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Regional Perspectives on the Origin and Early Spread of the Bon Religion based on Core Areas of Monastery Construction across the Tibetan Plateau

Karl E. Ryavec

(University of California, Merced)

1. Introduction

his study examines the early growth and spread of the Bon religion of Tibet based on mapping the spatial densities of monastery constructions ca. 1000-1240 CE. These historical spatial patterns will also be compared to the earliest Buddhist temple and monastery building activities ca. 600-1240 CE across the Tibetan Plateau. The purpose of this approach is to provide a spatial perspective on how Bon grew and spread by constructing a core-periphery cartographic model of early Bon compared to Buddhist monastic areas. These include 70 Bonpo sites, and 363 Buddhist sites, constructed during the Imperial and Second Diffusion of Buddhism periods. The end date of 1240 is selected based on the beginnings of Mongol incursions and involvement in Tibetan internal politics that witnessed new patterns of patronage and official tolerance of different religious traditions under a 'Pax Mongolica' that altered previous indigenous ways in which the Bonpo and Buddhists spread their networks of temples and monasteries across Tibet.

The theoretical underpinnings of this study relate to Regional Religious Systems, and also the study of Nativism in major religious traditions. As noted by Blezer and Teeuwen, the history of religion includes many cases of emerging traditions claiming distinction from their competitors, while they in fact adopted a great deal of similar doctrines, beliefs, ritual practices, and outlook.¹ Good examples are Shinto in Buddhist Japan, Bön and Buddhist traditions in Tibet, Islam in its Judeo-Christian environment, and perhaps the rise of organized Daoism in China. And, in such competitive fields, there are clashes

¹ Blezer, Henk, and Mark Teeuwen. 2013. *Challenging Paradigms: Buddhism and Nativism Framing Identity Discourse in Buddhist Environments*. Leiden: Brill.

between newly arising universalizing (or proselytic) 'systems' and localising ethnic traditions that claim authority based on being native to the area. In fact, Shinto and Bön are key examples of nativist traditions that were triggered by Buddhism but not subsumed by it. I believe spatial analysis and models offer useful approaches to better understanding these problems, and apply it here to model the early growth of core areas of Bon as an organized monastic tradition in Tibet to discover if there were systemic regional patterns and processes.

2. Regional Religious Systems

An initial theory of Regional Religious Systems was first promulgated as a working definition by Wu, Tong, and Ryavec (2013) based on a study of religion in China:

A Regional Religious System is a type of spatial formation in which a group of related or unrelated religious institutions are conditioned by physical, geographical, administrative, cultural, or socioeconomic systems and are highly dependent on regionally and locally distributed variables such as economy, transportation, education, culture, ethnicity, and language, etc.²

This initial definition highlighted the spatial dependence of religious sites within larger socioeconomic systems and pointed to the regional features of a religious system. In this sense, it was assumed that certain aspects of the late G. W. Skinner's patently spatial research on China's agrarian economy and society, generally referred to as Regional Systems Theory, would likely prove relevant in developing an applied theoretical model of Regional Religious Systems.³

Research on RRS is still in its infancy, and only a small number of related studies have been carried out. Ryavec and Henderson, applied core-periphery theory to study the growth and spread of mosques in China according to core areas to better understand the historical geography of Islam.⁴ But this study did not differentiate mosques in

² Wu, Jiang, Daoqin Tong, and Karl E. Ryavec. 2013. "Spatial Analysis and GIS Modeling of Regional Religious Systems in China: Conceptualization and Initial Experiments," pp. 179-196 in Yongtao Du and Jeff Kyong-McClain (eds.), *Chinese History in Geographical Perspective*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

³ See for example: Skinner, George William. 1964/65. "Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China." *Journal of Asian Studies* 24: 3-43, 195-228, 363-399. *The City in Late Imperial China*. 1977. Stanford: Stanford University Press. "Presidential address: The Structure of Chinese History." 1985. *Journal of Asian Studies* 44, no. 2: 271-292.

⁴ Ryavec, Karl Ernest, and Mark Henderson. 2015. A Core-Periphery GIS Model of the Historical Growth and Spread of Islam in China. *Historical Methods* 48:103-111.

any attempt to rank them in importance, such as by number of adherents, or presence of an Islamic school, and so did not contribute towards any greater methodological development of RRS by either borrowing or building upon Skinnerian Regional Systems methodologies. And, while a number of recent studies have conducted important research with georeferenced historical religious data pertaining to China, these studies are based upon observing and commenting on local and regional patterns mapped, and not utilizing GIS to further construct new forms of data (such as core-periphery zones) for spatial analysis.⁵ This present study on the early growth of temple networks of the Bon religion across Tibet builds upon these initial studies by utilizing georeferenced data on Tibetan Buddhist compared to Bonpo temples to identify if there was a systemic core-periphery zoning to each tradition based upon regionally and locally distributed factors, such as ethnicity and language.

A specifically economic approach to explaining how and why some religious traditions gained wider acceptance, and greater politico-economic power in different areas, forms the Economics of Religion approach. Scholars have utilized this line of inquiry to study religious competition in terms of a plurality of religious providers or a monopoly, and to try to understand the pricing of religious goods.⁶ Given that a fundamental building block of Regional Systems Theory is based on Central Place Theory with its focus on the retailing of commercial services and commodities in an open market, the Economics of Religion approach is certainly worth examining to see how it might help improve upon RRS Theory. But there are obvious difficulties in attempting to define a standardized set of the types of 'services' religions offer (such as funerary rites), and how to determine comparative economic or spiritual values to such services between different religions and sects.

To date only one study has applied the Economics of Religion approach to the case of Tibetan Buddhism. In "The Market Approach to the Rise of the Geluk School, 1419-1642" McCleary and van der Kuijp argue that the new Gelukpa sect or school of Tibetan Buddhism became the state religion of the Ganden Podrang government (i.e.

⁵ Chen, Shih-pei. 2016. Remapping Locust Temples of Historical China and the Use of GIS. *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 3(2):149-163. Protass, Jason. 2016. Toward a Spatial History of Chan. *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 3(2):164-188. Bingenheimer, Marcus. 2016. Knowing the Paths of Pilgrimage. *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 3(2):189-222.

⁶ Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2002. "Beyond Church and Sect: Dynamics and Stability in Religious Economies." Ted G. Jelen (ed.), *Sacred Markets, Sacred Canopies: Essays on Religious Markets and Religious Pluralism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. Ekelund Jr. Robert B., Robert F. Hébert and Robert D. Tollison. 2006. *The Marketplace of Christianity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Kingdom of the Dalai Lamas) of Tibet ca. 1642-1950 due, in part, by introducing new and superior organizational methods (such as celibacy and ordained abbots).⁷ Certainly the Gelukpa increased their political and economic control over more areas through collecting taxes-in-kind from both their own religious estates, and those they confiscated from other sects, but Buddhism became the state religion of Tibet not the Gelukpa sect, which furthermore did not become any sort of religious monopoly. Instead, they became the monopoly sect with an appendage government within a highly decentralized state. Across Tibet, monasteries of the older Tibetan Buddhist sects continued to collect, and retain for themselves, taxes-in-kind from their agricultural estates and agreements with nomads. And, the Tibetan government formally acknowledged the ownerships rights of non-Gelukpa sects to various agricultural estates across Central Tibet.⁸ Furthermore, during the period of their rise, and even when they achieved paramount political power, the Gelukpa were not able to convert adherents in areas they controlled who remained faithful to Bon. For example, some of the Bonpo monasteries converted into Gelukpa establishments as a result of Lhasa's inroads into the Gyelrong (Chinese: Jiarong) region of Sichuan during the Qing period were actually turned back into Bonpo centers in recent decades based on local popular support when many monasteries destroyed during China's Cultural Revolution were restored with government approval during the 1980s.⁹ In other words, the local inhabitants remained true to their long-term traditional Bon faith despite more than one century of Gelukpa overseers. Also, most Tibetan Buddhists do not discriminate among the different schools in seeking religious services, such as naming a newborn child, or arranging funerary services. Farmers and herders across Tibet seek out the services of Buddhist monks and incarnate lamas based primarily on geographic proximity to their homes. A much more relevant application of the Economics of Religion approach to Tibet would be to study how and why certain people converted to Buddhism in the first place while others adopted the new form of organized Bon. Within the market arena of the new Gelukpa sect, any expansion of their control over more agricultural feud lands, or trade marts, was more the result of political and

⁷ McCleary, Rachel M. and Leonard van der Kuijp. The Market Approach to the Rise of the Geluk School, 1419-1642. *Journal of Asian Studies* 69(1):149-180.

⁸ Ryavec, Karl Ernest. 2001. Land Use/Cover Change in Central Tibet, c. 1830-1990: Devising a GIS Methodology to Study a Historical Tibetan Land Decree. *The Geographical Journal* 167:342-357.

⁹ Karmay, Samten G., and Yasuhiko Nagano (eds). 2003. *A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in Tibet and the Himalaya*. Bon Studies 7. Senri Ethnological Reports 38. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.

economic intrigues and machinations than due to the Tibetan population following a new sect based on the marketing of more appealing religious products and services.

3. Data

The locations of 70 Bonpo monasteries (Map 1: Bonpo Monasteries Founded ca. 1000 - 1240 CE), and 363 Buddhist monasteries (Map 2: Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries Founded ca 600 - 1240 CE), founded during the Imperial and Second Diffusion of Buddhism periods have been georeferenced to facilitate mapping their spatial densities to discern whether there were distinct core-periphery structures to their patterns of construction. These sites are documented in various works compiled by numerous scholars and research institutions based on field surveys and archival textual materials (Appendix 1: Sources Consulted in Mapping and Documenting Buddhist and Bonpo Temples and Monasteries). Only two of these nineteen sources were published outside of China, and among these the 2003 report “A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in Tibet and the Himalaya” by Karmay and Nagano specifically focused on the temples and monasteries of the Bon religion. The other survey volumes include both Buddhist and Bonpo sites in their surveys. Also, information about a key Bonpo monastery near the main town in Kyirong county just north of the Nepalese border was only gleaned from Chan’s valuable guidebook to Tibet.¹⁰ The 2003 report likely omitted this site because their researcher could not gain access to this border area the Chinese tightly restrict access to. The monastery in question is named Jadur (Tib. Bya dur), and although Chan could not determine its precise age, he noted that Bonpo pilgrims to Mt. Kailash in western Tibet traditionally obtained barley flour (tsampa) for their journey here, lending me to speculate that it could be an early site due to its location along this ancient trade and pilgrimage route.

I was earlier able to construct a more detailed GIS database of a total of 2,925 Buddhist and Bonpo monasteries from these nineteen sources based on all of the sites documented from ca. 600 to the 1950s, and these data then formed the skeletal framework for my *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*.¹¹ For this reason, the Appendix included here is very detailed and extensive in covering mainly Tibetan and/or Chinese language survey volumes that document Tibetan Buddhist and Bonpo monasteries across different counties, prefectures, and provinces that

¹⁰ Chan, Victor. 1994. *Tibet Handbook*. Chico, CA: Moon Publications.

¹¹ Ryavec, Karl Ernest. 2015. *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

today cover the Tibetan culture region in China. Readers should refer to these nineteen key sources for detailed information about specific sites.

For mapping the regional densities of the early Bonpo monasteries, I was fortunately able to extend this survey to key areas in northern Nepal thanks to the above-mentioned report by Karmay and Nagano which includes three early Bonpo monasteries in Nepal (two in Dolpo district, and one in Mustang district). In addition, at least one ruined monastery site in Dolpo is believed to date from this early period and is also included. There are also many family temples of the Bon religion in these Himalayan regions of Nepal, though unfortunately they were not included in the 2003 survey so I could not determine if any also date from before the thirteenth century. As far as I can ascertain, no Bonpo monasteries were constructed during the premodern period outside of the current boundaries of China and Nepal, though legends ascribe some Buddhist sites in Ladakh in northern India to earlier Bonpo foundations.

An important aspect of these data documenting the historical Bonpo monasteries mapped in this present study concerns the inclusion of sites no longer extant in Central Tibet and northern Yunnan province of China, as well as sites that were forcibly converted to Tibetan Buddhist sects prior to ca. 1240 CE. The first paramount monastery in the early development of Bon as a formal, organized religion was Yeru Wensakha (gYas ru dBen sa kha). It was constructed on the north bank of the Tsangpo in Central Tibet in 1072, but was destroyed by a flood in 1386, and rebuilt about 10 km to the north as Menri (sMan ri) in the fifteenth century. Also, among a number of Buddhist monasteries destroyed by Mongol supporters of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1674 in northern Yunnan province, four sites are recorded in the 1997 Zhongdian County Gazetteer as having been Bonpo establishments.¹² Considering the possibility that one or more of these monasteries may date from prior to ca. 1250, I have included one of these sites. And, three Bonpo monasteries in present-day Yushu prefecture of Qinghai province are recorded as having been converted to Buddhist establishments during the period of Mongol dominance in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. One of the early Bonpo monasteries in this region was converted to the Drigung Kagyu sect (bum dgon), and two to the Sakya sect (Thub bstan, and Seb mda'). Interestingly, both of these Tibetan Buddhist sects performed roles integral to the Mongol's territorial administration of Tibet, and the conversion of these Bonpo monasteries may have been a form of

¹² Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Difang Zhi Cong Shu. 1997. *Zhongdian Xian Zhi* (Zhongdian County gazetteer). Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe.

reward for the civil services of the Drigungpa and Sakyapa, and likely indicate key locations along trade routes vital to maintaining Mongol control.

To summarize, these data documenting the locations of early Bonpo and Buddhist monasteries of Tibet and the Himalaya are most likely incomplete and fragmentary. Nevertheless, there is value to these data in the rigorous, multi-faceted approach to their collection and recording. Different scholars and teams of official government researchers covered all local administrative districts across the Tibetan Culture Region in China, and that part of Nepal where Bonpo monasteries were also constructed. These specialists consistently applied their efforts to visiting the sites in question, and verifying information collected from local informants with historical texts whenever possible. As a result, even though many early sites may no longer be extant and/or recorded, it is reasonable to assume that the geographic pattern to those sites documented reflect the actual core-periphery structure of their historical locations. In other words, where there used to be many sites, more sites are documented than where there used to be fewer sites, even though the total number of sites is unknown.

4. Methodology

Based on the 70 Bonpo and 363 Buddhist monastery locations, the Kernel density function of ArcGIS (ESRI, Redlands, California) was utilized to map the density surface of sites according to nine zones ranging from an innermost core to an outermost periphery. For any point in space, the Kernel density estimator searches the neighboring monastery sites within a predefined distance range or bandwidth. A value of 300 km was used for this bandwidth function. The densities are mapped in nine zones, though there is no specific number of zones required. But too few zones would not allow specific core areas to be identified within regions, while too many zones would spread the highest density values over a multitude of core zones.

In this survey, each monastery point was weighted (i.e. treated) equally due to the paucity of historical variables pertaining to all sites. Though it would be worthwhile to reexamine these data in the future should more information become available. For example, the number of monks, seats of incarnations housed at each monastery, or presence of specialized colleges such as for medicine or dance, or presence of wood-block printing establishments, would all be worthwhile to attempt to assign weights for either individually or as a complex. For the most part, however, these sorts of specialized institutions within the Bonpo and Buddhist monasteries developed over centuries and

accurate data about them mostly date from the 1500s and later. It would be possible, though, to do this sort of more intricate and nuanced survey for a later point in time, especially for the eighteenth to mid-twentieth centuries.

5. Findings: Core Regions of the Bon Religion Compared to Tibetan Buddhism

The main findings of this study are presented in Map 3: Core Regions of the Bon Religion of Tibet ca. 1200, and Map 4: Core Regions of Tibetan Buddhism ca. 1200. There was a paramount core of early Bonpo monastery constructions across Kham and Amdo in eastern Tibet centered on the Gyelrong (Chinese: Jiarong) region, while Tibetan Buddhist monastery constructions centered on Lhasa and Central Tibet. In addition to these two clearly defined regions of early Bon and Buddhist monastery building activities, each religious tradition also promoted additional temple building in several minor core areas. In the case of Bon, there are also areas of high temple densities in Tsang in Central Tibet, and in the Dolpo and Mustang districts in Nepal. And, in the case of Buddhism, high densities are also discernable in part of western Tibet in the core region of the Guge Kingdom, and in part of Kham. However, it is important to note that the early Tibetan Buddhist temples in areas outside of China today in India, Nepal, and Bhutan are not included in this survey, so it is possible one or more additional minor Buddhist core areas existed during this period too.

Problems in identifying core-periphery zones based on monastic centers of religious traditions point to the need to reassess theoretical tenants borrowed from Regional Systems Theory for formalizing a more robust Regional Religious Systems Theory. The basis of the city-based regional economies of premodern peasant Eurasian civilizations are marketing areas defined by hierarchies of settlements with distinct urban core areas. Certainly, most of the early monasteries of the Bonpo and Buddhists were in agricultural valleys connected by long-distance trade routes. But, it is necessary to question whether these core cultural areas identified by the concentration of agricultural resources and population would have historically developed along the same lines without the presence of these religious institutions? Some speculation in this regard might consider the development of mass-monasticism, with about one-quarter of the male population residing as monks in the monasteries, as integral to the agrarian economy in that multiple sons did not place as much demand on land inheritance, which would have fragmented farming systems more and made them less productive. Also, there is some evidence that the earliest long-distance

trade in tea from China to Tibet, dating from at least ca. 200 CE, was for medicinal and ritualistic purposes.¹³ It was only during the advent of the Second Diffusion of Buddhism ca. 1000 CE that tea became a daily beverage across Tibet, thereby making it a staple item that would have led to large increases in trade volumes. As a result, the Bon and Buddhist monastic traditions diffused largely according to marketing and trade connections across these regional economies of Tibet based not on urban but on their own monastic centers.

To summarize, the Bon monastic systems ca. 1000-1240 CE were based on three regions, which may be termed Gyelrong, Tsang, and Dolpo-Mustang. And, Tibetan Buddhist monastic systems during approximately the same period were based on the three macroregions of U-Tsang (Central Tibet), Guge, and Kham. These core regions of monastery constructions illustrate important geographical differences between the early development of Bon and Buddhism. Based on these findings, I believe the most important factors that explain the historical social processes that led to these spatial patterns are: 1) areas where different Tibetic and non-Tibetic, specifically Gyalrongic, languages were spoken, and 2) the Imperial territorial administration of Central Tibet ca. 600 – 900 CE, and subsequently that of the Guge Kingdom in Western Tibet ca. 900 – 1240 CE. Environmental factors, such as land cover patterns, do not appear relevant given that both Bon and Buddhist monasteries were founded in different ecoregions, such as in forested valleys and alpine meadows.

Tibetic and non-Tibetic Language Areas

Language appears to be one of the most important factors in the locations of monastery building activities of the Bonpo and the Buddhists. The core area of the Bonpo in eastern Tibet is centered on Gyelrong to southern Amdo near the bend of the Yellow river,

¹³ Lu, Houyuan, Jianping Zhang, Yimin Yang, Xiaoyan Yang, Baiqing Xu, Wuzhan Yang, Tao Tong, Shubo Jin, Caiming Shen, Huiyun Rao, Xingguo Li, Hongliang Lu, Dorian Q. Fuller, Luo Wang, Can Wang, Deke Xu, and Naiqin Wu. 2016. "Earliest Tea as Evidence for one Branch of the Silk Road across the Tibetan Plateau." *Scientific Reports* 6, article no. 18955. According to John Vincent Bellezza's review of this report in the April 2016 issue of *Flight of the Khyung* (www.tibetarchaeology.com), tea in the Gurgyam burial in Western Tibet was accompanied by vegetal traces (lemma phytoliths) of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). And, this seems to document the presence of what is called *pak* (*spag*), a staple food in historical-era Tibet, consisting of tea and parched barley meal kneaded together into a paste. It is likely that this edible mixture was deposited in the tomb as provisions for the dead in the afterlife, as part of an elaborate series of funerary rites. The use of barleycorn and barley cakes in funerary rites is attested in Old Tibetan literature.

specifically the agricultural valleys of the upper Dadu watershed in the present-day counties of Jinchuan (Tib. Chuchen) and Barkham, and the grasslands of Hongyuan, and Dzoge. In Jinchuan and Barkham, The Gyalrongic (Chinese: Jiarong) language is spoken.¹⁴ The Gyalrongic language, and its close neighbor Qiangic, are widely considered Tibeto-Burman subgroups that have been heavily influenced by Classical Literary Tibetan, and together with the southern Himalayan Bodish languages of Nepal, India, and Bhutan can be considered to belong to the “Tibetosphere” (Tournadre 2013).¹⁵ In fact, Gyalrongic language speakers became classified as ethnic Tibetans by the Chinese state in the 1950s, while the Qiangic language speakers to the east and closer to Agrarian China obtained their own Qiang *Minzu*, or Nationality, designation.

Unfortunately, I am not aware of detailed linguistic maps of the non-Tibetic languages spoken across Tibet, as it would be interesting to see if any such pockets occur in the other Bon cores in Tsang, and Dolpo-Mustang. It is also possible, even if those adherents of Bon in these areas now speak Tibetic languages as it generally the case in Tsang, that in pre-historical times up to the Second Diffusion of Buddhism many spoke non-Tibetic languages. This is certainly an area that requires further research.

The Imperial and Guge Kingdom Territorial Administrations

In addition to language differences, some of the reasons that led to the spatial patterns of the core areas of Bon monastery constructions relate to the areal extents of the Imperial (ca. 600-900) administration in Central Tibet, and the Guge Kingdom's administration in western Tibet after ca. 900. These territorial administrations are important for explaining the absence of Bonpo monasteries in western Tibet, considering the numerous historical accounts that Bon was the religious tradition of Zhangzhung as this region was called during the Imperial period and earlier. The Tibetan Empire annexed Zhangzhung in the 640s, though Guge maintained the name of Zhangzhung by which it was called well into the historical period until its fall in 1630. During the aftermath of empire and the Second Diffusion of Buddhism, the pro-Buddhist Guge kingdom was the only strong, centralized kingdom on the Tibetan Plateau, and as such was able to prevent

¹⁴ Wurm, S. A., Rong Li, Theo Baumann, and Mei W. Lee. 1987. *Language Atlas of China*. Hong Kong: Longman.

¹⁵ Tournadre, Nicolas. 2013. “The Tibetic Languages and their Classification,” pp. 105-130. In Thomas Owen-Smith and Nathan Hill (eds), *Trans-Himalayan Linguistics: Historical and Descriptive Linguistics of the Himalayan Area*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Bonpo monasteries from being constructed anywhere in its territory. It is reasonable to assume that, in the absence of a strong pro-Buddhist political administration, some Bonpo monasteries would have been constructed in western Tibet. The locations of the Bonpo monasteries in Eastern Tibet, and the Himalayan frontier, are less problematic in this regard given the lack of strong centralized pro-Buddhist polities there. Similarly, Central Tibet lacked any regional form of government in the post-Imperial period, and instead was characterized by various local centers of the new Buddhist sects and schools. And, there is evidence the Bonpo monasteries in Tsang were constructed in areas with relatively weak pro-Buddhist local sentiment. Only in areas where the Tibetan Royal Court (Pho brang) had not seasonally resided, nor where the Council ('Dun ma) had met, were Bonpo monasteries subsequently constructed leading to one of the core regions of Bon (Ryavec 2015).¹⁶ These patterns indicate the local populations in these areas may have been ethnically different from the clans that gained prestige by inviting the Emperor and his court to stay on their lands. This movable court was based in a tent encampment that generally shifted between summer and winter sites.

6. Conclusion: Geographic Perspectives on the Origins of Bon

The most important finding of this study is that the paramount core region of Bon was centered in eastern Tibet in Gyelrong where non-Tibetic languages were spoken. Of course, these patterns do not prove that most early adherents of Bon prior to ca. 1000 CE were largely non-Tibetic language speakers, but they do indicate this is a serious possibility, and that there was a certain amount of cultural difference between them and the Tibetans further to the west in Kham, Central Tibet, and western Tibet who largely converted to Buddhism. It is also clear that the local population in Gyelrong were largely adherents of Bon by the fall of the Tibetan Empire considering how many Bonpo monasteries were constructed ca. 1000-1200 CE. It is not reasonable to assume, as many scholars have speculated, that Bonpo refugees from Central Tibet or Zhangzhung during the Imperial period and aftermath of empire could have persuaded an entire regional population to suddenly support their religion, instead of Buddhism, or even Daoism, to such a great extent by giving lands, building materials, and the great amount of labor required to construct the monasteries. In this regard it is intriguing that Nicolas Tournadre, a

¹⁶ Refer to Map 14 "Central Tibet, 650-764: Annual sites of the royal court and council" in *A Historical Atlas of Tibet* by Karl E. Ryavec. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

leading expert on the Tibetic languages, considers it a very probably hypothesis that some of the Tibetic languages spoken on the grasslands to the north of Gyelrong (but still within the paramount core region of Bon), such as Khalong, have a Qiangic substratum.¹⁷ If this is the case, it would lend even more credence to this line of speculation. In this sense, we may view the Bon religion by ca. 1000 CE as both a form of Tibetan Buddhism and thus a Universalizing religion, that in some way appealed to Gyalrongic and Qiangic language speakers, and as an ethnic religion that resisted conversions to the standard forms of Tibetan Buddhism taught by Tibetic language speakers.

In light of these findings, I would propose a theory that Bon already was an ethnic religion by the Imperial period. If Bon was an ethnic religion, this might help to explain why Buddhism mainly appealed to non-Bon adherents in Tibet beginning in the Imperial period, and reached a mass conversion state by the Second Diffusion of Buddhism, when as we have seen the monastery became important in facilitating increased economic trade, and promoting agricultural growth by providing the option of monkhood to the extra sons of farming families. According to Samuel (1990), the content of early Bonpo texts appears more distinctive from that of early Buddhist (i.e. *chos pa*) texts, and there is some historical reality to placing the origin of Bon religious teachings in pre-Imperial Zhangzhung and countries to the west.

The Tibetan Grasslands as the First Silk Roads

The spatial patterns to the core areas of Bon also indicate long-distance trade connections from Sichuan to South Asia and Persia. Unlike the so-called 'Silk Road' for which the term was coined in the nineteenth century to refer to the long-distance trade routes between China and South and Western Asia that ran from Han and Tang China through the Tarim Basin, the Sichuan to India routes via Kham and Central Tibet developed much earlier because they are shorter, and offer water and pasturage for livestock year-round. Also, recent research findings have found that some pre-Buddhist cultural and religious sites of the Bronze and Iron Age periods on the Tibetan Plateau were located in the viewsheds of long-distance least-cost paths in wholly pastoral

¹⁷ Tournadre, Nicolas. 2014. "The Tibetic Languages," pp. 26-29. In Karl E. Ryavec, *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

regions.¹⁸

It is possible the earliest contacts ca. 2000-1500 BCE between East Asia, and South and Western Asia, during the Bronze Age Shu civilization of the Sichuan Basin and early Indian and Harrapan civilizations, was facilitated, in part, by people who lived and travelled between areas that became these later Bon cores. Over time, these various peoples could have started to share aspects of language, ethnicity, and religion, as a result of long-distance trade contacts. Also, for people who became familiar with these overland routes from Sichuan to South Asia via Central Tibet, it would have been advantageous to develop family connections at key staging places along the way through marriage alliances. Family connections are repeatedly mentioned as key factors in the spread of the later Bon teachings during the period of monastery constructions, with esteemed teachers from Central and Western Tibet coming to Gyelrong and the Himalaya. And, to this day, many adherent of Bon in Gyelrong and Amdo have maintained the practice of marrying Bonpo from Tsang.

The Tibet routes would have been faster and safer for travel and trade between Sichuan and India prior to the Han period than the Tarim Basin routes to the north. Note how the Chinese were not able to secure the Tarim Basin route until the Han period when they finally possessed the resources of an empire strong enough to extend the Great Wall westwards with limes and watchtowers through the Gansu Corridor and into the Tarim Basin, and to support agricultural colonies there. The Chinese also needed to be wary of nomadic groups, such as the Xiongnu and Qiang, who could easily harass caravans along the Gansu Corridor from regions of relative security on the Tibetan and Mongolian plateaus. Whereas, in contrast, the routes from Sichuan to India via Kham and Central Tibet would have been safer for peoples of the Tibetan plateau because the sheer remoteness and distances involved made it much more difficult for hostile groups to harass the caravans. And, the grasslands of the Tibetan Plateau provided pack animals with ample water and forage year-round in stark contrast to the lack of water and forage along the desert stretches between oases in the Gansu Corridor and Tarim Basin.

We know that by ca. 350 BCE, silk fabric of ancient Shu (i.e. Sichuan) became a valuable trade and marketing item in India from the Sanskrit

¹⁸ Ryavec, Karl E. 2018. "GIS Derived Viewsheds of Mountaintop Tombs in Western Tibet: A Preliminary Survey. *IEEE Xplore Digital Library* pp. 1-4. DOI: 10.23919/PNC.2018.8579467.

Arthashastra text written around this time.¹⁹ It is clear this trade in general ran from Southwest China to India over the Tibetan-Burman highlands. And while the bulk of this trade likely went via Yunnan into Assam to reach India, it is also reasonable to assume that some went via Eastern Tibet to Central Tibet, and thence along Himalayan routes to India, while some continued westwards to Zhangzhung and beyond. According to the great Chinese historian Sima Qian, information about this older, Tibeto-Burman trade route came from the report submitted to Emperor Han Wudi by Zhang Qian, who, as an ambassador of the Han court, had been sent to the West to establish an alliance with the Dayuezhi against the Xiongnu in 139-126 BCE. Zhang Qian states that he was surprised to have found in Daxia (Bactria) bamboo sticks from Qiong, and cloth from Shu, both in present-day Sichuan province in China.²⁰ The Bactrians told him that these goods had come from a country called Shendu (i.e. India) and provided some new information to the Han about it.

Over time, certainly by the Tang to Song periods in China, long-distance trade in tea from Southwest China across the Tibetan Plateau would have further benefited the economic base of the later core region of Bon in Gyelrong and bordering parts of Kham and Amdo. From a long-term perspective on Chinese history, what is fascinating about the Gyelrong Bon core is that it formed a 'folk fortress' that was never directly incorporated into Chinese territorial administrations from the Qin annexation of the Sichuan Basin ca. 350 BCE, until the Qing period in the eighteenth century when the Jinchuan Wars were fought to subdue Bonpo polities.

It is clear the Bon religion inherited a great deal of cultural traditions from Tibet's neighboring civilizations, particularly China, Persia and the Indus Valley. The reputed founder of Bon was Shenrab Miwo (gShen rab mi bo), but there are no sources with which to establish his historicity, and many scholars dismiss this figure as a later invention because he occupies a position very similar to that of Sakyamuni in Buddhism. Bonpo tradition also claims that the ultimate source of Bon is the land of Olmo Lungring, which appears to mean literally 'Long Valley of Ol-mo' (Karmay 1998).²¹ Most scholars are

¹⁹ Duan, Yu. 2016. "Unfolding the Westerly Transmission of Chinese Silk", pp. 16-23, in Paramita Mukherjee, Arnab K. Deb, and Miao Pang (eds.), *China and India: History, Culture, Cooperation and Competition*. London: Sage.

²⁰ Yang, Juping. 2013. The Relations Between China and India and the Opening of the Southern Silk Road During the Han Dynasty. *The Silk Road* 11:82-92.

²¹ Karmay, Samten G. 1998. "Extract from A General Introduction to the History and Doctrine of Bon," pp. 104-156, in Samten G. Karmay (author), *The Arrow and the*

convinced this sacred land, if it really existed, was likely somewhere in South Asia, Persia, or Central Asia. I, however, would venture the possibility that Olmo Lungring may have referred to Gyelmorong in Eastern Tibet, because this is where the paramount Bon core developed when the Bonpo tradition of this sacred land began. There is no factual evidence from recovered manuscripts or inscriptions that indicate the existence of the name or even the notion of Olmo Lungring as a sacred land of Bon before ca. 1000 CE. Gyelmorong is characterized by a long valley formed by the Gyalmo Ngul Chu (Chinese: Dadu river), and sounds closer to Olmo Lungring than any of the other possible candidates proposed to the west of Tibet.

It is possible, over time, the ethnic make-up and shared religious traditions of the Bonpo became more developed as a way to maintain their distinctiveness and group solidarity to protect their economic niches along the ancient trade-routes from Sichuan to India and Persia. But the Islamic conquests by ca. 1000 CE across South and Western Asia closed off any possible remaining cultural links and family ties. Ethnic differences would also explain why pro-Buddhist Tibetans discriminated against Bonpo when and where they could in not allowing them to construct their monasteries in the Guge Kingdom, and parts of Central Tibet. In this sense, the Bonpo by ca. 1000 CE may well have come closer to Buddhist outlooks in their worldviews, even though their ancestors may have held other beliefs, but this may not have been enough to alter their ethnicity vis-à-vis those Tibetans who started to convert to the more international form of Buddhism that became a Universalizing Religion.

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Kham and Amdo

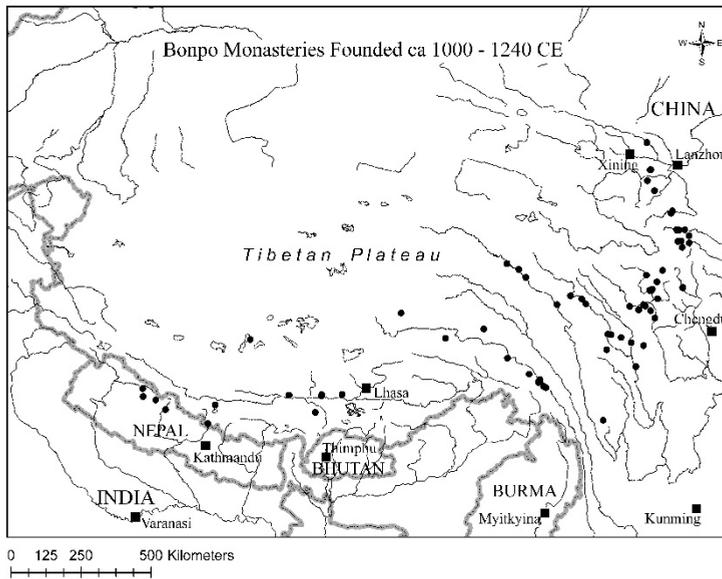
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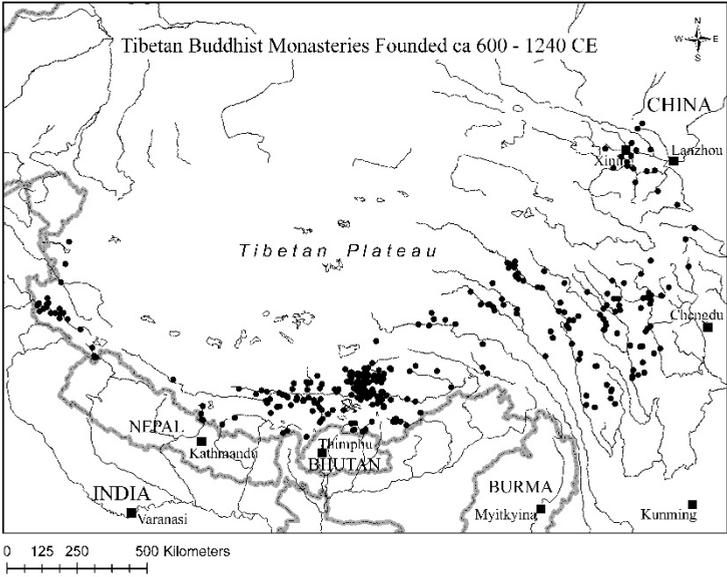


Legend

■ City

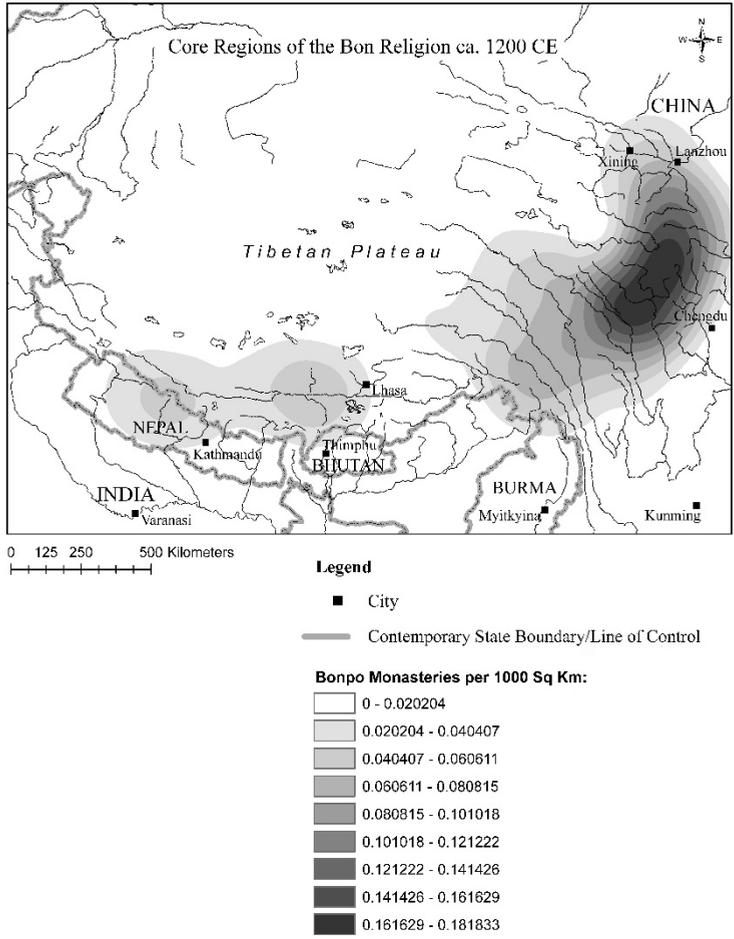
• Bonpo Monastery

----- Contemporary State Boundary/Line of Control



Legend

- City
- Tibetan Buddhist Monastery
- Contemporary State Boundary/Line of Control



Survey of the language use by Urban, Minyag-speaking Tibetans: A case study on Minyag people living in Lucheng Town, Kangding Municipality, Ganzi Prefecture

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Introduction

Historically, various forms of exchange between different ethnic groups or different nationalities and societies has led to mutual contact between languages. When a society achieves a specific level of development, frequent, long-term contact occurs between languages and thus tends to intensify mutual linguistic influence. There are different types of language contact, which have different types of outcomes, including language shift, borrowing of language components, code-switching, bilingualism, and use of multiple languages.¹ As long as there is a certain amount of contact between languages, there will be some extent of language change.

I have lived in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment in Kangding Municipality, on the eastern Tibetan Plateau, since childhood. Through observations in the family, school, or other contexts, I found that in Lucheng Town, the urban centre of Kangding, whether in government units, restaurants, schools, markets, or residential communities, or on public transport, people of different nationalities habitually switch between several languages, to communicate with each other. Lucheng Town is a site where the population of Minyag-speaking Tibetans is relatively concentrated, and multilingual practices are common amongst this population. In recent years, with the acceleration of urbanisation, language contact has intensified, causing a large number of lexical borrowing and code-switching in the Minyag language, as well as changes in the language attitudes of Minyag speakers. Therefore, this paper mainly takes the Minyag-speaking residents of Lucheng Town as an example to observe patterns of language use and attitudes in daily communication, with the aim of assisting the development of language policy, bilingual teaching and language use in the region. It is also hoped that this article will raise awareness regarding the challenges of multilingualism in a Tibetan urban context.

¹ Chen 1983:138.

1. *The basic situation of language use in Lucheng Town
(Kangding Municipality)*

Kangding, meaning 'to pacify the Khams region' (in reference to the Tibetan cultural and linguistic region of Khams) is the governmental seat of Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province. Its Tibetan name is Dartsendo. In the early years of the Republic of China, the urban centre of Kangding was given the name Lucheng. The town is under the jurisdiction of Kangding Municipality and is also the seat of the Ganzi Prefecture People's Government and Kangding Municipal People's Government. Kangding Municipality covers an area of 201.4 square kilometres and has a population of nearly 50,000 (2014). Lucheng Town is not only a multi-ethnic area but also a multi-faith region where Tibetan Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Confucianism, Han Buddhism, Taoism and other religions coexist. Tibetans constitute the majority, and 17 ethnic groups, including Han, Hui, Yi and Sui also live there. At the end of 2012, the resident population was 132,451, of which 92,397 were Tibetans, accounting for 69.8% of the total population; 37,441 were Han, accounting for 0.3%; 1,319 were Hui, accounting for 1%; 347 were Yi, accounting for 0.3%; and 947 were other ethnic groups, including Mongol, Miao, Zhuang, Naxi and others, accounting for 0.7%.²

Lucheng Town was historically the centre of the "tea-horse trade". It is also the central region of the "ethnic corridor," where the ethnic groups frequently passed and migrated since earlier time. It is also the transportation hub between the Han Chinese inland and Tibet, as well as the main distribution centre of Tibetan-Chinese trade. There have always been many ethnic groups in the region, and the languages of the region are also diverse. This diversity includes both Tibetan (Khams dialect) and Chinese (Sichuan dialect), Amdo dialect (pastoralist dialect), as well as the Minyag, rGyalrong, Qiang, Yi, Guiqiong, etc.; among them, the lingua franca is Tibetan (Khams dialect) and Chinese (Sichuan dialect). Also, the Han people have long been in close contact with Tibetans here. The Tibetan-Chinese bilingualism thus has a long existence, reaching back further than in other Tibetan areas, and so the development of bilingualism today is comparatively high. Personal language use is characterised by diversity and complexity.

² Kangding Xianzhi 1995:148-150.

2. *On the questionnaire survey*

2-1. *Survey sample composition*

The survey was conducted for Minyag-speaking residents in Lucheng Town. In order to have a more comprehensive and objective understanding of the language use in daily oral communication, I conducted field surveys from July to September of 2017, and December 2017 to March 2018. When the questionnaire was issued, the author selected four communities based on the nature of ethnic groups: 'Tibetans as a majority', 'non-Tibetans as a majority', 'Tibetans as a half', and 'multi-ethnicity' respectively. In the community, 200 questionnaires were distributed, and 200 were returned, with a total of 200 (100%) being considered valid.

2-2. *Structure of the questionnaire and survey method*

This survey was based on the questionnaire, supplemented by personal interviews conducted in respondents' homes. The questionnaire consisted of five parts, with a total of 60 single-choice questions and multiple-choice questions. The first part (Q1-Q9) mainly investigated the background of the interviewee, such as age, occupation, education level, marital status, and so on. The second part (Q10-Q22) mainly investigated the language background of the participants, such as the language that was first learned, the language that parents use with the interviewee, and how many languages the interviewee spoke at the time. The third part (Q23-Q39) mainly investigated the language use of participants, such as: what language was used with different family members at home, and what language was used for different groups in different communication situations. The fourth part (Q40-Q48) mainly investigated the language attitude of the participants, including the participants' willingness to learn various languages, the expectation of language development prospects, and the attitude towards learning foreign languages.

Each question has given several options or criteria. The questions, options or indicators in the questionnaire were provided, and thus, participants only needed to make their own choices within the given scope. Some questions recorded the opinions of the respondents in more detail, and, therefore, I set a blank space for each question. Individual interviews were used to supplement the survey on more critical issues. The questionnaires in the survey were partially questioned by one-on-one; that is, the author asked questions, and filled in or checked according to the interviewees' answers. However, due to requests made by some respondents, some of the questionnaires

were completed by the respondents themselves. Personal interviews mainly took place with the interview methods for the questionnaire survey participants, selected several individual subjects with characteristics. Then, the content was more in-depth understanding of the questions set by the questionnaires, supplemented by finding suitable objects for relevant interviews on relevant issues.

2-3. Basic background of the participants

2-3-1. Age and gender

In this survey, the author selected 200 persons between the ages of 15 and 60 as the target of the survey.

For the age, the proportion of people in each age group is moderate, among which 98 persons are between the ages of 15 and 24, accounting for 49% of the total number; 15 persons between the ages of 25 and 34, accounting for 7%; 50 persons between the ages of 35 and 50, accounting for 25%; 37 persons between the ages of 51 and 60, accounting for 19%.

The proportion of males and females was nearly equal. The number of males was 109, accounting for 55% of the total number. The number of females was 91, accounting for 45% of the total.

Table 1

Unit: person

Background	Gender		Age			
	M	F	15—24	25—34	35-50	50-60
Sample	109	91	98	15	50	37
Percentage	55%	45%	49%	7%	25%	19%

2-3-2. Occupation

Based on the survey results of the occupations of the respondents, I found that 28.5% of the people are business service personnel, accounting for the largest proportion: 57 people. Next, civil servants and personnels in state-owned enterprises and institutions accounted for 50 persons and 30 persons respectively, accounting for 25% and 15% each. There were 30 unemployed persons, among whom 10 had just graduated from a college or university and had not found a stable job yet; 20 were full-time carers and had no jobs. The students and teachers accounted for 21 persons and 10 persons respectively, accounting for 10.5% and 5% each. According to the survey results, the employment situation of Minyag-speaking residents in Kangding Municipality is relatively pessimistic.

Table 2

Unit: person

Back-ground	Civil servants	Teachers	Students	Employees	Business-persons	Unemployed	Total
Sample	50	21	10	30	57	30	200
Percentage	25%	10.5%	5%	15%	28.5%	15%	100%

2-3-3. Education

In the questions on education in the questionnaire, high school students included both secondary school and vocational high schools, while graduate students included those in master and doctoral courses. Among the respondents, the number of college graduates was the highest, with 68 people, accounting for 34% of the total, followed by 49 undergraduate students or graduates, accounting for 24.5%. There were 8 persons with a master's degree, and 16.5% were junior high school graduates or junior high school students. In general, the degree of education of the respondents is relatively high.

Table 3

Unit: person

Back-ground	Junior high school	High school	Vocational high schools	Under-graduate	Graduate (master and doctor)	Total
Sample	33	42	68	49	8	200
Percentage	16.5%	21%	34%	24.5%	4%	100%

When investigating the types of education that the subjects had received, I have found that the number of people who had attended a Chinese school since the beginning of primary school, where all courses are taught in Chinese ('Type 1' education), was 106, accounting for more than 53% of the total, while the number of people who have attended programs where all courses are taught in Tibetan from primary school, and the Chinese course begins in the third grade ('Type 2'), was 94, or 47% of the total.

According to the survey results, the situation of the Minyag-speaking residents in Lucheng Town is not optimistic regarding the employment of the Han and Tibetan education models in various sectors of the city. The results of the survey are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4

Unit: person

Background	Type-1 education	Type-2 education	Total
Sample	94	106	200
Percentage	47%	53%	100%

Based on the above investigation, we can understand whether it is the first or the second type education for Minyag-speaking residents whose mother tongue is 'Minyag language.' They are not able to receive mother tongue education. Instead, they are forced to accept education in a second or third language. Therefore, those whose mother tongue is 'Minyag language' have not received mother tongue education and have not achieved the standard bilingual teaching effect.

2-3-4. Marital status and interethnic marriage

Among the 200 respondents, 124 were married, accounting for 62% of the total, and 76 were unmarried, accounting for 38% of the total. Among the 124 respondents, 2 had intermarried with other ethnic groups, accounting for 1% of the total, of whom 1 person was married to a Han Chinese, and the other was married to a Qiang. Judging from the composition of the family and ethnic groups, the majority of households with the authentic Minyag Tibetans account for 198, or 99% of the total. The 'authentic Minyag Tibetan' here refers to the Minyag people who speak the Minyag language and Kham Tibetan. This can be seen from the table below:

Table 5

Unit: person

Background	Marital status		Interethnic marriage	
	Married	Single	No	Yes
Sample	124	76	198	2
Percentage	62%	38%	99%	1%

The attitude of the respondents to intermarriage shows that there are 23 persons who choose to promote it, accounting for 11.5% of the total, and 97 persons who choose to respect (but not promote) it, accounting for 48.5% of the total, the largest number. There were 50 persons who said that mixed marriages were acceptable, 25% of the total, and 30 persons who claimed that mixed marriage was unacceptable, accounting for 15% of the total.

In general, interethnic marriages in the survey location are less common, but attitudes toward interethnic marriage are relatively open, and the proportion of people who state that mixed marriages should be respected or that they are acceptable was moderate. Some

respondents believed that when they choose their spouse, they can marry as long as they have the same beliefs. Some people thought that the customs and habits of different ethnic groups are different, and it may be tough to get along with each other, so they do not agree with intermarriage between different ethnic groups.

Table 6

Unit: person

Back-ground	Promote	Respect	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Total
Sampel	23	97	50	30	200
Percentage	11.5%	48.5%	25%	15%	100%

3. Language use depending on various occasions

The language use in different occasions is investigated and analyzed according to the following aspects: (1) language use in the family and in communication, and within the family including father (or male elder), mother (female elder), siblings (or spouses), and juniors (or children); (2) language use in communicative situations including communicative occasions, objects, and topics.

3-1. Situation of the language use within the family

Table 7: Situation of the language use with elders, close aged, and younger
Unit: person

Target	Chinese (Si-chuanese)		Tibetan (Khams)		Minyag		Chinese more than Tibetan (Khams)		Chinese less than Tibetan (Khams)		Minyag more than Tibetan (Khams)		Minyag less than Tibetan (Khams)	
	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage
With father	6	3%	15	7.5%	69	34.5%	15	7.5%	26	13%	59	29.5%	10	5%
With mother	9	4.5%	10	5%	38	19%	15	7.5%	29	14.5%	48	24%	51	25.5%
With siblings or spouse	24	12%	25	12.5%	11	5.5%	68	34%	24	12%	13	6.5%	35	17.5%
With younger	67	33.5%	56	28%	10	5%	34	17%	11	5.5%	17	8.5%	5	2.5%

According to the survey results above, whether it is an elder, an age peer, or someone in a younger generation, the Minyag language is mainly used in the family, though sometimes there is a phenomenon where Minyag and Tibetan (Khams) are mixed. The majority of Minyag-speaking residents communicated with their elders in Minyag language, because in the family, the elders' language habits are relatively conservative, so they retain their native language and communicate with younger generations in their native language. When talking with age peers, the number of Chinese-Tibetan (Khams) and Tibetan (Khams)-Minyag bilinguals is gradually increasing. When communicating with younger generations or children, Chinese is used more. This is related to increasing environments where children learn Chinese because children are frequently exposed to Chinese when they are at school or socialising with friends.

3-2. Situation of the language use in public occasions

Table 8: Situation of the language use in various public occasions Unit: person

Target	Chinese		Tibetan (Khams)		Minyag	
	Person	Percentage	Person	Percentage	Person	Percentage
Market	182	91%	18	9%	0	0%
Government	169	84.5%	31	15.5%	0	0%
Hospital	190	95%	10	5%	0	0%

According to the survey results above, the Minyag people in Lucheng use Chinese in public places such as government offices, hospitals, markets, or banks, followed by Khams Tibetan. No one speaks Minyag on any of these occasions. To sum, in public, the trend to use these languages is: Chinese (85.2%) > Tibetan (Khams) (14.7%) > Minyag (0%).

4. Influence of language contact

Sapir once said in his book *Language*: "Languages, like cultures, are rarely sufficient unto themselves. The necessities of intercourse bring the speakers of one language into direct or indirect contact with those of neighboring or culturally dominant languages".³ Since ethnic mixed-residing was gradually formed in history, different ethnic groups have influenced each other and integrated into the long-term

³ Edward 2010 [1921]:34-40.

historical exchanges. The use and transference of language have not only existed since ancient times but is also universal. I traced the interviews between the respondents and different groups on different occasions and found that it is ordinary that the Minyag people in Kangding use code-switching and lexical borrowing in their daily lives.

In sociolinguistics, code-switching refers to the phenomenon in which a person switches from one language or variant to another language or variant in the same conversation, and also refers to conversion between different languages. Code-switching is one of the essential research fields of sociolinguistics, and it is a communicative phenomenon.⁴ Amongst Minyag people in Kangding, Chinese is used in two different ways. One is the use of Chinese by people who have not necessarily studied it formally, or have only studied it a little; a listener can tell immediately that the speaker is not a native Chinese speaker. The other way that Chinese is used is by people who have studied or been educated in the language, and can skillfully switch the languages between the two languages. The former way of using Chinese accounts for the larger proportion of the Minyag population, while the latter has a smaller proportion.

In this survey, the author found the following questions from the respondents' answers to the questionnaire. First, when asked "When you talk with Han Chinese friends, will you mix your native language (Minyag) with Chinese?", 186 people answered that they basically did no switch to their native language in this situation, accounting for 97.7% of the total number of people surveyed; however, 9 people said that they do not, accounting for 2.3% of the total number. Second, when asked "When you talk with a friend of the same ethnic group, will you mix Chinese or Tibetan (Khams)?", 89 people answered that they would occasionally use Chinese/Tibetan (Khams), which accounted for 12% of the total number of people surveyed, and there were 143 people who often use Chinese/Tibetan language, accounting for 86% of the total, whereas 3 persons reported that they would not mix Chinese/Tibetan (Khams). The last group is the elderly. To sum up, in usual daily communication, 94.4% of people will switch into Chinese and Tibetan (Khams).

In other words, when Minyag-speaking residents talk with their Han friends, they will not mix up the element of Minyag language in their speech. When talking to friends of the same ethnic group, they can mix Chinese and Khams Tibetan with Minyag. Among them,

⁴ Wang 2007:20.

young and middle-aged people mix them more, whereas older people use the Minyag language with Chinese and Khams dialect less mixed.

In terms of grammatical switching, firstly it is nouns. In the case of Minyag language, there are no specific names for the newly-produced articles. Therefore, it is common to use Chinese and Tibetan loan words, and the terms related to religious etiquettes are borrowed from Khams Tibetan. Terms for newly produced daily necessities and technologies are all borrowed from Chinese.

Therefore, in conversations that involve the names of the days, people often choose to express these in Chinese and Tibetan (Khams). Regarding the use of numbers, people are accustomed to using Chinese for numbers such as phone numbers, bus routes, room names, buildings numbers, and so on. The Minyag people who have lived in the city for a long time are relatively scattered, so they are influenced by the Han Chinese. They have established profound national feelings and formed a sense of identity with Chinese culture and Chinese language. They mainly choose the Chinese language for daily communication with the Han Chinese people.

5. Survey on language attitudes

In bilingual and multilingual societies, due to factors such as social or ethnic identity, emotions, behavioural tendencies, and so on, people will form a certain understanding or make a specific evaluation of the social value of a language or word. Such recognition and evaluation are usually called language attitudes.⁵

Language attitudes were mainly examined in the following aspects: (1) The behavioural tendency, including the purpose of the subjects studying Chinese, and the attitude towards learning foreign languages. (2) Social status evaluation, including their opinion on whether the Minyag language is useful or not; and whether Chinese is useful? (3) Practical function evaluation, the question is: which language is more important to you? (4) Expectations of language development prospects, including the language in which they want to teach their child; do you want to learn and master this ethnic language further?

⁵ Yan 2002: 15

5-1. Behavioral tendencies

5-1-1. Purpose of learning Chinese

10 persons chose the answer that they could communicate in Chinese with more people, accounting for 5% of the total; 5 persons chose the answer that they need Chinese when attending school and being outside, accounting for 2.5%. Meanwhile 40 persons chose the answer that they were able to communicate/ work (go to school) or go out with more people, accounting for 20% of the total; 11 students said the language was required by the school, accounting for 5.5% of the total; 5 persons stated that Chinese is promising, accounting for 2.5% of the total; 81 persons chose the answer that they were able to communicate/work with more people (going to school) or the need to go out / learn Chinese proficient promising, accounting for 40.5% of the total; and 48 persons chose the answer that they were able to communicate with more people/work (school) or outing needs/school requirements / learn proficient Chinese, accounting for 24% of the total.

The interview data shows that Minyag-speaking residents believe that learning Chinese is motivated by voluntary, self-development needs. In order to go out of their native place, to go throughout the country or to go to school, they must be proficient in the national language. They believe that learning Chinese is conducive to better developing themselves, and to developing China's economic culture, the development of a harmonious society, and achieving common prosperity.

5-1-2. What is your attitude toward learning a foreign language?

The survey found that 180 people supported learning a foreign language, accounting for 90% of the total number; only 20 people expressed no attitude, accounting for 10% of the total; and no one opposed learning a foreign language, indicating that Minyag urbanites are basically supportive of learning foreign languages. The interview data shows that they believe that foreign languages are currently used in the world and that everyone needs to learn them. The attitude of Minyag-speaking residents in regards to foreign languages shows that they have broad thinking, are open-minded, that they look at the real world and study foreign languages, and have hope that their next generation can master the most practical language. They think that bilingual speakers who know their mother tongue and Chinese or foreign languages have greater advantages than monolingual people who only knows the mother tongue. The survey shows their positive

and inclusive attitude towards foreign languages and their striving to absorb more knowledge and information through actively learning of Chinese and foreign languages, and striving to integrate into a more modern lifestyle. On the other hand, the real economic interests also drive Minyag-speaking residents to learn and use more Chinese and foreign language, because, compared with the Minyag language, the economic value and frequency of the use of Chinese and foreign languages are higher, that also demonstrates the insufficiency of the development of the Minyag language from the side.

5-2. Evaluation of practical functions

When Minyag speakers in Lucheng were asked: “Which language(s) are more important to you?”; the answer was: 15 persons chose the Minyag language, accounting for 7.5% of the total; 28 persons chose Khams Tibetan, accounting for 14% of the total number; 37 persons chose Chinese, 18.5% of the total; 35 persons chose Minyag and Khams Tibetan, accounting for 17.5% of the total; 85 persons chose Khams Tibetan and Chinese, accounting for 42.5% of the total. The order of importance for these languages is thus: Chinese > Khams Tibetan > Minyag. The result shows that the order of importance is a direct measure of government support.

Through the investigation, it was found that the Minyag-speaking residents of Lucheng had a negative attitude towards the practical function of their own language, but held a sense of identity for the Chinese language. This was mainly due to the social and economic and political status of Chinese. Mastering Chinese means having more direct channels to learn about the latest and fastest economic and cultural information, and it means more opportunities. This recognition of the practicality of Chinese directly encourages ethnic minorities to actively learn and use Chinese.

5.3 Expectations for the future of language development

5.3.1 If there were schools that taught in different languages, in which language do you hope that your children or next generations were taught?

Because there is no ‘Minyag language’ model of mother tongue education in Minyag area, the model of education is to teach in Chinese and Tibetan. Therefore, the questionnaire survey involves only the bilingual education of Chinese and Tibetan. There is no survey option to ‘whether or not they are willing to receive education in Minyag language?’.

According to the questionnaire survey show that most respondents

(155 people) chose that they would want them to attend a bilingual school, accounting for 77.5% of the total number, while 25 persons chose the Chinese language school, accounting for 12.5% of the total, and 20 persons chose Tibetan schools, accounting for 10% of the total number; the number of the last two is similar. The tendency to choose a language is related to the language level of each respondent. If the level of Minyag/Tibetan (Kham) is not high, the parents who do not speak well their native language tend to choose Chinese schools because they think that learning Chinese can help their children find a good job. Now they know that in society bilingual people are more likely to be employed, so most parents choose to send their children to bilingual schools, which are more important for both Chinese and Tibetan (Kham).

5.3.2 Do you hope to learn your own language in more details and to master it?

The number of people who wish to study their own language constituted a significant majority, being 168 persons, accounting for 84% of the total. No respondents did not wish to study their own language, while 24 persons did not care, accounting for 12% of the total. Those that thought that learning or not has little effect on their daily life, being 8 persons, accounted for 4% of the total. Almost all Minyag-speaking residents have deep feelings regarding their mother tongue and have a strong desire to protect their mother tongue, hoping that their language will be maintained. Therefore, in daily life, most Minyag people use their native language as a language amongst themselves.

Table 9

Unit: person

Back-ground	Minyag		Kham Tibetan		Chinese	
	Person	Percentage	Person	Percentage	Person	Percentage
Great develop	0	0	181	90.5%	179	89.5%
To some extent develop	20	10%	19	9.5%	10	5%
Naturally develop	2	1%	0	0	19	9.5%
No more use shortly	178	89%	0	0	0	0
	200	100%	200	100%	200	100%

Participants had high expectations for the future development of Chinese and Tibetan (Khams), and no one chose to "no longer use it shortly." On the contrary, no one in Minyag language chose to "have great development", 178 persons chose "no longer use shortly", accounting for 89% of the total, and 20 persons chose to develop within a certain range, accounting for 10% of the total. It shows that Minyag speakers in Lucheng believe that their language will shortly fall out of use.

5-4. Evaluation of the social status

Table 10: Whether Minyag, Khams, or Chinese is useful Unit: person

Background	Minyag		Khams Tibetan		Chinese	
	Person	Percentage	Person	Percentage	Person	Percentage
Useful	11	5.5%	169	84.5%	180	90%
Useful for a part of people or in a limited area	39	19.5%	31	15.5%	20	10%
Useless	150	75%	0	0	0	0
N/A	0		0	0	0	0
	200	100%	200	100%	200	100%

In response to the above question, 180 persons answered that Chinese was "useful", the highest proportion. 20 participants think that Chinese is "useful for some people or within a certain range," all of whom are elders. The answer of Minyag language "Useful for a part of people or in a limited area" and "useless" was given by 189 persons – a significant majority. 169 persons answered that "Khams Tibetan" was useful, accounting for 84.5% of the total.

According to the above data, it can be seen that Minyag speakers in Lucheng have a relatively high evaluation of the social status of Khams Tibetan and Chinese. They think that Khams Tibetan and Chinese are very useful in daily life. As for the specific usefulness of the Minyag language, most people thought that it was useless or of limited use.

6. Analysis of relevant factors affecting language use

The following analysis examines factors that influence language contact, according to five factors.

6-1. The family language environment

The family is the most direct and primary place to learn a native language. The results of the survey show that 96.7% of the participants first learnt their mother tongue before the age of five, and 96.6% of their parents spoke the native tongue before the age of five. The language used in conversations between husband and wife in the family is mainly the mother tongue. Therefore, parental language choice and language use are the most important factors affecting the next generation.

According to the survey, 65% of Minyag speakers in Lucheng have a positive attitude towards inter-ethnic marriage, and they are more open to intermarriage; 35% of the participants have a negative attitude, that is, unwilling to accept intermarriage between different ethnic groups; but such families are relatively few. In general, Minyag-speaking residents are more tolerant of other national languages and have a stronger willingness to maintain their mother tongue. Therefore, the intermarriage between different ethnic groups and the attitude towards intermarriage are also important factors affecting language use.

6.2 The community language environment

Most of the Minyag cadres and teachers working in the municipal and state organizations at all levels in Lucheng were transferred from the towns and villages of Kangding Municipality in the mid-1980s and 1990s. In recent years, the Minyag people who have worked in Lucheng and attended junior high school have also become increasingly common. These Minyag people were scattered in the residential areas of various agencies and failed to form compound settlements. Therefore, the degree of mixed living was high, and the Minyag language failed to become the primary means of communication. According to the survey data, the frequency of using Minyag language in places where Minyag people live is higher, and the possibility of using multiple languages in multi-ethnic mixed places is higher. Chinese is most commonly used, with Tibetan (Khams) as a supplement, whilst the position of the Minyag language is secondary.

There are two common languages in Lucheng: Chinese (Sichuanese) and Tibetan (Khams). Lucheng is an important transit point from Tibet to the Chinese inland. It is the seat of Ganzi Prefecture and the seat of government agencies at all levels. In addition to the Minyag people, Tibetans, Yi and Qiang nationalities are in a mixed or diaspora state. Because of the long-term mixed living, exchanges

between different ethnic groups have required a common language, and hence, Chinese has dominated.

Chinese is the language of the main ethnic group in China, and it is also the common language used by various ethnic groups to communicate with each other, and Chinese is thus the primary language. Tibetan (Khams) is the lingua franca of the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and is the secondary language. For the Minyag language, because of the small population of Minyag speakers in Lucheng, the use of the language limited to within the group, particularly within the family.

6-3. The social language environment

Schooling and social interaction are the main ways for Minyag speakers in Lucheng to learn Chinese. The language environment is an essential factor that restricts the degree of language use. According to the survey, 36% of people received Tibetan-medium education, while 64% received bilingual education in Chinese and Tibetan. There are two middle schools in Kangding Municipality (Kangding Middle School, Kangding Municipality National Middle School [Shi Yizhong]), four primary schools (Xidajie Primary School, Dongdajie Primary School, Huimin Primary School, and New District Experimental Primary School), and three kindergartens (New District Kindergarten, Dongguan Kindergarten, State Kindergarten), as well as Ganzi Prefecture National Cadre School, Sichuan Tibetan School. Except for Sichuan Tibetan School, the schools above all implement Chinese-medium education.

Taking Kangding Middle School as an example, the school implements Chinese-medium teaching, with each subject mainly taught in Chinese, with a Tibetan language class added. It can be seen that the bilingual education model of the school affects the language use of the participants. Therefore, school education and school language environments are both important places for cultivating bilingual people, and they are also the factors of the language use of both Chinese and Tibetan. The implementation and popularization of Tibetan-Chinese bilingual education has accelerated the process of ethnic residents switching to Tibetan-Chinese, which has led to the decline of the Minyag language. However, the policy of bilingual education only considers strong local languages. Languages that are deemed to be dialects or patois (*dijiaohua*), such as the Minyag language, will not be taken into account, so bilingual policies have not been implemented in areas where such languages are used. The

existing educational modes⁶ – Tibetan-medium and Chinese-medium – do not take such languages into account they fail to take into account the existence of native, non-tibetic languages within the educational system.

According to the survey data, 91% of the participants use Chinese in markets, government offices, hospitals, and so on, because the majority of people working in those places are Han Chinese. Therefore, those Han Chinese people do not speak Tibetan or Minyag, and so Minyag speakers must use Chinese to communicate with them. Also, 60% of the participants chose to use the language depending on addressee's ethnicity. Talking to foreign friends, neighbors or strangers mainly uses Chinese/Tibetan (Khams). It can be seen that the surrounding language environment has a greater impact on the language use and choice of the participants in daily communication. The Han Chinese is the most numerous ethnic group in China. In order to communicate smoothly with each other, it is the best choice for different ethnic groups to use Chinese as their common language or regional communication language among ethnic groups in almost all ethnic mixed areas

6-4. Language attitudes

The survey found that 75.6% of the participants hoped that their children would receive Chinese medium education or Chinese-Tibetan bilingual education, which is a reflection of their language and national consciousness, indicating that they hope that their national language and culture can be passed down, but they do not exclude Chinese and foreign languages, and this represents an inclusive attitude towards other languages; the trend of global economic integration makes them realize the importance of learning foreign languages. This attitude is the embodiment of the positive function of national consciousness, which is conducive to preserving ethnic characteristics and languages. However, although the participants all hope that their mother tongue can continue to be maintained and their feelings for the mother tongue are very deep. But the realistic economic value of the Minyag language is relatively low. Fewer people choose to educate their children in their mother tongue in terms of behavioral orientation, which creates contradictions to some extent. Because they have no choice.

