

## Preface

he man we all know simply as Dan Martin was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1953 as Daniel Preston Martin. Something of his history will be offered below, but the most important things to notice about Dan are undoubtedly the combination of his extreme erudition and his limitless generosity. There is arguably no other scholar—aside perhaps from the legendary Gene Smith—who has so tirelessly worked for decades to freely share his profound insights in Tibetan history and all things Tibetan.

Given this, no excuse is needed for a volume of papers offered in his honor. But a reasonable question is why the undersigned are the editors of such a volume, and the answer is simple: thanks to the trajectory of Dan's career path, and while surely in one sense almost all working Tibetan scholars are his students, Dan has never had any formal disciples. Therefore, in the absence of those who, structurally speaking, as it were, might have been expected to arrange the *Festschrift* of a scholar of his stature, the undersigned with love and appreciation undertook the task.

It is no doubt *pro forma* to offer here a requisite apology: “we well know that many more scholars would have wished to contribute, but ....” In the present case, however, this is much more than a *pro forma* statement. We do assuredly know that not many more, but in fact almost *all*, scholars in the field would gladly dedicate a study in Dan’s honor. The proximate problem is that the energies of the two aging editors are limited, and this and other considerations led to the correspondingly limited collection of papers assembled here. We earnestly and sincerely hope that those who were not asked to contribute do not take it amiss or as any sign of disrespect, and that they simply understand that we could only do so much; we do not have even a fraction of the energy that Dan himself constantly and unabatedly demonstrates!

A final question to address here at the outset is why we publish the papers in Dan’s honor in the *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines*, rather than, for instance, as a printed volume, and again, the answer is simple. Dan has demonstrated, through the years of his tibeto-logic.blogspot.com (which was initiated in August 2006), and through many other freely shared online resources (see below), his dedication to making knowledge *free*. We therefore thought it only fitting and proper that

the papers offered in his honor also be published in Open Access.<sup>1</sup>

Before turning to an appreciation of Dan's scholarship, we might give a very short summary of his life's trajectory.<sup>2</sup> Soon after his birth in Buffalo, Dan's family returned to its home area in Michigan and North Indiana, where they frequently moved from one small city or rural area to another because of his father's occupation. Though scholarship was not a force that he could see around him, and certainly not that of the esoteric variety, when Dan was sixteen years old, he began self-study of Sanskrit. By skipping lunches at school, he saved money and ordered a book through the mail. When his religious mother found out, she said, "If you want to study a foreign language, why don't you study Hebrew?" Eventually, in fact, long years later, having ended up in Israel, he did so, and would become more than competent in the language. But all that was in the future. As a teenager, Dan would haunt public libraries and read books not known at his home. He was, in fact, the first generation in his extended family to study at university.

Since Dan's family did not financially contribute towards his academic education, when he completed high school at seventeen and a half, he took a factory job to save money for his studies. He returned to different factory jobs in North Indiana every summer during his studies, remaining extremely poor throughout his undergraduate years. Dan began his university studies at Indiana University in 1971, completing his BA, with Honors, in the Department of Religious Studies in 1976. Already before he arrived in Bloomington, he had heard about Prof. Thubten Norbu and wanted to study the Tibetan language, but his advisor told him this was not possible as a freshman (which was in fact untrue!), and Dan was sent instead to study Italian. Two years later, in 1973, he did begin his study of Tibetan, although as he will admit, he has never gained full fluency in any of its spoken varieties. Be that as it may, after completing his undergraduate degree, Dan continued to study Tibetan and to assist Prof. Norbu, Taktser Rinpoche, in various academic aspects. To support himself he worked at night as a cleaner. In the mornings he read with or helped Prof. Norbu, then slept briefly, before heading back to work. After three years, he was offered a job cataloguing the Tibetan collection of the

<sup>1</sup> Openness is not only about cost-free access. Dan has always been sensitive to the profound restrictions that the PRC government continues to place on Tibetan scholarship. It was fitting that he chose to dedicate his very first tibeto-logic blog of August 2006 to a Tibetan literary figure and a Tibetan historian who experienced these restrictions first-hand. His blog continues to offer evidence of his concerns even if his own scholarship sticks largely to the past.

<sup>2</sup> This has benefitted from short notes shared by Yael Bentor.

