

They are actually present throughout its literature, the so-called *Seventeen Tantras*, later systematized for the posterity by the great adept Klong chen Rab 'byams Dri med 'od zer (1308-1364). The doctrine of the Three Gnoses serves to define the most abridged definition of the Primordial Base. Actually, the many explanations can be subsumed under these three categories, as reports Klong chen pa with a quotation from the *Guirland of Pearls* (*Mu tig phreng ba*):³

There are many explanations about the aspects of the Natural State. But [in essence,] they are the three kinds of Gnosis.

The doctrine of the Three Gnoses is thus central to *rDzogs chen*. But even if its general characterization is now well-known, it has rarely been treated as such. In this regard secondary literature has tended to reflect how the subject is generally treated in primary sources.⁴ But because of its importance, actual depth, and philosophical impact in Tibetan intellectual history, the idea of the authors of the present paper was that the doctrine of the Three Gnoses deserves a special attention in itself. On the basis of previous achievements in the field,⁵ we have considered the possibilities and interest of a thorough examination of its nature and possible origins. For practical reasons, we have decided first to focus on its exegesis in Klong chen pa's works and its sources, by collecting, combining and analyzing different passages on this topic. This defines the scope of the present paper.

The "Three Gnoses" forms a category unique to *rDzogs chen*. Through the medium of such a trinity, they express its special view: that of the "indivisibility of Primordial Purity and Spontaneous Accomplishment" (*ka dag lhun grub dbyer med*): the "Great Unique Sphere" (*thig le nyag gcig chen po*). The decisive point of this view is

pure and great natural luminosity of Spontaneous Accomplishment" (*lhun grub rang gsal chen po dag pa'i dbyings la ji ltar gnas pa*) (=Man ngag sde).

³ ZGP 83.2-3: *Mu tig phreng ba las | gnas lugs rnam pa mang bshad kyang || ye shes rnam pa gsum yin no ||*. Cf. *Mu tig phreng ba* 577.1: *gnas lugs bsam gyis mi khyab kyang || ye shes rnam pa gsum yin no ||*. The original *tantra* makes a contrast between the inconceivable Absolute and the three concepts of Gnoses.

⁴ The model of the Three Gnoses is largely distributed at the various levels of *rDzogs chen* discourse and practice, but it is rarely developed in itself. Moreover, its mentions can be quite repetitive. For these reasons, the present study required the consideration of a vast array of texts, and the careful combination of many short passages.

⁵ In this aim, the authors are greatly indebted to the pioneer works of Herbert Guenther (1983), Samten Gyaltsen Karmay (1988), as well as of David Germano (1992), and Jean-Luc Achard, the latter having analyzed the Three Gnoses in depth, in connection to the notion of the Base (1999), its seven interpretations (2003), its manifestations (2005), and the problem of the apparition of ignorance (2008), etc.

that the two aspects of Emptiness (*stong pa'i cha*) and Clarity (*gsal ba'i cha*), defining respectively *ka dag* and *lhun grub*, Essence and Nature, are indivisible since the origin (*gdod nas dbyer med*).⁶ The third Gnosis, Compassion, forms thus in a sense a middle term expressing this indivisibility. In the following quotation, Klong chen pa captures the essential philosophical meaning of the Three Gnoses:⁷

Essence being empty (*stong pa*), substances or characteristics are not established.

Nature being clear (*gsal ba*), the own essence of the manifestation of primordial radiance is not rejected.

Compassion, being Pure Awareness (*rig pa*), remains the unobstructed (*ma 'gags pa*) basis of the complete arising as knowing Gnosis.

The doctrine of the Three Gnoses expresses thus in a unique way the transcendence of the extremes of existence (through the non-establishment of substances and characteristics) and non-existence (through the non-rejection of appearances), and the confrontation of the intrinsic presence of a gnoseological element at the heart of *rDzogs chen* soteriology: "Compassion" defined as "Pure Awareness".

While the questions of the origins of the *Man ngag sde*⁸ are beyond the limited scope of the present paper, we would like to suggest that the "Buddhization"⁹ of *rDzogs chen*, a process culminating in the works of Klong chen pa, is inseparable from a complementary tendency of the "*rDzogs chen*-ization" of Buddhism, at least in some Tibetan schools and trends. In both tendencies, the doctrine of the Three Gnoses appears to be paradigmatic.

In his study of classical *rDzogs chen*, David Higgins observes a "global reconfiguration of the entire Buddhist path around the guiding topos of primordial knowing [=Gnosis] and its existential disclo-

⁶ They have never been separated, and thus do not have to be re-united by artificial means. Their direct realization, as they are, forms the Path of the reintegration of the individual into its primordial condition, the natural freedom beyond ignorance, passions, *karma*, and the suffering of cyclic existence.

⁷ ThChDz 148b3-4: *ngo bo stong pas dngos po dang mtshan mar ma grub / rang bzhin gsal bas ye gdangs snang ba'i rang ngo ma dor / thugs rje rig pas mkhyen pa ye shes su rgyas pa'i 'char gzhi ma 'gags par gnas te /*.

⁸ Whether Bon, rNying ma, or both with a common source which can possibly be Śaiva (Achard 1999); but probably not Chan, unless we accept the evolutionist theory stating that its combination with tantrism led to the formation of *rDzogs chen*. But the specificity of *thod rgal*'s theory, esoteric anatomy, and practices, as shown by Achard (*id.*) give stronger credit to the thesis of an independent tradition that has nevertheless interacted with all the others.

⁹ By this, we mean the harmonization of *rDzogs chen* with Buddhist sūtric and tantric systems and vocabulary.

sure.”¹⁰ According to him, *rDzogs chen* gnoseology, distinguishing mind (*sems: citta*) and Gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*, which he translates as “primordial knowing”), formed thus a central hermeneutical tool in Klong chen pa’s works to harmonize the various levels of Buddhist teachings and practices.¹¹ While the *Man ngag sde* texts make complex distinctions and classifications of Gnoses, integrating and reorganizing *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* categories, Higgins observes that in this system, the Three Gnoses “provide the framework for understanding all the others.”¹²

An exemplary case of *rDzogs chen*-ization may be also seen in the treatment by rNying ma scholars of the Tibetan controversy about whether it is the Second Wheel of the *Dharma* or the Third Wheel of the *Dharma* that is of definitive meaning (*nges don: nītārtha*).¹³ This complementarity is precisely seen as that of the empty aspect (*stong pa’i cha*) and the luminous aspect (*gsal ba’i cha*), based on the *rDzogs chen* view of their primordial indivisibility. And Dorje Wangchuk even concludes that the view of the *Tathāgatagarbha* for rNying ma

¹⁰ Higgins: 136. Higgins has described in particular the ten modes of Gnoses found in the *sPros bral don gsal* and the abridged *Thig le kun gsal*. The problem of the Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism is also well phrased when he writes that the “reception and interpretation of a remarkably heterogeneous amalgam of Buddhist teachings that had been developing for more than a millennium and over an entire subcontinent called for unusually innovative forms of doctrinal synthesis and practical guidance.” In this regards, he adds that: “In exploring the soteriological implications of the principal *rDzogs chen* distinction between dualistic mind (*sems*) and primordial knowing (*ye shes*), I am proposing that it be viewed as an indispensable hermeneutical key to understanding how rNying ma authors sought to synthesize divergent, and at times seemingly contradictory, models of Buddhist path within a single framework of study and practice” (226-227).

¹¹ *rDzogs chen*, the ninth vehicle of the main rNying ma and Bon po doxographies, is precisely distinguished from the others on the basis of the distinction between mind and Gnosis. So when this becomes the hermeneutical key to explain Buddhism as a whole, *rDzogs chen* represents a meta-point of view for interpreting all other vehicles.

¹² Higgins 108-110. Achard (1999:112-116) has shown the various classifications of *rig pa*, Pure Awareness, in five or fifteen categories. The Three Gnoses belong to the “Pure Awareness Dwelling in the Base” (*gzhi gnas kyi rig pa*). Their indivisibility is also constantly reminded with special expressions such as the “Unique Pure Awareness” (*rig pa nyag gcig*).

¹³ Dorji Wangchuk (2004) has exposed in his analysis of the rNying ma exegesis of the *Tathāgatagarbha* that those two currents philosophically represented by the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools (also seen as representative of respectively the negative/intellectualist/apophatic vs. positive/mystical/cataphatic approaches, or in Tibetan controversial terms as *rang stong* or *gzhan stong*) were generally seen as complementary for the rNying ma authors. See the position integrating *rang stong* and *gzhan stong* of a proto-*ris med* figure such as Prajñārāśmi (’Phreng po gter ston Shes rab ’od zer, 1518-1584) in his *Ambrosia of Study, Reflection and Meditation* (*Thos bsam dang sgom pa ’chi med kyi bdud rtsi*). Deroche forthcoming 1.

authors relies ultimately on the *rDzogs chen* definition of the Primordial Base endowed with the Three Gnoses.¹⁴

When the *Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka* had become generally accepted in Tibet as the philosophical summit, its notion of “absence of discursive elaborations” (*spros med: niṣprapañca*) tended to be correlated with the *rDzogs chen* definition of Primordial Purity (*ka dag*) by rNying ma authors. But the idea that the view of the *Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka* is the “indivisibility of the two truths” (*bden gnyis dbyer med*) as exposed by Mi pham, and others before him, may actually reflect the view of *rDzogs chen*, and the effort to harmonize it with *Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka*.¹⁵ The necessity for the rNying ma school vis-à-vis the gSar ma schools to show the Buddhist orthodoxy of its treasured *rDzogs chen*, formed the context for such arrangement.¹⁶ But it is the *Yogācārā-Madhyamaka* of Śāntideva, central during the first assimilation of Buddhism in Tibet, and revived in the 19th century so-called *ris med* movement, that reflects more on the plane of sūtric discourse the complementarity of the two aspects of emptiness and clarity, inseparable in the *rDzogs chen* meta-point of view.

In many respects, the so-called 19th century impartial (*ris med*) movement, encompassing both Bon and Buddhism, rNying ma and gSar ma schools, can be seen as centered on *rDzogs chen*.¹⁷ The con-

¹⁴ Wangchuk (2004: 202-203).

¹⁵ Because no Sanskrit sūtric equivalent can be found for this expression. Prajñārāsmi, in his *Lamp Illuminating the Two Truths*, following clearly a *Prāsaṅgika* approach, explains that the realization of the two truths follows two steps: (1) the two truths are first distinguished, then (2) the two truths are realized as indivisible (*dbyer med*). See Deroche: 2011. But we may add that in *rDzogs chen*, the inseparability is presented since the beginning.

¹⁶ Regarding the exegesis of *rDzogs chen*, it seems that the Bon po school, historically even more marginalized than the rNying ma school in Tibet, took a totally different position as it is now better known in the West through the activity of traditional teachers like Yongs 'dzin slob dpon bstan 'dzin rNam dag Rin po che. It appears that the Bon po school in its contemporary state has maintained a stronger differentiation between *sūtra*, *tantra* and *rDzogs chen*, in terms of Base, Path and Fruit. In this line of thought, only the view of *rDzogs chen* can be strictly defined as the indivisibility (*dbyer med*) of the empty and luminous aspects. The view of the Base in the *Madhyamaka* cannot be the indivisibility of the truths, since they need to be differentiated in order to practice alternatively (and not simultaneously) the two accumulations necessary to obtain the two Buddha-bodies in this system. Similarly, the view of *tantra* is seen as the conjunction (*zung 'jug*) of wisdom and means (*thabs dang shes rab*), or bliss and emptiness (*bde stong*), with the artificial creation of the illusory body (*sgyu lus*) as the basis of the formal bodies. In *rDzogs chen* the sole contemplation of the Natural State (*gnas lugs*) indivisible from its self-manifestations (*rang snang*), forms the unique way to obtain complete Buddhahood.

¹⁷ Deroche forthcoming 2. The *ris med* movement's eclectic tendencies have been also criticized from the perspective of a radical *rDzogs chen* point of view, under the critique of the cliché: “the Great *Madhyamaka*, *Mahāmudrā*, and *rDzogs pa chen*”

junction of *Mahāmudrā* and *rDzogs chen* (*phyag rdzogs zung 'jug*) has been the hallmarks of the *bka'*-*rnying ma* eclectic trends that have anticipated and led to the emergence of the 19th century *ris med* movement, connecting also the levels of *sūtra* and *tantra* within the category of *Madhyamaka* (*rang stong* and *gzhan stong*, or *sūtric* and *tantric Madhyamaka*), as well as with the non-gradual *Mahāmudrā* (of the *sūtra*-s or the *tantra*-s) taught by *sGam po pa* and his successors. Such *bka'* *rnying* eclectic trends give thus primacy to the direct introduction (*ngo sprod*) to the Natural State. And even the vocabulary of such confrontation in the *Mahāmudrā* of the *Dwags po bka' brgyud*, as well as of the *Shangs pa bka' brgyud*,¹⁸ appears very close to *rDzogs chen*, notably in reference to the Three Gnooses equated with the *trikāya*.

But the doctrine of the Three Gnooses could be equally seen as reflecting the Buddhicization of *rDzogs chen*, that is to say the use of classical Buddhist terms for conceptions and practices of a different level (and possibly different origins). Thus, the very terminology of the “Essence which is empty” (*ngo bo stong pa*) and “Nature which is luminous” (*rang bzhin gsal ba*) could be considered as markers of the use of *Madhyamaka* and *Yogācāra* notions in order to adapt the teachings of *rDzogs chen* within a Buddhist discourse and setting. The close association of the Three Gnooses with the *trikāya* is another example of such Buddhicization.

po are the same” (*dbu ma chen po phyag rgya chen po rdzogs pa chen po gcig pa red*). See Yondzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche 2012: in particular 57-106. See also Achard 1999: 69 n. 34. The *Bon po* critique of this cliché is that these three topics belong respectively to the three categories of *sūtra*, *tantra* and *rDzogs chen*. And thus they are definitely not considered to be the same. In this regard, a major statement is given in the celebrated *Aspiration to Mahāmudrā* by the 3rd Karmapa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339), who is also famous for his *rDzogs chen* transmission and lineage known as the *Karma snying thig*, and thus exemplary of the highest level of integration of *Man ngag sde* teachings into the *Karma bka' brgyud* school. Indeed, Rang byung rdo rje's point of view on the unity of *Madhyamaka*, *Mahāmudrā* and *rDzogs chen* is much more subtle and profound than a naïve formulation of identity like in the cliché quoted above. He writes (*Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i smon lam*, 6.4-5): *yid byed bral ba 'di ni phyag rgya che || mtha' dang bral ba dbu ma chen po yin || 'di ni kun 'dus rdzogs chen zhes kyang bya || gcig shes kun don rtogs pa'i gdengs thob shog* /. “Free from mentation: this is the Great Seal. Free from extremes, this is the Great Middle. This, all inclusive, is called also the Great Perfection. May I, by knowing one, obtain the certainty of the realization of the meaning of all.” This expression *gcig shes kun don rtogs* (“knowing one, realizing the meaning of all”) may also be correlated with the *rDzogs chen* principle of *gcig shes kun grol*, “knowing one, liberating all.” On this principle see Karmay 1988: 198; Achard 1999: 150.

¹⁸ We should note that *Khyung po rnal 'byor*, at the origin of the *Shangs pa* lineage, was first a mature *Bon po* and *rDzogs chen* master before going to search the *Dharma* in India during his fifties.