Minyag speakers in Lucheng have a negative attitude towards the

⁶ One is that each subject is mainly Tibetan, and a Chinese course is added, which is called class I teaching mode. Each subject is dominated by Chinese, and a Tibetan language is added, which is called class II teaching mode.

practical function of their language, but they hold a sense of identity for the Chinese language. This is mainly due to the status of Chinese in the social and economic realms. Mastering Chinese means more direct channels to understanding the latest and fastest economic and cultural information, and it also means more opportunities. This recognition of the practicality of Chinese directly encourages ethnic minorities to learn and use Chinese actively. But this is also their helpless choice and expression of the fact that they did not use "Minyag language" as an opportunity for mother tongue education.

6-5. Level of education

The survey found that 79% of participants were multilingual people who knew more than two languages, while 20% of the participants are bilinguals who master two languages, and only 1% are monolinguals who only know a single language. Moreover, most of these bilingual and multilingual people have received undergraduate education and above. This shows that the higher the level of education is, the more languages are available as well as, the more inclusive and usable the other languages are.

Conclusion

Through a field questionnaire survey and interviews with Minyag speakers in Lucheng, this paper made a comprehensive and detailed statistical description of language use and language attitudes of Minyag speakers in daily life, and analyzed the reasons for this. On these bases, it concluded the characteristics of Minyag language use. The investigation found that the language use of Minyag-speaking residents in Lucheng showed the following characteristics.

First, most of the Minyag speakers in Lucheng are bilingual or multilingual, and they have a high degree of mastery of Chinese and Tibetan (Khams), in addition to speaking their own language. Second, in the areas where Minyag speakers are clustered, and in the home, the Minyag language is used, and in other situations, bilingualism and code-switching are more common. The trend of language shifting in the family is from monolingual to bilingual, and the family language is in transition from Minyag monolingualism to Minyag-Tibetan (Khams) bilingualism from the previous generation to the next generation. In daily dialogues, the mixed use of Chinese and Tibetan more happens; in particular, borrowing Chinese words into Tibetan (Khams) is more common. Influential factors include the family, school, and surrounding language environment. Also, Minyag-speaking residents have higher recognition of the use of Chinese and

Tibetan (Khams), and they are more open-minded in learning languages of other ethnic groups, but they are worried about the development prospects of the Minyag language. The situation is not optimistic.

The results of this survey provide a comparison of the characteristics of language use and language exposure and language impact of Minyag-speaking residents. It not only helps to understand the current situation of language life in the Minyag area, but also deepens our understanding of it, and it also fills in the shortcomings in the study of the spoken language use of urban Minyag-speaking residents. With the rapid development of urbanization, various ethnic groups and their languages are in a period of increasing contact with each other. The detailed observation and description of the language behaviour of the Minyag group can be referred to for language policy formulation and bilingual teaching in the Minyag area. Also, the study of the status quo of language use provides essential reference information. At the same time, from the perspectives of multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic areas, ethnic unity, social stability, national unity, and cultural development, this study can enrich the study of sociolinguistics and add an example to the study of Tibetan language use, and thus make predictions about the development of language.

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A Tibetan Journey

Interview with SAMTEN G. KARMAY (CNRS/CRCAO)

by KATIA BUFFETRILLE (EPHE/CRCAO)¹

The conversation below took place in order to be included in a volume in tribute to Mireille Helffer for her 90th birthday. Mireille and Samten have both contributed to the influence of French Tibetology in the world and even if they had different research interests, there is one theme that has brought them together: the Gesar Epic. But this conversation has gone well beyond that, and as we spoke, we discover Samten's unique physical, spiritual and intellectual journey. This is why I thought it would be useful to translate this article and to give a greater number of readers the opportunity to learn about "A Tibetan Journey".

Katia Buffetrille: *As we are about to offer this volume of articles for Mireille Helffer's 90th birthday, it seemed to me that this is the place for an interview with you who, like her, has experienced the developments of Tibetology in France, the place also to remind us of our first meeting with her and recall some memories that bind us to her. When did you meet Mireille?*

Samten Gyaltzen Karmay: I met Mireille in the 1980s. She was working on a text written by Sönam Lodrö (Bsod nams blo gros, 1784-1835). I do not remember if it was me who spoke to her about this Bönpo text dealing with the origins of musical instruments or if she had found it at the Bönpo Monastery in Dolanji, in Himachal Pradesh. This text deals with the mythical origin, but also sometimes with the real origin, of the instruments. It was a particularly important document for Mireille who had not found any text on the instruments in the Nyingma (rnying ma) tradition. It was at the origin of one of her articles (1997, pp. 343-361). I remember that Mireille also worked on the *Ngarab* (*Rnga rabs*), a text that deals not only with the manufacturing of the drum but also with the various types of drum. What about you, when did you meet Mireille?

¹ This article was first published in French in Buffetrille Katia et Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy *Musique et épopée en Haute-Asie. Mélanges offerts à Mireille Helffer à l'occasion de son 90^e anniversaire*. (Paris, L'Asiathèque), 409-428.

KB: *I remember very well my first meeting with Mireille. For me, our "real" encounter dates back to 1991, but of course, our ways had crossed before. I was returning from the Halase-Maratika caves in Nepal and we met in Bodnath. She was doing a fieldwork at Shechen Monastery (Zhe Chen), as she did for many years. I came back from Halase, feeling a kind of exaltation because while I was studying the phenomenon of Buddhization of sacred mountains, lakes and caves, I could observe in this particular place an active and concrete Buddhization led by a Sherpa lama. With great enthusiasm I told everything to Mireille without realizing that I had started to speak to her using the familiar form.² I was struck by her careful listening, the interest she showed for a subject that was not hers at all, an interest she moreover had for many subjects and which has not waned over the years.*

But let's go back to you. You told me one day that when you were a child, you heard some passages of the Gesar epic, which is one of the themes dear to Mireille. Can you say a few words about this?

SGK: My memories go back to the late 1940s when I was about 10 years old. In my country of Sharkog (Shar khog), in Amdo, after the harvest, in autumn, women, men and children, we all went to the mountains for two or three weeks. Only a few people stayed in the village to look after the houses. We settled on a mountain slope where each family in the village had a plot. We set up the tents below the slope terrain. The villagers worked all day, collecting the grass they had been drying in order to keep it as fodder for the animals in the winter. In the evening, after the meal, everyone gathered around a big fire. The evening began with songs and dances, then Apha Gyathar (A pha Rgya thar), a man from the village, began to recite the epic. He was the head of one of the households in the village but was originally from the east of Sharko (Shar khog). Maybe he came as adoptive-son-in-law (*mag pa*), I do not know. His topic was Ma Atag Lhamo (Ma A stag lha mo), one of the episodes of the Dülung (Bdud gling), but I do not remember the passage he sang. I was told that he also sometimes recited the story of Pa Gyatsa Zhelkar (Dpa' Rgya tsha zhal dkar), the half-brother of Gesar, but I never heard it. I still remember how beautiful his voice was. He told the story of Ma Atag Lhamo, then sang. I did not know at that time that what I heard was part of the Gesar epic, but I still remember today the many battles, the presence of scary personages, and that of Ma Atag Lhamo, a very

² As opposed to English which employs the pronoun "you", which is singular as well as plural, and is used for respectful as well as familiar speech, French carefully distinguishes between the singular "tu" which is familiar, and the plural "vous" which besides indicating a real plural—even in familiar speech—is also used for polite or formal speech.

courageous woman who participated so actively in the battles that her sword was covered with human fat.

In the evening, in the mountains, the recitation lasted a very long time. The beer (*chang*) flowed, some listeners slept, others sang or danced. It was a spontaneous celebration, with no particular organization or ritual dimension. Did the bard recite the whole story, or did he stop before the end? I confess I do not remember it anymore. Apha Gyathar was by no means a professional bard and I do not know if he was singing on other occasions. I only saw him on this occasion in the mountain and I do not think he has been invited into houses to practice his art. He was called *drungpa* (*sgrung pa*), someone who tells stories. There was no special bönpo bard because the function did not take into account the religious school and I do not remember having seen or heard of traveling bards.

It is likely that there were recitations of the epic on other occasions but I have never participated in anything other than this holiday on the mountain. I know that in Lhasa bards told the epic in the houses of the nobles, but I never had the opportunity to be present.

KB: *I am struck by the fact that you always say Ma Atag Lhamo or Pa Gyatsa Zhelkar. Is this usual in Amdo?*

SGK: This addition of Ma or Pa (Dpa') is indeed specific to the Sharwa country (Shar ba). I do not know if this exists all over Amdo.

KB: *I was always surprised that no one was named Gesar in Tibet. Do you know the reason? Moreover, are there other names of the epic's heroes given to Tibetans?*

SGK: In my family, named Karmay (Mkar rme'u tshang), there were two sisters one called Karthigmen (Dkar thig sman) and the other, Trotso (Khro 'tsho). I remembered this much later, when I was working on the Gesar epic, in France. The Ling (Gling) community knew thirteen very special women including Trotso, the daughter of Trothung (Khro thung), the evil uncle who sees his nephew Gesar as a threat. Trotso is a fairly common name, which is not the case with Karthigmen. The only person I knew with this name was from my family. I have never heard of anyone named Gesar, but I do not know why. The current king of Bhutan has a name that includes that of Gesar, but written in a different way: Khesar. On the other hand, it is common for women to be called Drukmo ('Brug mo), named after Gesar's wife, but not Atag Lhamo.

The best horse of the Karmay family was called Kyanggö (Rkyang rgod), named after the horse of Gesar, a name known to all

Amdowas. I do not remember who gave it this name, but I am sure that it was a family member who knew the epic. This name Kyanggö is a description of the horse since *kyang* indicates that the animal was brown in color and that it was wild, although *gö* (*rgod*) can also mean wise, capable.

KB: *In Les Neuf Forces de l'Homme ("The Nine Forces of Man"), the book you wrote with the Anthropologist Philippe Sagant, a passage is devoted to the hunt (pp. 172-182), but a very special hunt, that of large herbivores like deer with big horns or wild sheep. In her work on the Buryatians, Roberte Hamayon has shown the importance of reciting the epic before deer hunting, "the main game" (180). It is this recitation that will ensure the success of the hunt. What was it in your village?*

SGK: I never heard that the epic was sung before the hunt, and in my village the recitation was not related to a particular period. It should be pointed out that it was forbidden to recite the epic in the Bönpo monasteries—just as it was in the Buddhist monasteries—and also in the chapels of the houses. The monks should devote themselves to monastic life and listening to love stories has nothing to do with the religious practice. The same is true of the stories of the saintly madman Drukpa Künleg ('Brug pa Kun legs) or the mischievous stories of Aku Tönpa (A khu ston pa): they cannot be told within families or in chapels.

KB: *Recently, Anne-Marie Blondeau and Anne Chayet have published a book on the epic, by a Bönpo author, to which you contributed. Could you say a few words about it?*

SGK: The book edited together with Anne-Marie and Anne is indeed by a Bönpo author, Wangchen Nyima (Dbang chen nyi ma), a chief of the Khyungpo Marong (Khyung po Dmar rong) tribe who wrote many texts about the epic. I found this incomplete manuscript of three chapters in the Alexandra David-Neel's collection, when I was cataloguing it. No one knows where and how she got this text. Every year the author, who was not a bard, performed a Gesar *magdog* (Gesar *dmag zlogs*) ritual that aimed at harming enemies. Furthermore, there were Gesar sacred dances ('*cham[s]*) in Khyungpo, which was not the case at Sharkhog. The Gesar *cham* created by the 5th Dzogchenpa (Rdzogs chen pa) mostly belongs to the Nyingma tradition. The dances of Gesar originate from the Lingdro (Gling bro) tradition established by the great Nyingmapa master Mipham (Mipham, 1846–1912). I am not shocked by the appearance of new

Gesar's dances. As Professor Stein explained very well, the text of the epic is not finished: new episodes are born and are told.

The Bönpo consider Gesar as a god who protects from enemies (*dgra lha*). Mipham added a full religious aspect to the epic, which is only one aspect. However, the subject is complex since in the Bönpo version that we have translated, there is the idea that Gesar is a manifestation of Padmasambhava, which was amplified by Mipham. Certainly, we cannot remove the religious aspect of the epic since it is present throughout the text. But the Bönpo are more attentive to the lay aspects of Gesar than to its religious aspects.

KB: *When you arrived in France, you met Professor R. A. Stein, the great specialist of the epic. You also worked with him. I suppose that your respective ways of approaching the epic were very different. How did this meeting between a Western Tibetan scientist and a Tibetan researcher happen?*

SGK: In the early 1970s, Professor Stein lectured at the École Pratique des Hautes-Études on the Amdo version of Gesar. Among the course participants were Mireille Helffer, Anne-Marie Blondeau, Anne Chayet and Yoshiro Imaeda. At that time, I could not understand everything because of my lack of French. I then read the books that Professor Stein had written about Gesar. All were in French, nothing had been translated into English and he was the only one interested in Gesar besides Mireille who had published her thesis in 1977 on *Les chants dans l'épopée tibétaine de Gesar d'après le livre de la course de cheval* ("Songs in the Tibetan Epic of Gesar Based on the Book of the Horse Race").

Professor Stein had requested me to copy the Amdo version in order to distribute it to the other auditors. Little by little, I read his book on *L'épopée tibétaine de Gesar dans sa version lamaïque de Ling* ("The Tibetan Epic of Gesar in Its Lamaist Version of Ling"), which is actually a summary translation of three texts. To read his book *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet* ("Research on the Epic and the Bard in Tibet") was not easy, but the many discussions we had together helped me a lot.

While he was Professor at the Collège de France (1966–1981), I had a post of "assistant". We read together texts he was working on, and then often he would give me a list of texts that were at the National Library. I had to read them and sometimes summarize them for him. It was very useful for me because it allowed me to read texts that I would otherwise never have read, mainly Buddhist tantras. It was the time when he was working on the submission of Rudra and on the metal masks called *saché* (*za byed*) whose origin he was looking

for. Professor Stein was very interested in borrowings and influences that might have existed between China and Tibet. If the Chinese civilization was central to his research, he did not forget how important it was to know what was happening on the borders of the country, and therefore in Tibet. I think I understood his vision during the introductory speech he gave when entering the College. He constantly made comparisons between Chinese and Tibetan facts to determine whether there were borrowings, and if so, which ones.

Through remarks that punctuate his book on *L'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, I realized that he did not consider Gesar a historical figure. Like all Tibetans, I thought at that time that Gesar had lived in the 10th century and that he had governed the kingdom of Ling. It was a shock for me to understand that Westerners regarded the hero of the epic as a mythical character. For Tibetans, the epic makes sense only if Gesar is a historical personage. Why waste time in creating characters that do not exist? Tibetan researchers have even tried to prove his existence and assign dates to him. I quickly realized that he was an invented character, certainly derived from a historical figure. However, I observe that our way of thinking is evolving: recently a Tibetan researcher admits that Ma Atag Lhamo was a character we had created. Previously, no one would have spoken that way.

KB: Mireille was interested in the instruments, but also their origin, their use, and she did a thorough research on this topic. She did a lot of fieldwork and her approach was not only that of a musicologist, but also that of an ethnologist and a philologist. What did you think at that time about a woman researcher working on liturgical music?

SGK: At the time, no one else was interested in this subject. I was not surprised, but I told myself that it would be very difficult to explain to Tibetans that a woman researcher was interested in the traditional music played in the monasteries, all the more because some rituals are forbidden to women. However, I was already used to French researchers and their method of working. I read texts with Mireille and discussed problems with her related to vocabulary which, in this domain, is very particular.

I must say that Mireille really did what she planned. She was mainly interested in Nyingma and Bonpo music. No other researcher has done such work. It must be emphasized that Mireille has conducted a research unique in the world.

As far as I am concerned, I do not understand the musical notation and, moreover I am not used to Nyingma music. Similarly, in Bhutan, liturgical music is totally foreign to me and I do not understand the way they play during the rituals.

When I was a young monk, we learned to play liturgical instruments by imitation and by practicing daily rituals. There was no class or school with a teacher, nor text telling us how to use them. Not to mention that music notation texts can only be read by a very small number of people. No novice was specialized in a particular instrument. Making mistakes was not considered as serious matter. Nevertheless, for the performance of the annual *cham*, one had to learn to play long trumpets (*dung chen*) and oboes (*rgya gling*) because, in that case, one has to learn to blow. As for the dance, we trained for weeks and only the good dancers were chosen.

KB: *Before addressing the subject of your coming to the West and your meeting with a totally new world as well as with the Western research, could you say a few words about your childhood?*

SGK: At the age of eight, I attended the school of my village, Kitshal (Ki tshal), with three other novices. Then, from ten to thirteen years old, I stayed at the small monastery of Nating (Sna steng), not far from my village.



Fig. 1 Kitshal. Village © Katia Buffetrille 1986.

When I was about thirteen years old, I did the preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*), pushed by my mother. Lay people usually came to the monastery once a year to do the *ngöndro* (*sngon 'gro*) which consisted of a hundred thousand prostrations and the recitation of many mantras. We tried to do three thousand prostrations a day and it was really very difficult. These practices lasted six to seven weeks during which we stayed at the monastery. Otherwise, we stayed at home because there was nothing to do at the monastery. If there were ceremonies we had to attend, we would receive a message.

Then I was sent to Kyangtshang Monastery (Skyang tshang) which was bigger than that of Nating. There, I was considered as a monk and I led a real monastic life with early rising. Food and clothing were donated by our parents; the monastery did not provide anything. I lived with my great-uncle who was the head of the monastery and I took my meals with him. The other monks ate in the kitchen of the monastery. We had three meals a day except during the summer retreat (*dbyar gnas*). Some monks had decided individually not to eat anything at night. Eating meat was a common practice except for those who had vowed to give it up.

I left my village to go to Lhasa with six companions in 1955. We walked to Chengdu, then we rented a truck to Lhasa where we arrived in 1956 after two months of travel. We went to the Gelug (*dge lugs*) monastery of Drepung ('Bras spungs), which was well known for the quality of its teachings. I was twenty then. When I arrived, I was interviewed by a lama who asked me if I believed in Tsongkhapa (Tsong Kha pa), the founder of the Gelug school, to which I answered in the affirmative. In case of a negative answer, I would have been expelled.

We were staying at Zungchu Khamtshen (Zung chu khams tshan), a section that belonged to the Gomang Dratshang College (Sgo mang grwa tshang) and which sought to recruit monks. Those from Mongolia and Amdo were very few because of the arrival of the Communists. This monastic college did not accept the monks from Central Tibet, nor those of Kham (Khams) who were living in other colleges.

We rarely participated in rituals, not because we were Bönpos but because we were there to study. There were about forty monks who performed the rituals under the command of the chant master (*dbu mdzad*). Sometimes rituals were performed in our section (*khams tshan*), for example if a monk from Amdo had arrived and wanted to offer tea and money to the monks. Students like me could participate in these rituals but it was not compulsory. Personally, I never took part in them.

KB: *Following the Chinese invasion of the 1950s, then the Lhasa uprising in March 1959, you fled to India. It was in Delhi in 1960, when you were working in an Indian commercial printing house, that a meeting took place that would totally change the course of your life: that with Professor David Snellgrove. He was looking for Tibetan scholars ready to go to England to help him with his research on the Bön religion. You agreed to go into exile to the West with four companions.*

SGK: We spent six months at Snellgrove's home, about an hour by train from London. Then he found an apartment in London for three of us, my two companions, Tenzin Namdak (Bstan 'dzin Rnam dag, today called Yongs 'dzin Rinpoche), Sangye Tenzin (Sang rgyas bstan 'dzin, the late head of the Bönpo) and myself. Professor Snellgrove first worked mainly with Tenzin Namdak, and then when he left for India, I took over.

I worked with him four years, during which I learned English. He spoke the Tibetan dialect from Dolpo, Nepal, where he had stayed for a long time. I learned a lot from him, often unconsciously. He explained to me how he understood the texts that interested him and he asked me how I interpreted them. We were doing a critical reading. It was obvious to me that he did not accept what the texts literally said, and that he wanted to understand the interpretation of the Tibetans. This led to many debates. We did not agree, but that's how I learned what is called the scientific approach. When I left Tibet, I thought the earth was flat. Tibetans believe what the texts say literally, which is not the case in the West. Thus, when speaking of a character said to be historical, Tibetans accept everything written about him. During our readings, we found dates relating to personages mentioned in the texts. We compared these dates with traditional chronologies and it was obvious that Professor Snellgrove did not agree. At first it was a shock for me but I gradually understood.

For him, Bön was a form of Buddhism that has spread in Tibet long before the introduction of Buddhism *stricto sensu*. He thought that Tibetans could have been in contact with Buddhism long before the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet in the seventh century. This was very complicated to explain to my companions.

I think that Tenzin Namdak as well as Sangye Tenzin never really accepted this scientific vision which put in doubt what the Tibetan texts say. My companions could not read what Mr. Snellgrove had written because their English was insufficient and they thus could not understand his point of view.

I was younger than them and I learned English more easily. It was essential for me to learn the languages that could give me access to the Tibetological works. By working with Professor Snellgrove on his book *Nine Ways of Bon*, also on *Four Lamas of Dolpo*, I learned a lot, even if it was not always easy. I also benefited immensely from reading fiction, novels in English. Traditionally, Tibetans do not have fictional literature or very little because it makes no sense to them. I understood little by little the interest of creating characters, as well as the value of this literature.

KB: *Could you give some examples that show your evolution?*

SGK: For example, Mr. Snellgrove did not accept the dates given by Tibetan texts about Shenrab Miwo (Gshen rab mi bo), the master who is said to be at the origin of Bön. I opposed his claim that it was a totally mythical figure. The documents of Dunhuang mention at least five or six times the name of Shenrab without evoking, it is true, neither the origin of this character, nor his actions. The land of Tagzig (Stag zig), from which Bön is supposed to come, appears only in the late Bönpo tradition. For me, it is obvious that from a character called Shenrab, we created a kind of hero, in the same way that it was done with Padmasambhava or even the Buddha. Gautama was a simple monk whom the Mahāyāna presents with very particular characteristics like the thirty-two signs, etc. The same applies to Jesus Christ. Perhaps one day, archaeology work will tell us more about Shenrab Miwo, a character I have a lot of interest in, even though he never existed.

Let us take another example: for the Bönpos, the question of the origin of the *Gzi brjid*, the long biography of Shenrab Miwo which is at the base of the book of Snellgrove's book *Nine Ways of Bon*, does not arise: this text belongs to the Bönpo Kagyur (Bka' 'gyur), and was orally transmitted to Loden Nyingpo (Blo ldan snying po, 1360-1385?) by a sage. In addition, for us, the Kagyur texts go back to Shenrab Miwo. Professor Snellgrove wanted to know how this author had written these texts, what were his sources, his materials.

I started thinking and then questioning what the texts literally said. I then did some research. This is how I understood what science (*tshan rig*) was from the Western point of view. When I talk with my Tibetan friends about Western Tibetology, I always have trouble explaining them what it is about since they still continue to literally believe the texts. This is why I have a lot of problems with the monks of Menri Monastery (Sman ri), in Dolanji (India), who say that I no longer have faith and that I am no longer a real patriot.

Until I left Tibet, I had no doubt about my faith. For Tibetans, having faith is important because it reinforces their sense of belonging to the society: we are “from within” (*nang pa*). Now, I sometimes think that Tibetan believers are “backward” because they cannot fully use their reason, their logic. The study of logic (*tshad ma*) showed me the importance of reason to understand metaphysics. It is not possible to progress intellectually if one is inhabited by a deep faith. It is likely that somehow “losing” faith has helped me to pursue a university career according to Western standards. Thus, one cannot say in a Tibetan circle that Padmasambhava did not exist: I am the only one to say it. In my research on the “Great Perfection” (*Rdzogs chen*), a set of philosophical teachings and meditative techniques of Tibetan Buddhism and Bön, I researched and found references to Padmasambhava in texts which are attributed to him. But the texts that mention him in the 8th-9th centuries speak of him as a mythical character. I did not find anything that proves either his coming to Tibet or the actions attributed to him. I have shown through my work on the “Great Perfection” that this philosophy developed mainly in Tibet, with Indian and Chinese influences, and that in the 10th century a properly Tibetan synthesis was formed. I have been heavily criticized, especially by Western researchers like John Reynolds because, for him, without providing any historical proof, the teaching of the Dzogchen dates back to very remote times. As my book has not been translated, Tibetans do not have access to it yet.

Another example is the great king Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po, 617–649/650): he is certainly a historical figure but I cannot, like the other Tibetans, consider him as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara or believe in the miracles that are attributed to him.

I do not criticize what the monks do or think but I do not accept it anymore as far as I am concerned. However, I have not lost my cultural tradition. I do not practice as they do, I do it in my own way but I am very interested in the way the monks practice.

KB: A very important cultural phenomenon among the Bönpos and the Nyingmapas is the tradition of text-treasures (gter ma). These texts, which are said to have been hidden by Drenpa Namkha (Dran pa nam mkha') for the Bönpos or by Padmasambhava for the Buddhists, are supposed to be rediscovered one day by a predestined being (gter ston) mentioned in prophecies. What is your position on this topic? What do you think, for example, of Nyangrel Nyima Özer (Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer, 1124–1192), who is credited, among others, with the discovery of the Kathang Zanglingma (Bka' thang zangs gling ma), the first complete biography of Padmasambhava or of the Mani Kabum (Ma ñi bka 'bum), a collection of teachings and practices centered on Avalokiteśvara?

SGK: For me, the treasured texts (*gter ma*) as they are described in the Tibetan tradition do not exist. I consider Nyangrel Nyima Özer as the author of the texts whose discovery he is credited with.

As far as the Bönpo *terma* are concerned, it is possible that one day a text or a statue was discovered in a stūpa such as the great stūpa of Gathang (Dga' thang), but with regard to the texts said to have been found in a cave or elsewhere, I affirm that it is the discoverer who wrote them. This can be seen in the language: if the texts had really been written in the 8th or the 9th century, the language would be archaic. It is said, for example, that the *Mani Kabum* was written by Songtsen Gampo, that is to say in the 7th century, but when one reads the text, one understands that it was written after the 10th century. Language, vocabulary, grammar, all show that this text is not as old as tradition maintains. When I was in Tibet, I too believed in the existence of these treasure-texts in the way they are presented by the Tibetan tradition. Tibetans do not generally question this phenomenon for fear of being called *tawa logpa* (*lta ba log pa*), "people with a contrary view".

KB: *At the outset, you worked with these two great tibetologists, Professor Snellgrove and Professor Stein. Then, you started to write your own books, your own articles. Your way of understanding Tibetan history, religion, and culture was no longer that of a traditional Tibetan researcher but that of a researcher trained in the West. Can you say something about it?*

SGK: These two great tibetologists, Professors Stein and Snellgrove, have indeed had a great influence on my research. When I translated the *Legs bshad mdzod* into English, a history of the Bönpo tradition, I was helped by someone who became a great friend. He was a specialist in Italian literature who taught at the University of London. I showed him the translation of my text. This friend knew neither Tibetan culture nor religion, but he was very interested and the many questions he asked helped me understand how to approach a text. Thus, the Bönpo tradition says that the Bön was persecuted by King Drigum Tsenpo (Gri gum Btsan po), thus long before Songtsen Gampo. Drigum is for me the first historical king. There is a lot of information about him in the Dunhuang documents but nothing about this persecution. The Tibetan tradition points to another persecution in the time of King Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde btsan, 742–798). It occurred to me—and I wrote it—that there was only one persecution, the one under Trisong Detsen. This statement deeply shocked my Tibetan friends who then considered that I had really lost my culture.

Moreover, the *Legs bshad mdzod* contains many prophecies giving the dates of personages. Yet I consider these dates as data valid for the historian because, for me, these prophecies were not written before the life of the personage in question, but during his life or after. Tibetans, for their part, cannot accept that prophecies are used as historical sources, since they believe that they describe events that will happen in the future (in relation to the text). Nevertheless, I still think that if we cannot accept the tradition in a scientific way, it can still be respected as a tradition.

KB: If we summarize a little bit your background, we can say that you were confronted with Western culture, which led you to have a different view of your own culture. Then, you were confronted with your compatriots who had many difficulties to understand what you had become.

SGK: When we came to the West as part of the Rockefeller Foundation program, there were about twenty Tibetans working in various universities in the Western world. In fact, only two of us have become tibetologists: Panglung Rinpoche, in Germany, and myself. The reason was, I think, that we were the youngest and were more open to a new culture while Tenzin Namdak and Sangye Tenzin have always remained deeply involved in religion. They thus have always strictly observed their vows, even that of not eating meat, which is very rare among Tibetan Buddhist monks. Perhaps they were not ready to open up to another culture. But in my opinion, the essential reason has been their ignorance of Western languages. Personally, I was attracted by the ideas expressed by the Westerners and I had access to them.

I was asked a few years ago to present my work at Dolanji monastery and it went wrong. The monks had read the two volumes of my book *The Arrow and the Spindle* which had been translated into Tibetan and published in Beijing. It was the first time they had access to my work. About a hundred monks came with the books and, one after the other, they spoke out against what they had read: for example that Tönpa Sherab had never written anything, nor the Buddha. Until then they considered me a Bönpo like the others; but from that moment, they no longer looked at me as such. For them, I had betrayed Tibetan culture and it was very difficult for me to explain myself. They asked me to rewrite certain passages, and they even told me that I had only been wasting my time writing such things. They may not consider me totally as a person “with a contrary view” but they see me as someone very particular. My works are contested, but only by Bönpo monks. As for the Buddhist monks, I do not know. I was invited to Drepung monastery in India, but I did not

go there fearing a brutal confrontation. On the other hand, my books, *The Arrow and the Spindle*, have been very successful among Tibetans living in China.

I sometimes have the impression of being confronted with people from the 14th century who learn by heart without thinking and who are totally ignorant of Western writings. I now think that I lost a lot of time learning texts by heart even if I excelled at it. When we debated at Drepung, memorization made sense; but we did not debate every day. It is therefore usually a useless exercise especially since it is necessary to constantly repeat what we have learned so as not to forget it.

Many Tibetans in India have kept the traditional vision and religion still prevails among them. Western researchers, for their part, have been searching for the truth of facts and dates for a very long time, while scientific research is a recent step for Tibetans.

When I am among a group of Tibetans, I now feel the difference. I no longer feel fully Tibetan; rather Western and especially French. The influence of my reading has played a lot.

KB: *A long time ago, I read Adjrur Gumbo's impressions of his stay in France. Jacques Bacot (1877–1965), this great scholar and explorer who had known him in Tibet during one of his travels, invited him to visit France. Adrup's look at our country is fascinating. What, in our Western culture, surprised you most?*

SGK: I remember when we arrived at London airport there were porters, all in suits and ties. However, we thought that this kind of dress was worn only by the bourgeoisie. So we were very surprised and a little shocked. We ourselves had suits that Snellgrove had bought for us.

KB: *This reminds me of the words of Adjrur Gumbo who, after his visit to Marseille, said that all the inhabitants were rich and that there were no poor people (p. 353)!*

SGK: Also, in Tibet, physical contact is easy and habitual. The only time we do not touch is, for example, in case of illness, or if our interlocutor is a butcher or a blacksmith, that is to say, belongs to a social stratum traditionally considered impure.

We did not lose this habit of spontaneous physical contact right away, but we soon realized that it was not good. However, it was difficult for us to hold back and we only managed to do so little by little. But if Tibetans have easy tactile contacts, the friendly kiss does not exist. Professor Snellgrove had a lady among his neighbors who

had established a warm relationship with himself but also with Tenzin Namdak. One day, she went to him and spontaneously kissed him on the cheek. He went away, distraught; the lady was shocked by his brutal retreat.

Another thing that has been difficult to integrate is punctuality: in the West, it is impolite not to arrive on time for an appointment. In Tibet, there was no watch and exactitude was something very relative. Mr. Snellgrove's Sherpa assistant, Pasang Khampache, had already spent many years in England when we arrived. It was he who was in charge of our "education". The first time Pasang gave us an appointment, we nodded, but when we arrived there was no one because we were well over time. He got angry and we were disappointed. But, gradually, we learned.

KB: You went back home in 1985. You were then confronted not only with a country, Tibet, which had suffered and changed a lot but also with your family, with your friends, with the villagers, with people who had known you as a monk and who knew that you had become a great academic. How did it go?

SGK: While the events of the Cultural Revolution were still very much alive, it was difficult for me to describe to them my life, so different from theirs. Besides, I was no longer a monk, I was married and father of a child. Now, the villagers, some of whom had known me young, still had the image of a monk. So they wanted me to sit in their houses with the monks, at the place of honor, which I did not want. It is difficult for Tibetans to distinguish between religious respect and social respect. I wanted social respect but not religious respect since I was no longer a monk.

KB: It was during this trip that the villagers worshiped the local god (yul lha). This cult, which you had attended as a child, was again performed for the first time in many years. You explained in one of your articles (pp. 423-431) the importance of this cult for "national identity through the identification of each individual as an active member of his community and as a patriot of the nation" (p. 429). When you came back to your village, you had changed a lot as you explained it, and you arrived in this particular context that is the worship of the territorial god. You wanted to be a researcher whose purpose was to observe this cult while you were born there and knew some of these people since your early childhood. How did it go?

*SGK: The worship of the territorial god had been effectively abandoned for more than twenty years. I participated by offering the fumigation of juniper (*bsang*) on the mountain. But my participation*

in the ritual was not the same as that of my companions (about sixty). I had a camera that I used. I did not recite the ritual text with them, meaning that I was no longer a member of their society. I wanted to be a researcher and did not want to be involved in the ritual. It was my choice. My companions would have been much happier if I had participated in the ritual. I was struck by the strong belief they showed in the territorial god and I felt how much my attitude bothered them. They wanted to perform this ritual as it always was, and addressed people older than me who passed on their knowledge.



Fig. 2 A householder making the ritual arrow (*mda'rgod*) that will be put in the cairn in order to benefit from the protection of the territorial god. © Samten G. Karmay 1985.

The organizer of the ritual was a villager who worked with the Chinese and was therefore an official. However, he worked hard for the ritual to take place at that time so that I could be present. He was considered a collaborator of the Chinese authorities, but he remained deeply Tibetan. In fact, as long as we did not talk about the Ganden Phodrang government (*Dga' ldan pho brang*) or the Dalai Lama, there was no problem. On cultural issues, he had to be careful since it encouraged national identity. However, people had started to

express criticism against the Cultural Revolution but these criticisms were directed at the Gang of Four.

I was very conscious of being someone distinct. I was dressed in Western clothes and my friends were repeatedly asking me to wear a *chuba* (*phyu ba*), which I did in order for them to feel more comfortable with me. They then considered me again as a Tibetan, a member of their society. In addition, having a camera at that time distinguished me from others and I could not explain that it was for my research because they would not have understood. Most villagers at that time were uneducated. I would have liked to avoid this discomfort—an impossible task since I wanted to study the ritual very closely, the actions and also the feelings of the villagers. I do not think that my non-participation in the ritual was experienced as a treason, but it made them uncomfortable. The image they had kept of me no longer corresponded to what I had become and they wondered how I could change so much. What had happened? I think they began to question my faith in the territorial god, but they did not inquire directly. They understood that I was out of their society and I think they were not really happy with this situation.

Dances and drinks followed the ritual. Four boys were singing very well, but I did not understand the lyrics. One of them explained to me that it was a song in honor of Mao. I was very shocked: how could one worship the territorial god and then sing songs in honor of Mao? I told them about my feelings and they understood very well. There were also horse races. Traditionally, before the races, several village leaders showed their talent as orator. But that did not happen in 1985. The races had lost a lot compared to what they were before. I was afraid the villagers would get into trouble after the ritual, but nothing happened.

KB: But did not they see you as a model of success? You had come to know the world, you had a university career? That should also surely play a role in the perception they had of you?

SGK: They certainly saw me as an example to follow. For them, I had succeeded. My family members wondered if I would come back to live with them because they saw the future with little hope, and perhaps they thought that if I returned they would become like me. To come back at home was unthinkable for me. All this was sad.

The villagers even bestowed on me a kind of “power”. One day, a mother came to see me with her child. She wanted me to blow into his mouth like the lamas do when they recite a mantra and thus convey the power of this sacred formula. I laughed and later I always blamed myself because I offended her although that was not my

intention. I was looked at as a great scholar with the power to bless. When one is a scholar, he is seen as Ngagi Wangpo (Ngag gi dbang po), the "Lord of words", the scholar. This woman thought that by receiving my blessing, her child would one day perhaps follow the same path as me. People knew that I was famous but without really knowing why. They perceived me as someone who possessed something they did not have.

When I went to Gamay Gompa (Dga' mal dgon pa), one of the most important Bönpo monasteries in the area, the monks wanted to welcome me with ceremonial scarves (*kha btags*). They were about 200 to 300 standing in a row. I arrived by car, much like a little Dalai Lama (laughs). However, I tried to avoid any situation that could lead to confusion as to my status. Nevertheless, I was obliged to receive the scarves, but my condition of ex-monk always made me very uncomfortable.

On the second day, while talking with Kalzang Dargye (Skal bzang Dar rgyas), the preceptor of the monastery (*slob dpon*), who was not only one of my friends at Drepung but also a great scholar, he told me: "How sad it is that you are totally lost for us and useless for our society. We spent a lot of time together at Drepung where you were going to become a great *geshe* (*dge bshes*), a position that would have been very useful for our monastery. You have become a layman and what you do is totally useless to us." He looked very sad.

It is true that I feel much better now with the Westerners whom I understand perhaps better than I understand Tibetans.

I am attracted to the West for its science and culture. My main interest is research. I do not listen very much to Tibetan music, but I really like Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, especially Beethoven. I am not interested in modern Tibetan painting either. On the other hand, Matisse and Gauguin are for me great masters. Perhaps my friend is right: I have become useless for the traditional Tibetan society.

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Wrathful and Peaceful Sound: Musical and Religious Logics of the Two-armed Mahākāla Ritual

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*'For supplication, it cannot work without being able to recite in clear and loud tone. If the reciting is in the good tone, melody, and so on, from Lama's lineage, there would be much feeling and difference. Like that, one still can control consciousness if one prays as the voice of dog'*¹ (The Seventeenth Karmapa Orgyan 'phrin las rdo rje 2006: 4. Trans. Yanfang Liou).

Ritual performance was first rejected within the Buddhist tradition, but was then gradually accepted. Concepts about music were also transformed in the development process of Buddhism and nowadays have various meanings according to different contexts. The concepts of Tibetan Buddhist ritual influence the music itself, musical behavior, and function of music. Terry Ellingson stated 'In exploring these traditions, we will contradict a second widespread assumption in Western scholarship--i.e., that Buddhism was primarily, or in its "original" form, an anti-ritual and anti-musical religion' (Ellingson 1979: 115). In fact, in Tibetan Buddhism, different orders or sub-orders have their own way in which ritual music is performed while even different monasteries of the same orders have their own style.

In research on Tibetan ritual music, some scholars have emphasized ritual functions. For example, although Walter Kaufmann analyzed the musical characteristics of chanting music, he assessed that the instruments, except for shawms, such as long horns, rattle drums, hollow cymbals, bells, conches and trumpets,² have no musical function or have more ritual function than musical function (Kaufmann 1975: 16-18). On the contrary, Rinjing Dorje and Ellingson have stated that 'the presence of "meaning" in the music does not make the music less "musical"'. The meaning, technique, aesthetics,

¹ [Tib.] *gSol 'debs skad gsangs mthon pos 'don mi nus pa'i bzo de 'dra byas pa yin na 'grigs kyi med. Bla ma brgyud pa'i phyag bzhes nas byung ba'l, gdangs dang dbyangs la sogs pa 'then thub na gzhan dang mi 'dra ba yud shas red. De ltar ma byung n'ang so so'i rgyud 'khul thub pa gcig byung phyin gsol ba khyi skad ma ru btab kyang 'grigs kyi yud red.*

² The instruments used in Tibetan Buddhist rituals are rattle drum (Tib. *da ma ru*), hollow cymbals (Tib. *rol mo*), flat cymbals (Tib. *sil snyan*), drum (Tib. *rnga*), shawm (Tib. *rgya gling*), trumpet (Tib. *rkang gling*), long horn (Tib. *dung chen*), vajra (Tib. *rdo rje*), bell (Tib. *dril bu*), and conch (Tib. *dung dkar*).

and musical symbolism should be discussed altogether (Rinjing Dorje & Ellingson 1979: 76). Ellingson argues that the acoustic beauty is as important as its ritual function. An effective offering (Tib. *mchod pa*) shall be constructed by being beautiful (Tib. *snyan pa*) and being meaningful (Tib. *don yod*). “‘Meaning’ (Tib. *don*) is a multivalent concept, with both cognitive and motivational dimensions’ (Ellingson 1979: 356). Unlike what Kaufmann assessed, Ellingson argues that ritual instruments all present their own ‘beauty’ in different ways. For instance, bells and rattle drums are played throughout a piece. These two instruments present a special richness to the sound of instrumental ensemble. The beats and rhythm of these two instruments are contrast with cymbals’ pulses, which produces polyrhythm. Conches also add enrichment to the beauty of the ensemble. Long horns might be the melodic instruments of instrumental ensemble (Ellingson 1979: 642-643, 662-663).

In scholarship, some scholars had explored the concepts of ritual music from historic literature or fieldwork, the general categories of music, the specific techniques of instruments, the symbolic meanings of chanting and instrumental music, and the musical characteristics. However, it is difficult to learn various rituals in their full form because of the requirement to take the empowerment. It might mean that these scholars were not able to show the whole musical structure of rituals and discuss the musical logic within the whole rituals. How ritual music works as a mechanism based on musical logic and religious symbolism has not been comprehensively discussed. In this article, I mainly take the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual, which I received permission to learn during my fieldwork at Rumtek (Wylie Rum bteg) Monastery³, Sikkim, India, as an example. I combined and compared

³ Rumtek Monastery is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Sikkim, Northeast India. It has a long history, and maintains traditions that uphold the transmission of Buddhist teachings from India and Tibet. It is said that the old Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim was founded by dBang phyug rdo rje (1556-1603), the ninth Karmapa because of the invitation of the Sikkimese king (Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche 2006: 157). However, the date is before the foundation of the Sikkimese kingdom (1642). Therefore, it may not be correct. Tsultsem Gyatso Acharya argues that the event should be traced back to the eighteenth century. The fourth king of Sikkim, Gyur med nam rgyal (1707-1733), visited Tibet and became the disciple of the twelfth Karmapa, Byang chub rdo rje (1703-1732). After the king returned to Sikkim, he built three Bka' brgyud monasteries in Sikkim: Karma rab brten gling at Ralang (South Sikkim), Karma thub bstan chos 'khor gling at Rumtek (East Sikkim), and Bkra shis chos 'khor gling at Phodong (North Sikkim). The twelfth Karmapa prayed at and blessed the three monasteries at mTshur phu in Tibet (Tsultsem Gyatso Acharya 2005: 55-56). It was not set up as a central Karma bka' brgyud monastery. In 1959, the sixteenth Karmapa, Rang 'byung rig pa'i rdo rje (1924-1981), left his primary seat, mTshur phu Monastery, Central Tibet because of the political situation and fled into exile with 150 tulkus, gurus, monks, and lay disciples. Their

the ritual music and texts to investigate the musical logic in their musical texture and the religious logic behind ritual music.

first destination was Bhutan, but it proved difficult to stay there. Later, the King of Sikkim, Bkra shis rnam rgyal (1914-1963) invited the Karmapa to live in Sikkim. The sixteenth Karmapa re-established his main seat in exile at Rumtek, on a ridge facing Sikkim's capital city, Gangtok. The new Rumtek Monastery, part of Dharma Chakra Center, was inaugurated in 1965. The sixteenth Karmapa also established many monasteries, retreat centres, and Buddhist centres in other places in Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh, India, the United States, Canada, several European countries, and Asia (Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche 2006: 180-183; *Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center*, viewed 27 Aug, 2018). The sixteenth Karmapa passed away in 1981. A controversy over the identity of the seventeenth Karmapa began when the prediction letter to find the seventeenth Karmapa was not found. The main four incarnates are the fourteenth Zhwa dmar pa, Mi pham chos kyi blo gros (1952–2014), the twelfth Ta'i si tu pa, Pad ma don yod nyin byed dbang po (1954-), the twelfth rGyal tshab pa, Gags pa bstan pa yar 'phel (1954-), and the third 'Jam mgon kong sprul, Karma blo gros chos kyi seng ge (1954-1992). After the sixteenth Karmapa passed away, these four lineage incarnates were mainly responsible for the affairs at Rumtek. Ten years after the sixteenth Karmapa passed away, the twelfth Ta'i si tu claimed that in 1981 the sixteenth Karmapa gave him a talisman in which he had found the prediction letter. The fourteenth Dalai Lama also supported the tour heading to Tibet to find the seventeenth Karmapa. Unfortunately, the third Jam mgon kong sprul passed away because of a car accident. Finally, only the twelfth Ta'i si tu pa and the twelfth Rgyal tshab pa went to Tibet and found and recognized Orgyan 'phrin las rdo rje (1985-) as the seventeenth Karmapa in 1992. The fourteenth Dalai Lama and People's Republic of China confirmed this recognition of the seventeenth Karmapa (Terhune 2004: 144, 169-196). However, the fourteenth Zhwa dmar pa claimed that, first, the Dalai Lama's approval of the Karmapa reincarnation is not necessary. The Dalai Lama as the religious and political leader of Tibet confirmed the Karmapa reincarnation based on the prediction letter written by the previous Karmapa. Nevertheless, there is no historical evidence showing that the previous Dalai Lamas appointed or helped to recognize previous Karmapas. Second, in the past, previous Zhwa dmar pas had recognized more Karmapas than had previous Ta'i si tu pas. Therefore, the Zhwa dmar pa claimed that he had more right to recognize the seventeenth Karmapa. Third, Zhwa dmar pa argued that the prediction letter preserved by the Ta'i si tu pa is fake according to the handwriting, signature, and poetic texts on the prediction letter. Fourth, Zhwa dmar pa claimed that Ta'i si tu pa is an agent of the Chinese government (Curren, 2006: 73-74, 119-138). In 1994, Zhwa dmar pa announced that 'Phrin las mtha' yas rdo rje (1983-), who was born in Tibet, is the seventeenth Karmapa (Maheshwari 2000: 113). 'Phrin las mtha' yas rdo rje renounced monkhood and married in 2017. In 1999, Orgyan 'phrin las rdo rje left Tibet and arrived in India. Now, the monks at Rumtek follow the instruction of Orgyan 'phrin las rdo rje. Because of the conflict between the supporters of the two seventeenth Karmapas and the doubt about the Chinese government's interference, the two Karmapas are not allowed to settle at Rumtek Monastery. Orgyan 'phrin las rdo rje's temporary residency is rGyud stod tantric Monastery, which belongs to the dGe lugs order near Dharamsala (Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche 2006: 180-183; *Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center*, viewed 27 Aug, 2018). Because of the settlement of the monks and laypeople and the building of new institutes, Rumtek Monastery is not only a historical monument. The religious, cultural, and daily activities construct a new cultural context in different communities.

In this article, the first class analyzed is 'the texts transmitting meanings' in the ritual manuals. Like lyrics, the texts transmit meanings in the form of a song. Ritual performance consists of music and ritual texts. The ritual texts contain chants with various kinds of chanting music. The meanings in the texts are clearer than music. Through studying the structure of the texts in each section of the rituals, the logic and pattern of ritual and its function are understood. The second class is 'music is music', which illustrates musical logic and pattern. The third class is 'the musical performance for transmitting meanings'. Combining the structures of music with ritual meaning and function identifies the relationship between music and ritual. A particularly important point is to investigate if and how musical performance transmits meanings. Finally, I conclude with a theory of Tibetan Buddhist ritual music from both musical and religious perspectives.

Ritual Structure

This Two-armed Mahākāla ritual performed at Rumtek Monastery is the medium version of the ritual.⁴ It is not as complicated as the full version. Generally speaking, at the generation stage (Tib. *bskyed rim*)⁵, practitioners need to perform the self-generation⁶ as Vajra Yoginī, who is an important personal deity in the Karma bka' brgyud order and perform the front-generation⁷ as Mahākāla, Mahākāli, deities, and protectors. In this version, although the self-generation is not written in the ritual texts, practitioners can still perform the self-generation at the beginning.

The Vajra master (Tib. *rdo rje slob dpon*) is the spiritual master of the ritual. After performing the front-generation and inviting protectors

⁴ In Tibetan Buddhism, before reading ritual manuals and doing ritual practices, the practitioners all need to receive the tantric empowerments (Tib. *dbang*), an oral transmission (Tib. *lung*), and instructions (Tib. *khrid*) on the practices from gurus (spiritual teachers). Gurus are instructed to judge if the students have the intelligence to receive the empowerment and practice. If the students are not qualified, it is dangerous to practice *tantra* (Powers 2007: 267). When I was learning ritual music and ritual manuals, these monks were concerned that I had not received the empowerments for these rituals. I promised that whatever I learned would be used for this research and not for any personal practice. Moreover, from the religious perspective, I have no right to transmit and teach ritual manuals and music. This right belongs to reincarnates. For these reasons, I do not include or translate all the ritual texts and scores, but only the sections that are necessary and relevant to the issues.

⁵ In this stage, practitioners need to create the images of deities.

⁶ Practitioners visualize and generate deities as themselves.

⁷ Practitioners visualize and generate deities in front of themselves.

and deities, practitioners also generate offerings to them. The assistants to the Vajra master (Tib. *las kyi rdo rje*)⁸ also offer physical offerings. The deities and protectors are pleased by the offerings. In particular, practitioners need to praise, offer to the protectors, and fulfil protectors' wishes in order to pacify protectors so as to prevent them from bring disease and disaster to the world, as well as reminding them of their promise to protect dharma, and requesting them to do their duty. The protectors in the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual may have a negative characteristic, which is the source of disaster and needs to be removed through the offering made by the practitioners. Once this is done, then, the protectors perform their function.

There are some kinds of Mahākāla ritual that are practiced in different orders. Although the Two-armed Mahākāla is the main protector of the Karma bka' brgyud order, the short section of the Six-armed Mahākāla is also included in this ritual. Some peaceful and wrathful protectors and local spirits are invited, offered, and become pleased to perform their function.

After the protectors dissolve, these protectors leave the ritual field. If the practitioners received training at visualization, they can still finish the completion stage (Tib. *rdzogs rim*)⁹ in their mind in this ritual. The ritual structure is as below.

Front-generation of Mahākāla, Mahākāli, deities, attendants, and demons in the four *maṇḍalas*)¹⁰

Invitation
Offering
Empowerment
Prostration

Generating offerings
Offering and eight offerings
Generating offerings
Offering
Inviting lineage masters, guru, Guru Rinpoche, deities
Offering
Inviting Buddha, bodhisattvas, deities of four levels of *tantra*
Offering
Asking for the fulfilment of accomplishment
Offering to the protectors and *dākinī* (Tib. *mkha' 'gro ma*, female wisdom being),
requesting the fulfilment of wishes

⁸ Because the Vajra master cannot leave the seat, the assistant to the Vajra master is responsible for purifying offerings, displaying offerings, and any work for the Vajra master.

⁹ In this stage, practitioners need to transform themselves into the deities.

¹⁰ *Maṇḍala* is the residence of deities.

Generating main sacrificial cake, nectar, and blood.
 Offering main sacrificial cake, nectar, and blood and requesting the fulfilment of wishes
 Inviting family and attendants of Mahākāla, and requesting the accomplishment of supreme and ordinary activities
 Requesting the local deity in Rumtek to fulfil wishes
 Generating offerings
 Inviting guru, personal deity, ḍāka (Tib. *dpa' bo*, male equivalent of *mkha' 'gro ma*), different protectors to accept offerings and requesting them to fulfil wishes and four activities
 Inviting White Mahākāla to accept offerings and fulfil the request
 Offering to all the dharma protectors, Mahākāla, and Mahākāli, and requesting

The Six-armed Mahākāla

Generating offerings
 Front-generation of the Six-armed Mahākāla and attendants
 Invitation and offering
 Front-generation of Avalokiteśvara
 Offering and asking for the fulfilment of wishes

Generating offering and offering to rNam sras (a peaceful protector) and requesting
 Generating offering and offering to sNgags bdag (a peaceful protector) and requesting
 Generating offering and offering to Dam can (a wrathful protector) and requesting
 Generating offering and offering to Srin mgon (a wrathful protector) and requesting
 Generating offering and offering to Zhing skyong (a wrathful protector) and requesting
 Generating offering and offering to Mkhar nag (a wrathful protector) and requesting
 Generating offering and offering to A phyi (a peaceful protector) and requesting
 Generating offering and offering to Tshe ring ma (a peaceful protector) and her four sisters and requesting
 Prostrating and offering to the protectors of mTshu phu¹¹, which is in Tibet
 Front-generation: protectors in mTshu phu
 Requesting protectors to come to listen to instruction
 Offering
 Requesting them to do their duty
 Generating offerings
 Offering to ḍāka, ḍākinī, and protectors
 Requesting
 Generating offerings
 Offering to gZhi bdag (a local deity in Tibet)
 Requesting
 Praising and prostrating

gSol kha: praying, offering, and requesting
 Generating offerings
 Offering and eight offerings

¹¹ The main seat of Karmapa is in mTshur phu.

Requesting
 Inviting family and attendants of Mahākāla, protectors, and messengers
 Offering and requesting

Inviting Mahākāli and protectors and offering
 Confessing and requesting
 Confessing to Mahākāla's son and requesting
 Confessing to all the protectors and requesting
 Generating fulfilling offerings
 Requesting, warning
 Blessing offerings
 Fulfilling wishes of Mahākāli and deities
 Requesting
 Fulfilling wishes of protector of Mi la ras pa, five sisters
 Confessing and requesting
 Requesting Mahākāla and Mahākāli
 Dissolving into sacrificial cake
 Requesting to destroy enemy
 Requesting to do wrathful actions
 Removing obstacles
 Fulfilling wishes
 Dissolving into the practitioners
 Asking for blessings and requesting

Physical offerings
 Offering leftovers
 Praising and confessing
 Completion stage
 Letting all the protectors and deities leave
 Fulfilling wishes

Dedication

Ritual is the performance for deities. Although the monks perform full versions, medium versions, or concise versions of rituals, the basic structure is the same. The structure is as follows: generation stage → offering → requesting and performing function → completion stage. Through the ritual performance, the invisible deities or protectors and the invisible world can be generated to connect the invisible world with this world. The physical offerings, the offering of musical instruments, and the inner offering generated by ritual performance are for the deities. Monks perform to please the deities or protectors and to request them to perform their function. At the end of the ritual, the deities or protectors dissolve into the minds of monks, or sentient beings. This dissolution needs to be accomplished by the outer performance which is chanting and visualization.

During my fieldwork at Rumtek, many interviewees claimed the most important thing is the mind and motivation. If this is the case, then why do they need different kinds of ritual performance? In the

following sections, I will discuss the issue of how music as the outer performance in rituals activates the functions and purposes of both music and ritual.

Chanting Music

There are three kinds of chanting music:

A. *'don* :

The word *'don* means recitation. There is no notation for *'don* works. The texts are recited without any intentional tone or melody. The number of syllables in each sentence is usually not regular. These chanted forms can be accompanied by drums or not. When they are accompanied by drums, the drum beats are evenly made without any accent.

B. *gdangs*:

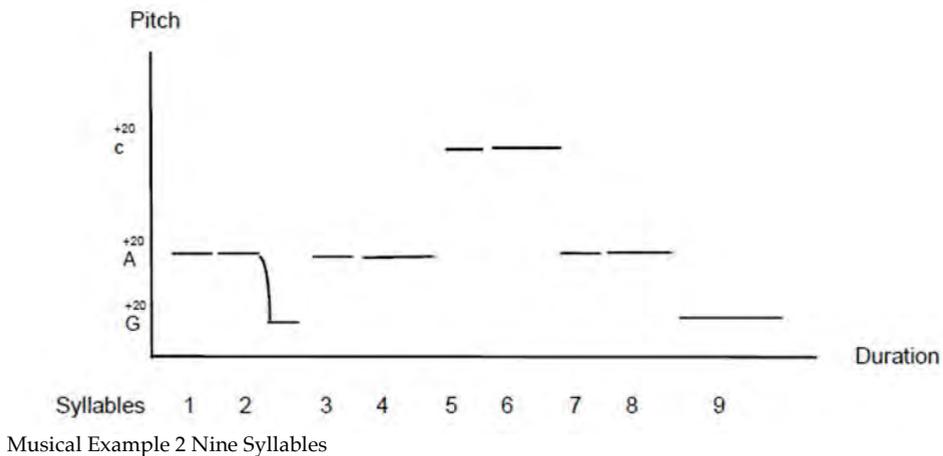
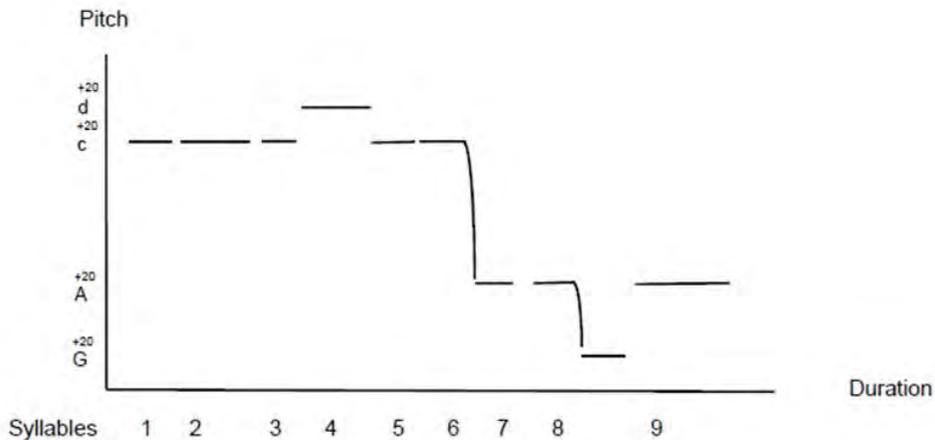
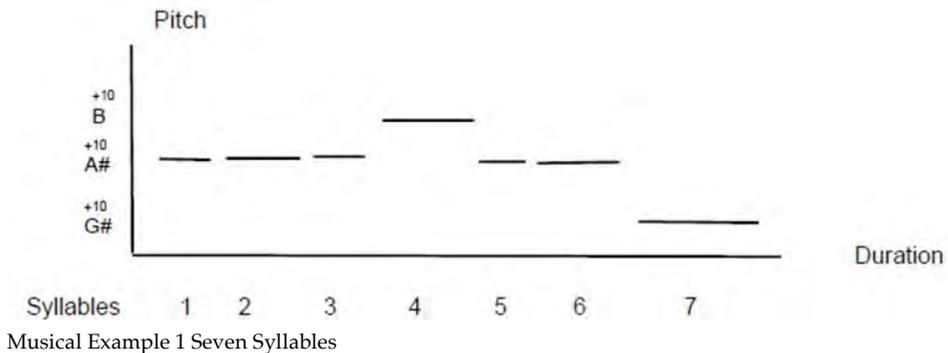
gDangs means tone or melody. There is no notation for *gdangs*. It is, basically, the chanting with melody. The melody consists of discrete tones with rhythm. The number of syllables in each sentence is usually regular. It can be accompanied by drums playing or the holding of a vajra to beat the head of a bell. When it is accompanied by drums, the drum beats on the odd syllables are stronger than those on the even syllables.

Here are two pieces of the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual that can act as examples for this. The number of syllables in each sentence is usually odd. There are two kinds of melody. One is for seven syllables, and the other is for nine syllables. In the two examples below, Musical Example 1 and Musical Example 2, the duration of the odd syllables is shorter than that of even syllables. The last syllable of each sentence is the longest.¹²

The two kinds of melody are chanted repeatedly. The first tone of the two kinds of melody is different. When the number of syllables changes from seven syllables to nine syllables or from nine syllables to seven syllables, then the chanting masters (Tib. *dbu mdzad*)¹³ chant a different first tone to lead the chanting of the other monks.

¹² Chanting music presents difficulties for those wishing to present it in Western notation; it is too complicated for readers to understand the visual representation. Therefore, in this article, one method I use is the coordinate axes to present the relative pitch and duration.

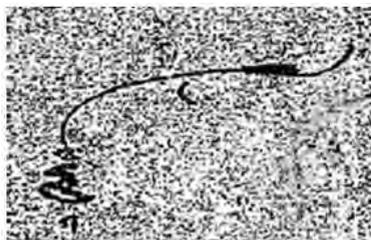
¹³ Chanting masters lead ritual performance.



C. *dbyangs*

dByangs means vowel, tone, or melody. In these three kinds of chanting, only *dbyangs* has notation. The melody is the prolongation of a vowel. The number of syllables of each sentence is usually regular, and it can be accompanied by drums or the holding of a vajra to beat the head of the bell. The tempo is very slow.

The score consists of curved lines and texts. The contour of the lines represents the melodic contour. Each ritual text is followed by a meaningless syllable. Take the invitation part of the Two-armed Mahākāla as an example (Musical Example 3). In this example, 'Hūṃ', the syllable to be chanted, is at the beginning of the line. 'Nga', the meaningless syllable following 'Hūṃ', is used to prolong the first syllable. It is represented in the middle of the line.



Hūṃ Nga

Musical Example 3 Score of *dByangs*

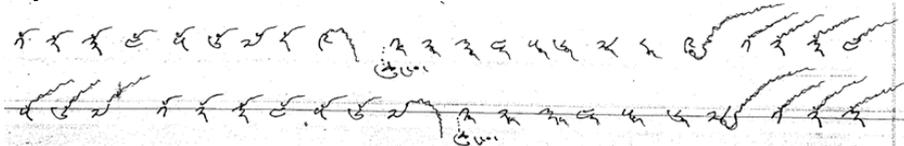
According to the musical characteristics and function, the chanting music can be divided into descriptive sections with less melody and object-centred sections with more melody. The descriptive sections such as generation are the sections in which invisible participants and offerings are generated. The monks recite *'don* to describe the figures and residence of deities, such as Mahākāla, Mahākāli, and offerings, like eight offerings, written on ritual manuals. These pieces are not melodic. However, when the ritual sections, such as praising, are object-centred—for the sacred objects, such as deities—the monks chant *dbyangs* and *gdangs*. This shows that these pieces of ritual are supposed to be a formal and pleasant performance for the deities by performing more melodic music. After these deities had been generated in the descriptive sections, these deities participate in the ritual and watch the performance in the object-centred sections such as those for offering.

Instrumental Musical Structure

Percussion and wind instruments are played in ritual performances. The percussion constructs the musical frame, and wind instruments accompany the percussion. The percussion instruments consist of rattle drums, flat cymbals, hollow cymbals, and another drums. The wind instruments include shawms, trumpets, long horns, and conches. In addition, vajras and bells are played in the musical frame constructed by percussion or are played alone to accompany chanting music.

Percussion

Different patterns are played to end each part of the ritual and to connect them with the following part. There is a notation for hollow cymbals as shown in Musical Example 4. The score as figures consists of numbers, lines, texts, and other signs to present the techniques and rhythm.



Musical Example 4 Score of Hollow Cymbals from the Collected Scores of *Rolmo* (Instrumental Music)

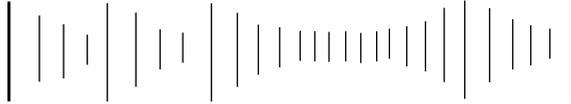
The four basic techniques are presented by texts. To explain the basic techniques and patterns and for them to be easily understood, I have used my own set of symbols.¹⁴ The longer lines show that the sound is stronger, while the shorter lines shows that the sound is weaker. The distance between two lines shows duration.

a. *'bebs*: *'bebs* means descending and falling. Thus, the sound starts as a strong beat that gradually becomes weaker.

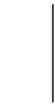
¹⁴ The pitch and duration of Tibetan ritual music are not fixed but relative, thus it is not suitable to adopt Western notation to present the music. In Ellingson's thesis (1979), in addition to showing the notation of Tibetan Buddhist rituals and explaining the musical techniques, he adopted revised Western notation, combining the revised Western notation with graphs to represent chanting music. For the music of cymbals, he mainly presented the Tibetan notation with a timeline. In some pieces, he used some lines to show a fall or prolonged acceleration. The marks of forte and piano show the dynamics. The revised Western notation is adopted to represent shawm's music. Long horn music is only shown by Tibetan notation without any transcription. In my MA thesis (2009), I used a descriptive method to represent instrumental music. During my fieldwork in Rumtek Monastery for this research, one chanting master recognized it as an efficient method to represent instrumental music.



b. *'bebs ring*: *ring* means long. Hence, *'bebs ring* is the long version of descending.



c. *bzhag*: *bzhag* means putting down. Therefore, it is played at the end of musical pieces when the hollow cymbals are placed down. There are two kinds of *bzhag*.

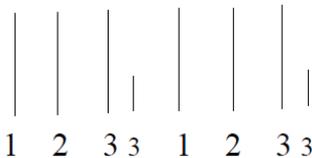
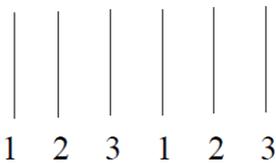


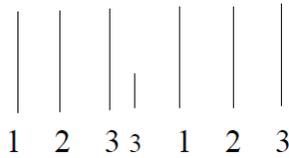
The cymbals are played once.



The cymbals are played lightly twice and heavily once.

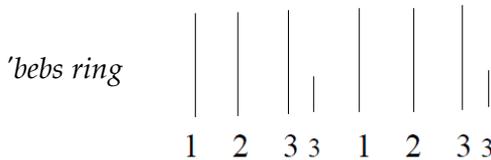
d. For different deities, *'gnyis brdung* (two beats)', *'gsum brdung* (three beats)', and *'bzhi brdung* (four beats)' are played. Take *gsum brdung* (three beats), the most common way, as an example. There are three kinds of *gsum brdung* (three beats):





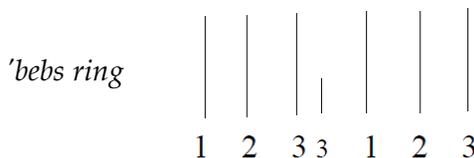
I analyzed and concluded all the pieces of the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual that there are eight general patterns to connect the ritual's different parts (I have not included the music played for invitation, drinking offering, and deities leaving, which has different characteristics).

- a. (Part A) Unaccompanied reciting—(Part B) Playing the drums heavily once and then lightly once, with chanting.



(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed. It depends on which deity is going to be offered or praised.)

- b. (Part A) Unaccompanied reciting—(Part B) Playing drums evenly, with reciting.



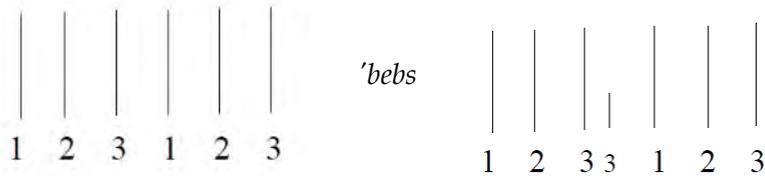
(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed, depending on which deity is going to be given offerings to or praised.)

- c. (Part A) Playing drums, heavily once and then lightly once, with chanting—(Part B) Playing drums, heavily once and then lightly once, with chanting.



(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed, depending on which deity is going to be given offerings or praised.)