Field Museum in Chicago, a project for which two Indiana professors had received funding. The work was not well paid or rewarded.<sup>3</sup> After three years in this job, Dan had had enough, and thanks to having saved some money, was able to make a tour of several months to Tibetan areas in India: Bodhgaya, Dharamsala, Dolanji, and to Kathmandu, Nepal. When he returned to Bloomington, it was 1982. In 1983, he began graduate studies in the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies, later renamed the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, where he received support for three years, thanks to a fellowship. That year he met the woman who was to become his life partner, wife, and soulmate, Yael Bentor, who attended, as did Dan, the evening meetings in the home of Michael Walter, to read the *Kālacakratantra*. He always came prepared, reading the available Tibetan commentaries. Dan completed his MA in 1986, and his Ph.D. dissertation in 1991 (and Yael in the same year) in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, with minor in Religion and Anthropology.

Dan has never held a structural academic position (which may be one reason for his incredible productivity, but if so, it is the least important one), but fortunately, his partnership with Yael provided him with a base and with the perfect environment for his work. In 1991 Yael Bentor, an Israeli native, obtained a one-year post-doctoral position at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Dan left his books with his brother, took a suitcase and joined her. Yael's one-year postdoc was extended to two, and in 1994 she obtained a tenure track position as lecturer, which she held until 1999, then becoming Senior Lecturer, and ultimately Professor Emerita. After Yael's appointment at the Hebrew University, Dan brought with him his immense card catalogue of Tibetan histories, a project he began when computers were not owned by individuals. In 1997 this catalog appeared as a book from Serindia (*Tibetan Histories*, see below), and in its latest incarnation is available online through the universally known website of the BDRC.<sup>4</sup> (A task for the future remains the addition of links to the scanned histories themselves in the voluminous BDRC collections). Another card catalogue collection of Tibetan words was incorporated into the THL Tibetan-to-English Translation Tool and is now available

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<sup>3</sup> To the best of our knowledge no catalogue of the valuable collection of Tibetan books in the Field Museum has ever been published, although copies have been or are in circulation.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.bdrc.io/blog/2020/12/21/dan-martins-tibetan-histories/>. The original is also available at [https://www.academia.edu/6616266/TIBETAN\\_HISTORIES\\_A\\_Bibliography\\_of\\_Tibetan\\_Language\\_Historical\\_Work](https://www.academia.edu/6616266/TIBETAN_HISTORIES_A_Bibliography_of_Tibetan_Language_Historical_Work).

online in a more complete form.<sup>5</sup> Yet another invaluable resource is a bibliography of Proper Names.<sup>6</sup> We will return to more of Dan's scholarship below.

During the 1990s, Dan travelled between different academic institutions in Europe and US. The year 1993/94 found him in the Institute of Advanced Studies in Oslo as part of a group project cataloguing the Bonpo Kanjur organized by Per Kvarne. He then edited the catalogue, each part of which was compiled by a different scholar of the group. In the following academic year, he taught in the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies (now Department of South Asian Studies) at Harvard University, the year before one of the undersigned, Leonard van der Kuijp, joined that department. Dan was also the first Numata scholar in Hamburg University, and taught briefly at his alma mater Indiana University, and then again at Harvard. For one year he was a fellow in the Institute of Advanced Studies in Jerusalem, as part of a group organized by David Shulman on Sanskrit poetics. During that time, he also worked on the resource known to every scholar in the field, *TibSkrit*,<sup>7</sup> an invaluable ocean of references, often with learned observations, which has been updated and expanded over the years. In between his travels Dan completed the Bon catalogue and published his MA thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, while also publishing numerous papers. It was also during that time that he began assisting students in the US and Europe with their research works, at times offered more help than did their own supervisors. As mentioned above, it is a hallmark of his personality, openness, and sheer generosity of spirit that Dan has always liked to share his great knowledge. Many first books by young Tibetologists list him with a sincere gratitude in their acknowledgements.

During the last twenty years, Dan has lived in Jerusalem, with of course not infrequent travel abroad, to conferences or to workshops. His links with his adopted city are deep; not long ago, he took a four-year course on the history of Jerusalem. Bringing the early aspiration of his mother to fulfillment, he completed this course, which was taught entirely in Hebrew!

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<sup>5</sup> <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. See also <https://www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://sites.google.com/view/tibetosophy/home>.

<sup>7</sup> We believe the latest version is that found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1swvt6iti39s0yj/Tibskrit%202016.docx?dl=0>. See also <https://glossaries.dila.edu.tw/glossaries/TSK?locale=en>.

*The Briefest Possible Discussion of Dan's Scholarship*

No full appreciation of Dan's scholarship is possible here. His interests range so widely, and his knowledge is so profound, that it is unlikely one scholar (or even a pair of scholars!) could do justice to his output. Much of it, moreover, as noted above, has not been formally published and peer reviewed, but has appeared on his famous and precious tibeto-logic blog. We think it is no exaggeration to say that the scholarly standards upheld in this blog posts far exceed the often-questionable assurances putatively offered by a peer review!