The fact that *rDzogs chen* is not found in available Sanskrit sources leaves us only with speculation concerning the possible Sanskrit terms corresponding to the Three Gnoses. Considering the association with *Madhyamaka* philosophy and the doctrine of Emptiness, the Sanskrit equivalent for the first Gnosis, the Essence (*ngo bo*), could be *svabhāva*. Then *Yogācāra*'s notions such as *prakṛtiprabhāsvaracitta*, would suggest that the second Gnosis, Nature (*rang bzhin*), especially qualified as luminous (*gsal ba: prabhāsvara*), might well correspond to *prakṛti*. But the last Gnosis, Compassion (*thugs rje*), remains much more complex and giving any Sanskrit usual equivalents such as *karuṇā*, even more hypothetical than for the other two. It has been pointed out that, in this context of the Primordial Base, this third Gnosis does not bear the same ethical connotations of *Mahāyāna* discourse, with the virtues and salvific capacities of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Some have thus opted for the translation as "Energy" (Norbu & Adriano 1999). But others have shown that its description already implied a providential character and maintained "Compassion." (Germano 1992; Achard: 1999). Another way has been to integrate both aspects of inherent dynamism and universal benevolence, with translations such as "resonating concern" (Guenther: 1983/2001), "compassionate resonance" (Germano 1992) or "compassionate responsiveness" (Higgins 2013). We have decided here to keep the single and simple word Compassion and examine its complexity. The reason is that in this context, the central definition of *thugs rje* is of gnoseological nature, being equated to the key notion of Pure Awareness (*rig pa*). Moreover, like the term "Energy," interpretative translations such as "compassionate responsiveness," seem rather to express the "dynamic power of Compassion/Pure Awareness" (*thugs rje'i rtsal, rig pa'i rtsal*) which is to be distinguished from Compassion itself. If it were not a little bit odd, a word-by-word translation of *thugs rje* as the "Mind-Lord," the "Lord (*rje*) of the Mind/Heart (*thugs*)" or the enlightened Mind which is the Lord (since *thugs* is honorific), may actually be preferred in order to address the gnoseological problem at stake with the third Gnosis. And such a translation would keep the connotations of "noble mind" or "good heart" associated with the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit *karuṇā* and others related terms.¹⁹

The categories of the Three Gnoses, as well as the *rDzogs chen* tradition, belong more generally to the category of mysticism or esotericism, with the insistence of a direct presentation by a qualified master, devotion and the blessing of a spiritual lineage, the consideration of a

¹⁹ See Germano (1992: 852-857) for insightful remarks on *thugs rje* in the context of the Three Gnoses.

subtle anatomy, the application of yogic techniques, and visionary experiences.²⁰ Nevertheless, the characterization of the Base with the Three Gnoses brings up the philosophical problem of ascribing cognitive or gnoseological elements to the Absolute. As studied by Orna Almogi, this question has a complex history in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, with the debate of whether a Buddha, in its ultimate status, possesses Gnosis or not.²¹ As we shall see the doctrine of the Three Gnoses can be seen as the *rDzogs chen* theoretical and practical resolution of this problem. It may not be surprising that for Klong chen pa, the thesis stating that a Buddha possesses Gnosis was considered to be the correct one.²² But even if Essence, Nature and Compassion, being indivisible, are all called “Gnoses,” it is particularly the examination of the third and middle term, “Compassion,” that fully addresses the gnoseological problem.

We shall now take a closer look at the Three Gnoses, following Klong chen pa’s exegesis and his quotations from the *tantra-s* of the *Man ngag sde*.²³ We will proceed first with an examination of the Three Gnoses dwelling in the primordial Base. Then, we will see how the Three Gnoses manifest in two ways: as the ground for the *trikāya* of a perfect Buddha, or as the source of the *samsāric* universe and beings. After, we will analyze how the shift of recognition which distinguishes these two existential options is addressed in the doctrine of the Three Gnoses, by a special focus on “Compassion.” Finally, we shall consider how the Three Gnoses are reflected on the structure of the *rDzogs chen* Path that leads to the Fruit of a perfect Buddha.

1. The Three Gnoses Defining the Base

The definitions of the Base according to the Three Gnoses are extremely frequent and often repetitive. Klong chen pa quotes several

²⁰ As pointed out by Achard (1999: 213), the characteristic of *rDzogs chen* is that the Base is directly perceived through the senses (*dbang po mngon gsum*), i.e. the eyes.

²¹ See in particular Almogi 2009: “Chapter Three: The Controversy Surrounding the Existence of Gnosis.”

²² See Higgins (2013: 131) for references.

²³ His main sources about the Three Gnoses are the *Seventeen Tantra-s* of *Man ngag sde*. As for the *Seventeen Tantra-s*, nine *tantra-s* (*sGra thal ’gyur*, *Mu tig phreng ba*, *bKra shis mdzes ldan*, *Rig pa rang shar*, *Kun bzang klong drug*, *sNying gi me long*, *Nyi zla kha sbyor*, *Nor bu phra bkod*, and *Thugs kyi me long*) are quoted concerning the Three Gnoses. But we have not found any quotation about the Three Gnoses from the eight others (*rDzogs pa rang byung*, *Rig pa rang grol*, *Seng ge rtsal rdzogs*, *Yi ge med pa*, *sGron ma ’bar ba*, *Ngo sprod spras pa*, *sKu gdung ’bar ba*, and *Rin chen spungs pa*). In this paper, we focus more on Klong chen pa’s quotations than on the original sources. Thus, extracts from *rDzogs chen tantra-s* are given only for reference and kept for future investigation.

times *The Mirror of the Heart of Vajrasattva*, giving as well the Three Gnosés' most general qualifications:

Know all phenomena of the Base as the Three: namely, Essence,
Nature, and Compassion.
Moreover, know all phenomena of the Essence as empty.
Know all phenomena of the Nature as clear.
Know all phenomena of the Compassion as all-pervasive.²⁴

The Three Gnosés define the Base in its very primordiality, before any manifestation. This original state is known in *rDzogs chen* terminology as the Youthful Vase Body. *The Tantra of Self-Apparition* is often quoted by Klong chen pa in this regard.²⁵

In the past, when I did not exist, the Base abided in this way.
It was called "the Base, the Great Primordial Purity," and abided
as [having] three aspects: Essence, Nature, and Compassion.

²⁴ ZGP 69.5-6: *sNying gi me long las / gzhi'i chos thams cad ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum du shes par gyis shig / de yang ngo bo'i chos thams cad stong par shes par gyis shig / rang bzhin gyi chos thams cad gsal bar shes par gyis shig / thugs rje'i chos thams cad kun la khyab par shes par gyis shig / ces so //*. Cf. *sNying gi me long* 576.3-4: *gzhi'i chos thams cad ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum du shes par gyis shig //*. *Ibid.* 576.5-6: *ngo bo'i chos thams cad stong par shes par gyis shig // rang bzhin gyis (sic, read gyi) chos thams cad gsal bar shes par gyis shig // thugs rje'i chos thams cad sems can thams cad la khyab par ngo shes par gyis shig //*. The first part of this quotation is also found for example in *TshDDz* 796.5-797.1. The general qualifications of the Three Gnosés are repeated constantly, as in *Mu tig phreng ba*, "the Base [is endowed with three aspects:] Essence, Nature, and Compassion which arises all-pervasively. *GThDz* 1215.1-2: *de nyid las / gzhi ni ngo bo rang bzhin dang // thugs rje kun la khyab cing 'char // ces so //*. Cf. *Mu tig phreng ba* 572.6: *gzhi ni ngo bo rang bzhin dang // thugs rje kun la khyab cing 'char //*.

²⁵ ZGP 75.2-5: *Rang shar las / nga med pa'i sngon rol na gzhi'i gnas lugs 'di ltar gnas te / gzhi ka dag chen po zhes bya ba ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum du gnas so // ngo bo mi 'gyur ba'i ye shes ma 'gags par gsal ba gzhon nu bum pa'i sku'i gnas lugs zhes bya'o // rang bzhin 'od lnga'i snang ba ma 'gags pa'o // thugs rje'i snang ba ni dper nam mkha' sprin med pa lta bu'o // de dag ni ngo bo ka dag gi gnas lugs zhes bya ste // rgya gar yang ma chad / phyogs gang du yang ma lhung ba'o // zhes so //*. Cf. *Rig pa rang shar* 99.6-100.1: *nga med pa'i sngon rol na // gzhi 'di ltar gnas te // gzhi ka dag chen po zhes bya ste // ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum gnas so // ngo bo de mi 'gyur ba'i ye shes ma 'gags par gsal ba gzhon nu bum pa'i sku'i gnas lugs zhes bya'o // rang bzhin 'od lnga'i snang ba ma 'gags pa'o // thugs rje'i snang ba ni dper na sprin med pa lta bu'o // de ni ka dag gi gnas lugs zhes bya ste // rgya gar yang ma chad phyogs gar yang ma lhung ba'o //*. These passages are quoted also in *ThChDz* 152b4-5 and *TshDDz* 801.2-5 with few variants. For a French translation of this quotation, see Achard: 65-66. The expression of the Base of Primordial Purity defined according to the Three Gnosés, is also found in *TshDDz* 796.3: *Rang shar las / ka dag chen po'i gzhi de la yang ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum dang ldan / zhes dang /*. Cf. *Rig pa rang shar* 167.1-2: *ka dag chen po'i gzhi la yang // ye shes ma 'gags gsal ba'o // de yang ngo bo mi 'gyur dang // rang bzhin gsal bas kun la khyab // ye shes rnam dag ngo bo la // ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rjes (sic, read rje) gsum dang ldan //*.

The Essence, which is the changeless Gnosis, shined unobstructedly.

It was called “the Natural State of the Youthful Vase Body”.

The Nature, manifestation of the Five Colours, was unobstructed.

The manifestation of Compassion was like the cloudless sky.

This is called “the Natural State of the Essence, Primordial Purity”.

And it is not limited or not partial at all.

This condition is prior to the distinction of recognition or non-recognition, with the consequent apparition of Buddhas or deduced beings.²⁶ This original condition before the manifestation of various objects is particularly defined as the “Primordial Purity.” This is the mode of the Essence. The Essence is here categorized as the changeless Gnosis.²⁷ In other sources, the Essence in its gnoseo-

²⁶ Another example: ThChDz 149a4-149b1: *bKra shis mdzes ldan chen po'i rgyud las / rtogs pa'i sangs rgyas ma byung / ma rtogs pa'i sems can ma byung ba'i snga rol na / rig pa rang byung gi ye shes gzhi las ma g.yos te / rkyen med pa'i snang ba gsum dang thabs gcig tu bzhugs so // de nas yang rig pa'i ye shes nyid kyis / rang gi 'dug tshul gyi gnas lugs 'di gsungs so // skye [sic, read kye] snang ba chen po yangs pa'i klong 'di ni ma g.yos pa'i chos kyi sku chen po las / ma 'khrul pa'i sangs rgyas chen por bzhugs so // ngo bo'i sku ma 'gags par gnas te / ngo bo mi 'gyur / thabs gsang pa / ma g.yos / mi g.yo / ma bskyod pa / snang ba thams cad dus gcig la rdzogs pa / ye shes thams cad skad cig la rdzogs pa / sku thams cad smin par gnas pa / 'od kyi snang ba thams cad ma bsgrigs par gsal ba / gnas lugs kyi snang ba la / snang thabs kyis ma bsgrigs pa ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum rgya ma chad par yongs su rdzogs pa chen po'o //* Kong chen pa quotes the great tantra of the *bKra shis mdzes ldan*: “In the past, when Buddhas who have realized [the Base] and sentient beings who have not realized [it] did not emerge, the Pure Awareness, Self-Originated Gnosis, not moving from the Base, abided together with three unconditioned “presences” (*snang ba*). Then, the Gnosis of Pure Awareness itself told about the Natural State of its “presencing” (*'dug tshul*): Ho! This infinite expanse of the great presence abides as the great Buddha who has not been bewildered from the great body of the reality that is unmovable. The Body of Essence abides unobstructedly. Its essence is changeless. Its means are secret. It did not move, it will not move. It is unshaking. All appearances are simultaneously perfect. All gnoses are instantly perfect. All Buddha-Bodies are matured. All the luminous manifestations are radiating without being obscured. In the presence of its Natural State, the three [aspects of] Essence, Nature, and Compassion, are not obscured by means of appearances. They are the Great Perfection, vast and without limitations. [...]” These passages are quoted also in TshDDz 801.5-802.5

²⁷ This definition is also found in another quotation: “The Essence is changeless in the three times. The Nature is always unobstructed. The Compassion completely illuminates everywhere.” ZGP 83.1-2: *Nor bu phra bkod las / ngo bo dus gsum 'gyur ba med // rang bzhin rtag tu 'gags pa med // thugs rje kun la rab snang zhing // zhes pa dang /*. Cf. *Nor bu phra bkod* 484.4: *ngo bo dus gsum 'gyur ba med // rang bzhin rtag tu 'gag pa med // thugs rje kun la rab snang ba'o //*. Note here that the epithet “unobstructed” is given to Nature, while it is more generally attributed to Compassion. But the relation between Nature and Compassion is especially close since Clarity, or “luminosity,” is semantically connected to the “lucidity” of Intelligence or Pure Awareness.

logical status, is particularly equated with Primordial Purity, while the Nature is connected with Spontaneous Accomplishment. Compassion appears thus here to be a middle term between the two elements of *ka dag* and *lhun grub*, as we will examine more closely below. Klong chen pa quotes the *Tantra of the Union of Sun and Moon*:²⁸

There are Three Gnoses abiding in the Base:

- [1] Essence, the Gnosis of Primordial Purity,
- [2] Nature, the Gnosis of Spontaneous Accomplishment,
- [3] Compassion, the Gnosis of Self-Manifestation.

These definitions of the Three Gnoses are also explained metaphorically in Klong chen pa:²⁹

What are the examples about [the Three Gnoses]? Essence, the Gnosis of Primordial Purity is like the utterly pure sky. Nature, the Gnosis of Spontaneous Accomplishment is like the transparent ocean. Compassion, the All-Pervasive Gnosis is like a stainless jewel.

But all these definitions are just the conventional characterization of the Base:

According to the *Tantra of the Six Expanses*: through the three kinds of Gnosis itself, characteristics of the Base are exposed with words.³⁰

Only the use of words within a discursive and thus diachronic exposure shows the Three Gnoses to be separated. But all sources insist on their indivisibility (*dbyer med*) in the synchronic and timeless mode of the unique Pure Awareness. According to the *Tantra of the Penetration of Sound*:³¹

²⁸ ZGP 72.3-4: *Nyi zla kha sbyor las / gzhi gnas kyi ye shes ni gsum ste / ngo bo ka dag gi ye shes / rang bzhin lhun grub kyi ye shes dang / thugs rje rang snang gi ye shes so / zhes bshad do //*. Cf. *Nyi zla kha sbyor* 406.7: *gzhi gnas kyi ye shes ni gsum ste // ngo bo ka dag gi ye shes dang // rang bzhin lhun grub kyi ye shes dang // thugs rje rang snang gi ye shes so //*.

²⁹ TshDDz 810.3-5: *dpe ji ltar du bzhugs na / ngo bo ka nas dag pa'i ye shes nam mkha' rnam par dag pa lta bur bzhugs / rang bzhin lhun gyis grub pa'i ye shes rgya mtsho dangs pa lta bur bzhugs / thugs rje kun la khyab pa'i ye shes nor bu dri ma med pa lta bur bzhugs so //*.

³⁰ TshDDz 796.4-5: *Klong drug pa las / ye shes nyid ni rnam gsum gyis // gzhi yi khyad par tshig tu bstan // zhes pa dang /*. Cf. *Kun bzang klong drug* 649.7: *ye shes nyid ni rnam gsum gyis // gzhi yi khyad par tshig tu bstan //*.

³¹ ZGP 70.6-71.1: *Thal 'gyur las / ye shes rang ngor gnas pa las // gsum gyi tshul du dbyer med do // zhes pa dang / ye shes rnam dag rang gi ngo bo la // ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum dang ldan // zhes so //*. Cf. *sGra thal 'gyur*. 442.2-3: *ye shes rang ngor gnas // gsum*

Gnosis remaining in itself, is indivisible in three ways. And in the own essence of the utterly pure Gnosis, there are the three [aspects] of Essence, Nature, and Compassion.

The mode of this indivisibility and interrelation is exposed according to Klong chen pa:³²

Essence remains as the indivisibility of Emptiness and Clarity.
Nature remains as the indivisibility of Clarity and Emptiness.
Compassion remains as the indivisibility of Awareness and Emptiness.

Essence and Nature are thus intertwined, as the indivisibility of Emptiness and Clarity, Clarity and Emptiness, with an emphasis on Emptiness for the Essence, and Clarity for the Nature. Compassion appears here to be a middle term with the notion of Awareness, which is nevertheless inseparable from Emptiness. Emptiness thus qualifies here all terms. In another quotation, Compassion appears again as a middle term, this time phrased as the indivisibility of appearances and Emptiness:³³

The Essence, Gnosis of Primordial Purity, is free from all the conceptual constructions [produced out] of ignorance.
The Nature, Gnosis of Spontaneous Accomplishment, is empty and clear self-radiance.
The Compassion, all-pervasive Gnosis, is the unobstructed [inseparability] of appearances and Emptiness.

And we have seen already in the quotation of the *Tantra of Self-Apparition*, the indivisibility of the Three Gnoeses is also expressed as the absence of bias, partiality, that is to say the limitation of ex-

pa [sic] *gyis* [sic, read *gyi*] *tshul du dbyer med do* // . The second part is not found in the *sGra thal 'gyur* itself. The first sentence is quoted also in ZGP 82.1-3. It is found also with little addition in the TshDDz 796.3-4: *Thal 'gyur las / 'khor dang 'das pa mi gnas pa'i // chos nyid stong pa kun khyab pas // ye shes rang ngor gnas pa la // gsum gyi tshul du dbyer med do // zhes dang* / . "The empty Reality, in which there is not either cyclic existence or extinction, is all-pervasive. Therefore, the Gnosis abiding in itself is indivisible in three ways." Cf. *sGra thal 'gyur* 442.2-3: *'khor dang 'das la mi gnas pas // chos nyid stong pa kun khyab phyir // ye shes rang ngor gnas // gsum pa* [sic] *gyis* [sic, read *gyi*] *tshul du dbyer med do* // .