- d. (Part A) Playing drums, heavily once and then lightly once, with chanting—(Part B) Playing drums evenly, with reciting.

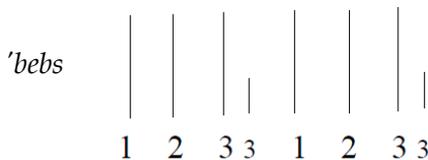


(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed, depending on which deity is going to be given offerings or praised.)

- e. (Part A) Playing drums, heavily once and then lightly once, with chanting—(Part B) No drums are played.

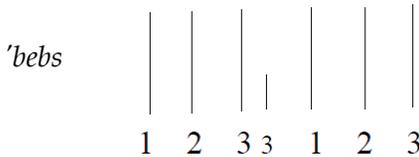


- f. (Part A) Playing drums evenly, with reciting—(Part B) Playing drums, heavily once and then lightly once, with chanting.



(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed. It depends on which deity is going to be offered or praised.)

- g. (Part A) Playing drums evenly, with reciting—(Part B) Playing drums evenly, with reciting.



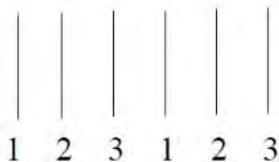
(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed, depending on which deity is going to be given offerings or praised.)

- h. (Part A) Playing drums evenly, with reciting—(Part B) No drum are played.



According to these patterns above, I conclude the rules are as follows:

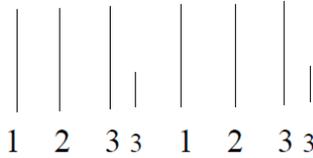
- When part A is unaccompanied reciting, it is followed by *'bebs ring*.
- When part A is chanting accompanied by drums heavily once and then lightly once, it is followed by



(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed, depending on which deity is given offerings or praised.)

- When part A is reciting accompanied by drums played evenly, it is followed by *'bebs*.

- d. When the following part B, is the chanting accompanied by drums played heavily once and then lightly once, it shall be played:



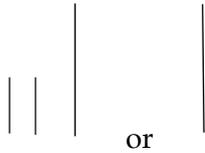
(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed, depending on which deity is going to be given offerings to or praised.)

- e. When part B is reciting accompanied by drums played evenly, it shall be played:



(The *gsum brdung* (three beats) may be changed, depending on which deity is going to be given offerings to or praised.)

- f. When part B is unaccompanied reciting, it shall be played:



These patterns show a musical function that indicates how different parts connect with each other through music.

Wind Instrument

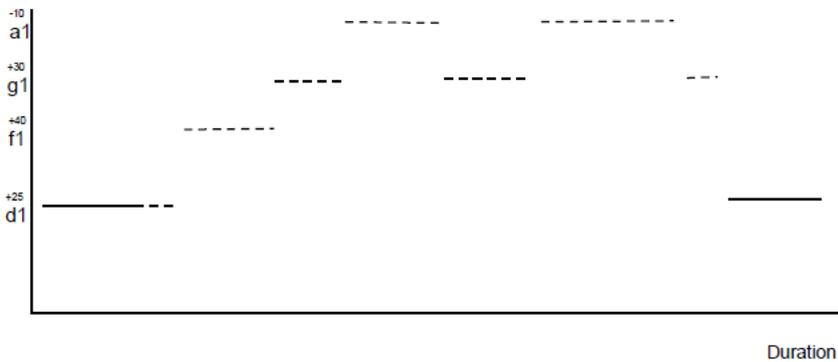
Except for conches, shawms, trumpets, and long horns have various musical techniques of performance.

1. Shawm: No notation is provided for shawm. Nevertheless, there are thirty-two pieces of melody that have been played and recorded by monks themselves in Rumtek Monastery. There are seven holes on a shawm. The three fingers of the right hand and the three fingers of the left hand stop the first six holes. The last hole can be opened or stopped by a plug. Generally speaking, '*bdun pa* (seven)' in which the final hole is plugged, is played in the morning; '*drug pa* (six)', in which the final hole is opened, is played in the afternoon. 'Bri gung rgyal tse Rin po che (1960–), one of the authority figures at Rumtek

Monastery, indicated that there is also a way to play the shawm with 'Inga pa (five)' holes, which apparently means only using the first five holes. The tempo is faster when playing the shawm with five holes and therefore if they need to play a quick melody, they may choose the 'Inga pa (five)' style of playing.

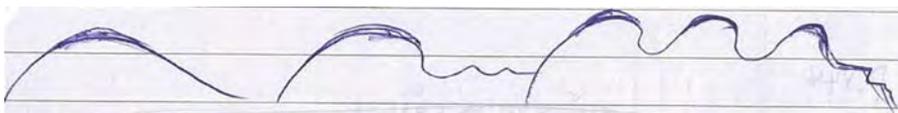
There is no absolute duration, only relative for the length of the sounds, and depends on the cymbal playing of the chanting masters. The chanting masters are the leaders. Other instrumental players need to play their instruments based on the chanting masters' playing. The first and last tones are played longer, showing the beginning and ending of each piece. The variety of tones is in the middle.

Take a short piece from 'mtshur phu gar glu', as an example, the musical contour is presented, as shown in Musical Example 5. One technique to play shawm is similar to a *trill* in Western music, as presented by the dotted lines.

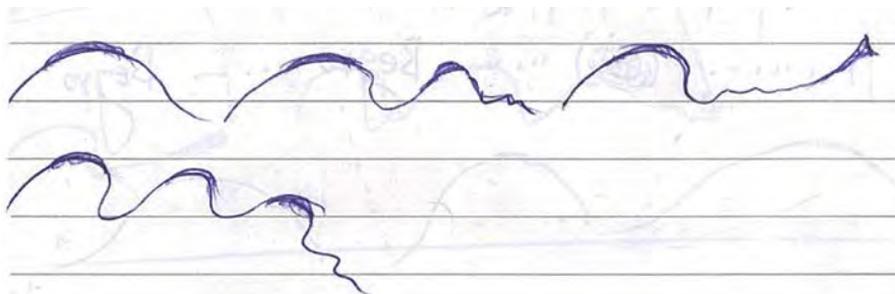


Musical Example 5 Musical Contour of Shawm

2. Conch: No notation is made for the conch, and no melody or specific technique is played. One monk explained to me that three or four fingers are put in the mouth of the conch to produce a beautiful sound. Two fingers may produce a sound similar to a dog's barking. Therefore, the beauty of sound is the main consideration. In the ensemble, conches are played from the beginning to the end of musical pieces.
3. Trumpet: The curved lines are the notation for the trumpets. They can present the contour of sound and the techniques. The most common patterns are 'gsum 'bud (three blowing)' as shown in Musical Example 6 and 'bzhi 'bud (four blowing)', as shown in Musical Example 7.



Musical Example 6 'Three Blowing' of Trumpet



Musical Example 7 'Four Blowing' of Trumpet

4. Long horn: There is a notation for the long horn. The long horn is played using five kinds of techniques.

- a. *rdor*: The lower lip covers the upper lip, and then, the air vibrates the lips. Compared with *kha rdor*, the duration is longer.



- b. *kha rdor*: Only the air vibrates the lips.



- c. *rgyang*: The sound is produced directly without any specific embouchure. The contour of sound is straight.



- d. *tir*: The tongue is put between the lower and upper teeth. The sound is as strong as an elephant's trumpet.



- e. *tsag*: Overtone is played lightly.



Musical Texture

These wind instruments accompany cymbals, drums, and rattle drum. Take one piece of the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual as examples to show the musical texture as Musical Example 8.

	<i>'bebs ring</i>			<i>gsum brdung (three beats)</i>								
Hollow cymbals												
Drums	X	X	X	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	X	X	X	x	X	X	x	
Rattle Drum	X	X	X	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	X							
Trumpets	<hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <i>gsum 'bud (three blowing)</i>											
Long horns	<hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <i>kha rdor</i> <i>tsag</i> <i>kha rdor</i> <i>rgyang</i> <i>tsag</i>											

Musical Example 8 Musical Texture of the Two-armed Mahākāla Ritual

Chanting masters play hollow cymbals as the leaders of ensemble. Drums and rattle drum are played following hollow cymbals' rhythm. Trumpets and long horns accompany percussion. Three blowing of Trumpets ends before three beats of cymbals. The pattern of long horns consists of various techniques and ends with *tsag*, which is played lightly.

Religious Function of Music and Meanings of Music

'Bri gung rgyal tse Rin po che said that music can help performers to concentrate on their meditation. This statement demonstrates how ritual performance is not only understood to be musical but also has a religious function. After learning ritual music and the meanings within the ritual manuals, as well as the musical logic, I also examined the logic of the religious function of ritual performance. The variety of chanting music and instrumental music constructs different levels of musical performance.

One interesting point is that the musical variety of the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual is more than the rituals for one main deity, such as the Red Avalokiteśvara (Tib. *rGyal ba rgya mtsho*) and the Green Tārā ritual (Tib. *Zab tig sgrol ma*). The Red Avalokiteśvara ritual and the Green

Tārā ritual are only performed for peaceful deities, but various ritual music are performed for peaceful and wrathful deities and protectors in the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual. The ritual structures show that the deities and religious functions are more prominent in the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual. That is an example of the complexity of ritual structure.

I conclude that the complexity of ritual influences the complexity of the music used within it. Both the characters of deities and their actions influence the choices the monks make about the use of instruments. I tested this rule by examining the longest version of the Mahākāla ritual, one which I did not learn, and found that the rule also holds in this ritual. For confirmation of my findings, I also asked 'Bri gung rgyal tse Rin po che about these tendencies. He told me that this rule existed, which confirmed my conclusion. In this section, I discuss the function of music, how the instruments and music interact with each other to embody the ritual meanings and function as a method of attaining awakening, and the integrated performance from the three vajras: body, speech, and mind.

In different contexts, music and instruments have various functions. For example, in the past, people played conches to transmit messages, such as inviting people to participate in religious activity (Bian Duo 2006: 18). It is said that when Wencheng princess was building Ra mo che Temple, conches were used to suppress demons (Bawo Zulachenwa 2009: 65). Instruments themselves have symbolic meanings. For instance, vajra is the symbol of the diamond vehicle; bells represent the perfection of wisdom (Beer 2004: 233, 243).

Ritual music is formed to achieve a certain purpose. Lobsang P. Lhalungpa proposes that "The role of sacred music lies primarily in the process of inner transformation towards an ever higher and purer state technically known as "Enlightenment [awakening]" (Lhalungpa 1969: 3). How the purpose can be achieved relies on the religious and symbolic function of music.

In scholastic studies, the function and symbolic meaning of music and, within the ritual context, the instruments themselves in ritual context have been studied. Generally, the ritual music and instruments are categorised into peaceful (Tib. *zhi ba*) or wrathful (Tib. *drag po*) ones, depending on the characters of the deities they evoke. For example, the conch is associated with peaceful deities, but the long horn is regarded as an instrument for fierce deities (Pertl 1992: 90). Flat cymbals are played in the rituals of peaceful deities; hollow cymbals are played in the rituals of wrathful deities (Beer 2004: 229). The shawm is played in peaceful music, and the trumpet is played in fierce music (Ellingson 1979: 645). The peaceful style is played for teachers and some personal deities (Tib. *yi dam*) with flat cymbals, drums, and

conches. The fierce style is played by hollow cymbals, human bone drums and trumpets, and metal trumpets (Ellingson 1979: 684). Although Ivan Vandor also connected shawms, conchs, and cymbals with peaceful deities and short trumpets and smaller hollow cymbals with fierce deities, he claims that long horns and drums are for both (Vandor 1974: 145). From these scholars' research, we can see similarities and differences in the symbolic meanings. For example, conches are for peaceful deities, but long horns may be used only for wrathful deities, or be for both wrathful and peaceful deities.

In different rituals, instruments may have different symbolic meanings. For example, Rinjing Dorje and Ellingson stated:

Crossley-Holland mentions that "The hand-bell and hand-drum [da ma ru]...symbolize Wisdom and Method..." (1968: 83-4). This statement is correct on one level of interpretation, in connection with a particular type of ritual. However, according to the text of the Gcod yul ritual, the da ma ru is associated with "balanced Wisdom", the bells with "the Wisdom that comprehends separate aspects", and the rkang gling with yet a third aspect of Wisdom, "Mirror-like" (Gcod yul: 3a-b) (Rinjing Dorje & Ellingson 1979: 77).

So far, we can see that there are various definitions and symbolic meanings of instruments and instrumental music. This may be due to the various interpretations and rules of different orders or the different logic adopted in various contexts.

The characters of deities influence the selection of instruments. Ellingson claims that the characters of deities decide which musical characteristics, such as types of orchestration, tempo, and rhythm are used (Ellingson 1979: 372). Rinjing Dorje and Ellingson propose that the musical characteristics are used depending on the preference of different deities. Peaceful deities generally prefer relatively slow, soft, and smooth music, while fierce deities like fast, loud, and rough music (Rinjing Dorje & Ellingson 1979: 75). In addition, Bian Duo has stated that the timbre of long horn is similar to that of a tiger's roar, a loud sound that represents invincible guardian deities. The timbre of shawm is thought to be soft, which represents the kindness of female deities (Bian Duo 2006: 208). These arguments show that the timbre of instruments is a musical characteristic that is connected to the characters and preference of the deities.

After learning the ritual music and the meanings in ritual manuals, I have concluded that the function of the individual instrumental music is an additional element within ritual music. My analysis of this is as follows.

First, music is the tool to define the start and end of a ritual. In a narrow sense, a ritual starts when the senior chanting master chants the first syllable. In a broad sense, rituals can start with the preparation of religious objects or the waiting outside of shrine rooms. A junior monk strikes a drum several times outside the main hall, and on hearing the sound, all the monks gather outside. When the Vajra master, the chanting masters, and the discipline masters (Tib. *chos khrims*) show up and go inside the main hall, all the monks follow them to in. At the same time, a junior monk plays *'bebs ring* and three beats. After that, the curtains of the doors are drawn down. If any monk goes inside after the curtains are drawn, that means they are late and will need to do prostrations as the punishment until indicated to stop by the discipline masters. When the ritual is paused for a break, a junior monk strikes the drum outside the main hall once. Then, when the break is over, a junior monk strikes a drum again to gather all the monks back. In this way, the drum-playing sends a message for all the monks to gather together and defines the time in which the monks are to stay in the ritual field.

Second, music embodies the ritual performance. The ritual texts have to be chanted, and then the outer performance and visualization can be activated. As discussed above, in the stage of generation, the monks recite (not musically) the ritual texts to generate the deity and offerings. In the section of invitation, praising and displaying offerings have the object to do the action, the ritual texts are chanted with *dbyangs* or melody, which is musical. Therefore, when the section of ritual is object-oriented, the music is more melodic. In addition to more formal performance, playing musical performance more is the method through which the deities become pleased. Moreover, during visualizing, the monks take more time to visualize the invitation, praise, and offerings to the deities. The *dbyangs* and melody that are slower than the recitation allow the practitioners more time for them to create the visualization.

Third, the function and action of each section in the rituals and the characters of the deities decide the choice of instruments. As I have described above, in previous research, scholars usually connected flat cymbals, shawms, and conches with peaceful deities, and hollow cymbals, trumpets, and long horns with wrathful deities. Ellingson indicated the relation between ritual action and instruments, but he did not present them with clear examples (Ellingson 1979: 624).

In Rumtek Monastery, shawms and conches are for peaceful deities, and trumpets are for wrathful deities. Different pieces of long horns are for either wrathful deities or peaceful deities. I found that the rule governing the playing of flat cymbals and hollow cymbals is not based on the characters of the deities but on the function and action in rituals.

The function and action in the rituals consist of peaceful actions and wrathful actions: pacifying (Tib. *zhi ba*), enriching (Tib. *rgyas pa*), empowering (Tib. *dbang*), and destroying (Tib. *drag po*). Wind instruments are played according to the characters of deities. The characters of deities include peaceful and wrathful aspects.

In both the Red Avalokiteśvara and the Green Tārā rituals, because these two deities are peaceful, only shawms and conches are played. The actions in these two rituals are all peaceful, such as inviting, prostrating, offering, praising, receiving blessing and empowerment, dissolving, and dedication. Therefore, flat cymbals are played without the use of hollow cymbals.

In the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual, Mahākāla and its family and attendants are wrathful, and various kinds of wrathful or peaceful protectors are invited to the ritual field. Shawms and conches are played for peaceful deities, while trumpets are played for wrathful ones. The actions the monks do—more specifically, require the protectors to do—include praising, offering, or removing obstacles, which influence the choice between hollow cymbals and flat cymbals. If they perform peaceful actions, such as praising and offering, then they play flat cymbals. If they ask the deities to perform wrathful actions, such as removing obstacles, they then play hollow cymbals. Peaceful deities cannot do wrathful actions. Therefore, according to these two rules, we can find three patterns in the Two-armed Mahākāla ritual:

- a. Peaceful action+ Peaceful deity= Flat cymbals + Shawm
- b. Peaceful action+ Wrathful deity = Flat cymbals + Trumpet
- c. Wrathful action + Wrathful deity = Hollow cymbals + Trumpet

The basic techniques of chanting and instrumental music, the characters of deities, and the ritual function are the elements of structure. The character of deities and function decide which instruments are played. Then, the varieties of musical techniques construct various patterns. Finally, the musical surface structure¹⁵ is presented. These elements cooperate with each other to produce ritual music with musical function and religious meanings.

Integration of Body, Speech, and Mind

Ritual performance consists of the outer performance and visualization. When the instruments are played, ritual texts are

¹⁵ "Surface structure" is adopted from *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* written by Noam Chomsky.

chanted, and the figures of deities are mentally visualized, the ritual function is shown. Take the invitation section of the Two-armed Mahākāla as an example, a piece which Ellingson discussed in his thesis. He connected the movement of striking cymbals with the figure of the *maṇḍala* (Ellingson 1979: 623-634). Although the version I learned also belongs to the Karma bka' brgyud order, the way to perform this section is a little different to that shown by Ellingson. Furthermore, the function of chanting the *mantra* (Tib. *sngags*)¹⁶ and striking cymbals and how body, speech, and mind integrate in the ritual performance were not discussed. My discussion showing the integration of body, speech, and mind is below.

The ritual texts are chanted first and include four *maṇḍalas* of deities, such as the deity of cemetery, Mahākāla, local deities, Shiva, Ragacha, Lord of death, and female deities, and so forth, which are surrounded by attendants.

After this, the chanting masters play flat cymbals. They hold and rotate the right piece of flat cymbals towards the left piece. Then, they hold the right piece of flat cymbals to strike one point (1, 2, 3), as Musical Example 9, on the left piece of flat cymbals for three times. On the third time (3), the chanting masters chant *dza*, the first syllable of *Dza Hūṃ Baṃ Ho*, the four-syllable *mantra*. Then, the chanting masters strike the three points (a, b, c) on the cymbals and chant *Hūṃ, Baṃ, and Ho*, the following three syllables. *Dza Hūṃ Baṃ Ho* symbolizes that these four *maṇḍalas* of deities are combined one by one in visualization through chanting and playing instruments.

Because an invitation is a peaceful action, and many of the deities are fierce, flat cymbals are played accompanied with trumpets, drums, and long horns. The musical texture is shown in Musical Example 9. Through the integration of body, speech, and mind, these deities are generated, invited, and shown into the ritual field.

¹⁶ *Mantras* are the ritual words or sound having religious power in tantric practice.

Long horns

rdor

Drums

Long horns

Trumpets

Drums

Long horns

Musical Example 9 Musical Texture of the Invitation of the Two-armed Mahākāla Ritual

The other important function embodied in ritual performance is method (Tib. *thabs*) and wisdom (Tib. *shes rab*). In Rumtek Monastery, all the instruments are played in pairs, which forms small networks. In the ensemble, the instrument on the right side symbolizes method and the instrument on the left side symbolizes wisdom. When the chanting master plays flat cymbals and hollow cymbals, one piece of flat cymbals or hollow cymbals that is held in the right hand symbolizes method; while the other held in the left hand symbolizes wisdom. Consequently, when these instruments are being played, method and wisdom are interwoven. Furthermore, the practice of method and wisdom is the practice of Father *tantra* (skilful-means) and Mother *tantra* (wisdom), the highest types of *yoga* within this tradition.

Moreover, the master of the retreat center in Rumtek explained that all the practices are the method that connects to the practitioners' inner wisdom. There are six perfections (Tib. *pha rol tu phyin pa drug*) to

practice. The six perfections are associated with a person's cultivation of generosity (Tib. *sbyin pa*), morality (Tib. *tshul khrims*), diligence (Tib. *brtson 'grus*), tolerance (Tib. *bzod pa*), meditation (Tib. *bsam gtan*), and wisdom (Tib. *shes rab*). The saying is that the first five perfections are the method or skillful means for accumulating merit; the sixth one, the perfection of wisdom is for accumulating pristine cognition (Beer 2003: 255). Practitioners practice the six perfections for the pursuit of awakening through self-cultivation. These six perfections are not only the methods for awakening but are also the goal and the ideal qualities, which are to be developed within the practitioner. The six perfections provide the guidance to construct and transform the practitioner's character on the way to awakening (Wright 2009).

The perfection of wisdom is not only the highest *bodhisattva's* virtue but also the guide of the first five perfections. The perfection of wisdom raises the first five perfections from the ordinary level up to the level of perfection (Wright 2009: 219). In one Mahāyāna *sūtra*, the Buddha instructed his disciples that the goal of enlightened wisdom cannot be attained if one is dull-witted, does not practice, learn, and or ask questions (Wright 2009: 178). Skill in means, which is essential to the practice of *bodhisattvas*, comes from and is contained in the perfection of wisdom. The development of skill in means and a profound realization of emptiness work together for liberation (Wright 2009: 226).

Consequently, the first five perfections, as the skills and means, are to be integrated with wisdom in the practice of the *bodhisattvas*. In ritual music, method and wisdom are always played together during the practice. Furthermore, all practices are designed to connect us to the wisdom within our own minds—the Buddha nature. Tibetan Buddhism holds that every living being has Buddha nature (Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po*)—the enlightened state

Conclusion

Music has been accepted in Tibetan Buddhism and is regarded as a symbolism of wisdom. In the monastic system, as mentioned by the seventeenth Karmapa Orgyan 'phrin las rdo rje, ritual shows a sense of beauty and function of music. As a result of the monastic institutionalization, every lineage has created its own system of practice. In these lineages, monastics are required to play ritual music according to their own lineage's musical system and the instruction they have received within their monastery. The musical performance as an ensemble leads to the Tibetan Buddhist ritual performance.

Theoretically, I found that the structures of music and religious meanings work together. The musical rules of variations, different patterns, and musical texture increase the musical beauty and richness of the ritual. The variations of instrumental music are to accompany chanting music or to connect two sections with different chanting. Combined with the structure of ritual, the structure of music does not only show the aesthetic function but also reveal a religious purpose. The chanting music can be divided into descriptive sections with less melody and object-centred sections with more melody. The beauty of music is associated with the offering or performance for deities. Furthermore, by performing musical signs, the religious symbolic meaning attached to the music and instruments is activated. The instrumental music is influenced by the characters of the deities and the action within rituals. The other rule manifesting in instrumental music is the non-duality of method and wisdom.

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Tibetan Refugees in India: The Challenges of Applying for Indian Citizenship

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I. Introduction

Since the Dalai Lama fled Chinese-occupied Tibet in 1959, India has offered refuge to roughly 130,000 Tibetans in the ensuing 60 years. With the help of then-Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, settlements for these Tibetans were established in the old British hill station of McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, in the foothills of the Himalayas, as well as in remote regions elsewhere in India. Shortly thereafter, the Dalai Lama and his retinue established the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE), known today as the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The settlements continued to grow with periodic and varying levels of support from the Indian government and non-governmental organizations. Today, many Tibetans—whatever their precise legal status—continue to reside in these settlements dispersed across the subcontinent, promote human rights, exercise such limited self-determination as is available in exile, and persist as a community in exile with a distinctive history, religion, culture, language, and national identity.

Despite many qualifying as refugees¹ under international law, all Tibetans in India are viewed in policy and practice as “foreigners.” India’s legal obligations toward most Tibetans residing in India are limited to customary international law obligation of *non-refoulement*, that is, they may not be returned to a state in which they face persecution. Tibetans in India are required to have registration certificates (RCs), without which their presence is technically illegal, although the Indian government enforces the law intermittently and unevenly in this regard.² RCs must be regularly renewed and serve as identity documents.³ They are also a prerequisite for obtaining an identity

¹ I use the term ‘refugees’ here for convenience, but only a trivial number of Tibetans enjoy that legal status. Alternative terms include: Tibetans-in-Exile and Tibetans in India.

² Tibet Justice Center, “Tibet’s Stateless Nationals III: The Status of Tibetan Refugees in India,” Boston University, 2014.

³ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 2.

certificate (IC), a document issued by the Indian government that permits limited international travel to those countries that will recognize an IC in lieu of a passport as a valid travel document.⁴



The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile building in Dharamshala. It is located inside the Central Tibetan Administration complex off Jogiwara Road.

According to the Secretary of Bureau of the Dalai Lama, Tibetans born in India are eligible to obtain an RC after graduating from high school.⁵ Those with RCs are guaranteed certain fundamental rights including: right to elementary education, right to lease land for 20 years through the Central Tibetan Relief Committee, right to obtain benefits such as bank loans and driving licenses (but only with the possession of a valid RC), right to promote and preserve Tibetan culture, right to reside in classified Tibetan settlements, right to travel in certain areas, and right to work in certain forms of employment.⁶

However, it is undeniable that acquiring Indian citizenship provides rights that Tibetans in India otherwise do not enjoy as foreign-

⁴ Tibet Justice Center, "Tibet's Stateless Nationals III: The Status of Tibetan Refugees in India," Boston University, 2014.

⁵ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. "India: Residency rights of Tibetan refugees, including the requirements and procedures for Tibetan refugees to obtain a Registration Certificate; rights to employment, education, health care, and other social services; consequences for Tibetans without a Registration Certificate, including instances of refolement," Refworld, January 2, 2015.

⁶ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *supra* note 2.

ers, including but not limited to all freedoms provided in the Indian Constitution, equality of opportunity in matters of public employment, and full legal, political, and social privileges in India.⁷ As foreigners, Tibetans have been unable to enjoy the many privileges of citizenship, including voting, benefit from India's limited social safety net, the right to travel, either domestically or internationally, and engage in a host of activities and forms of employment.⁸ This created a push among some in the Tibetan community to challenge the Indian Government's refusal to grant citizenship to Tibetans born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987, despite their clear eligibility under the Citizenship Act.⁹

In a groundbreaking decision issued in March 2017, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) accepted a Delhi High Court ruling from September 2016 to allow Tibetan refugees born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987 to apply for Indian citizenship and hence receive Indian passports.¹⁰ The general reaction amongst Tibetans to this policy shift has been ambivalent: while many Tibetans are inclined to apply for passports to receive the benefits associated with citizenship, others hesitate because of a concern that large numbers of Tibetans becoming Indian citizens will gradually dilute their national and ethnic identity as Tibetans.

The present article describes the obstacles that many Tibetans in India face when seeking to vindicate their rights owed to them as *de jure* Indian citizens.¹¹ These challenges include political and governmental hurdles, ineligibility under the Citizenship Act, exorbitant lawyers' fees, delays in receiving passports, lack of knowledge of substantive benefits, and criticism from others in the Tibetan community. In many cases, these challenges essentially serve as dissuading factors, as Tibetans initially interested in applying for citizenship fail to do so as a result.

Prior to conducting research for this topic, preliminary fieldwork was carried out in December 2017 and January 2018 in Dharamshala and New Delhi. The focus was on examining whether or not the Delhi High Court ruling allowed Tibetans in India to live more sustaina-

⁷ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 4.

⁸ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 4.

⁹ Citizenship (Amended) Act, No 5 of 1986; INDIA CODE (1986).

¹⁰ Lobsang Wangyal v. Union of India, W.P. (C) 3539/2016 (High Court of Delhi) (India), September 22, 2016.

¹¹ This article was compiled chiefly after conducting research and interviews with Tibetans in Dharamshala and New Delhi in May and June of 2018. Indians knowledgeable about the Tibet issue were also interviewed, including one eminent constitutional lawyer and two prominent journalists and experts on Tibetan affairs. The Dharamshala-based Tibetan Legal Association provided additional research assistance and methodological advice during the drafting of this article.

bly. "Sustainably," in this case, specifically referred to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 10 (Reduced Inequality) and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Institutions).

II. Methodology

General Overview

The field research cited above was augmented by secondary literature and legal research, as well as subsequent interviews with key participants such as officials of the CTA. The research was aimed at providing a comprehensive picture of the challenges that Tibetans in India face when applying for Indian citizenship.

The first part of the fieldwork involved identifying an organization, based in Dharamshala, that works closely with Tibetans in India and their legal rights. The second part comprised a series of interviews conducted with Tibetans and Indians, and sought to interview people from different ends of the Tibetan refugee spectrum and others who may have varying opinions and experiences to share. The next phase consisted of transcribing these interviews and analyzing the interviewee responses for any key trends and correlations.

The research was conducted in collaboration with the Tibetan Legal Association (TLA). TLA is an organization of Tibetan lawyers in India that handles a wide range of cases for Tibetans across the country. Its president, Lobsang Dakpa, is a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

Fieldwork in Dharamshala and New Delhi

The entirety of the fieldwork was carried out in Dharamshala and New Delhi, as both regions are home to some of the largest Tibetan populations in India. Most interviews with Tibetans in New Delhi took place at Majnu-ka-tilla, a Tibetan settlement located in North Delhi. In total, 25 people were interviewed: six Tibetan politicians, 16 everyday Tibetans, two Indian journalists and experts on the Tibet issue, and one Indian constitutional lawyer.

Interviews

The interviews took place for a period of two weeks in May and early June of 2018. Only adults of at least 18 years of age were selected to participate in the semi-structured interview format, as the citizenship issue primarily comes into play for Tibetans who are economically

active, in college, or unemployed. Prior to the commencement of interviews, interview subjects were promised full anonymity and were provided with a description of this project and its goals to help establish a sense of legitimacy and trust. Because of this, all of the testimonies provided in this article reference the unnamed knowledgeable interviewees.

The post-interview process consisted mainly of making verbatim transcripts of each audio recording. Though a fairly-time consuming process, doing so greatly facilitated the ability to identify trends amongst the responses and analyse what was said by each interviewee.

III. Obstacles to Exercising Citizenship Rights

Generally, Tibetans in India have faced recurrent obstacles when applying for Indian passports. These include: a lack of knowledge of procedures by which to obtain a passport (which, according to them, stems from a lack of direction from the Indian government), exorbitant lawyers' fees, ineligibility under the Citizenship Act, delays in receiving Indian passports despite successful applications, lack of knowledge of substantive benefits (provided for Indian citizens *and* foreigners in India), and criticism from many in the Tibetan community of India.

Ineligibility under the Citizenship Act

The Citizenship Act provides that Tibetans born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987, *are* citizens and thus eligible to apply for Indian passports.¹² But provision is legacy of prior and now superseded law, applied retroactively. It does not provide a path to citizenship for Tibetans born elsewhere (typically Tibet), or for those born after July 1, 1987.

Article 11 of the Indian Constitution gives Parliament the authority to regulate citizenship and naturalization.¹³ Pursuant to that delegated power, Parliament enacted the Citizenship Act of 1955, which, as amended by the Citizenship Acts of 1986 and 2003, specifies how a person may acquire and lose Indian citizenship subsequent to the effective date of the Constitution. Section 3 of the Citizenship Act governs citizenship by birth, and states that every person born in India is a citizen by birth if he/she meets the following criteria:

¹² The Citizenship Act, No. 57 of 1955; INDIA CODE (2003).

¹³ The Constitution of India, of 1950, Government of India (2007).

- Born between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987; or
- Born between July 1, 1987 and the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 with at least one parent who is a citizen of India at the time of his/her birth
- Born on or after the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, with both parents being citizens of India or one parent a citizen of India and the other not an illegal migrant.¹⁴

Until very recently, the policy of the GOI was not to recognize citizenship for Tibetans, even those who qualified under the Citizenship Act. The provisions of § 3 of the Citizenship Act of 1955 appear to offer at least a portion of Tibetans in India access to citizenship.¹⁵ However, it has been extremely difficult for Tibetans in India to acquire passports and prove their citizenship statuses. This inability of Tibetans, even those born in India between 1950 and 1987, to receive citizenship has continued, despite various high court rulings entitling them to citizenship. A few of the most prominent high court decisions include *Namgyal Dolkar v. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs*, *Tenzin Choephag Ling Rinpoche v. Union of India*, *Phuntsok Topden v. Union of India*, and *Lobsang Wangyal v. Union of India*.¹⁶ Furthermore, the GOI has continued to refuse to apply these holdings to anyone other than the named plaintiff. As a result, many in the Tibetan community have remained foreigners in India.

Political and Governmental Hurdles

Out of the 300-plus Tibetans who have received Indian passports to date, a select few have been through high-profile cases. Namgyal Dolkar is one such example, and the first Tibetan citizen of India to pursue her right to a passport under the earlier Citizenship Act.¹⁷ In an earlier interview, Dolkar—an ethnic Tibetan born in India in April

¹⁴ The Citizenship Act, *supra* note 11.

¹⁵ Tibet Justice Center, "Tibet's Stateless Nationals III: The Status of Tibetan Refugees in India," Boston University, 2014.

¹⁶ *Namgyal Dolkar v. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs*, W.P. (C) 12179/2009 (High Court of Delhi), *Tenzin Choephag Ling Rinpoche v. Union of India*, 15437/2013 (High Court of Karnataka), *Phuntsok Topden v. Union of India*, W.P.(C) 1890/2013 (High Court of Delhi), and *Lobsang Wangyal v. Union of India*, W.P.(C) 3539/2016 (High Court of Delhi).

¹⁷ *Namgyal Dolkar v. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs*, *supra* note 15.

1986—said she fought to obtain Indian citizenship because as a foreigner, she was denied many opportunities, including a position as a lecturer in English literature.¹⁸ Without Indian citizenship, she was not eligible to take the exam. Upon applying for a passport, she was warned that persisting with her efforts to attain citizenship would land her in prison.¹⁹

Dolkar was the first Tibetan to receive indicia of her Indian citizenship by way of court proceeding. But the process was particularly laborious. Dolkar explained that a lawyer acting on her behalf filed a petition in the High Court of Delhi stating that Dolkar, an ethnic Tibetan born in India in April 1986, had sought an Indian passport and argued that she qualified as an Indian citizen by birth under § 3(1)(a) of the Citizenship Act of 1955. The High Court sided with Dolkar in its decision, and ordered the Government of India to pay her a sum of 5000 rupees in one month. However, it took five months for this payment to be made, and several more months for Dolkar to actually receive an Indian passport.

Furthermore, Roxna Swamy, Dolkar's attorney, said that the MEA did not act on her client's application for a passport for over a year and a half, despite several petitions brought forth by Swamy to the High Court of Delhi.²⁰ At one point, the MEA attempted to redirect the application to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), stating that the latter was the branch that actually establishes policy in this regard. After more than a half dozen adjournments at the request of the Solicitor General, the High Court of Delhi finally issued its decision in Dolkar's favor.²¹

In the end, while Dolkar did successfully receive an Indian passport, her case highlights key governmental and institutional hurdles that *de jure* Tibetan citizens face in the quest to vindicate their rights as citizens. Dolkar is now a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and President of the Gu Chu Sum (Political Prisoners of Tibet) Movement.

Even after the change in GOI policy, interviewees describe facing hurdles from the Indian Government, in particular, the MEA once again, which further complicates the process. In June 2017, the Regional Passport Office (RPO) in Bangalore released a ruling stating that Tibetans who apply for Indian citizenship must abide by the following four criteria:

¹⁸ Tibet Justice Center, "Tibet's Stateless Nationals III: The Status of Tibetan Refugees in India," Boston University, 2014.

¹⁹ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 14.

²⁰ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 14.

²¹ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 14.

- 1) Tibetans must surrender their RC and IC cards.²²
- 2) Tibetans will be prohibited from returning to their original refugee settlements.
- 3) Tibetans must present a written paper stating renouncement of CTA benefits.
- 4) Tibetans must also present a written paper stating renouncement of benefits received from the RC and IC cards.²³

The above RPO ruling made it extremely difficult for those Tibetans in India seeking to apply for citizenship and discouraged many from doing so due to its second provision, which prohibited Tibetans with Indian passports from returning to their original refugee settlements. One Tibetan parliamentarian voiced disapproval when asked about this and mentioned an instance when she met a young working Tibetan woman who needed Indian citizenship to pursue advancement in her job.²⁴ The woman was unable to apply due to the RPO ruling because she was the only child in her family and could not afford to live outside her refugee settlement while providing support for her parents back home.²⁵

The RPO was challenged as unconstitutional and in November 2017, the Delhi High Court, in *Tamding Dorjee v. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs*,²⁶ upheld three out of the four provisions, but declared unconstitutional the provision prohibiting Tibetans from returning to their original refugee settlements. Dorjee filed the petition when he had applied for a passport but was denied said facilities by way of an RPO Shimla ruling which prescribed the same four conditions as the RPO Bangalore's statement above.²⁷

Since the Tamding Dorjee case ruling, local offices have, for the most part, stopped enforcing the above requirement. This has greatly reduced concerns amongst Tibetans, many of whom found the RPO Bangalore's second criterion to be especially problematic.

However, some Tibetans have also taken issue with the third provision of the RPO Bangalore ruling, which states that Tibetans who

²² It should be noted that some, but not all, de jure Tibetan citizens of India possessed the RC and IC documents before it became clear that under the court ruling they are citizens.

²³ *Tamding Dorjee v. Govt of India Ministry of External Affairs*, W.P. (C) 7577/2017 (High Court of Delhi) (India), November 7, 2017.

²⁴ Interview with a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Dharamshala, May 28, 2018.

²⁵ Interview with a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, *supra* note 24.

²⁶ *Tamding Dorjee v. Govt of India Ministry of External Affairs*, *supra* note 23.

²⁷ *Tamding Dorjee v. Govt of India Ministry of External Affairs*, *supra* note 23.

apply for Indian citizenship must renounce their CTA benefits. According to them, many Tibetans who receive Indian citizenship are financially unable to sustain themselves during the initial few months after receiving a passport, and hence require continued benefits from the CTA until they are able to independently support themselves.²⁸

When mentioning this request to Tibetan parliamentarians, the majority of them were at odds with this viewpoint. One parliamentarian disagreed with the argument that Tibetans – who apply for Indian citizenship – should be allowed to surrender the benefits they receive from CTA only after reaching a certain level of financial stability.

No, because the Indian government has provided different lands for Tibetans to stay in. Whether you are rich or poor, whatever you got before remains what it is. The CTA says that the land provided by the Indian government was given only for Tibetan refugees! So this automatically becomes irrelevant for Tibetans who become Indian citizens, and they should only be able to receive the benefits they receive from the Indian government. Hence, the refugee-provided land should only be enjoyed by refugees and not citizens.²⁹

From the interview testimonies, it does not appear as if the third provision of the RPO Bangalore ruling will change anytime soon.

Exorbitant Lawyers' Fees

Prior to the change in the Government of India's policy on Tibetans in India and Indian citizenship, the only Tibetans able to secure an Indian passport were those who had the financial means to hire a lawyer. Hiring a lawyer, though expensive, was seen as a surefire way to obtain Indian citizenship by way of direct court appeal. Indian lawyers, in general, are extremely expensive. Some Indian lawyers who have brought cases on behalf of Tibetans do not charge significant fees. But there are very few such lawyers, and the majority charge more than most Tibetans can afford. Today, poverty and/or limited financial mobility prevents some Tibetans who are de jure citizens from vindicating their citizenship, a situation that may even be unconstitutional as the Indian Constitution does not draw citizenship distinctions based on wealth.

²⁸ Interviews with a number of everyday Tibetans who had received Indian passports, Dharamshala, May 25–29, 2018.

²⁹ Interview with a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Dharamshala, May 27, 2018.

In the previously-mentioned *Namgyal Dolkar v. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs* court case, Dolkar hired a lawyer who argued that Tibetans are eligible for citizenship as per the amended Citizenship Act of 1986. The Act was an inclusive framework under which every person born in India on or after January 26, 1950, but prior to the commencement of the 1986 Act on July 1, 1987, is automatically a citizen of India by birth.³⁰ After the successful court appeal, Dolkar said she hoped her case would pave the way for other Tibetans struggling to establish their identity in India.³¹

One interviewee said that, in his experience, a non-trivial number of the Indian lawyers purporting to provide the necessary assistance engage in fraudulent practices such as overcharging their clients or misleading them about the process and associated expenses.³² To him, having a well-informed friend is sufficient to help one navigate the complexities of receiving an Indian passport.

Furthermore, the very thought of hiring a lawyer for assistance, paying the exorbitant lawyer fees, and maneuvering one's way towards citizenship is viewed as an arduous process by many Tibetans, and thereby presents itself as a major psychological hurdle for those seeking to apply. Those with little educational background may also hire lawyers needlessly, for they can first seek advice from Tibetans who have experience with the process. One interviewee expressed his desire to see Tibetans who have already gone through lawyers and received citizenship to offer their services either for free or for a very low cost to others seeking to apply.

*Some Tibetans who have already gone through lawyers should join hands with society and offer their services – because they have gone through the process and know the mill – to those looking to receive Indian passports. I think this concept of hiring a lawyer to do a job like this is a self-created problem.*³³

The testimonial excerpt above suggests that more cooperation is needed within the Tibetan community. In this case, applying for citi-

³⁰ *Namgyal Dolkar v. Government of India Ministry of External Affairs*, W.P. (C) 12179/2009 (High Court of Delhi), *Tenzin Choephag Ling Rinpoche v. Union of India*, 15437/2013 (High Court of Karnataka), *Phuntsok Topden v. Union of India*, W.P.(C) 1890/2013 (High Court of Delhi), and *Lobsang Wangyal v. Union of India*, W.P.(C) 3539/2016 (High Court of Delhi).

³¹ Anand Bodh, "25-yr-old First Tibetan to be Indian Citizen." *Times of India*, 20 Jan. 2011, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/25-yr-old-first-Tibetan-to-be-Indian-citizen/articleshow/7323090.cms>

³² Interview with an Indian journalist and expert on the Tibet issue, New Delhi, May 21, 2018.

³³ Interview with an everyday Tibetan, New Delhi, May 24, 2018.

zenship can be such an important yet daunting task for some Tibetans that it would be beneficial for those who have already experienced the process to reach out to those interested in applying but unsure of how best to approach it.

Additionally, from the testimony of a high-ranking CTA official, Tibetans who apply for citizenship seem to be viewed as naturalized citizens rather than natural citizens, which would explain the need to hire a lawyer.

Those who have applied for citizenship through the high court, logically they have to hire the lawyers also. Because you are not a natural citizen, you are a naturalized citizen. Therefore, without applying you can't get it. Then you have to prove the many documents also. So on the basis of that, many of them apply and get citizenship. It is individuals' choice. I think, so many of them have gone through on the basis of the announcement.³⁴

If true, this statement would be at odds with one of the provisions outlined by the Citizenship Act, which declares any person born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987 to be a *citizen by birth*.³⁵

Delay in receiving passport

Some Tibetans have experienced delays in receiving their passports despite submitting their applications without any mistakes. A few interviewees mentioned many Tibetans who applied for Indian passports but did not receive these passports on time, despite following all the rules, regulations, and procedures properly.³⁶ Occasionally, some Tibetans paid bribes in order to accelerate their passport issuance. As a result of these perceived obstacles, many of the applicants withdrew their applications and do not plan on applying for citizenship again.

Tibetans are not the only ones who experience these delays; many other Indian passport applicants across the country also face them. This is because there is no accountability amongst government offices that handle the processing of the passport applications. One Tibetan, who recently received his Indian passport, had the following to say about his personal experience of navigating the process.

³⁴ Interview with a high-ranking CTA official, Dharamshala, May 27, 2018.

³⁵ The Citizenship Act, No. 57 of 1955; INDIA CODE (2003).

³⁶ Interviews with several everyday Tibetans, Dharamshala and New Delhi, May 19 – June 2, 2018.

Though I am glad I have become an Indian citizen, I do not know if I would go through the process again, just because of all the hassle and time that it took for me to finally receive my passport. From the time I submitted my application to the time I actually got the passport, it was almost one year. This put me in somewhat of a state of panic because I had a few international traveling commitments that I could not honour as a result.³⁷

It seems as though the delays in receiving a passport are just extensions of the delays Tibetans go through when applying for RCs and ICs as well. In Karnataka, for example, RC renewals—in some cases—are dragged out for months, and a bribe is often necessary to expedite the process.³⁸ The IC application procedure has become more complex in recent years, with delays of over two years becoming increasingly commonplace and posing severe difficulties for Tibetans as a result. In an earlier interview, one respondent mentioned a bright Tibetan student who almost lost a scholarship offer due to the IC application taking so long.³⁹ Another Tibetan high school student lost an opportunity to study as a Pestalozzi Scholar in the United Kingdom due to her inability to acquire an IC in time.⁴⁰

Until roughly four years ago, the process of applying for a passport or even RC/IC consisted of filling out and submitting manual paper documents. This would result in long lines at regional passport offices and unnecessary complications brought about by missing papers and files. Over the last four years however, thanks to a basic change in the approach of the Indian Government, many of these processes have been digitized to the point where one can apply for a passport or identity document online today. Many Tibetans have strongly approved the digitization of application procedures, stating that it has ameliorated some of the aforementioned issues that arose from manually submitting hard paperwork.⁴¹

Lack of Knowledge of Substantive Benefits

One of the largest challenges that Tibetans voiced when deciding whether or not to apply for citizenship was their overall lack of knowledge. Many Tibetans stated that they were unsure as to what exact rights they currently had as “foreigners” in India, and what

³⁷ Interview with an everyday Tibetan who recently received Indian citizenship, Dharamshala, May 30, 2018.

³⁸ Tibet Justice Center, “Tibet’s Stateless Nationals III: The Status of Tibetan Refugees in India,” Boston University, 2014.

³⁹ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 38.

⁴⁰ Tibet Justice Center, *supra* note 38.

⁴¹ Interviews with several everyday Tibetans, Dharamshala and New Delhi, May 19 – June 2, 2018.

rights they would have were they to formally vindicate their citizenship in court. They expressed a desire for a central database that listed this information for them.⁴² Several Tibetans who were ambivalent faced a similar predicament, unsure of the comparative pros and cons of a decision either way.⁴³

One interviewee had quite a bit to say when it came to the lack of overall knowledge among the Tibetan community.

I think the lack of knowledge of procedures is the main hurdle. And there I feel that among Tibetans, if there is a kind of self-help or support group amongst Tibetans who are knowledgeable and who offer this help, then I don't think this hurdle should exist. There are many Tibetan lawyers and organizations out there. But unfortunately, Tibetan society—like several other societies in crisis—is comprised of many divided minds (people are for and not for citizenship). In such societies, it is normal that people will not help the one who wants to apply. Those people will put hurdles in their way, which makes it doubly difficult.⁴⁴

Once again, community support is the main theme here. Seeking help from Tibetans and officials who are knowledgeable about the application process, as well as about entitlements with and without citizenship, can make a substantial difference for those in two minds about whether or not to apply for a passport. This creates a simple yet achievable goal, according to one respondent.

The goal of these community groups should not be to try and convince Tibetans in India to apply for citizenship. Rather, these groups should help Tibetans who are on the fence understand whether one choice is the right one for them, over another.⁴⁵

Criticism from many in the Tibetan community

Tibetans who wish to take advantage of formal Indian citizenship by applying for Indian passports or otherwise often face criticism from some in the Tibetan exile community. While receiving Indian citizen-

⁴² To help to inform Tibetans about the relevant procedures, in September 2018 I created a website (www.passportorrc.com) that offers information on the rights conferred by Indian citizenship and those rights (if any) that 'foreigner' status confers.

⁴³ Interviews with several everyday Tibetans, Dharamshala and New Delhi, May 19 – June 2, 2018.

⁴⁴ Interview with an Indian journalist and expert on Tibet, New Delhi, May 22, 2018.

⁴⁵ Interview with an everyday Tibetan, Dharamshala, May 26, 2018.

ship confers political and social rights, including the right to run for political office, a significant portion of the Tibetan community opposes Indian citizenship because they fear that, over time, it will lead to the atrophy of Tibetan nationality or the continuing objective of the CTA to vindicate the right of all Tibetans to self-determination. As such, these Tibetans often consider applying for Indian citizenship an act of betrayal towards the entire Tibetan cause and fight for freedom. For Tibetans with this mindset, it remains preferable for Tibetans in India to remain “foreigners.”

One Tibetan who advises against opting for citizenship, remarked:

Somehow, an increasing number of Tibetans desire certain rights. But if taking up Indian citizenship and benefiting from it continues, then it may become a trend in the community. The natural selfish nature of humans will come out. This is applicable to all struggles, whether it is the Tibetan freedom struggle or Indian freedom struggle, French or Russian revolutions, etc. You will see that people who maintained their resolve through difficult times were always part of the minority. Large portions of the population were looking at the trends, and went along with where the wind was blowing.

Therefore, today, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama is alive, when there is still hope, most of us still remain steadfast in our belief to our Tibetan rights. But in the future, it may become a trend to take up Indian citizenship and fall into this trap! This could really weaken the Tibetan struggle.⁴⁶

These views are shared by many Tibetans in India, who fear that securing citizenship in India undercuts the ultimate goal of returning to a free Tibet in the future. At the same time, there are some who believe that Tibetans who apply for citizenship should receive praise and not be subject to a backlash. One Indian constitutional lawyer, who has fought many cases on behalf of Tibetans, was amongst the few who support this option.

Overall, the Tibetan community and CTA should be happy at the fact that the Indian Government, judiciary, and Indian society want to make Tibetans a part of India...because while Tibetans may have lost one huge piece of their homeland, they have found another. They are part of this land... just because you simply take up Indian citizenship does not mean you are forsaking your own individual identity and taking up a common identity. Tibetans will still be able to preserve their Tibetan identity. They will still observe and preserve the Tibetan way of life. They will still be able to preserve their Tibet-

⁴⁶ Interview with a Tibetan activist, Dharamshala, May 30, 2018.

*an heritage. But by choosing to become Indian citizens, they are only striving to attain a few common ideals.*⁴⁷

However, Tibetans who share the aforementioned belief are in the minority and are outnumbered by those with anti-citizenship sentiments. As a result, some in the Tibetan-in-Exile community do not opt for Indian citizenship due to underlying apprehensions of a backlash they may face from others in the community. This is not to say that prospective citizenship applicants *will* be subject to criticism, but rather that they believe there is a chance of this happening.

IV. The Central Tibetan Administration's Stance on Citizenship

It is important to discuss the CTA's stance on the Indian citizenship issue, as it is the primary voice for Tibetans in India. The CTA has officially adopted a neutral position on this development. Its president or *Sikyong*, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, has stated that the decision to apply for Indian or any other country's citizenship is a personal choice.⁴⁸ During prior interview with me, he emphasized his view on behalf of the CTA.

*As the CTA, we cannot say you cannot apply for Indian citizenship because it is the law. To advocate against citizenship would be illegal. But we do not encourage Tibetans to apply either because the responsibility of CTA is to maintain the Tibetan cause and Tibetan movement, and to look after Tibetans in India. Hence we have taken this stance, where applying for citizenship is an individual choice.*⁴⁹

However, the CTA seems to be applying double standards to this issue. On one hand, it has long been in favour of Tibetans living abroad adopting citizenship of their respective host countries, especially in the case of Western countries (United States, Germany, United Kingdom, etc.).⁵⁰ On the other hand, a few of its members have veered away from *Sikyong* Dr. Sangay's statement and do not favour Tibetans in India adopting Indian citizenship. One member of the Parliament-in-Exile had the following to say:

⁴⁷ Interview with an Indian constitutional lawyer, New Delhi, May 23, 2018.

⁴⁸ Dr. Yeshe Choedon, "The Unintended Consequences of India's Policy on Citizenship for Tibetan Refugees," *Indian Defence Review*, March 9, 2018, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/the-unintended-consequences-of-indias-policy-on-citizenship-for-tibetan-refugees/>

⁴⁹ Interview with *Sikyong* Dr. Lobsang Sangay, CTA, Dharamshala, December 23, 2017.

⁵⁰ Dr. Yeshe Choedon, *supra* note 48.

The very purpose of us coming to India is not to settle in India and become a permanent citizen. The main purpose of our coming over to India is to do something for our own nation. Because India, being a very well-developed and democratic country, has given us all the rights. We can thus do everything that we need to do, especially for Tibet...so we are very fortunate to be in a country like India where we can do a lot of things. So why become an Indian citizen?⁵¹

A few other parliamentarians who were interviewed also echoed similar sentiments to those above, stating that Tibetans have virtually everything they need in India, and should thus be satisfied with what they have been so generously provided by the Indian government. One parliamentarian in particular showered the GOI with praise, and said that there is no need for Tibetans to apply for Indian citizenship because few countries rival India when it comes to exemplary treatment of foreigners.

When we are free in India, there's no point in making Indian citizenship. We are totally taken care of by the Government of India. They are very grateful people. There is no such country in the world who has taken care of foreigners like India...so those who really want to take this citizenship, are not very far-sighted. Those who think of day-to-day individual activities are the people who take up citizenship for these benefits and rarely think of the greater Tibetan cause.⁵²

The differences in opinion between CTA members has indicated to some that the administration unofficially attempts to discourage Tibetans in India from applying for citizenship. One Tibetan, not an Indian citizen and based in Dharamshala, raised her suspicion in concurrence with this belief, stating that "there is some social construct in which CTA is trying to discourage Tibetans from applying for Indian citizenship."⁵³ If true, this represents another hurdle that Tibetans in India would face when applying for citizenship.

V. Conclusion

From excessive lawyers' fees to political and governmental hurdles, to criticisms from other members of the community, Tibetans face challenges that stand as serious obstacles to securing Indian citizenship. Those born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987

⁵¹ Interview with a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Dharamshala, May 28, 2018.

⁵² Interview with a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, *supra* note 51.

⁵³ Interview with an everyday Tibetan, Dharamshala, May 26, 2018.

are citizens by dint of birthright citizenship. However, Tibetans born in this timeframe do not have the full ability to exercise the de jure rights to which all Indian citizens are entitled, including securing a passport for travel.

India has been an indispensable host to the Tibetans residing in exile. From helping establish settlements to schools, the Indian government has played a significant role in allowing the Tibetans to preserve their cultural identity and ways of life. But on the legal front, Tibetans in India continue to face challenges when applying for citizenship, to the point where many are discouraged by the obstacles they encounter. There have been numerous High Court rulings that confirmed what the Citizenship Act already stated, and yet for decades the GOI has refused to permit de jure Tibetans from directly securing citizenship. Given that high court verdicts based on the constitutionality of an act of parliament—in this case, the Citizenship Act—have jurisdiction across the country, this could signify a potential disconnect between law establishment and law enforcement.

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upon us, continue to show why is he one of the greatest gurus and leaders of our time.

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On the Life of Chos rgyal bsod nams (1442-1509): Unlocking the Mysteries of a Byang gter Master from Mustang¹

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In previous works, I have focused attention on a collection of early biographies of the patriarchs of the Byang gter tradition that were written before the seventeenth century as part of my larger objective to develop a more complete account of the tradition's early history. This work is continued here through an investigation of the little-known Chos rgyal bsod nams (1442–1509), whose autobiography has been translated into English and attached to this article. While the autobiography should be considered a success from the religious perspective in that it can easily be imagined to fill the reader with faith in the Buddha-dharma in general and Chos rgyal bsod nams in particular, it does not sufficiently explain the historical significance of its subject. Thus, in the first major section of this article, I will weave together a narrative of the life of Chos rgyal bsod nams that is intended to be illuminating regarding the basic contours of his life, while also bringing into focus the mysteries posed by the autobiography. In the remainder of the article, I will present evidence from other sources in an attempt to provide tentative solutions to those mysteries, a process that will yield a higher vantage point, metaphorically speaking, from which one can more completely appreciate Chos rgyal bsod nams's place within the early history of the Byang gter.

The principal source for this study is the autobiography, simply entitled *The Liberation Story of Rigs 'dzin Chos rgyal bsod nams*.² It is not only the earliest hagiography of this patriarch; it is also the most extensive. The first of its five parts describes his birth and early training in Mustang, while the second offers an account of his exploits at a variety of other locations, concluding with his visit to the epicenter

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² Chos rgyal bsod nams (1442–1509) 1983, pp. 235-250.

of the Byang gter tradition in La stod Byang. The third section discusses his retreat practices and death, which demonstrates that this work is not completely autobiographical. An autobiographical song of realization constitutes the fourth section, and the fifth is a prayer that praises Chos rgyal bsod nam, who is addressed therein as "father." While it is not clear when the autobiography reached its current form or who may have been the final editor, parts of the autobiography were presumably composed before Chos rgyal bsod nam passed away in 1509. The history of the rNying ma pa, the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung*, that was composed in the eighteenth century and the history of the Byang gter, the *Byang gter thub bstan rdo rje brag gi chos 'byung*, that was published in 2015 are both employed below as they include sections devoted to Chos rgyal bsod nam, though they appear to be based solely on the autobiography.³ The *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* reduces his life to a single paragraph, while the more lengthy section that appears in the *Byang gter thub bstan rdo rje brag gi chos 'byung* can be read as a commentary on the autobiography as it offers a few clarifications of obscure sections of the text. Because of the reverence of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682), for the Byang gter and his close spiritual relationship with the patriarchs of the tradition, his voluminous record of received teachings (*thob yig*) is an important source for any detailed study of the Northern Treasure Tradition.⁴ The *thob yig* is particularly useful for this current investigation as the Fifth Dalai Lama employed the *thob yig* of Chos rgyal bsod nam as one of his main sources for tracing the Byang gter lineages that he received.⁵ As a result, there are nearly fifty appearances of his name within that source.

The beginning of the autobiography, as stated above, is dedicated to the period of Chos rgyal bsod nam's life from his birth (1442) until the age of twenty-three (1464) that unfolds in Glo bo (i.e., Mustang) in modern-day Nepal.⁶ The territory, along with the rest of mNga' ris, had been consistently controlled by the kings of Mang yul Gung thang

³ For the eighteenth-century biography, see Gu ru bkra shis (b. 18th c.) 1990, pp. 672–673. For the twenty-first-century biography, see Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, pp. 201–206. I am very appreciative, as always, of the advice provided by Stéphane Arguillère, who has identified the author of this more recent work as Chos dbyings khyab brdal. For a discussion of the overall value of Gu kra'i chos 'byung, see Martin 1991, pp. 329–349. There is also an entry for Chos rgyal bsod nam in a twentieth-century bibliographic encyclopedia as well. See mKhas btsun bzang po (b. ca. 1920) 1973–1990, Vol. 3, p. 725.

⁴ For the Fifth Dalai Lama's record of received teachings, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, vol. 1–4. For an introduction to this important document, which also discusses Chos rgyal bsod nam, see Ehrhard 2012, 79–96.

⁵ Ngag dbang blo bzang (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 3, p. 228.

⁶ Chos rgyal bsod nam (1442–1509) 1983, pp. 236–240.

from their capital city of rDzong dkar from the middle of the thirteenth century through the latter half of the fourteenth century.⁷ As the power of Gung thang diminished, largely because of the weakening of their Sa skya pa allies and the demise of the Yuan Dynasty (1368), their ability to control Glo bo was also diminished.⁸ A general by the name of A ma dpal (1380–ca. 1440), whose forefathers had already begun to consolidate power in Glo bo with the blessing of their overlords in Gung thang, is regarded as the first king of Glo bo.⁹ He constructed the palace in the capital city of sMon thang in Upper Mustang, began the process of eliminating internal rivals throughout Mustang, and exerted control over neighboring regions.¹⁰ After his death, A mgon bzang po (1420–1482) completed his father's political and military aspirations during his reign as the second king and shepherded Glo bo into its golden age, which lasted until the late sixteenth century.¹¹

In order to strengthen the Buddhist traditions of their kingdom, both A ma dpal and A mgon bzang po invited the Sa skya pa master named *Ngor chen* Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456) to Glo bo.¹² This great master and founder of the Ngor subsect of the Sa skya pa visited the newly established kingdom on three separate occasions between 1427 and 1449.¹³ *Ngor chen* transformed the religious landscape of Glo bo as he renovated important monastic centers, appointed their abbots, and aided with the preparations of entire collections of Buddhist scriptures.¹⁴ Although both the rNying ma pa and bKa' rgyud pa were active in the region at the time,¹⁵ the Sa skya pa exerted the most obvious influence over the region as a result of the relationship between *Ngor chen* and the kings of Glo bo.

⁷ For the sake of orientation, note that Kathmandu is about 125 km directly south of rDzong dkar. Glo bo, on the other hand, is about the same distance to the west-northwest of rDzong dkar. See Ryavec (2017: 118) for a map of the region with markers relevant to this discussion. While there are many wonderful sources that discuss the history of Glo bo, the description of the history of the kingdom through the sixteenth century and its relationship with its neighbors by Kramer (2008: 13–35) was found to be the most complete presentation and the most relevant for this study.

⁸ Kramer 2008, p. 15.

⁹ For a critical discussion of the royal line of Glo bo that focuses on A ma dpal, see Heimbels 2017, pp. 276–282 and Kramer 2008, pp. 19–22. For a brief discussion of the entire royal line, see Jackson 1980, pp. 133–136.

¹⁰ Kramer 2008, p. 20.

¹¹ Kramer 2008, p. 22.

¹² For an extensive examination of the three journeys to Glo bo by *Ngor chen*, see Heimbels 2017, pp. 271–343.

¹³ Heimbels (2017: 271) lists the dates of these three journeys to Glo bo as follows: 1427–1428, 1436–1437, and 1447–1449.

¹⁴ Heimbels 2017, pp. 271–343.

¹⁵ Kramer 2008, p. 25.

Chos rgyal bsod nam was born in this new kingdom in the Year of the Water-Dog (1442), just after A mgon bzang po succeeded his father, A ma dpal, as king (ca. 1440) and between the second (1436–1437) and third (1447–1449) visits of *Ngor chen*. Chos rgyal bsod nam's father, *dPon chen* lHa grub 'bum (ca. 15th c.), was a scion of the lDong family, which consisted of a long line of practitioners of the path of mantras.¹⁶ The lDong hailed from the village of Dzar, also known today as Jharkot, located within the valley of Muktinath in Lower (*smad*) Glo bo. *dBon mo* dKar lcam 'bum (ca. 15th c.), Chos rgyal bsod nam's mother, birthed her child near a fortress named Glo bo rGyam dpal.¹⁷ For the first seven years of his life (1442–1448), Chos rgyal bsod nam was permitted to comport himself as any other child before spending two years learning to read and write (1449–1450) and a third year (1451) receiving a basic introduction to religious life. The following two years of his training (1452–1453) included introductions to *Medicine Buddha* (*sman bla*), *Sarvavid Mahāvairocana* (*kun rig*), *The Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* (*zhi khro*), *Cakrasaṃvara* (*bde mchog*), and a cycle of teachings dedicated to a four-armed protector (*chos skyong bzhi pa*).

At the age of thirteen (1454), Chos rgyal bsod nam went to study the *Śāstra* commentaries (*bstan chos*) and the *Prajñāpāramitā* (*phar phyin*) at the great monastic center known as rNam rgyal Chos sde chen po, which was just northwest of the capital city of sMon thang.¹⁸ *Ngor chen* oversaw the renovation of this monastic center during his third visit

¹⁶ The lDong is one of the four great ancestral clans. In some sources, "lHong" is used as a variant. For an example, see Sørensen 1994, p. 367, note 1189.

¹⁷ The author of the autobiography does not reveal the name he was given by his family, referring to himself from the beginning as Chos rgyal bsod nam, despite the fact that he did not receive this name until 1465. The autobiography does not explicitly state that the fortress of Glo bo rGyam dpal was located in the village of Dzar, and I have not yet found reference to a location by this name elsewhere. There is, however, brief mention of a minister named rGyam dpal bzang in a seventeenth century document entitled *The Archive of Te* (Ramble 2008: 194, 201, 205). Seeber estimates that the fortress of Dzar was not constructed until the early seventeenth century (Seeber 1994: 85), which suggests that either Glo bo rGyam dpal was the name of a preexisting fortress in Dzar or that it was located elsewhere in Glo bo. Nevertheless, there are reasons to conclude that Glo bo rGyam dpal was in Dzar and, therefore, that Dzar was in fact the birthplace of Chos rgyal bsod nam. For example, the Fifth Dalai Lama refers to Chos rgyal bsod nam as "*glo bo dzar pa*" in his record of received teachings, which suggests that he understood Chos rgyal bsod nam himself—and not simply his paternal ancestors—as having hailed from Dzar, Mustang; see, Ngag dbang blo bzang (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 3, p. 302.

¹⁸ For a good description of the location of rNam rgyal chos sde, see Heimbel 2017, p. 306, fn. 388.

(1447–1449), just six years before the arrival of Chos rgyal bsod nam.¹⁹ For the following nine years (1455–1463), Chos rgyal bsod nam trained with sNgags 'chang bDe legs rgyal mtshan (ca. 15th c.) at an unnamed monastery that was presumably in or near Dzar. Although bDe legs rgyal mtshan is known as "an adherent of the rNying-ma-pa tradition,"²⁰ the extensive list of teachings received from this master includes a wide range of materials, such as *Sūtras (mdo sde)*, *Jātaka Tales (skyes rabs)*, bKa' ma (e.g., *Vajrapāṇi Ucarya*), gTer ma (e.g., *Ma ni bka' 'bum*), and gSar ma (e.g., *The Mahāmudrā Coemergent Awareness*).²¹ bDe legs rgyal mtshan was also a significant player in the relationship between the monarch and the Sa skya pa, as he was a disciple of Ngor chen and one of the early teachers of *Glo bo mkhan chen* bSod nam lhun grub (1456–1532), the son of King A mgon bzang po and the grandson of A ma dpal.²²

After Chos rgyal bsod nam completed his training with bDe legs rgyal mtshan at the age of twenty-two (1463), he engaged in an extensive practice of mantra recitation focusing on *Tāra (sgrol ma)*, *Vajracchedikā (rdo rje gcod pa)*, and the *Peaceful Guru (gu ru zhi ba)*. It was at this point, according to the autobiography, that Padmasambhava appeared in the sky in front of him to bestow prophetic instructions. The Master from Uḍḍiyāna informed him, in seven-syllable verse, that it was not yet time to focus all of his efforts in permanent retreat. Because of his residual karma—and in order to benefit sentient beings—he must travel east to obtain transmission of the 500 cycles of the Vehicle of Secret Mantras. Thus, the following year (1464), Chos rgyal bsod nam embarked upon a journey, more or less in an eastern direction, from which he never returned. From the religious perspective, this visionary episode is theologically important as it suggests that all Chos rgyal bsod nam was to accomplish in Tibet, including his mastery of the Byang gter teachings, was "meant to be,"

¹⁹ According to Heimbel, rNam rgyal Chos sde and Thub bstan dar rgyas gling are two names for the same institution. For details regarding the name and the nature of the renovations, see Heimbel 2017, pp. 305–308.

²⁰ Kramer 2008: 25.