One feature of all of Dan's writing is a looseness and freedom that no doubt in part stems from his distance from the sometimes absurd expectations of academic scholarship within universities. Dan's blogs address his readers in the second person, engaging with them and their own quests for knowledge, inviting them to discover along with him, and of course to correct and educate him. That so much superb scholarship has appeared in the form of blog posts does not mean, perhaps needless to say, that Dan's more formally published scholarship is in any way deficient. In lieu of a complete (or an attempt at a complete) bibliography of his published work, we offer only a listing of books, and request interested readers to further consult both <https://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/>, and Dan's own academia.edu page, <https://independent.academia.edu/DanYerushalmi>, where extensive resources are to be found.<sup>8</sup>

Dan's monograph publications are:

*Mandala Cosmogony: Human Body Good Thought and the Revelation of the Secret Mother Tantras of Bon* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994).<sup>9</sup>

*Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works* (London: Serindia Publications, 1997). In collaboration with Yael Bentor. Foreword by Michael Aris.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See further <https://sites.google.com/site/tibetological/50-tibetan-geo-texts/Home> / temporary-home-for-tibskrit

<sup>9</sup> Rev. Per K. Sørensen, *Studies in Central & East Asian Religions* 10, 1997, pp. 64–69; Edgar C. Polomé, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 25.1/2, 1997, p. 190.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. Phillip Denwood, *Circle of Inner Asian Art Newsletter* 6 (November 1997); Kurtis R. Schaeffer, *Journal of Asian Studies* 57.3, 1998, pp. 856–858; Katia Buffetrille, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61.3, 1998, pp. 586–587; Roberto Vitali, *The Tibet Journal* 23.4, Winter 1998, pp. 120–128; Per Kværne, *Acta Orientalia* 59, 1998, pp. 327–328; Vladimir L. Uspenski, *Manuscripta Orientalis* (St. Petersburg) 5.2, June 1999, p. 72; Neil Howard, *Ladakh Studies* 9, Winter 1997/98, pp. 28–29.

*Unearthing Bon Treasures: The Life and Contested Legacy of an Eleventh-Century Tibetan Scripture Revealer*, with a General Annotated Bibliography of the Bon Religion (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001).<sup>11</sup>

*A Catalogue of the Bon Kanjur*, Senri Ethnological Reports series 40 (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2003).<sup>12</sup>

Forthcoming:<sup>13</sup>

*A History of Buddhism in India and Tibet. An Expanded Version of the Dharma's Origins made by the Learned Scholar Deyu*. The Library of Tibetan Classics 32 (Somerville, MA : Wisdom Publications, 2022).<sup>14</sup>

Tibet in the eleventh century, while weakened in terms of political unity and military strength, was the scene of a great revival in Buddhist learning and spirituality.<sup>15</sup>

Signing himself as Daniel Martin, this is how Dan began his very first publication some forty-three years ago, unafraind to use “Buddhist learning and spirituality” in one sentence! Three years later, and now signed “Dan Martin,” the more mature scholar would offer in the *Journal of the Tibet Society*, the successor of the *Bulletin*, a paper on the saint Mi la ras pa (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.) that has withstood the test of time.<sup>16</sup> This essay was a sure sign of great things to come, and in retrospect is an early indicator of what was to become his dominant or at least a central interest in terms of chronological orientation.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. Katia Buffetrille, *Acta Orientalia* 64, 2003, pp. 289-293; Per Kværne, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47, 2004, pp. 69-71.

<sup>12</sup> Dan served as volume editor (“general editor”), co-author, and author of the introduction (pp. 1-19). A catalogue of the 192 volumes of Bon scriptures, authored by a seven-person committee at the Senter for Høyere Studier (Oslo, Norway) composed of Tseyang Changngoba (Lhasa), Namgyal Nyima Dagkar (Bonn), Per Kværne (Oslo), Dondrup Lhagyal (Lhasa), Dan Martin (Jerusalem), Donatella Rossi (Rome), and Tsering Thar (Beijing).

<sup>13</sup> We know of another forthcoming book, a history of the Bon tradition, the first author of which is Per Kværne, but we have no details to hand.

<sup>14</sup> Van der Kuijp has seen a preprint of this large work which will be published shortly, and it is vintage Dan Martin, shot through with carefully considered observations and references in the capacious critical apparatus. A sheer delight to read!

<sup>15</sup> “Gling-ras-pa and the Founding of the ‘Brug-pa School”, *The Tibet Society Bulletin* 12, June 1979, pp. 56-69

<sup>16</sup> “The Early Education of Milarepa”, *The Journal of the Tibet Society* 2, 1982, 53-76.