³² TshDDz 810.3: *ngo bo stong gsal dbyer med / rang bzhin gsal stong dbyer med / thugs rje rig stong dbyer med du bzhugs so* // .

³³ ZGP 72.1-2: *Klong gsal las / ngo bo ka dag ye shes ni // ma rig rtog pa kun dang bral // rang bzhin lhun grub ye shes ni // stong gsal rang mdangs nyid du gnas // thugs rje kun khyab ye shes ni // 'gags med snang stong nyid du gnas // zhes so* / . The part on Compassion is also found in ZGP 81.3.

treme to one side, either empty aspect, luminous aspect, or aware aspect. Klong chen pa quotes the *Tantra of the Luminous Expanse*, to insist on the fact that:³⁴

Because [the Base is at the same time] empty, clear, and unobstructed, it is not limited and partial.

Those three aspects encompass the empty essence, the potentialities and development of all manifestation. The following quotation of the *Tantra of the Penetration of Sound* shows the association of the Essence with the absence of characteristics, and the association of Nature and Compassion with the dynamism of manifestation. Nevertheless the Essence itself contains the potential of manifestation as it is the ultimate nature of manifestation which remains unaffected by it. On the other hand, even if Nature and Compassion are the active sources for manifestation, the sense of indetermination and absence of objectification remains central to their understanding. They are not separated with their manifestation, but at the same time not limited by individual aspects or sides.³⁵

[The Base] abides as [having] three aspects: the primordial Essence, Nature, and Compassion.

[1] Since the Essence abides as Buddha-Body, it is naturally accomplished without distinction and division into the aspects of [the Body of] Reality, [the Body of] Enjoyment, and [the Body of] Emanation. In it, there are no objects of mind such as the complexions of the Buddha-Bodies.

[2] The Nature, which makes possible that [everything] arise, [abides] in the manner of Lights. [They are] white, red, yellow, green and blue. [Nature,] not being biased with characteristics, is a natural accomplishment known as “unbiased.”

[3] Compassion is not ascertained one-sidedly as [something] like this other than the various apparitions. Because it manifests

³⁴ ZGP 75.1-2: *Klong gsal las / stong dang gsal dang mi 'gags phyir / rgya chad phyogs lhung med pa'o // zhes pa dang /*.

³⁵ ThChDz 149b7-150a2: *Thal 'gyur las / thog ma'i ngo bo rang bzhin dang // thugs rje rnam pa gsum du gnas // de yang ngo bo skur gnas pas // chos dang longs spyod sprul pa'i char // ma phyed 'byed pa med pa'i tshul // babs las grub pa nyid la yang // sku mdog la sogs blo yul med // rang bzhin 'char byed 'od kyi tshul // dka' dmar ser dang ljang mthing ni // mtshan ma ris can ma yin par // ris med shes bya'i babs las grub // thugs rje 'char ba sna tshogs las // 'di 'dra gcig tu nges med pas // sna tshogs snang phyir gzhi zhes bya // ces so //*. Cf. sGra thal 'gyur 472.4-7: *thog ma ngo bo rang bzhin dang // thugs rje rnam pa gsum du gnas // chos dang longs spyod sprul pa'i char // ma phyed 'byed pa med pa'i tshul // babs las grub pa nyid la yang // sku mdog la sogs blo yul med // rang bzhin 'char byed 'od kyi tshul // dkar dmar ser dang ljang 'thing ni // mtshan ma rigs can ma yin par // rigs med shes bya babs las grub // thugs rje 'char ba sna tshogs las // 'di 'dra gcig tu nges med pas // sna tshogs snang srid phyir gzhi zhes //*.

oneself in a variegated way, it is called the “Base.”

The conjunction of Emptiness and Clarity, Essence and Nature plus Compassion, is often compared to the diffraction of light within a crystal empty of objects and purely transparent.³⁶

2. Correlations with the Three Buddha-bodies

The correlation of the Three Gnoses with the Three Buddha-Bodies exposes the very principle of *rDzogs chen* stating that the Base contains in itself all the enlightened qualities, and that its sole contemplation forms the path to obtain the state of a complete Buddha, with the three dimensions of the *trikāya*. Essence is associated to the Body of Reality (*chos sku: dharmakāya*), Nature to the Body of Enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku: saṃbhogakāya*), and Compassion to the Body of Emanation (*sprul sku: nirmāṇakāya*).

Almogi (2009: 66) reviewed the discussion that the doctrine of the *trikāya* may have been elaborated due to the tension between homogeneity and heterogeneity, the Absolute and a Buddha's salvific activities, with the resolution of the middle term of the Body of Enjoyment, of celestial nature but formal, and designed for soteriological purposes. The doctrine of the Three Gnoses deals exactly with the same patterns, but its originality is to situate such a reconciliatory model within the scope of the Base, the Absolute itself.

If the nature of the correlation between the Three Gnoses and the Three Bodies is not just of a comparison, it is not easily defined as a simple identity. In some occurrences, the Gnoses are presented to belong to the Buddha-Bodies, with the use of the genetive, as in the following quotation of the *Mirror of the Heart of Samantabhadra*:³⁷

³⁶ See for example the following quotation, giving with few other similes of the Three Gnoses. *sNyan brgyud kyi rgyab chos chen mo zab don gnad kyi me long* 209.3-5: *bShad rgyud las / chos sku la ye shes nang gsal du gnas pa ni shel dang / de'i nang gi 'od lngar gsal ba bzhin no // gzhi la sku gsum rdzogs pa ni nyi ma'i snying po la 'od zer mi 'gags pa bzhin no // ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum gyi dpe ni rma bya'i sgong 'am/ nyi ma nyid dam / nam mkha'i sprin dang char pa bzhin no // yang na man shel bzhin no//*. “The way how Gnoses abide as inner clarity in the Body of Reality, is compared to a crystal and the diffraction of clarity in five lights within it. The way how the Three Buddha-Bodies are perfect in the Base is compared to the absence of obstruction of light rays in the core of the sun. Examples of the three, Essence, Nature, and Compassion are the egg of a peacock, the sun itself, clouds and rain in the sky. There is also the comparison to the crystal.”

³⁷ ZGP 82.6-83.1: *Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long las / chos sku'i ye shes bsam 'das brjod med dang // longs sku'i ye shes kha dog ma 'dres gsal // sprul sku'i ye shes cir yang bsgyur du btub / ces pa dang /*. Cf. *Thugs kyi me long* 585.2: *chos sku'i ye shes bsam 'das brjod med dang // longs sku'i ye shes kha dog ma 'dres gsal // sprul sku'i ye shes cir yang*

The Gnosis of the Body of Reality is inconceivable and ineffable.
 The Gnosis of the Body of Enjoyment [has] colours which shine
 distinctively.
 The Gnosis of the Body of Emanation can be transformed into
 anything.

But most generally, the Gnosés and Bodies are found in apposition,
 like in:³⁸

Primordial purity is the clear and empty non-conceptual Gnosis,
 similar to the utterly pure sky of the autumn. Specifically [it is
 endowed with three aspects]:
 The Essence, empty Gnosis, the Body of Reality;
 The Nature, clear Gnosis, the Enjoyment Body;
 The Compassion, self-illuminating Gnosis, the Emanation Body.

But in other passages, the Three Gnosés are more precisely defined as
 the “basis” (*gzhi*) for the Three Bodies, or their acquisition:³⁹

The Primordial Base [is endowed with] Essence, Nature and
 Compassion. Essence is empty, clear, and free from conceptual
 constructions, and the basis for the Body of Reality.
 Nature is great radiating light, [the inseparability of] appearances
 and Emptiness, and the basis for the Body of Enjoyment.
 Compassion is unobstructed, accompanied by Pure Awareness
 (*rig pa*) and the basis for the Body of Emanation.

It has been already shown that the *trikāya* can be also correlated with
 the complex *sNying thig* system of Gnosés in another way: in this al-
 ternative model, the Three Gnosés are equated with the sole Body of
 Reality as identified with the Primordial Base, the Five Gnosés of
Vajrayāna are equated with the Body of Enjoyment, and the Two
 Gnosés⁴⁰ with the Body of Emanation.⁴¹

bsgyur du btub //.

³⁸ ZGP 75.5-6: *thog ma'i ka dag de yang / ngo bo stong pa'i ye shes chos sku / rang bzhin
 gsal ba'i ye shes longs sku // thugs rje rang snang gi ye shes sprul sku / gsal stong rnam
 par mi rtog pa'i ye shes ston ka'i nam mkha' rnam par dag pa lta bu'o //.*

³⁹ ZGP 90.3-5: *gdod ma'i gzhi ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum gyi ngo bo stong gsal
 spros pa dang bral ba des chos sku'i gzhi byed do // rang bzhin 'od gsal snang stong chen
 po des longs sku'i gzhi byed do // thugs rje ma 'gags rig pa dang bcas pa des sprul sku'i
 gzhi byed do //.*

⁴⁰ In this context, the Two Gnosés are the knowledge of phenomena “as they are” (*ji
 lta ba*), and “as many as they are” (*ji snyed pa*), as qualifications of the omniscience
 of the Body of Emanation.

⁴¹ Achard 1999: 154-155. See Higgins 2013: 110, for a table of the complex presenta-
 tion of the *sNying thig* analysis of Gnosis in the *tantra*-s of the *Mu tig phreng ba*

But in the all-encompassing model of the Three Gnoses equated with the Three Bodies, the Five Gnoses can be subsumed under the Nature as well as other fivefold categories:⁴²

In the Nature, being the ground for their apparition, the Five Bodies, Five Families, Five Gnoses, Five Energies, Five Wisdoms, and Five Lights remain spontaneously accomplished.

Such overlapping classifications create a potentially infinite network of cross-references and significations.⁴³ The relation of Essence, Nature, and the manifestation of the Five Gnoses characterizes the next passage.⁴⁴

In the dimension of the Essence, which is like the pure sky of autumn, and which is non-conceptual Gnosis, abides the Nature. The Nature shines as the knowing Gnosis like a surface of a clear mirror. [This] Gnosis dwelling in the Base, shining internally, remains as the omniscient Gnosis endowed with five characteristics: shining internally and free from conceptual construction, this Gnosis [abides as the Five Gnoses,] as follows.

- [1] Since the Essence is empty and changeless, it abides as the great Gnosis of the Realm of Reality (*chos dbyings: dharmadhātu*).
- [2] Since the Nature shines and the ground for manifestation is unobstructed, [it abides as] the great mirror-like Gnosis.
- [3] Since dualistic grasp of mere self-appearing Buddha-Bodies and Gnoses sinks into the realm [of reality], [it abides as] the great Gnosis of equality.
- [4] Since the aspect of knowing shines internally without mixing up whatever objects are knowable, [it abides as] the great Gnosis of discernment.
- [5] Since it timelessly abides as the ground of the spon-

and *sGra thal 'gyur*. See also the synthetic table at the end of the present paper.

⁴² *Thod rgal gyi rgyab yig nyi zla gza' skar* 423.4-5: *rang bzhin la 'char gzhi'i tshul du sku lnga rigs lnga ye shes lnga rlung lnga / shes rab lnga 'od lnga lhun grub tu gnas so //*.

⁴³ This is what Higgins (2013: 108) refers to as the “baroque intricacies” of the *sNying thig* analysis and typology of Gnoses.

⁴⁴ ZGP 78.2-79.1: *ngo bo ston ka'i nam mkha' dag pa lta bu / rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes kyi ngang na rang bzhin mkhyen pa'i ye shes su gsal ba me long dag pa'i ngos lta bu gzhi gnas kyi ye shes nang gsal du thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes mtshan nyid lnga ldan du bzhugs pa ni / nang gsal spros pa dang bral ba'i ye shes de yang / ngo bo stong la 'gyur ba med pas chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes / rang bzhin gsal la 'char gzhi mi 'gags pas me long lta bu'i ye shes / rang snang gyi sku dang ye shes tsam la yang gnyis bcas kyi 'dzin pa dbyings su nub pas mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes / shes bya gang la yang ma 'dres par mkhyen cha nang du gsal bas so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes / don gnyis lhun gyis grub pa'i gzhi mar ye gdod ma nas bzhugs pas bya ba nan tan gyi ye shes chen por bzhugs so //*.

taneous accomplishment of the two benefits, [it abides as] the great Gnosis of persistent action.

Here we see that the Nature, associated with knowing and Clarity, abides in the Essence, characterized with non-conceptuality, Emptiness, and permanence. The Essence is thus given ontological predominance, as its association with the Body of Reality in contrast to the Formal Bodies clearly shows. The notion of Gnosis is present at both levels, and it is at the level of Nature, that the diffraction of the Five Gnoses appears. But the first of these Five Gnoses, the Gnosis of the *Dharmadhātu*, remains attached to the ontological level of the Essence or Body of Reality. So we may say that the relation between Essence and Nature is that of the Gnosis of the *Dharmadhātu* with the four other Gnoses.⁴⁵

From another perspective, the definition of the Three Gnoses of *rDzogs chen* as the pre-existence of the *trikāya* within the Primordial Base is also extended to the categories of the Buddha's Body, Speech and Mind (*sku gsung thugs*), associated respectively with Essence, Nature and Compassion.⁴⁶

3. The Three Gnoses as the Source of Manifestation

The primordial Base (*ye gzhi*), whether it is recognized or not, becomes either the "basis of freedom" (*grol gzhi*) or the "basis of illusion" (*khrol gzhi*). And in both cases, the Three Gnoses remain the underlying principles. As it is said:⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The four other Gnoses are found in classical Yogācāra where they are the transformation of the eight consciousnesses: the mirror-like Gnosis (*ādarśajñāna*) is the transformation of the eighth consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), the Gnosis of equality (*samatājñāna*) of the seventh consciousness (*kliṣṭa-manas*), the Gnosis of discernment (*pratyavekṣanājñāna*) of the sixth consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*) and the Gnosis of persistent action (*krtyānuṣṭhānajñāna*) of the five sensory consciousnesses. The idea of *rDzogs chen* is that these Five Gnoses are actually preexisting within the Base, and that the eight consciousnesses are their degradation.

⁴⁶ ThChDz 154a5: *thog ma'i dbyings gzhon nu bum pa sku'i nang na ngo bo skur gnas pa / rang bzhin gsung du gnas pa / thugs rje thugs su gnas pa /*. "Inside of the primordial realm, the Youthful Vase Body, the Essence remains as Buddha-Body, the Nature remains as Buddha-Speech, and the Compassion remains as Buddha-Mind."

⁴⁷ ZGP 90.5-91.1: *sKu'i rgyud za 'og ber khyim gyi le'u las / rtogs te sangs rgyas pa'i dus na'ang ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum las ma 'das so // 'khrul te 'khor bar 'khyams pa'i dus na'ang ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum las ma 'das so // zhes gsungs so //*. This being so, even our current experience is included within the Three Gnoses. It is found repetitively in Klong chen pa like in ZGP 172.6: *ma dag pa'i dus na'ang ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum las ma 'das te /*. "Even at the time of impurity, one does not go beyond Essence, Nature, and Compassion."

Even at the time of realization and subsequent Buddhahood, one does not go beyond the three [aspects of] Essence, Nature, and Compassion.

Even at the time of illusion and subsequent wandering into cyclic existence, one does not go beyond the three [aspects of] Essence, Nature, and Compassion.

But the Three Gnoses, not recognized as such, become the ground for the “three ignorances.”⁴⁸

In dependence to Awareness (*rig pa*), there are the three ignorances (*ma rig pa*).

- [1] Non-recognizing the non-conceptual aspect of the Essence is the “ignorance of the single identity.”
- [2] Not knowing as Nature [’s self-manifestation] the radiance of Nature manifested into Light, is the ignorance of the co-emergence.
- [3] Not knowing Compassion to be Self-Awareness (*rang rig*) is the discriminative ignorance.

They form the first cause of bewilderment.

In another quotation, Klong chen pa explains the ignorance of the Essence as the ignorance itself, then Nature makes the objects of ignorance, and Compassion its conditions.⁴⁹ The apparition of ignorance does not appear at the level of the Essence, which remains utterly pure and undefiled, but in the mode of Nature, with the dynamic power (*rtsal*) of the Base, and the question whether it is recognized or not by Pure Awareness (*rig pa*) as the own manifestation of the Base.⁵⁰ We can read.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Thod rgal gyi rgyab yig nyi zla gza’ skar* 427.6-428.1: *de’ang rig pa la ltos pa’i ma rig pa gsum ste / ngo bo mi rtog pa’i cha ngo ma shes pas bdag nyid gcig pa’i ma rig pa / rang bzhin ’od du gsal ba rang bzhin du ma shes pas lhan cig skyes pa’i ma rig pa / thugs rje rang rig tu ma shes pas kun tu brtags pa’i ma rig pas ’khrul pa’i dang po’i rgyu byas /*. See also Higgins (2013: 71-72) and Achard (2008: 81-82), on the three types of ignorance.