²¹ For the account of his training with bDe legs rgyal mtshan, see Chos rgyal bsod nam (1442–1509) 1983, pp. 238–240.

²² bSod nam lhun grub in turn is connected to the patriarchs of the Byang gter as he bestows full ordination on mNga' ris paN chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542), who is known as the earliest master of the Northern Treasure Tradition to practice strict monasticism. For details, see Kramer 2008, p. 25. Padma dbang rgyal's brother, Rig 'dzin Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje (1512–ca. 1580), who later identifies himself as the reincarnation of the founder of the Byang gter tradition, Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, is said to have had two important early teachers, one of whom is none other than *Glo bo mkhan chen*. See Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje (1512–ca. 1580) 2015, p. 283 and Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, p. 272.

as it was indeed prophesized by Padmasambhava, the central-most figure of the rNying ma pa Tradition in general and the Byang gter in particular. From an analytical perspective, however, the use of foreshadowing by the author suggests that the autobiography is not a simple record of events, but a well-crafted piece of literature. It should also be noted that while the second half of the fifteenth century was a high point for the political and religious culture of Glo bo itself, it was also a period in which religious pilgrims, such as Chos rgyal bsod noms, consistently traveled to Tibet, experiencing and impacting the religious culture of the Himalayan Plateau. In fact, *Ngor chen* encouraged this activity by establishing the tradition of sending those training in Glo bo to the great seats of Sa skya pa power in Tibet in order to complete their studies, and a group of three hundred monks is said to have embarked upon this journey in 1450.²³

The narrative of the second section of the autobiography traces the exploits of Chos rgyal bsod noms as he traveled to various destinations in Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan, beginning in 1464 and concluding in 1467.²⁴ He first traveled east to visit the pilgrimage destinations sKyid grong and the Kathmandu Valley (1464), and it is at the latter where he met the Bengali master of the *Kālachakra Tantra* named Vanaratna (1384–1468).²⁵ The following year (1465), Chos rgyal bsod noms traveled to Central Tibet and finally received his name from the secular and religious ruler of the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud pa, Chos rgyal rin chen dpal (ca. 1421/2–1469).²⁶ One must assume that Chos rgyal bsod noms held the 'Bri gung bKa' brgyud pa tradition in very high regard, but the precise reason is not explicitly explained in the autobiography. It is known, however, that the 'Bri gung were present in Glo bo as early as the twelfth century, not long after the tradition's founding by 'Jig rten mgon po (1143–1217).²⁷ It has also been suggested that the temple at Muktinath, which is very close to Dzar where Chos rgyal bsod noms was born, was essentially a branch monastery of 'Bri gung in the thirteenth century.²⁸ Perhaps his visit to the 'Bri gung seat of power is best understood within the context of the larger religious imperative

²³ Heimbel 2017, p. 308.

²⁴ Chos rgyal bsod noms (1442–1509) 1983, pp. 240–242.

²⁵ Vanaratna is said, interestingly enough, to have taken Sras mo Padma bzang po (ca. 14th–15th c.) as his consort after the death of her husband, *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem. For details, see Gu ru bkra shis (b. 18th c.) 1990, p. 669. For an interesting discussion of Vanaratna's exploits in Tibet, including brief mention of his visit to La stod Byang, see Ehrhard 2004, pp. 245–265.

²⁶ For a brief synopsis of the life of Chos rgyal rin chen dpal, see Sørensen 2007, p. 725.

²⁷ Jackson 1976, pp. 43–44.

²⁸ Jackson 1976, p. 44.

of the time to visit the Tibetan sources of the Buddhist traditions that were present in Glo bo. Later that same year, Chos rgyal bsod nams also visited the important pilgrimage destinations of Central Tibet, including Lha sa and bSam yas.

The following year (1466), Chos rgyal bsod nams received his first transmission of the *rDzogs chen* teachings of the Byang gter, the *dGongs pa zang thal*, at the feet of *sPrul sku* Dharmarāja (*sprul sku dharma ra dza*, ca. 15th c.) at sTag tshang seng ge in present day Bhutan.²⁹ In the autobiography, this is the first explicit reference to the Byang gter, but, according to the Fifth Dalai Lama, Chos rgyal bsod nams had already received transmission of other Byang gter cycles from bDe legs rgyal mtshan while in Glo bo.³⁰ Despite the fact that Chos rgyal bsod nams later received extensive training in the entirety of the Byang gter tradition from Sangs rgyas dpal bzang (ca. 15th c.) at Mt. bKra bzang, he explicitly expressed his gratitude to *sPrul sku* Dharmarāja in the song of realization that appears toward the end of the autobiography.³¹ By mentioning only *sPrul sku* Dharmarāja by name, he suggests that he owes the greatest of debts to this master. Chos rgyal bsod nams continued his pilgrimage that year in a northerly direction passing through Sa skya, the account of which is surprisingly uneventful. Later, at the 'Brug pa dKar brgyud pa monastery of Ban 'brog rDo rje

²⁹ For detailed studies of the *dGongs pa zang thal* scriptures and practice manuals, see, respectively, Turpeinen 2015 and Arguillère 2018. For a further discussion of *sPrul sku* Dharmarāja, see Valentine 2018, p. 105.

³⁰ For examples, see Ngag dbang blo bzang (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 3, pp. 284–285, 341. Within the five-chambered treasure casket discovered by *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem (1337–1409), the central chamber contained the bulk of the *rDzogs chen* material. The Byang gter transmissions that were received through bDe legs rgyal mtshan came from the Southern and Western chambers according to the Fifth Dalai Lama. One can presume that there must have been Byang gter cycles included in the collections of cycles, e.g., *Hayagrīva*, *Vajrakīla*, and *The Eight Herukas*, that Chos rgyal bsod nams received from this master. Unfortunately, *sPrul sku* Dharmarāja's name does not appear in the Fifth Dalai Lama's *thob yig*. Therein, Chos rgyal bsod nams receives transmission of teachings from eight individuals: Sangs rgyas dpal bzang (twenty-seven transmissions, including Byang and lHo gter), bDe legs rgyal mtshan (eight transmissions, including *bka'* and various gter ma), rDo rje rgyal mtshan (three transmission, including Byang and lHo gter), Chos kyi rin chen (two transmissions, lHo gter), 'Jam dpal 'od zer (two transmissions, Byang gter), Ngag dbang grags pa (one transmission, Byang gter), Byams pa chos grags (one transmission, lHo gter), and mChog grub rdo rje (one transmission, lHo gter). There is the slim possibility that rDo rje rgyal mtshan, who is at times addressed as *sPrul sku*, could be the same person as *sPrul sku* Dharmarāja, for he is the only unidentified teacher in the group from whom the Fifth Dalai Lama reports that Chos rgyal bsod nams received Byang gter *rDzogs chen* teachings. For the Byang gter transmission records, see Ngag dbang blo bzang (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 3, pp. 250–350. For a discussion of the contents of *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem's five-chambered treasury, see Turpeinen 2015, pp. 24–25.

³¹ Chos rgyal bsod nams (1442–1509) 1983, p. 247.

gling, Chos rgyal bsod noms received transmission of both Byang and lHo treasures from rDo rje rgyal mtshan (ca. 15th c.) and Chos kyi rin chen (ca. 15th c.).³²

Finally, in the year 1467 (age 26), Chos rgyal bsod noms arrived at Mt. bKra bzang, the original epicenter of the Byang gter Tradition in La stod, where he learned everything there was to know about this tradition from Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, the leading patriarch of the tradition at the time. According to the Fifth Dalai Lama, Chos rgyal bsod noms also received transmission from Ngag dbang grags pa (ca. 15th c.), who was one of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang's two Byang gter masters and the son of Rin chen grags pa (ca. 14th–15th c.), a close disciple of the principle Byang gter treasure revealer, *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem (1337–1409).³³ After Chos rgyal bsod noms copied the entire repository of Byang gter texts, Sangs rgyas dpal bzang performed a prayer intended to scatter Chos rgyal bsod noms's remaining karma. At this point, nearly all of the foreshadowing embedded in the vision of Padmasambhava, which occurred in 1463, had come to fruition. He was ordered to travel east and request the 500 teachings of the Path of Secret Mantras, and after his journey to the east, as well as to the north, he had arrived at Mt. bKra bzang and received the 501 teachings of the Byang gter Tradition. It was necessary for him to embark upon this quest because of his remaining karma from previous lives, and that karma had now been scattered by the prayers of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang. The only remaining task suggested by the foreshadowing is to return to the intense practice of the recitation of mantras, and that is precisely what he does next. Upon the completion of his training at Mt. Bkra bzang, Chos rgyal bsod noms enters retreat, where he spends the remainder of his life from 1468 through 1509.

The third section of the autobiography, which covers these final 42 years of his life, consists nearly entirely of a list of the cycles that he practiced each year and the number of times that he recited the mantras of each of those cycles.³⁴ He devoted himself to the recitation of a single mantra some of those years. For example, during his thirty-fourth year (1475), he did naught but complete 10,300,000 recitations of the *Peaceful Guru* (*gu ru zhi ba*) heart mantra. Many of the other years,

³² While the names of the teachers do appear in the autobiography, the nature of the teachings received are not mentioned. For those details, see Ngag dbang blo bzang (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 2, pp. 605–606, 695–696, and Vol. 3, pp. 259–260, 301–302.

³³ Ngag dbang blo bzang (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 3, pp. 287–288. For an English translation of biographies of Ngag dbang grags pa, Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, and Rin chen grags pa, see Valentine 2017, 156–165. For a study of the biography of *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem, see Herweg 1994.

³⁴ Chos rgyal bsod noms (1442–1509) 1983, pp. 242–247.

however, involved a variety of practice cycles. His thirtieth year (1471), for example, included 10,200,000 recitations of the *Vajrapāṇi Ucarya* (*phyag na rdo rje u tsha*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Vajrapāṇi gZa' 'dul* (*phyag na rdo rje gza' 'dul*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Vajrapāṇi Rigs gsum 'dus pa* (*phyag na rdo rje rigs gsum 'dus pa*) heart mantra, and 100,000 recitations of the *Wrathful Vajrapāṇi* (*phyag na rdo rje gtum po*) heart mantra. This section also contains an account of the death of Chos rgyal bsod nams, which occurred on the eighth day of the first month of 1509, including a brief mention of the various signs that demonstrated the extent of his accomplishments to the faithful. The description of his passing proves, as mentioned above, that this hagiographic text is not entirely autobiographical.³⁵

The central mystery, or perhaps contradiction, that is contained within the pages of the autobiography, which I have avoided until now, involves the precise location where Chos rgyal bsod nams performed his end-life retreat from 1468 through 1509. Conventional wisdom maintains that after he received his final instructions from Sangs rgyas dpal bzang at Mt. bKra bzang, he traveled directly to Bodhgaya, India and never returned.³⁶ In fact, in the section of the autobiography that describes the end of his life, it explicitly and simply states, "I went to rDo rje gdan" (*rdo rje gdan du phyin*).³⁷ While it does not specify which rDo rje gdan, for there are other locations in Tibet with that name, it is usually understood to mean the original rDo rje gdan, which is *the* Bodhgaya of India, despite the fact that the term for India does not appear in the text.³⁸ Nevertheless, if one were to consider that passage in isolation from the rest of the autobiography, it is a reasonable conclusion. However, the autobiographical song of realization that appears after the account of Chos rgyal bsod nams's passing, the penultimate section of the entire autobiography, is perplexing with regard to this subject. The final 9-syllable quatrain reveals that he practiced the 501 cycles of the Path of Secret Mantra with single-pointed focus for thirteen years in an isolated mountain

³⁵ One might also note that in the first two sections of the autobiography that discuss Chos rgyal bsod nams's birth and training, the verses are written almost entirely in 7-syllable or 9-syllable lines. The structure of the writing is much more irregular in this third section of the text. My hypothesis, which at this point remains untested, is that this section of the text was assembled or written by an unnamed individual who used a practice journal belonging to Chos rgyal bsod nams and accounts of his death to "complete" the autobiography.

³⁶ While there are other sources that mention this perspective, it is clearly represented in Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, 204.

³⁷ Chos rgyal bsod nams (1442–1509) 1983, p. 242.

³⁸ The recently composed history of rDo rje brag, however, clarifies the account by adding "rgya gar gyi" (i.e., "of India") to the sentence. See Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, p. 204.

retreat in the northern region of La stod.³⁹ Then, immediately following this passage in the section's colophon, he reports that he wrote the song in his practice chamber at rDo rje gdan. If we are to presume that neither statement has been significantly altered over time, then the closeness of the proclamations suggests that the author did not understand them to be inconsistent statements.

How might one interpret these apparently contradictory claims? Perhaps the most straightforward option is to conclude that he practiced in La stod near Mt. bKra bzang for thirteen years and then relocated to Bodhgaya, India for the remainder of his life. While this is a plausible interpretation of the song itself, it is problematic when considered together with the rest of the autobiography, for it states that he was at Mt. bKra bzang in 1467 and rDo rje gdan in 1468, which leaves no time for thirteen years of retreat in La stod. Alternatively, one could translate the colophon of the song in a number of ways that would allow for rDo rje gdan to be a location in La stod.⁴⁰ For example, it could be understood to refer to a practice chamber that is at a currently unknown location in La stod that was named rDo rje gdan. It could also be the case that Chos rgyal bsod nam refers to his practice chamber, presumably in the mountains of La stod, as rDo rje gdan because it is where he had already achieved—or intended to achieve—enlightenment, just as the Buddha achieved enlightenment in Bodhgaya, India. These alternatives, which are based on reasonable interpretations of the text, suggest that Chos rgyal bsod nam not only conducted his retreat in La stod, but that he also, in all likelihood, never traveled to India.

A clear solution to "the rDo rje gdan problem" cannot be yielded decisively from an analysis of the autobiography on its own. The plausibility of the traditional understanding of Chos rgyal bsod nam's life (i.e., that he lived in India from 1468–1509) is reduced, however, when one considers how such an interpretation would magnify a more subtle—but perhaps more significant—problem created by the autobiography through omission. The mystery that the autobiography entices us to investigate is why, and indeed how, we have come to possess a hagiography of this master from Glo bo who appears within the biography itself to have been nearly irrelevant to the Byang gter communities of Byang Ngam ring and completely insignificant in the

³⁹ Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, p. 248. Regarding the length of time of the retreat in La stod, the text reads, "mi lo bcu gsum." Given the semantic groupings within the other lines of the stanza, I have translated this as "thirteen years," but it could also be translated as "three decades." While they are very different lengths of time, neither translation significantly affects the problem at hand.

⁴⁰ The Tibetan reads as follows: "rDo rje gdan gyi sgrub khang du sbyar." For the complete passage, see Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, p. 248.

context of the patriarchs who transmitted the Byang gter to rDo rje brag in Central Tibet. When scrutinized with this question in mind, it appears that the autobiography was written, or perhaps edited, in a manner that prohibits an accurate understanding of his significance. In what follows, I will offer evidence from other sources that suggests, quite to the contrary, that Chos rgyal bsod noms was both a significant patriarch of Byang Ngam ring and that he was an important link in the transmission lineage that connected the patriarchs of Mt. bKra bzang and rDo rje brag. As will become clear below, however, the evidence I will propose will nearly require an abandonment of the supposition that Chos rgyal bsod noms resided in India from 1468 until 1509.

Given the emphasis on transmission lineages in the Tibetan traditions, it is very likely that the reason we know about Chos rgyal bsod noms at all is precisely because there were individuals who believed that he was an important teacher. Nevertheless, this hagiographic work offers absolutely no insight into his role as a teacher. There is not a single episode in which he transmitted teachings to anyone, and the only people who are explicitly mentioned are his parents and teachers; not a single disciple makes an appearance in the text's narrative.⁴¹ The seeming irrelevance of Chos rgyal bsod noms is magnified when considered in the context of the biography of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1454–1541), one of his Byang gter contemporaries, who was also a disciple of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang.⁴² Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan's biography contains an extensive list of his disciples who were installed at important seats throughout La stod and beyond, including the renowned Shākya bzang po (ca. 16th c.).⁴³ Perhaps because of the nature of these two early biographies, the later narrative traditions tend to trace the Byang gter lineage from Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, to Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, and then to Shākya bzang po. This tendency can be observed in the 18th century *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung*, where there is an account of the early history of the Byang gter that includes a brief vignette of the life of Chos rgyal bsod noms.⁴⁴ The larger narrative of the section within the *Gu kra'i chos 'byung* is intended to demonstrate how the religious authority of Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, the tradition's founding treasure revealer, was transmitted to rDo rje brag in Central Tibet. The author tends to narrate streamlined

⁴¹ The final section of the autobiography, however, is a six-stanza prayer that praises the guru, which is discussed below. It does not, however, explicitly identify any students by name.

⁴² Regarding the biography of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, see Nam mkha' bsod noms (16th c.) 1983, pp. 207-234. For an English translation, see Valentine 2018, pp. 117-133.

⁴³ For the complete list, see Nam mkha' bsod noms (16th c.) 1983, pp. 220-224.

⁴⁴ Gu ru bkra shis (b. 18th c.) 1990, pp. 672-673.

accounts of the lives of the early patriarchs that emphasize each subject's connection to a previous master as well as to the student or students who maintained the lineage as it was transmitted through the generations. The brief account of the life of Chos rgyal bsod nam that is included predictably emphasizes his link to Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, but it does not mention any of his disciples. Moreover, the biographies that appear after his in this source feature Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, who is not a student of Chos rgyal bsod nam, and then Shākya bzang po, through whom the lineage is transmitted to the next generation of patriarchs.⁴⁵ Thus, one is left wondering why Chos rgyal bsod nam is included in the narrative, for he is presented as a lineage dead end.

There are also a few narratives of the history of the Byang gter that do not include Chos rgyal bsod nam. For example, the Fifth Dalai Lama's biography of Ngag gi dbang po (1580–1639), the third incarnation of *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem, begins with a discussion of the subject's previous incarnations, which nearly amounts to a prehistory and early history of the Byang gter.⁴⁶ Therein, Chos rgyal bsod nam is appropriately absent for he does not directly encounter any of the incarnations. As mentioned in the discussion of sources above, however, Chos rgyal bsod nam is an extremely important figure within the pages of the Fifth Dalai Lama's thob yig. He reports that Chos rgyal bsod nam did indeed transmit teachings to three individuals: Sangs rgyas bstan pa, Shākya bzang po, and Chos skyong bSod nam bkra shis.⁴⁷ The first of these figures, Sangs rgyas bstan pa (ca. 15th–16th c.), is relatively unknown, but we can be sure that he is not *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem's uncle (ca. late 14th c.) who had the same name, for they are separated by several generations. Sangs rgyas bstan pa received eleven cycles of teachings from Chos rgyal bsod nam, which suggests that their acquaintance was far from casual.⁴⁸ He also received transmission of the Se lineage of the Byang gter from *sPyan tshab* mGon po zla ba (b. 15th c.).⁴⁹ Sangs rgyas bstan pa in turn

⁴⁵ Gu ru bkra shis (b. 18th c.) 1990, pp. 673–674.

⁴⁶ For the biography of Ngag gi dbang po, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1972, 443–570. Chos rgyal bsod nam is also not included in either of Boord's published accounts of the history of the Byang gter. See Boord 1993, pp. 21–35 and Boord 2013, pp. 31–85. His very helpful narrative emphasizes the role of the incarnations of *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem, and in this way is very similar to the account given by the Fifth Dalai Lama in the biography of Ngag gi dbang po.

⁴⁷ For examples of each, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, pp. 284–285, 301–302.

⁴⁸ For examples, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 3, pp. 252–253, 256, 259–260.

⁴⁹ The records are scattered throughout the third volume, but for an example, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, p. 253.

transmitted the Byang gter teachings to 'Khrul zhig dKon cog bzang po (b. 15th c.) and Shākya bzang po.⁵⁰

Shākya bzang po (ca. 16th c.) is generally held to be a much more important figure in Tibetan history in general as well as with respect to the Byang gter in particular.⁵¹ Although there is no surviving, early biography of this figure, he is well known as the first of the famous *Yol mo Bla ma* incarnations and, as his name suggests, he is responsible at least in part for the spreading of the Byang gter through northern Nepal. As mentioned above, Shākya bzang po is also a significant figure within the Central Tibetan tradition, for it is he who received the Byang gter treasures from Nam mkha rgyal mtshan and transmits them to the *mNga' ris Rig dzin* Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje (1512–ca. 1580), who later identifies himself as the reincarnation of the tradition's founder, *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem. Thus, after generations during which the treasures were passed through family lineages and merit-based disciple lineages, Shākya bzang po places the revealed scriptures back into the hands of the individual who revealed them in his previous life.⁵² Indeed, the Fifth Dalai Lama confirms that Shākya bzang po received at least eight transmissions from Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan.⁵³ However, he is also reported to have received at least twelve transmissions in total from Chos rgyal bsod nams (seven transmissions) and his disciple, Sangs rgyas bstan pa (five transmissions).⁵⁴ Although only tentative conclusions can be obtained solely on this quantitative data, the number of transmissions suggests that Shākya bzang po's relationship with Chos rgyal bsod nams could have been as significant as his relationship with Nam mkha' rgyal

⁵⁰ For examples, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, p. 253, 256.

⁵¹ For a discussion of this figure and his first two reincarnations, see Bogin 2005.

⁵² Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje's reincarnation, Ngag gi dbang po (1580–1639), is the one who founds the rDo rje brag Monastery in Central Tibet early in the seventeenth century. The third *Yol mo bla ma* incarnation, bsTan 'dzin nor bu (1598–1644) was later instrumental in the identification of Ngag gi dbang po's reincarnation, Padma 'phrin las (1641–1717), who was enthroned at rDo rje brag after his death. Padma 'phrin las received ordination from none other than the Fifth Dalai Lama, which is not only a testament to their political and religious connections, but it is also a significant step in the monasticization of the Byang gter tradition.

⁵³ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 2, pp. 767, 769, 771, Vol. 3, pp. 229, 252, 264, 289, 315.

⁵⁴ For examples of the records involving Chos rgyal bsod nams, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, pp. 326, 588, 607. For examples of the records involving Sangs rgyas bstan pa, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, pp. 260, 285, 305.

mtshan.⁵⁵ It should be noted, however, that Shākya bzang po also received transmission from Ngag dbang grags pa, who was one of the Byang gter masters of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang and Chos rgyal bsod noms, and transmitted teachings to not only both of the mNga ris brothers, but also their father, 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan (1445–1558).⁵⁶

The last of Chos rgyal bsod noms's students, but far from the least intriguing, is *Chos skyong* bSod noms bkra shis (ca. 16th c.), who was his biological heir. The Fifth Dalai Lama describes him not only as the "son" (sras) of Chos rgyal bsod noms, but also as a "bKra bzang pa," signifying that his identity was intimately bound to a term of residency at Mt. bKra bzang, the primary ancestral estate of the Byang gter tradition.⁵⁷ To a certain extent, his identity is corroborated by the biography of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, where bSod noms bkra shis is listed as one of his disciples.⁵⁸ Although he is not explicitly identified therein as the son of Chos rgyal bsod noms or as a bKra bzang pa, his clan name, lHong, is suggestive of the former. Also, bSod noms bkra shis's name appears among the disciples who are seated at important estates in the vicinity of Byang, such as bKra bzang.

The Fifth Dalai Lama also reports that bSod noms bkra shis transmitted teachings to six students, who can be organized into three lineages. First, he transmitted teachings to both Shākya bzang po and Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje, who are, as stated above, important in the lineage associated with rDo rje brag. Second, bSod noms bkra shis transmitted teachings to *gNubs chen* Ngag dbang rgya mtsho (ca. 16th c.), who sits within a separate lineage that reaches the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century. Third, there is *gZhon nu stobs ldan* (ca. 16th c.), *Tshar chen* Chos kyi rgyal po (1502–ca. 1566/7), and 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568). The most significant individual in this grouping is 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse, as he also received transmissions directly from both *gZhon nu stobs ldan* and *Tshar chen* Chos kyi rgyal po. 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse is particularly important as the Fifth Dalai Lama also relied upon his

⁵⁵ One can at the least agree to lament the fact that at present, we do not possess and narrative accounts of the meetings between Chos rgyal bsod noms and Shākya bzang po.

⁵⁶ For the record involving Ngag dbang grags pa, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, p. 253. For the record involving 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, p. 699.

⁵⁷ For examples, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, p. 287–288, 265, 266.

⁵⁸ Nam mkha' bsod noms (16th c.) 1983, p. 222.

record of teachings to construct his own thob yig.⁵⁹ In 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse's autobiography, he reports that he received an invitation to travel to Mt. bKra bzang to receive transmissions from bSod noms bkra shis in 1558.⁶⁰ This passage is extremely interesting, for it offers a small glimpse into the situation at Mt. bKra bzang seven years after the death of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan.⁶¹ Moreover, while Chos rgyal bsod noms's autobiography is again astonishing in that it remains silent with respect to the circumstances of his child's conception, birth, training, etc., we can be reasonably sure that Chos rgyal bsod noms had a son by the name of bSod noms bkra shis who resided at Mt. bKra bzang.⁶² We can further surmise that the pair were not estranged, for bSod noms bkra shis received many transmissions from his father.⁶³

From this refreshed perspective on the life of Chos rgyal bsod noms that includes a discussion of his son and disciples, one can more fully grasp the significance of this patriarch. With respect to the lineage that is transplanted to Central Tibet, both Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan and Chos rgyal bsod noms should be understood as the sources of the tradition that was transmitted through Shākya bzang po to Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje despite the fact that the hagiographic tradition focuses solely on Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan. And, with respect to the significance of Chos rgyal bsod noms in La stod, it is very likely that he remained in retreat in the mountains near enough to bKra bzang to remain relevant. While the exact location of Chos rgyal bsod noms's retreat will remain a mystery, it is clear that bSod noms bkra shis was a significant patriarch at Mt. bKra bzang itself. This information, speculative as it may be, helps explain the fame of Chos rgyal bsod noms in La stod.

⁵⁹ Ngag dbang blo bzang (1617–1682) 1991–1995, Vol. 3, p. 228.

⁶⁰ 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568), p. 96.

⁶¹ As I have discussed elsewhere, Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan's biography leaves us with the understanding that the Se clansmen had already taken over as the leading patriarchs at Mt. bKra bzang by the mid-16th century, but from this small reference we can at the least deduce that the situation was more complicated and that perhaps the lHong family had reigned dominant for at least a brief period in the mid-16th century. See Valentine 2018, pp. 109–111.

⁶² It is also likely, therefore, that the final section of the autobiography, a prayer that praises the guru, was authored by bSod noms bkra shis, for it begins by addressing Chos rgyal bsod noms as "father" (*pha*). One might go so far as to speculate that bSod noms bkra shis could have even been the editor of autobiography, for he certainly would have had motive. As would be expected from his appearance in the biography of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, the thob yig records that bSod noms bkra shis did receive a single transmission of teachings from that master.

⁶³ For examples, see Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) 1991–1995, pp. Vol. 3, pp. 263, 287–288, 301–302.

When all of the above is considered, the scenario in which Chos rgyal bsod nam is believed to have lived in India from 1468 until 1509, is all but impossible to maintain. Are we to conclude that after a single year of training at Mt. bKra bzang, Chos rgyal bsod nam made such an impact as a great master that they continued to revere him after his departure? Would he have even been recognized as a master at that stage of his life before completing years of isolated practice? Is it plausible that Chos rgyal bsod nam was visited by Shākya bzang po and Sangs rgyas bstan pa in India to receive teachings from him or is it more plausible that they encountered each other in La stod? Is it plausible that bSod nam bkra shis might have trained with his father in Bodhgaya and then traveled to Mt. bKra bzang where he was accepted as a patriarch of the tradition? How would we even know of Chos rgyal bsod nam's meditative exploits in India? Who would have witnessed his passing? Who would have transported the news back and forth across the Himalayas? It is important to remain open to the possibility that new information could come to light that would allow for the construction of affirmative answers to these rhetorical questions. Until such a time, however, I propose that it would be best to describe Chos rgyal bsod nam as a spiritual seeker from Lo Mustang, who traveled throughout the Himalayas until he reached Byang. While there, his thirst for new teachings was permanently slaked by drinking deep of the Byang gter tradition at the feet of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang. His desires thus quenched, he went into retreat somewhere in the vicinity of Mt. bKra bzang for the remainder of his life. While in retreat, he fathered a child, bSod nam bkra shis, and trained him and a very few others in the Northern Treasure Tradition. One of his other disciples, Shākya bzang po, is revered within the tradition for his role in training Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje, the reincarnation of *Rig 'dzin* rGod ldem and a figure of paramount importance for the lineage that relocates to rDo rje brag in Central Tibet. His son, bSod nam bkra shis, eventually rose in importance at Mt. bKra bzang, and by 1558 he was an active patriarch in residence at this important center for the Byang gter.

It would be negligent of me to not at least mention that Chos rgyal bsod nam and bSod nam bkra shis were not the only Byang gter patriarchs of La stod to bear the heritage of the region of Glo bo. Both Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542) and his brother, Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje were also born in Mustang.⁶⁴ Unlike Chos rgyal bsod nam, however, the familial lineage of the siblings can be traced to the royal

⁶⁴ For biographies in English, see Einhorn 2013 and Samten Chhosphel 2013, respectively. For an argument for these dates for Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje, see Valentine 2013, pp. 162-165.

lineage of the kingdom of Gung thang.⁶⁵ Their father, 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan (1445–1558), lived in Glo bo despite the fact that he was the only remaining biological heir to the throne of Gung thang, which had been the seat of power of the entire region of mNga' ris in previous generations.⁶⁶ It is perhaps for these reasons that Padma dbang rgyal and Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje are known respectively as the *mNga' ris Paṅ chen* and the *Rig 'dzin mNga' ris pa chen po*. For more on the mNga' ris brothers and their family, look for my future work that will focus on the recently published autobiography of Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje.⁶⁷

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⁶⁵ Kramer 2008, p. 34.

⁶⁶ Kramer 2008, 34.

⁶⁷ Legs ldan bdud 'joms rdo rje (1512–ca. 1580) 2015, pp. 217-304.

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The Liberation Story of Rigs 'dzin Chos rgyal bsod nam (1442–1509)

[236] Homage to the assemblage of the Bla ma, Yi dam, and mKha' 'gro!

The sNgags pa of the lDong [family], Chos rgyal bsod nam,
Wrote this abridged liberation story for the benefit of his
successors (*brgyud 'dzin*).

Kye Ho!

Below the spread out canopy of azure-blue sky,
On top of a precious and well-formed expanse (*gdal pa*) of earth,
South of Ma gro, where the four great rivers descend from Mt.
Kailash,

In the middle of the resplendent forests of medicinal herbs in the
region called Dzar,

There was a lineage of patriarchs of a noble family of genuine
origins called lDong,

Which included King (*mi dbang chen po*) *dPon chen* Zang dar
phyug, and

The scions of that family were vajra masters of the path of
mantras.

My father, [who was of this family] was named *dPon chen* lHa
grub 'bum (ca. 15th c.), and

My mother was named *dBon mo dKar lcam 'bum* (ca. 15th c.). As for the two of them, [237]

It was a period [of their lives] when they were comporting themselves in a manner suitable to householders.

Before the fortress named *Glo bo rGyam dpaI*,

On a day within the [astrological interval called] *Puṣya (skar ma rgyal smad)* in the Year of the Water-Male-Dog (1442),

I was born at sunrise.

My second year was the Year of the Pig (1443), and my third was the Year of the Mouse (1444).

My fourth year was of the Year of the Ox (1445), and my fifth was of the Year of the Tiger (1446).

My sixth year was of the Year of the Rabbit (1447), and my seventh was of the Year of the Dragon (1448).

Both the children and the elders comported themselves according to custom [during those years].

My eighth year was the Year of the Snake (1449), and I learned the alphabet, etc.

My ninth year was the Year of the Horse (1450), and I learned to write.

My tenth year was the Year of the Sheep (1451), and I learned various forms of religious behavior.

My eleventh year was the Year of the Monkey (1452), and I learned about *Medicine Buddha (sman bla)*, *Sarvavid Mahāvairocana (kun rig)*,

The Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (zhi khro), and the Hell Realms, and my desire to move away from cyclic existence was roused.

My twelfth year was the Year of the Rooster (1453), and I learned the *Yi dam* of *Cakrasaṃvara (bde mchog)*, and [238]

The cycle of teachings dedicated to that four-armed protector (*Chos skyong bzhi pa*).

My thirteenth year was the Year of the Dog (1454). I started [reading] the *Śāstra* commentaries (*bstan chos*) and the *Prajñāpāramitā (phar phyin)*, and

I was sent to study at *rNam rgyal chos sde chen po*.

My fourteenth year was the Year of the Pig (1455), and I went to the monastery near where I was born. At the feet of *sNgags 'chang bDe legs rgyal mtshan* (ca. 15th c.),

I requested many cycles of teachings for granting protection (*bsrung*), performing reversals (*bzlog*), suppressing [spirits] (*dbab*), and cutting (*bcad*),

Beginning with the longevity cycle called *rDo rje tshe bsgrub*,
Purification practices for both Buddhists and non-Buddhists, (*chos spyod rab bsal phyi nang gnyis*),

The cycle called *rDo rje rnam 'Joms dpal bsdud pa*,

The cycle called *rDo rje gcod pa bzang spyod mtshan 'bum*,

The effigy (*gtor ma*) cycle called *brGya bzhi gtor 'bum padma gces 'phreng*,

The fire ceremony for purification called *Kun rig ngan song sByong rgyud sbyin bsreg*, and others.

My fifteenth year was the Year of the Mouse (1456), and I requested

The complete cycle of teachings, reading transmissions, and empowerments for: *The Ma ni bka' 'bum*,

The *Sūtras (mdo sde)*, the *Jātaka Tales (skyes rabs)*, fasting instructions (*bsnyung gnas*),

The *Tārā Sarasvatī (sgrol ma dbyangs can)* and *Hermitage Goddess (lha mo ri khrod ma)* cycles,

The *White Acala (mi g.yo dkar po)* and *Wrathful Bhurkumkuṭa (khro bo rme ba brtsegs)* cycles,

The *Vajrapāṇi Ucarya (phyag na rdo rje gZa' 'dul u tsa)* cycle,

All the revealed cycles within the *Precious Treasury (rin chen gter mdzod)*, and

The *Vajrabharava (bcom ldan rdo rje 'jigs byed)* cycle of the Ra tradition (*ra lugs*).

My sixteenth year was the Year of the Ox (1457), and I requested absolutely all of the reading transmissions and empowerments for:

The *Peaceful Guru* cycle (*gu ru zhi ba*), [239]

All of the cycles for the *Wrathful Red Guru (gu ru drag dmar)*

Of various sizes (*brgyad tshan drug dang phra mo zhe gnyis*), and

All of the cycles for the heart-sādhanas of the Gurus (*gu ru thugs bsgrub*).

My seventeenth year was the Year of the Tiger (1458), and

I requested many reading transmissions and empowerments for the *Vajrakīla (rdo rje phur pa)* cycles, including

The *Golden Jowo (gser mdog jo bo lugs)* and the *Sa skya pa (sa phur)* cycles.

My eighteenth year was the Year of the Rabbit (1459), and

I requested all of the cycles related to [a particular form of] *Hayagrīva* (i.e., *rta mgrin yang gsang*),

A *Vajravārāhī* cycle (i.e. *rdo rje phag mo'i chos tshan brgya rtsa*), and *Protector Ma ning* (*mgon po ma ning*).

My nineteenth year was the Year of the Dragon (1460), and I requested all of the cycles related to

The *Medical Elixir Sādhana* (*bdud rtsi sman sgrub*) and *Yamāntaka, Lord of Life* (*gshin rje tshe bdag*).

My twentieth year was the Year of the Snake (1461), and I requested absolutely everything related to

The Great Sādhana of the Eight Herukas (*sgrub chen bka' brgyad*).

My twenty-first year was the Year of the Horse (1462),⁶⁸ and I requested all there is regarding

The Skillful Means (*thabs lam*) cycle,

The Family [Lineage] Holder of the Mantra Practitioner of Uḍḍiyāna (*o rgyan sngags lam rigs 'dzin chen po*) cycle,

The Mahāmudrā Coemergent Awareness (*phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor*) cycle,

The three retreat cycles of *rGyal ba yang dgon* (*rgyal ba yang dgon ri chos bskor gsum*), and the means for pacifying harmful emotions (*dam chos nyon mongs zhi byed*).

My twenty-second year was the Year of the Sheep (1463), and I requested

The *Niguma* cycle of teachings (*ni gu chos bskor*) and *Dharma Protector Phiyag drug pa* cycle (*chos skyong phyag drug pa*).

My benefactor, bDe legs rgyal mtshan, [240] was very kind to me.

Later [that year], I had completed ten thousand recitations of the *Tāra* (*sgrol ma*) Mantra, and

One hundred recitations of the *Vajracchedikā* (*rdo rje gcod pa*), and

While I was performing the familiarization rites and reciting the mantras for the *Peaceful Guru* (*gu ru zhi ba*),

Padmasambhava appeared in the sky in front of me, and said:⁶⁹

⁶⁸ For some reason, the biography that was published in 2015 skips the twenty-first year, despite remaining very close to the autobiography for each of the preceding years. See Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, p. 202.

⁶⁹ Chos dbyings khyab brdal clarifies that this is a "prophecy" (*lung bstan*) (2015, p. 203).

Son of earthly guardians (*zhing skyong*) and the Ḍākinī, you listen!

Consider the misfortune that has resulted from past actions, and

While remembering death and impermanence,
Meditate continuously on the empty luminousness of the mind itself, and

[You] and I will form an inseparable union!

However, because of [you still possess] residual karma from your past life,

Go quickly in the direction of the rising sun, and
Request the 500 cycles of the Secret Mantra (*gsang sngags*), and
You will be of great benefit [to sentient beings] in this life and the next.

This concludes the chapter of my biography concerning my training in the dharma while residing in my homeland.



My twenty-third year was the Year of the Monkey (1464), and I went to see the sKyid grong Jo bo statue.

Then, I traveled in a southerly direction into the Nepalese region, and circled through the [pilgrimage destinations], and [saw] the likes of

The three sibling Jo bo statues (*jo bo mched gsum*), the Svayāmbhūnath Stūpa ('*phags pa shing kun*), and

The sacred caves called Yang le shod and A su ra,

The Boudhanath Stūpa, Changu Narayan (*khyung rang byon*), and

The meditation sites of the eighty *mahāsiddhas*.

Then, I went before the great Vanaratna (1384–1468) and

Requested many cycles of teachings from the five classes of tantra.
[241]

My twenty-fourth year was the Year of the Rooster (1465), and that is when I traveled to Central Tibet (*dBus*).

I met personally with the Precious Master of the Northern 'Bri gung pa sect,

The one named Chos rgyal rin chen dpal (1421/2–1469).

Indeed, while attending him, he gave me the name "Chos rgyal bsod noms."

I requested his blessing to go on pilgrimage to places such as Lhasa, bSam yas, Shangs kyi zab bu lung, and gNas rnying ngor.

My twenty-fifth year was the Year of the Dog (1466), and I went to sTag tshang seng ge.

I met personally with sPrul sku Dharmarāja (*sprul sku dharma ra dza*, ca. 15th c.).⁷⁰

From him, I requested absolutely everything regarding The Great Perfection cycle [of the Northern Treasure Tradition] called *dGongs pa zangs thal*.

Then, I went on the pilgrimage route that included places such as the sacred sites at dPal ldan Sa skya, rGod tshang sbu kra in Southern La stod, and The Ding ri glang circuit.⁷¹

Then, I went to Ban 'brog rDo rje gling.

I requested many empowerments and reading transmissions of the profound *Mantrayāna* (*gsang sngags*) from

The two masters named *Bla ma* rDo rje rgyal mtshan (ca. 15th c.) and

Bla ma Chos kyi rin chen (ca. 15th c.).⁷²

My twenty-sixth year was the Year of the Pig (1467), and that is when I went north into La stod, to

The sacred mountain abode known as Ri bo bKra bzang, to [serve] before

Bla ma Sangs rgyas dpal bzang (ca. 15th c.).

He gave me the complete transmission of all of the empowerments and reading transmissions for [242]

The 501 dharma cycles of the *Mantrayāna*.⁷³

I indeed copied all of the books completely.

⁷⁰ The Sanskrit transliteration in the autobiography is mangled, but it has been corrected to the form presented in this translation by Chos dbyings khyab brdal (2015, p. 204).

⁷¹ The activities of this stanza are not discussed in the newer version of the biography, see Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, p. 204.

⁷² Chos dbyings khyab brdal only mentions the first of these two teachers (2015, p. 204).

⁷³ Chos dbyings khyab brdal clarifies that this includes the five treasuries of lHa brag, which most importantly includes the *dGongs pa zang thal* (2015, p. 204).

We came together when it was time to pray for my past karma to be scattered,
 And I obtained the secret treasury of advice that the lama had for his heart-sons.
 The precious Sangs rgyas dpal bzang was so kind!

This concludes the chapter of my biography concerning my experience of hardships in the Tibetan regions of dBus and gTsang.



My twenty-seventh year was the Year of the Mouse (1468), and during that year, I went to rDo rje gdan.⁷⁴

Because I want to achieve enlightenment in this body and life, I completed 10,300,000 recitations of the heart mantra for the *rDo rje tshe* [longevity ritual].⁷⁵

My twenty-eighth year was the Year of the Ox (1469), and during that year, I completed 100,000 recitations of the *Vajrasattva* (*rDo rje sems pa*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Vajravidāraṇa* (*rDo rje rnam 'joms*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Maitreya* (*rGyal ba byams pa*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Mañjuśrī* (*'jam dpal dbyangs*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Sarasvatī* (*dbyangs can ma*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Dākinī Seng gdong* (*mkha' 'gro seng gdong*) heart mantra, and 100,000 recitations of the *White Acala* (*mi g.yo dkar po*) heart mantra.

My twenty-ninth year was the Year of the Tiger (1470), and during that year, I completed 30,500,000 recitations of the heart mantra of the *Noble Mahākāruṇika* (*'phags pa thugs rje chen po*).

⁷⁴ Chos dbyings khyab brdal "clarifies" that this is Bodhgaya in India, but as discussed in the accompanying article, this is very likely not the case. See Chos dbyings khyab brdal 2015, p. 204.

⁷⁵ Wherever it is that Chos rgyal bsod nam resided during his twenty-seventh year, he appears to have stayed there until his passing in 1509 doing nothing but reciting mantras. Chos dbyings khyab brdal states that, "he did nothing but direct his mind toward the recitations for the bla ma, yi dam, and chos skyong" and then directs us to the autobiography for the rest of the details (2015, p. 204). The next few pages of the autobiography are rather formulaic. Each irregular stanza states an age (e.g., twenty-seven), a year (e.g., Year of the Mouse), the name of a tantric cycle (e.g., rDo rje tshe), the word "essential [mantra]" (i.e., snying po ma Ni), and a number (e.g., 10,300,000). If more than one mantra was recited that year, its name and number of recitations follows the first. It should also be noted that the lines of verse begin to be more erratic from here forward. Up until this point, they have been in steady 9-syllable or 7-syllable lines.

My thirtieth year was the Year of the Rabbit (1471), and during that year, I completed 10,200,000 recitations of the *Vajrapāṇi Ucarya* (*phyag na rdo rje u tsha*) heart mantra, 100,000 recitations of the *Vajrapāṇi gZa' 'dul* (*phyag na rdo rje gza' 'dul*) heart mantra, [243] 100,000 recitations of the *Vajrapāṇi Rigs gsum 'dus pa* (*phyag na rdo rje rigs gsum 'dus pa*) heart mantra, and 100,000 recitations of the *Wrathful Vajrapāṇi* (*phyag na rdo rje gtum po*) heart mantra.

My thirty-first year was the Year of the Dragon (1472), and during that year, I completed 300,000 recitations of the *Vajrapāṇi 'gro bzang* (*phyag na rdo rje 'gro bzang*) heart mantra, and 10,100,000 recitations of the *Vaiśravaṇa* (*rnam sras*) heart mantra.

My thirty-second year was the Year of the Snake (1473), and during that year, I completed 300,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Guhyasamāja* (*bcom ldan 'das dpal gsang ba 'dus pa*) heart mantra, 300,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Maha ba ya* (*bcom ldan 'das maha ba ya*) heart mantra, 300,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Hevajra* (*bcom ldan 'das kye'i rdo rje*) heart mantra, and 400,000 recitations of the supreme mantra of the *Bhagavān Cakrasaṃvara* (*bcom ldan 'das 'khor lo bde ma*) heart mantra.

My thirty-third year was the Year of the Horse (1474), and during that year, I completed 10,100,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Vajrabhairava* (*bcom ldan 'das rdo rje 'jigs byed*) heart mantra.

My thirty-fourth year was the Year of the Sheep (1475), and during that year, I completed 10,300,00 recitations of the *Peaceful Guru* (*gu ru zhi ba*) heart mantra.

My thirty-fifth year was the Year of the Monkey (1476), and during that year, I completed 20,400,000 recitations of the *Guru Brag dmar* (*gu ru brag dmar*) heart mantra.

My thirty-sixth year was the Year of the Rooster (1477), and during that year, I completed 80, 300,000 recitations of the *Guru Thugs bsgrub* (*gu ru thugs bsgrub*) heart mantra.

My thirty-seventh year was the Year of the Dog (1478), and during that year, I completed 10,300,000 recitations of the *Peaceful and Wrathful Bhagavān* (*bcom ldan 'das zhi khro*) heart mantra.

My thirty-eighth year was the Year of the Pig (1479), and during that year I completed 300,000 recitations of the heart mantra of the root text of the *Great Sādhana of the Eight Herukas* (*sgrub chen bka' brgyad kyi rtsa ba*) and 400,000 recitations of the *gSang sngags nus 'dril chen po* heart mantra.

My thirty-ninth year [244] was the Year of the Mouse (1480), and during that year, I completed 40,400,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Mañjuśrī Yamāntaka* (*bcom ldan 'das 'jam dpal gshin rje*) heart mantra.

My fortieth year was the Year of the Ox (1481), and during that year, I completed 30,300,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Padma dbang chen* (*bcom ldan 'das padma dbang chen*) heart mantra.

My forty-first year was the Year of the Tiger (1482), and during that year, I completed 20,100,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Śrī Viśuddha* (*bcom ldan 'das dpal yang dag*) heart mantra.

My forty-second year was the Year of the Rabbit (1483), and during that year, I completed 40,100,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Che mchog yon tan* (*bcom ldan 'das che mchog yon tan*) heart mantra.

My forty-third year was the Year of the Dragon (1484), and during that year, I completed 20,200,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Che mchog yon tan* (*bcom ldan 'das che mchog yon tan*) heart mantra.

My forty-fourth year was the Year of the Snake (1485), and during that year, I completed 50,100,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Vajrakīla* (*bcom ldan 'das rdo rje phur pa*) heart mantra.⁷⁶

My forty-sixth year was the Year of the Sheep (1487), and during that year, I completed 20,100,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān mNgon rdzogs Heruka Srid pa ma mo* (*bcom ldan 'das mngon rdzogs he ru ka srid pa ma mo*) heart mantra.

My forty-seventh year was the Year of the Monkey (1488), and during that year, [245] I completed 20,100,00 recitations of the *Bla ma rigs 'dzin* heart mantra.

My forty-eighth year was the Year of the Rooster (1489), and during that year, I completed 20,600,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Vajrapāṇi Tamer of Haughty Spirits* (*bcom ldan 'das phyag na rdo rje dregs pa kun 'dul 'jig rten mchod rten*) heart mantra.

My forty-ninth year was the Year of the Dog (1490), and during that year, I completed 20,300,000 recitations of the wrathful heart mantra of *Śrīmahā sTobs ldan nag po smod pa* (*dpal chen stobs ldan nag po smod pa*).

My fiftieth year was the Year of the Pig (1491), and during that year, I completed 10,100,000 recitations of the *Jina Putra Garuḍa* (*rgyal sras khyung chen*) heart mantra.

My fifty-third year was the Year of the Tiger (1494), and during that year, I completed 10,600,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Śrī Hayagrīva drags pa kun sgrol* (*bcom ldan 'das dpal rta mgrin dregs pa kun sgrol*) heart mantra.

My fifty-fourth year was the Year of the Rabbit (1495), and during that year, I completed 20,100,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān Padma dbang chen yang gsang 'khros pa* (*bcom ldan 'das padma dbang chen yang gsang 'khros pa*) heart mantra and 10,100,000 recitations of the *Bhagavān of the Union of Hayagrīva-Vajravārāhī* (*bcom ldan 'das rta phag yab yum*) heart mantra.

My fifty-fifth year was the Year of the Dragon (1496), and during that year, I completed 30,500,000 recitations of the *Vajravārāhī* (*rdo rje phag mo*) heart mantra.

⁷⁶ Note that the forty-fifth year is missing from the autobiography.

My fifty-sixth year was the Year of the Snake (1497), and during that year, I completed 30,300,000 recitations of the *'Phya sa rigs gsum 'dus pa* heart mantra.

My fifty-seventh year [246] was the Year of the Horse (1498), and during that year, I completed 10,100,000 recitations of the *'Phags pa phrin las grub pa* heart mantra.

My fifty-eighth year was the Year of the Sheep (1499), and during that year, I completed 10,300,000 recitations of the *Śrī Jñānaguhya (dpal ye shes gsang ba)* heart mantra.

My fifty-ninth year was the Year of the Monkey (1500), and during that year, I completed 100,000 recitations of the *'Jam dpal gshin rje yang zab* and 10,000 recitation *E rings* heart mantra.

My sixtieth year was the Year of the Rooster (1501), and during that year, I completed 500,000 recitations of the *Mañjuśrī Yamāntaka yang zab ('jam dpal gshin rje yang zab)* heart mantra.

My sixty-first year was the Year of the Dog (1502), and during that year, I completed 20,100,000 recitations of the *Mahādeva (lha chen) Dregs pa stobs 'dul* heart mantra.

My sixty-second year was the Year of the Pig (1503), and during that year, I completed 20,100,000 recitations of the *Mahādeva (lha chen) bSod nams dpal 'bar* heart mantra.

My sixty-third year was the Year of the Mouse (1504), and during that year, I completed 40,100,000 recitations of the *Ye shes mgon po ma ning* heart mantra.

My sixty-fourth year was the Year of the Ox (1505), and during that year, I completed 30,300,000 recitations of the *mGon po phyag bzhi pa* and 10,100,000 recitations of *Las mgon seng gdong* heart mantra.

My sixty-fifth year was the Year of the Tiger (1506), and during that year, I completed 600,000 recitations of the *bDe gshegs* heart mantra and 500,000 recitations of *Yang Kīla (yang phur pa)* heart mantra.

My sixty-sixth year was the Year of the Rabbit (1507), and during that year, I completed 630,000 recitations of the *Black Vajra Garuda (rdo rje khyung nag)* and 500,000 recitations of *'Jig rten mchod rten* heart mantra. [247]

My sixty-seventh year was the Year of the Dragon (1508), and during that year, I completed 600,000 recitations of the *Hayagrīva dregs pa dbang bsdud (rta mgrin dregs pa dbang bsdud)* heart mantra.

His sixty-eighth year was the Year of the Snake (1509). He departed [this world] for the benefit of others on the eighth day of the first month (i.e., the Month of Miracles).⁷⁷ There were many amazing signs such as rainbows and lights as well as showers of flowers. Having

⁷⁷ Note that this section cannot be autobiographical. I have this shifted to the third-person here.

arranged his body in a squatting position, he departed peacefully into the expanse of reality (*chos kyi dbyings*).



E! MA! HO!

I am the *sngags pa* from lDong named Chos rgyal bsod nam, and
From the age of eight until twenty-seven,
I trained in the holy dharma incessantly.
My achievements were grounded in listening, thinking, and
contemplating, and I am so very happy!

Then, thirty-two different learned ones from dBus and gTsang,
Bestowed upon me an uncountable number of teachings,
empowerments, reading transmissions, and instructions.

Because I was taken as a student by *sPrul sku* Dharmarāja (*Dharma Ra dza*),

I have come to be endowed with fortunate karma, and I am so
very happy!

By practicing *Rigs 'dzin yongs rdzogs*, first and foremost,
I have come to know hundreds of *sādhanas* focused on the *Rigs 'dzin Bla ma*, [and]

[I can see] the self-cognizing consciousness shining within the *Bla ma*.

[Now], phenomenal reality appears as the *Bla ma*, and I am so
very happy!

By practicing the *bKa' brgyad yongs rdzogs*, first and foremost, [248]
I have come to know hundreds of mandalas of the *Yi dam* deities,
and

From this self-manifesting clarity within the *Yi dam* deities,
I am never separated, and I am so very happy!

By practicing the *Supreme Mother, Vajravārāhī* (*yum chen rdo rje phag mo*), first and foremost,

I have come to know hundreds of *sādhanas* focused on the *Ma mo Dākinī* (*ma mo 'kha' 'gro*), [and]

[Now], because of the inseparability of methods and knowledge, I
have entered into a state in which appearances and emptiness are
united, and I am so very happy!

By practicing the *sādhana* of the *Assembled Guardians of the Teachings* (*bstan srung kun 'dus*), first and foremost,
 I have come to know hundreds of *sādhana*s of the protectors and guardian spirits, [and]
 [Thus], the 80,000 afflictive emotions have been liberated into the expanse, and
 I have won the battle against bad transmigrations, and I am so very happy!

By practicing the *Zang thal* of the Great Perfection, first and foremost,
 I have come to know hundreds of completion stage (*rdzogs rim*) practices of the highest path of Secret Mantra, [and as a result],
 The self-aware, self-arising, and self-shining *Dharmakāya*,
 I see through direct perception, and I am so very happy!

In an isolated, mountain retreat in the northern region of La stod,
 In single-pointed focus on the 501 cycles of the Path of Secret Mantra,
 I practiced for thirteen years, [and]
 Accomplished my wish in accordance with the dharma, and I am so very happy!

I wrote this while in my practice chambers at rDo rje gdan.



Maṅgalaṃ! Namō Guru!

Father, Precious and Authentic Lama,
 Benevolent Scholar and Master, Lord of the Teachings, [249]
 [Your] son prays [to you] from his heart with faith,
 That through your compassion, your devotee,
 Will be blessed by the radiance of your experience and realization!

With respect to [your practice of] the holy teachings of the Great Perfection,
 You established the eighteen roots, the three sets of six teachings, [which are]
The Six Oral Transmissions of the Vajra Masters (*rdo rje slob dpon gyi snyan brgyud drug*),
The Six Great Spheres of Vajrasattva (*rdo rje sems pa'i klong chen drug*),
 and

The Six Profound Seals of Vajravārāhī (rdo rje phag mo'i zab rgya drug)!⁷⁸

[During] the Elaborate [Vase Empowerment], the Non-elaborate [Secret Empowerment], the Exceedingly Non-elaborate Insight-Wisdom [Empowerment], [you] illuminated [me] with [your] experiential knowledge.

[During] the Fourth [Empowerment] and the Empowerment to Awareness's Creativity, [and]

By means of the Twenty-one Introductions,⁷⁹

[You] expanded in the ten directions the branches and leaves [through initiation]!⁸⁰

Having established the [foundation] through the [Three] Immobilities (*mi 'gul ba*),

[You] took the measure [of your progress] through the Three Abidances (*sdod pa*), and

Intensified [your practice] with the Three Attainments (*thob pa*).

[Thus], in [your] experiential practice of the Three Gazes (*lta stangs*),

The radiance of the manifest flowers [of Reality] blazed!⁸¹

Because [my] actions have not been in vain with respect to the [eight] freedoms and the [ten] favorable [conditions necessary for advancement],

[I have practiced] liberations through wearing, seeing, and hearing, and

As the Four Visions gradually [dawn],

I pray that the fruit of [my] meditation ripen,

As my experiential realization [becomes] permanent!

May [you] apprehend [Chos rgyal bsod nams as] an example of a wish-fulfilling tree

[Through] this good song of realization, [250]

⁷⁸ This refers to a system of classifying the various texts of the dGongs pa zang that that was employed by the Fifth Dalai Lama. For a discussion of this set of the eighteen root teachings, see Turpeinen 2015, pp. 71-73.

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the Twenty-one Introductions, see Turpeinen 2015, pp. 36, 41, 131, 256.

⁸⁰ This stanza refers to the collection of initiation texts that are found together in The Six Oral Transmissions of the Vajra Masters (*rdo rje slob dpon gyi snyan brgyud drug*) discussed in the previous stanza. See Turpeinen, 2015, pp. 255-256.

⁸¹ The translation of this stanza was completed in reliance upon the generous suggestions of Jean-Luc Achard, who also supplied the following reference for clarification. See Rig 'dzin rGod ldem (1337-1409) 2015, pp. 212-218.

That has been established within [his] inner [circle] of heart sons.
 I pray that we will meet over and over again, [and]
 That you will auspiciously accomplish your wishes in accordance
 with the dharma!

Maṅgalaṃ!⁸²



⁸² There are three lines of verse at the very end of the text, which are essentially illegible. My best guess, arrived at with the aid of Christopher Bell, is "bsod nams kyi rnam thar la/_lta ba de [...] par/_chos bsgrubs na/_rang gzhan kun la phan par 'gyur," which seems to be a suggestion that the reader would be of great benefit if he would follow the example of Chos rgyal bsod nams.

The Brief Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Penden

Christopher Bell

The *Brief Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Penden*, as its title makes clear, is a short 18-folio religious biography of Jokpa Jangchup Penden (*lcog pa byang chub dpal ldan*, 1404/1464-1471/1531), the founder and first abbot of Deyang College (*bde yangs grwa tshang*) at Drepung Monastery (*'bras spungs dgon pa*). He is also the founder of Nechung Chapel (*gnas chung lcog*), the precursor to Nechung Monastery and home to the powerful sovereign spirit (*rgyal po*) Pehar (*pe har*), an important Dharma protector (*chos skyong*) tied to the Dalai Lamas' lineage and government. This paper hopes to draw more attention to this underappreciated abbot in Drepung's history by offering a complete translation and transcription of his significant yet difficult biography. Not only does the work provide insight into Tibetan clan patronage and cultural practices, it also gives a far more elaborate account of the deity Pehar's arrival on the outskirts of Drepung and the founding of his cultic site at Nechung. This founding myth has several variations, but the general account is that Pehar was expelled from the area of Tsel (*tshal*), southeast of Lhasa, having been trapped in a box that was then thrown into the Kyichu River (*skyid chu*). The assistant of a Drepung abbot pulled the box from the river but opened it while bringing it up to the monastery. Pehar flew from the box in the form of a bird and disappeared into a nearby tree, and the abbot built the first incarnation of Nechung around this tree, securing the deity as a protector of nearby Drepung Monastery and the Geluk (*dge lugs*) school of Tibetan Buddhism in general.¹ The stone on which the attendant placed the box and a portion of the original tree are still visible at Nechung Monastery today. However, the following account of Pehar's arrival at Drepung is far more in

¹ For the various versions of this myth, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1998, pp.104-107. For more recent and fuller discussions of Pehar's mythic evolution and his connection to Jokpa Jangchup Penden, see Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2005, pp.280-288; *ibid* 2007, vol. 2, pp.627-630; as well as Bell 2013. Given their close work with the *Brief Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Penden*, I am grateful to Per Sørensen and Guntram Hazod for reviewing an earlier draft of this paper and offering much needed insight and advice.

depth and does not contain some of these famous details, illustrating the multivocal and conflicting nature of important monastic narratives.

The full title of this text is the *Brief Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Pendenpa along with the Origins of the Great Dharma Protector* (*lcog pa byang chub dpal ldan pa'i rnam thar rags bsduṣ chos skyong chen po'i 'byung khungs dang bcas pa*).² According to Per Sørensen and Guntram Hazod, this text was composed by Sangyé Gyatso (*sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*, 1653-1705), the (in)famous final regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682).³ However, this is questionable since it appears to contradict a claim made in the portion of the *Nechung Record* (*gnas chung dkar chag*) also composed by Sangyé Gyatso. This is the major record of Nechung Monastery composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama and Sangyé Gyatso, the inscription for which is still visible today on the southern courtyard wall of the monastery itself.⁴ While the *Hagiography* claims that Pehar was forced from Tsel Yangön (*tshal yang dgon*) by attendants of the myriarch Dönyö Dorje (*don yod rdo rje*) and traveled toward Drepung alone in a coracle, the *Nechung Record* states that the deity left the monastery with the Second Dalai Lama (1476-1542).⁵ The *Hagiography* itself does not explain its authorship; however, it was composed within a century after Nechung Monastery's seventeenth-century expansion. The *Hagiography* quotes heavily from the *Nechung Record*, placing it after its composition in 1682, and it was in turn quoted in the *Gungtang Record* (*gung thang dkar chag*), placing it before 1782.⁶ Regardless, until further evidence I tentatively agree with Sørensen and Hazod in ascribing the text to Sangyé Gyatso.

Jokpa Jangchup Penden's dates are likewise disputable. Georges Dreyfus places the abbot's birth in 1404 and dates the founding of Deyang College to 1440.⁷ However, I tentatively concur with the dates (1464-1531) given by Sørensen and Hazod because they align the events of Pehar's arrival at Nechung Monastery with the lifetime of the Second Dalai Lama (1476-1542),⁸ in accordance with the *Nechung Record* as noted above. Nonetheless, Pañchen Sönam Drakpa (*pañ chen bsod nams grags pa*, 1478-1554) records 15 abbots for Deyang

² See Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho n.d. A photocopy of this text was generously provided to me by the irreplaceable Tsering Gyalbo (1961-2015), former Director of the Religion Department at the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences (TASS) in Lhasa.

³ See Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.217n.572.

⁴ For a complete translation and transcription of this text, see Bell 2016.

⁵ See *ibid*, p.187.

⁶ See Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.13.

⁷ See Dreyfus 2006.

⁸ See Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.217n.572.

College by the time of his writing, which would be the year of his death at the latest.⁹ If Jokpa Jangchup Penden was still abbot of Deyang in 1529 when Pehar arrived (see below), this leaves at most 25 years for 14 other abbots to take their seat at the college, which seems unlikely. These discrepancies make the exact dates for Jokpa Jangchup Penden difficult to ascertain.

Beyond authorship and dating, the text of the *Hagiography* is also particularly difficult to read. It has numerous misspellings, the grammar is often unruly, and excerpts from the *Nechung Record* randomly and abruptly interrupt the flow of the hagiography proper. These excerpts are themselves out of order or from different portions of the *Nechung Record*, and they were clearly added to the preexisting text after the fact. The quotations from the *Nechung Record* are even redundant, with the first incomplete interpolation (ff.4a.3-4b.5) being repeated more fully later in the text (ff.5b.1-8b.5). Nevertheless, this text is the earliest detailed account so far available of the abbot Jokpa Jangchup Penden, the founding of Deyang College, the mythic events surrounding Pehar's arrival at Drepung, and the establishment of Nechung. Moreover, one unexpected value of this text is that it occasionally cites portions of the *Nechung Record* that were themselves too damaged to transcribe reliably. Although the hagiography paraphrases from the record just as much as it quotes, making a confident rendering of the damaged text unlikely, it still offers significant insights into the record's contents that are otherwise unavailable. These quotations pull predominantly from the *Nechung Record* sections on the tantric authority of revering protector deities, the past lives of Pehar, and the ontological nature of the Five Sovereign Spirits (*rgyal po sku lnga*) led by the deity. Beyond these inclusions, the hagiography is fairly generic, discussing Jokpa Jangchup Penden's miraculous birth, his religious devotion and monastic ordination, and his founding of Deyang College at Drepung Monastery. The remainder of the text describes the six times Pehar took possession of an oracle through the course of moving from Tsel Yangön to Drepung, which led to his developing a close bond with Jokpa Jangchup Penden and his community, as well as his requesting the establishment of Nechung Chapel. In the final possession Pehar prophesizes Jokpa Jangchup Penden's rebirth after his death, and his cremation and funeral are detailed in depth.

After this short introduction, this article consists of three parts. The first part is a complete translation of the *Hagiography*, with subheadings to aid in classifying its contents and important hagiographical moments. The subheaders for the quoted portions of the *Nechung*

⁹ See Paṅ chen Bsod nams grags pa 2007, p.146.

Record list their line placement in the original wall inscription for ease of intertextual comparison.¹⁰ Rather than completely copying the repeated portions from the *Nechung Record*, I chose to translate the divergent words used in the *Hagiography* when applicable in order to indicate the subtle changes in meaning and emphasis that can be encountered when a text is repeated in a different context. It is my recommendation to simply skip the first interpolation (sections 4-7: 4a.3-4b.5) for a more comprehensible reading, since it is an awkward interjection that is repeated more fully later at a more understandable juncture. I include it nonetheless for comprehensiveness and comparison.

The second part of this article is a transcription of the original manuscript of this rare text, typed using the common 'headed' (*dbu can*) Tibetan script. The manuscript was written with the 'headless' Tibetan script (*dbu med*) and uses many abbreviations (*bskungs yig*), some of which are very obscure. I would like to thank Mikmar Tsering for taking the time to personally parse out these abbreviations with me. Like the *Nechung Record*, this transcription is given here so that the text may gain more exposure, since it is otherwise only available in manuscript form at the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa. The third part is a photocopy of the text itself, as provided to me by Tsering Gyalbo. I include the original manuscript for posterity, as well as to offer specialists the original text so that they might arrive at insights and readings potentially different from my own. Finally, I provide here an outline of the hagiography's contents to act as a quick reference:

1. The Buddha's prophecy regarding Jokpa Jangchup Penden (ff.1b.1-6)
2. Jangchup Penden's birthplace, parents, and upbringing (ff.1b.6-3a.4)
3. Jangchup Penden becomes a monk (ff.3a.4-4a.3)
4. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 11-12 [Fifth Dalai Lama section] (ff.4a.3-6)
5. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 9-10 [Fifth Dalai Lama section] (ff.4a.6)
6. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, line 9 [Fifth Dalai Lama section] (ff.4a.6-4b.2)
7. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 41-42 [Sangyé Gyatso section] (ff.4b.2-5)
8. Jangchup Penden is told about the need for Dharma protectors (ff.4b.5-5b.1)

¹⁰ For a cross comparison, see Bell 2016.

9. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 9-11 [Fifth Dalai Lama section] (ff.5b.1-6b.1)
10. Text requotes passages from the *Nechung Record* given on ff.4a.3-4b.5; continues where the latter abruptly ended on line 42 of the record (ff.6b.1-7a.6)
11. Text interrupts and intersects the previous quote, elaborates on and quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 12-13 [Fifth Dalai Lama section], and includes a brief segment from line 42 [Sangyé Gyatso section], now placed toward the end of the previous section (ff.7a.6-8a.1)
12. Text summarizes the story of Pehar and Padmasambhava from the *Nechung Record*, lines 14-15 [Fifth Dalai Lama section] (ff.8a.1-4)
13. Text abbreviates and quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 42-44 [Sangyé Gyatso section] (ff.8a.4-8b.5)
14. Jangchup Penden founds Deyang College at the age of 37 (ff.8b.5-10a.5)
15. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [1] (ff.10a.5-10b.6)
16. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [2] (ff.10b.6-11a.3)
17. Jangchup Penden has a clairvoyant dream about Pehar's arrival (ff.11a.3-11b.1)
18. Pehar arrives on the banks of the Kyichu River (ff.11b.1-11b.5)
19. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [3] (ff.11b.5-12a.5)
20. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [4] (ff.12a.5-14b.1)
21. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [5] (ff.14b.1-15b.2)
22. Jangchup Penden transfers the abbotship and passes away (ff.15b.2-16b.1)
23. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [6] (ff.16b.1-17b.1)
24. Colophon (ff.17b.1-18a.3)

The *Brief Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Penden* quotes the *Nechung Record* extensively, making up almost a quarter of the text in fact. Because of the close relationship between these works, the following translation and transcription are in many ways a companion piece to my previously published translation and transcription of the *Nechung Record* and is in robust conversation with that text. With *Nechung Monastery* as their intersecting focus, the two works provide insight into institutional development, monastic establishment, and the various textual genres employed in legitimizing a burgeoning Tibetan deity cult.