⁴⁹ ZGP 122.2-3: *ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum gyi mtshan nyid ma shes shing / ngo bo ma rig pa dngos / rang bzhin gyis yul / thugs rjes rkyen byas nas / khams gsum gyi sems can gyis sdig pa sbu tsam zhig ma byas par ’khor bar ’khyams te /*. The four conditions (*rkyen bzhi*) of ignorance are (1) the causal condition (*rgyu’i rkyen*) made by the union of the three types of ignorance; 2) the objective condition of the objects (*dmigs pa’i skyen*), the appearances perceived as external objects; (3) the subjective condition (*bdag pa’i rkyen*) which is the reification of the ego; 4) the present condition (*lta da’i rkyen*) which is their conjunction in the present state of bewilderment. See Achard, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ See Achard 2008: in particular 76-78 on this matter.

⁵¹ ZGP 73.6-74.2: *Thal ’gyur las / ngo bo ka dag ye shes la // ma rig pa zhes srid med pas // gcig dang gnyis zhes grangs med do // gang du ma phye chig chod la // ye shes tsam du*

In the Essence, which is the Gnosis of Primordial Purity, there is no possibility for “ignorance.” Thus, there is no enumeration such as “one” and “two”. It is not divisible, decisively one, and there is nothing established as merely Gnosis.

“Nature, Gnosis of Spontaneous Accomplishment,” is unborn and unobstructed, and does not give thought on anything. Since it has no ascertainment of objects, dynamic power and qualities are unobstructed. It arises as a simple display. Therefore, it is the basis of various expressions.

Here we find an interesting tension between the definition of the Essence as the Gnosis of Primordial Purity, while at the same time refuting the fact that mere Gnosis could be established as such. According to this quotation, the dynamic power (*rtsal*) is a property of the Nature or Gnosis of Spontaneous Accomplishment. Nevertheless, in another source each of the Three Gnoses displays a specific dynamic power. In this way, they form the threefold matrix of the entire manifestation and the underlying structure behind the veils of illusion. In connection with the problem of the manifestation of the Base (*gzhi snang*),⁵² Klong chen pa explains thus how the world manifests from the “three dynamic powers” (*rtsal gsum*):⁵³

From the dimension of the Base arises the “manifestation of the Base”. It is [composed of] the three dynamic powers of the Base.

The dynamic power of Essence is the field, which provides space, the dimension of non-conceptual space itself.

The dynamic power of Nature is the Five Colours, which arise distinctively as the self-radiance of Gnosis.

grub pa med // rang bzhin lhun grub ye shes zhes // mi skye mi 'gag cir mi dgongs // yul dag nges pa med pa'i phyir // rtsal dang yon tan 'gags med pas // rol pa tsam du snang ba las // sna tshogs brjod pa'i gzhi ma'o // zhes pa dang /. Cf. *sGra thal 'gyur* 490.6-491.4: *ngo bo ka dag ye shes la // ma rig pa zhes srid ming med // gcig dang gnyis kyi grangs med pa'o // rtags pas yod med grub pa med // gang du ma phyé chos nyid las // ye shes tsam du grub pa med // tshig med brjod pas grub pa med // mtha' la mi gnas rang rig dag // brjod 'dzin ming gis mtha' zad pa'o // rgyu med rkyen gyis grangs med las // gnyis snang yul dang yul can med // mtshan nyid gang du phyé ba med // yul rkyen rags pa rang zad pa'o // ye nas med pas dag pas dag // 'khrul rtog 'gags pas cing [sic, read ci] mi mdzad // ma skyes pas na 'gags stongs so // rang bzhin lhun grub ye shes zhes // mi skye mi 'gag ci mi dgongs // yul dag nges pa med phyir ro // rtsa [sic, read rtsal] dang yon tan 'gag med pas // rol pa tsam du snang ba las // sna tshogs rdzogs pa'i gzhi ma'o //*.

⁵² On this topic, see Achard (2005).

⁵³ *Thod rgal gyi yang yig nam mkha' klong gsal* 79.5-80.1: *gzhi yi ngang las gzhi snang shar // de yang gzhi yi rtsal gsum ste // ngo bo'i rtsal ni go 'byed yul // rtog med nam mkha'i ngang nyid du // rang bzhin rtsal ni kha dog lnga // ye shes rang gdangs phyed par shar // thugs rje'i rtsal ni shes rig tsam // yul 'byed nus pa'i tshul du shar // de ni grol 'khrul gnyis kyi gzhi // nges pa med pa'i lhun grub bo //*.

The dynamic power of Compassion is mere knowledge and awareness, which arise as the capacity to differentiate objects. This is the ground of both freedom and illusion: it is the Spontaneous Accomplishment [in which those two ways are] indeterminate.

Here we may say that the Three Gnoses are envisioned from the “perspective” or mode of Spontaneous Accomplishment. From the perspective of the Youthful Vase Body, or Primordial Purity, or Essence, there is no consideration of either freedom or illusion. But from the perspective of the “manifestations of the Base” (*gzhi snang*), or Spontaneous Accomplishment, or Nature, the two possibilities of freedom and illusion emerge simultaneously because it is indeterminate (*nges med*). Here the dynamic power of Compassion is defined as “mere knowledge and awareness” (*shes rig tsam*) in reference to the cognizing of objects. In contradistinction, the dynamic power of Essence remains purely non-conceptual, but it provides the space for the emergence of objects. The generation of space from the Essence is explained further in the following:⁵⁴

- [1] The impartial and empty self-radiance of the Essence makes the illusory ground of the field opening into the whole empty space of the external field.
- [2] The intelligent, empty, and subtle [self-radiance] of the Essence makes internally the field of the universal ground (*kun gzhi, ālaya*), the illusory field supporting all the eight collections [of consciousnesses (*rnam shes: vijñāna*)].

Here the Essence has two aspects, both being empty and luminous at the same time. But the emphasis of the first is impartiality. In the context of the non-recognition of this Essence as it is, it provides then the ground for the illusion of the external space. The second aspect, with an emphasis on its cognitive aspect, provides in the same context of illusion, the “universal basis,” explained as the ground for the collection of eight consciousnesses of the *Yogācāra* School. This “universal basis” (*kun gzhi*) is thus clearly distinguished from the “primordial Base” (*ye gzhi*) of *rDzogs chen*.

The connection of those two levels is that the Essence acts in the delusive mode as the receptacle or container, either external with physical space, or internal with the “store-consciousness.” Then the contents, the bodies of beings, and the manifestation of the four ele-

⁵⁴ ZGP 87.5-6: *ngo bo ris med stong pa'i rang mdangs kyi [sic, read kyis] phyir yul nam mkha' stong pa kun gyi go skabs 'byed pa'i yul gyi 'khrul gzhi byed la / ngo bo rig stong phra mos nang du kun gzhi'i yul tshogs brgyad kun gyi rten byed pa'i 'khrul yul byed do//.*

ments constituting them, is provided by the Nature:⁵⁵

From the clear radiance of Nature, luminous Nature, two lights appear.

- [1] The light of the illuminating Nature constitutes inside the ground for the illusion of the body with the patterns of colours and characteristics.
- [2] From the [first] appears [the second:] the reflexive light. It provides outside the field in which the four elements manifest individually.

According to these two quotations we can see that Essence and Nature, or the interplay of Emptiness and Clarity, creates the world and its beings, the “container” and the “vital essences” (*snod bcud*). We find here the *rDzogs chen* conception that the phenomenal world is created by light. Seen through the prism of nescience, light creates the illusion of the body. And through the degradation of this light into reflections, the field of the four elements is produced. If light creates the illusion of the body, we may keep in mind that in the cosmology of *rDzogs chen*, the body is first a body of light (*'od kyi lus*) before it becomes a body made of the four gross elements.⁵⁶ As such it is also associated with the life-energy.⁵⁷ In another passage presented in the next part,⁵⁸ Klong chen pa shows that the Five Gnoses produce through dynamic power (*rtsal*) the Five Lights, their own radiances (*rang gdangs*), which then, due to the delusive function of grasping them as substantial become the five elements associated with their corresponding energies or vital forces, expressions of the dynamic power of Awareness.

⁵⁵ ZGP 87.6-88.2: *rang bzhin gsal mdangs 'od kyi rang bzhin las 'od gnyis snang ba'i rang bzhin gyi 'od kyi [sic, read kyis] nang du lus kyi 'khrul gzhi kha dog dang mtshan ma ris can du byed la / de las snang ba gzugs brnyan gyi 'od kyis phyir 'byung ba bzhi so sor snang ba'i yul byed do //*.

⁵⁶ On this cosmological process, see Achard 2008: 83-90.

⁵⁷ ThChDz 276b3-5: *ngo bo skur bzhugs pas rang ngo na mi gsal yang phyir snang sku'i 'char gzhi ma 'gags par rang gsal / rang bzhin 'od lnga'i 'char gzhi srog rlung yan lag bzhi gsung gi snying por ye gnas / thugs rje thugs rang byung rig pa'i snying po mkhyen pa gnyis kyi ye shes su lhun gyis grub pas / sku dang ye shes 'du 'bral med pa'i dgongs pa las 'pho 'gyur med par bzhugs so //*. “The Essence, remaining as the [matrix] of the Body, does not shine in its own essence, but shines by itself as the unobstructed basis of the arising of the Body which appears outside. The Nature which is the basis of the arising of the Five Lights and the vital energy with its four parts, remains timelessly as the matrix (*snying po: garbha*) of Speech. Compassion, the matrix of Mind, self-originated Awareness, is spontaneously accomplished as the Wisdom of the two kinds of Omniscience. Therefore, they remain without moving or changing from the Enlightened Intent in which the Bodies and Gnoses are inseparably united.”

⁵⁸ See note 73 below for the full Tibetan extract and translation.

Another quotation synthetizes all this cosmological process according to the Three Gnoses:⁵⁹

Within the aspect of Essence is the field empty of anything whatsoever.
 In it, the mere light of Nature and the light of [its] reflection arise from the aspect of Nature.
 From the aspect of Compassion, the subtle knowledge grasps the objects of analysis.
 Thereby, the body is accomplished from the light of Nature. The outer world with earth, water, fire, wind, space, and their colours is accomplished from the five colours of [the light of] reflection.

So the physical body and the elements of the world all derive from the lights arising from Nature, within the background expanse, or field of possibilities, provided by the Essence, and while the Compassion, Mind-Lord, apprehends the objects. In another classification, Klong chen pa determines Essence, Nature and Compassion as the causes for the illusion of respectively ignorance, objects and body, and dualistic mind.⁶⁰

The Five Lights [of Nature] made the basis for the illusion of the objects and the body.
 By Compassion the basis for the illusion of the dualistic mind arose.
 By Essence the basis for the illusion of ignorance appeared.

But because in this process of degradation, the underlying frame of the Three Gnoses is never interrupted, the other possibility of their manifestation into the three dimensions of Buddhahood still remains in essence. Klong chen pa writes:⁶¹

One initially deviates from the Essence, Nature, and Compassion. So, even at the present time, one's own body, as the essence of these three, remains the *maṇḍala* of the Victorious, beyond meeting and parting from the Three Buddha-Bodies.

⁵⁹ ZGP 120.5-121.1: *ngo bo'i cha la* [sic, read *las*] *ci yang ma yin pa'i stong pa'i yul la rang bzhin gyi cha nas rang bzhin dang gzugs brnyan 'od tsam du shar / thugs rje'i cha las shes pa phra mos dpyod byed yul la 'dzin pas / rang bzhin gyi 'od las lus grub / gzugs brnyan gyi kha dog lnga las phyi rol gyi sa chu me rlung nam mkha'i kha dog dang bcas par grub /*.

⁶⁰ *Thod rgal gyi yang yig nam mkha' klong gsal* 80.5: *'od lngas yul lus 'khrul gzhir byas // thugs rjes sems kyi 'khrul gzhi shar // ngo bo* [sic, read *bos*] *ma rig 'khrul gzhi byung //*.

⁶¹ ZGP 173.3-4: *thog mar ngo bo rang bzhin thugs rje gsum las 'khrul pas / da lta yang de gsum gyi ngo bor rang lus rgyal ba'i dkyil 'khor sku gsum 'du 'bral med par gnas te /*.

And as a central topic of *Man ngag sde* teachings, this enlightened potential remains at the “heart” or center of a specific subtle anatomy,⁶² where all the three aspects of the Three Gnoses can be envisioned as follows:⁶³

The Great Gnosis [remains] in the palace of the pure channel of light in the midst of the heart.
 The Essence remains as the Buddha-Bodies, thus the major and minor marks of the Five Lights are perfected.
 The Nature remains as light, thus the appearances of the Five Gnoses are immeasurable.
 The Compassion remains as Pure Awareness (*rig pa*), thus knowledge shines innerly.

This quotation may also refer particularly to the visionary practices of Direct Transcendence where Essence, Nature and Compassion are respectively perceived as Five Buddha-Bodies, Five Lights and Gnoses.⁶⁴

4. Reflections on “Compassion”: the Heart of *rDzogs chen* Gnoseology

In all the sources that we have presented until now, “Compassion” (*thugs rje*) appears mainly as a cognitive function, as the honorific word *thugs*, the “enlightened Mind/Heart,” indicates. In the following quotation, the Three Gnoses are associated with the enlightened Body, Speech and Mind. In this context “Compassion” is associated to Mind. Here the correspondence between *thugs rje* and *thugs* becomes almost tautological:⁶⁵

Essence remains as the Body and is changeless.
 From the light of Nature, Speech itself arises.
 Compassion (*thugs rje*), being the Mind (*thugs*), remains as Pure Awareness (*rig pa*).

⁶² Within the central channel common to tantrism, the *Man ngag sde* system adds within it this “pure light channel.” In its center, its “palace,” the Gnosis is said to reside. On this system of specific channels and their visionary manifestations, see Achard 1999: 129-136.

⁶³ ThChDz 248a6: *ye shes chen po de snying dbus 'od rtsa dag pa'i gzhal yas na ngo bo skur gnas pas 'od lnga'i mtshan dpe rdzogs / rang bzhin 'od du gnas pas ye shes lnga'i snang ba tshad med / thugs rje rig par gnas pas mkhyen pa nang na gsal ba'o //*.

⁶⁴ On this system of correlations see Achard: 118-120.

⁶⁵ *miThar thug don gyi snying po* 296.4-297.1: *ngo bo skur gnas 'pho 'gyur med // rang bzhin 'od las gsung nyid 'char // thugs rje thugs te rig par gnas //*.

But, because of its association with the Body of Emanation, the Gnosis of *thugs rje* is also clearly associated with the compassionate forms of salvific activities, matching the diverse circumstances of the deluded beings. In the following quotation, we find the semantic network of Compassion as benefiting others:⁶⁶

Because Compassion remains universally, the benefit of others appears by itself.

We may thus say that in this context, the term *thugs rje* integrates those different levels of significations. Whether this *rDzogs chen* term was a Tibetan translation from Sanskrit, from the language of Zhang Zhung, or a pure Tibetan composition, we must be sure, that because of its centrality in the *rDzogs chen* view, the term was carefully chosen. Indeed, *thugs rje* is the heart of *rDzogs chen* gnoseology since it is the aspect that gives a gnoseological function to the whole. As we can read:⁶⁷

Because Compassion knows as Mind, the knowing of the Three Gnoses is unobstructed.

Again and again, the core principle of Compassion is its association with Pure Awareness.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ ZGP 461.6-462.1: *ngo bo stong pas spros pa'i mtha' las 'das / rang bzhin gsal bas longs sku'i 'char gzhi ma 'gags / thugs rje kun khyab tu bzhugs pas gzhan don ngang gis 'byung ba ste / chos sku longs sku sprul sku gsum lhun grub chen por bzhugs so /*. "The Essence, being empty, is beyond all conceptual constructions. The Nature, being clear, is the unobstructed basis of the apparition of the Enjoyment Body. Because Compassion remains universally, the benefit of others appears by itself. The three Bodies, of Reality, Enjoyment and Emanation, remain in the great Spontaneous accomplishment."

⁶⁷ *sNyan brgyud kyi rgyab chos chen mo zab don gnad kyi me long* 207.2-3: *ngo bo chos skur gnas pas gzugs sku gnyis kyi rten byed / rang bzhin gsung du yod pas 'od gsal gyi klong na chos nyid kyi rang sgrar rang snang / thugs rje thugs su mkhyen pas ye shes gsum gyi mkhyen pa ma 'gags pa'o //*. "The Essence, remaining as the Body of Reality, supports the two Formal Bodies. The Nature, existing as Speech, appears by itself as self-resounding of reality in the vast expanse of radiant light. Because Compassion knows as Mind, the knowing of Three Gnoses is unobstructed."