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*The Brief Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Pendenpa
along with the Origins of the Great Dharma Protector*

1. The Buddha's prophecy regarding Jokpa Jangchup Penden

[1b] In connection with [discussing] many extraordinary future incarnations, the Lord of Sages [Siddhartha] prophesied, “In particular, during the age of the five degenerations, the age of strife after the golden age [has ended], sentient beings will suffer immeasurably and abundant torments will come about in this obdurate trichiliocosm. [I] prophesy that a *śrāvaka* named Namkha, who became an average [student] at the feet [of myself]—the supreme guide of humans, Śākyamuni—will become the Acarya Salé himself, then he will become the monastic seat [holder] for the masters of the Kadam lineal transmission.”

2. Jokpa Jangchup Penden's birthplace, parents, and upbringing

The place where [Jokpa Jangchup Penden] was born was behind a mountain resembling a crouching evil enemy. [2a] There were four [seasonal] blossoms of golden flowers, various wild young deer, a few scattered flower, walnut, and apple trees, and various birds sweetly singing. In front [of the village], there was a cleansing pond that gently flowed down into the Kyichu River, with fish and [larger] fish-eyed Matsya [fish] swimming [in it]. Sesame, grain, and juniper tree branches [also flourished there] regardless of the season. Such a village was called Döldüpa; it was surrounded by a hundred [other] villages and became a patron of the Kadampa masters. The sentient

beings of that area came onto the path of ripening and liberation and were bearers of the Great Bliss lineage.

His father, named Zhapdrung Siddhi, cultivated the two types of *bodhicitta* [2b] and became a yogi of Glorious Hayagrīva. He was able to see a host of malevolent and obstructing spirits, and [and would perform] blessings with very little fear. His mother, named Drölma Lhadzé, had a proper ancestry. She would continuously recite the Maṇi prayer and was accepted as a disciple of Noble Avalokiteśvara. His mother did not know [at first] that she had conceived, yet repeatedly saw wondrous [signs, like] a puppy wearing white silk [coming from] the Eastern Pure Land of Abhirati. His father dreamed that there was a golden five-pronged *vajra* adorned with silk ribbons in his mother's lap.

His mother experienced imperceptible pain when he was born on the morning of the 10th day of the 1st month of the Wood-Male-Monkey year [1464]. He was the oldest among four brothers. [When he was born,] a rainbow dome [appeared] in the sky and many divine boys and girls gleefully scattered a rain of flowers. His bodily complexion [3a] was excellent and he was given the name Hevajra. [One day] he spontaneously told his parents, "These are the Dharma lineages of my past lives in which I died [possessing] the ten virtues, as well as my chief horses, possessions, shrine objects, retinue, and students." His parents were astonished. He perceived the residual karma of his past lives and auspicious circumstances arose. From the time he was a pup, he had a very handsome body and could read and write. Such [signs] diligently appeared, and experience and realization arose [in him].

3. Jangchup Penden becomes a monk

In the Sheep year [1475], [after] swiftly reaching the age of 11, he fully received the vows of a devout layman in the presence of Jengawa Rinchen Nyingpo and trained his mind in the three baskets [of the Buddhist Canon]. One night he dreamed, then studied and reflected on it. Because of this, he exhorted, [3b] "[We are] like heedless wild deer aimlessly running toward water. It is good if I summarize the essential meaning of an entire life." The Victorious One [then] said to himself, "For the sake of each verse, I will abandon my life force and strive for enlightenment. Then I will concentrate on accomplishing that, and also go to the monastic seats of the Kadampa masters—Nyetang Or, Yerpa, Reting, Samyé, and Lhasa. [While there,] I will make supplications with fervent devotion. When I am asleep at night, if I say 'A,' it will [represent] the doorway to all unborn phenomena." [This experience] lucidly and starkly brought his erroneous percep-

tions to primordial nothingness, and he went to his homeland.

Furthermore, on the 15th day of the 1st month in the Dog year [1478], he was ordained as a novice monk in the presence of Jengawa. Having continuously performed and recited one empowerment, [4a] he fully received the ripening empowerments, permissions, profound teachings, and oral instructions of the Kadampa masters. On the 15th day of the 5th month in the Monkey year [1488], [at the age of] 25, he became a fully ordained monk in the presence of Jengawa Rinchen [Nyingpo]. His [ordination] name was...

4. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 11-12 [Fifth Dalai Lama section]

¹¹The mind set on enlightenment, the king of awareness, is the nature of the Venerable One. Thus, the gods and spirits of the phenomenal world are certainly inseparable from one's own mind. Because of this, once the mind itself is stainless and purified, the gods and spirits of the phenomenal world spontaneously appear.

While one remains firm within the [meditative] state of nonthought, [the Five Sovereign Spirits] spontaneously appear as the five—body, speech, mind, good qualities, and activities. They arise without limitations for the benefit of beings.

5. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 9-10 [Fifth Dalai Lama section]

Their extraordinary methods are compatible with the essential intention of all the *tantras*.

¹¹ The *Drepung Record* (*Dpal ldan 'bras spungs dgon gyi dkar chag*) quotes and paraphrases the hagiography here to claim that Jokpa Jangchup Penden's ordination name is Rikpé Gyelpo Jangchup (Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences 2009, p.343). This is a misunderstanding, however, since it draws from a confusing portion of the hagiography that abruptly begins to quote the *Nechung Record*. I made a similar misreading and mistranslation, where I likewise attributed this quote to Jokpa Jangchup Penden under this faulty alias; see Bell 2016, p.163. I have since discovered that these verses were drawn from a thirteenth-century text entitled the *History of the Wrathful Deities: The Three Essential Households* (*Gnad khyim gsun pa khro bo sngon byung*) by the Nyingma treasure revealer Guru Chöwang (Gu ru chos dbang, 1212-1270); this work is part of a larger cycle of texts concerning the Eight *Sādhana* Deities (*sgrub pa bka' brgyad*). For the original verse from which these lines were drawn, see Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug 1979, p.359.5-6.

**6. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, line 9
[Fifth Dalai Lama section]**

In the *Tantra* it says [the following about] the Ultimate Truth:¹² [4b]

Many mutable beings manifest as emanations that naturally arise from the wisdom of the Victorious One. [According to] ultimate reality, they are nondualistic, simultaneously perfected, [and part of] the spontaneously present *maṇḍala*.

**7. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 41-42
[Sangyé Gyatso section]**

In response to those intractable tamable beings whose minds must be wrathfully subdued [there appeared]: the central sovereign spirit of the mind [Gyajin], who is an emanation of Vairocana—the wisdom of the Dharmadhātu, the purification of hatred; the eastern sovereign spirit of the body [Mönbuputra], who is an emanation of Vajrasattva—the mirror-like wisdom, the purification of ignorance; the southern sovereign spirit of good qualities [Shingjachen], who is an emanation of Ratnasambhava—the wisdom of equanimity, the purification of pride; [the western sovereign spirit of speech (Kyechik Marpo), who is an emanation of Amitābha—the wisdom of discriminating awareness,] the purification of desire.¹³

**8. Jokpa Jangchup Penden is told
about the need for Dharma protectors**

...Jokpa Jangchup Pendenpa—who is supreme among those who bear the saffron-colored victory banners, who cultivated the two types of *bodhicitta*, and who mastered the inner and outer teachings. Eminent translators said the following to him, [5a] “Having been revealed with immeasurable difficulty, the inner and outer instructions in the tantric stage of the three turnings of the Wheel of Dharma were sorted. The incontrovertible path of ripening and liberation [can be] completely realized. [However,] our current experience is that there are a great many obstacles to resting in equanimity and achiev-

¹² *Rgyud las*; neither the *Nechung Record* nor this text specify from which *tantra* the following quote is drawn.

¹³ This segment of the text abruptly cuts off before completing Kyechik Marpo's line or including Pehar, as found in the *Nechung Record*; see Bell 2016, pp.185-186. For more on the Five Sovereign Spirits, in terms of their appearance and traits, see Bell 2013, pp.30-36.

ing the rank of Vajradhara. Constant harm to even the rare Dharma that embodies the precious Noble Ones [bodhisattvas] has also increased." Accordingly, in order to guard against inner and outer harm, you need to rely on a protector deity like this one [below]. If you depend on mundane gods, they will not be very powerful and you will fall into the lower realms [of rebirth]. You definitely must depend on supramundane [gods]. [5b]

9. Text quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 9-11 [Fifth Dalai Lama section]

Generally speaking, the great sovereign spirit Pehar and his retinue are included within such *maṇḍalas* as that of the great Eight *Sādhana* Deities and are understood as the essence of the All-Supreme Heruka. They are [found] among the haughty spirits of [mundane] offerings and praises and appear in whatever form is appropriate to guide disciples. Because of this, their extraordinary methods are compatible with the essential intention of all the *tantras*.

In particular, according to the generation stage of the Mahāyoga [*tantras*], the Five Sovereign Spirits, their consorts, emanations, and ministers, along with their brigadiers, arise from the radiance of the one hundred supreme peaceful and wrathful deities. As such, [Padmasambhava's] mind emanation, Ngari [Paṅchen] Padma Wangyel,¹⁴ said:

The Five Great Sovereign Spirits are the inherent potency of the Five Buddha Families. Their five consorts are the inherent radiance of [the Five Buddha Consorts], such as Locana. The male and [6a] female bodhisattvas are the very essence of the six sense objects. They are [all] assembled with their cabinet ministers, hangmen, hound keepers, and ministers.

[He also] said, "The great sovereign spirits, who are endowed with destructive powers, assemble from the inherent potency of the unproduced peaceful and wrathful Herukas and their consorts."

In the scriptural transmission of the Anuyoga, [these deities] are the essence of the right, left, and middle channels, as well as the male, female, and androgynous haughty spirits.

In the Atiyoga, they must be understood as the very nature of the union of appearance and emptiness. [Padmasambhava's] good quali-

¹⁴ Mnga' ris Padma dbang rgyal, 1487-1542; see Ahmad 1999, pp.164-170.

ties emanation, the Dharma King Wangpo Dé,¹⁵ said:

The assembly of male and female haughty spirits
are the inseparability of appearance and emptiness.
Summon them from the expanse of non-duality [to
perform] the enlightened work of the four activities.

All those [deities] are the purification of one's own mind. Free from conceptual elaboration, they are the single seminal drop of the Heruka's wisdom, which arises out of the Dharmadhātu on its own. [6b]

10. Text quotes passages from the *Nechung Record* given on ff.4a.3-4b.5; continues where the latter abruptly ended on line 42 of the record

In the *Three [Essential] Households* it says:¹⁶

The mind set on enlightenment, the king of awareness, is the nature of the Venerable One. Thus, the gods and spirits of the phenomenal world are certainly inseparable from one's own mind. Because of this, once the mind itself is stainless and purified, the gods and spirits of the phenomenal world spontaneously appear.

While one remains firm within the [meditative] state of nonthought, [the Five Sovereign Spirits] spontaneously appear as the five—body, speech, mind, good qualities, and activities. They arise without limitations for the benefit of beings. Their extraordinary methods are compatible with the essential intention of all the *tantras*.

In the *Tantra* it says [the following about] the Ultimate Truth:¹⁷

Many karmically-bound beings manifest as emanations that naturally arise from the wisdom of the Victorious One. [According to] ultimate reality, they are nondualistic, simultaneously perfected, [and part of] the spontaneously present *maṇḍala*.

In response to those intractable tamable beings [7a] whose minds

¹⁵ Chos rgyal Dbang po'i sde, 1551-1603; see Ahmad 1999, pp.170-178.

¹⁶ *Khyim gsum du*; see note 11.

¹⁷ See note 12.

must be wrathfully subdued, the Five Buddha Families [appeared as]: the central sovereign spirit of the mind [Gyajin], who is an emanation of Vairocana—the wisdom of the Dharmadhātu, the purification of hatred; the eastern sovereign spirit of the body [Mönbuputra], who is an emanation of Vajrasattva—the mirror-like wisdom, the purification of ignorance; the southern sovereign spirit of good qualities [Shingjachen], who is an emanation of Ratnasambhava—the wisdom of equanimity, the purification of pride; the western sovereign spirit of speech [Kyechik Marpo], who is an emanation of Amitābha—the wisdom of discriminating awareness, the purification of desire; and the northern sovereign spirit of activities, [Pehar], who is an emanation of Amoghasiddhi—the essence of all-accomplishing wisdom, the purification of envy. They are supported by a manifold assembly of secondary and tertiary emanations, such as five consorts that engender wisdom, five ministers that accomplish activities, lion-masked dancers that entertain, and four great brigadiers.¹⁸ One relies on their many peaceful and wrathful activities in order to accomplish pacifying, enriching, conquering, and destructive actions.

11. Text interrupts and intersects the previous quote, elaborates on and quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 12-13 [Fifth Dalai Lama section], and includes a brief segment from line 42 [Sangyé Gyatso section], now placed toward the end of the previous section

[Read the following] if one is overpowered by a request for just the conventional truth [of Pehar's past]: Countless eons ago [7b] in a land called Anuté, there was a devout king [named] Dharmarāja and a minister [named] Dünting Nakpo.¹⁹ When they became [religious] lineage sons,²⁰ [the king] was ordained as Abbot Daö Zhonnu and he promised to maintain the 253 rules [of the *Vinaya*]. The king undertook teaching and study while the minister was happy [meditating] in the wilderness. Then, at the “Temple where Demons are Subdued by Realization,” Daö Zhonnu and a Brahmin woman had sex and he made a [perverse] prayer of aspiration. Because of such acts, [he was

¹⁸ These two sentences from line 42 of the *Nechung Record* appear 2.5 lines lower in the Tibetan text at f.7b.1-3, cutting into lines 12-13 of the *Nechung Record* as given in section 11 below. It is clear from their content that they belong at this point in the text, so I have moved them accordingly for ease of clarity.

¹⁹ The text here spells the name *bdun stong nag po*, while I have transliterated it using the more common variant *dun ting nag po* for the sake of uniformity and ease of cross-textual comparison; see Bell 2013, p.42.

²⁰ This is where the fragment from line 42 of the *Nechung Record* cuts into the flow of the narrative; see note 18.

reborn as] the butcher Ragochen, [then as] Mudü Dramkar,²¹ the middle [sibling] of five brother commanders. He enslaved the celestial gods and spirits of phenomenal appearance, [8a] ate small stars for food, and wore the sun and moon as a crown.

12. Text summarizes the story of Pehar and Padmasambhava from the *Nechung Record*, lines 14-15 [Fifth Dalai Lama section]

Such things were spoken by the great master [Padmasambhava]. When the master resided at the Wish-Fulfilling Crystal Cave, the Capricious Spirit [Pehar] took the form of an eight-year-old child. He transformed into a white lion and leaped down onto the master's *maṇḍala*, his mouth open wide. [Padmasambhava] struck the lion, who fled into the sky before being captured. [The lion] transformed into a crystal rosary-bearing layman and [Padmasambhava] conferred empowerments on him and bound him under oath.

13. Text abbreviates and quotes *Nechung Record*, lines 42-44 [Sangyé Gyatso section]

The Dharma-protecting King Trisong Deutsen constructed the vast Changeless and Spontaneously Present [Samyé] Monastery, together with its temples and sacred images. When the Abbot [Śāntarakṣita], the Master [Padmasambhava], and the Dharma King [Trisong Deutsen] were discussing how [they would appoint a monastery protector], the Abbot said, "The other eight classes [of gods and spirits] are too harmful." The Master said:

[8b] The tutelary deity of Mongolia is Namlha Jangchub. Once we invite this sovereign spirit Shingjachen [here], we will entrust the monastery to him and he will fearlessly protect it. After we conquer the meditation center of Bhatahor, Pehar will follow after his possessions and come [here]. I will establish his supports at Pehar [Kordzö]ling.²²

[Pehar] was invited [to Tibet], along with Dharmapāla of the Zahor royal line and many [of the deity's] possessions—such as a turquoise Buddha [statue], a conch-shell lion [statue], and a Bhatahor begging

²¹ As in note 19 above, the name given is *dmu bdud khri khar*, though I have transliterated the more common *dmu bdud khram dkar*; see Bell 2013, p.45.

²² The three names given here all refer to the same deity. The last line indicates where Pehar's name likely came from, a toponym drawn from the name of this temple at Samyé.

bowl. He was installed as the guardian who protects Dharma centers and his supports were established. He was entrusted [to protect these sites] and truly promised to do so. Then his supports continued to be established at such sites as Gungtang Tsel Yangön Monastery.

14. Jangchup Penden founds Deyang College at the age of 37

In the twelfth month of the monkey year [1500] he reached the age of 37, and on the 10th day [9a] he founded Glorious Deyang College within the Kadampa monastic center Tsogyé²³ [Drepung Monastery]. [It was patronized by] more than 16 high *geshés* and 50 monks, as well as the patron clans of the Ngüldungpa and Takdongpa. The monasteries beyond [Drepung that surround Deyang in a *mandalic* configuration] are Orgyan Chödzungpa in Tsurpu [to the north], Böngön Garpa College to the east, Mengön to the west, and the monastery of Dambak Marscherchen in the lower valley [to the south].²⁴ When this Dharma center was established, the empowerments for all the cycles of the one hundred thousand Vajrayāna *tantras* were performed. [This included] the *Vajramālā*²⁵ empowerments, the *Kālacakra*, the Zhalu system of the *Hevajra Tantra*, the *Mahāmāyā*, the *Guhyasamāja*, the Chak system of [Vajra]bairava surrounded by Eight Zombies, the *Glorious Cakrasaṃvara*, the *One Hundred [Cycles] of Mitra*, the *One Hundred [Cycles] of the Siddhas*, the [practice for] Black and White Acala, the *Homage to the Twenty-One [Tārās]*, [9b] and the [practice for] Red and Black [Mahākāla] with the Curved Blade. Through such limitless Dharma teachings and general doctrines of the Kadampa School, sentient beings were put on the path of ripening and liberation.

The elders of the family lineages made offerings. [This included] the Revered Lekden Düdjom Norbu Wangyel and his sister Drönmakyé, as well as their servants; the descendants of Prince Namgyelö;²⁶ and, from the Takdongpa [clan], Nangso Sönam Dargyé, Nangso Tseten, Lady Tsering Wangmo, and their son Sönam Tsering, as well as their servants. The ancient *samaya* vow [was fulfilled] through the quality and quantity of the patrons, as well as through the chief tutelary deity Cakrasaṃvara, [with whom there is] a contin-

²³ *Mtsho brgyad*; the monastery is certainly Drepung, though, this is an obscure epithet for it.

²⁴ See Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.217n.572. If translated literally, this monastery is called “the possessor of the holy orange mask.”

²⁵ *Rdo rje phreng ba*; lit. “Vajra Garland.” This is an important explanatory tantra for the *Guhyasamāja* system.

²⁶ *Lha sras* Rnam rgyal 'od. This figure is a member of the Gugé (*Gu ge*) royal line; see Vitali 1996, p.506.

uous sacred bond. Each of the throne[-holders also made] extensive offerings of dedication *tormas* and *samaya tormas*. Inseparable from the secret essence of all moral conduct, this fearless lion [Jokpa Jangchup Penden] sat atop [Deyang's] throne. [10a]

Regarding the Wheel of the Dharma of the profound, vast, and unsurpassed vehicle, it liberates fortunate beings, [bringing] them to ripening and liberation, and completes all the activities of tamable beings. Supplications were performed [by] disciples who gathered faithfully, led by the Revered Rinchen Zangpo, the Learned Drapa Gyentsen, and the Learned Raptan Döndrup—heads of meditation centers, Dharma colleges, monasteries, and such. [The disciples also] made prayers and offerings for each of the Dharma protectors, such as Brahmā. Furthermore, it is said that [the Dharma protectors] guard [the monastery] and come quickly because of their great karmic connection. Through both the Dharma and material wealth, [the above individuals] came to aid this monastery.²⁷

15. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [1]

Due to the past [bad] karma of the myriarch lord of Tsel, Dönyö Dorjé²⁸—like [allowing] the damage [caused by] the Bönpos of Ogyan Gar to greatly increase—on the 3rd day of the 1st month of the Earth-Ox year [1529], Pehar took possession [of an oracle] and prophesied,²⁹ [10b] “When Gungtang [Monastery] is destroyed by fire, Dönyö Dorjé will pass on to the pure land³⁰ [from] here. I, Pehar, will go to the

²⁷ For a list of Deyang Monastery's abbots, see Paṅ chen Bsod nams grags pa 2007, p.146. For a brief history of Deyang, see Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences 2009, pp. 340-353.

²⁸ Don yod rdo rje. Other than the title presented here, and a potential connection to the famed Rinlung (*Rin spungs*) lord Dönyö Dorjé (1462/1463-1512; BDRC: P375), little is known of this figure; see Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.218n.576.

²⁹ Quoting the *Gungtang Record*—which in turn summarizes content from the *Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Penden*—Sørensen and Hazod translate this event as Pehar taking possession of Dönyö Dorjé himself; see Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.217. The lines in the original hagiography and the summary in the *Gungtang Record* differ grammatically; the former text uses an instrumental case particle (*Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho* n.d., ff.10a.6-10b.1) while the latter uses a dative-locative particle (Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, Appendix 6, *Gung thang dkar chag*, f.41b.2). This confusion is worsened by the unreliable spelling and poor syntax used throughout the manuscript of the hagiography. However, given that Pehar takes possession of an unnamed individual five more times in this text, I suggest that he possesses someone other than Dönyö Dorjé and is delivering the prophecy in the myriarch's presence. For more on the historical context of the political transition this episode symbolizes, see Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, pp.627-630.

³⁰ *Dag pa'i zhing du gshegs*; this is an honorific euphemism for dying.

land of Uḍḍiyāṇa!" Because of [this prophecy], the master [Dönyö Dorjé] became very angry and said many times, "[I will throw] Pehar and his sacred possessions into the middle of the river!" His family and lineage holders pleaded [with him], saying, "[Pehar] is the protector of our ancestors, how can you throw him in the river? [If you do this] his power will bring great harm to our retinue and subjects!" Dönyö Dorjé said, "I will not die and Gungtang shall not be destroyed by fire! If he goes to Uḍḍiyāṇa, I will perform destructive rites [against him]!" Then he said, "[Throw] Pehar and his sacred possessions into the Kyichu River³¹ [headed for] Dambak Marsar village!"³² His servants, subjects, and family [then] set out to carry Pehar and his sacred possessions in a coracle to the middle of the river.

16. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [2]

When they did so, Pehar took possession [of an oracle again] and said, [11a] "𑀧𑀲𑀸𑀢𑀺 I Pehar, the evil spirit, have an inauspicious connection with this unintelligent master and his family. When the residence of this evil spirit changes, the master and his retinue will fall into the ocean! [Dönyö Dorjé] and those around him should listen. The evil spirit's *vajra* verses are immutable. After the evil spirit and his possessions are carried away, his form will no longer be present. My lama is the Vajrasattva [Jokpa Jangchup Penden]. I will clear away all adverse conditions for him." Having spoken such, [the deity] went into the river and proceeded to the lower valley of Dambak Marsarchen [village].³³

³¹ *Skye* [sic: *Skyid*] *chu*. This word is preceded by a syllable that is difficult to read (Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho n.d., f.10b.5). At first glance it looks like *sku*, but it seems to have a suffix letter too faded to recognize. Despite this, the meaning of the sentence is fairly clear.

³² *nas krong*s *ston glang dmar sad*. This fragment is difficult to fully understand. I suggest that it is a highly misspelled variant for the village area around Nechung, called elsewhere in this text *dam/dar 'bag dmar ser*. This could explain the *ston glang dmar sad*; however, the *nas krong*s is still unclear. Perhaps it is a poorly written phonetic rendering for *gnas chung*, since such phonetic misspellings are found elsewhere in this text. It is also possible that *nas* is a redundancy and *krongs* is a misspelling of *grong*, which is how I interpret it here. For a fuller discussion of Dambak Marsar village and its significance, see Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.217n.574. Guntram Hazod suggests that it could refer to one of the four "glang dar ma" sites situated around Lhasa, this one being located behind Drepung; email correspondence, January 19, 2020. See also Hazod 2014.

³³ *Dam 'bag dmar ser can*. A variant spelling for the first part of this name is *Dan 'bag*, pronounced Denbak.

17. Jangchup Penden has a clairvoyant dream about Pehar's arrival

Subsequently, the previous night [Jokpa Jangchup Penden] had an excellent dream. In it, a white man appeared from the sky and said, "Receive me! Receive me!" [He stood] within a tent of rainbow light, had teeth like rows of [tiny] conch-shells and turquoise eyebrows, [rode] a young white horse, and had many attendants. He placed his head at lord [Jokpa Jangchup Penden's] feet. [The lord] cleared away all [of the white man's] physical defilements and offered him about a thousand human hearts. [The white man then] said, "Quite a few omens will appear and [11b] a guest will come today, so be prepared!"

18. Pehar arrives on the banks of the Kyichu River

Around noon on the 5th day [of the month], Pehar and his sacred possessions came to rest on the banks of the Kyichu River [near] the lower valley of Dambak Marscherchen. There was a rainbow tent and a white rainbow [over it]. Master [Jokpa Jangchup Penden's] attendants came [to him] and he instructed his two attendants, Drakpa Gyentsen and Döndrup Raptan, as follows, "My guest has arrived at the bottom of the valley and has also pitched [his rainbow] tent. Bring him [here]!" The two attendants went quickly and saw [the guest]. He was neither man nor spirit and he wore silks and brocades, as well as a cloak of vulture feathers.

19. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [3]

He said, "HRĪḤ! In an unfabricated divine palace I reside as the essence of non-duality. [However,] for the master, I am [here] in a conventional sense surrounded by young monks. The time has come to depend on me, [12a] the protector among the evil spirits! I seek an acceptable place for my possessions!" [He then] prophesied, "[For] the master [and the monastic] assembly [I will be] a sentry during the day and a watchman during the three [watches of the] night. I will clear away adverse conditions, accomplish concordant conditions, and am endowed with the power of good aspirations. I will properly bear [these responsibilities]!" The attendants said, "We are the attendants! We told our master we would come to receive [you] and return. Then you can pay homage to him and discuss your full history, you who are neither man nor spirit. Thus, it would be very good for us to bring you!" So the servants, having gone down, invited [the deity] up.

20. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [4]

The master's fast dark-yellow horse had died, and its head, as well as a sheep's head, had been placed in front of him; they were bright white [skulls] lacking flesh or brains. Then Pehar and his sacred possessions [12b] arrived before the master. Pehar took possession [of an oracle] and said, "HRĪH! The time has come for me, the spirit, to say these three statements to the master, who resides as the essence of Vajrasattva in the middle of this gathering consisting of the young monks' assembly, the eight male and female bodhisattvas, the patron [clans] that flank [the master]—the Tak[dongpa] and Ngül[dungpa]—as well as sixteen attendants.

"[First,] the master, along with his retinue and subjects, must understand that this evil spirit's **small** items have no **abode**.³⁴

"[Second, I] thoroughly illuminate the path, like the eight [auspicious] items³⁵ glittering in the ground, the [eight] auspicious signs³⁶—[such as] the white parasol—in the sky, and the seven ornaments³⁷ in the intermediate space. The assemblies of the master, bodhisattvas, tutelary deities, *dākinīs*, and all the oath-bound protector deities have gathered like clouds. Accordingly, I feel the *vajra* on my forehead and the adamantine nectar of immortality on my tongue.

"[Third,] for the master, the Dharma stream, and the spiritual community, [13a] [I will act as] a sentry during the three [watches of the] day and a watchman during the three [watches of the] night. Until I attain enlightenment, I will not transgress [my vows]. I will swiftly destroy the physical enemies and the formless obstructing spirits. [May] the master consider [this]! My formless *vajra* verses are immutable!

"During the death anniversary of the lord's mother, Drölma Lhadzé, when he [built] a silver-plated reliquary [for her], he offered items topped with a thousand measures-worth of turquoise and gold,

³⁴ 'Dre ngan *gnas med rdzas chung* 'di dag rnam slob dpon 'khor 'bangs bcas pas go dgos so/.

³⁵ [Bkra shis] *rdzas brgyad*; these are [1] a mirror (*me long*), [2] curds (*zho*), [3] *dürvā* grass (*rtswa dur ba*), [4] wood apple fruit (*shing tog bil ba*), [5] a right-coiling conch shell (*dung g.yas 'khyil*), [6] a bezoar (*gi wang*), [7] vermilion powder (*li khri*), and [8] white mustard seeds (*yungs dkar*).

³⁶ *Bkra shis rtags rdzas* [sic: *brgyad*]; these are [1] the supreme parasol (*gdugs mchog*), [2] a pair of golden fish (*gser nya*), [3] a vase (*bum pa*), [4] a lotus (*pad ma*), [5] a right-coiling conch shell (*dung g.yas 'khyil*), [6] an eternal knot (*dpal be'u*), [7] a victory banner (*rgyal mtshan*), and [8] the wheel of Dharma ('*khor lo*).

³⁷ *Nor bu cha bdun*; these are [1] the king's earrings (*rgyal po'i rna cha*), [2] the queen's earrings (*btsun mo'i rna cha*), [3] the minister's earrings (*blon po'i rna cha*), [4] rhinoceros horn (*bse ru'i rwa*), [5] a branch of coral (*byu ru'i sdong po*), [6] an elephant tusk (*glang chen mche ba*), and [7] a triple-eyed gem (*nor bu mig gsum*).

dedicating them to her complete enlightenment. In addition to this, due to the master's practice, Drölma Lhadzé [indeed] passed into the Blissful Pure Land."³⁸

In response to this, [the lord] composed an expanded practice for his dedication prayer. As [the lord] took [a piece of] turquoise in hand and placed it on top of the horse's skull, he entrusted himself to [Pehar] and commanded, "Pehar, [your] supports, thread-crosses, and shrines have been inconsistent. I will establish a powerful thanksgiving rite for the good [activities] that were previously entrusted [to you] and [13b] build a shrine on well-appointed land. I praise the powerful prestige of the excellent outer [activities] that have been entrusted [to you]! May you accomplish all the pacifying, augmenting, subjugating, and destructive activities that I [request]! May you perform activities that [cause] all monastic communities and monasteries to completely flourish! May you perform awesome activities that quickly liberate [through destruction all] physical enemies and formless obstructing spirits with wrong views!" The turquoise-encrusted horse skull arose from this [meeting].

The lord [then] commanded the monastic disciplinarians of the Takdong clan as follows, "Build a small abode (*gnas chung chung*) for my Dharma protector Pehar!" This was properly accomplished according to the lama's instructions. Afterward, they constructed body, speech, and mind supports, as well as a thread-cross support, topped by the lord's own horse skull. [The shrine] was consecrated with the *Glorious Cakrasaṃvara* [practice] [14a] and the local ruler gave the benediction. Then flowers were strewn about and fell to the ground as far as an arrow can fly. The monastic disciplinarians and male and female patrons of the Takdongpa and Ngüldungpa [clans performed] their own songs and dances; the virtuous teachers sang *vajra* songs on experience and realization; and the sons and daughters of the gods rained down flowers. There was [also] a tent of rainbow light and [other] inconceivable and wondrous signs. The lord supervised the blessings for each of the supports. Because of [all] this, [everyone] was graced with an actual vision of a white man riding a white horse, who was adorned with such items as a jeweled crown, and who was clothed in various silks. His teeth were like rows of conch shells and he had turquoise eyebrows. He carried a white conch shell in his right hand and a 10[8-bead] rosary in his left. He was surrounded by a retinue. Periodic support offerings were accordingly established [at the shrine] and it was indeed given the name Nechung from the beginning. [14b]

³⁸ *Bde ba can*; Skt. *Sukhavatī*.

21. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [5]

The Bönpos at Orgyan Gar resolved to display their military regiment before the precious lord and his retinue. Pehar took possession [of an oracle] and said as such, “HRĪḤ! Even if they do not vividly see the knowable Dharma as they would an image of the master [Padmasambhava] on the surface of a mirror, I, the capricious spirit (*gnod sbyin*) Pehar, will liberate the physical vow-violators that have wrong views. In the past, the master offered [me] a thousand human hearts in continuous succession. These offerings were the vital energy and life forces of the physical vow-violating enemies. After I, the formless Pehar, received these, the master sat in undisturbed meditative absorption. At the end of the future degenerate age, the chief enemies and obstructing spirits, as well as their ministers and servants, will be born as tamable beings and they will destroy the sacred teachings. The master did not despair [however]; he considered these tamable beings and took rebirth in [later] incarnations. The master [15a] repelled them out of kindness. I, formless Pehar, also came to be connected [with him] and [now] I spontaneously arise from the unmanifest realm as a watchman. The evil spirit’s *vajra* verses are immutable.”

[Misfortunes] like epidemics fell upon the chiefs and ministers of the Bönpos of [Orgyan] Gar and they were repelled. [Because of this], the lord performed elaborate [rituals], like a thanksgiving rite and an activity entrustment rite, and said, “Well done! Well done! The great sovereign spirit Pehar with turquoise eyebrows and teeth [white as] conch shells, [along with] his retinue, came down. You—the enemy[-defeating] god (*dgra lha*) named Öden Karpo who has a rainbow tent that radiates white light—clear away adverse conditions throughout the vast revolutions of the three times, past, present, and future. Protect us until you achieve enlightenment! [15b] [Regarding] entrusted activities, thoroughly accomplish all [such] activities in this Land of Snows [Tibet]!” [The deity thus created] suitable outer and inner wind horse[-like good fortune] and auspicious circumstances [until] the lord reached the limit of his lifespan.

22. Jangchup Penden transfers the abbotship and passes away

The Learned Rinchen Zangpo was consecrated as the [next] representative on the fearless lion throne. The Dharma disciples of the Learned Drapa Gyen[tsen] and the Revered [Rap]ten Döndrup attained [Tsongkhapa’s *Great Treatise on*] *the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* and the visualization procedure for the illusory body of *Glorious Cakrasaṃvara*. As soon as they did so, he fully elaborated on the

commentary for the illusory body [practice], saying, "The illusory karma of sentient beings, the bodhisattvas, and the Dharmakaya Buddha are the noncause of wisdom. Because of this, they are the noncause of all the Buddha's teachings and causes from such are the noncause of wisdom. Because of this, they are the noncause of all the Buddha's teachings and causes from the teachings are similarly caused and not caused."

[16a] In approximately the Iron-Male-Rabbit year [1531], [Jokpa Jangchup Penden] dissolved into the Dharmadhātu of realization (passed away) amid great miraculous displays. A rain of flowers, sounds of music, a rainbow tent, and inconceivable sounds along the mountain slopes continuously arose, and this miraculous state remained for a week. Along with this, his disciples made countless different kinds of offerings for up to a week. They offered his precious remains up for cremation and recited prayers single-pointedly for a day and a night. Because of this, they [could] hear all the joyful clamor and melodic sounds of the gods. The master departed to the Eastern Pure Land; [during the cremation,] the form of Glorious Cakrasaṃvara appeared to naturally arise on the crown of his head and all the lamas from this Vajradhara's lineage gradually appeared [around him] like a painting. All his relics were gathered together [16b] and placed in an exceedingly grand reliquary.

23. Pehar takes possession of an oracle [6]

While commemorating the lord's kindness [a year later?], his disciples built a golden reliquary. When they began this, Pehar took possession [of an oracle] and prophesied as such, "HRĪḤ! The master Vajrasattva departed to the pure land and the body, speech, and mind supports (relics) have completely appeared. A good [shrine] has been built for my, the formless Pehar's, supports and I resolve [to act] for the continual benefit and happiness of the Dharma until the end of the eon. I have an excellent, auspicious connection to this holy place and the master, and I, the evil spirit, also became an inseparable friend [to him]. The Takdong[pa] and Ngüldung[pa] will be reborn as demon-tamers. The master himself will also be reborn at that time, and we will have an excellent, auspicious connection in the future until the end of time. With the power of my mind, [I], the evil spirit, will traverse this expanse of time after the evil spirit has returned to the land of Uḍḍiyāṇa." [17a]

The reliquary of great enlightenment was built, and it was 25 measures high with a plentiful circumference and utterly glorious splendor. The forehead relic of the naturally-arising Cakrasaṃvara that came from the crown of his head, the Dharmakāya relics [of] his

bones, whatever [other] body, speech, and mind supports (relics) that there were, as well as relics of [other] Chinese and Tibetan Siddhas and masters, blessed garment (relics), inconceivable supports, the lord's own garments surrounded by *torma* offerings, and a myriad [of small] reliquaries [made] with the lord's bones were [all] placed inside the dome [of his reliquary].³⁹ While the *maṇḍala* of Glorious Cakrasamvara was opened (created) and displayed just like in the *tantras*, inconceivable [rites]—such as the consecration ritual from earlier, as well as wealth treasures and Dharma treasures—[17b] were also indeed established.

24. Colophon

[This is] the *Brief Hagiography of Jokpa Jangchup Pendenpa, the Origins of the Great Sovereign Spirit Dharma Protector, and the Offering of Glorious Deyang College's Supports*. Along with this is [the following] outline of the established lineage. Jé Jamyang Chöje Tashi Penden (1379-1449) established Drepung Monastery, invited [monks] into the monastic community, and offered such [scriptures] like the seven different [sections] of the Abhidharma. Having established such a succession of practices—like [having] smoke billow from the roof, protective canopies erected for the lamas, various kinds of splendid incense brought to the monastic censers, as well as serving other people like the upper and lower valley patrons—he resided in this seven-college monastery. The protector deity of Glorious Drepung [Pehar] came accordingly. Then he continued in succession—manifesting, requesting [offerings], and establishing [himself]—from the Omniscient [Second Dalai Lama] Gendün Gyatso (1476-1542) [18a] to [the Fifth Dalai Lama] Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso (1617-1682), who is the Supreme Protector of All, along with the god. In this way, [Pehar] was invested with authority as the chief of all the Dharma protectors. I indeed sought the source for these [details] from within the reliable hagiography of the precious abbot Jamyang Drakpa.

[1a] ལྷོག་པ་བྱང་ཚུབ་དབལ་ལྷན་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་རགས་བསྟུན་ཚོས་སྦྱོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འབྲུང་ཁྱེད་པ་
བཅས་པ་བཞུགས་སྟོན།

[1b] ངོ་མཚར་མང་པོ་སྐྱེ་སྐྱེས་ཕྱི་དང་སྦྱར་ཏེ། ལུབ་པའི་དབང་པོས་ལྷང་བསྟན་ཚུལ། ཡང་དགོས་
སྟོན་ལྷན་པའི་མཚུག་དཔོན་ལྷན་སྟོན་མ་ལའི་དུས། སྐྱེ་འགོ་རྣམས་སྟུག་བསྟུན་དབལ་ཏེ།

³⁹ For more on the religious significance and classification of Tibetan relics, see Bentor 1994.

མེད་པས་མཁར་བ་རྒྱལ་ལ་སྤོང་གསུམ་མི་མཚེད་ཞིང་གི་དབལ་དུ་གྱུར་པ། ཀྱང་གཉིས་འདྲེན་
 མཚོགས་ཤུག་འི་རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཞབས་སུ་འབྲིང་དུ་གྱུར་བའི་ཉན་ཐོས་ནལ་མཁའའི་མཚོན་ཅན། དེ་ཉིད་གྱི་
 ལུང་བསྟན་པའི་ཨ་ཙ་ར་ས་ལེ་དེ་ཉིད་ནས་རིམ་རྒྱུད་བཀའ་གདམས་གོང་མ་གདན་ས་ཚགས་སྐྱོ་སོང་
 ཞེས་པར་སྐྱེ་འབྲས་པའི་ས་ནི་རྒྱབ་རི་ནག་པོ་དག་ཅན་འབྲིངས་པ་འདྲ་བ་གསེར་ [2a]མི་རྟོག་སྐད་
 བཞི། རིགས་དུགས་[ལྷ་]ཚོགས་གསེར་སྤོང་ཤིང་མི་རྟོག་ལྟར་ལ་ཀུ་ཕུ་ཙེ་ལེ་ཉུང་ཐེག་བྱ་སྐྱེ་ཚོགས་སྐད་
 ལྟར་པར་སྤོངས་པ། མདུན་ན་ལྷུས་གྱི་རྒྱུད་བྱེད་ཚུ་དལ་གྱི་འབབ་པ་ཉ་དང་ཉ་པོ་ཆེ་ཉ་མིག་རྒྱལ་ས་
 འཕྱོ་བ་འབྲུ་བསྟན་ས་པོན་ལྷ་ངན་མེད་པའི་ཤིང་གི་ལོ་མ་དབྱར་ སུན་གྱི་བྱེ་བྲག་མེད་པ་དེ་ལྷ་ལྷའི་
 ཤོང་ལྷུང་དུ་ལྷ་ལྷུང་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་ཤོང་ལྷུང་བརྒྱ་ཕྱག་གཅིག་གི་བསྐྱར་བའི། བཀའ་གདམས་གོང་
 མའི་ལོན་བདག་དུ་གྱུར་པ། ལུལ་གྱི་སྐྱེ་འགོ་རྒྱལ་སྤོང་གི་ལམ་ལ་སྤྱོར་བ་བདད་ཆེན་གྱི་རིགས་
 རྒྱུད་འཛིན་པ། ལལ་ཞབས་དུང་སི་རྒྱའི་མཚོན་ཅན། བྱང་ཚུབ་ཐུགས་གཉིས་འབྲིངས་པ་[2b]དབལ་
 ཏ་མགོན་གྱི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་དུ་གྱུར་པ། གདོན་བཤེགས་ཚོགས་ལ་གཟིགས་པ་ཙམ་གྱི་སྐྱབ་ལུས་པ་བྱིན་
 རྒྱབས་ཅན། ལུམ་སྐྱོལ་མ་ལྷ་མཛོས་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་རིགས་རྒྱུད་ཚད་ལྡན་ཞལ་ནས་མ་ཁིའི་སྐྱ་རྒྱུན་མི་
 ཚད་པ་འཕགས་པ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོས་རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་བ། དེ་ཉིད་དུ་རྒྱལ་ས་སུ་བཞུགས་ལུམ་ལ་འཛིན་
 ཏོགས་པ་མེད་ཅིང་ཁྱིའུ་ལུས་དར་དཀར་གྱོན་པ་ཞིག་གི་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་མཚོན་པར་དགའ་བའི་ཞིང་
 ཁམས་འོ་མཚར་བ་ཡང་ཡང་འཇལ། ཡལ་གྱི་མི་ལམ་དུ་ལུམ་གྱི་བང་ན་གསེར་གྱི་དོ་རྗེ་ཅེ་ལྷ་པ་དར་
 ལྷུས་སྤྲུལ་པ་མེས། ཤིང་པོ་སྤྲེལ་ལོ་ལྷ་བ་དང་པོའི་ཚོས་བཅའི་ལྷ་པོ་ལུམ་ལ་གཞོན་པའི་གཟུགས་དུ་
 མེད་པར་བཞུགས་ཐུགས་བཞེད་ཅིང་ཚོན་སྐྱེ་མཚེད་བཞེས་པ། བར་སྤུང་དུ་འཇའི་གྱུར། ལྷའི་བྱང་
 བུ་མོ་མང་པོས་མེ་རྟོག་གི་ཆར་བདེ་བར་རྒྱུངས། སྐྱ་གཟུགས་མདོག་ལུན་[3a]སུམ་ཚོགས་པར་གྱུར།
 མཚོན་དབྱེས་པ་དོ་རྗེ་ལས་ལ། དཔེ་བ་དཔེ་བཅའི་དུས་ལས་འདས་པར་གྱུར་པའི་སྐྱེ་བ་ལྷ་མའི་ཚོས་
 བརྒྱུད་དང་། འགོ་རྟོག་སྐྱེ་ཚོས་རྟོན་མཚོན་འཕྲོ་སྤོང་གྲ་འདི་ཡོད་ཅེས་ཤུགས་འབྲུང་དུ་ཡབ་ལུམ་
 གཉིས་ལ་སྐྱས་པས་ཏ་ལས་པར་གྱུར། སྐྱེ་བ་ལྷ་མའི་ལས་འཕྲོས་དེ་སྤང་བ་རྟོན་འབྲེལ་དུ་འཆར།
 ཁྱིའུའི་དུས་ནས་སྐྱེ་འབྲེལ་ཆེ་ཞིང་ཡི་གེ་འི་སྐོག་སོགས་ལ་ཚོན་པར་སྤང་ཞིང་ཉམས་[རྣམ་]རྟོག་འཆར།
 ལུག་ལོ་ལ་གོར་ལོ་བརྒྱ་གཅིག་གི་སྤོང་ལ་མེབས་པ་སྤུན་ལྷ་བ་རིན་ཆེན་སྤོང་པོའི་དུང་དུ་དཔེ་བསྟན་གྱི་
 བསྐྱབ་པ་རྗེས་པར་སྤང་ལྷེ་གཞོན་གསུམ་ལ་སྤོ་སྤྱུངས། ལུབ་གཅིག་མི་ལམ་དུ། ཐོས་བསམ་མི། ལུ་
 ལ་སྤོག་པ་འོ། བསམ་མེད་རི་[3b]དུགས་ལྷ་ལྷའི་དོན་མེད་ལ། ཚོ་གང་སྤོང་པོའི་དོན་ལ་དུལ་ན་
 ལེགས། ཅེས་པའི་རྟོན་གྱི་སྐྱེལ། རྒྱལ་བས་ཚོགས་བཅད་རེའི་དོན་ལྱིར་དུ་སྐྱེ་སྤོག་དོར་ནས་བྱང་ཚུབ་
 བརྒྱལ། བདག་ཀྱང་རྗེས་སུ་བསྐྱབ་དགོངས་ནས་བཀའ་གདམས་གོང་མའི་གདན་ས་སྤོང་ཐང་འོར་
 ཡོར་པ། ར་སྤོང་། བསམ་ལས་ལྷ་སར་མེབས་གདུང་ཤུག་[ཤུགས་]དུག་པོའི་སྐྱོ་ནས་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་
 པས་མཚོན་མོ་གཉིད་གྱི་དུས་སུ་ཨ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ན་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པ་དེ་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱི་སྐོ་ཅེས་པའི་རང་
 སྐྱེ་བྱུང་བའི་འབྲུལ་པའི་སྤང་བ་ཡི་མེད་པར་འོད་གསལ་དུ་རྗེན་སྤང་གི་སོང་འདུག་རང་ལུམ་དུ་
 འཕྲོབས། སྤྱར་ཡང་སྤུན་ལྷ་བའི་དུང་དུ་ལྷེ་ལྷ་བ་དང་པོའི་ཚོས་བཅོ་ལྷའི་ཉན་རབ་བྱང་དཔེ་ཚུལ་
 གྱི་བར་ཐོབ་པར་མཛོད། དབང་ཅིག་རྒྱུད་དུ་བྱེད་གསུང་ནས་[4a]བཀའ་གདམས་གོང་མ་རྒྱལ་ས་གྱི་
 དབང་ལུང་ཟབ་ཚོས་མན་དག་སྤོང་རྒྱལ་ས་རྗེས་པར་གནང་སྤུན་ལྷ་བ་རིན་ཆེན་དུང་དུ་སྤོལ་ལོ་

ཉེ་ཤུ་ཅུ་ལྷའི་རྟ་རྒྱ་བ་ཡར་ངོ་བོའི་ལྷའི་ཉེན་བསྐྱེན་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་མཚན་དུ་རིག་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་བྱང་
 རྒྱལ། སེམས་གཅིག་ནི་བཅུན་གྱི་རང་བཞིན་ཏེ། ལྷང་སྲིད་ལྷ་འདྲེ་ངང་གི་སེམས་གཉིས་སུ་མེད་པར་
 ཐག་ཚང་ན་སེམས་ཉེད་དེ་མེད་དག་པ་དོར། ལྷང་སྲིད་ལྷ་འདྲེ་ལྷུན་གྱི་འབྲུག། ཅེས་དེ་མི་རྟོག་པའི་
 ངང་ལས་མ་གཏོས་བཞིན་སྐྱེ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཡོན་ཏེན་འཕྲིན་ལས་ལྷར་སྐྱེན་གྱིས་སྲུབ་པའི་འགྲོ་དོན་
 རྩོགས་མེད་ཤར་བ་ལ་རང་རྒྱུད་པ། སླིན་ཚུལ་རྒྱུད་ལྡེ་ཐམས་ཅད་དགོངས་པ་མཐུན་ཅིང། དེས་དོན་
 རྒྱུད་ལས་རྒྱལ་[4b]བ་གཅིག་གི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལས། དུ་མ་ཁ་བསྐྱར་འགོ་བ་ཡིས་རང་ལས་བྱང་བའི་སྐྱུལ་
 པར་སྣང། དོན་དམ་གཉིས་མེད་ཅིག་ཏུ་རྫོགས། ལྷུན་གྱིས་སྲུབ་པའི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་དུ། ཞེས་
 གསུངས་པ་ལྟར། གདུལ་བྱ་མ་རུང་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྣང་པོར་དྲག་པོས་འདུལ་བར་འོས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ངོ་
 པོར། ཞེས་སྣང་རྣམ་དག་ཚེས་དབྱིངས་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྣམ་པར་སྣང་མཛད་རྣམ་འཕུལ་དབུས་རྩོགས་ཐུགས་
 ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གཉི་ལྷག་རྣམ་དག་མེ་ལོང་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྟོག་སེམས་རྣམ་འཕུལ་ཤར་རྩོགས་སྐྱའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ད་རྒྱལ་
 རྣམ་དག་མཉམ་ཉེད་ཡེ་ཤེས་རིན་ཆེན་འབྱུང་ལྡན་རྣམས་འཕུལ་སྣོ་ཡོན་ཏེན་རྒྱལ་པོ། འདོད་ཆགས་
 རྣམ་དག་སྣོག་པ་བྱང་རྒྱབ་དཔལ་ལྷན་པ་རུར་སྤྲིགས་རྒྱལ་མཚན་འཛིན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་ཏུ་ལྷུར་པ།
 བྱང་རྒྱབ་ཐུགས་གཉིས་འབྱོངས་པ་བྱི་ནང་གི་ཚེས་ལ་ནང་བྱན་རྒྱུད་པར་ལོ་རྒྱུ་བ་གོང་མ་རྣམས་
 [5a]ཀྱིས་དཀའ་བ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པས་སྐྱེན་དངས་ནས། བཀའ་འཁོར་གསུམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ་རྒྱུད་ལྡེ་བྱི་
 རན་གི་གདམས་དག་རྣམས་བྱེ་བྲག་དུ་བྱེ། དེ་དོན་བྱིན་ཅི་མ་ལོག་པ་སྤྲིན་གྲོལ་གྱི་ལམ་མ་ལུས་པ་
 ཐུགས་སུ་རྒྱུད་པར་མཛད། ད་ལྟར་གྱི་བྱ་བ་རྣམས་གཏང་[བཏང་]སྟོམས་སུ་བཞག། རང་རེ་རྣམས་
 རྟོ་རྩེ་འཆང་གི་གོ་འཕང་རྒྱབ་པ་ལ་བར་གཅོད་ཤིན་ཏུ་མང་ཏེ། འཕགས་པ་རིན་ཆེན་འདུས་པར་
 ཚེས་ཀྱང་དགོན་ལ་རྟག་ཏུ་འཚོ་བ་འང་མངས། ཞེས་གསུང་པ་ལྟར། བྱི་ནང་གི་གཞོན་པ་སྤྲོབས་པའི་
 རྩེར་སྲུང་མ་འདྲི་རྩ་བུ་ཞིག་རྟེན་དགོས་ལ་འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་རྩ་བརྟེན་ན་མཐུ་ཆེ་བ་མེད་པས་ངན་སོང་
 དུ་སྐྱུང་ལ་འཇིག་རྟེན་ལས་འདས་པ་ཞིག་ངེས་པར་བརྟེན་[5b]དགོས་ཏེ་སྤྱིར་སྐྱབ་ལྡེ་ཆེན་པོ་བརྒྱུད་
 སོགས་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་གྱི་ནང་དུ་རྒྱུད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཆེ་མཚོག་ཏེ་ཏུ་ཀའི་ངོ་པོར་རྟོགས་ཞིང། མཚོད་
 བསྟོད་དྲེགས་པའི་ནང་ནས་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ལེ་ཏར་ཡང་གཙོ་འཁོར་རྣམས་གདུལ་བྱ་གང་ལ་གང་
 འདུལ་གྱི་སྐྱར་བརྟན་པ་ལས་རང་རྒྱུད་པ་སླིན་ཚུལ་རྒྱུད་ལྡེ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་དགོངས་པ་མཐུན་ཅིང་ལྷག་
 པར་བསྐྱེད་པ་མ་ཏེ་ཡོ་ག་ལྟར་ན་ཞི་ཁྲོ་དང་རིགས་བརྒྱའི་འདདས་ལ་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྐྱེ་ལ་ཡུམ་སྐྱུལ་སྟོན་
 ཏུ་འདྲེན་བཅས་པར་ཤར་བ་ཡིན་ཚུལ་ནི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱུལ་པ་མངའ་རིས་བསྐྱེད་དབང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་རིགས་ལྷའི་
 རང་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐྱེ་ལྷ་རང་སྐྱེན་མ་ལ་སོགས་རང་གདངས་ཡུམ་ལྷ་དང་། སེམས་དཔའ་[6a]སེམས་
 མ་ཡུལ་དུག་ངོ་པོ་ཉེད། རང་སྟོན་ཤ་གོལ་བྱི་གོལ་སྟོན་ཚོགས་ཞེས་ཞི་བ་དང་ཁྲོ་བོ་ཁྲག་འཐུང་ཡལ་
 ཡུམ་སྐྱེ་མེད་རང་རྒྱལ་ལས། འཇིག་རྒྱལ་མཐུ་སྟོབས་ལྡན་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་ཚོགས་ཞེས་དང་ལྷང་ཨ་རུ་
 ཡོ་གར། རོ་རྒྱུང་དབུས་གསུམ་དྲེགས་པ་པོ་མོ་མ་ཞིང་གསུམ་གྱི་ངོ་པོ་དང་ཨ་ཏི་ཡོ་གར། ལྷང་སྟོང་
 ལྷང་འཐུག་རང་བཞིན་ཤེས་དགོས་པས། ཡོན་ཏེན་སྐྱུལ་པ་ཚོས་རྒྱལ་དབང་པའི་སྤེ། ལྷང་སྟོང་
 དབྱེར་མེད་དྲེགས་པ་པོ་མོའི་ཚོགས། གཉིས་མེད་དབྱིངས་ལས་ལས་བཞིའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་བསྐྱུལ་ཅེས་དེ་
 དག་ཐམས་ཅད་རང་སེམས་རྣམ་དག་ཏེ་ཏུ་ཀའི་ཚེས་དབྱིངས་རང་བྱུང་གི་ཡེ་ཤེས། ཐིག་ལེ་ཉག་ཅིག་
 སྤྲིས་[6b]བྲལ་ཡིན་ཚུལ། བྱིས་གསུམ་དུ་རིགས་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་བྱང་རྒྱབ་སེམས་ཅིག་ནི་བཅུན་གྱི་རང་

བཞེན་ཏེ། ལྷང་སྲིད་ལྷ་འདྲེ་རང་གི་སེམས་ཀྱི་གཉེས་སྤྱོད་པར་ཐག་ཚོད་ན། སེམས་ཉིད་དྲི་མེད་
 དག་པ་དོར། ལྷང་སྲིད་ལྷ་འདྲེ་རྩུན་གྱི་གྲུབ། ཅེས་དེ་མི་རྟོག་པའི་ངང་ལས་མ་གཤམས་བཞེན། ལྷ་
 གསུང་ཐུགས་ཡོན་ཏེན་འཕྲིན་ལས་ལྷ་རྩུན་གྱི་གྲུབ་པའི་འགྲོ་དོན་ཕྱོགས་མེད་དུ་ཤར་བ་ལས། རང་
 ལྷུང་པ་མིན་ཚུལ་ལྷུང་སྲིད་ཐུགས་ཅད་དགོངས་པ་མཐུན་ཅིང་དེས་དོན་ལྷུང་ལས་རྒྱལ་བ་ཀྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་
 ལས་དུ་མ་ལས་ལ་ལྷུང་འགྲོ་བ་ཡིས། རང་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་རྣམས་པར་ལྷུང་དོན་དམ་གཉེས་མེད་གཅིག་
 ཏུ་རྫོགས། ལྷུན་གྱི་གྲུབ་པའི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་དུ། ཞེས་གསུང་པ་ལྟར། གཏུལ་བྱ་མ་རུང་[7a]རྣམ་གྱི་
 ལྷུང་པོར་དུག་པོས་འདུལ་བར་འོས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོར་ཞེ་སྤང་རྣམ་དག་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྣམ་
 པར་ལྷུང་མཚན་རྣམ་འཕྲུལ་དབྱུས་ཕྱོགས་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ། གཏི་ཐུག་རྣམ་དག་མེ་ལོང་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྣོར་
 སེམས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་སྤྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ། ང་རྒྱལ་རྣམ་དག་མཉམ་ཉིད་ཡེ་ཤེས་རིན་འབྲུང་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་
 ལྷོ་ཕྱོགས་ཡོན་ཏེན་རྒྱལ་པོ། འདོད་ཆགས་རྣམ་དག་[སོ་]སོར་རྟོགས་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྤང་མཐའི་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་
 ལུབ་ཕྱོགས་གསུང་གི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཐུག་དོག་རྣམ་དག་བྱ་གྲུབ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ངོ་བོ་དོན་ཡོད་གྲུབ་པའི་ཡང་རྒྱལ་
 ཉིད་རྒྱལ་ཚོགས་དུ་མར་བརྟེན་ནས། ཞེ་རྒྱས་དབང་དུག་གི་ལས་རྒྱབ་ཕྱིར་ཞེ་དུག་དུ་མར་བརྟེན་ཅིང་
 ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཅམ་ལུ་བའི་དབང་དུ་སོང་ན། ལྷུལ་པ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་རྩོན་[7b]རོལ་ཡུལ་ཨ་ལུ་ཏེ་བྱ་
 བར། ཚོས་ལྷན་རྒྱལ་པོ་རྣམ་ར་རྩོན་པོ་བདུན་རྣོང་ནག་པོའི་བྱ་རྒྱུད་པའི་ཚེ་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་པ་བྱང་
 འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྟེ་རིགས་ལ། ཡེ་ཤེས་སྤྱིད་པའི་ཡུམ་ལྷ་ལས་གྲུབ་རྫོན་པོ་ལ། ལྷའི་རྩོ་[ས]ངས་
 འབག་སེང་གར་མཐའ་ཏུ་འདྲེན་ཕྱེ་ལ་སོགས། མཐའ་པོ་ལྷ་འོད་གཞོན་ལུར་རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་ནས་
 འཕྲིམས་ཉེས་བརྒྱ་ལྷ་བརྒྱ་ཅ་གསུམ་གསུང་བར་ཁས་ལྷངས། རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆད་ཉུང་ལ་ཚོན་ཞིང་། རྫོན་པོ་
 དགོན་པ་ལ་དགའ་བའི་དེའི་ཚེ་འགོང་པོ་དགོངས་འདུལ་གྱི་ལྷ་ཁང་དུ་ལྷ་འོད་གཞོན་ལུ་དང་བམ་ཟེ་
 མ་དང་འདུས་པའི་རྫོན་ལམ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་གཤམ་པ་རྩ་མགོ་ཅན་པ་སྤོང་དཔོན་མཚེད་ལའི་བར་དལ་
 བདུད་ཁྱི་ཁར་ཅེས་ནམ་མཐའི་སྤང་སྲིད་ལྷ་འདྲེ་[8a]བཟན་དུ་འཁོད། ལྷར་ཕུན་ཟས་རྩོམ་ཉི་རྣམ་ཚོད་
 དུ་བཅིངས། ཞེས་སོགས་ཀྱི་རྫོན་དཔོན་ཚེན་པོས་བསམ་ལུག་ཤེལ་གྱི་ཐུག་ལུག་ན་བཞུགས་དུས།
 གཞོད་སྤྱིན་དེ་ཉིད་བྱིས་པ་ལོ་བརྒྱད་པའི་ཚུལ་བྱས་སེང་གི་དཀར་མོར་རྩུས་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་གྱི་སྤོང་དུ་
 བབས་ཁ་བསྤང་འདེབས་པས། སེང་གི་གནམ་ལ་སྤོས་ཏེ་འཛིན་བཀུག། དགོ་གཞེན་ཤེལ་སྤོང་ཚོགས་
 པར་རྒྱལ་ཏེ། དབང་བསྐྱར་དམ་བཅུག་མཚན། ཚོས་སྤོང་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཁྱི་སོང་ལྷུང་བཅན་གྱིས།
 ཟབ་ཡངས་མི་འཕྱར་རྩུན་གྱི་གྲུབ་པའི་གཅུག་ལག་ཁང་བརྟེན་བརྟེན་བཅས་གཞིངས། མཐའ་སྤོབ་
 ཚོས་གསུམ་གྱི་རྩོམ་པ་ཀའ་དགོས་པའི་མཐའ་པོའི་ཞལ་ནས། ལྷེ་བརྒྱད་གཞུན་རྣམས་ནི་གཞོད་ཚེ་
 རྫོན་དཔོན་ཞལ་ནས་རྣོར་[8b]གྱི་པོ་ལྷ་གནམ་ལྷ་བྱང་རྒྱབ་ཡིན། རྒྱལ་པོ་ཤིང་བྱ་ཅན་དེ་གདན་
 དངས་ནས་དེ་ལ་གཏད་ན་གཅུག་ལག་མི་འཛིགས་གསུང། ལྷ་ཏེ་རྣོར་གྱི་དགོམས་ལྷ་བཅོམ་ནས་ནི།
 དཔེ་ཏར་བཀའ་བཅའི་རྗེས་སུ་འབྲངས་ཏེ་འོང། ང་ཡི་དཔེ་ཏར་སྤོང་དུ་བརྟེན་འཛུགས་གསུངས།
 ཟ་རྣོར་རྒྱལ་རྒྱུད་རྣམ་པ་ལ་ལ་གཡུའི་སྤུབ་པ། དུང་གི་སེང་གོ། ལྷེ་[ལྷ]ཏེ་རྣོར་གྱི་སྤོང་བཟེད་བཀའ་
 ཅ་དུ་མ་དང་བཅས་རྩུན་དངས། ཚོས་འཁོར་སྤོང་བའི་གསུང་མར་མདའ་གསོལ་ཞིང་བརྟེན་གཅུགས།
 གཉེས་བསྐྱེད་ཞལ་བཞེས་མཚན་པ་ཡིན་ལགས། དེ་ནས་གུང་ཐང་ཚལ་ཡང་དགོན་སོགས་སུ་བརྟེན་
 པའི་རྒྱན་རྩུགས་བཞེན། དགུན་ལྷ་སྤེལ་ལོ་ཐ་རྒྱུང་དུས་གུང་ལོ་སུམ་ཅུ་སོ་བདུན་དུ་ཤེབས་ཤིང་ཚོས་

བརྩེ་ཉིན་བཀའ་གདམས་གདན་ས་[9a]མཚོ་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་ནང་ཚན་དཔལ་ལྷན་བདེ་ཡངས་གྲུ་ཚང་
 འདེབས་པར་མཛད། འདྲེ་རབ་འབྱམས་པ་བརྩེ་དུག་དགེ་འདུན་ལྷ་བརྩེ་ལྷག་རིགས་རྒྱུད་ཡོན་བདག་
 དངུལ་རྒྱུད་པ་དང་། ཡོན་བདག་རྣམས་དོང་པ་བཅས་དགོན་པར་ཚུར་ལུ་ན་ཨོ་རྒྱུ་ཚོས་རྫོང་པ།
 ཤར་དུ་བོན་དགོན་སྐར་པ་གྲུ་ཚང་། ལུ་བ་ན་སྤོན་དགོན། མདའ་ན་དམ་འབག་དམར་སེར་ཅན་གྱི་
 དགོན་པ་བཅས་ཡོད་པས། ཚོས་ཀྱི་གདན་ས་དེ་ཉིད་བཞུགས་པའི་དུས། གསང་ལྷགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུད་
 འབྲམ་སྐོར་མ་ལུས་སྤོན་བྱེད་དོན་རྗེ་སྤོང་བའི་དབང་དུས་འཁོར་ལྷ་ལྷགས་སྤོན་དོར་མདུ་མ་ཡ། གསང་
 འདུས་ཚགས་ལྷགས་འཛིགས་བྱེད་རོ་ལང་བརྒྱུད་བསྐོར་དཔལ་བདེ་མཚོག་མི་ཏུ་བརྒྱ་ཙ་ལུ་བཞོ་བརྒྱ་
 ཙ་། མི་གཡོ་བ་དཀར་ནག། ལྷག་འཚམ་[9b]ཉིར་། གི་གྲག་དམར་ནག་སོགས་བཀའ་གདམས་
 པའི་ཚོས་སྐོར་མཐའ་ཡས་པ་དང་། ལྷག་མཐའ་སྤྱིའི་སྐོ་ནས་འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས་སྤོན་གྲོ་ལ་ལམ་ལ་འགོད་
 པར་མཛད། རིགས་རྒྱུད་ལྷངས་ཀྱི་ཆེ་བ་མཚོད་ཞབས་དུང་ལེགས་ལྷན་བདུད་འཛོམས་འོར་བུ་དབང་
 རྒྱལ་སྤིང་མོ་སྤོན་མ་སྤོན་སྤོ་འཁོར། ལྷ་སྤོན་རྣམས་འོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱུད་པ་རྣམས་གདོང་པའི་ནང་མོ་བསོད་
 ལྷགས་དར་རྒྱས། རང་སོ་ཚོས་བརྟན། དཔོན་མོ་ཚོ་རིང་དབང་མོ་སྤོན་བསོད་ལྷགས་ཚོ་རིང་སྤོ་
 འཁོར། ཡོན་བདག་རྗེ་ལྷ་རྗེ་སྤོད་རྣམས་དང་རྒྱུན་དུ་ལྷགས་དམ་གཙོ་བོ་ཡི་དམ་འཁོར་ལོ་སྤོན་པའི་
 སྐོ་ནས་ལྷགས་དམ་སྤོད་པོ་ཁྲི་ཚོ་རེ། གཏོར་བསྐོས་རྒྱས་པ་ལྷགས་དམ་གཏོར་མའི་རྒྱུད་ལམ་ཐམས་
 ཅད་དུ་གསང་བ་གནད་དང་མ་བྲལ་བར། མི་འཛིགས་སེང་གེ་འདི་ཁྲིའི་སྤོད་དུ་[10a]བཞུགས།
 ཟབ་པ་དང་རྒྱ་ཆེ་བའི་ཐེག་པ་ལྷ་ན་མེད་པའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་བསྐོར། ལྷ་ལྷན་སྤོན་བྱ་རྣམས་སྤོན་
 གྲོ་ལ་ལ་སྤོན་བར་མཛད། གདུལ་བྱའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཐམས་ཅད་མཐར་སྤྱིན། རྒྱུ་བ་གནས་ཚོས་གྲུ་དགོན་
 སོགས་ཀྱི་གཙོ་བོ་དུང་པ་རིན་ཚེན་བཟང་བོ་དང་དུང་རམ་པ་གྲུ་པ་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དང་དུང་རམ་པ་རབ་
 བརྟན་དོན་གྲུ་བཅས་པའི་སོགས་དངས་པའི་དད་འདུས་སྤོབ་མ་རྣམས་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ཏེ། ཚོས་
 རྒྱུངས་གདོང་བཞི་པ་རེ་སོགས་ལ་གསོལ་མཚོད་གྲིས་གསུངས་སྤོར་ཡང་ལས་འབྲེལ་ཆེ་བས་བསྐྱུང་བ་
 དང་སྤོར་དུ་ལྷག་གསུང་བ་དང་། ཚོས་དང་ཟང་ཟིང་གཉིས་ཀའི་སྐོ་ནས་གདན་སར་ཞབས་ཏོག་ལུ་ལ་
 དུ་ཕྱིན་པ་མཛད། ཨོ་རྒྱུ་སྐར་བོན་གཞོད་ཚོ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཆེ་བ་སོགས་གི་སྤོན་གྱི་ལས་དབང་གི་དབང་གི་
 ཚལ་ཁྲི་དཔོན་དོན་ཡོད་དོན་རྗེས་ས་སྤོང་ཏོར་ལྷ་དང་པོའི་ཚོས་གསུམ་ལ། དཔེ་ཏར་འདི་ཉིད་ཁོད་དུ་
 ལྷན་ས་[ཁོག་ཏུ་བརྒྱུས་] [10b]ལྷང་སྤོན། ལྷང་ཐང་མེ་ཡི་འཛིགས་དུས་འདིར། དོན་ཡོད་དོན་རྗེ་
 དག་པའི་ཞིང་དུ་གཤེགས།⁴⁰ དཔེ་ཏར་ང་ལྷོ་ཨོ་རྒྱུ་སྤོང་ཏུ་འགྲོ། ཞེས་སོགས་ལྷང་སྤོན་པས། སྤོབ་
 དཔོན་ཁོ་གཏུ་ཆེ་བའི་ཤེས། དཔེ་ཏར་བསྐོར་རྗེས་ལུས་གཡུར་བཅས་པ་རྣམས་རྒྱ་བོའི་གཞུང་ལ་
 ཞིག་ལན་མང་གསུང། གདུངས་འཛིན་བརྒྱུད་པར་བཅས་པའི་ལུས་པ་ལ། ས་མེས་སྤོང་མ་ཡིན་པས་
 རྒྱ་ལ་བསྐྱར་བས་ག་ལ་མཐུས་འཁོར་འབྲངས་རྣམས་ལ་གཞོད་ཚོ་ཚེན་བོ་ཡོད་ལུས་པས། སྤོབ་དཔོན་
 ཞེས་ལན། ང་ལྷོ་འཛི་གྲུང་ཐང་མེས་མི་འཛིགས། ཁོ་ཨོ་རྒྱུ་དུ་འགྲོ་ན་ངས་ལས་སྤོར་རོ་གསུངས་
 ལན། ལས་གོངས་སྤོན་སྤོང་དམར་སང་དཔེ་ཏར་དགོར་རྗེས་ལུས་གཡུར་བཅས་སྤོ་སྤོ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་གསུངས་
 འཁོར་འབངས་གདུང་འཛིན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དཔེ་ཏར་དགོར་རྗེས་ལུས་གཡུར་བཅས་རྒྱ་བོའི་གཞུང་དུ་གོ་

⁴⁰ These two lines are quoted nearly verbatim in the *Gungtang Record*; see Sørensen, Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo 2007, p.792[f.41b.2-3].