⁶⁸ ZGP 82.3-6: *thog ma'i thugs rje nang gsal gyi rig pa de yang / ngo bo rnam par mi rtoḡ pa sprin med pa'i nam mkha' lta bu chos sku / rang bzhin me long g.ya' dag pa lta thams cad mkhyen pa'i ngang las / rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i 'char gzhi ma 'gags par 'od gsal ba longs sku / thugs rje nang gsal du thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes rang rig pa'i rgyal por bzhugs pa sprul pa'i sku rig stong 'gyur ba med pa chos nyid la mnyam par bzhag pa lta bur bzhugs so //*. The translation part omitted in the main text is: "Specifically the Essence, non-conceptuality, like a cloudless sky, is the Body of Reality. The Nature, like a mirror freed from rust, shines brilliantly as the unobstructed basis for the manifestation of the distinctive omniscience within the state of

The primordial Compassion is the Pure Awareness of inner luminosity [...] The Compassion, the omniscient Gnosis shining innerly, remains as the King of Self-Awareness, and is the Emanation Body. It is aware and empty, changeless, and remains like the meditative equipoise in Reality.

The importance of this gnoseological definition of Compassion is directly addressed by Klong chen pa when he refutes the objection of the non-existence of Gnosis in Compassion:⁶⁹

Someone, who misunderstands the explanation of Compassion as unobstructed, all-pervasive, and non-conceptual, proclaims that Gnosis is interrupted [in Compassion, i.e. that Compassion is devoid of Gnosis]. But, if there were no ground for the manifestation of Gnosis [within Compassion], a Buddha would not have any knowing aspect. And it would follow that [a Buddha] would be an inert void like space or like an inanimate substance.

This discussion is connected to the debate of the existence of Gnosis in the state of a Buddha. And like the Base of *rDzogs chen*, a Buddha is definitely not an inert void for Klong chen pa. The two aspects of Compassion, the cognitive aspect and the *stricto sensu* compassionate aspect, are connected in an interesting manner in the following quotation of the *Tantra of the Penetration of Sound*:⁷⁰

Within Compassion which is all-pervasive Gnosis, inactivity is the gate of various appearances. It appears like Buddha's activities and is intrinsically perfect. From the nature of the empty Body of Reality, the aspect of the perfection of Gnosis as knowledge [i.e. Compassion] arises spontaneously to sentient beings. If Compassion did not exist, the umbilical cord between cyclic existence and extinction would be severed. Therefore, through knowledge [i.e. Compassion] [the Base] is aware and clear.

omniscience. It is the Enjoyment Body."

⁶⁹ TshDDz 806.2-3: *thugs rje 'gags med kun khyab spros bral du bshad pa la 'khrul nas kha cig gis ye shes rgyun chad du 'dod de / ye shes kyi 'char gzhi med na sangs rgyas kyi mkhyen cha med pas phyang chad nam mkha' lta bu'am yang na bems po lta bur 'gro ste/.*

⁷⁰ ZGP 80.5-81.1: *Thal 'gyur las / thugs rje kun khyab ye shes las // mi mdzad sna tshogs 'char ba'i sgo // mdzad pa ltar snang ngo bor rdzogs // chos sku stong pa'i rang bzhin las // ye shes mkhyen pa rdzogs pa'i cha // shugs kyis sems can rnam la 'char // 'di med 'khor 'das lte chad pas // mkhyen pas rig cing gsal ba'o // zhes so //.* Cf. sGra thal 'gyur 491.6-7: *thugs rje kun khyab ye shes las // mi mdzad sna tshogs 'char ba'i sgo // mdzad pa ltar snang ngo bo rdzogs // chos sku stong pa'i rang bzhin las // ye shes mkhyen pa rdzogs pa'i cha // shugs kyis sems can rnam la 'char // de med 'khor 'das de chad pas // mkhyen pas rig cing gsal ba'o //.*

The Compassion is said to be “inactive,” an epithet for the spontaneous activity: it is the gate for various manifestations, appearing like the Buddha’s activities. Thus it is said to be perfect in itself, encompassing all activities or manifestations while not being limited or exhausted by them. But we need to consider here the insistence on the gnoseological dimension. When it is said that Compassion arises spontaneously to sentient beings, it is especially defined as the aspect of Gnosis or knowledge. So the traditional *Mahāyāna* Buddhology/soteriology of the spontaneous and compassionate activities of a Buddha is here reinterpreted in a different framework. What appear to sentient beings are not only salvific actions, but more fundamentally the Gnosis itself. The two levels may be integrated according to the understanding that the ultimate salvation is through the recognition of this Gnosis, and the supreme compassion is the revelation or teaching of this single truth of *rDzogs chen*. We should also note that this Compassion is explicitly situated between the level of the Absolute, the Body of Reality, in which it originates, and the level of sentient beings, to which it appears. Even more, it is defined as the “umbilical cord” connecting *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*.⁷¹ Without Compassion, they would be totally separated, and there would be no possibility to be delivered from *saṃsāra* and attain *nirvāṇa*.

Similarly to Gnosticism which was criticized by Neoplatonism regarding the fact that it considered Gnosis to be the sole means of salvation, thus denying the importance of virtues, in Tibet, Buddhist instantaneism (represented by Chinese *Chan*) was criticized by the gradualist approach (represented by Indian *Yogācāra-Madhyamaka*) for denying the importance of the practice of virtues related to the level of conventional truth. Thus the orthodoxy/orthopraxy became in Tibet the View of the Two Truths, related to the Two Accumulations of Gnosis and virtues, and culminating into the Fruit of the Two Buddha-Bodies.

So in this context, we may consider that the choice of Tibetan *rDzogs chen* authors to translate the Gnostic aspect of the Absolute with the term *thugs rje*, used otherwise to translate *karuṇā*, was particularly skillful. Because the view of *rDzogs chen* is especially the indivisibility of *ka dag* and *lhun grub*, Gnosis and merits being already perfected in the Natural State. Thus Wisdom and Compassion, or Wisdom and Methods are also preexistingly united. In this respect, we shall also remind that the key term of Mahāyānist universal benevolence and soteriology, the Enlightened Mind (*byang chub kyi*

⁷¹ Similarly, Rong zom pa named the fact that a Buddha’s Gnosis is not separated from the *Dharmadhātu* as one link between Buddhas and sentient beings. See Al-mogi (2009: 232) for references.

sems: bodhicitta) has also been used in *rDzogs chen* texts in a different framework, being equated with the Self-Occuring Gnosis (*rang byung ye shes: svayambhū-jñāna*). But again, what is implied in the *rDzogs chen* view is that the different levels of *bodhicitta*, relative or absolute, are already integrated within the contemplation of all the aspects of the Base: empty Essence, clear Nature, and all-pervasive Compassion. Through the terms *byang chub kyi sems* or *thugs rje*, all the semantic network of compassion, love, benevolence, kindness, mercy, good heart, responsiveness, grace, felt resonance, is integrated as the inherent qualities already present in the Natural State.

The polysemy of the word *thugs rje* points out at the core of the *rDzogs chen* view, the all-encompassing heart, in which knowledge and compassion are inseparable: the “Intelligence of the Heart.” Moreover the definition of *thugs rje* as *rig pa*, Pure Awareness, places also *thugs rje* at the center of *rDzogs chen* soteriology since it is through *rig pa* that the Basis is recognized, and through *ma rig pa* that it is mistaken.

In many extracts presented here, *thugs rje* is explicitly defined as *rig pa*, and not as the common source of *rig pa* and *ma rig pa*. But *ma rig pa* is itself based on *rig pa*. It is at the level of the dynamic power (*rtsal*) of Compassion that the problem of the apparition of ignorance is fully evident:⁷²

At the time of the emergence of the Base’s manifestations, the dynamic power of Compassion appears naturally as knowledge, clear and cognizant, and the capacity to investigate objects. From the perspective of the non-recognition of its own nature, it appears concomitantly with the three ignorances.

In an interesting passage,⁷³ Klong chen pa describes how illusion or

⁷² TshDDz 829.1-2: *gzhi snang du shar dus thugs rje'i rtsal shes pa gsal rig yul dpyod nus su rang shar ba de rang ngo ma shes pa la ltos nas ma rig pa gsum dang mtshungs ldan du shar te /*.

⁷³ ZGP 126.1-127.2: *stong pa'i ngang las ye shes kyi rtsal shar bas 'od lnga byung / de la ma 'gags pa'i rig pa yod pas 'od lnga la 'dzin pa byung / 'dzin pa de la rlung zhes bya ste / nang gsal gyi thugs rje'i rtsal phyir 'phros pa yin no // de yang snang ba'i yul 'od lnga la thugs rje'i rtsal 'dzin pas tha dad du gzung bas 'byung ba rags par ji ltar grub na / so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes kyi rang gdangs 'od dmar po de la dngos 'dzin du 'khrul pas me dmar po byung / de la rlung rig pa'i rtsal gyis drod byung / yang mnyam pa nyid kyi rang gdangs 'od ser por gsal ba de la 'dzin pa skyes pas sa ser po byung / me long lta bu'i ye shes kyi rang gdangs 'od dkar por shar ba la 'dzin pa skyes pas chu dkar po byung / bya ba grub pa'i ye shes kyi rang gdangs 'od ljang gu shar ba la 'dzin pa skyes pas rlung ljang gu byung / 'byung ba nam mkha' ni ye gdod ma nas ye shes dang mnyam du gnas te 'pho 'gyur med do // ye shes kyi rang gdangs 'od rnams la 'dzin pa skyes pas sa chu me rlung bzhi byung / de dag la rig rtsal rlung gis khyab pas las kun byed do // de ltar ye shes lnga la 'dzin pa skyes pas 'byung ba dngos su grub bo // de yang thog mar ma rig*

ignorance causes the extraversion of the dynamic power of Compassion. In itself, the dynamic power of Compassion is defined as inner clarity (*nang gsal*). Its extraversion is due to a grasping. It is then called “energy” (*rlung: prāṇa*), the energy of the dynamic power of Compassion. This grasping takes as its objects the self-radiances (*rang gdangs*) of the Five Gnoses: the Five Lights. The Five Lights become grasped as substances and in this way the five gross elements appear. Moreover, this grasping or energy remains as the pervading force which animates the elements and combines them all together in order to form the universe and beings. Energy is also differentiated into the respective energies of the five elements. This grasping represents thus a degradation of the dynamic power of Compassion. This primordial shift represented by grasping and extraversion is even called the “dynamic power of ignorance” (*ma rig pa'i rtsal*). This passage also shows the relation between Compassion and Nature, with its fivefold objects and their transformation as described above.

Nevertheless, the dynamic power of Pure Awareness is itself pure. In the case of a Buddha, it is defined as self-recognition, the source of the various facets of omniscience, which are the pure aspects of the fivefold radiance of Nature. In this mode, even outward manifestation remains also pure: it benefits beings as the two kinds of omni-

pa'i rtsal gyis bskyed pas 'byung ba lnga la so so'i rtsal byung nas / de rnams gcig tu 'dzom pas snod bcud kyi 'jig rten chags te /.

“From the empty state, the dynamic power of Gnosis appearing, the Five Lights emerge. In this, unobstructed Pure Awareness being present, the grasping of the Five Lights appears. This grasping is called the energy (*rlung: prāṇa*). It is the diffusion outside of the dynamic power of Compassion which is [itself] inner clarity. Moreover, because of the grasping [= the extraversion] of the dynamic power of Compassion, the field of appearances, the Five Lights are grasped individually. Due to this, how are established the gross elements? [1] Because of the illusion of grasping as a substance the self-radiance of the Gnosis of discernment, fire, which is red, is born. In this, the energy of the dynamic power of Pure Awareness produces the heat. [2] Then, because of the generation of the grasping of the self-radiance of [the Gnosis of] equality, illuminating as yellow light, earth, which is yellow, is born. [3] Because of the generation of the grasping of the self-radiance of the mirror-like Gnosis appearing as white light, water, which is white, is born. [4] Because of the generation of the grasping of the self-radiance of the Gnosis of persistent action appearing as green light, wind, which is green, is born. [5] The element of space abides together with Gnoses from the origin; it is changeless. Because of the generation of the grasping of Lights, self-radiances of Gnoses, the four elements, earth, water, fire, wind are born. They, being pervaded by the energy of the dynamic power of Pure Awareness, perform all actions. Thus, because of the generation of the grasping of the Five Gnoses, the elements are established as substances. Moreover, because at the origin, they are generated by the dynamic power of ignorance (*ma rig pa'i rtsal*), in the elements, the respective [energies of] dynamic powers are born. Then they gather together as a whole, so the world, the receptacle and its contents, arises.”

science.⁷⁴

The dynamic power of Pure Awareness appears, illuminating internally, as the Five Gnoses of omniscience, and illuminating externally, as the [two] aspects of omniscience knowing [phenomena] as they are, and as many as they are.

5. The Structure of the Path

The two aspects of the Base, Primordial Purity and Spontaneous Accomplishment, even indivisible, are fully realized on the Path according to the two main practices of *Man ngag sde*: “Breakthrough” (*khregs chod*) and “Direct Transcendence” (*thod rgal*). Such a path is necessary because of the state of illusion and the deluded mode or degradation of dynamic power. So these two practices are connected to the two types of dynamic power emerging respectively from Primordial Purity and Spontaneous Accomplishment.⁷⁵

As for the path: since there are two aspects, namely, Primordial Purity and Spontaneous Accomplishment, there are also two dynamic powers: the moving mind and the body made by the elements, with materiality and objects.

Thus, in order to purify these two dynamic powers, there are two practices: Breakthrough (*khregs chod*) and Direct Transcendence (*thod rgal*).

The dynamic power of Primordial Purity produces the moving mind, the dualistic mind apprehending everything in terms of subject and object, and the dynamic power of the Spontaneous Accomplishment produces the body and objects. These elements correspond with the sources mentioned above in which the aspect of the Essence is connected to the production of the external space and the universal basis (basis of the dualistic mind comprising the eight consciousnesses) whereas the aspect of Nature is connected to the apparition of the illusion of the body and the elements.

In another passage, Klong chen pa describes these two dynamic powers and their creations but with special reference to Pure Aware-

⁷⁴ *Thod rgal gyi rgyab yig nyi zla gza' skar* 439.4-5: *rig pa'i rtsal ni / nang gsal thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes lnga dang / phyi gsal ji lta ba dang ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i rnam par shar ro //*.

⁷⁵ *Bum pa'i brda don* 133.1-2: *lam yang ka dag lhun grub gnyis // gnas phyir de yi rtsal yang gnyis // gyur ba'i sems dang 'byung bzhi'i lus // gdos bcas yul dang bcas pa'o // de ltar rtsal gnyis sbyang ba'i phyir // nyams len khregs chod thod rgal gnyis //*.

ness:⁷⁶

The primordial state is twofold: appearance and Emptiness. From this perspective, the dynamic power (*rtsal*) of Pure Awareness is twofold: [1] the dynamic power of appearance and [2] the dynamic power of Emptiness.

[1] The dynamic power of appearance [produces] body and objects, and all variously appearing entities that arise. [All arise] as [the degradation of] the dynamic power of Spontaneous Accomplishment.

[2] The dynamic power of Emptiness [produces] the moving mind. It spreads variously without ground. If we look [at the moving mind] from the very [moment of its] simple spreading, it doesn't exist. It is self-occurring from the dynamic power of Primordial Purity.

Since good qualities arise as defects, these two dynamic powers make the conditions of the experience [of bewilderment]⁷⁷. There are two aspects that purify these two [dynamic powers]: Break-through and Direct Transcendence.

Pure Awareness forms a middle term between *ka dag* and *lhun grub*, Essence and Nature, and its dynamic powers are defined in correlation of those two poles. Moreover, it is also through the dynamic powers of Pure Awareness, that the qualities of *ka dag* and *lhun grub* are transformed into the defects of deluded experience.

We have seen that the illusions related to the aspects of Essence and Nature are purified through *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*. What about Compassion? Even if as Pure Awareness, it can be interpreted as a middle term, from another perspective, the importance of its cognitive function associates it more particularly with the purification of mind, and thus, to the practice of *khregs chod*. In this framework, the purification of the body, derived from Nature, is accomplished by the practice of *thod rgal*:⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *gSang ba bla med spyi babs* 284.1-285.1: *thog ma'i ngang las snang stong gnyis // de las rig pa'i rtsal yang gnyis // snang ba'i rtsal dang stong pa'i rtsal // snang ba'i rtsal ni lus dang yul // sna tshogs snang ba'i dngos kun shar // de yang lhun grub rtsal du'o // stong pa'i rtsal ni 'gyu ba'i sems // gzhi rtsa med pa sna tshogs 'phro // 'phros tsam nyid nas bltas na med // ka dag rtsal las rang byung ngo // yon tan skyon du shar bas na // rtsal 'di gnyis kyis mthong rkyen byas // de gnyis sbyong byed rnam pa gnyis // thod rgal dang ni khregs chod do //*

⁷⁷ On the four conditions, see note 50 above.