བར་གདན་འདྲེན་པར་རྩམ་ན། དཔེ་ཉར་ཁོག་དུ་རྒྱན་ནས་[11a]རྗེ་ འདྲེ་བན་དཔེ་ཉར་འཁྲུང་
 རྟོག་ཚུང་སློབ་དཔོན་གདུངས་འཛིན་བཅས་པར་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བར། འདྲེ་བན་གནས་གཞི་སློབ་པའི་དུས་
 འདི་ནི་སློབ་དཔོན་འཁོར་ཚོགས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ད་དངོས་ཤིག། འཁོར་ས་བཅས་པས་གོ་དགོས་སོ། འདྲེ་
 བན་རྗེ་རྗེ་ཚེ་ལེ་ལེ་འགྲུར་བ་མེད། འདྲེ་བན་བསྐྱར་རྩམ་བཅས་པ་ཁྲུར་ནས་འགྲོ་གཟུགས་མེད། ང་
 ཡི་སློབ་མ་རྗེ་རྗེ་སེམས་དཔེ་འཕྲོད། དེ་ཡི་འགལ་རྒྱུན་མ་ལུས་སེམས་བྱེད་ཞེས་སོགས། རྒྱ་བོད་
 གཞུང་ལ་སེབས། དམ་འབག་དམར་སེར་ཅན་གྱི་མདར་སེབས་རྗེའི་ནས་མདར་གསུམ་རྗེ་ལམ་ཤིན་
 ཏུ་བཟང་། རྣམ་མཁའ་ནས་མི་དཀར་པོ་ཞིག་གི་ང་ལེན་ང་ལེན་ཟེར་བའི་སྐྱེ་དང་བཅས་བྱུང་།
 འཇའ་འོད་གྱི་གུར་ལུབ་པའི་ནང་ཞིག་ནས་དུང་སོ་འཁོར་ལོ་མར་ཡོད་པ། གཡུའི་སློབ་མ་ཅན་རྟེ་
 དཀར་གཞོན་པ་འཁོར་ཚོགས་མང་པོ་བྱུང་སྟེ། བདག་གི་རྐང་པ་སྐྱི་པོར་སྐྱབས། ལུས་ཀྱི་དྲི་མ་རྣམ་
 བསལ། མི་སྣོང་སྣོང་ཡག་ཅོམ་སྐྱིན་ཟེན། ལུས་ཀྱང་མང་རྩམ་བྱུང་བས་དེ་རིང་[11b]མགོན་ཡོང་བ་
 ཡོད་པས་གུབས་གྲུས་ཤིག་གསུང་། ཚེས་ལྗེའི་ཉིན་གུང་རྩམ་ལ་དར་འབག་དམར་སེར་ཅན་གྱི་མདར་
 རྒྱ་རྒྱའི་འགམ་དཔེ་ཉར་བསྐྱར་རྩམ་ལུས་གཡང་དང་བཅས་པ་བཞུགས་པ། འཇའ་གུར་ལུབ། འཇའ་
 དཀར་ཞིག་སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་དུང་སྟེ་བྱུང་བས། དུང་དྲགས་པ་རྒྱན་མཚན། དུང་དོན་གྲུབ་རབ་
 བརྟན་གཉིས་ལ་ལུང་པའི་མདའ་བེད་རང་གི་མགོན་སྟེ་བོང་གུར་ཡང་ལུབ་འདུག་གདན་རྗོངས་
 ཤོག་གསུང་མཚུབ་རིགས་མཛད། དུང་པ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་དུ་བྱོན་ནས་གཞིགས་པས། མ་མེན་འདྲེ་
 མེན་ཞིག་ལ་དར་གོས་གྱི་གྲོན་ཞིང་བྱ་མོད་པོའི་སྐྱེ་བུ་ལེ་བ་གྲོན་པ་ཞིག་གི་སྤྱི་ སློབ་མེད་ཀྱི་གཞུལ་
 ཡས་ཁང་ན། གཉིས་མེད་ཀྱི་རོ་པོར་བཞུགས་པ། སློབ་དཔོན་དེ་ལ་ཀུན་རྗེས་བན་ཚུང་གི་བསྐྱར་བ།
 འདྲེ་བན་གྱི་སྤངས་མ་[12a]ང་བརྟེན་པའི་དུས་ལ་བབས། དཀོར་རྩམ་གྱི་གནས་སྐྱབ་བ་ཞིག་ཚོམ་
 ཞིག་གསུང་། སློབ་དཔོན་འདུས་ཚོགས་ཉིན་གྱི་བྱ་ར། མཚན་གསུམ་གྱི་མེལ་ཚོ། འགལ་རྒྱུན་སེམས་
 ཞིང་མཐུན་སྐྱབ་སློབ་ལམ་གྱི་སྟོབས་དང་ལྷན། ལེགས་པར་བཅང་ཞེས་གསུངས་ནས་ལུང་སྐྱས་དུང་
 ཡགས་སེང་གྱིས་དུང་པ་རང་བཞུགས་ཤིག། ངས་སློབ་དཔོན་ལ་ལུས་ཡོང་བ་སྐྱབ་ནས་ཡར་བྱོན་དེར་
 སློབ་དཔོན་ལ་ལྷག་འཚལ་རྟེ་མི་མེན་འདྲེ་མེན་གྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་རྣམས་ལུས་པས། ཤིན་ཏུ་ལེགས་ཡར་གདན་
 རྗོངས་ཤོག་གསུངས། དུང་མར་བྱོན་ཡར་གདན་དངས། སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་རྟ་བྲ་འག་རྒྱུང་དྲགས་ཅན་
 ཤི་བའི་མཐོ་དབངས་མཐོ་བཅས་ཤ་སྐྱབ་མེད་པའི་སྐྱེ་རྣམ་དེ་བ་དེ་སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་མདུན་དུ་ཡོད་པར།
 དཔེ་ཉར་དཀོར་རྩམ་ལུས་[12b]གཡར་དང་བཅས་པ་སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་མདུན་དུ་འགྲོར། དཔེ་ཉར་
 ཁོག་ཏུ་རྒྱན་ས་[བརྒྱུས་པས] རྗེ་ སློབ་དཔོན་རྗེར་སེམས། རོ་པོར་བཞུགས་པ་ལ། བན་ཚུང་འདུས་
 ཚོགས་སེམས་དཔེ་ཉར་སེམས་མ་བརྟུང། ཡོན་བདག་སྟག་དང་དུལ་གྱི་གཞིགས་པ་ཅན། དུང་སེང་
 བརྟུ་དྲག་བཅས་པའི་ཚོགས་དབུས་འདྲེ་ང་ཚོག་གསུམ་སྐྱེ་བའི་དུས་ལ་བབས། འདྲེ་བན་གནས་མེད་
 རྩམ་ཚུང་འདི་དག་རྣམས་སློབ་དཔོན་འཁོར་འབངས་བཅས་པས་གོ་དགོས་སོ། ལེགས་པར་ས་ལ་རྩམ་
 བརྟུད་བཀྲགས་ལ་བཞིན། གནམ་ལ་གདུགས་དཀར་བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྟགས་རྩམ་དང་། བར་དུ་ལོར་བུ་ཚ་
 བདུན་ལམ་གྱི་གསལ། སློབ་དཔོན་བྱང་སེམས་ཡི་དམ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་དང་། དམ་ཅན་སྤང་མའི་ཚོགས་
 རྣམས་སྐྱིན་གཏེབས་བཞིན། སྐྱི་པོར་རྗེ་རྗེ་བདུད་རྩི་སྐྱེར་བའི། སློབ་དཔོན་ཚོས་རྒྱུང་འདུས་སྟེ་
 བཅས་པ་ལ་ཉིན་[13a]གསུམ་བྱ་ར། མཚན་གསུམ་མེལ་ཚོ་དང་། བྱང་རྒྱལ་མ་ཐོབ་བར་དུ་འདའ་

མི་བྱེད། གཞུགས་ཅན་དག་དང་གཞུགས་མེད་བཞེགས། ལྷུང་དུ་སྐབས་པར་བྱེད་ལ་སློབ་དཔོན་
 དགོངས། གཞུགས་མེད་དོན་རྗེ་ཚེ་ལོ་ལ་འགྲུང་བ་མེད་རྗེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་དུལ་རྒྱུང་པའི་ཡུམ་སློལ་མ་ལྷ་
 མཛེས་གོངས་པའི་དགོངས་རྗེ་གས་སུ་གཡུ་གསེར་ཞེ་སྟོང་རེ་པའི་གཙུག་དངོས་ཆས་རྣམས་རྗེ་གས་བྱང་
 ཏུ་བསྐྱོད་པའི་ལྷུང་དུ་སྐབས་པའི་ཐོག་སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་ཕྱག་དུ་བཞེས་ནས། སློན་མ་ལྷ་མཛེས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་
 དུ་སོང་གསུངས་ནས་བསྐྱོད་པ་སློན་ལམ་གྱི་འཚམས་སྦྱོར་རྒྱས་པ་མཛད། གཡུ་སྐྱག་དུ་བཞེས་རྟེན་མགོའི་
 མགོ་བོར་བཞག་ཏེ། དཔེ་ཉར་རྟེན་མདོ་བརྟེན་འདི་ལ་ཚོལ། ལྷུང་བཅོལ་ལེགས་པའི་བཏང་རག་
 གཉན་པོ་དང་། བཅོལ་[13b]ལེགས་པའི་ས་སྟོང་བརྟེན་དུ་འཇུགས། ལྷུང་བཅོལ་ལེགས་པའི་དུལ་
 འཕང་གཉན་པོ་བསྟོད། ང་ཡི་ཞི་རྒྱས་དབང་དྲག་ལས་རྣམས་སྐྱབ། འདུས་ཚོགས་དགོ་འདུན་ལྷེ་
 དང་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་མ་ལུས་ཡོངས་སུ་རྒྱས་པའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་མཛད། ལོག་ལྷ་གཞུགས་ཅན་དག་དང་
 གཞུགས་མེད་བཞེགས། ལྷུང་དུ་སྐྱོལ་བའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་གཉན་པོ་མཛད། ཞེས་བསྟོན་ལ་བཀའ་སློ་
 མཛད། རྟེན་མགོ་གཡུ་འཕྲུ་ཅན་དེ་དེ་ནས་བྱང་། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས། ལྷག་དོངས་དུང་པའི་ཞལ་ངོར་
 བཀའ་སློ་སྟེ། ང་ཡི་ཚོས་གསུང་།སྤང་།དཔེ་ཉར་འདི་ཉིད་ལ་གནས་རྒྱུང་རྒྱུང་ཞེས་བཞེས་ཤིག་
 གསུང། ལྷ་མའི་བཀའ་བཞེན་ལེགས་པར་སྐྱབ་ནས། རྗེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་རྟེན་མགོས་གཙུག་སྐྱེ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་
 རྟེན་བརྟེན་མདོས་དང་བཅས་པ་གཞིངས། དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་སྟོན་པའི་སློ་ནས་རབ་དུ་གནས་ས་
 [14a]དབང་གི་ཤེས་པ་བརྗོད་ནས་མེ་ཏོག་འཛོར་བས་མདའ་རྒྱུང་གང་ཅམ་གྱི་ས་མེ་ཏོག་འཕེབས་པ་
 ལྷུང་། ལྷག་གདོང་དུངས་གདུང་པའི་ཞལ་ངོ་ཡོན་བདག་པོ་མོ་རྣམས་དང་ང་རང་གི་སྐྱེ་ཤོན་དང་
 དགོ་བའི་བཤེས་གཉན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཉམས་རྟོག་དོན་རྗེའི་སྐྱེ་སྤེའི་བྱ་དང་བྱ་མོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མེ་ཏོག་གི་ཆར་
 ཕབ། འཇའ་འོད་ཀྱི་གུར་སྐབ། ངོ་ཆར་བའི་རྟེན་པས་མ་གྱི་མི་ཁྲབ་པ། རྗེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་རྟེན་པོ་པོ་ལ་
 བཀའ་སློང་མ་བཞག་མཛད་པས། མི་དཀར་པོ་རྟེན་པོ་ཞོན་པ་རེན་པོ་ཆེད་སོག་ལྷ་སོགས་རྒྱན་
 དང་དར་སྐྱ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ན་བཟའ་དུང་སོ་འཁོར་མ་གཡུའི་སློན་མ་ཅན། ཕྱག་གཡམས་དུང་དཀར་གཡོན་
 འཕྲང་བ་བརྒྱ་རྩ་ལོག་པ་འཁོར་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་བསྐྱར་བ་ཞལ་མདོན་སུམ་དུ་གཟིགས། བརྟེན་གསལ་གྱི་
 རྒྱན་དེ་ལྷར་ཚུགས་པ་ཡིན་ཞིང་གནས་རྒྱུང་ཞེས་མིང་གི་ཐོག་མར་གཏང་པ་[14b]དེ་ལྷར་ཡིན་རྗེ་
 རེན་པོ་འཁོར་བཅས་ལ། ཨོ་རྒྱན་སྐར་པ་བོན་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དམག་བཤམས་པར་གོས་ཆམ་ལྷ། དཔེ་
 ཉར་ལུས་ལོག་དུ་སྐྱངས་ལྷ། ཅི་ལྟོ་སློབ་དཔོན་མེ་ལོང་ངོས་ལ་གཞུགས་བརྟེན་ལྷར་ཤེས་བྱའི་ཚོས་ལམ་
 མེ་ཚོང་མེད་ན་ཡང་། གཞུགས་ཅན་དམ་ཉམས་ལོག་ལྷ་ཅན་དེ་རྣམས། གནོད་སྦྱིན་དཔེ་ཉར་དང་
 ཡིས་སློལ་བྱེད། སློན་དུས་སློབ་དཔོན་རྟེན་པའི་རིམ་པ་ལ། མི་སྟོང་སྟོང་སྤྲག་སྤྲལ་བ་དེ་རྣམས་ནི།
 གཞུགས་ཅན་དམ་ཉམས་དག་པའི་སྐྱེ་ཚེ་ཡིན། གཞུགས་མེད་དཔེ་ཉར་དང་ཡི་སྐྱངས་བེན་གྱིས། སློབ་
 དཔོན་ཉིང་འཛིན་མ་གཡེངས་བསྐྱེད་ལ་བཞུགས། སྟོགས་དུས་མའོངས་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐ་མ་ལ། དག་
 བཞེགས་གཙོ་སློན་འཁོར་འབངས་དེ་དག་རྣམས། གདུལ་བྱར་སྐྱེས་ནས་བསྟན་པ་བསྟན་པ་གཉན་པོ་
 ཤིག། སློབ་དཔོན་སྐྱགས་ངན་མ་མཛད་གདུལ་བྱར་གཟིགས། སློབ་དཔོན་ཡང་སྤེད་དེ་སྐྱེ་བ་སྐྱངས།
 སློབ་དཔོན་[15a]ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་དེ་ལས་བསྐྱོག་པར་བྱེད། དཔེ་ཉར་གཞུགས་མེད་དང་ཡང་འབྲེལ་ཡོང་།
 མི་མདོན་དབྱིངས་ནས་བྱར་སྐྱེན་གྱི་སྐྱབ། འདྲེ་ངན་དོན་རྗེའི་ཚོག་ལ་ལྷུང་བ་མེད། ཞེས་སོགས་
 གསུང། སྐར་དཔོན་[བོན་]སོགས་ཀྱི་གཙོ་སློན་རྣམས་ནང་སོགས་ཀྱི་ཆར་ཕབ་ཏེ་བསྐྱོག་པར་མཛད།

རྗེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གཏང་རག་འཕྲིན་བཅོལ་སོགས་རྒྱས་པར་སྤང་ནས། ལེགས་སོ་ལེགས་སོ་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་དཔེ་
 ཉར་ར་གཡུ་ཡི་སྒྲིན་མ་དང་དུང་སོ་འཁོར་མར་བྱས། འཇའ་ཡི་གུར་ལུབ་འོད་དཀར་འབྱེད་པར་བྱེད་
 པའི། འོད་ཚལ་དཀར་པོ་ཞེས་པའི་དག་ལྷ་ཁྱེད། འདས་དང་མ་འོངས་ད་ལྟར་དུས་གསུམ་གྱི་ཟབ་
 ཡངས་འབྱེད་པའི་འགལ་རྒྱུན་མ་ལུས་སེལ། བྱང་རྒྱལ་མ་ཐོབ་པར་དུ་སྐྱོད་པར་མཛོད། འཕྲིན་
 [15b]བཅོལ་གངས་ཅན་གྱི་ཁྲིད་འདི་ན་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཐམས་ཅད་མཐར་བྱེད་པར་མཛོད། རྗེ་ཉིད་སྐྱེ་
 ཚོ་ཚད་དུ་མེབས། ལྷི་ནང་གྱི་རྒྱུད་རྟགས་བརྟེན་འབྲེལ་འགྲིག། དུང་རམ་པ་རེན་ཆེན་བཟང་པོ་མི་
 འཇིགས་སེང་གའི་ཁྲི་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཚབ་དུ་དབང་བསྐྱར་དུང་རམ་པ་གྲགས་པ་རྒྱུན་དུང་བརྟེན་དོན་གྲུབ་གྱི་
 ཚོས་བྱ་སློབ་རྣམས་ལ་བྱང་རྒྱལ་ལམ་རེམ། དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་བཟོས་པའི་རྒྱ་ལུས་གྱི་དམིགས་རེམ་ལ་
 སློབས་ཅན་ལོ་འདི་གསུང་སྟེ་འགོ་རྣམས་ལས་གྱི་རྒྱ་མ་བྱང་སེམས་ཚོས་གྱི་སྐྱེ་སངས་རྒྱས་ནི་ཡི་ཤེས་གྱི་རྒྱ་
 མ་ཡིན་པས་རྒྱལ་པའི་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་རྒྱ་མ་ལྷ་བྱར་ནས་རྒྱ་བ་ཡི་ཤེས་གྱི་རྒྱ་མ་ཡིན་པས་རྒྱལ་པའི་
 ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་རྒྱ་མ་ལྷ་བྱར་བསྟན་ནས་རྒྱ་བ་ན་རྒྱ་མན་ཡིན་གསུང། རྒྱ་ལུས་གྱི་འབྲེལ་བཤད་རྣམ་
 རྒྱས་པར་མཛོད། [16a]ལྷགས་སོ་ཡོས་གྱིས་ལོ་ཚོད་ན་རྒྱ་འཕུལ་ཆེན་པོའི་ངང་དུ་དགོངས་པ་ཚོས་
 དབྱེདས་སུ་ཐེམ། མེ་དོག་གི་ཆར། རོལ་མོའི་སྐྱ། འཇའ་གུར། རི་མགུལ་པའི་སྐྱ་བསམ་གྱི་མི་བྱབ་
 པ་རྒྱུན་པར་བྱང་ཞག་བདུན་རྒྱ་མའི་ངང་དུ་བཞུགས། ལྷོ་བ་རྣམས་གྱི་མཚོད་པའི་བྱེ་བྲག་དབལ་ཏུ་
 མེད་པ་དང་བཅས་སྟེ་ཞག་བདུན་གྱི་བར་དུ་མཚོད། སྐྱ་གདུང་རེན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷུ་ལུས་ནས་ཉིན་མཚན་
 དུ་གསོལ་བ་རྩེ་གཅིག་ཏུ་བཏབ་པས་ལྷ་རྣམས་ཅ་ཅོད་གཏའ་ཞལ་སྐྱ་སྟན་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱི་ཐོས་པ་བྱུང།
 སློབ་དཔོན་མངོན་པར་དགའ་བའི་ཞིང་དུ་གཤེགས། དབུ་ཐོད་དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་བཟོས་པའི་སྐྱ་རང་
 ཕྱོན་དུ་གསལ། རྗེ་རྗེ་འཚང་ནས་བརྒྱད་ནས་ལྷ་མ་ཐམས་ཅད་རེམ་བཞིན་བྲིས་པ་ལྷ་བྱར་གསལ་དུ་
 རིང་བསེལ་ཐམས་ཅད་གཅིག་[16b]ཏུ་དྲིལ་བ་ལས་མཚོད་རྟེན་འབྲུམ་ལྷག་ཅམ་བཏབ་ནས། རྗེའི་
 བཀའ་དྲིན་ལ་བསམ་ནས་བྱ་སློབ་རྣམས་གྱི་གསེར་གྱི་མཚོད་གདོངས་བཞེངས་པར་རྩམ་པ་ན། དཔེ་
 ཉར་ཁོག་ཏུ་སྐང་སྟེ། ཅིཾ་ སློབ་དཔོན་རྗེ་སེམས་དག་པའི་ཞིང་དུ་གཤེགས་སྐྱ་གསུང་ལྷགས་རྟེན་
 རབ་ཏུ་བྱོན་པ་རྣམས། གཟུགས་མེད་དཔེ་ཉར་ང་ཡི་རྟེན་གྱི་ལེགས་པར་བཞེངས་ལ་སྒོམ་ལམ་ཚོས་
 རྒྱུན་ལ། སན་དང་བདེ་བ་སྐལ་པའི་མཐར་ཐུག་པར། དགོན་གནས་སློབ་དཔོན་བཅས་པར་རྟེན་
 འབྲེལ་བཟང་འདྲེ་ངན་ང་ཡང་འབྲེལ་མེད་གོགས་སུ་ཡོང། ལྷག་གདོང་དུལ་གདུང་བདུང་འདུལ་
 སྟེ་བ་སྐངས། སློབ་དཔོན་ཉིད་ཀྱང་ཡང་མིད་དེ་དུས་ཡོང། མ་འོང་དུས་གྱི་རྣ་མའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་
 བཟང། འདྲེ་ངན་ཡོད་རྩམ་ཡངས་པའི་དུས་འདི་ནི། འདྲེ་ངན་ཨོ་རྒྱུན་སྐྱིད་[17a]དུ་ལོག་ནས་
 འགོ། ཞེས་སོགས་ལུང་སྐྱེས་ནས། སྐྱེ་འབྲུམ་བཞེངས་པའི་བྱང་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་པོའི་སྤངས་ལ་ཐོ་ཉེ་ཤུ་རྩ་ལྔ་
 རྒྱ་ཞེངས་སུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་གྲང་དཔལ་གྱི་རབ་ཏུ་མཛོས་པ། ལུས་པའི་ནང་དུ་དབུ་ཐོད་ལས་བྱོན་
 པའི་བདེ་མཚོག་རང་བྱོན་སྐྱེ་དབལ་གྱི་རིང་སེལ། གདུང་རུས་ཚོས་སྐྱེའི་རིང་སེལ་སྐྱེ་གསུ་ལྷགས་གྱི་
 རྟེན་རི་སྟེང་རྒྱ་བོད་གྱི་སྐབ་ཐོབ་ཐོང་མ་རྣམས་གྱི་རིང་སེལ། བ་བཟང་བྱོན། རྟེན་བསམ་གྱི་མི་བྱབ་
 པ། རྗེ་ཉིད་རང་གི་ན་བཟང་གཏོར་ཆའི་སྐོར་རྗེ་ཉིད་གྱི་གདུང་རུས་མཚོད་རྟེན་འབྲུམ་ཐུག་
 བཅས་པ་ནང་དུ་བཞུགས། དཔལ་འཁོར་ལོ་བཟོས་པའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་ཞལ་བྱེ་རྒྱུད་སྟེ་ནས་རི་རྩར་
 བསྟན་པ་བཞིན། རབ་ཏུ་གནས་པའི་ཚོ་ག་སྟོན་དུ་གྱུར་ནོར་གཏོར་ཚོས་གཏོར་སོགས་ཀྱང་བསམ་

[17b]གྱི་མི་ཁྱབ་པ་བཞག་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་ལགས། ལྷོག་པ་བྱང་རྒྱུ་དཔལ་ལྷན་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་རགས་
 བཟུམ་ཚེས་སྐྱོད་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོའི་འབྱུང་འཁྲུངས་དཔལ་ལྷན་བདེ་ཡངས་གྲུ་ཚང་པའི་བརྟེན་གསོལ།
 རྒྱན་གཙུག་པ་རགས་བཟུམ་དང་བཅས་པ་དེ། རྗེ་འཇམས་དབྱུངས་ཚེས་ཀྱི་རྗེ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དཔལ་ལྷན་
 པས་འབྲས་སྤྲངས་བཏབ་ཏེ་དགོ་འདུན་གྱི་ནང་དུ་སྤྱན་དྲངས་མངོན་པ་བདུན་མི་འདྲ་བ་སོགས་བྱིན་
 ཅིང་། ཐོག་ཁ་ནས་དུད་བྱད་པ། ལྷ་མར་རྗེགས་པ་གསུང་ཕྱབ་པ་དགོ་འདུན་སློབ་ལ་དཔལ་ཏའི་
 གདན་སློབ་སྤྲུལ་དྲངས་པ་ཡོན་བདག་ཕྱ་མདའ་རྣམས་ལ་གཞན་མི་རྒྱགས་པ་སོགས་ཀྱི་སྤྱད་རིམ་
 སོགས་བཞག་ནས་དགོན་བདུན་པོའི་ནང་མཚན་དུ་བཞུགས། དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲས་སྤྲངས་ཀྱི་སྤྲངས་
 མར་ཡོང་བ་དེ་ལྷར་ཡིན་ཅིང་དེ་ནས་རིམ་པ་རྒྱུད་དེ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་དགོ་འདུན་[18a]རྒྱ་མཚོ་
 ལས་བཟུན་གསོལ་འཇུག་པ་གནང་། ལྷ་དང་བཅས་པའི་སྐྱབས་མགོན་མ་ལུས་པ་དག་དབང་སློ་
 བཟང་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་བར་ཚེས་སྤྲངས་ཀུན་གྱི་གཙོ་བོར་མངའ་གསོལ་བ་དེ་ལྷར་གནང་ལ་འདི་རྣམས་ཀྱི་
 འབྱུང་ཁྲུངས་མཁན་རིན་ཆེན་འཇམ་དབྱུངས་གྲགས་པའི་རྣམ་ཐར་ཁྲུངས་ཕྱབ་ནང་ནས། བདག་ལ་
 རྩལ་བ་ཡིན་ལགས། ལུས། །།⁴¹

⁴¹ These last two lines are written in the 'fast' (*rgyug yig*) Tibetan cursive script.

**“Mom, Can I Become a Han Officer?”
Childhood Memories, Politics, Emancipation and Inti-
macy in the Chinese-Written Autobiographical Essays of
Blo gros chos mtsho, a Khampa Woman (1909/1910–1949)**

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(CRCAO & INALCO)

his article is about the previously untold history of a non-religious woman born in the turbulent first half of the 20th century in Eastern Tibet, her path to personal self-affirmation and emancipation, her strong, bold, and somewhat unconventional activities, and her radically innovative and modern autobiographical essays, narrated in the first person.¹ While it is widely acknowledged that Tibetan culture privileges women with relatively more freedom than is experienced by women in other parts of Asia, nevertheless women are virtually absent from the scene of mainstream written and oral Tibetan History/histories, which are dominated by male-centered patriarchal historical narratives. Histories of women – secular women in particular – have often remained voiceless, yet they do exist. They simply have not been valued or sufficiently told and documented. Because these narratives have not been transmitted or remembered, they have not become integrated within mainstream Tibetan historical and cultural discourses.

This article aims to give voice to Blo gros chos mtsho (aka Blo gros, Ch. Luozhe Qingcuo 羅哲情錯, 1909/1910-1949), a Khampa woman at the crossroads of epochs and cultures who was born into one of the most influential ruling families of Upper Nyarong (Tib. *Nyag stod*), the Rgya ri tshang. She was twenty when she was given in marriage to Ren Naiqiang 任乃强 (1894-1989), a prominent Han scholar, one of the

¹ Earlier versions of this article were presented at international seminars, conferences and workshops, notably: the 14th Seminar of the IATS (University of Bergen, Norway, June 19-25, 2016) where Yudru Tsomu (Sichuan University) and myself co-organised a panel entitled “Untold Histories of Women in the Making of Modern Tibet”; at the workshop “Global Lives and Local Perspectives” (University of Oxford, May 12-13, 2017); and at the international conference “The Body in East Asia’s Modern and Contemporary Literatures” (Université Paris-Diderot, Nov. 16-18, 2017).

fathers of Tibetology in China during the Republic of China (ROC). Their marriage gave birth to a lifelong, intellectually stimulating partnership and a fruitful cross-cultural and translinguistic cooperation, which resulted in truly remarkable scholarship and several publications.

This paper analyses Blo gros chos mtsho’s personal journey and her cultural-cum-political activities, from her Nyarong (Tib. *Nyag rong*) origins and her status as a young Khampa woman who was illiterate in the Tibetan language, to her self-made education in oral and written Chinese after her marriage, her intellectual work in Chengdu and in Kham as her husband’s assistant, her role as co-founder and executive director of the scholarly magazine *Kham-Tibet Studies Monthly* (Ch. *Kang Zang yanjiu yuekan* 康藏研究月刊), and her locally and nationally-oriented political views and activities. By analysing Blo gros chos mtsho’s life and career through the lens of the political forces and cultural influences at work in Kham during the ROC period, I show the emblematic significance of her cross-cultural activities despite the fact that her story, for too long underestimated, has been left untold in both Tibetan and Chinese mainstream cultural discourses. This article also – and perhaps above all – explores the power of literacy in founding, provoking and affirming women’s empowerment as well as the innovative reach of a previously unheard-of literary voice. This is all the more significant if one considers that Blo gros chos mtsho wrote in Chinese in the pre-Maoist period, at a time when few Tibetan women received any education at all and, more generally, few Tibetans were fluent and/or educated in Chinese.

Blo gros chos mtsho was not the only transfrontier woman who played a significant role in the political and cultural arena of the first half of the 20th century; I will discuss a few others later in this article. Here it suffices to point out that, from this point of view, her example serves as a significant intellectual case-study for a small group of intellectuals, female and male, who anticipated Sino-Tibetan dynamics and activities that were to fully develop in the (post-)Maoist years to come, thus showing some continuities – and not only ruptures – between pre-Maoist and (post-)Maoist times.

1. *Blo gros chos mtsho’s autobiographical writings*

Blo gros chos mtsho was not a very prolific writer; she published only two autobiographical essays at the very end of her short life, while very nearly upon her deathbed. These writings – alongside a long biographical essay posthumously written by Ren Naiqiang to commemorate his wife’s premature death, as well as first-hand oral, written and

visual materials mainly collected during fieldwork – constitute the main sources on which this article is based.² Blo gros chos mtsho's essays are both written with the "I" (Ch. *wo* 我) of first-person narrative. Her first piece – "My Proposal to the National Assembly" (Ch. *Wo zai Guomin dahui de ti'an* 我在國民大會的提案, 1948) – is a four-page-long piece where Blo gros chos mtsho discusses her political views on the conflictual Sino-Khampa relations at the time, and explains the problem-solving propositions she elaborated and submitted to the 1948 National Assembly in Nanjing. The second essay – "My Homeland" (Ch. *Wo de jiaxiang* 我的家鄉, 1949) – is a much longer nine-section piece which, in chronological terms, progresses from Blo gros chos mtsho's childhood at Rab ru estate in Nyarong to her personal and professional projects at the time of writing.³ Blo gros chos mtsho's writings are the expression of a certain literary modernity: her language is simple and vernacular; her style is direct and unadorned; her tone is intimate, almost introspective: it is disarming in its sincerity and genuineness. If the notion of literary modernity implies a focus on the *individual self*, the *inner self*, one's *human intimacy*, and, consequently, the *embodied self* and *corporeality*, then Blo gros chos mtsho represents a very interesting modern intellectual figure, with all the ambivalences that such modernity implies.

Histories of literary modernity – East Asian literary modernity in particular – have often begun as historiographies of the narrative self, with a focus on the singular individual, a fascination with the psychologized self, an attention to bodily sensations and representations, a

² Blo gros chos mtsho's autobiographical essays are entitled "My Proposal at the National Assembly" (Ch. *Wo zai guomin dahui de ti'an* 我在國民大會的提案; see Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948) and "My Homeland" [Ch. *Wo de jiaxiang* 我的家鄉, two installments; see Luozhe Qingcuo, 1949a and Luozhe Qingcuo, 1949b]. For Ren Naiqiang's biographical essay, "Mourning Blo gros chos mtsho" (Ch. *Dao Luozhe Qingcuo* 悼羅哲情錯), see Ren Naiqiang, 1949.

³ "My Homeland" (Ch. *Wo de jiaxiang*) was published by two installments for a total of nine sections in all. The titles of the sections are: 1. "I abandoned my homeland" (Ch. *Wo gufu le zhe jiaxiang* 我孤負了這家鄉), 2. "Lofty Rab ru estate" (Ch. *Wei'e de Raolu guanzhai* 巍峨的饒祿官寨), 3. "Sister 'Chi med's tragic death" (Ch. *Cansi de ajie Quemo* 慘死的阿姊却墨), 4. "Unforgettable May 6" (Ch. *Bu neng wang de wu yue chu liu* 不能忘的五月十六), 5. "The most faithless people in the world" (Ch. *Shi shang zui wu xinyi de ren* 世上最無信義的人), 6. "Our monastery" (Ch. *Women de lama si* 我們的喇嘛寺), 7. "Revenge" (Ch. *Baofu* 報復), 8. "Leaving the Dharma" (Ch. *Likai le fofa* 離開了佛法), 9. "What I would like to undertake" (Ch. *Wo xiang zuo de shiye* 我想做的事業); see Luozhe Qingcuo, 1949a; Luozhe Qingcuo, 1949b.

vernacularization of writing, and the emergence of highly-personalized self-referential literary genres.⁴ Autobiography has played a crucial role in this, and the writing of autobiographical selves – the so-called modern subjects – as secularized and temporalized singular individuals has usually been considered as an important topic in modernity studies.⁵ These features of modernity are also crucial in Blo gros chos mtsho’s autobiographical essays, and, in this sense, her writings provide an interesting site to explore the complex interaction between continuity and rupture that is so crucial to questions about modernity, and Tibetan modernity in particular.⁶

Autobiography and, more generally speaking, the rich bulk of Tibetan life-writing produced up unto the 20th century, mainly consisted of traditional religious life writings, hagiographies in the form of *rnam thar*, which proposed almost exclusively male models of sainthood and spiritual accomplishment, with very few female-centered examples.⁷ Autobiographical writings by women were even rarer, since women “encountered difficulties in merely trying to produce religious literature” and faced strictures against writing.⁸ Full-fledged lay autobiographies describing personalized and secularized selves, mainly government officials and noblemen, were also very few before the 20th century. They were written by men, about men, and largely drew on the traditional genre of religious *rnam thar*.⁹

⁴ Only for China, for example, there exists an impressive amount of scholarly literature on the subject; see for instance R. Hegel and R. Hessney (eds.), 1985; J. Průšek, 1980; Lydia Liu, 1995; and J. Ng, 2003. As far as Tibet is concerned, scholarship examining the “apparition of the self” in life writing includes, among others, S. G. Karmay, 1988; J. Gyatso, 1992; J. Gyatso, 1998.

⁵ See P. Burke, 2011; K. J. Weintraub, 1982.

⁶ For scholarship on the debated question of modernity in Tibet, see R. Barnett and S. Akiner (eds.), 1994; R. Barnett and R. Schwartz (eds.), 2008; M. C. Goldstein, 1989; M. C. Goldstein, D. Sherap, W. R. Siebenschuh, 2004; M. T. Kapstein (ed.), 2009; H. Stoddard, 1986; G. Tuttle, 2005; G Tuttle (ed.), 2011.

⁷ For scholarly works on women in Tibetan culture and on female-centered *rnam thar*, see for example A. Chayet, 1993; H. Diemberger, 2007; H. Fjeld and T. Hofer (eds.), 2010-2011; H. Gayley, 2017; H. Havnevik, 1989, 1997, 1998; H. Havnevik and J. Gyatso (eds.), 2006; S. H. Jacoby, 2014; C. Makley, 2007; K. R. Schaeffer, 2004; N. Schneider, 2013; J. Willis (ed.), 1989; Y. Tsomu, 2018.

⁸ See K. R. Shaeffer, 2004, p. 53. Kurtis R. Shaeffer eloquently explores the example of the hermitess O rgyan chos skyid (1675-1729), who was forbidden to write her *Life* by her master precisely because of her gender (K. R. Shaeffer, 2004, p. 53-56). In a similar vein, Hanna Havnevik explains that the female master Rje btsun Blo chen rin po che (1856-1951) too, experienced strictures against writing because of her gender (H. Havnevik, 1998, p. 101).

⁹ Regarding proto-modern non-religious Tibetan life writing, see, for example, L. Hartley, 2011; other early-20th-century examples of lay autobiographies are mentioned in J. Gyatso, 2011, p. 18-19. Regarding the evolution of the genre of *rnam thar* into so called anglophone “new-age” *rnam thar*, see L. H. McMillin, 2001.

Thus, with respect to the Tibetan life-writing tradition, and the Tibetan tradition *tout court*, Blo gros chos mtsho was not only *innovative* because she wrote in Chinese at a time when Chinese was rarely practiced by Tibetans as a literary language; she was also *ground-breaking* because she wrote in the genre of modern individual-centred self-reflexive life writing, and in a style – direct introspective realism – which was almost unheard of in the Tibetan literary tradition.¹⁰ Furthermore, Blo gros Chos mtsho was *modern*, because she was fully conscious of the newness of her trajectory; she was determined to participate in the larger movement of transformation and innovation which Kham was undergoing during the first half of the 20th century. Writing for her became, among other activities, a way of inscribing herself within both her birth world (Kham/Tibet) and her chosen world (Han environment/China).¹¹

2. *Where histories connected:
Nyarong and the Kham region of Eastern Tibet*¹²

The Kham region of Eastern Tibet, and its geopolitical and cultural configuration during the first half of the 20th century, is central to this article, not only because Blo gros chos mtsho and her entourage were from Kham, but also because their stories were deeply intermingled with Kham local histories and the macro-history of the Sino-Tibetan borderlands. The *dramatis personæ* of this article were proactive agents of those histories as much as those histories constitutively contributed

¹⁰ Blo gros chos mtsho's literary form and content were more in line with the new aspirations and innovations introduced in Chinese literature starting from the first decades of the 20th century, during the May Fourth period and the emergence of a modern Chinese literature. One of those aspirations was the elaboration of a new national literature written not in the classical language, but in the vernacular language. Experimenting with innovative, modern, non-Confucian ways of writing lives and exploring the self was also an important aspect of the intellectual endeavors of modern Chinese writers; see, for example, K. A. Denton, 1998; M. Dryburgh, S. Dauncey (eds.), 2013.

¹¹ I refer here to the observations that "newness alone is not enough to comprise modernity" and that the "degree of self-consciousness of newness" is paramount in defining modernity elaborated by F. Jameson, 2002, and developed for the Tibetan case by Janet Gyatso. See also S. Kaviraj, 2005a; and S. Kaviraj, 2005b; see J. Gyatso, 2011, p. 13-15.

¹² This subtitle refers to the expression "connected histories" first introduced by Sanjay Subrahmanyam for the Eurasian case and adopted by Janet Gyatso to signify the importance of geographical, cultural, but also conflictual, contacts and interactions to explore the question of Tibet and modernity; see J. Gyatso, 2011, p. 10-11, quoting S. Subrahmanyam, 1997.

to shaping their personalities, commitments and life paths. These individuals lay at the confluence of Kham’s endogenous and exogenous tensions and ties, local concerns and national preoccupations, internal feuds and external negotiations, fights and reconciliations, Chinese expansionism, Lhasa interventionism and Khampa resistance.

Kham was at that time a conglomeration of *de facto* autonomous self-governed principalities ruled by local “kings” (Tib. *rgyal po*), “governors” (Tib. *sde dpa*) and “chieftains” (Tib. *dpon po*) which were often involved, one against another, in bloody conflicts. Nyarong, the “Iron Knot” (Tib. *lcags mdud*) of Tibet, was no exception, and beside being the “Land of Flowers” (Tib. *me tog yul*) romantically recalled by Ama Adhe in her memoirs, it was also – and perhaps above all – a land of “honor and pride”, of “fighting warriors”, of “interminable feuds” and “bloody revenge”; a land where “a rifle was an essential part of a man’s life; [...and] families fought against families, tribes against tribes, often for reasons that were so buried in the past that even the protagonists were not very sure of what they were fighting about [...]”.¹³ Nyarong was thus a region where manliness – and sometime womanliness – were defined in terms of heroism, bravery and fighting spirit. Khampa collective memory and Tibetan national narratives abound with stories of heroes and heroines, of brave fearless men and women fighters. Consider Mgon po rnam rgyal (1799-1865), the “blind warrior of Nyarong” who dominated the Kham political scene in the 19th century; or Aten, the anti-Maoist resistant warrior depicted by Jamyang Norbu in *Warriors of Tibet*; and Ama Adhe (b. 1932) and her group of resistant women who passed on supplies and intelligence to Khampa guerrilla fighters in the 1950s.¹⁴ But consider also Rgya ri ‘Chi med grol ma (1905-1939), the amazon woman whose exploits and feats have inspired legends and poems; and the “Four rivers, six ranges” (Tib. *Chu bzhi gang drug*) warrior Rgya ri nyi ma (1920s-year of death missing) and his anti-Maoist revolt-leader wife, Rdo rje g.yu sgron, whose histories are directly connected with the stories explored in this article.¹⁵

¹³ See Jamyang Norbu, 1986, p. 32. For the characterization of Nyarong as the “Iron Knot” of Tibet, see Yudru Tsomu, 2015, p. 60. For Nyarong as the “Land of Flowers”, see Adhe Tapontsang, 1997, p. 5. For scholarly studies on 19th-20th-century Kham, Nyarong, and Sino-Tibetan relations see, for example, L. Epstein, 2002; S. Gros (ed.), 2014; S. Gros (ed.), 2016; Lin Hsiao-ting, 2006; Yudru Tsomu, 2015.

¹⁴ For more information on Mgon po rnam rgyal, see Yudru Tsomu, 2015; for Aten, see Jamyang Norbu, 1986; for Ama Adhe, see Adhe Tapontsang, 1997.

¹⁵ Rdor rje g.yu sgron, one of Rgya ri nyi ma’s wives, led a revolt against the Chinese in Nyarong in 1956 (on Rdor rje g.yu sgron and Rgya ri nyi ma, see Carole McGranahan, 2010, p. 80-85). Rgya ri nyi ma, Rdor rje g.yu sgron, and the legendary Rgya ri ‘Chi med sgrol ma were all relevant members of the same family, the

Resistance to external forces was just as constitutive of Nyarong – and the whole of Kham in general – as intra-Khampa conflicts. Throughout their history, Kham principalities fought to preserve their autonomy from both Lhasa and its recurrent annexing manoeuvres, and from China with its expansionist and integrationist politics. Nationalist China in particular was interested in controlling and annexing Kham, and one important reason among many was to secure an easy access route to central Tibet, and eventually to rule it (a policy called *an Kang zhi Zang* 安康治藏, “pacifying Kham to rule Tibet”). The transfer of the ROC capital from Nanjing to Chongqing following the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), and the massive exodus of the Chinese population and institutions from the Eastern coastal regions to the Southwestern borderlands to escape the Japanese bombings, also contributed to fostering the idea among Chinese politicians and intelligentsia that it had become urgent to effectively pacify and administer the no-longer remote Southwestern frontiers, and particularly Kham. The “barbarians” had now become neighbours; acquiring a deeper knowledge of their distinctive cultures and habits became a crucial issue for the integrity of the Republic and for the pacific cohabitation between the local populations and the newly arrived urbanites.¹⁶

The Chinese venture in Kham – which had already begun during the Qing dynasty with the establishment of a military and administrative presence there – was maintained during the ROC period, while measures aiming at promoting the social integration and cultural assimilation of Kham people into the ROC were reinforced, at least on paper. Alongside military incursions, territorial administration, mining exploitation and the support of a settler economy in Kham, these culturally-oriented measures were crucial for the consolidation of the ROC. Three of these measures are particularly relevant here since they saw the direct and proactive involvement of the figures presented in this article. The first was the implementation of Chinese-language ed-

Rgya ri tshang, of which Blo gros chos mtsho (whose history is central to this article) is a member too. Their family relations will become clearer later in my analysis. Regarding the historical/legendary tones which are popularly used to recall Rgya ri 'Chi med sgrol ma's feats, I will later write in this article about Blo gros chos mtsho's description of 'Chi med sgrol ma's heroic profile. Lodi Gyari Rinpoche – special envoy to the 14th Dalai Lama in the USA and 'Chi med sgrol ma's grandson – noted, in a personal communication, that “songs and poems have been written in her ['Chi med sgrol ma's] honor and even Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal composed a song about her heroic deed to inspire Tibetan Nationalism.” (Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, personal email communication, May 6, 2016).

¹⁶ On the issue of the cohabitation/confrontation between the locals and the newcomers on the Southwestern frontiers, Kham in particular, and the mutual visions of the “other”, see L. Maconi, 2014.

educational and schooling programs sponsored by the Chinese government to spread Chinese as the “official language” (Ch. *guanhua* 官話) in Kham and Eastern Tibet, thus establishing the basis for the cultural assimilation of the Tibetan population and the embryonic spread of Sinophone literacy in Eastern Tibet.¹⁷ The second was the initiation of state-funded exploratory programs and fieldwork research in Eastern Tibet, Kham in particular, with the emergence of new disciplines (sociology, archaeology, anthropology, Chinese tibetology) and new scholars working in collaboration with local people, mainly as informants or guides, but also as colleagues.¹⁸ The third was the creation of the first journals specialized in Tibetan and Khampa issues, launched with Chinese initiative and Tibetan cooperation. These journals were mostly written in Chinese, with occasional minor sections in Tibetan, the latter language often handwritten or in Latin-alphabet transliterations.¹⁹

¹⁷ The first China-implemented Chinese-language school in Kham was created in Batang in 1904. Since the very beginning of Chinese schooling programs, emphasis was put on the importance of enrolling the “children of the barbarians” (Ch. *man zidi* 蠻子弟). As I showed in previous papers and in a forthcoming article, since Khampa families were reluctant, if not hostile, to send their siblings to Chinese schools, they devised several “avoidance strategies” to resist what they considered as a compulsory “corvée”. One can safely say that the ROC schooling and educational programs in Kham were not very effective and enjoyed very limited success among the Khampa. See L. Maconi, forthcoming; L. Maconi, oral paper, 2018; and L. Maconi, oral paper, 2019.

¹⁸ Among the Chinese scholars who pioneered new disciplines at the beginning of the 20th c. making investigations in Chinese Southwestern regions, there are geologists such as Ding Wenjiang 丁文江 (1887-1936, PhD in Scotland), sociologists such as Ke Xiangfeng 柯象峰 (1900-1983) and Xu Yitang 徐益棠 (1896-1953, PhDs in France), ethnologists-cum-sociologists such as Ma Changshou 馬長壽 (1907-1971), archeologists such as Wu Jinding 吳金鼎 (1901-1948, PhD at the University of London), and the pioneers of China Tibetology: Rdo rje spyod pa (aka Paul Sherap, Ch. Xie Guo’an 謝國安, 1887-1966), Ren Naiqiang 任乃強 (1894-1989), Li Anzhai 李安宅 (1900-1985, PhD in the USA), and Liu Liqian 劉立千 (1910-2008). I will deal later in this article with Ren Naiqiang, Paul Sherap and Liu Liqian’s common intellectual projects and activities.

¹⁹ In my personal archives, I could list ca. 103 Sino-Tibetan periodicals which were launched in the first half of the 20th century, which had a more or less ephemeral duration and life, and which can be regarded as specialized in Kham and Tibet issues (that is they deal with Kham and Tibet-related issues for ca. 80%/90% of their content, the rest mostly dealing with other ethnicities or regions included in the Xikang 西康 province). Of these 103 periodicals, 98 are in Chinese, 2 in Tibetan, 3 are in Chinese with some Tibetan-language sections. One of them, the *Kham-Tibet Studies Monthly* (Ch. *Kang Zang yanjiu yuekan* 康藏研究月刊, Chengdu, 1946-1949), is of particular interest in this article, as will become clear later.

3. *Reconstructing Blo gros chos mtsho's family histories*

Blo gros chos mtsho belonged to a family where leadership was a tradition, both for men and women. Apart from a few biographical data, we possess very little information regarding her early childhood up until the age of seven. We know that she was born in Dpal yul in 1909 or 1910 to an influential ruling family. Her father, Rgyal ba mtshan dpe (dates of birth and death unknown), was the chieftain of the Sde yung tribe in Dpal yul. Her mother, Sgrol ma chos mtsho (dates of birth and death unknown), was a member of one of the most prominent Khampa families of that time – the Rgya ri tshang, rulers of Upper Nyarong – and was the sister of Rgya ri Rdo rje rnam rgyal (dates of birth and death unknown), the authoritative chieftain of Upper Nyarong (Tib. *Nyag stod dpon po*). It was in fact the maternal branch of the family – the Rgya ri tshang – that was to play a crucial role in Blo gros's life after the age of seven: she was adopted by the Rgya ri tshang, she was raised by them and with them as a full member of the family, as one of their daughters. The story goes that Blo gros chos mtsho was seven when her parents were killed in one of the multiple feuds in which their tribe was engaged. Their Dpal yul *rdzong* (fortress-house) was destroyed and Blo gros and her elder brother, Che gros (dates of birth and death unknown), were captured by the enemy and kept in seclusion.²⁰ They were finally released after long and costly negotiations conducted in person by Rgya ri Rdo rje rnam rgyal, their maternal uncle and the chieftain of Upper Nyarong.

It was in these tragic circumstances that Blo gros chos mtsho arrived at Rab ru estate, the majestic residence of the Rgya ri clan in Upper Nyarong. In the early 1920s, the Rgya ri family found itself with no sons, only two daughters. The eldest was 'Chi med sgrol ma (1905-1939), the heroic woman warrior who made her name a legend throughout Eastern Tibet thanks to her leadership in battles against rival clans, the "red" Chinese soldiers of the Long March who passed through Kham in 1935, as well as against the Chinese Nationalist army of Liu Wenhui 劉文輝.²¹ She was eventually captured and executed by

²⁰ I possess conflicting information about Blo gros chos mtsho's big brother's name. Ren Naiqiang – who, in his essay, provides accurate Latin-alphabet transliterations of Tibetan toponyms and personal names – calls him "Che gros" (Ren Naiqiang, 1949, p. 4); whereas Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, in a personal communication, names him "Chos bdag" (Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, personal email communication, May 6, 2016).

²¹ Liu Wenhui 劉文輝 (1895-1976), one of the warlords of Sichuan province during China's Warlord era, became the Governor of Xikang Province from 1939 to 1950. Xikang became an official province of the ROC and early PRC from 1939 to 1955,

the Nationalists in 1939, remaining “proud and defiant, even in her final moment before the firing squad”.²² Blo gros chos mtsho recalls this tragedy in her long nine-chapter essay “My Homeland” remembering ‘Chi med’s masculine outfit, her awe-inspiring look, her bold horsemanship, the excellence of her archery skills, and the exquisite elegance of her Tibetan calligraphy.²³ Raised as a potential clan leader, ‘Chi med sgrol ma was the only daughter of the family who received an education (only in Tibetan, not in Chinese), a thing which aroused Blo gros chos mtsho’s greatest admiration. The second sister was called Dpal mo sgrol ma (?-early 1930s).²⁴ Blo gros chos mtsho recalls her elegance and beauty, the delicacy of her features, and her composure and reserve as boys courted her. Since there was no male heir in the Rgya ri tshang, an arrangement was made, as was often the case in Tibet at that time, by which a family would take a young man as an adoptive bridegroom or matrilocally resident husband (Tib. *mag pa*), who would take on his wife’s family name, and live with them to carry on the hereditary line. Dpal mo sgrol ma thus took as her bridegroom Dbang phyug rdo rje (dates of birth and death unknown) from the Zhi ba family, a very influential and prominent family from Dkar mdzes rdzong.²⁵ They had a son, Rgya ri nyi ma rgyal mtshan (aka Rgya ri nyi ma, 1920s-year of death missing), the only male heir, who would later become the new chieftain of Upper Nyarong and, in later Maoist times, a member of the “Four river six ranges” (Tib. *Chu bzhi sgang drug*) volunteer resistance army that tried to drive the PRC occupational forces out of Tibet and led the 14th Dalai Lama out of Lhasa and into exile in 1959. That same year, the whole Rgya ri family would flee into exile.²⁶

it comprised most of the Kham region, its capitals were Kangding 康定 (Tib. Dar rtsed mdo, 1939-1951) and Ya’an 雅安 (Tib. G.yag ma, 1951-1955).

²² I quote here Jamyang Norbu, 1986, p. 53.

²³ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1949a, p. 19-20. Blo gros chos mtsho dedicates the 3rd paragraph of “My Homeland” (Ch. *Wo de jiaxiang*) to the depiction of her adoptive family, including ‘Chi med sgrol ma and the circumstances of her death (title of this paragraph: “Elder Sister ‘Chi med’s Tragic Death”, Ch. *Cansi de azi Quemo*).

²⁴ The second sister is named “Dpon mo sgrol ma” (and not “Dpal mo sgrol ma”) in Ren Naiqiang, 1949. Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, Yudru Tsomu and a few oral informants, however, refer to her as Dpal mo sgrol ma (see Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, personal email communication, May 6, 2016; and Yudru Tsomu, 2018, p. 119).

²⁵ The family name of Dbang phyug rdo rje is spelled “Shes ba” in Ren Naiqiang, 1949, whereas it is referred to as “Zhi ba” in Yudru Tsomu, 2018, p. 119. Oral information collected during fieldwork is contradictory concerning the correct spelling.

²⁶ Even though Dpal mo sgrol ma is Rgya ri nyi ma’s biological mother, it is generally believed that his mother was ‘Chi med sgrol ma. This is due to the fact that Dpal mo sgrol ma died very young and Rgya ri nyi ma was raised by his grandfather, Rgya ri Rdo rje nram rgyal, and his aunt, ‘Chi med sgrol ma. In fact, since Zhi ba Dbang phyug rdo rje married into the Rgya ri family, he was wedded to both the

The union of the Rgya ri tshang and the Zhi ba tshang families was, from the very beginning, fraught with conflict and dispute. It provoked a shift in the balance of alliances which brought about one of the most devastating and tragic family feuds of that era, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives, including the death of Zhi ba Dbang phyug rdo rje and the displacement of a large number of families. It created havoc and instability in the whole region for decades. Many parties were involved in the war, but the tragedy in all this was that "it was not a Gyari vs Shiwatsang feud, it was a Gyari vs Gyari feud". (Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, personal email communication, May 6, 2016).²⁷

Blo gros chos mtsho writes extensively about all these feuds and acts of revenge and violence in "My Homeland" (Ch. *Wo de jiaxiang*). She mixes detailed factual descriptions and personal reflections, notably about her visceral and constant fear of losing all her family in those feuds, and about her ambivalent feelings when considering the outsider Han as the only possible solution for stopping the never-ending chain of revenge. Very early on, she developed an inclination to opt for mediation, negotiation and non-conflictual solutions, and she was glad when, at the age of twenty, she was given in marriage to the man who successfully served as a negotiator in one of the bloody feuds in which her family was mired. The man who acquired the respect and the gratitude of the whole Rgya ri tshang, and who was given the privilege of marrying one of the Rgya ri daughters, was called Ren Naiqiang 任乃强 (1894-1989), a prominent Han scholar, a geographer, and one of the fathers of Tibetology in China.

Rgya ri sisters. I thank all my interlocutors for helping me to retrace Blo gros chos mtsho's family relations: Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, Rgya ri nyi ma's eldest son, who kindly agreed to elucidate some factual information about his family (Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, personal email communication, May 6, 2016), but also all those who asked for anonymity.

²⁷ Lodi Gyari Rinpoche further explains: "This feud came to a natural end when my father became of age and regained total control of the family's domain because as the only son he was precious to both factions of the family. However, revenge killing resulting from this conflict continued until the Chinese communist occupation because even though the Gyari family feud had ended, many people who had lost family members during the Gyari vs Gyari war continued to pursue revenge, as was the custom back then. It is now finally over and there has been an extraordinary reconciliation. When my father died, he was free from sorrow because the deep division and animosity among the Gyari clan relatives and friends had come to an end" (Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, personal email communication, May 6, 2016).



Fig. 1 — *Blo gros chos mtsho* and husband *Ren Naiqiang*
 Unknown photo studio, Chengdu, late 1930s-early 1940s
 Private collection - Courtesy of *Ren* family member

A fine intellectual, Ren Naiqiang was also a fieldworker who explored the Kham region extensively at a time when the ROC was sponsoring explorations of its barely known Southwestern frontier regions, Kham in particular, in order to control and annex these regions not only *de jure* but also *de facto*. Among other scholarly work, Ren Naiqiang pioneered the field of China Gesar studies with the introduction, in the 1930s, of the first Chinese translations of some episodes of the Gesar epics, which he named the “Barbarian Romance of the Three Kingdoms” (Ch. *Man san guo* 蠻三國).²⁸ Having graduated from the Beijing

²⁸ For a thorough account of Ren Naiqiang’s pioneering studies in the *Gesar Epics*, see Ren Xinjian, 2011; for an analysis of the beginning of China gesarology and tibetology, see L. Maconi, 2004, p. 389-400. Ren Naiqiang’s first publication about the *Gesar Epics* dates back to May 1930 when he published the results of his first-hand collected Gesar-related fieldwork findings by installments in the *Sichuan Daily* (Ch. *Sichuan ribao* 四川日報). Those installments included: 1. an introduction to the *Barbarian Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Ch. *Man san guo* 蠻三國), that is the *Gesar Epics*; 2. the translation of an abstract from the *Bdud ’dul* episode (Defeating the Demon-King of the North). He subsequently published other translations and studies of the *Gesar Epics*. The title Ren Naiqiang gave to the *Gesar Epics* – *Man san guo* – evokes the Chinese classics *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*), a possible example here of the “narrative of similarity” (that is, supporting “ideas of unity and common origins” between the Khampa and the Han) which Yudru Tsomu mentioned in one of her articles (Yudru Tsomu, 2013, p. 333-334, p.

Advanced College of Agriculture (Ch. *Beijing gaodeng nongye xuetang* 北京高等農業學堂) in 1920 – that is in the years of the democratic movement of 1919 – Ren Naiqiang was above all an explorer who travelled the Kham region studying its geography, history and society, habits and customs, agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry. He produced fascinating ethnography of the region at a time when the Chinese cultural world had very limited knowledge of its remote and “barbarian” frontier regions, Kham included.²⁹

Ren Naiqiang met Blo gros chos mtsho in 1929, during a one-year fieldtrip to nine different counties in Kham, including Upper Nyarong. He had been appointed as inspector of the Sichuan borderland by provincial governor Liu Wenhui and during the few months he spent in Nyarong, he stayed at the palace of the Rgya ri tshang. This presented a privileged position to observe the local ruling family's habits and customs, relations, alliances and conflicts, and its governance strategies. In this regard, the marriage with one of the daughters of the family, which was proposed to him as a sign of confidence and respect, was an unexpected opportunity for close ethnological observation. Blo gros married Ren Naiqiang (whom she refers to in her writings by his courtesy name of Xiaozhuang 筱莊) officially as a Rgya ri daughter, with the Rgya ri tshang organizing an elaborate and sumptuous Tibetan-style wedding and offering a generous dowry.

After their wedding in 1930, the couple moved to Chengdu where the rest of the Ren family had settled. Blo gros gave birth to three children, but in the family there were other children and another wife; importantly, Blo gros had not married a single man: she had married a married man.³⁰ Ren Naiqiang's “first wife” (Ch. *da fu* 大婦), Qing Yizhi

338). The use of the term “Man” 蠻 (barbarian) shows the skewed vision of frontier peoples which was still widely spread among the intelligentsia in those days. It also expresses all the ambivalence of Ren Naiqiang's views which constantly negotiate between modern and progressive ideas and ways, and more traditional, almost Confucian, postures and attitudes. Ren Naiqiang himself, however, noted, since the very beginning of his research, that the content and form of the *Gesar Epics* had no relations with the Chinese classics. It is also interesting to note here that in Ren Xinjian's commemorative research article, “Man san guo” has been changed into “Zang san guo” 藏三國 (*Tibetan Romance of the Three Kingdom*); see Ren Xinjian, 2011.

²⁹ For Ren Naiqiang's major works, see Ren Naiqiang, 1990, 2000, 2009, 2010. For Chinese scholarship on Ren Naiqiang's research work, see, for example, Ren Xinjian and Zhou Yuan (eds.), 2011.

³⁰ Blo gros and Ren Naiqiang had three children: Rgya nag rdo rje (1932-1933), Ren Xinjian 任新建 (Tib. Tshe dbang rdo rje, b. 1937, scholar in Tibetan studies at the CASS in Chengdu) and Ren Xinya 任新雅 (b. 1941). Ren Naiqiang was already father to four children from his first wife: Ren Yi 任壹 (b. 1926, daughter), Ren Xinlu 任新鈞 (son), Ren Xinyong 任新勇 (son, killed during service in an ambush in Li

青儀志, was a traditional Han woman with little bound feet, who originally came from Ren Naiqiang’s native village in Sichuan. The two had been bound to marry before they were even born, as was customary in certain Chinese families. “Honest” (Ch. *zhonghou* 忠厚) and “straight” (Ch. *ganzhi* 贛直): these are the two adjectives with which Ren Naiqiang describes his Chinese wife in “Mourning Blo gros chos mtsho” (Ch. *Dao Luozhe Qingcuo-Blo gros chos mtsho* 悼羅哲情錯, 1949). They are in fact the only two pieces of information we are given about her: a conciseness which is in sharp contrast with the profusion of details that Ren Naiqiang gives about his “Tibetan wife” (Ch. *fanfu* 蕃婦).³¹



Fig. 2 — First wife Qing Yizhi (middle-front), Blo gros chos mtsho’s daughter Ren Xinya (front, second-right), husband Ren Naiqiang (front, first right), and eldest daughter Ren Yi (first-left) - 1954 ca.? Private collection - Courtesy of Ren family member

county, Rnga ba Prefecture, in 1953), Ren Xinyu 任新喻 (daughter, perished in the line of duty in 1969). I am very grateful to Ren Xinjian and Ren Yi for sharing with me information, memories and materials about their family in general, and Blo gros in particular (see my interviews, Chengdu, Oct. 2014 and Oct. 2015).

³¹ At the beginning of the essay “Mourning Blo gros chos mtsho” (Ch. *Dao Luozhe Qingcuo*, Ren Naiqiang, 1949), Ren Naiqiang enumerates the specificities of Blo gros’s character, that is: independence, strength, courage, extraversion, intelligence and extreme joviality. But he also writes about her “benevolence” (Ch. *renci* 仁慈), “politeness” (Ch. *youli* 有禮), “devotion” (Ch. *ningfu* 佞佛), “calm” (Ch. *congcong* 從容), “humility” (Ch. *qianxun* 謙遜), “composure” (Ch. *dianze* 典則), “respect towards worthy persons and the elderly” (Ch. *zunqin shangxian jinglao* 尊親尚賢敬老), and “caring love towards children” (Ch. *ciyou* 慈幼); a *mélange* of traditional Confucian virtues and more modern, almost feminist, qualities that celebrate her radiant beauty, her exuberant energy, her “consummately Tibetan temperament” (Ch. *Qi xingge, zuyi daibiao zhengge zhi fanzu* 其性格, 足以代表整個之蕃族; see Ren Naiqiang, 1949, p. 22). Ren Naiqiang’s incorporeal aesthetic in describing Blo gros’s healthy days is in sharp contrast with Blo gros’s realistic and corporeal description of her suffering body in her later days, which will be analyzed later in this article.



Fig. 3 — Blo gros chos mtsho (middle) with Ren Naiqiang and First wife's four children and two cousins: baby girl Ren Xinyu (front-left), Ren Xinyong (middle-left), cousin (tallest-left), Ren Xinlu (smaller-right), Ren Yi (middle-right), cousin (taller-right)
Chengdu, 1936 - Private collection - Courtesy of Ren family member

Blo gros was based in Chengdu for around six years, tirelessly learning the Chinese language and Han manners and assisting her husband in his research. The couple very often moved and periodically stayed in other places in Sichuan and Xikang (Chengdu, Chongqing, Jiang'an, Dar rtse mdo, etc.), according to the needs of Ren Naiqiang's work. The other members of the family mostly remained in the Chengdu official residence. Blo gros chos mtsho somehow became the "Khampa prototype" of her husband's studies, especially at the beginning of their marriage, as one can see in the chapter "My Tibetan Wife" (Ch. *Yu zhi fan fu* 餘之蕃婦) of the book *An Illustrated History of Xikang: Folk Customs* (Ch. *Xikang tujing: minsu pian* 西康圖經：民俗篇) where Ren Naiqiang explicitly endorses the initial ethnologically utilitarian aspect of his second marriage.³² Such marriages were moreover quite common at that time among Han scholars and explorers working in/on Kham: marrying a Tibetan woman had become a convenient way to learn the Tibetan language and to explore Tibetan culture. In the case of the Ren family, the marriage worked out well: it gave birth to a life-long intellectually stimulating partnership and a fruitful cross-cultural cooperation. We perceive real affection, caring and much respect in Ren's long commemorative essay published one month after

³² See "My Tibetan Wife" (Ch. *Yu zhi fan fu* 餘之蕃婦), in Ren Naiqiang [1934], 2000, p. 314-315.

Blo gros’s death.³³ There are sections in this essay which shed an interesting light on their personal and professional relationship. There is a naturalness and genuineness in Ren’s words which betray his emotions and a true fondness for his *fan fu* which is quite unusual for a Han scholar who, despite a certain modernity and a relative open-mindedness – was born at the end of the 19th century, received a Confucian-style education and wrote in *wenyanwen* (classical Chinese) most of his life. As Ren Naiqiang himself soberly notes at the very end of his commemorative piece:

“I previously wrote about Blo gros’s nature and character in the chapter “My Tibetan Wife” (Ch. *Yu zhi fan fu*) [...] as she represented the average ‘Tibetan person’. I had been married with her for two years at that time. Since then, eighteen years have already gone by, and I think now that that first piece is inadequate to thoroughly represent her. This is why I have written this new piece in her memory”.³⁴

4. Education and language

When Blo gros chos mtsho married Ren Naiqiang at the age of twenty, she was illiterate in both Tibetan and Chinese, and she could speak no Chinese at all when she arrived in Chengdu soon after her marriage in 1929. Her priority therefore became to study oral and written Chinese, learn the customs and the habits of the Han people, and master how to behave and to do things correctly and independently in an environment which was completely alien to her. Becoming literate was the first step towards self-affirmation and emancipation, freedom and agency; it was the turning point of Blo gros’s personal journey. Studying became an obsession: she practiced every day, several hours a day, with a tutor or at the primary school, with children, even after becoming fluent in Chinese, until the very end of her life.³⁵ On her deathbed she writes: “Even if my spirit still acutely wishes to go on learning, my

³³ See Ren Naiqiang, 1949.

³⁴ See Ren Naiqiang, 1949, p. 23-24.

³⁵ An example suffices here to illustrate Blo gros’s determination and thirst for literacy: in 1934 the couple moved to Jiang’an county for a short period, but Blo gros’s personal tutor could not travel with them on that occasion. Blo gros then decided to attend, for one semester, the same primary school as Ren Yi, Ren Naiqiang’s eldest daughter who often followed the couple during work transfers. Both “girls” attended Jiang’an Girls’ College Elementary School (Ch. *Jiang’an niizi zhongxue fuxiao* 江安女子中學附小), Ren Yi as a 2nd year pupil, Blo gros as a 4th year student. Ren Yi was eight years old ca., Blo gros was twenty-three ca. (See my interview with Ren Yi, Chengdu, Oct. 2015).

body doesn't allow me to do so. I hate it so much".³⁶

Very early in her childhood, Blo gros understood the power of education as the most powerful equalizer, from the point of view of both cultural and gender identity. An anecdote about her childhood memories is very significant in this regard. It tells of Chinese government's officers seen through the eyes of a little Khampa girl, the ambiguous feelings their presence caused in her child mind, and Blo gros's early determination to learn the Chinese language. In "My Proposal to the National Assembly" (Ch. *Wo zai Guomin dahui de ti'an*), Blo gros recalls the day that some "Han officer" (Ch. *Han guan* 漢官) arrived in her village riding a towering horse.³⁷ The officer was accompanied by interpreters and his presence provoked great agitation among the villagers: everybody was busy welcoming them and preparing for their arrival. "The atmosphere had suddenly changed in the village" – she notes – "dogs were jumping up and down and chicken were flying everywhere, as if a plague was spreading all around".³⁸ Blo gros remembers the population offering gifts to the officers, money to the interpreters and food to everybody. Then the Han left without a single word of gratitude, and when "we [the children] asked mother 'what did they come for?', mother answered: 'They came to claim the money they are owed. [...] We don't know what they do with our money, or where they go with it; they don't help us, but they come and beg for money and food. [...] We must have accumulated debts from previous lives'.³⁹

Blo gros then explains that because the Han officers – the tax collectors – visited them "to beg for money", the Upper Nyarong population used to call them the "grand beggars" (Tib. *rgya sprang po*), playing on the double meaning of the word "rgya" (Chinese, but also large, vast and, by extension, grand) in Kham dialect.⁴⁰ She writes:

"Although our Kham people used to call Han officers the "grand beggars", in my childish heart, I did not despise them, I was secretly envious of them. One day I asked mother: "[Mom], can I become a Han officer?' Mother answered: 'Pray and practice Buddhism a lot, and in your next life you might well become one.' But I was not satisfied with that answer. I thought: 'If people who study Buddhism a lot can become Buddha in one lifetime, then if I study hard, why wouldn't I be able to become a Han officer?' That day, I decided that one day I would go to the land of the Han to

³⁶ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1949a, p. 17.

³⁷ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 2.

³⁸ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 2.

³⁹ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 2-3.

⁴⁰ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 3.

study Chinese and become a Han officer”.⁴¹

These few lines of childhood memories efficiently show the embryonic roots of Blo gros’s determination to better acquaint herself with the Han-Other, starting by understanding the Chinese language. This determination began with the very elementary intuition that strong Sino-Tibetan power-relations characterized Nyarong society, that she too wished to obtain a position of power as an adult (at least the power to collect taxes), and that she too could do the job the Chinese were doing. In fact she could do it even better, since she would be able to fluently communicate with the local population in their mother language and, at the same time, with the Han side in Chinese. Blo gros’s juvenile determination would become, in later days, a constant practice of appropriation, that is of taking over those aspects of Han culture – language, forms of writing, even arguments – that could be of use to her to articulate her own distinctive political, social and cultural views and projects. Learning Chinese, playing an active intercultural role, and bridging the gap between the Khampa and Han worlds became Blo gros’s primary political and cultural commitment.

5. Political concerns, views, activities and projects

Blo gros chos mtsho was extremely concerned by the worsening of the Sino-Khampa confrontation during the first half of the 20th century; the conflicts, violence and loss she directly experienced through her family’s history greatly contributed to the development of her interest in politics. She was determined to play a significant proactive role in helping solving the political and social issues that afflicted her native land, and she struggled for twenty years to obtain a full-fledged official position in Kham, that is in the Xikang provincial government administered by Liu Wenhui. Liu Wenhui however merely conferred on her a string of titles (Constitutional supervisor for the Nationalist government, Executive Officer of the Xikang Province Woman Association, etc.) which in fact corresponded to no real active positions: Blo gros chos mtsho’s repeated offers to assist as a cultural and political mediator went completely ignored.⁴² She finally managed to attend the first session of the National Assembly, established under the framework of the 1947 Constitution of the ROC and called to assembly in

⁴¹ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 3.

⁴² We know from Ren Naiqiang’s commemorative essay that Blo gros was very disappointed about Liu Wenhui’s indifference and disregard; she actually “hated” Liu Wenhui, but she was convinced that the “saving-Kham” cause was more important than any other personal feelings; see Ren Naiqiang, 1949, p. 17.

Nanjing in 1948. As one of the fifty-two national representatives of Xikang province, Blo gros chos mtsho represented Dpal yul, her birth-place.⁴³

Blo gros took her role as a national representative very seriously and wrote a proposal to be submitted and discussed at the National Assembly.⁴⁴ In it she detailed the problematic situation in Kham, the reasons behind it, and the urgency to do something before the problems became unsolvable, and her worries about the possible imminent “death” of Kham. In her view, the main issue in the Kham-China relationships was the behavior of Han officers posted in Kham, their deep ignorance of anything Khampa, their lack of sympathy and understanding towards the local population and culture, and their total lack of interest in their work as officers there. The local population had no contact with them, and the cultural and linguistic gap did not favour a better cohabitation. Blo gros’s words clearly point to an issue of coercive power, a lack of legitimacy, and inappropriate agency since, as she writes, power in Kham should be mainly exerted by bilingual and bicultural Kham people. She explains:

“Since I came to Sichuan in 1929, I have started learning oral and written Chinese and everything one needs to know when living in the territory of the Han people. I have got used to local customs and habits, and I can now happily live in Han territory. By contrast, how do Han officers who govern our Kham people live in Kham territory? They cling to the golden rule of ‘using Chinese to transform the barbarians’ (Ch. *yong xia bian yi* 用夏變夷) as soon as they are appointed officers in frontier regions; they live in Chinese-style palaces built by Han people; they eat rice and vegetables

⁴³ Blo gros chos mtsho was the only Tibetan woman who officially attended the National Assembly as a representative of a Xikang principality. Wu Xianglan 吳香蘭 (Tib. Ye shes rnam sgron) who also attended the National Assembly, was the “proto-official” representative of the kingdom of Muli 木里 (Muli was not officially recognized as an established administrative unit by the ROC as the ROC never managed to control it; Muli was *de jure* annexed to Yanyuan county (Ch. *Yanyuan xian* 鹽源縣), so it was formally represented at the National Assembly by the Yanyuan representative, backed by Wu Xianglan). Wu Xianglan, from Litang, was the cousin of Ngag dbang Bsam gtan chos ’phel (Ch. Xiang Songdian Chunpin 項松點春品, 1927-1961), the 18th and penultimate king of Muli who originally was from Litang, married Tshe ring (Ch. Cili 次裡), a member of the ‘Bar family, the Muli ruling clan, and held office from 1944 to 1949. Wu Xianglan fled to Taiwan after the Maoist takeover of China in 1949 and had a political career there.

⁴⁴ Blo gros’s proposal, “Proposal for the Adoption of Legal Requirements to Stipulate Borderland Populations’ Participation in Politics, as well as their Rights and Interests” (Ch. *Yi falü guiding bianmin canzheng zhengquan yi’an* 以法律規定邊民參政政權益案), is detailed in Luo zhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 5-8 (see also Ren Naiqiang, 1949, p. 17).

sent to them from inner China; they wear traditional Chinese long robes or trendy Sun Yat-sen-style suits (Ch. *zhongshanfu* 中山服); everything, absolutely everything they use, has to be brought into Kham from inner China: lanterns, vegetable oil, salt, pickles, vinegar, soy sauce, as well as door inscriptions, candles, artillery and ‘toilet paper to wipe one’s butt’ (Ch. *kai pigu de caozhi* 揩屁股的草紙). They, of course, can speak and write only Chinese, they read Chinese books, they publish Chinese-language notifications, they apply Chinese law, they exert Chinese-style coerciveness, they implement the Chinese educational system to build a Chinese land [in Kham]”.⁴⁵

And again about power, legitimacy and agency:

“These [Han officers in Kham] are only able to perfunctorily carry out orders and cheat their superiors, but they are totally useless to provoke any political impulse in the field. Since the people are the very object of politics, if one doesn’t understand the feelings of the people and their conditions, one cannot pursue politics. In Kham, 99% of Khampa don’t understand the Chinese language, Han residents make up only 1%, so those officers exert their rule on only 1% of the population, the Han, but they have no relationships at all with 99% of the remaining population, the locals. All my family, starting from my grandparents, to my parents, down to the present day [generation], has already experienced three or four generations of Han officers’ governance, yet no one has understood what those officers have been doing so far”.⁴⁶

Blo gros chos mtsho never questions the legitimacy of the Chinese presence in Kham and the ROC’s integrationist policy there. She does however challenge the way measures are implemented in border regions like Kham and she criticizes the lack of practical collaboration between the Han and the local population, the insufficiency of consultation and discussion between the two sides, and, above all, the incompetence of Han officers on the field, their coerciveness, arrogance and disdain. She proposes a common-sense solution which, in her view, should have been urgently implemented by law. It consisted of disposing of all unprofessional and non-aculturated officers as well as of “ignorant and abusive interpreters” who, she explains, create problems with both the population and the officers because of their highly insufficient linguistic knowledge. She suggests instead to offer official posts only to bilingual and bicultural people who are efficient, capable, open-minded and dynamic. Local people, she explains, should be

⁴⁵ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 2.

⁴⁶ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 2.

given priority since they have first-hand knowledge of the real situation in the field and a deep understanding of local needs.

Blo gros's *Proposal*, however – which, before being submitted to the National Assembly, had already been countersigned by a great number of colleagues and accepted by the Review Committee – was in the end not discussed at the National Assembly. The official reason was 'shortage of time': the National Assembly was busy discussing several other thornier issues. Blo gros chos mtsho was very disappointed about this, but she did not resign. Once back in Sichuan, she opened a legal file, appealed to the Court and pursued legal action to have her proposal taken into consideration and implemented, "[...] but nothing changed", she writes.⁴⁷ By this point the year was 1948. The Maoist takeover was imminent, the National Assembly had elected Chiang Kai-shek as the first constitutional President of the ROC, giving him emergency powers "to avert imminent danger to the security of the State or of the people", without legislative restriction. As a matter of fact, the situation was extremely critical for the Chinese Nationalist government, and everything was soon to change, in both China and Tibet.

From the description of her experience at the National Assembly, two pervasive features of Blo gros chos mtsho's views and writings emerge. Firstly, her ambivalence, not as chaotic or contradictory ideas or feelings about something or someone, but as the importance, in her view, of being 'ambi-valent', 'two-powered', a way of approaching and solving problems by accepting the positive and rejecting the negative from any two opposite sides. Secondly, the analogical connections she often makes between body and place. Throughout Blo zhos's essays, there are striking correspondences and analogies between 'writing the body' and 'writing place', and, in particular, between writing her own body and her own *pha yul* or "fatherland".

6. *The body, the nation, the self*

The idea that bodies and bodily characteristics are heavily freighted with values and features that are often linked to political, social and cultural spheres is not new. 'Body politic' is actually an ancient metaphor from the *Rigveda* (Skt. *Rgveda*) of ancient India and the Greek and Latin classics (Aesop's *The Belly and the Members* is an outstanding example), through medieval literature (considering the church as the body of Christ) and modern philosophy (Thomas Hobbes' association

⁴⁷ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 5.

of bodily afflictions and political diseases in the *Leviathan*), to post-colonial discourses viewing the body as a site of representation and control (Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, etc.); the examples of tropes likening a *corpus*, ‘body’, to a *corporatio*, ‘corporation’, abound.⁴⁸ Regarding China, there is a general consensus in Chinese studies scholarship that there is little exposure of the body in pre-modern Chinese culture; the body is evoked, and its appearance in literature and culture is a relatively new phenomenon, connected to modernity, anatomy, phenomenology, materiality, realism and a new corporeal aesthetics. The rhetoric of the healthy body as a metaphor of national health became widespread in the nationalistic ROC period, and the newly built nation was depicted as a living body that can be healthy or sick, can rejuvenate or wither, and can eventually die.⁴⁹ In Tibetan culture and literature, corporeal representations express something ‘substantial’: *rus ba*, meaning ‘bone’ or ‘bone-substance’, is the metonym for the ancient clan system of Tibet, and represents the very essence of a family lineage, thus referring to individual, clanic and community identities. Similarly, on a larger scale, the widely-known image of the Srin mo demoness lying on her back, stands for Lhasa in particular, and Tibet as a whole, and recalls one of the most ancient Tibetan myths linking female corporeality to national issues.⁵⁰

In the case of Blo gros chos mtsho’s writings, however, the simile among bodily, national and identity considerations is more than just a literary trope. Blo gros chos mtsho fell seriously ill soon after she first entered the “Land of the Han” and arrived in Chengdu after her marriage. She was never to recover, and her autobiographical essays are largely punctuated by simple, realistic, extremely genuine and direct descriptions of the gradual but inexorable deterioration of her ill and suffering body, her thirst for life despite everything, her determination to live, and, in parallel, the serious weakening of her decaying homeland, torn between internecine wars and resistance campaigns. As Blo gros chos mtsho writes, it was urgent to do something before the problems in Kham became unsolvable, it was urgent “to heal the dying

⁴⁸ “Corporation” is used here in the etymological sense of an association of persons united for some purpose, hence a society, an institution, a church, a state, a nation. Scholarship on body politic is very rich, see, for example: de Baecque, 1993; A. D. Harvey, 2007; K. Olwig, 2002.

⁴⁹ For relevant secondary references dealing with the body in Chinese culture and literature, see David L. Eng, Ruskola Teemu and Shuang Shen, 2012a and 2012b; L. Heinrich and F. Martin (eds.), 2006; A. L. Heinrich, 2016; A. Zito and T Barlow (eds.), 1994.

⁵⁰ According to Tibetan tradition, the Srin mo, a pre-Buddhist demoness, ferociously resisted the spreading of Buddhism in Tibet. She was thus subjugated by being pinned down to the soil, on her back, by means of “monastic nails”, each “nail” corresponding to one of the main monasteries of the newly Buddhisied Tibet.

body" of the Kham region before it died. Analogies between writing the body and writing place are pervasive in her essays, notably in terms of weakening, serious disease, agony and imminent death. The use of medical terminology is pervasive too; a few examples suffice here. In the opening paragraph of "My Homeland" (Ch. *Wo de Jiexiang*), Blo gros chos mtsho, from her deathbed, recalls her homeland, her childhood and, in general, her personal journey. She regrets having "abandoned" her Nyarong "fatherland" (Tib. *pha yul*) during the twenty years she travelled far and wide across diverse Kham principalities, engaged in fieldwork with her husband, rarely going back to the land she felt so emotionally connected to. She writes:

"During these twenty years of study, I didn't have the time to feel nostalgic for my homeland, yet villagers travelling from there often told me that my house was already damaged and that the village had already changed; my heart was torn apart. [...] Now I am here, with no hope, and I miss my homeland so much. I am severely ill, but what about him [my fatherland]? I know it all too well, he is much more seriously ill than me".⁵¹

In "My proposal to the national assembly" (Ch. *Wo zai guomin dahui de ti'an*), Blo gros extensively writes about the "political disease" (Ch. *zhengzhi bing* 政治病) from which all Chinese frontier regions, Xikang province in particular, suffered in that moment of their history. She notes:

"The political disease from which Xikang is currently suffering is exactly the same political disease that has already affected Mongolia (Ch. *Menggu* 蒙古), Xinjiang and Dbus-Gtsang (Ch. *Xizang* 西藏) in past years. Several border nationalities are now afflicted from the same political disease that earlier wrecked present-day Outer Mongolia (Ch. *Wai Meng* 外蒙) and Dbus-Gtsang to the point that they died of it. [*corrupted ten-character sentence about Xinjiang*] Xikang is fundamentally and integrally bound to Dbus-Gtsang, but we, the Khampa, we don't want to follow Central Tibet to its death (Ch. *que bu yuan suizhe Xizang siqu* 卻不願隨著西藏死去). In this moment of agony, I still hope that the nationalities of all border regions will be reborn (Ch. *fusheng* 復生), recover (Ch. *jiankang* 健康) and become co-nationals within one single body, the Republic of China. But will the medicines used by the doctors be

⁵¹ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1949a, p. 17.

efficacious to treat our symptoms?”⁵²

Then she adds:

“The Central [Chinese] government is the hospital, locally appointed officers are the doctors, but the program to rule border regions is just a tonic. If one wants drugs to effectively treat one’s symptoms, one first needs to carry out a full check-up and establish a careful diagnosis of the situation. [...] I have some medical knowledge since I have been ill for a long time now, and I dare to say that this is the crux of the issue: finding an effective [treatment] program”.⁵³

In the first paragraphs, Blo gros equates “disease” with “separatism”, “death” with “separation”, thus confirming her attachment to the construction of a united and peaceful political environment, which includes Kham and all the other border regions (the healthy body), under the guidance of the ROC. Blo gros’s voice is however more critical in the second paragraph: her point here is that the measures (i.e. the treatments) implemented by Chinese government officers are anything but efficient; their diagnoses of the situation are not accurate enough and the remedies they implement are more harmful than beneficial. Consequently, the treatment she proposes is a radical change of local governance in Kham conferring – as explained before – more power and agency to bilingual and bicultural Kham people.

⁵² See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 4. Blo gros does not precisely describe the events in Mongolia, Xinjiang and Central Tibet which she evokes in her essay. The geopolitical chessboard concerning those regions was extremely complex and highly conflictual in the first half of the 20th century; issues of national boundaries, independence claims and resistance movements proliferated, they involved multiple actors, China, Russia and the UK, among others. As far as Mongolia is concerned, following the iterated declarations of independence after the fall of the Qing dynasty, and the Chinese and Russians attempts to (re)affirm their control on the region, the Russia-supported Mongolian resistance movement to Chinese annexionism ended in the foundation of the People’s Republic of Mongolia in 1924. As for Xinjiang, the situation was all the more explosive: after more than a century of Manchu governance (1877), and before being integrated into the PRC in 1949, the Kumul Rebellion established the First East Turkestan Republic in 1933, and the Ili Rebellion led to the Second East Turkestan Republic in 1944. As far as Central Tibet is concerned, a series of events deeply destabilized its political configuration during the first half of the 20th century, threatening its *de facto* autonomy and ultimate independence: the British invasion of Tibet in 1904, the following Tibet-related bilateral conventions and treaties the British signed with China and Russia; the entering of Chinese troops into Tibet in 1908, the 13th Dalai Lama’s fleeing to India and Proclamation of Independence in 1913, the 9th Panchen Lama’s fleeing to Inner Mongolia in 1924 and his multiple activities in China, etc. They led to the closing of the Central Tibet and, eventually, to its final incorporation into the PRC.

⁵³ See Luozhe Qingcuo, 1948, p. 4.

The analogy between Blo gros chos mtsho's diseased body and the declining Khampa political and cultural environment is even more effective in Ren Naiqiang's long posthumous biographical essay commemorating his Khampa wife. Written in classical Chinese (Ch. *Wenyan* 文言), his style is concise and graphic, detailed and realistic, almost surgical, in dissecting every single aspect of a human/national bodily deterioration: the appearance of the illness, its evolution, every single symptom, the physical pain, the final agony, the tapeworm eating Blo gros's body from the inside, sucking her blood, her energy and vigour, her resistance and tenacity, her thirst for life, and her final, ineluctable end.⁵⁴ There is nothing tearful or pathetic in Ren Naiqiang's description, the lapidary-like precision of his words is extremely effective yet never voyeuristic: a string of three/four-character classical Chinese sentences interspersed with full-stops to describe the stiffness of her limbs, her swollen tongue, her sparkling eyes, her last three words (Xinya, the name of her daughter; Xinjian, her son, and Xiaozhuang, her husband), her hushed voice, the children playing around her deathbed.⁵⁵ Unlike Blo gros chos mtsho, Ren Naiqiang never explicitly discloses the human/national body trope, he never directly associates his wife's dying body with the situation in Kham, but the implicit analogy is clearly implied by the lines of the description. Blo gros chos mtsho died from illness in August 1949, she was buried in Chengdu, in a "foreign land" (Ch. *yixiang* 異鄉, in opposition to the *jiaxiang* 家鄉 of Blo gros's essay *Wo de jiaxiang*, "My Homeland"), her body facing her fatherland of Upper Nyarong.⁵⁶ The People's Republic of China (PRC) was created only a few days after her passing, and Upper Nyarong, the Kham region of Eastern Tibet, as well as the rest of greater Tibet, were soon to be definitively and effectively incorporated into the new Maoist political body.

7. Intellectual and editorial activities

In 1946, a group of scholars-cum-cultural actors which included Ren Naiqiang, Paul Sherap (1887-1966), Liu Liqian 劉立千 (1910-2008) and Blo gros chos mtsho, co-founded in Chengdu the Kham-Tibet Research

⁵⁴ Blo gros chos mtsho never names her disease in her essays; it is Ren Naiqiang who acquaints the reader with its true nature, naming and describing it, but also enumerating all the countless treatments Blo gros ineffectively tried.

⁵⁵ Ren Naiqiang's style combining a classical three-/four-character Chinese language structure with detailed realism gives a very refreshing result of literary modernity in Chinese.

⁵⁶ See Ren Naiqiang, 1949, p. 24.

Society (Ch. *Kang Zang yanjiu she* 康藏研究社) and launched the *Kham-Tibet Studies Monthly* (Ch. *Kang Zang yanjiu yuekan* 康藏研究月刊), an independent, privately sponsored academic journal of which Blo gros chos mtsho was appointed executive editor.⁵⁷ The *Monthly* was not sponsored by the government or other state institutions; economic independence was one of the principal points of its ethical and scholarly charter, a precondition for the founders to be able to work independently of political interferences, at least in principle. As its title suggests, the thematic orientation of the *Monthly* was Tibetan studies. Publications included Liu Liqian’s complete Chinese translation of the *Mar pa’i rnam thar* (Ch. *Maba yishi zhuan* 瑪巴譯師傳); Li Zhesheng’s 李哲生 Chinese translation of “Notes sur les marches tibétaines du Sseut-tch’ouan et du Yun-nan” (Ch. *Chuan Dian zhi Zang bian* 川滇之藏邊) by the French missionary Francis Goré; Peng Gonghou’s 彭公侯 Chinese translation of the Ladakhi version of the Gesar Epics (Ch. ‘*Man San Guo’ benshi* 『蠻三國』本事) translated into English by A. H. Francke; Paul Sherap’s serial publications on Mon yul and the Mon ba in Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Ladakh; Ren Naiqiang’s numerous scholarly works such as the “Genealogy of the Indigenous Leader of Sde dge” (Ch. *Dege tusi shipu* 德格土司世譜), his pedagogical notes, for instance a piece explaining the Tibetan transliteration romanisation system used in the *Monthly* (Ch. *Benkan caiyong zangwen zhi daiyongzi shuoming* 本刊採用藏文之代用字說明), and his more political articles such as “The Tibet Issue: History and Current Situation” (Ch. *Xizang wenti*

⁵⁷ The *Kham-Tibet Studies Monthly* (Ch. *Kang Zang yanjiu yuekan*) was published from Oct. 30, 1946 to Sept. 30, 1949; 29 issues in all. Ren Naiqiang, Paul Sherap and Liu Liqian were all researchers in Tibetan Studies at West China University Frontier Region Research Center (Ch. *Huaxi daxue bianjiang yanjiusuo* 華西大學邊疆研究所) in Chengdu when they founded the *Monthly*. Paul Sherap (1887-1966, Tib. Rdo rje spyod pa, Ch. Xie Guo’an) was a Khampa polymath and polyglot intellectual from Dar rtse mdo who firstly studied in Drepung monastery in Lhasa as a young monk. He then moved to India where he became a Christian and was given the name of Paul Sherap. Back to Kham, in the 1930s he worked as a Tibetan language teacher at the Kangding Normal College, and in 1944 he integrated the Huaxi University Frontier Region Research Center in Chengdu where Ren Naiqiang also worked. For Paul Sherap’s adventurous life before his return to Kham in the late 1920s, see Paul Sherap, G. A. Combe, 1926. As for Liu Liqian (1910-2008), he too integrated the Frontier Research Center in 1944. A Buddhist himself, he started to become interested in Tibetan Buddhism as a young man while working in a bank in Chongqing. He then learned Tibetan language in Dar rtse mdo following Paul Sherap and other religious masters’ teachings (and marrying Paul Sherap’s daughter at the same occasion). He specialized in the translation of Buddhist texts and worked as the official translator and interpreter for several Tibetan masters.

licheng yu xiankuang 西藏問題歷程與現況).⁵⁸

Within the *Monthly* editorial team, Blo gros was much more than a simple collaborator, she was absolutely instrumental in creating and running the *Monthly*, in having it regularly sponsored, properly and cheaply printed, published, and distributed to relevant institutions and private circles. She also represented the publication at many social and business events. She played a determining public relations role since she was in charge of all the contacts with the wealthy and influential personalities who sponsored the journal, both Han and Tibetans. Among the regular sponsors one finds, for example, the Shanghaiese photographer and explorer Zhuang Xueben 莊學本 (1909-1984) who was a friend of the Ren family, as well as the “strongman of Sde dge”, Bya rgod stobs ldan (1898-1960), who wrested power away from the Sde dge royal family and became the authority there in the early 20th century.⁵⁹ Blo gros solicited donations by organizing and participating in several types of events and social activities, and she also helped correct the drafts and herself contributed two essays to the *Monthly*. When illness forced Blo gros to stay in bed, the *Monthly* was not issued regularly, as it appears, for example, from a “note of apology” published

⁵⁸ For the Chinese translation of the *Mar pa lo tsa ba'i rnam thar* (Ch. Maba yishi zhuan 瑪巴譯師傳), see Liu Liqian, 1946-1948; for the eleven-installment Chinese translation of Francis Goré's “Notes sur les marches tibétaines du Sseu-tch'ouan et du Yun-nan” (Ch. *Chuan Dian zhi Zang bian* 川滇之藏邊) from the Dec. 1947 issue to the Aug. 1949 issue, see Zhao Aidong, Shi Shuo, Yao Leye, 2011 (for the original piece, see F. Goré, 1923); for the Chinese translation of A. H. Francke's Gesar epics Anglophone version, see Peng Gonghou (tr.), 1947-1948 (for the original piece, see A. H. Francke, 2000); for Paul Sherap's series on Mon yul, see Xie Guo'an, 1947a, 1947b, 1947c, 1947d, 1947e, 1947f, 1948; for Ren Naiqiang's quoted articles, see Ren Naiqiang, 1947-1948, Ren Naiqiang, 1947 and Ren Naiqiang, 1948.

⁵⁹ Zhuang Xueben 莊學本 (1909-1984), the “father” of visual anthropology in China, was very active in Eastern Tibet, in Kham in particular, in the 1930s (he was based in Dar rtse mdo for about ten years). Zhuang's pictures of “China's West” were the first pictures of Eastern Tibet published in Chinese popular, fashionable, urban magazines such as the Shanghai-based *Liangyou Pictorial* (Ch. *Lingyou huabao* 良友畫報; special issue on Xikang, 1940), *Zhonghua Pictorial* (Ch. *Zhonghua huabao* 中華畫報) and *Shanghai News* (Ch. *Shenbao* 申報). As for Bya rgod stobs ldan (1898-1960), he played a prominent role in the history of Eastern Tibet in the first half of the 20th c. by making opportunist alliances with many different actors, in Kham, Central Tibet and Nationalist China [see Yudru Tsomu, 2016 (unpublished)]. Zhuang Xueben and Bya rgod stobs ldan's names are mentioned in the “expense reports” and “sponsorship thanking notes” which were regularly published in the *Monthly*. The notes list all the names of the *Monthly* private sponsors and the amount of their donations (mostly 10,000 yuan, sometimes much more), and show the network woven around the Kham-Tibet Research Society, its configuration, extension, orientation and the spheres of influence. One can also see that Han donors largely outnumbered Tibetan donors, the majority of them being businessmen from Sichuan, but also from Shanghai, and a few scholars and intellectuals.

three months before her passing (issue No. 26, 1949). And when Blo gros died in August 1949, the *Monthly* permanently ceased its activity, the September issue being the last issue. Her role and presence there were thus indispensable.⁶⁰

In the *Monthly* editorial venture, Blo gros chos mtsho was the only woman, she operated entirely in a men’s world. The Tibetan regions of Khams, Amdo and Dbus-gtsang had no Tibetan-language Tibetan-founded modern journals in those days, so the issue of the place of women in the press and the editorial industry does not apply there.⁶¹ But even in China where a modern periodical press already existed, the place of women in the industry was still in its infancy. This was all the truer in the regions of Western China, despite the democratic movement of May 4th 1919, the rise of feminist ideas and the publication of women’s magazines, created at least at the beginning mainly by male editors.⁶² In Chengdu, the first periodical for women and by women was founded in 1912 (24 issues in all).⁶³ The journal was called *Women’s World* (Ch. *Nü jie* 女界); it had strong feminist undertones and often published contributions of the well-known poetess Zeng Lan 曾蘭 whose essays declaimed the condition of women. By the time Blo gros chos mtsho was in Chengdu, other women’s journals had been created, but I have no evidence at the moment to determine if she ever

⁶⁰ The very critical political context of the imminent end of the ROC and the subsequent foundation of the PRC (Oct. 1, 1949) might also have contributed to the decision of stopping the publication of the *Monthly*, but, according to my information, it was not the main reason, the main reason being Blo gros’s death.

⁶¹ Two journals in the Tibetan language were created at the beginning of the 20th century on the Indian side of the Himalaya, outside any interference from the Chinese political and cultural worlds: *The Ladakh Journal* (Tib. *La dwags kyi ag bar*), edited in Leh between 1903/1904 and 1908 by A. H. Francke’s Moravian mission; and the *Mirror of Tibet* (Tib. *Gsar ’gyur me long*) published in Kalimpong between 1925 and 1962 by the missionary Gergan Dorje Tarchin. In Lhasa, between 1907 and 1911, the Qing dynasty Amban Lian Yu launched *News in Colloquial Tibetan* (Tib./Ch. *Bod yig phal skad gsar ’gyur/Xizang baihua bao* 西藏白話報), a Sino-Tibetan bilingual publication aiming at “spreading modern and secular culture in Tibet and abolishing superstition” (see Xu Lihua, 2003, p. 44). At this stage of my research, I possess no evidence showing that women agency and women-related issues played any determinant role in these Tibetophone publications (which anyway had not been launched on Tibetans’ initiative). I also possess no evidence suggesting that Blo gros knew about those journals, but it is very possible since Paul Sherap, who lived in India, knew about the *Mirror of Tibet* and possibly read it.

⁶² Women-related periodical publications mainly appeared at first in the coastal regions of Eastern China (Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing, Canton), and only later in Chongqing and Chengdu. The first women’s journal in China, the *Women’s Study Journal* (Ch. *Nixue bao* 女學報), was published in Shanghai in 1898 (for more details, see for example J. Nivard, 1986, p. 174-175, endnote 1).

⁶³ See Wang Lüping, 2011, p. 43.

read those publications. Questions abound: did she know about them? Had she heard of publications from elsewhere in which women and women's issues played a determinant role? To what extent did she know about feminist ideas and the emerging role of women in China and, more generally, the international modern urban societies? Was she inspired by any particular model in her professional life and in the consolidation of her natural thirst for independence, empowerment and emancipation?

Blo gros does not explicitly write about feminism or women's issues in her essays. She never uses these words and the thematic orientation of the journal she co-founded did not deal with this kind of question. However one can safely say that, at least to a certain extent, she was aware of women-related debates in modern Chinese culture and in the world, and she certainly supported feminist ideas about female empowerment, independence and emancipation. I have already pointed out in this article that Blo gros herself came from a family where strongwomen and female power were a reality and in some sense, a tradition. Moreover, after marriage, Blo gros frequented a modern and progressive intellectual environment where issues of female agency in the modern world were likely to have been debated. Her husband, Ren Naiqiang, was her first unconditional supporter. He encouraged all her undertakings and was a tenacious defender of the necessity of promoting female education and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the Rens' intellectual circle also included Westerners, Protestant missionaries in particular, who, in the first half of the 20th century, were based in diverse localities across Kham spreading the Christian religion, but also opening hospitals and schools. Their views and efficiency in achieving cultural and educational projects might have inspired the Rens, Blo gros chos mtsho in particular. Missionaries founded, for example, all the Western China Schools which opened in and around Kham, including the Western China University in Chengdu where Ren Naiqiang and all the editors of the *Monthly* worked as researchers in the 1940s. Paul Sherap himself converted to Christianity while in India and was well informed about Western missionary work in Asia. Missionaries also contributed greatly in promoting equal opportunities to high-quality modern education for all, including women and the poor. Starting from the end of the 19th century, female missionaries in particular helped spread modern ideas and practices about women's education, agency, and representation in Chinese journals and publications. This began in China proper, but later took place also in the frontier regions of "Western China", that is

in Eastern Tibet, where they were very active.⁶⁴ Missionaries also had a long experience of more personal and associative fundraising initiatives that allowed them to fund privately-sponsored editorial projects such as missionary journals, the oldest example in Sichuan being *The West China Missionary News* (Ch. *Huaxi jiaohui xinwen* 華西教會新聞). The first editor in chief of this publication was a woman, the British Quaker missionary Mary Jane Davidson.⁶⁵

All of these influences may thus have strengthened Blo gros chos mtsho's naturally independent temperament, her progressive views, and her determination in pursuit of her projects, including the publication of the *Monthly*.⁶⁶ She may also have been encouraged and sustained in her moments of doubt and weakness by examples of other Khampa women who, in the first half of the 20th century, emerged on the Sino-Tibetan scene thanks to their fluency in both Tibetan and Chinese and their cultural and/or political Sino-Tibetan activities. Beside Wu Xianglan 吳香蘭 (Tib. *Ye shes nam sgron*) whom Blo gros met at the National Assembly in 1948, other proactive and influential women may have constituted inspiring models of independent female figures,

⁶⁴ See, for example, the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East founded by the British Missionary Miss Grant in 1834 to spread women's education in China and nearby countries [Society for Promoting Female Education in the East (ed.), 1847]. For a bibliographical review of studies on the implication of American women missionaries in the promotion of female education in China at the turn of the 19th century, see Mary Shepard Wong (2012). As far as Kham is concerned, we know that in Batang, for example, in the school launched by a very active group of American medical doctor missionaries including Albert Shelton, classes were for everybody, boys and girls, and texts and illustrations taken from *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Harper's Bazaar* were often used to compensate for the lack of schoolbooks, notably in the Tibetan language; see F. Beal Shelton, 1912, p. 94.

⁶⁵ Mary Jane Davidson (1847-1918) and her husband, the Reverend Robert John Davidson, were Quaker missionaries at the Friends' Foreign Mission Association (FFMA) in Chongqing from 1890-1895. Mary was also a trained nurse and midwife. *The West China Missionary News* – which she launched in 1899 and which was stopped in 1943 – was firstly an English language monthly issued for internal distribution among the Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and Tibetan regions' members of the FFMA. It then became a Chinese-language bulletin of Christian news freely distributed in Western China.

⁶⁶ Another strong female personality was active in Kham in the first half of the 20th century: the writer-cum-traveler Alexandra David-Neel (1868-1969), the first Western woman to manage to reach Lhasa in 1924. From 1938 to 1943, she was “stuck” (*coincée*) in Dar rtse mdo because of the civil war in China, waiting for an opportunity to continue her journey toward innermost Tibet. Did Blo gros and Ren Nai-qiang ever hear about her exploratory missions? Did they ever meet and exchange with her? Further research will elucidate these points. At the moment, we only know that in those years Alexandra David-Neel published a few articles in the *Journal of the West China Border Research Society* (Ch. *Huaxi bianjiang yanjiu xuehui zazhi* 華西邊疆研究學會雜誌), an Anglophone review of anthropology published in Chengdu from 1922 to 1946 by the Canadian Methodist Mission Press.

worthy of appreciation and emulation. These include: Liu Manqing 劉曼卿 (Tib. Dbyangs can, 1906-1941), the traveller, activist, and sino-phone writer who was the sister-in law (and possibly also the 1st wife?) of the Ba thang ba Skal bzang tshe ring (Ch. Wang Tianhua 王天化 or Wang Tianjie 王天傑, 1905-1946), one of the leaders of the 'Kham for the Khampa' movement;⁶⁷ Feng Yunxian 馮雲仙 (Tib. Bskal bzang chos sgron), herself a journalist and a writer, she was a friend of Liu Manqing and the wife of the distinguished scholar Byams pa nam rgyal (aka Byams brtse'i gru gzings, Ch. Yang Zhifu 楊質夫, 1907-1961);⁶⁸ Huang Yulan 黃玉蘭 (Tib. Tshe ring dbyangs 'dzoms, 1905-2001), an active teacher and cultural player, she was the wife of the nationalist politician Jiang Anxi 江安西 (Tib. Blo bzang don grub, 1906-1989), the maternal uncle of the communist revolutionary 'Ba' ba Phun tshogs dbang rgyal (1922-2014);⁶⁹ and Ye shes sgröl ma (Ch. Wang Zhe

⁶⁷ Liu Manqing 劉曼卿 (Tib. Dbyangs can, 1906-1941) was born in Lhasa to parents of uncertain ethnicity (a Tibetan mother and a Chinese father, according to F. Jagou 2009, p. 6; a Tibetan Muslim father from Lhasa and an unmentioned mother, according to D. G. Atwill, 2018, p. 183, n. 62). She grew up in Nanjing as part of the Khampa community there and attended the Nanjing Mongol-Tibetan School. Liu Manqing extensively travelled to Kham and Lhasa in the 1930s, was received twice by the 13th Dalai Lama in Lhasa and wrote several books such as the travelogue *Carriage Expedition to Kham and Tibet* (Liu Manqing, 1933) and *Borderland Education* (Liu Manqing, 1937).

⁶⁸ Feng Yunxian 馮雲仙 (Tib. Bskal bzang chos sgron), a Khampa woman of unknown date and place of birth, became an orphan as a baby and was adopted by the wellknown Lai Zhizhong (a local lordling in Ya'an, a member of the powerful Lai family, a Hakka clan originally from Guangdong who was involved in the mining business in Western Sichuan since the end of the Qing). Feng Yunxian was a friend of Liu Manqing at school in Nanjing. She then became a scholar, a social activist, a female reporter at the Central News Agency, a special commissioner in Kham for the Nationalist government, a representative at the National Congress and a member of the Mongolian and Tibetan Committee. Her writings include *Diary of My Travel Outside of the Pass in Xikang* (Feng Yunxian, 1937). Her husband, the scholar Byams pa nam rgyal (aka Byams brtse'i gru gzings, Ch. Yang Zhifu 楊質夫, 1907-1961), was a disciple of *dge bshes* Shes rab rgya mtsho, one of the pioneering authors of *The Great Sino-Tibetan Dictionary* (Ch./Tib. *Zang Han da cidian* 藏漢大辭典 / *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*) in the 1920s, and the Tibetan translator, in the early 1940s, of Sun Yat-sen's *Essentials of the Three Principles of the People* (Ch./Tib. *San min zhuyi yaoyi* 三民主義要義 / *San min kru'u yi'i bsdus don*; see Sun Krung hran, 1943. I thank Gray Tuttle for providing a copy of the Tibetan translation).

⁶⁹ Huang Yulan 黃玉蘭 (Tib. Tshe ring dbyangs 'dzoms; 1905-2001), from Batang, was educated in the missionary Normal College there and was fluent in Tibetan, Chinese and English. Very active in the field of education, she took an active part in the pedagogical and cultural life of the Khampa circles in Nanjing during the years she spent there with her husband Jiang Anxi 江安西 (Tib. Blo bzang don

王哲, 1925-?), an early fervent communist militant who was to become a sinophone writer in later (post-)Maoist times.⁷⁰ All of these women – in very different ways, and by nurturing views and ambitions with which Blo gros might not have fully agreed – worked for the emergence of a more progressive and modern Tibet. They played important intercultural roles and were deeply involved in working as mediators in the emergence of a new Sino-Tibetan dialogue.⁷¹ In the literary field, they all experimented with genres, styles, and a language, Chinese, all things previously unheard of in Tibetan women’s literature. They all pioneered a field of Tibetan literary production that was to become an enduring and pervasive aspect of the Tibetan political-cultural scene in the (post-)Maoist years to come, that is, Tibetan sinophone literature. In particular, they anticipated, albeit embryonically, issues of diglossia, identity, agency and displacement which were to dominate the Sino-Tibetan intellectual and literary debates / scene in the (post-)Maoist period.⁷² Their precursory political and intellectual activities also

grub, 1906-1989, Bapa Phun tshogs dbang rgyal’s uncle), in the late 1920s and in the 1930s. She possibly collaborated with the editors and contributors of Sino-Tibetan journals while in Nanjing [the monthly edited by Mongolo-Tibetan Commission (Ch. *Meng Zang yuebao* 蒙藏月報, 1929), *Kham Vanguard* (Ch. *Kang Zang qianfeng* 康藏前鋒, 1933), *Journal of the Mongolian-Tibetan School* (Ch. *Meng Zang xuexiao xiaokan* 蒙藏學校校刊, 1936)].

⁷⁰ Ye shes sgrol ma (Ch. Yixi Zhuoma 益西卓瑪, also Wang Zhe 王哲, 1925-?), from Labrang, a professional sinophone writer since the 1950s (“Labrang Female Workers” is her first piece; see Yixi Zhuoma, 1953], was at school at Shanghai Fudan University in the early 1940s. A fervent communist and anti-Japanese activist, she was thirteen when she joined the underground communist cultural youth circles in Lanzhou (she was at school there) and, later, in Shanghai. She remained all her life a staunch communist (see my interview, Lanzhou, Oct. 6, 2002). Her father Dgon mchog tshe ring (1895-1995), an educated modern man from a rich family of Labrang and a communist since the early 1920s, introduced modern cinema in Lanzhou in 1933, opening the first cinema hall there, the New People Cinema (Ch. *Xinmin dianyingyuan* 新民電影院) and personally travelling to Shanghai to buy films.

⁷¹ A thorough study on these intercultural Sino-Tibetan women, and their role in the first half of the 20th century Kham, needs to be done; I am presently working on it. Speaking about intercultural Tibetan women of that period, I am not sure, at this stage of my research, whether Blo gros ever heard of or met, in Dar rtse mdo or Chengdu, Rin chen lha mo (aka Mrs. Louis King; 1901-1929), a woman from Dar rtse mdo who married the English-national official Louis King in 1919 (the year Blo gros met Ren Naiqiang in Nyarong) after several years of love partnership in Kham. In 1926 Rin chen lha mo (with the interpretation of her husband) published a book in English about Tibetan culture and people (King Rinchen Lhamo, 1926). It is interesting to note here that since neither Louis King nor Rin chen lha mo were fluent in each other’s language, they had to communicate in Chinese, the language they both were fluent in (King Rinchen Lhamo, 1926, vii).

⁷² Books on (post-)Maoist, or contemporary, Tibetan literature include: P. L. Grokhovskiy, 2018; L. R. Hartley and P. Schiaffini-Vedani (eds.), 2008; Lama Jabb, 2015; S. J. Venturino, 2006; and R. Virtanen, 2014. Regarding the issues of diglossia,

show that continuities – and not only ruptures – between pre-Maoist and post-Maoist times are significant and constitutive features of 20th century Sino-Tibetan social and intellectual history, notably in terms of the dynamics and strategies of appropriation, adaptation, rejection and reformulation of the ‘other’ culture that Tibetans elaborated in reaction to Chinese political and cultural annexing politics. Those strategies – which stemmed from present political circumstances and cultural preservation needs – certainly participated in the Tibetan transition from tradition into previously unheard-of creative forms of modernity. These continuities of the Tibetan reactions to Chinese designs between the pre-Maoist and (post-)Maoist periods, also show that there existed continuities between Chinese pre-Maoist and (post-)Maoist politics vis-à-vis Tibet, notably in terms of the pattern and intentions of Chinese policies, and the political and cultural strategies of assimilation in Tibet. What is sharply different between the two periods mentioned above, however, is the depth, extension and effectiveness of those policies in Tibet, and in Kham and Eastern Tibet in particular, given the fact that Central Tibet was still, *de facto*, at that time, under the direct administration of the Dalai Lama’s government, the Ganden Podrang (Tib. *Dga’ ldan pho brang*), and that Chinese policies and measures implemented in Kham were not implemented there.

8. Conclusion

This article has explored the complex and inextricable connection among individual journeys, literature, and creativity, and the epoch-making events of macro-history through the emblematic history of a Khampa woman, Blo gros chos mtsho. It has shown how individual histories can sometimes acquire strong emblematic historical significance, and has investigated the deep analogical relationships linking individual, social and cultural/national bodies. By following Blo gros chos mtsho on her personal journey, detailing her cultural and political activities, and exploring the large spectrum of personalities that she met, socialized and collaborated with, I hope to have brought to life a cross-section of Kham social and intellectual history during the first half of the 20th-century, a society in which Blo gros chos mtsho played a significant and proactive role. Why then have her story and her activities so long been unacknowledged and left untold in both Western scholarship and mainstream Tibetan and Chinese cultural discourses?

identity, agency and displacement in (post-)Maoist Tibetan literature, and the correlated highly debated question of whether literature written in Chinese by Tibetan writers can be defined as “Tibetan literature”, see for example L. Maconi, 2002, 2007, 2008 (defended in), 2008(a), 2008(b)-2009.

The answers to this kind of question are always complex and multifactorial, but it is relevant to point out here a number of possible converging explanations. One of these reasons is simply that the secular Sino-Tibetan intellectual history of the first half of the 20th century is a large field of research which has so far drawn only limited attention from the Western academic world. A second reason may be that, from the point of view of mainstream Tibetan cultural discourse inside and outside of Tibet, Blo gros chos mtsho's story does not precisely correspond to a certain mythology of heroism, anti-Chinese resistance, and uncompromising opposition that has been developed within familial, religious, political histories, where Sino-Tibetan intercultural relations and complex cross-cultural narratives are less valued than strongman and strongwoman narratives. Reasons of gender chauvinism and a certain dislike for calling anything written in Chinese “Tibetan” literature, should also be mentioned here. Finally, another reason may be that, from the point of view of the Chinese mainstream intellectual discourse on Tibet and Kham in particular, Blo gros chos mtsho's story and writings – which could in principle well fit a certain politically-correct Chinese discourse of compromise, negotiation and in-betweenness – have long been overshadowed by the histories of more prominent male figures in her intellectual circle, Ren Naiqiang and Paul Sherap among others.

This article has shown that, despite all these obstacles, Blo gros chos mtsho flourished as a figure of highly emblematic significance. She is notably representative of the transformations that Kham society was undergoing in the first half of the 20th century, while, at the same time, she embodied social, political and literary issues and concerns which were to become pervasive and enduring in Kham and across Tibet soon after her death in 1949, during Maoist and post-Maoist times. Among these are the tension between her intimate Khampa self and the acquired culture of her Chinese education and marriage; the negotiation between the Tibetan language of her origin and the Chinese language of her learning/intellectual formation; her concerns over place and displacement; the identifying relationship between the self and the place (her own dying body and her *pha yul*); the ambivalence between two simultaneous processes (that is, the disapproval and, at the same time, the appropriation of certain aspects of the “other” culture); and her intercultural role in the efforts to negotiate a gap between the two worlds. In short, she embodies issues of agency and identity which she experienced through the refractive lens of her identity as a Khampa woman, and which she expressed in a very modern way. In this regard, she is a precursor of a certain Sino-Tibetan literary and intellectual modernity.

Blo gros chos mtsho's writings – thanks to their simplicity, genuineness and intimate tone – are the expression of her original, distinctive and modern voice. Through her essays, we see her remembering, thinking and doubting, we see her in action, we visualize her resolution and determination. We learn about her proactive, positive and enterprising attitude; we especially learn about her preoccupations (the plight of her *pha yul*), her priorities (education, the most powerful equalizer), her views, aspirations and projects (the proposal presented at the National Assembly in Nanjing, but also a project to build a self-sufficient farm in Nyarong) and the intercultural role she wanted to play in all of this. She was particularly determined to get her voice heard; this is an essential and recurrent point in her writings: the importance of expressing one's constructive voice, having it heard and striving to have one's proposals and projects realised, without violence, without weapons.

By reading Blo gros chos mtsho's essays in a cross-cultural perspective, one experiences a sort of revitalising explosion of canons: the canon of Tibetan tradition, its established values and literary patterns, those of *rnam thar* for instance, and its hagiographical narrative, and the canon of classical Chinese literature, its standards and normative discourse which still permeated the Chinese intellectual arena in spite of the ongoing strivings towards literary modernisation. The very axioms upon which canons are based are undermined, as if unintentionally, but with deep determination, elegance, sobriety, audacity, freedom and modernity. Blo gros chos mtsho was a woman of mediation and negotiation; her life and her writings were the fruit of intercultural encounters, the expression of an open mind and of a certain intellectual hybridity. Such is the cultural history of Tibet: a multilayered, complex and extremely rich re-elaboration and adaptation of endogenous creativities and exogenous encounters.

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From Sūtra Collections to Kanjurs: Tracing a Network of Buddhist Canonical Literature across the Western and Central Himalayas

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Introduction

n 2015, Helmut Tauscher and Bruno Lainé published an article entitled “The ‘Early Mustang Kanjur’ and its Descendants,” in which they presented some ideas that call for significant changes to common assumptions in the field of Kanjurs Studies. In particular, they discovered a previously unnoticed larger network of Kanjur collections in the Western Himalayas, besides the commonly known mainstream Tshal pa and Them spangs ma lineages. Many details about this network were formulated as tentative ideas and cautious hypotheses that require additional analysis in the light of further textual evidence. The present article is oriented precisely toward this aim,¹ and therefore a summary of the key findings and propositions by Tauscher and Lainé are in place, before moving on to an introduction of newly discovered manuscript material that will enable us to evaluate and modify some of their earlier ideas. Further, a consideration of this material allows for an investigation of the more distant past, thus providing important insights into the formative temporal context of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when new Kanjurs were produced from earlier, independent canonical collections. While many of the following points are obviously also of preliminary nature and require subsequent evaluation, their importance for the field of Kanjur Studies justifies their early dissemination.

The Early Mustang Kanjur and the hypothesis of a “Mustang group” of Kanjurs

In a common perception of Kanjur Studies, the textual traditions of Tibetan canonical literature are essentially bifurcated in the sense that existing Kanjurs are regarded as belonging either to the Tshal pa or

¹ Research for this article was conducted as part of the project “Buddhist Kanjur Collections in Tibet’s Southern and Western Borderlands” (P 30356), under the direction of Helmut Tauscher and funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). I would like to thank Helmut Tauscher and Bruno Lainé for their invaluable help and feedback as well as Dennis Johnson for his thorough copyediting services.

Them spangs ma lines of transmission.² These form the mainstream traditions to which most of the commonly used Kanjurs belong. This also includes a third “mixed” group, such as the Narthang and Lhasa Kanjurs, which have emerged due to a conflation of these two lines. A fourth group, by contrast, is referred to as “local” or “independent” Kanjurs. This term is used, amongst others, by Helmut Eimer³ to designate local Kanjur productions which are independent of larger textual networks, therefore applicable only to a few, exceptional Kanjur collections.⁴

Drawing from an investigation of newly documented manuscript collections at Hemis (*he mi*) and Basgo (*ba mgo*) in Ladakh, and in view of their connection to the Early Mustang Kanjur, of which only a catalogue exists, Tauscher and Lainé were able to postulate a fifth one, the so-called “Mustang group.”⁵ This hypothesis is mainly based on observations of the order and close textual connections of works contained in the respective collections. A closer comparison of the textual order of selected sections, namely the entire Sūtra (*mdo*) section of one of the Hemis Kanjurs and two volumes of the Sūtra section of material from Basgo (*mdo*, vol. Nya and Zha),⁶ with the contents of the Early Mustang Kanjur revealed “commonalities” that “are too significant to be explained by a common source or by mere coincidence.”⁷ Given the assumed time of production of the respective collections – the Early Mustang Kanjur is connected to the activities of Ngor chen Kun dga’ bzang po (1382–1456)⁸ and therefore dated to the middle of the fifteenth century, while both Hemis and Basgo collections date roughly from the seventeenth century – they concluded that the investigated Hemis and Basgo manuscripts must be part of a larger group of Kanjurs, which “descended from the Early Mustang Kanjur and was disseminated – to what extent ever – in the border regions of southwestern Tibet.”⁹ They further assumed that a Kanjur had existed in the area of Mustang prior to the Early Mustang Kanjur, and that this hypothetical “Old Mustang Kanjur” would hence be more ancient than the Them spangs ma Kanjur, with the term “Kanjur” being used here in a rather loose sense as referring to any collection of the word of the

² See Tauscher and Lainé (2015).

³ Eimer (2012, XXI–XXIII) as well as Tauscher and Lainé (2015, 463–64) discuss the main features of local Kanjurs.

⁴ The basic divisions and affiliations in Kanjur literature are set out in Tauscher (2015) and were well understood already by Eimer (1992, in particular pp. XVIII–XIX) or Harrison (1994).

⁵ See also Tauscher (2015, 109).

⁶ These two volumes were selected as the most striking examples, but significant parallels were detected also in other volumes.

⁷ Tauscher and Lainé (2015, 465).

⁸ On his life and works, see Heimbrel (2017).

⁹ Tauscher and Lainé (2015, 465).

Buddha.¹⁰

Based on these first important findings, Helmut Tauscher initiated a new research project with the aim of gathering and investigating new manuscript material in the Mustang and Dolpo regions and expanding our understanding of the contents and outlines of the “Mustang group.” As will be described below, a consideration of this material confirms the strong textual connections between canonical collections in Ladakh, Dolpo, and Mustang, even though it does not clarify the exact relationship between the Early Mustang Kanjur and the Kanjurs at Hemis and Basgo. It will, however, add crucial information on the processes prior to the creation of the Early Mustang Kanjur, and thus on a period when Tibetan Kanjurs, in the sense of the model ascribed to Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364), were taking shape.

The manuscript collections of Namgyal Monastery, Upper Mustang

From 2010 onward, Christian Luczanits, an art historian and Tibetologist at SOAS, started documenting various monastic collections in the area of Mustang. This work also led him to Namgyal Monastery (*nam rgyal dgon pa*), located on a hill west of the old capital of Lo Manthang. This Sa skya institution hosts a significant collection not only of Buddhist statues but also of older Tibetan manuscripts. Among the books of the monastery, there are forty-three volumes which are markedly different in style and definitely older than the rest of the manuscripts. The entirety of these manuscripts was digitised in a series of research trips, the final one conducted in the summer of 2017 with contribution by the current author.¹¹

An analysis of the textual contents of these volumes demonstrated that these actually consist of two sets: one set of fourteen volumes designated by the volume label (*gdong dar*) “bum,” that is, the Tibetan word for the numeral ‘100.000.’ Accordingly, they contain the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (ŚSPP), i.e., the “Sūtra of the Perfection of Wisdom in 100.000 Ślokas.” The remaining twenty-nine volumes belong to a second set, labelled “mdo sde” or “Sūtra collection.” Interestingly, the current inhabitants of Namgyal Monastery commonly refer to this as “old Kanjur.” This collection is divided in thirty volumes,

¹⁰ Tauscher and Lainé (2015, 466).

¹¹ For a first summary of the monastic objects at Namgyal and their documentation, see Luczanits (2016a) and Luczanits (2016b). A forthcoming book by Christian Luczanits and Markus Viehbeck will offer a detailed art and text historical study of the oldest manuscripts at Namgyal. I would like to thank Christian Luczanits for including me on the respective expedition to Mustang and Mkhan po Tshedbang rig ’dzin, the current abbot of Namgyal Monastery, for hosting us during that trip and for making this research possible.

with each individual volume marked by a basic letter of the Tibetan alphabet. Two volumes (Ma and Ha) are missing, and one volume (Nya) is reduplicated with almost identical contents.

The Sūtra collection and the Prajñāpāramitā set have considerable similarity in style. They use a similar, if not identical, paper of high quality, their page layout and calligraphy are executed with great care, and both contain exceptional illuminations on the first and last folio of every single volume. Art historical considerations and an investigation of the combined codicological, orthographic, and palaeographic features tentatively point to the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century as a likely time of production, with the Prajñāpāramitā set being placed slightly earlier than the Sūtra collection.¹² While similar features may also be found in other sets of Prajñāpāramitā literature,¹³ of which in fact a great number was produced, illuminated sets of this quality are extremely rare. A larger set of canonical literature as gathered in this Sūtra collection, with an early age as assumed for the Namgyal manuscripts, and, moreover, with illuminations of a comprehensive iconographic programme, is not merely a rarity, but must be seen as a unique case in the history and documentation of older Tibetan manuscripts known so far.



Sample of first and last folio of Namgyal, mdo, vol. Na; image courtesy of Christian Luczanits.

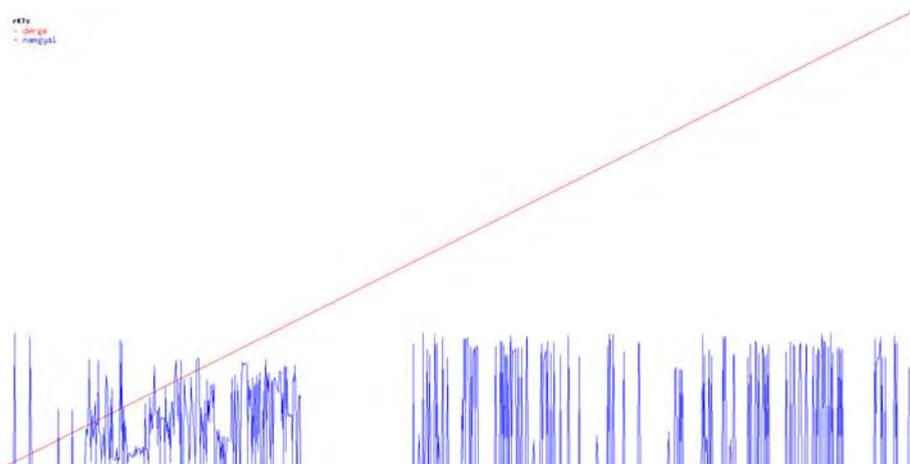
¹² Given the limitations of this article, these considerations cannot be discussed here. See, however, Luczanits and Viehbeck, forthcoming, Chapter One and Chapter Two.

¹³ For example, see the volumes and illuminations studied in Heller (2009) as well as in Allinger and Kalantari (2012).

The dating is of particular importance, since this would mean that the Namgyal manuscripts predate any collection of the mainstream traditions, given that the Tshal pa and Them spangs ma lines go back respectively to the middle of the fourteenth century and the 1430s and that the Kanjurs of these lines that are accessible as physical manuscripts do not predate the seventeenth century.¹⁴ Further, contents and structural order differ considerably from what is known from mainstream Kanjurs and hence raise the question of their mutual relationship.

Contents and connections: comparing the Namgyal Sūtra manuscripts with other collections

In order to address these matters, first a digital catalogue of the volumes was produced to enable a comparison with the contents of other collections. This method was initially developed by Bruno Lainé to compare the placement and order of texts in different collections.¹⁵ The relative placement of texts in the Derge and Namgyal Kanjur is indicated by the graph below.



Comparison of Derge Kanjur (red) and Namgyal (blue).

In this visual rendering, the red line demonstrates the order of texts in Derge, while the blue graph refers to Namgyal for comparison. The

¹⁴ See Tauscher (2015, 108).

¹⁵ For a detailed description of this method and its discussion as a tool for understanding relationships between individual Kanjurs and canonical collections, see Lainé (2009). This tool is presently available online on the rKTs website: <https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/rktsneu/structure/index2.php>; accessed Mar. 01, 2019.

complete Namgyal collection (325 texts) contains only a fragment of the texts found in Derge (1107 texts). For example, no Vinaya texts are found in Namgyal. The subsequent Prajñāpāramitā section only contains two shorter texts (rKTs 27 & 28, Ng 28.57, Ng 18.1),¹⁶ next to the large ŚSPP as a separate collection. The Avatamsaka is fully absent in Namgyal, and it contains only two texts among the Ratnakūṭa collection (rKTs 62, Ng 14.12, and rKTs 79, Ng 14.11). In contrast and as expected, many texts from the Sūtra section of Derge are also found in the Namgyal collection. Interestingly, within the Tantra section several tantric texts, mostly in the form of *dhāraṇīs*, are included in Namgyal, but there are also major gaps. In particular, not a single text from the first ten volumes of the Derge Tantra section is found in Namgyal. The Namgyal collection also does not contain any text referred to as tantra (*rgyud*). Further, none of the Old Tantra (*rnying rgyud*) texts are contained in Namgyal. However, several texts from the Dhāraṇi section (*gzungs 'dus*) are found in both Derge and Namgyal.¹⁷

On the other hand, the Namgyal collection contains five works found neither in Derge nor in any other of the mainstream Kanjur traditions:

- *'Phags pa byams pa la bstod pa*; no title in Tibetan or Sanskrit at the beginning of the text, the title is taken from the colophon, Ng8.3, mdo vol. Nya, ff. 54a1-74a5 (also in the duplicate vol. Nya, ff. 94a2-114b4, Ng45.04); rKTs 1290
- *Khams gsum gy-is*¹⁸ *bstod pa zhes bya ba*; no title in Sanskrit, Ng8.4, mdo vol. Nya, ff. 74a7-77b4 (also in the duplicate vol. Nya, ff. 114b4-118a1, Ng45.05); rKTs 1291
- *'Phags pa sdug bsngal brgyad sbyong ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo'*; no title in Tibetan or Sanskrit at the beginning of the text, the title is taken from the colophon, Ng22.15, mdo vol. Za, ff. 58a8-59a4; rKTs 1387
- *Klu'i rgyal po sog ma myed kyi gzungs*; no title in Tibetan or Sanskrit at the beginning of the text, the title is taken from the colophon Ng28.45, mdo, vol. Sa, ff. 124a4-129a8; rKTs 1388
- *De bzhin gshegs pa'-i zhal chems nga rgyal bcom pa'i gzungs*; no

¹⁶ Since the titles and other details of the respective texts are not important to the present discussion, the rKTs numbers will act as a universal identifier here. This allows for the clear identification of any known canonical text and thus reference to the respective bibliographical details of its versions in different Kanjur editions as provided in the rKTs database.

¹⁷ A useful overview of the contents of the Derge Kanjur is found in Schaeffer (2009, 156); a detailed handlist of the contents can be retrieved from the rKTs website: <https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/rktsneu/handlist/index.php>; accessed Dec. 13, 2018.

¹⁸ Here, the reversed i-vowel sign (*gi gu log*) is rendered as –i.