⁷⁸ *Bar do gnad kyi sgron me* 190.5-6: *khregs chod kyis sems sbyong thugs rje'i gnas lugs ngo shes par byed dgos / thod rgal gyis yul dang lus sbyong rang bzhin gyi gnas lugs shes par byed dgos /*. *Thod rgal* operates the purification and reintegration of the five elements in their pure origins: the Five Lights of Nature, thus transmuting the material body into the Fruit of the Rainbow Body (*'ja' lus*).

Through Breakthrough, one should purify the mind, that is to say recognize the Natural State of Compassion [=“Mind-Lord”].

Through Direct Transcendence, one should purify the objects and the body, that is to say understand the Natural State of Nature.

But with the general principle of indivisibility, each of the two practices of *khregs chod* and *thod rgal* fully comprehends the Three Gnoses. In *khregs chod*, it is the case since the Three Gnoses are the very description of the direct confrontation. And in *thod rgal*, their indivisibility manifests itself in the intensification of a visionary process that absorbs the whole individual and its universe of perception. As it is well demonstrated in Klong chen pa's writings:⁷⁹

As the sign of Essence, [one realizes] the absence of origination free from conceptual constructions.

As the sign of Nature, light shines in a variegated way.

As the sign of Compassion, knowledge arises as [the inseparability of] clarity and emptiness.

You must know that these very [three signs show that] in the midst of [one's own] heart, the Primordial Lord who is Changeless Light, abides within the Enlightened Intent in which the Three Bodies are inseparably united.

This indivisibility of *ka dag* and *lhun grub*, emptiness and light, is also described according to the integration of interior and exterior, where each aspect sustains the other along the process of the practice. This culminates in the realization of the “inseparability of the Expanse and Awareness” (*dbyings rig dbyer med*):⁸⁰

⁷⁹ sGron ma bzhi skor 95.5-96.1: ngo bo'i rtags su skye med spros pa dang bral ba la / rang bzhin gyi rtags su 'od sna tshogs su gsal zhing / thugs rje'i rtags su shes pa gsal stong du 'char ba 'di kho na gdod ma'i mgon po 'od mi 'gyur ba snying gi dbus na sku gsum 'du 'bral med pa'i dgongs pa la bzhugs pa yin par shes par gyis shig.

⁸⁰ ThChDz 331b6-7: phyi 'od gsal la ltas [sic, read bltas] pas nang rnam rtoq dang bral te ris med mnyam par grol ba ni / ka dag gi rig gdangs dang / lhun grub kyi 'od gdangs gnyis phyi nang zung du 'brel bas / dbying rig 'du 'bral med pa'i dgongs pa zhes bya'o // . The topic of the inseparability of the Expanse and Awareness is expressed in the context of the visionary practice of *thod rgal* with the symbolic description of three “gazes”: TshDDz 1233.5-1234.3: smin mtshams kyi nam mkha' la mig gtad de shes pa ma yengs par blta ba ni dbyings dang rig pa'i lta stangs zhes bya'o // de'ang nam mkha' ni dbyings rnam dag gi sgron ma 'char ba'i gzhi yin pas der blta ba la dbyings kyi lta stangs zhes bya'o // shes pa ni rig pa'i rtsal yin pas de ma yengs na gdangs lu gu rgyud kyi snang ba 'char bas rig pa'i lta stangs zhes bya'o // . “Looking with an undistracted cognition, the eyes focused in the space between them is known as the gaze of the Expanse and Pure Awareness. Moreover, space being the basis of the apparition of the Lamp of the utterly pure Expanse, to look at it is called the gaze of the Expanse. Cognition being the dynamic power of Pure Awareness, without distraction and emerging as the appearance of the radiating strings of chains, it is

By means of seeing light externally, one is internally separated from conceptuality and released into the impartial equality. The radiant Awareness of Primordial Purity and the radiant Light of Spontaneous Accomplishment, inside and outside, being integrated, it is called “the Enlightened Intent in which Expanse and Awareness are inseparably united.”

Within the context of the visions of *thod rgal*, the Three Gnoses are also used to classify the different contents of visions, with various and overlapping systems of analogies, which also shows an ontological procession of the Three Gnoses. Here we find such a system, centered on the notion of Pure Awareness:⁸¹

The Pure Awareness of Emptiness abides as Clarity.
 The Pure Awareness of the Clarity abides as Buddha-Bodies.
 The Pure Awareness of the Buddha-Bodies abides as [the inseparability of] appearances and Emptiness.
 Moreover, the Pure Awareness of the Base is the great Primordial Purity.
 The Pure Awareness of Spontaneous Accomplishment is Bodies and Gnoses.
 The Pure Awareness of Compassion is the unobstructed string of chains.⁸²

Again and again we find the correlation of *ka dag* and *lhun grub* with empty space and luminous appearances, with the continuous presence of Pure Awareness, rendered poetically by Klong chen pa in the following way:⁸³

From the great and timeless radiance of the pure Reality, which is the Primordial Basis endowed with the residence of Light, the Gnostic Energy endowed with the matrix (*snying po*, *garbha*) of Pure Awareness which is Compassion, moving out, inner luminosity manifested outside. In the space of Primordial Purity, the sun, moon, planets and stars of Spontaneous Accomplishment,

called the gaze of Pure Awareness.”

⁸¹ ZGP 82.1-3: *Don gsal me long las stong pa'i rig pa gsal bar gnas so // gsal ba'i rig pa sku ru gnas so // sku'i rig pa snang stong du gnas so // yang gzhi'i rig pa ka dag chen po yin / lhun grub kyi rig pa sku dang ye shes yin / thugs rje'i rig pa ma 'gags lu gu rgyud do // zhes bshad do //*. As we have discussed above, classical associations are Essence with Five Buddha-Bodies, Nature with Five Lights, and Compassion with Five Gnoses (cf. Achard 1999: 118-120).

⁸² A specific visionnary content of *thod rgal* also called “vajra chains” (*rdo rje lu gu*).

⁸³ *Tshig don rin po che bang mdzod 462.6-463.2: gdod ma'i gzhi 'od kyi khang pa can / chos nyid dag pa'i ye gdangs chen po las / ye shes kyi rlung thugs rje rig pa'i snying po can g.yos pas / nang gsal phyir shar te / ka dag gi nam mkha' la lhun grub sku dang ye shes kyi nyi zla gza' skar dang bcas pa / shel 'od phyir snang ba ltar snang la /*.

Bodies and Gnosés, appear externally like light [within] a crystal.

Conclusion: The Three Inseparable Rings of the Mystery

Ultimately, the three Gnosés appear like three Borromean rings,⁸⁴ inseparable yet distinct; undivisible in the unfolding of our own being, but variously described in terms of language. The synthetic table of our main results (see below) shows that the Three Gnosés form the very structure of the *Man ngag sde* view of reality, the interplay of macrocosm and microcosm, and of its praxis and soteriology. By definition, the Three Gnosés are gnosés, so literally they are not affected by *i*-ignorance. But if this remains true from the point of view of Primordial Purity, or Essence, on the other hand, from the point of view of Spontaneous Accomplishment, or Nature, their dynamic power (*rtsal*), brings up the problem of the correct recognition of the own manifestation (*rang snang*) of the Base. And this is the heart of *rDzogs chen* gnoseology and soteriology, with the key term of *thugs rje*, literally the Mind-Lord which is to be principally defined as Pure Awareness, a state in which Wisdom and Compassion,⁸⁵ cognition and emotion are intrinsically inseparable. *Thugs rje* is thus the "Intelligence of the Heart." We have discussed that this term *thugs rje* must have been skillfully chosen in this respect, in a way similar to the use of the term *byang chub sems* (*bodhicitta*) in *rDzogs chen*, exposing the view of the indivisibility of *ka dag* and *lhun grub*.

We have also shown that the term "dynamic power" (*rtsal*), often considered in its association with Compassion (*thugs rje'i rtsal*, or *rig pa'i rtsal*), actually applies, according to Klong chen pa, to all Three Gnosés. This brings thus much more complexity, notably with the analysis of the Three Gnosés as the ground for the manifestation of the universe and beings. Further research needs to be done on this notion of *rtsal*, and the semantically connected terms such as display (*rol pa*), ornament (*rgyan*), etc.

Bon po sources need also to be examined, particularly the Bon po triad of *Ma bu rtsal*, the Mother (Base, *gzhi*), the Child (Awareness, *rig pa*) and the dynamic power (*rtsal*), would bring more elements about the notion of Compassion=Awareness at the heart of *rDzogs chen* gnoseology and its relation with dynamic power.

Through the study of the Three Gnosés, the specificity of *rDzogs chen* appears clearly. The possible influence of *Chan* seems here par-

⁸⁴ On the Three Gnosés as inseparable knots according to canonical literature, see Achard 2005: 87-88.

⁸⁵ We may even say "love."

ticularly limited since this specific triad has no strict equivalent⁸⁶ and that the *Chan* view is much more limited to non-conceptuality, whereas it is only one aspect within the Three Gnoses.

On the question of the possible connection of *rDzogs chen* with non-dualist Śaivism highlighted by Achard (1999), some hypotheses may be formulated for future research. Generally speaking, the relation between *ka dag* and *lhun grub* shows some parallels with the couple of Śiva and his Śakti. But more specifically, it is in the *Sāṃkhya* tradition, that we may find some correspondences with the Three Gnoses of *rDzogs chen*. Particularly, we have suggested here that *rang bzhin* as the second Gnosis could possibly be the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit *prakṛti*. This hypothesis can also draw a philosophical parallel between *rang bzhin* in *rDzogs chen* and *prakṛti* in *Sāṃkhya* with their parallel uses of fivefold classifications regarding their modes of manifestation.⁸⁷ In this perspective, Essence (*ngo bo*: **vabhāva*) could be considered, but with much more difficulty, as an apophatic version of *Sāṃkhya*'s *puruṣa*. The next term of comparison brings more interest: Compassion, that is to say Awareness, could be equated to *buddhi*, the Intellect, first and purely sattvic element of the manifestation of *prakṛti*. Here we find a problem very similar to the Three Gnoses in *rDzogs chen*: the Intellect (*buddhi*) is both the first layer of the manifestation of *prakṛti*, thus the beginning of illusion (*māyā*), yet the instrument of liberation (*mokṣa*) in order to go back to the source. This idea share similar features with the somehow ambivalent notion of Compassion (*thugs rje*) = Pure Awareness (*rig pa*), the key-problem of recognition, and the question of the apparition of ignorance. The ontological hierarchy of *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* and *buddhi*, seem also parallel to the procession from Essence to Nature and Compassion: from the Absolute to manifestation. Strictly speaking, the hierarchy between

⁸⁶ Nevertheless, a possible Sinitic origin of the doctrine of the Three Gnoses has been considered to be the “Three Greats” (三大): “Essence” (體), “Function” (用) and “Attributes” (相) within the “Unique Mind” (一心), from the commentaries based on the Chinese text of *The Awakening of the Faith of the Great Vehicle* (大乘起信論, **Mahāyāna Śraddhotpāda Śāstra*), attributed to Aśvaghōṣa (80?-150?). Not having fully examined this Chinese literature, we cannot conclude, but with the materials presented in this paper, we hope that experts in Chinese Buddhism may be able to do so. Our conviction remains that the *Man ngag sde* system, with its specific visionary techniques, cannot be subsumed under what is known of Chinese Buddhism.

⁸⁷ Both notions, *rang bzhin* in *rDzogs chen* and *prakṛti* in *Sāṃkhya* are related to the use of fivefold classification in order to describe the process of manifestation. *Sāṃkhya* counts within *prakṛti* five sense-capacities, five action-capacities, five subtle elements, five gross elements. Even if there is no strict equivalent in *rDzogs chen* of the three *guṇa*-s (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*) defining *prakṛti* in *Sāṃkhya*, we find the notion of an undetermination that can bring the possibilities of cyclic existence (degradation of light) or Buddhahood (self-illumination).

the Three Gnoses in explained in *rDzogs chen* according to the hierarchy of the *trikāya*. The similarity with *Sāṃkhya* is seen here as a possible indicator of the connection between *rDzogs chen* and Śaivism, since *Sāṃkhya*, reinterpreted, has continued to serve as a philosophical background for tantric yogic practices. But the authors of the present paper not being experts in this school, its use or evolution within Śaivism, the terminological parallels with *rDzogs chen* are simply given here to attract the attention of Indologists and envision future collaboration between them and Tibetologists.

Such comparisons, to be pertinent, need to combine the study of philosophical discourses and contemplative practices. And the fact that the same contemplative practices can be explained according to different philosophical discourses or schools leads to a greater difficulty, together with the question of mutual, complex borrowings, over long and repeated periods of time. The tradition of *rDzogs chen*, present in both Tibetan Buddhism and Bon, was situated at the crossroads of the many civilizations of Asia, central Asia, and beyond (parallels can even be found in Neoplatonism).⁸⁸ The mystery of its

⁸⁸ Some interesting similarities between *rDzogs chen* and Neoplatonism have already been noted (Guenther 1994: 1-33; Arguillère 2007) and would need to be fully investigated in close collaboration with Hellenistic scholars. We have found that in some passages, Plotinus discusses visionary experiences in a way that is strikingly similar to the explanations of *thod rgal* practices in *rDzogs chen*. In particular, see the following:

“The eye is not wholly dependent upon an outside and alien light; there is an earlier light within itself, a more brilliant, which it sees sometimes in a momentary flash. At night in the darkness a gleam leaps from within the eye: or again we make no effort to see anything; the eyelids close; yet a light flashes before us; or we rub the eye and it sees the light it contains. This is sight without the act, but it is the truest seeing, for it sees light whereas its other objects were the lit not the light.” (V 5, 7, 23) English translation, p. 409. Hereafter is another striking and beautiful example:

“Suddenly, swept beyond it all by the very crest of the wave of Intellect surging beneath, he is lifted and sees, never knowing how; the vision floods the eyes with light, but it is not a light showing some other object, the light is itself the vision. No longer is there thing seen and light to show it, no longer Intellect and object of Intellection; this is the very radiance that brought both Intellect and Intellectual object into being for the later use and allowed them to occupy the quester’s mind. With This he himself becomes identical, with that radiance whose Act is to engender Intellectual-Principle, not losing in that engendering but for ever unchanged, the engendered coming to be simply because that Supreme exists. If there were no such principle above change, no derivative could rise.” (VI 7, 36, 17) English translation, p. 590.

In his reading of Plotinus, Pierre Hadot (1993) notes that some passages of his works refer explicitly to the existence of a tradition of “spiritual exercises” in Neoplatonism. But like in ancient forms of tantrism, such practices were never written down but orally transmitted from master to disciple. Plotinus’ own master, Ammonius Saccas, is also famous for having refused to write down his own

origins looks unfathomable. And this is not only true historically, but also philosophically, since it emerged from the deepest contemplative inquiries into the mystery of the universe, life and intelligence, which form the irreducible contents of the doctrine of the Three Gnoses.

teachings and asked total secrecy to his students. This secrecy was only revealed in the exoteric form by some disciples like Plotinus. The similarities of Plotinus' thought with *rDzogs chen* may lead to another examination of the supposedly Eastern influences of Plotinus, who according to Porphyry, came to Rome only because of the failure of his expedition to Persia and India, encouraged by his own master to go there to meet their sages. Research on historical exchanges and connections would require the combination of expertises in many cultural and linguistic areas from Plotinus' Alexandria, to India and Tibet, with Persia and ancient Indo-Greek kingdoms as complex multicultural areas in between. Note that it is in this intermediate region of Persia, or more largely central Asia, that the Bon po point out the origin of their own tradition under the name "sTag gzig."