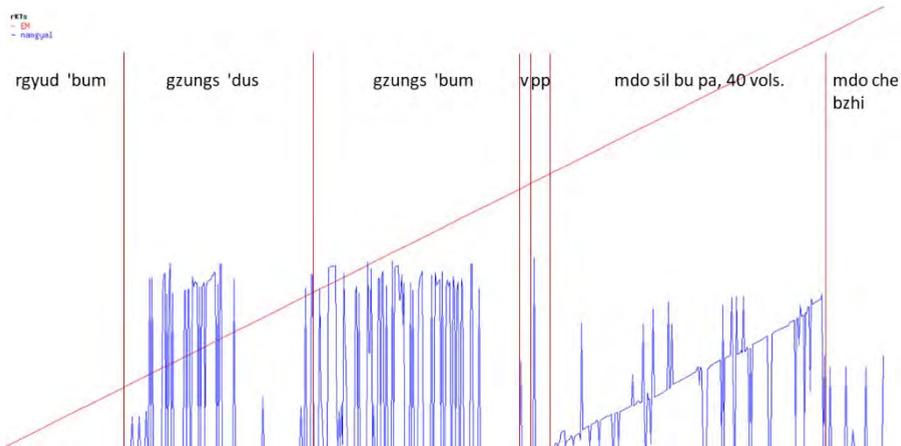
title in Sanskrit, Ng28.46, mdo, vol. Sa, ff. 129a8-133b6; rKTs 1389

The Namgyal collection further contains two texts ascribed to human authors, which therefore would usually be found in the Tanjur:

- *Jātakamālā*, *Skyes pa'i rabs kyi rgyud*; Ng 25.1, rKTs 981
- *Saptakumārikāvadāna*, *Gzhon nu ma bdun gyi rtogs pa brjod pa*; Ng13.16, rKTs 1294

From the perspective of mainstream Kanjurs, all of these works are unusual for a Sūtra collection. At the same time, however, they are also found in other collections, thereby pointing to a larger network that the Namgyal collection belongs to, that is, to various other canonical collections between Ladakh, Mustang, and Dolpo.¹⁹ These close relationships can also be traced by comparing the order of works in the different collections.

As demonstrated in the previous graph, the Namgyal collection bears parallels in textual order neither in relation to the Derge Kanjur nor to any other mainstream Kanjur tradition. However, this situation is different when Namgyal is compared against the Early Mustang catalogue:



Comparison of Early Mustang (red) and Namgyal (blue), with structure of Early Mustang added.

¹⁹ For the details on locating these works in other collections, see Luczanits and Viehbeck, forthcoming, Chapter Three.

The right side of this graph obviously displays a significant ratio of parallel placement. Through the addition of another layer in the form of the content structure of the Early Mustang catalogue, it becomes evident that this pertains only to the section of “Various sūtras” (*mdo sil bu pa*). While texts from the two Dhāraṇi sections (*gzungs 'dus* and *gzungs 'bum*) are also found in Namgyal, they are featured in completely different order. In the Sūtra sections of both Namgyal and Early Mustang, the texts are arranged in a strikingly parallel manner, although the individual volumes contain a varying number of texts, since Early Mustang contains a greater number of volumes than Namgyal. How may this parallel be explained in historical terms?

A possible explanation may be arrived at through a close reading of some of the remarks on the activities on Ngor chen's activities in Mustang, who is said to have initiated and supervised several projects of producing deluxe editions of canonical collections in the mid-fifteenth century.²⁰ His biographer, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs, states the following about the context for the production of the first Kanjur upon Ngor chen's initial arrival to Mustang:²¹

At first, there was no complete *bKa' 'gyur* available in that land. [Ngor chen] then entirely commissioned [one set, taking] the Tantra section from Sa skya and searching in all directions for original [manuscripts] of the other [sections]. For an extensive [presentation], [one] should take a look at the *bKa' 'gyur* catalogue written by the Lord.

In fact, a similar phrasing is found also in the introduction to this very catalogue, that is, the catalogue of the Early Mustang Kanjur:²²

The patron known as dPon po A ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan [thought] “[I] should spread the Conqueror's teachings in every way.” In the region of mNga' ris, beginning with the Later

²⁰ A concise summary of the historically likely scenario is given in Heimbel (2017, 314–26). He assumes that Ngor chen was involved in the production of altogether three sets of Kanjurs and one Tanjur.

²¹ Translation in Heimbel (2017, 284–285), who provides the following Tibetan text (appendix, p. 551): *dang po yul der bka' 'gyur tshang ma mi bzhuḡs pa la | rgyud 'bum sa skya nas | gzhan rnam phyogs mtha' dag nas ma phyi btsal nas tshang bar bzheḡs | rgyas par rjes mdzad pa'i bka' 'gyur dkar chag tu blta |*.

²² Translation taken from Heimbel (2017, 319–20), with the following text in Tibetan: *dpon po a ma dpal bzang po rgyal mtshan zhes rnam par grags pa'i sbyin bdag (...) des | rgyal ba'i bstan pa sgo thams cad nas rgyas par bya ba dang | khyad par mnga' ris kyi sa phyogs su bstan pa phyi dar gyi dus nas brtsams te yun ring mo'i bar la bstan pa rin po che rma med par gnas su zin kyang | dus ha cang ring du gyur pa'i dbang gis glegs bam 'ga zhig 'thor nas deng sang rgyal ba'i bka' 'gyur ro cog gi glegs bam tshang ba phyogs gcig mi bzhuḡs pa'i mun pas khyab pa'i skabs 'dir | bka' 'gyur ro cog gi nyi ma 'od zer | mnga' ris kyi sa'i cha thams cad du shar bar bya'o snyam pa'i dgongs pa zab mo thugs la shar ba ltar phyag len du btab nas bris pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs la |*.

Spread of the [Buddha's] doctrine, the precious teachings had already persisted without blemish for a long time. But since a very long time had lapsed, some volumes had become scattered and thus these days the entire volumes of the *Complete Translation of the Word of the Buddha* [i.e., the *bKa' 'gyur*] are not available in one place. At the point, when [mNga' ris] was pervaded by [such kind of] darkness, [A ma dpal] developed in particular the profound thought: "The sun rays of an entire *bKa' 'gyur* shall arise in every place of mNga' ris," and accordingly implemented [its production]. (...)

Based mainly on this second passage, Tauscher and Lainé assumed that a Kanjur had existed in Mustang before the creation of the Early Mustang Kanjur, that is, the "Old Mustang Kanjur" on which the earlier one was based.²³ The previous quotation, in contrast, and, more importantly, the information that can be drawn from a sequential comparison of Early Mustang and Namgyal suggest another explanation: namely that canonical manuscripts were indeed available in Mustang when Ngor chen entered the area in the fifteenth century, but that these collections were not seen to represent a complete Kanjur (according to Central Tibetan standards?). For this reason, new Kanjur sets were created in a patchwork-like fashion, combining manuscript collections that were available in Mustang, such as the Sūtra collections, while other parts, such as the mentioned Tantra section from Sa skya, had to be gathered from other places. While another scenario would also be possible, the comparison of the textual contents of the Early Mustang and the Namgyal collections strongly suggests that the Sūtra section of Early Mustang has a close historical relationship to Namgyal or similar collections.²⁴ The boundaries of individual volumes shifted and individual works were added or omitted, but the overall parallel arrangement of texts remains striking. Remarkably, this is true exclusively for the Sūtra section. In this case, Namgyal or similar collections served as a model for Early Mustang, while other sections were rather based on other collections. The comparison also demonstrates that a large number of texts, mostly shorter *dhāraṇīs* found in the last three volumes of Namgyal, were not included in Early Mustang. While most of these texts are also found in Early Mustang, they are placed in different sections (*gzungs 'dus* and *gzungs 'bum*) and their order does not suggest any historical relationship. This could imply that the presence

²³ See Tauscher and Lainé (2015, 465–66). As noted by Heimbel (2017, 319), this passage in Ngor chen's catalogue has been interpreted in different ways; see, for example, Eimer (1999, 11–12).

²⁴ In fact, more collections with a similar structure exist in this area, see the discussion of the Lang collections below.

of tantric texts in a collection identified as Sūtra was seen as problematic and hence corrected when new, more standardized Kanjurs were produced under Central Tibetan influence in the fifteenth century. What then does the Namgyal Sūtra collection represent, if it is not a “standard” Kanjur? Fortunately, similar textual collections have survived also at other places and provide information about this period of early canonical production.

The “Dolpo Kanjur” and the Lang collections

The “Dolpo Kanjur” consists of volumes of canonical texts preserved at Nesar Monastery (*gnas gsar dgon pa*), located at Bicher village in Upper Dolpo. This monastery houses a rich treasure of ancient manuscripts, consisting of 642 volumes with a total of about 160.000 folios, roughly 150 of them illuminated. An initial cursory handlist of these volumes was produced by Amy Heller.²⁵ As outlined by Heller, the volumes stem from three different monastic collections. Most of the volumes originally belonged to Nesar, but one collection of ninety-eight volumes was relocated from nearby Lang Monastery (*glang dgon pa*) and another collection of seventy-one volumes from nearby Serkhang Temple (*gser khang*). The close ties between these monasteries were investigated by Klaus-Dieter Mathes.²⁶ In 2014, the head lama of Nesar Monastery, Bla ma Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan, kindly prepared photographs of a complete Kanjur set from Nesar for the Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies (rKTs) archive. These eighty-eight volumes have since been referred to as “Dolpo Kanjur.” During recent field work in August 2018,²⁷ it was understood that these eighty-eight volumes were effectively compiled from the three collections of Nesar, Lang, and Serkhang. In this sense, they represent an artificial collection, although close historical connections between textual sources from these monasteries must be assumed. Yet, some of these volumes exhibit a structure similar to that of Namgyal. Since many of these have come from the collection of Lang Monastery, this collection of altogether ninety-eight volumes was systematically and exhaustively digitised in 2018.

In this case, too, it was first assumed that the collection could represent a Kanjur, considering that the size of ninety-eight volumes represents a fitting number in Kanjur terms. However, a Kanjur did in fact not emerge. Rather, the Lang manuscripts exhibit a clear focus on

²⁵ See Heller (2007) and Heller (2009).

²⁶ See Mathes (2003).

²⁷ I would like to thank the head lama of Nesar Monastery, Bla ma Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan, for his hospitality during that trip and for facilitating this research. Thanks also go to 'Jigs med blo gros for his invaluable assistance and to Klaus-Dieter Mathes for establishing the contact to Nesar in the first place.

Prajñāpāramitā and Sūtra collections. The collection contains a total amount of twenty-three volumes of the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (ŚSP). The situation remains complicated, as many of the volumes are fragmented or seem amalgamated, but a first estimation gives the impression that these volumes stem from at least three different sets of the ŚSP, produced tentatively between the late thirteenth to sixteenth centuries.²⁸ On the other side, there is a total of sixty-one volumes that belong to Sūtra collections. A first analysis of these suggests that they form three different sets, all of which are similar to the Namgyal collection in the sense that each of them is divided into thirty volumes, indicated by the thirty basic letters of the Tibetan alphabet. The oldest of these sets, with palaeographical features which suggest an age similar to that of the Namgyal collection, is preserved only in fragments of six extant volumes. Moreover, twenty-five volumes seem to be part of a rather incoherent set, in the sense that individual volumes were produced at different stages and over a larger period of time, perhaps from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Some of these volumes contain dedicatory prefaces that elucidate the context of their production.²⁹ Furthermore, there is one complete set of thirty volumes, which can be tentatively dated to the interim period of the late fourteenth to fifteenth centuries.³⁰ Apart from these, there are fifteen additional volumes³¹ of both canonical and non-canonical texts, mostly represented by individual Prajñāpāramitāsūtras, that do not point to the usual components of a Kanjur.

A first catalogue of the volumes from Lang was produced for the one complete Sūtra set. Many volumes of this set contain a cover page indicating that they belong to the set referred to as “Extensive Sūtra collection” (*mdo sde rgyas pa*). For some of the volumes, however, the cover is lacking, and thus their affiliation to the set can only be concluded based on stylistic considerations and content analysis. Their contents in turn reveal a close connection to the Sūtra set from Namgyal. All those texts in the Namgyal collection that are deemed as unusual, since they were either absent in mainstream Kanjurs or placed in Tanjurs, are also present in the Lang collection. Furthermore,

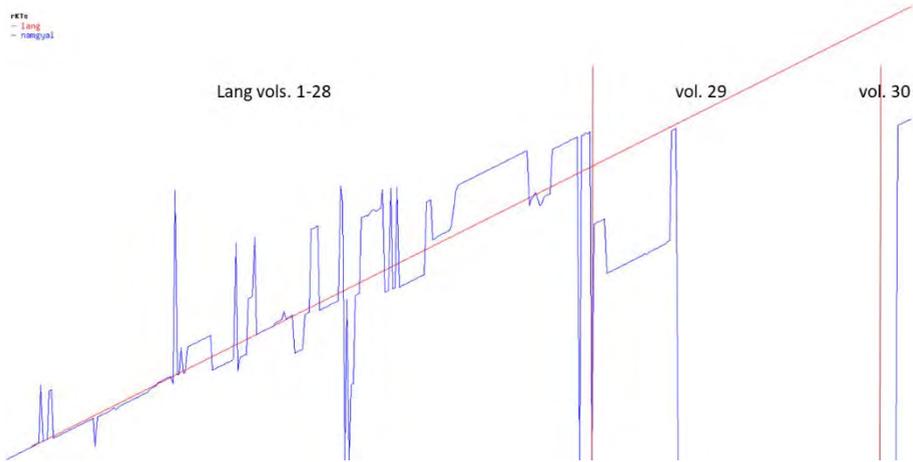
²⁸ A detailed analysis of the entire corpus is a desideratum and thus intended as a future research project. This will be concerned with a content analysis as well as codicological study of the volumes, including their dating. That said, some details on the dating of individual volumes were already given in Heller (2009) and Heller (2007).

²⁹ Some of these prefaces are examined in Heller (2009) and Heller (2007).

³⁰ Distinguishing these three sets is complicated by the fact that individual leaves were exchanged and mixed up among the different volumes.

³¹ Thus, the sum total amounts to ninety-nine volumes (instead of ninety-eight), since one bundle, referred to as L89 in Heller (2009, 226), contains fragments of two different volumes.

the Lang collection contains several additional texts not found in mainstream Kanjurs.³² Most of these are short *dhāraṇīs* included in volume Ha, that is, one of the two volumes missing from the Namgyal collection. The close relationship between these two collections is also evident in a comparison of their order of texts:

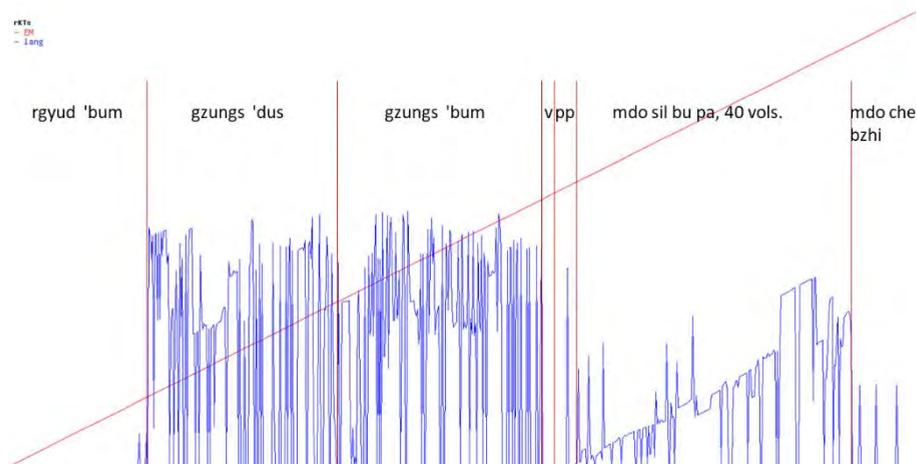


Comparison of Lang (red) and Namgyal (blue), with the structure of Lang added.

As illustrated by the graph above, there are significant similarities concerning the order of texts, but there is no consistent parallel sequence. While smaller groups of texts are arranged in similar order, they may be located in a different volume in the other collection. Most striking is perhaps the larger gap in volume Ha (29), but here it must be considered that this entire volume is missing from Namgyal. That said, the first thirty-seven texts of volume Ha from Lang are also found in Namgyal, where they are arranged in similar order in volume Za (22). Volume Ha is extraordinarily extensive in the sense that it contains altogether 140 texts, often extremely short and obscure *dhāraṇīs*. This also explains the difference in total count, with Lang containing overall 433 and Namgyal containing 325 texts.

The prominent presence of *dhāraṇīs* also becomes obvious through a comparison between the Early Mustang catalogue and the Lang collection:

³² A first handlist of this collection is provided in the rKTs archive: <https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/rktsneu/handlist/index.php>; accessed March 05, 2019. At the time of writing, twenty-one texts remain to be identified.



Comparison of Early Mustang (red) and Lang (blue),
with the structure of Early Mustang added.

As already observed in the above comparison between Namgyal and Early Mustang, close connections are only evident for texts included in the Sūtra section of Early Mustang. While many *dhāraṇī* texts are found in both collections, they are arranged in a different order. This too suggests that canonical collections, like the “Sūtra collection” of Namgyal or the “Extended Sūtra collection” of Lang, have served as sources for the inclusion of texts into Sūtra sections when new Kanjurs were produced in Mustang in the fifteenth century,³³ while at the same time the overall conceptual structure of these Kanjurs relied on different models, most likely derived from Central Tibet. The Sūtra collections, in contrast, seem to reflect an earlier stage of development prior to the emergence of fully-structured Kanjurs.

From Sūtra collections to Kanjurs

In this light, it seems feasible to reflect on the conceptual nature of the Sūtra collections found in Namgyal and Lang. First of all, it is important to note that their structure is not to be regarded as unique and exceptional, but rather that they are representations of a larger pattern. In the Lang collection alone, we find three similarly structured sets of Sūtra collections. Furthermore, it may be expected that traces of similar

³³ It is likely that the structure of the Early Mustang catalogue corresponds with Kanjurs that still exist in Mustang, such as the famous “Golden Kanjurs” at Tsarang and Lo Manthang; see Mathes (1997, 127). These, however, are yet to be investigated.

sets will also be found in the Nesar and Serkhang collections housed in the same temple in Bicher. Moreover, a first preliminary investigation of a private textual collection in Saldang and of the canonical collections at Shey Monastery (*shel dgon pa*) has already confirmed the existence of similar thirty-volume Sūtra sets also at other locations in Upper Dolpo. However, the current state of research does not predicate whether these are confined, in this very structure, to the area of Dolpo and Mustang. At all these places, the Sūtra sets, often along with other older manuscripts, sets of the ŚSPP, Dhāraṇi collections, and other individual sūtras, are commonly referred to as “old Kanjurs.” Yet, when prompted about their details, religious experts are able to differentiate between different sets of texts as well as between later “standard” Kanjurs and the Sūtra collections. The actual usage of these texts at any given monastery is that all of the volumes form a larger conceptual unit, which is commonly placed at the head of the main temple, representing the idealised entirety of the Buddhist teaching in the form of a symbolic material object. They may be also used in ritual contexts, in which they are recited or paraded through a village for purification of the community, its crops and livestock, as well as for protection from natural disasters.³⁴ In these ritual and symbolic contexts, the actual contents of a particular collection are not essential. Rather, volumes of this kind form a “practical canon,” that is, they represent an idealised “notional canon” of the entirety of all Buddhist works, of which they are seen as a local instantiation.³⁵ While it is certainly appropriate to speak of a “canon” or “canonical collections” in this sense, the use of these terms should not blind against the fundamentally open nature of such collections and their content-related diversity.³⁶

A historical perspective currently offers only limited information on how these Sūtra collections were regarded in earlier times. It seems that the idea of the term “Kanjur” as referring to a structured canon in the sense of Bu ston’s fourteenth century model only solidified with that very model. In the previous centuries, the term was obviously

³⁴ On such ritual usages in Tibetan village communities, see Gutschow and Gutschow (2003) and Childs (2005). Such usage for recitation is also attested by marginal notes in the Namgyal manuscripts, see, for example, Namgyal, mdo, vol. A, f.287b, line 9ff.: *chos med kyi sprang po klu sgrubs rgya mtsho zhes bya bas mdo sde glegs bam nyi shu rtsa byad rang gi lce thog nas gtsang mdon tshad mar byas pas dge ba'i rtsa bas pha mas gtso byas sems can thams cad kyi tshe 'dir 'gal rkyen bar chad zhi nas phyi ma bde ba can du skye bar 'gyur cig* l. These notes and their indications for the social usage of such manuscripts will be discussed in a forthcoming article, tentatively titled “Of Men and Manuscripts.”

³⁵ See Silk (2015), for different notions of canonicity in a Buddhist context, as well as Stanley (2014, 385), for the notion of a “practical canon.”

³⁶ Caution is certainly required when using the term “canon” in a Tibetan Buddhist context, as previously argued by Skilling (1997, 101–2); yet it largely depends on the notions associated with the term.

used more loosely to designate larger collections of Buddhist texts.³⁷ As suggested by Peter Skilling,³⁸ it is likely that the individual components that were combined to form a structured Kanjur were first transmitted independently. Of special importance for our context is the idea that texts were gathered in anthologies called “*mdo mang(s)*,” literally “Many sūtras.” These were obviously also taken as sources for the Sūtra sections of later Kanjurs, as attested, for example, in the colophons of the Tshal pa Kanjur documented in the Lithang Kanjur.³⁹ These colophons are of particular interest, since they record two processes in the transition from Sūtra collections to Kanjurs also observed in the above comparison of the Namgyal or Lang collections and the Early Mustang Kanjur: namely that tantric texts were extracted from the Sūtra collections and placed into the respective tantric sections (*rgyud 'bum*), and that texts composed by human authors were extracted and placed into the Tanjur (*bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog*). With regard to the latter, two of the respective works found in Namgyal and Lang, the *Jātakamālā* and the *Saptakumārikāvadāna*,⁴⁰ are mentioned among the examples listed in the Lithang Kanjur:⁴¹

Dhāraṇīs that are not real sūtras but belong to the tantric section were inscribed into the collection of tantras (*rgyud 'bum*) [...]. [Works] like the *Jātakamālā*, the *Varṇārhavarṇebhagavatobuddhasyastotreśakyastavaonāma*, or the *Saptakumārikāvadāna* were composed later by scholars of the *śāstras*, such as Ācārya Śūra and others, and hence [...] were inscribed into the Tanjur (*bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog*) [...].

While this aspect certainly warrants closer investigation, it also corroborates the idea that the Namgyal and Lang collections are representatives of a strand of smaller independent collections that existed prior

³⁷ See Schaeffer and Kuijp (2009, 9–14). For one of such collections found at Gondhla, Helmut Tauscher introduced the term “proto-Kanjur” to distinguish it against later fully-structured Kanjurs, see Tauscher (2008), in particular pp. XI–XII.

³⁸ See Skilling (1997), especially pp. 97–98, further also Eimer (2002, 4).

³⁹ A transliteration of the Tibetan text and partial English translation of the respective section colophons of the Lithang Kanjur is provided in Shastri (1987).

⁴⁰ Interestingly, the *Saptakumārikāvadāna*, is also included in the catalogue of the Early Mustang Kanjur (EM 636), see Eimer (1999, 110).

⁴¹ Lithang, *mdo sde*, vol. AH, pp. 295b7–296a4: *mdo dngos ma yin pa rgyud sder gtogs pa'i gzungs rnams ni rgyud 'bum gyi nang du bris shing* | [...] *skyes rabs dang sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das la bstod pa bsngags par 'os pa bsngags pa la sogs pa'i bstod pa rnams dang* / *gzhon nu ma bdun gyi rtogs pa brjod pa la sogs pa rnams ni phyis slob dpon dpa' bo la sogs pa bstan bcos mkhan po rnams kyis mdzad pa yin pa'i phyir* [...] *bstan bcos 'gyur ro cog gi nang du bris pas* [...] (TBRC Resource ID W4CZ7445). Here, neither the Tibetan text nor the English rendering given in Shastri (1987) were found to be reliable. On these colophons and the creation of the Old Snar thang Kanjur, see also Harrison (1994, 297–98) and Harrison (1996, 77–78).

to fully-developed Kanjurs. It remains possible that what is referred to here as Sūtra collections represents only one section and thus a fragment of Kanjur-like collections which at one time were more extensive, but the presence of these Sūtra collections without traces of other typical Kanjur-elements, their timing, and the observation of the editorial processes just described suggests otherwise. It rather seems that these Sūtra collections provide, for the first time, a material basis for the investigation of the production processes of Kanjurs from earlier collections.⁴²

Conclusions: contours and prospects of the “Mustang group”

With the strong connections already observed between the Basgo and Hemis collections, the Early Mustang Kanjur, and now, as a new addition, the Sūtra collections of Namgyal and Lang – together with the likely additional textual collections in Upper Dolpo – we now have a clear proof of a network of Tibetan canonical literature that stretches out between Ladakh, Dolpo, and Mustang. Given the geographic scope of this network and the increasing number of collections that are detected as its members, it seems misleading to conceive of its representatives as a “local” or “independent” transmission of Buddhist literature. Rather, it must be regarded as another important line of transmission next to the mainstream lineages of Tshal pa and Them spangs ma. For now, it seems that the focus of this network lies in the Western and Central Himalayas, but only a future investigation of other members of this network will allow for a clearer determination of its geographical boundaries and hence provide conditions for evaluating the viability of its provisional label as “Mustang group.”

The main argument for this network has been the detection of significant parallels in the arrangement of texts in different collections. While this article, too, is mainly focused on observations based on this approach, it should be noted that equally close connections are also found on the textual level.⁴³ Working more closely on a detailed philological analysis of the wording of individual texts and a comparison of these with the textual variations in other collections could be a viable

⁴² Of course one also has to consider other important manuscript collections such as those in Tabo, see Steinkellner (1994), and Gondhla, see Tauscher (2008), but as these are fragmentary and not structured systematically in one coherent collection their order cannot easily be mapped onto other collections.

⁴³ Some of these will be discussed in Tauscher, forthcoming (“Chinese Whispers? Transmitting, Transferring and Translating Buddhist Literature” in a volume edited by Vincent Eltschinger *et al.*), further a forthcoming edition of the *Lañkāvatārasūtra* by Lambert Schmithausen, and also in our own study, Luczanits and Viehbeck, forthcoming, Chapter Three.

solution to approach some of the open questions regarding that network. While a rough historical dating of the individual collections allows for the formulation of a relative chronology, so far we lack a clear understanding of the detailed relations between these collections and the historical possibilities underlying their connections. Such an approach may also provide insights into the relationships of the texts of this network to the texts of the mainstream Kanjurs, and thus help to clarify whether Sūtra collections like the ones found at Namgyal or Lang must be regarded as representing a strand of textual transmission that predates what is formulated in later structured Kanjurs, as it seems likely in light of their historical placement. Such an assumption is also encouraged by a recent philological study of the *Mañjuśrīvihārasūtra* conducted by James Apple. By means of a text-critical comparison of five versions of the text from Dunhuang and altogether seventeen versions from different Kanjur editions, including material from Basgo and Hemis, Apple came to the conclusion that the latter must be regarded as forming a separate Western Tibetan group that contains readings older than all witnesses of the mainstream Kanjurs of the Tshal pa and Them spangs ma lines.⁴⁴ It remains to be investigated whether this can be claimed also for other texts and for the newly added members of this group.

In any case, the manuscript collections at Namgyal and Lang provide unexpectedly rich material for textual-historical research, since an investigation of their contents and a comparison with later, fully-structured Kanjurs could elucidate not only the processes of selection, restructuring, and refinement on the content level of newly created collections, but also on the more granular level of the actual wording of the individual works they contain.

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⁴⁴ See Apple (2014, in particular pp. 293–300).

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Compte-rendu

Henrion-Dourcy, Isabelle, 2017. *Le théâtre ache lhamo. Jeux et enjeux d'une tradition tibétaine* (Leuven, Peeters, Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques 33). ISBN : 978-90-429-3339-2 (xxxv, 940 pp. ; 10 figures ; 40 planches hors-texte)

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Cette monographie anthropologique sur le théâtre tibétain *ache lhamo* est un travail interdisciplinaire qui se nourrit à la fois de l'anthropologie, de la tibétologie et de la théâtralogie. Recueillant les témoignages clefs d'acteurs et de lettrés ayant façonné et connu *l'ache lhamo* à l'époque prémoderne (avant 1950), cette étude est d'autant plus riche et poignante que le théâtre tel que l'auteure a encore pu l'observer lors de ses enquêtes de terrain menées au Tibet et en exil à la fin des années 1990 n'existe plus sous la même forme à l'heure actuelle.

L'ouvrage est divisé en trois parties : la première (pp. 55-283) présente le contexte culturel du *lhamo* à l'époque prémoderne. Cette partie débute par un examen des différentes versions du mythe fondateur de *l'ache lhamo*, qui fait remonter le théâtre au maître Thangtong Gyalpo, « saint fou » du 15e siècle, aussi crédité de la construction de ponts. Sous fond d'une esquisse historique des origines du *lhamo*, l'auteure trace l'évolution importante que connut *l'ache lhamo* au temps des 5e, et surtout des 11e et 13e Dalai Lamas. Cette perspective historique permet de mieux comprendre l'évolution de ce théâtre au-delà des formulations simplifiées de réification identitaire que connaît actuellement *l'ache lhamo* de part et d'autre de l'Himalaya.

L'auteure montre que *l'ache lhamo* est essentiellement un théâtre populaire, apprécié surtout des agriculteurs du Tibet central (régions de l'Ü et du Tsang) ; même si les livrets sont d'inspiration bouddhiste et sont considérés pour certains comme étant la parole du Buddha, les représentations sont ancrées dans le culte des déités locales, déités qu'il s'agit de réjouir par un spectacle afin de sécuriser une année agricole faste. Bien que l'élément religieux soit présent dans *l'ache lhamo*, le divertissement (des hommes et des dieux) est tout aussi important, ce

qui le distingue de l'art purement religieux des danses sacrées du *cham*.

La deuxième partie (pp. 287-409) de l'ouvrage traite de l'ancrage sociologique du *lhamo* ; cette partie est sans doute la plus utile pour comprendre le contexte socioéconomique dans lequel était pratiqué le *lhamo* à l'époque prémoderne. Henrion-Dourcy y dépeint une société où l'omniprésence des rituels servait à représenter le pouvoir du gouvernement (dont les fonctionnaires étaient en réalité assez peu nombreux) ; dans ce contexte, l'*ache lhamo* était un impôt en culture. La plupart des troupes du *lhamo* à l'époque prémoderne étaient constituées d'acteurs dont l'occupation principale était l'agriculture. Après avoir exécuté leur devoir théâtral annuel devant le gouvernement à Lhasa, et à part quelques spectacles supplémentaires pour des commanditaires monastiques ou aristocratiques lors desquels ils recevaient des pourboires, les membres des troupes retournaient à leurs occupations rurales. La troupe des Kyomolungma était une exception à cet égard, car ses acteurs étaient des professionnels du théâtre à temps plein, dont le style de vie était en grande partie itinérant. Dans son étude sur les principales troupes de l'*ache lhamo*, l'auteure accorde une attention particulière à cette troupe, dont certains des membres jouèrent un rôle important dans la renaissance du *lhamo* au début des années 1980. À part leur devoir d'impôt culturel envers le gouvernement à Lhasa, les troupes étaient également invitées en tournée dans divers villages par des commanditaires privés, notamment pour célébrer une bonne moisson et s'assurer la faveur des dieux pour l'année à venir.

Dans les années 1940, certaines troupes de *lhamo* se constituèrent dont les membres étaient des moines. La plus connue d'entre elles, celle du monastère de Kundeling, fut par la suite sanctionnée par le gouvernement, car ces activités théâtrales étaient jugées incompatibles avec les vœux monastiques. Un chapitre entier est consacré à ces troupes monastiques, car les moines de ces troupes étaient de grands amateurs de *lhamo* et jouèrent par la suite un rôle clef dans la revitalisation du *lhamo* après la révolution culturelle.

La troisième partie (pp. 413-704) de l'ouvrage, la plus longue, consiste en un examen de l'art et de l'apprentissage des acteurs ; est documenté aussi (dans les notes) leur vocabulaire technique, souvent absent des dictionnaires. Dans le cadre d'une description détaillée du prologue de l'*ache lhamo* qui, bien qu'il ne fasse pas partie de la trame des récits, constitue néanmoins le contexte indispensable à toute représentation de *lhamo*, se trouve une riche discussion théorique sur la relation entre rituel et théâtre *lhamo*. On peut en conclure que si le *lhamo* ne se veut pas être rituellement efficace, sa ressemblance à un rituel (notamment par la récitation d'un texte sacré et par l'offrande théâtrale

faite aux esprits locaux, aux *nāgas* et aux dieux) est censée produire une chaîne de connexions interdépendantes (*rten-'brel*) favorables.

La formation de l'auteure en théâtrologie lui permet d'accorder une attention très nuancée au savoir-faire technique des acteurs. Elle y constate la valorisation du naturel et de l'absence d'effort (caractéristique typique de la culture tibétaine), tant pour la gestuelle et la danse que (dans une moindre mesure) pour la voix, et observe que le jeu des acteurs évolue entre une structure relativement souple et la liberté individuelle d'improvisation. En examinant la pratique du théâtre traditionnel tibétain d'une manière contextuelle, Henrion-Dourcy réfute l'hypothèse qui consisterait à considérer le jeu des acteurs comme une forme d'identification méditative à une déité tantrique (comme dans le *cham*) ou encore comme une forme de possession de style chamanique, ces deux autres types d'identification étant par ailleurs connus et distingués au sein de la culture tibétaine.

Une section est dédiée à la réception tibétaine de la théorie indienne du *rasa* (saveur émotive), théorie qui ne fut que partiellement assimilée par les Tibétains. Au Tibet on constate l'impassibilité (voire même le détachement) des personnages sur scène, qui semble refléter la valorisation culturelle de la maîtrise de soi et de ses états d'âme. Les acteurs ne cherchent pas à s'identifier émotionnellement à leurs personnages, mais plutôt à montrer des icônes grandeur nature qu'ils portent sur leurs propres corps, à la manière d'une procession d'images marquantes. Par ailleurs, ils ne se soucient pas de maintenir l'illusion dramatique, l'espace même de la scène n'étant pas défini par des contours et se trouvant sans cesse violé, tant par les acteurs que par les spectateurs. Les acteurs ne jouant pas dans une scène particulière se tiennent en bordure de scène, discutant avec leurs connaissances dans le public ou taquinant parfois les autres acteurs. Les interludes comiques contribuent aussi à ce relâchement dramatique général, même si leur but premier est de réveiller l'attention du public. À cet égard, la satire qui s'en dégage n'est pas dirigée contre le système social dans son ensemble, mais uniquement contre des déviations individuelles (p.ex. moines cupides ; faux oracles ; fonctionnaires abusant de leur pouvoir, etc.). Certaines des moqueries dirigées contre les acteurs servent aussi à éviter la malchance causée par l'admiration, la flatterie et la jalousie (*mikha* en tibétain), surtout pour les acteurs les plus célèbres. Les acteurs doivent certes se montrer, sans quoi ils ne pourraient jouer, mais ils doivent aussi éviter d'être admirés, car cela pourrait leur attirer la malchance !

Si les histoires édifiantes du répertoire de l'*ache lhamo* servent à éveiller la foi et la dévotion des spectateurs, il faut savoir que ceux-ci manifestent ces sentiments religieux de manière tout-à-fait spontanée et sans contraintes particulières. Le caractère religieux des spectacles

n'exclut donc aucunement un comportement naturel et détendu, car assister à une représentation de *lhamo* était traditionnellement l'occasion de faire un pique-nique. Ces considérations montrent que le rôle de l'*ache lhamo* se situe entre édification et divertissement.

Dans l'épilogue (pp. 715-737) Henrion-Dourcy fait le point sur les changements importants dans la manière de jouer le *lhamo* survenus depuis la soutenance de sa thèse (dont ce livre est issu) en 2004. Ces changements sont liés à la folklorisation de l'héritage de l'*ache lhamo*, tant en République populaire de Chine qu'en exil, même si cette folklorisation obéit à une logique différente des deux côtés de l'Himalaya. En exil, le *lhamo* fait partie d'un héritage culturel qu'il s'agit à tout prix de préserver, car cet héritage est celui de l'ancien Tibet idéalisé, dont Lhasa est le centre idéologique. Par contre, en République populaire de Chine, ce même héritage est celui d'une des nombreuses minorités ethniques qui composent la Chine ; le centre idéologique est ici Pékin, censée garantir à ses minorités un futur radieux sous l'égide de l'État chinois tout en protégeant dans sa munificence leurs richesses culturelles. Alors que l'*ache lhamo* prémoderne – tel qu'a encore pu l'entrepercevoir l'auteure à travers les témoignages qu'elle a recueillis et dans la revitalisation initiée par des anciens acteurs qu'elle a pu observer à la fin des années 1990 – n'était pas une tradition normative fixe, la folklorisation de ce théâtre, par la professionnalisation des troupes d'une part et par le cadre idéologique et identitaire qui l'inspire d'autre part, a entraîné, sans doute sans toujours le vouloir, une standardisation quelque peu sclérosée de son contenu ainsi qu'un changement drastique du contexte des représentations théâtrales.

Parmi les appendices à cet ouvrage se trouvent une riche documentation des sources écrites (p.ex. livrets, études, etc. ; en langues occidentales, en tibétain et en chinois) et audiovisuelles concernant l'*ache lhamo*, une anthologie de chants et d'aphorismes relatifs à l'*ache lhamo*, ainsi qu'un recueil des chants insérés dans les interludes dansés. La bibliographie en fin d'ouvrage donne une liste exhaustive de toutes les sources consultées dans ces différentes langues, et est complétée d'une discographie et d'une vidéographie. À la fin du livre se trouvent un index et quarante planches hors-texte, dont la plupart sont des photographies prises durant des spectacles de *lhamo*.

Malgré la connaissance approfondie qu'a visiblement l'auteure de la culture tibétaine, on pourrait parfois lui reprocher, dans le domaine religieux, un certain manque de précision dans la traduction ou l'explication de certains termes techniques du bouddhisme. Ainsi, on pourrait s'étonner de la traduction (p. 72), apparemment rapportée de Rolf Stein, de « dieux protecteurs » pour *yi-dam* (skt. *iṣṭadevatā*), une telle traduction convenant peut-être mieux à *chos-skyong* ou *srung-ma* qu'aux déités étant au centre de l'évocation méditative et rituelle (skt.

sādhana) tantrique. De même, l'interprétation proposée pour les trois corps (skt. *kāya*) de Buddha (p. 447) semblerait indiquer qu'il s'agit de différents mondes ou plans de réalité (« matérielle » pour le *nirmāṇakāya*, « intermédiaire » pour le *saṃbhogakāya* et « sans forme » pour la *dharmakāya*), alors qu'il serait plus juste de parler de dimensions ou de modes d'incorporation de la réalisation d'un Buddha. Il faut aussi relever une erreur dans l'ordre dans lequel sont présentés les trois mondes de la cosmologie bouddhique (p. 515), le monde du désir (skt. *kāmadhātu*) devant être placé avant le monde de la forme (skt. *rūpadhātu*). Mais ce ne sont là en somme que des points secondaires qui n'affectent pas l'argumentation de l'auteure dans son ensemble.

On trouve aussi quelques rares coquilles : p. xxix : « Dung-dkar Blo-bzang <phrin-las (*sic* ! = 'phrin-las) » ; p. 426 : « Les acteurs aussi franchissent aussi (*sic* ! = dittographie) » ; p. 688 : « people can't (*sic* ! = can) make » ; et une erreur de numérotation (p. 418) dans une liste explicative.

Dans la bibliographie, il faut noter quelques problèmes mineurs de mise-en-page qui affectent quelque peu la cohérence de la présentation, notamment p. 855 « dPal mo skyid » devrait être « DPAL MO SKYID » ; de même, « dPav-ris-don-grub » devrait être « DPAV-RIS-DON-GRUB » ; « in China Tibetology » devrait être « in *China Tibetology* » ; p. 867 « in Tadeusz Skorupski (éd.) » devrait être « in Tadeusz SKORUPSKI (s. dir.) » ; p. 871 « PIERINGER Katrin et Wolfram MÜLLER » devrait être « PIERINGER Katrin & MÜLLER Wolfram » ; « in Helmut Krasser, Michael T. Much, Ernst Steinkellner, Helmut Tauscher, eds., » devrait être « in Helmut KRASSER, Michael T. MUCH, Ernst STEINKELLNER, Helmut TAUSCHER (s. dir.) » ; cas similaire p. 858 « GUTSCHOW Niels et Charles RAMBLE » devrait être « GUTSCHOW Niels & RAMBLE Charles ».

Cependant, ces quelques remarques critiques (qui après tout ne concernent que des points mineurs) ne doivent pas faire perdre de vue la valeur indéniable de cet ouvrage, qui impressionne tant par la pertinence des analyses présentées que par la qualité de l'écriture de l'auteure. En effet, malgré sa longueur et sa densité, ce livre n'est pas d'une lecture ardue ; l'auteure réussit à retenir l'attention du lecteur tout au long de ses nombreuses réflexions, techniques certes, mais toujours explicitées avec beaucoup de clarté. Parfois même, ses propos ne sont pas dénués d'un certain sens de l'humour (voir p.ex. p. 605, n. 318, sur la répétitivité du texte chanté de l'*ache lhamo*). Les nombreuses années que l'auteure a passées à côtoyer les acteurs du *lhamo* et à s'imprégner de leur art sont l'expression d'une passion pour ce théâtre qui, tout en étant rustique et populaire, incorpore aussi des éléments de la culture

savante et religieuse tibétaine. Tant par la richesse de sa documentation que par la diversité des pistes de réflexion pluridisciplinaire qu'il aborde, ce livre fournit un témoignage anthropologique d'une grande valeur permettant de comprendre l'*ache lhamo* dans la multidimensionalité contextuelle du vécu de ceux par qui et pour qui il fut et est (encore) joué.



Compte-rendu

Geoff Childs and Namgyal Choedup's *From a Trickle to a Torrent: Education, Migration, and Social Change in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal*, University of California Press, 2019, 230 pages, one map, 16 plates and 9 demographic tables.

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Geoff Childs and Namgyal Choedup's *From a Trickle to a Torrent: Education, Migration, and Social Change in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal* (University of California Press, 2019) analyzes the rural-urban migration from the Buddhist highland valley Nubri from the 1980s until the present. The authors state that while few children from Nubri migrated for educational purposes in the 1980s, such migration increased during the 1990s to become a virtual torrent in the 2000s. Furthermore, they maintain that "a culture of migration" has been established in the valley as it has become a normative expectation. Of a total population of 3,491 people, around a thousand (c. 30 %) have emigrated, leaving 2,452 people living in the valley. While the *de jure* population in the three largest villages in the valley increased by 10.3 % between 1997 and 2012, the *de facto* population living in the villages declined (Childs and Choedup 2019, pp. 65, 140). The authors argue that the large number of migrating children is due to new possibilities for education in exile Tibetan boarding schools and monasteries, mainly in Kathmandu, but also elsewhere in Nepal and India. Due to the drying up of migration from the Tibetan plateau, exile Tibetan institutions in Nepal and India seek to recruit Buddhist highlanders to fill the seats, while many schools and monasteries as well as individual students are supported by transnational sponsorship.

Instead of accepting general demographic rural-urban trends at face value, Childs and Choedup, relying on long-time fieldwork over two decades (since 1995) as well as anthropological demographic theory and network migration theory, analyze the strategic choices Nubri households make. They argue that parents choose new opportunities for their children due to their high evaluation of education, in expectation of future economic benefits and a rise in social status. The authors write that emigration serves to reshape village life, family management strategies, and intergenerational

relations, and they emphasize the agency of male household heads as well as their wives (*ibid.*, pp. 3, 9, 11, 15, 109). While poverty may be a motivation for moving to urban centers, the data shows that emigration reinforces economic differences already existing in Nubri, where the most affluent families are the ones that can afford to send their children to boarding schools and have the most extensive urban networks. Surprisingly, hardly any gender difference is found in the current educational recruitment of children outside the valley, a result supported by our recent collection of data from the Limi Valley in northwestern Nepal (Hovden and Havnevik, forthcoming).

The Nubri household migration strategy has unforeseen disadvantages, however, the most serious being that young adults often do not return to the villages. Although Nubri's population has *de jure* increased in recent years, a dramatic decline is expected in the near future, leading to fallow fields as fewer hands share the agricultural work. Children forget their local dialect, lack the knowledge needed in the agropastoral economy, and become ignorant of local culture and the ritual cycle, feeling on the whole alienated from village life. When farmers produce less, it is difficult to meet local taxation requirements that for centuries have supported the annual ritual cycle in the villages. In high Himalayan cosmology, a precarious balance is perceived to exist between humans and spirits inhabiting the landscape. Nonhuman entities are seen to be responsible for the prosperity and well-being of people and animals and are ritually appeased in order to achieve luck and good health and to avoid climatic calamities such as the droughts, hailstorms, and floods so damaging to high-altitude communities. A general development is a gentrification of the population, making a culturally acceptable aging difficult to attain (*ibid.*, p. 158). Similar developments are found in other highland Himalayan areas, such as in Buddhist villages in the Leh district in Ladakh studied by Karine Gagné in *Caring for Glaciers: Land, Animals, and Humanity in the Himalayas* (2018). In Ladakh, adult labor opportunities are the main cause of rural-urban migration (Gagné 2018, p. 141), but the result is similar. As only old people are left in the villages, they feel abandoned and see their way of life and cultural world disintegrate (*ibid.*, 168-191). Gagné writes that a nostalgia for the past and a belief that life was better before prevails among the elderly.

Although the emphasis of Childs and Choedrup's book is on the disintegration of village life, they also discuss the advantages of migration: young people get an array of new opportunities in the city, they become fluent in Tibetan and Nepali, and some also learn English, making it possible for them to compete in the urban labor market, which again increases the prospect of bringing future benefits to their

families. Being sent to the city for education offers the prospect of leading a life not dominated by heavy agricultural work and the rearing of children. While some girls have returned to Nubri to serve in new occupations such as health workers and teachers, others refuse even to visit their village during school vacations as they are afraid bride capture will force them back to frequent pregnancies and agricultural work.

Not only is the perceived cosmological balance affected by migration patterns and the declining population, so is the status of religious practitioners. Nubri has had age-old traditions of high-status married lamas (*ngagpas*), and since 2000 there has been mass recruitment to urban monasteries and their branches resulting in celibacy and textual Tibetan Buddhism becoming the norm, with around 50% of Nubri males involved. At the same time, the contradictory practice of accepting temporary ordination for boys has become more prevalent, as parents call back their sons to assume responsibility for the household. Currently, 36 % of males aged 15 to 24 have returned to lay life in the village. A gender disparity is seen in that former monks' seasonal work as textual reciters in Kathmandu provides cash, while disrobed nuns are disparaged upon returning and have few prospects for income. Of Nubri's nine nuns, two have been held back in the village, as has been customary, to take part in farming and to care for young and old family members (Childs and Choedup 2019, pp. 89-94).

In 2004 Geoff Childs published another excellent monograph from Nubri, titled *Tibetan Diary: From Birth to Death and Beyond in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal* (University of California Press), devoted to the entire life courses of people living in Nubri villages, while the present volume, co-written with Namgyal Choedup, studies the rapid changes in highland Nepal by documenting Nubri villagers' different life phases. Both monographs describe Nubri from the bottom up and use vignettes or citations from villagers emphasizing the authors' reliance on long-term participant observation and interviews, not only giving vivid portrayals but also offering the readers unique insight into high Himalayan village life. Although containing demographic statistics and analyses, *From a Trickle to a Torrent* is easily accessible for a non-specialist audience. The strength of Childs and Choedup's work is undoubtedly their long-term presence in the Nubri Valley and their combination of ethnographic data with migration statistics, substantiating their findings. In short, they offer "hard data" for comparative studies, as well as "thick descriptions" of villagers' motivations and interpretations. By relying on an emic definition of the household by including non-resident members, the authors tweak and nuance migration theory and give credibility to their analysis.

Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, with around 80 % of its 28 million people engaged in the agricultural sector. As Nepal is gradually becoming more integrated into the global post-capitalist economy, leading to increasing tourism, improved infrastructure, and televisions and cell phones becoming more common, Nepal's agropastoral communities undergo rapid change. Nubri, with its small and poor population, is particularly vulnerable to migration, climate change, and the disintegration of centuries-old ways of life. While researching and writing an eminent ethnography based on the primacy of the local, there is a danger—as is evidenced in several ethnographies from highland Nepal—of being too particular, and in *From a Trickle to a Torrent* I miss a stronger emphasis on the shift between local, national, and transnational perspectives that can illuminate processes of change affecting not only localities such as Nubri but other high-altitude communities in the global South. This is perhaps too much to ask from such a thorough, well-researched, and eloquently written book, but Himalayan ethnography in general would profit from multi-scalar analyses connecting local realities with large-scale processes as well as analyzing social change in the Himalayan highlands comparatively. *From a Trickle to a Torrent* targets a wider readership than specialists in Himalayan anthropology and Tibetan Studies, and I would not hesitate to make the volume part of my students' curriculum.

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Compte-rendu

Jinah Kim: *Receptacle of the Sacred: Illustrated Manuscripts and the Buddhist Book Cult in South Asia*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2013. 377 pp. 9780520273863.

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In *Receptacle of the Sacred*, Jinah Kim provides us a rich, well-researched study of Buddhist book culture in medieval South Asia, demonstrating the historical foundations for what remains an enduring, essential component of Buddhist thought and practice up to the present day. Three central components of the book cult are examined in the work's three sections: The Book (pp. 23-70), Text and Image (pp. 73-209), and The People (pp. 213-285). Her primary source materials are 110 surviving manuscripts, 28 of which are examined in detail, with a majority coming from eastern India (Bengal and Bihar) and a fewer number from Nepal (pp. 11, 55-59). All of her primary sources come from the *Prajñāpāramitā* ("Perfection of Wisdom") genre, a body of literature first produced around the beginning of the first millennium which serves as the foundation for Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Each text examined by Kim was copied between the 11th and 13th centuries, a timeline which leads her to make a strong departure from much of the accepted Buddhist historiography of the period. Generally, in the Buddhist history of South Asia, this era is regarded as one of significant decline and then devastation, most vividly exemplified by the razing of the great Buddhist university Nalanda Mahavihara in 1193. Through her careful research, however, Kim shows us how at this very moment in the late 12th century, illustrated Buddhist manuscripts reached their "apex in terms of iconographic clarity and the creative spirit behind the design...that realized the full potential of a book as a moveable three-dimensional object" (p. 190). It was in the full use of the physicality of their creation that the bookmakers demonstrated their genius and the tremendous "technological innovation" of that marked this era (p. 204). This leads Kim to argue that this period was thus "not [one] of decline and demise but rather [of] creative spirits and new energy" (p. 219).

She divides the various manuscripts into four groups: A, those designed like *stūpas*; B, those designed as “a container of holy sites, like a three-dimensional pilgrim’s map”; C, those in which the illustrations refer directly to the text; and D, those which are “designed as a three-dimensional *mandāla*” (p. 16). In each case, she argues “illustrating a manuscript charged it with divine power and made it a suitable tool for the spiritual transformation of medieval Buddhist practitioners” (p. 6). No longer were books only the vessels of philosophical and ritual knowledge, they became potent objects which in and of themselves were “a physical container of the Buddha’s dharma body” (p. 41).

Readers familiar with Tibetan Buddhism will instantly be reminded of the famous verses in this tradition attributed to the Buddha, who is said to have told his disciple Ananda:

At the end of five hundred years,
my presence will be in the form of letters.
Consider them as identical to me
and show them due respect.¹

However, in the case of these medieval South Asian manuscripts, it is not the words of the Buddha alone but also their relationship to the illustrations which transformed the texts into ritual objects imbued with power. She explains that through “the introduction of Esoteric iconography in manuscript illustration,” these Mahāyāna texts “(re)emerged as a powerful cultic object of Esoteric Buddhism” (p. 179). Not only were illustrations of Esoteric deities introduced in this period, the bookmakers also seriously considered the physical space in the book that they occupied, constructing the texts in such a way that the tantric deities were paired with their consorts on facing panels in the center of the manuscripts, the gods’ “union in bliss...explicitly suggested” (p. 196). These Esoteric illustrations, and their specific placement in the center of the manuscript, thereby empowered the texts with the blessings of the deities illustrated therein, emphasizing again how the book itself became a powerful instrument of transformation.

Her argument extends still further. Due to the manuscripts’ loose-leafed *pothi* format, composed of “movable parts and fluid spatial boundaries”, she claims that even the act of turning folio pages “evoke[d] the sense of transformation that many esoteric, yogic practitioners in medieval South Asia sought to achieve” (p. 133). Kim

¹ rDza dPal sprul rin po che 2010, p. 262 (translation Patrick Dowd) : *Inga brgya mtha mar 'gyur pa na // nga ni yi ge'i gzugs su 'ong // nga yin snyam du yid byas la // de tshe de la gus pa gyis //*.

explicitly employs “the analogy of [the] Internet and hypertext” to describe the way in which this format allowed the Buddhist practitioner to “roam freely beyond...spatial boundaries and physical limits and absorb all the cultic power” of the pilgrimage sites and Tantric deities portrayed in the paintings (pp. 7, 90). As practitioners flipped through the loose pages of the scriptures, they mirrored their own progress on the Tantric Buddhist path.

Such propositions are undeniably fascinating and provide a truly novel lens through which to view the emergent technologies of the Buddhist book during this period. The arguments are, however, quite speculative. By the author’s own admission, her work is “a historical construct of the early twenty-first century” and premised on the “contention that our present attempts to understand the past can in certain ways be helped more by historical *imagination* than by historical truisms” (p. 11, emphasis mine). The conclusions drawn from this broad interpretative approach must therefore be taken with a grain of salt, however captivating they are.

Contrastingly, “Chapter 6: Social History of the Buddhist Book Cult” relies less on speculative hermeneutics and more on explicit textual details to make concrete, surprising arguments about the social milieu of this period. For example, by the eleventh-century, half of the illuminated manuscripts were commissioned by laywomen and a majority of the male donations came from men from Nepal or Tibet (p. 225). Not only does this demonstrate far more active Buddhist engagement by laywomen than has been generally accepted, the number of foreign donors “suggests that eastern Indian Buddhist monasteries remained international seats of learning even in this late period” (p. 233). Against the dominant narrative of decline, Kim again shows the vibrancy of Buddhism in the subcontinent at this late moment and the broad support from both women and foreigners.

In her epilogue, she describes a book ritual she herself sponsored in 2004 in Patan, Kathmandu, tying her art historical research to contemporary religious practice. She thereby shows the persistence and continuity of the South Asian Buddhist book cult, which while undoubtedly changed, has adapted and continues on to the present day.

In short, *Receptacle of the Sacred* brings to life the uniquely rewarding topic of the medieval Buddhist book cult, inviting its reader to imagine a world of profound and vibrant Buddhist practice at a historical moment generally seen as a Buddhist dark age in South Asia. Students of Art History, Religious and Asian Studies will undoubtedly benefit from this fascinating study.

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Compte-rendu

Faith and Empire: Art and Politics in Tibetan Buddhism, edited by Karl Debreczeny (ed.), Ronald M. Davidson, Brandon Dotson, Xie Jingsheng, Tsangwang Gendun Tenpa, Per K. Sørensen, Bryan J. Cuevas, Wen-shing Chou, & Johan Elverskog, Rubin Museum of Art, New York, 2019, ISBN 978-0-692-19460-7, 272 pages.

par
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Faith and Empire est un impressionnant volume consacré, comme l'indique son sous-titre, à "l'art et à la politique" dans le contexte du Bouddhisme Tibétain. Cet ouvrage regroupe les contributions de neuf chercheurs, accompagnant l'exposition éponyme qui s'est déroulée au Rubin Museum of Art, entre le 1er Février et le 15 Juillet 2019, à New York. Il s'ouvre sur une savante préface de J. Brtischgi, suivie par le chapitre 1 ("Faith and Empire: An Overview", by Karl Debreczeny, p. 19-51) qui est consacré à la présentation du thème central du volume — le Bouddhisme et la politique, et bien évidemment leurs influences réciproques. Avec une grande pertinence, l'auteur précise dès le départ que la nature véritable des relations entre le Bouddhisme et la politique de l'Etat tibétain est largement méconnue du monde non académique, essentiellement en raison de la vision romantique du Tibet héritée des récits coloniaux. Ce point est éminemment important car l'image que le grand public se fait du Bouddhisme Tibétain est fortement influencée par les récits de voyageurs ou par les travaux des premiers ethnologues généralement peu au fait des subtilités relatives aux religions tibétaines et à leurs vicissitudes historiques. L'auteur complète d'ailleurs ses remarques en ajoutant que l'image d'un Bouddhisme Tibétain pétri de non-violence est encore une contre-vérité qui ne résiste pas à l'analyse historique elle-même. Il montre avec bon sens que la relation entre le bouddhisme et la politique est tout simplement symbiotique, facilitant l'émergence d'une royauté sacrée, en adéquation quasi parfaite avec les représentations classiques que le Bouddhisme véhicule à propos des rois du Dharma (*dharmarāja*). Au Tibet même, la puissance politique ainsi légitimée devait permettre la diffusion du Bouddhisme aussi bien dans le royaume lui-même que dans les régions conquises (ou sous influence culturelle tibétaine) tout au long de la période dynastique. Sous la gouvernance de rois locaux puis des Dalaï Lamas, cette relation symbiotique a perduré jusqu'à l'invasion de 1959.

Le second chapitre ("Indic Roots of Political Imagery and *Imaginaire*", by Ronald M. Davidson, p. 53-67) aborde les origines indiennes des représentations royales du Buddha et les raisons pour lesquelles le Buddha est comparé à un roi *chakravartin*, régnant à la fois sur le monde et le Dharma. Certaines de ces représentations sont étendues aux *vidyadhara*s, ainsi qu'aux déités courroucées, etc. Dans la dernière partie de ce chapitre, ce sont les représentations purement tibétaines qui sont décrites, à partir des sources anciennes telles que les inscriptions sur stèles, jusqu'aux descriptions désormais célèbres de la dynastie du Yarlung dans les textes tardifs (à commencer par les *gter ma*).

Le troisième chapitre ("The Emanated Emperor and His Cosmopolitan Contradictions", by Brandon Dotson, p. 69-81) prend directement la suite logique des thèmes discutés dans le chapitre précédent, en analysant le rôle contradictoire des empereurs tibétains considérés comme des manifestations de Buddhas ou de Bodhisattvas. Malgré leur nature émanée, ces empereurs n'en demeurent pas moins des souverains appliquant les lois du royaume, quitte à ce que ces lois soient en contradiction flagrante avec les principes du Dharma, comme par exemple l'activité royale de la chasse. On pourrait d'ailleurs ajouter ici d'autres règles ou plutôt modalités probablement inévitables de gouvernance que l'auteur n'aborde pas, à commencer par les exécutions politiques (parfois présentées de manière quasi épique dans la littérature tardive).

Le quatrième chapitre ("Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Xixia Kingdom", by Xie Jisheng, p. 83-103) nous entraîne dans le royaume Tangut (Mi nyag, Xixia 西夏), dans les marches sino-tibétaines. Fondé en 1038, ce royaume a joué un rôle considérable dans le renouveau du Bouddhisme au Tibet Central après l'arrivée de moines tibétains exilés dans cette région, consécutivement à la persécution du bouddhisme attribuée à Glang dar ma. Formés au Xixia, ces moines sont ensuite retournés au Tibet Central, y ont fondé des monastères et y ont introduit des pièces d'art religieux (statues, fresques, etc.) directement influencées par l'art Tangut (lui-même héritier de multiples traditions indiennes et chinoises).

Le chapitre 5 ("Tibetan Buddhism and Art in the Mongol Empire According to Tibetan Sources", by Tsangwang Gendun Tenpa, p. 105-123) aborde l'influence de la religion bouddhique tibétaine et de son art sur l'empire mongol, par le biais de la conquête du royaume de Xixia et l'établissement de la relation "prêtre-patron" (*chos yon*) entre le Tibet et l'Empire Yuan. Comme on le sait, si les Kagyüpas tirèrent effectivement profit de cette relation, celle-ci bénéficia essentiellement aux Sakyapas. La création de l'alphabet *Phakpa* et les traductions qui s'ensuivirent achevèrent d'implémenter le rôle des patriarches Sakyas à la cour impériale. Dans le domaine de l'art, les représentations

picturales des empereurs et de leur suite montrent ces derniers absorbés dans leurs dévotions, assis, les mains jointes en signe de respect et de vénération. On voit donc clairement que, dès le début de la dynastie, le Bouddhisme Tibétain joua un rôle décisif auprès des Yuan, y compris dans l'art et la littérature qui se sont développés pendant le règne de ces derniers.

Dans le chapitre 6 ("In the Shadow of the Khan: Tibetan Buddhist Art and Political Legitimation in the Ming Dynasty", by Karl Debreczeny, p. 125-149), l'éditeur principal du volume insiste à juste titre sur la continuité en matière de religion entre les empereurs Yuan et les fondateurs de la dynastie Ming. Cette fois-ci, ce seront les Karma Kagyüs, à commencer par le 5e Karmapa (De bzhin gshegs pa, 1384-1415), qui bénéficieront du patronage impérial. L'empereur Yongle (永樂帝) ira même jusqu'à proposer au Karmapa de régner sur l'intégralité du Tibet et de convertir tous les monastères à la tradition Karma Kagyü, offre que le hiérarque déclina sans hésitation. Malgré le soutien des empereurs Ming au Bouddhisme Tibétain, des persécutions, notamment sous l'empereur Jiajing, émaillèrent la dynastie, avant l'avènement des Mandchus.

Le chapitre 7 ("Rise of the Dalai Lamas: Political Inheritance through Reincarnation", by Per K. Sørensen, p. 151-169) décrit la montée en puissance de l'école Gelukpa et la reconnaissance du Dalai Lama comme l'incarnation principale du *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara. Le Dalai Lama se voit ainsi comparé au fondateur de la dynastie du Yarlung, Songtsen Gampo, que la littérature tardive a également présenté comme une émanation directe de ce *bodhisattva*, réitérant par la même occasion la relation prêtre-patron de l'époque des Yuan. La fusion des pouvoirs spirituel et séculaire s'effectuera avec le 5e Dalai Lama (1617-1682), patronné par les Mongols eux-mêmes. Le symbole le plus visible du pouvoir du Dalai Lama devait à partir de cette période être le palais du Potala, nommé d'après la demeure mythique d'Avalokiteśvara, au sommet du Mont Potala.

Le chapitre 8 ("The Politics of Magical Warfare", by Bryan J. Cuevas, p. 171-189) diffère sensiblement des autres parties du présent volume dans le sens où il aborde l'histoire des rituels de magie noire utilisés pour défaire les ennemis, à commencer par les Mongols,¹ mais également les ennemis régionaux (i.e., tibétains), des rituels tantriques étant alors utilisés à des fins purement politiques. C'est le cas des rituels célèbres pour repousser les armées (*dmag bzlog*, encore une fois notamment mongoles), mais également de rituels moins spécifiques

¹ Pour les Tibétains, les Mongols apparaissent à la fois comme des patrons du Bouddhisme, et comme des brutes épaisses peu enclines à la compassion pour ceux n'appartenant pas à leur secte religieuse.

qui ont pour but la destruction d'un adversaire. La justification de l'accomplissement de tels rituels s'appuie sur la nature théoriquement perverse de l'ennemi visé, comme par exemple lors des conflits qui ravagèrent l'est du pays de 1837 à 1863, avec la guerre civile fomentée par Gönpo Namgyel, un chef local du Nyarong.

Avec le chapitre 9 ("Bodhisattva Emperors of the Manchu Qing Dynasty", by Wen-Shing Chou, p. 191-211), on retrouve l'ordre chronologique qui caractérisait le présent volume, avec l'avènement de la dynastie des Qing, c'est-à-dire des Manchus, et leur décision d'établir le Bouddhisme Tibétain comme religion d'état. Au cours de cette dynastie, le système prêtre-patron fut réinstauré avec l'invitation de nombreux moines tibétains, mais également en reconnaissant l'empereur comme une émanation de Mañjuśrī, quasiment sur un pied d'égalité avec le Dalai Lama présenté comme une émanation d'Avalokiteśvara. L'empereur qui exemplifie à merveille le *bodhisattva* cumulant un rôle à la fois politique et religieux fut sans conteste le célèbre Qianlong (乾隆). Au cours de son règne, le Bouddhisme connut un essor extraordinaire sur tous les plans : constructions de temples, impressions de textes, réalisations de statues et de peintures, répliques de monastères, etc.

Enfin, le chapitre 10 ("Maitreya, Shambhala, and the End of Buddhist Empire", by Johan Elverskog, p. 213-228) aborde les mythes associés au Buddha du futur (Maitreya) et les théories eschatologiques du *Kālacakratāntra* et du royaume de Shambhala dans le contexte de la fin de la dynastie des Qing, essentiellement en Asie Centrale. A cette époque, les terreurs qui ont frappé l'Inde du 11e siècle avec les invasions musulmanes se répètent en Mongolie, en Chine, au Tibet, mais également en Russie, etc., tout au long de la fin du 19e et au cours du 20e siècle avec, une fois de plus, des invasions musulmanes, suivies par l'installation de la terreur bolchévique qui, en dépit de tous ses efforts, ne parviendra pas à éradiquer le Dharma dans les régions concernées. Le renouveau bouddhique qui a lieu dans cette partie du monde en est une preuve patente.

Deux appendices, une bibliographie, un index détaillé et une description des contributeurs closent cet ouvrage remarquable, tant par la qualité des articles (l'érudition des auteurs est un atout indéniable pour le lecteur) que par la richesse des illustrations. La perfection de l'ensemble est telle qu'on peine à lui trouver d'éventuels défauts. Les spécialistes des Tantras ne manqueront cependant pas de remarquer que, dans la préface de J. Britschgi, la présentation de l'accès et de l'entraînement aux pratiques tantriques avancées comme étant réservés à une élite de réincarnés ne coïncide réellement pas avec la manière dont les enseignements du Bouddhisme Tibétain étaient transmis (et continuent à l'être). Même si au Tibet antérieur à l'invasion communiste, les

enseignements tantriques n'étaient certes pas aussi publics qu'ils le sont depuis des décennies en Occident (et encore, les initiations de masse n'y étaient ni rares ni inconnues, bien au contraire), ils n'étaient en aucune manière réservés à une élite. J'en veux pour preuve les innombrables yogins errants, souvent experts dans les arcanes tantriques les plus sibyllins, les maîtres laïcs (pour qui la pratique du Bouddhisme repose essentiellement sur l'accomplissement de rituels tantriques), et la cohorte des moines sans titre particulier qui recevaient ce type d'instructions au titre de leur formation (et ce, jusque dans les collèges de dialectique). Cette remarque n'entache cependant en rien l'intérêt évident d'un tel ouvrage, et s'il fallait vraiment lui trouver un défaut, j'imagine que celui-ci consisterait en l'absence de notes de bas de pages (les notes figurant *in fine* des articles respectifs).