Synthetic table of the Three Gnoses according to Klong chen pa and his Sources

THE UNIQUE SPHERE (<i>thig le nyag gcig</i>)					
KA DAG		LHUN GRUB		DBYER MED	
3 GNOSES (<i>ye shes gsum</i>)	ESSENCE (<i>ngo bo</i>)		NATURE (<i>rang bzhin</i>)		COMPASSION = "MIND-LORD" (<i>thugs rje</i>)
Qualifications (in Youthful Vase Body) [Mode of <i>ka dag</i> & Es- sence]	Empty (<i>stong pa</i>)		Clear (<i>gsal ba</i>)		Unobstructed (<i>ma 'gags pa</i>) All-Pervasive (<i>kun khyab</i>) = Awareness (<i>rig pa</i>)
Base manifes- tation (<i>gzhi snang</i>): dynamic power (<i>rtsal</i>) [Mode of <i>lhun grub</i> & Nature]	Field providing space Dimension of non-conceptual space		Self-Radiance of the Five Gnoses = Five Lights / Colours		Mere Knowledge and Awareness Capacity to differentiate objects
Mode of Indivisibility	Emptiness-Clarity		Clarity- Emptiness		Awareness- Emptiness Appearance- Emptiness
RECOGNITION ▶ Basis of Liberation (<i>grol gzhi</i>)	Primordial Buddhahood (<i>ye sangs rgyas</i>): directly to ▶ FRUIT				
NON- RECOGNITION ▶ Basis of illusion (<i>'khrul gzhi</i>)	Out- side	Inside	In- side	Outside	Diffusion outside of the dynamic power as grasping = energy (<i>rlung</i>) which produces ◀ the five elements and animates them
	Space	Universal basis (<i>kun gzhi</i>) Ground for 8 conscious- nesses	Light of Na- ture ▼ Illu- sion of the body	Light of Reflec- tion ▼ Five ele- ments & objects	
----- 3 Ignorances	Illusion of ignorance (<i>ma rig pa</i>)		Illusion of body (<i>lus</i>) & objects (<i>yul</i>)		Illusion of mind (<i>sems</i>)
	Ignorance itself		Objects of ignorance		4 Conditions (<i>rkyen bzhi</i>) of ignorance
	Ignorance of the single identity of the cause		Ignorance of the co-emergence		Discriminative ignorance

BASE
(*gzhi*)

(primor-
dial:
ye gzhi)

PATH (<i>lam</i>)	Main practice	[Breakthrough (<i>khregs chod</i>)]	Direct Transcendence (<i>thod rgal</i>)	Breakthrough (<i>khregs chod</i>)
	Associated Purification	[Purification of ignorance]	Purification of the body and objects	Purification of the mind
	Visions in <i>thod rgal</i>	Buddha-bodies (<i>sku</i>)	Lights (' <i>od</i>)	Gnoses (<i>ye shes</i>)
FRUIT (<i>'bras bu</i>)	3 Buddha-Bodies (<i>sku gsum</i>)	Body of Reality (<i>chos sku</i>)	Body of Enjoyment (<i>longs sku</i>)	Body of Emanation (<i>sprul sku</i>)
	Buddha's Attributes	Body (<i>sku</i>)	Speech (<i>gsung</i>)	Mind (<i>thugs</i>)
	Tenfold Classification of Buddha's Gnoses	3 Gnoses ----- 1. Essence 2. Nature 3. Compassion [overlapping classification]	5 Gnoses ----- 1. <i>Dharmadhātu</i> 2. Mirror-like 3. Equality 4. Discernment 5. Persistent action	2 Gnoses ----- 1. of things as they are (<i>ji lta ba</i>) 2. as many as they are (<i>ji snyed pa</i>)

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bKra shis mdzes ldan: *bKra shis mdzes ldan chen po'i rgyud*. In NGB, vol. 10, 669.5-685.4.

sKu gdung 'bar ba: *dPal nam mkha' med pa sku gdungs 'bar ba chen po'i rgyud*. In NGB, vol. 9, 600.1-624.4.

sGra thal 'gyur: Rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud. In NGB, vol. 10, 386.6-530.6.

sGron ma 'bar ba: gSer gyi me tog mdzes pa sgron ma 'bar ba'i rgyud. In NGB, vol. 9, 578.1-598.4.

Ngo sprod spras pa: Ngo sprod rin po che spras pa zhing khams bstan pa'i rgyud. In NGB, vol. 9, 626.1-645.6.

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Mu tig phreng ba: Mu tig phreng ba. In NGB, vol. 9, 523.5-577.6.

rDzogs pa rang 'byung: sKu thams cad kyi snang ba ston pa dbang rdzogs pa rang byung chen po'i rgyud. In NGB, vol. 9, 2.1-237.5.

Yi ge med pa: Yi ge med pa'i rgyud chen po. In NGB, vol. 9, 364.1-384.5.

Rig pa rang grol: Rig pa rang grol chen po thams cad grol ba'i rgyud. In NGB, vol. 10, 334.5-386.5.

Rig pa rang shar: De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi ting nge 'dzin dngos su bshad: ye shes 'dus pa'i mdo: theg pa chen po gsang ba bla na med pa'i rgyud: chos thams cad kyi 'byung gnas: sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs pa: gsang sngags sa gcig pa'i ye shes: rdzogs pa chen po don gsal bar byed pa'i rgyud: rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud. In NGB, vol. 10, 1.1-334.5.

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Esquisse phonétique du tibétain de dGonpa : un dialecte parlé à mBrugchu

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1. Introduction

Le district de mBrugchu [*Brug-chu* / Zhouqu] se situe dans le sud-est de la préfecture autonome tibétaine de Gannan [*Kan-lho*], dans la province du Gansu, en Chine. Il se trouve dans les marges orientales de l'aire tibétaine, à proximité de l'espace culturel et linguistique de la majorité chinoise han. Les parlers vernaculaires du tibétain – ou les langues tibétiques (Tournadre 2014) – utilisés dans cette région demeurent énigmatiques du point de vue de leur classification dialectale parce qu'ils ont des caractéristiques phonétiques très différentes des dialectes de l'Amdo qu'ils côtoient. Les particularités des dialectes des trois districts de Cone [*Co-ne* / Zhuoni], Thewo [*The-bo* / Diebu] et mBrugchu ont déjà été évoquées par des chercheurs chinois.¹ Selon eux, ces trois dialectes appartiennent au groupe kham² parce qu'ils possèdent un système tonal. Mais une tradition populaire relate que les ancêtres tibétains de mBrugchu auraient migré du Kongpo (près de la préfecture de Nyingthri [*Nying-khri* / Linzhi], sud-est de la région autonome du Tibet) à l'époque impériale.³ Actuellement, le manque d'informations sur ces dialectes, et notamment sur celui de mBrugchu, ne permet pas de dégager leurs caractéristiques linguistiques et de confirmer l'un de ces classements.

Il n'est en fait pas certain que le toponyme de mBrugchu ait une origine tibétaine puisqu'il n'existe pas de nom commun tibétain désignant l'ensemble de cette région et que celle-ci a seulement été constituée en tant que telle en 1954, par la fusion des districts de Xigu et Cone (*Zhouqu Xianzhi* 1996:70-92).

¹ Qu (1968), dKon-mchog rGya-mtsho (1987), Lin (2002), rNam-rgyal Tshe-brtan (2008), Yang (2009), Rig-'dzin dBang-mo (2010, 2012, 2013) etc.

² Qu & Jin (1981), Zhang (1993), Qu (1995), Sum-bha Don-grub Tshe-ring (2011) etc.

³ Cf. Sum-bha Don-grub Tshe-ring 2011:37-38.

Les annales de Zhouqu (Zhouqu Xianzhi 1996:617) rapportent l'existence de deux groupes dialectaux tibétains dans le district de mBrugchu : l'un au sud-est, l'autre au nord-ouest. Mais les locuteurs de dGonpa y distinguent quatre variétés tibétiques : 1. la variété similaire à la langue parlée dans l'est de Thewo, c'est-à-dire Thewo-smad (principalement utilisée dans les villages de Quwa [Chu-dkar ou Chu-bar], Bazang ['Ba'-gtsang] et Hanban [Bod-rtsa] (ancien Heiyu [gSer-po]) et qui correspond au groupe du nord-ouest mentionné dans les *Annales* ; 2. la variété parlée dans le seul village de Jiangpan [rGyal-bde] ; 3. celle notamment utilisée le long de la rivière de Gongba [dGon-pa] (dans les villages de Gongba, Wuping [Bod-pa], Baleng [Ong-gsum], Tieba [Them-pa], Danian [sTag-gnyan], Guoye [sGo-yag] (anciens Sanjiaoping [sGo-yag] et Chigan ['Cha'-ri]), Chagang [Tsha-ba-sgang ou Tsha-sgang] et la majorité de Boyu [Bod-yul]) ; ainsi que 4. le baima (parlé dans la minorité de Boyu, par exemple, dans le village de Chalugou [Tsha-lung]). D'après les locuteurs des parlers de mBrugchu et de baima, l'intercompréhension entre les trois premières variétés est plutôt bonne, en particulier, entre la deuxième et la troisième variété ; en revanche, la quatrième variété est inintelligible par les locuteurs des autres parlers.

L'objectif de cet article est de proposer une esquisse phonétique synchronique d'un parler de la troisième variété, celui de dGonpa, qui compte environ cinq mille locuteurs, répartis entre le district de mBrugchu et le village de Pingya, dans le district de Wudu (préfecture de Longnan, au sud-est de la préfecture de Gannan). Je vais tout d'abord décrire ses phonèmes segmentaux. Puis je discuterai ses particularités suprasegmentales, qui sont tout à fait remarquables. Afin d'assurer la précision de la description phonétique, j'utilise l'Alphabet Phonétique International (API) et les symboles indispensables hors de l'API (cf. Zhu 2010). Les données sur lesquelles je m'appuie ont été recueillies lors de l'enquête de terrain que j'ai menée à Chengdu en 2012, auprès d'un locuteur appelé Bon gDugs-dkar, étudiant en licence, d'une vingtaine d'années, originaire du hameau de Lhayul [Lha-yul / Lewo], dans le village de dGonpa du district de mBrugchu.

2. Consonantisme

La liste des consonnes du dialecte de dGonpa est la suivante :

Liste 1 : consonantisme du parler de dGonpa

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
sourde-aspirée	p ^h	t ^h	t ^h			k ^h	
sourde-non-aspirée	p	t	t			k	ʔ
sonore	b	d	d			g	
sourde-aspirée		ts ^h		tɕ ^h	cç ^h		
sourde-non-aspirée		ts		tɕ	cç		
sonore		dz		dz	ʃj		
sourde-aspirée		s ^h		ɕ ^h	ɕç ^h -xç ^h	x ^h	
sourde-non-aspirée		s	ɕ	ɕ	ɕç-xç	x	h
sonore		z		z	zj-j-ʃj	ʃ	ɦ
sonore	m	n		ɳ		ŋ	
sonore		l	r				
sonore	w				j		

A : labiale B : dento-alvéolaire C : rétroflexe
 D : prépalatale E : palatale (prépalatale-palatale)
 F : vélaire G : glottale

Les résonantes (nasales, liquides et semi-voyelles) sont toutes sonores, tandis que les non-résonantes se distinguent en trois séries : sourdes aspirées, sourdes non-aspirées et sonores, à l'exception de l'occlusive glottale, la fricative rétroflexe et les fricatives glottales.

Dans ce tableau, /r/ se prononce [ɹ] ou [ʒ]. La formulation des fricatives palatales nécessite que la langue s'élève en totalité sans toutefois toucher le palais, ce qui rend la position de cette dernière variable ; il y a beaucoup de variantes phonétiques, analysées comme une seule série du phonème, laquelle est représentée par /ɕç^h, ɕç, zj/, c'est-à-dire en tant qu'articulation simultanée de la prépalatale et la palatale. Au contraire, les affriquées prépalatales et palatales sont stables pour ce qui est de la position de la langue. Cependant, dans quelques exemples, les palatales peuvent se prononcer comme des prépalatales. L'approximante palatale n'inclut que l'articulation palatale, tandis que la nasale prépalatale est quasiment toujours prononcée comme prépalatale, et ne doit donc pas être notée comme [ɳ], mais uniquement comme [ŋ].

Les phonèmes sonores occlusifs et affriqués n'apparaissent que comme un membre d'un groupe consonantique. On observe deux

types de groupes consonantiques à l'initiale : l'un où il y a préaspiration (l'initiale principale précédée par une fricative glottale faible [h] ou [h̥]) et l'autre où il y a prénasalisation (l'initiale principale précédée par une nasale homorganique faiblement prononcée). Cette dernière s'accorde du point de vue de la sonorité. À l'inverse, le caractère sourd ou sonore de la préaspiration n'est pas déterminé par la consonne initiale principale. De plus, puisque la préaspiration devant une affriquée sourde peut se prononcer comme une vélaire sourde [u̥, x] ou sonore [x], la préaspiration sonore n'est pas un élément consonantique mais un trait suprasegmental voisé. La prénasalisation, soit sourde soit sonore, peut alterner avec une préaspiration sonore en début de mot dans plusieurs exemples. Une prénasalisation sourde qui précède une consonne sourde-aspirée s'entend à peine. Une analyse acoustique complémentaire sera nécessaire pour vérifier ce phénomène phonétique très délicat.

D'un point de vue phonotactique, les dento-alvéolaires /ts^h, ts, dz, s^h, s, z/ ne peuvent pas précéder la voyelle /i/.

Description phonétique (des exemples sont suivis par un étymon littéraire) :

[sim. : initiale simple ; préas.sou. : initiale avec une préaspiration sourde ;
 préas.son. : initiale avec une préaspiration sonore ;
 pré.n. : initiale avec une prénasale (seulement pour les obstruents)]

la série occlusive

/p^h/

sim. :	p ^h a 'cochon' <i>phag</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	^m p ^h a fi 'chacal' <i>'phar</i>

/p/

sim. :	pa mo 'gelée' <i>ba mo</i>
préas.sou. :	^h pə 'prairie' <i>spang</i>
préas.son. :	^h pa 'faire (du thé)' <i>sbang</i>
prén. :	---

/b/

sim. :	---
préas.sou. :	---

préas.son. :	^h be ‘cymbales’ <i>sbug</i>
prén. :	^m bu ^w ‘insecte’ <i>'bu</i>
/t ^h /	
sim. :	t ^h o ə ‘sucre’
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	ⁿ t ^h u fiɣ ‘épais’ <i>'thug po</i>
/t/	
sim. :	to s ^h ə ‘tombe’ <i>dur sa</i>
préas.sou. :	^h tə ‘cheval’ <i>rta</i>
préas.son. :	^h tɣ ‘pierre’ <i>rdo</i>
prén. :	---
/d/	
sim. :	---
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	^h də fiu ‘village’ <i>sde ba</i>
prén. :	ⁿ də ‘flèche’ <i>mda'</i>
/t ^h /	
sim. :	t ^h a fiu ‘épaule’ <i>phrag pa</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	ⁿ t ^h a ‘chapelet’ <i>phreng ba</i>
/t/	
sim. :	t ^w u ‘six’ <i>drug</i>
préas.sou. :	^h t ^w u ‘singe’ <i>spre'u</i>
préas.son. :	^h tæ ‘déchirer’ <i>dbral</i>
prén. :	---
/d/	
sim. :	---
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	^h dɑ ‘couper’ <i>'breg</i>
prén. :	ⁿ də ^w ‘fantôme’ <i>'dre</i>
/k ^h /	
sim. :	k ^h ə ‘bouche’ <i>kha</i>
préas.sou. :	---

préas.son. : ---
 prén. : ʔk^hæ mə 'rein' *mkhal ma*

/k/
 sim. : kə le fi 'lent' *ga le*
 préas.sou. : ^hkə 'cou' *ske*
 préas.son. : ^hkə 'selle' *sga*
 prén. : ---

/g/
 sim. : ---
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ^hge fu 'forgeron' *mgar ba*
 prén. : ʔgu 'tête' *mgo*

/ʎ/
 sim. : ʎa ji 'mère' *a yas*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 prén. : ---

la série affriquée

/ts^h/
 sim. : ts^hə 'chien' *khyi*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 prén. : ⁿts^he fi 'lac' *mtsho*

/ts/
 sim. : tsɤ 'blé' *gro*
 préas.sou. : ^htsə 'herbe' *rtswa*
 préas.son. : ^htsə 'chinois (Han)' *rgya*
 prén. : ---

/dz/
 sim. : ---
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : tɯ ^hdzə 'temps' *dus tshod*
 prén. : ⁿdzɤ 'mdzo' *mdzo*

/tɕ^h/
 sim. : tɕ^hu le 'religion' *chos lugs*

préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 prén. : ⁿtɕ^hi^mbə 'foie' *mchin pa*

/tɕ/

sim. : tɕuⁿda 'ceinture'
 préas.sou. : ^htɕi 'un' *gcig*
 préas.son. : ^htɕə^hu 'puce' *lji ba*
 prén. : ---

/dz/

sim. : ---
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ^hdze t^ha^mbə '80' *brgyad tham pa*
 prén. : ⁿdzə 'suspendre' *'dzin*

/cɕ^h/

sim. : cɕ^hu 'eau' *chu*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 prén. : ^hcɕ^hur 'lèvre' *mchu*

/cɕ/

sim. : cɕə 'thé' *ja*
 préas.sou. : ^hcɕu t^ha^mbə 'dix' *bcu tham pa*
 préas.son. : ^hcɕu 'caractère' *rgyu*
 prén. : ---

/jɕ/

sim. : ---
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : tu^hjɕu t^ha^mbə '60' *drug cu tham pa*
 prén. : ^hɕi jɕə^hu 'Yama' *gshin rje*

la série fricative

/s^h/

sim. : s^hə 'farine' *sa*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 prén. : ⁿs^ha 'balayer' *'phyag*

/s/

sim. :	sə 'poulet' <i>bya</i>
préas.sou. :	^h sə 'frais' <i>bsil</i>
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	---

/z/

sim. :	tɕ ^h zə ʔə 'merci' <i>khyod bzang</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	^h zə ^h po 'corps' <i>gzugs po</i>
prén. :	ɕje ⁿ zo 'maître' <i>dpon po</i>

/ʃ/

sim. :	k ^h ə ʃu 'eau chaude'
préas.sou. :	^h ʃe ^h ci 'se solidifier'
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	---

/ɕ^h/

sim. :	ɕ ^h i 'pou' <i>shig</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	^r ɕ ^h i 'essuyer' <i>'phyid</i>

/ɕ/

sim. :	ɕi ^m bɕ 'délicieux' <i>zhim po</i>
préas.sou. :	^h ci na 'or' <i>gser nag</i>
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	---

/z/

sim. :	zi ji 'dans trois jours' <i>gzhis nyin</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	^h zi 'léopard' <i>gzig</i>
prén. :	---

/ɕɕ^h/

sim. :	ɕɕ ^h e 'pet' <i>phyen</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	---
prén. :	---

/ɕɕ/

sim. : ɕça ə 'poire'
 préas.sou. : ^hɕça 'jaillir' *gshar*
 préas.son. : ---
 pré.n. : ---

/zj/

sim. : zji 'un' *zhig*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ^ʰzji 'dé livrer'
 pré.n. : ---

/x^h/

sim. : x^hə 'viande' *sha*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 pré.n. : ---

/x/

sim. : xa^mbɯ 'chapeau' *zhwa*
 préas.sou. : ^hxo^htɕa 'aile' *gshog pa*
 préas.son. : ---
 pré.n. : ---

/y/

sim. : ^ʰmə ʏo ʏo 'tout rouge' *dmар*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ^ʰʏo^u 'tailler'
 pré.n. : ---

/h/

sim. : ha fɯ 'vent' *lhags pa*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 pré.n. : ---

sim. : fia fɯ 'arc-en-ciel' *gzha'*
 préas.sou. : ---
 préas.son. : ---
 pré.n. : ---

la série résonante

/m/

sim. :	ma fiu 'époux' <i>mag pa</i>
préas.sou. :	^h me 'médicament' <i>sman</i>
préas.son. :	^h ma 'plaie' <i>rma</i>
/n/	
sim. :	na mə 'épouse' <i>mna' ma</i>
préas.sou. :	^h nə fiu 'nez' <i>sna</i>
préas.son. :	^h nə fiu 'oreille' <i>rna</i>
/n̥/	
sim. :	n̥ə ^w 'personne' <i>myi</i>
préas.sou. :	^h n̥e 'cœur' <i>snying</i>
préas.son. :	^h n̥i 'œil' <i>dmyig</i>
/ŋ/	
sim. :	ŋo 'face' <i>ngo</i>
préas.sou. :	^h ŋa 'incantation, Mantra' <i>sngags</i>
préas.son. :	^h ŋa mo 'chameau' <i>rnga mong</i>
/l/	
sim. :	lo fia 'vallée' <i>lung ba</i>
préas.sou. :	^h la mə 'facile' <i>sla mo</i>
préas.son. :	^h lə 'dieu' <i>lha</i>
/r/	
sim. :	rə ^w 'montagne' <i>ri</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	^h ra na 'mouche' <i>sbrang nag</i>
/j/	
sim. :	ja ^h kə 'branche' <i>yal ga</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	^h ja 'yak' <i>g.yag</i>
/w/	
sim. :	wa m̥ə 'renard' <i>wa mo</i>
préas.sou. :	---
préas.son. :	^h wi n̥i ^h gə 'nous deux' <i>'a nyis ga</i>

Je récapitule ici l'apparition de chaque consonne avec ou sans préinitiale :

Liste 2 : récapitulation de l'articulation consonantique

consonnes	simple	préaspiration sourde	préaspiration sonore	préaspiration prénasalisation
/p ^h , t ^h , t̥ ^h , k ^h , ts ^h , tɕ ^h , cɕ ^h /	+	+		+
/p, t, t̥, k, ts, tɕ, cɕ, m, n, ɳ, ŋ, l/	+	+		+
/b, d, d̥, g, dz, dz̥, tʃ/			+	+
/ʀ, cɕ ^h , x ^h , h, fi/	+			
/s ^h , ɕ ^h /	+			+
/s, ʂ, ɕ, cɕ, x/	+	+		
/z, z̥, ʝ, r, j, w/	+		+	
/z/	+		+	+

La liste ci-dessus ne permet pas de dégager de règle simple de combinaison consonantique. Hormis la série glottale, qui est soit plosive soit fricative, les séries plosive et affriquée se classent régulièrement parmi les séries sourdes aspirées, sourdes non-aspirées, et sonores ; la série fricative se classe de la même façon que les plosives et fricatives, mais elle est plus compliquée. Les phonèmes /s^h, ɕ^h, z/ sont particuliers en ce qui concerne les possibilités de combinaison avec une pré-nasale. Les résonantes se classent en deux groupes : celui des nasales et de la latérale /l/, qui se distribuent comme la série de plosives sourdes non-aspirées, et celui des autres, qui se distribuent comme celle de la fricative sonore.

3. Vocalisme

Le dialecte de dGonpa ne possède que des voyelles orales, dont la longueur n'est pas distinctive. On peut entendre des voyelles nasales précéder une consonne nasale (préaspiration incluse). Ces voyelles nasales ne sont donc pas phonémiques mais correspondent à un effet d'assimilation. Il y a treize positions linguales :

Liste 3 : vocalisme du parler de dGonpa

i	ɨ	ɯ	u
e	ə	ɤ	o
ɛ			ɔ
æ			
a			ɑ

En outre, on compte deux articulations secondaires : rétroflexion (notée comme / ~ /) et vélarisation approximante (notée comme / ɯ /), qui apparaissent dans certaines voyelles limitées. Celle-ci diffère de la réalisation phonétique qui doit être écrite comme / ʏ /, où la proximité de la langue avec le vélum est plus forte que / ɯ / (cf. Suzuki 2011). Ces deux sons s'articulent du milieu d'une voyelle à la fin d'une syllabe, mais elles ne s'articulent jamais comme une finale consonantique. Ces articulations secondaires ne forment généralement pas de paire minimale.

Description phonétique (des exemples sont suivis par un étymon littéraire) :

[nor. : voyelle normale; rét. : voyelle rétroflexe; vél. : voyelle vélarisée]

/i/

nor. : k^{hi} 'aiguille' *khab*

rét. : x^{ha} p^{hi} 'animal sauvage' ?

vél. : ---

/e/

nor. : ^hke 'voix' *skad*

rét. : pa ke 'grand-père' *pa rgan*

vél. : ---

/ɛ/

nor. : le fi mə 'lune' *zla ba*

rét. : ---

vél. : ---

/æ/

nor. : ^hkæ 'portion' *skal*

rét. : ---

vél. : ---

/a/

nor. : ^hka ra ‘ceinture’ *ske rags*
 rét. : x^hṁ ma ‘parenté’ *pha dang ma*
 vél. : ---

/a/
 nor. : ka f̄a ‘pilier’ *ka ba*
 rét. : t^hṁ ‘loin’ *thag ring*
 vél. : ⁿts^ha^w m̄ṁ ‘froid’ *'khyag mo*

/ɔ/
 nor. : ^hkɔ ‘moelle’ *rkang*
 rét. : ---
 vél. : f̄ɔ^w n̄ə ‘dessous’ *'og*

/o/
 nor. : ^hko mə ‘voleur’ *rku ma*
 rét. : ja ^hkɔ ‘balançoire’ *yang skor*
 vél. : ---

/u/
 nor. : ^hku f̄u ‘fil’ *skud pa*
 rét. : p^ha ku ‘porcelet’ *phag gu*
 vél. : lu^w ‘mouton’ *lug*

/ʉ/
 nor. : k^hʉ to ‘poing’ *khu tshur*
 rét. : ⁿc̄ç^hʉṁ ‘lèvre’ *mchu*
 vél. : pu^w ‘fils’ *bu*

/ɣ/
 nor. : k^hɣ na n̄ə ‘ils/elles’ *kho rnam s ga*
 rét. : ʔ^ɣ ʔ^ɣ l̄ə ‘hoqueter’ *'ig ka*
 vél. : ---

/ʌ/
 nor. : ^hkʌ ji ‘bol’ *dkar yol*
 rét. : ^hc̄ç^ɣ ‘baguettes’ *gcus*
 vél. : ---

/ə/
 nor. : ^hkə f̄u ‘reins’ *rked pa*

rét. : mi ə 'chat' ?

vél. : jə^u 'lettre' *yig*

Je récapitule ici l'apparition de chaque voyelle sans ou avec articulation secondaire :

Liste 4 : récapitulation de l'articulation vocalique

voyelles	normale	rétroflexe	vélarisée
/ɛ, æ/	+		
/i, e, a, o, ɤ, u/	+	+	
/ɔ/	+		+
/ɑ, u, ʊ, ə/	+	+	+

La syllabe /ə/ qui apparaît fréquemment en deuxième position est souvent fusionnée avec la première syllabe, ce qui modifie la position de la langue lors de la prononciation de la voyelle rétroflexe dans le cas d'une parole rapide. Cette fusion peut apparaître avec n'importe quelle voyelle de la première syllabe, par exemple, /^{r̥}ɕ^hi/ [^{r̥}ɕ^hi] 'essuyer' (*phyid*) : /^{r̥}ɕ^hi-ə/ [^{r̥}ɕ^hɿ] 'être en train d'essuyer.' De plus, dans plusieurs exemples tels que la syllabe analysée comme /rə/, [ə] peut alterner avec [ɿə].

4. Traits suprasegmentaux

Les phénomènes suprasegmentaux qui ont cours dans le dialecte de dGonpa sont très particuliers parce qu'ils se caractérisent par différents types de phonation et de hauteur. Cependant, la réalisation phonétique de ces deux phénomènes change souvent, selon l'intonation. On peut donc se demander si les réalisations suprasegmentales ont, ou non, une fonction distinctive, ce que je propose de vérifier par une description détaillée de ces deux phénomènes. Voir aussi Suzuki (2015) pour une description phonétique plus générale

Des études précédentes comme Sun (2003) et Huang (2007) considèrent que le ton se reflète toujours dans la hauteur. Puisque la phonation n'est généralement pas associée à cette dernière, il est donc selon moi inapproprié de comparer la description suprasegmentale des études précédentes avec celles utilisant la théorie de la phonation.

La phonation peut être non-voisée, c'est-à-dire de 'registre moyen', ou voisée, c'est-à-dire de 'registre bas' (Zhu 2010:74-76, 291-301 ; Suzuki 2008) suivant le caractère de la consonne initiale. Si la consonne initiale contient une seule consonne non-voisée non-prénasalisée ou

une préaspiration sourde, elle est classée en tant que phonation non-voisée. C'est l'inverse dans tous les autres cas. La phonation voisée pourrait être marquée phonétiquement parce qu'elle est caractérisée par une voix soufflante voisée qui s'étend à toute la rime de façon stable. Elle est aussi associée à une hauteur relativement basse. Toutefois, toutes les consonnes se rapportent toujours à un de ces deux types de phonation, donc il n'est pas nécessaire d'expliciter la phonation quand on décrit un mot, hormis dans certains cas spécifiques.

Parmi ceux-ci, il convient de mentionner la préaspiration voisée, au cours de laquelle l'ensemble de la première syllabe est souvent réalisée par une voix soufflante voisée. Même en l'absence de préaspiration voisée, la syllabe peut être réalisée comme une syllabe soufflante voisée dans le cas d'une initiale résonante. Par exemple, la différence entre les mots 'forêt' /na/ (*nags*) et 'pus' /^hna/ (*rnag*) peut être rendue par les transcriptions phonétiques [na] et [n̥a], où la hauteur du premier exemple est relativement plus élevée que celle du deuxième. Dès lors, on devrait noter la phonation 'soufflante' dans la prononciation. Toutefois, un certain nombre d'exemples de nasales avec préaspiration sonore ne se prononcent pas toujours avec une voix soufflante, par exemple, 'œil' /^hni/ (*dmyig*) et 'ciel' /^hno/ (*gnam*). Cependant, dans le cas du parler de dGonpa, la nasale avec préaspiration peut se réaliser avec ou sans voix soufflante, ce qui dépend apparemment de la préférence du locuteur. On peut donc en déduire que la voix soufflante ne constitue pas un trait distinctif au sein de ce parler.

Si l'on envisage la hauteur de la voix sur une échelle de 1 à 5 conformément à la convention utilisée en linguistique chinoise (cf. Chao 1930), on peut noter que le registre moyen se situe entre 2 et 5 (sans jamais descendre au niveau 1) et que le registre bas oscille entre 1 et 4 (sans jamais monter au niveau 5). Chaque initiale présente souvent une hauteur spécifique. Généralement, les mots monosyllabiques avec une préaspiration sourde se prononcent en [55] (c.-à-d. le plus haut), l'initiale simple aspirée en [55] ou [44], celle avec une préaspiration en [44] (si elle est aspirée) ou [33] (si elle est sonore), et celle avec une préaspiration sonore en [22] ou [21], et d'autres initiales en [44] ou [33]. Par exemple :

^hkæ^[55] 'portion' (*skal*)
^hkæ^[22] 'dos' (*sgal*)

Toutefois, la valeur de la hauteur varie souvent, et on peut prononcer un mot en montant ou en descendant selon l'environnement consti-

tué par les autres syllabes éventuelles ou par les autres sons de la phrase. Autrement dit, aucune frontière lexicale n'existe au-delà de laquelle l'effet de changement de hauteur se produit. Or, on trouve des hauteurs différentes pour les mêmes formes segmentales dans le cas où un mot est prononcé de façon isolée :

$h_t\text{ə}^{[52]}$ 'cheval, regarder' (*rta*, *lta*)
 $h_t\text{ə}^{[55]}$ 'maintenant' (*lta*)

Si ces deux mots forment une paire minimale en raison de leurs hauteurs respectives, cela ne reste pas toujours le cas selon l'environnement dans lequel ils sont insérés :

$h_t\text{ə}^{[55]}$	$h_t\text{ə}^{[55]}$	$h_t\text{ə}^{[52]}-r\text{ə}^{[22]}$ (ou $h_t\text{ə}^{[52]}$)
<i>lta</i>	<i>rta</i>	<i>lta-ra</i>
maintenant	cheval	regarder-marque du présent
'(Je) regarde (ce) cheval maintenant.'		

En règle générale, la hauteur ne descend pas en milieu de phrase. Pour expliquer ce phénomène tonal, Bon gDugs-dkar m'a signalé que le mot 'maintenant' devait toujours être suivi d'autres mots, et qu'il était par conséquent fréquemment prononcé en [55]. Quoi qu'il en soit, la courbe descendante n'est de toute façon pas distinctive d'un point de vue phonologique.

On peut donc conclure qu'il n'existe quasiment pas de distinction de hauteur si l'on ne prend pas en compte la phonation spécifique de chaque registre. Le registre dépend toujours de l'initiale, donc le système suprasegmental a théoriquement un statut problématique dans le parler de dGonpa, où la distinction entre les registres n'est pas toujours strictement exprimée.

L'accentuation n'apparaît par aucun trait spécifique et phonétiquement évident, hormis l'affaiblissement occasionnel des syllabes situées en deuxième position. Celui-ci consiste en un changement de la position articulaire de la voyelle, en principe associé à une descente de la hauteur.

5. Conclusion

Cette esquisse phonétique du dialecte de dGonpa nous conduit à proposer que les éléments suprasegmentaux soient analysés comme relevant des éléments consonantiques initiaux, plutôt que comme un

trait phonologique appelé *ton*. Je recommande par ailleurs que l'on indique clairement s'ils apparaissent associés à un phénomène phonétique évident, en vue de mieux cerner les différences de ce dialecte avec les parlers vernaculaires voisins.

Je précise finalement que je me suis abstenu de discuter ici la différence entre mes données et celles de Huang (2007), qui a étudié le système tonal du dialecte de mBrugchu. Je ne dispose en effet pour l'instant pas d'information sur la variété qu'elle a décrite. J'y reviendrai après avoir recueilli de nouvelles données sur plusieurs parlers tibétains de mBrugchu.

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