Dan's scholarly interests are broad. In some respects he is seen, justly, as a specialist in the Bon tradition (or we had better say traditions), and he has indeed dedicated much attention to issues around Bon literature and history. In addition, he has been fascinated with the putative homeland of the Bon tradition and the language of Zhangzhung. It is certainly not possible to treat Bon separately from Buddhism, and Dan has not attempted to. Although he has not (one hesitates to say "never") presented himself as a specialist in Buddhist studies, in fact much of his published scholarship deals directly with Buddhist topics, many but not all tantric (and Mahāmudrā), but also including Abhidharma, Vinaya, and pilgrimage, not to mention forays into areas such as fine poetry (*kāvya*) and more. When it comes to the topics addressed in his blogs—which may superficially seem like many blogs, random dashed off notes, but are in fact finely honed often not-so-small explorations of diverse topics, with more than ample annotation—it is really impossible to offer even a brief summary of his breadth of interests. But if one were absolutely forced (at the point of a *phur pa*, let us say) to offer a single topic that lies at the center of Dan's work, it is the 12th to 13th centuries in Tibet.<sup>17</sup> It is perhaps not impossible to speculate that this interest led Dan to compile the authoritative survey of Tibetan historical works, and his engagement with all that went on in this formative period which motivated many—though certainly not all—of his investigations. We might with some justification aver that there is little in the Tibetan past that is not of interest to Dan, who seems to have read everything, and what is more to have understood it in ways that few others have, or are even capable of doing. But there is also a feature of Dan's scholarship that should absolutely not be overlooked, and that is his humility. He very frequently confesses to his readers his befuddlement, his puzzlement, his ignorance, his doubt. This can be disarming unless one realizes that this stands atop a profound knowledge, which always quests to understand better, more broadly, more deeply. Question after question that might, in some cases, have even occurred to others, get Dan's full attention: what *were* in fact the historical relations between Tibet and Persia? What *is* a Tibetan bell doing in Armenia? Just as there is no end to such questions, there is no end to Dan's asking them, even if time after time he has to confess to his readers that he cannot lead them to a pat answer. And for students and seasoned scholars alike, this lesson is one of the most significant and

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<sup>17</sup> As Yael Bentor once related to one of the editors, when Dan forgot the name of an acquaintance, "If he had lived in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Dan would have remembered his name!"

sometimes the hardest to learn: we often cannot know with confidence, we often do not know where to go next or what to do when we find ourselves in a certain spot. Rare is the scholar self-confident enough to tell us that he too does not know. In this too Dan is our constant teacher.

As touched on above, Dan's writing has a style that is uniquely his own. His approach to scholarship and scholarly writing has an informal feel to it that on occasion even becomes disarmingly colloquial. It is never pedantic or turgid and is accessible to all, to beginners in the field and to those who have been doing walk abouts for some time. He invites his readers to join him, to climb aboard his train of thought as he deftly journeys from topic to topic, sometimes ultimately circling back and tying it all together or, on more than one occasion, leaving things as they rightly should be left, in the air. Often combining the philological with the anthropological in various registers of intellectual rigor, it seems inadequate to term his interests merely "wide-ranging."

Dan characterizes his tibeto-logic blog by saying its contents are "More-or-less monthly musings on mainly antiquarian topics of Tibetan-related interest." His first post, of August 2006, offered his "Two Dedications" to a Tibetan writer and a historian who suffered profoundly for their mere desire to explore their own cultural and history, and as of this writing his most recent four posts of 2022, sixteen years on, are titled "Consecration Rite of the Great Translator," "Maṇḍalas of Medieval Arabic (and Latin) Magic", "Maṇḍalas of Jewish Magic" and most recently "One Secret of the Seals." Is there a pattern here? A growing trend in scholarship is to deploy the tools of the Digital Humanities to our corpora, and Tibetan studies is no stranger to this development. One potentially fruitful exercise is to examine the topics treated in a large corpus by mapping where and how often and how intently a given author might address a particular theme.<sup>18</sup> We can only wonder what the results would be if such a study were to be carried out on the scholarly corpus of Dan Martin: what topics would be most prominent, what themes return again and again, what connections could such an analysis show us that are less than evident on the surface? But perhaps after all a better approach is not to subject Dan's massively varied scholarship to analytical examination after all. Best of all, surely, is to sit down and allow oneself simply to read and absorb.

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<sup>18</sup> We might think in this regard of Gregory Forgues's so far unpublished "Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Text Mining Strategies to analyze the Ris med Network of Discourses: Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho's Collected Works as a Case Study." Paper presented at the 2019 IATS in Paris.

The editors are supremely confident that they join, in spirit, with all scholars of Tibetan studies, over the whole world, in joyously dedicating this volume to Dan in celebration of his work and in celebration of him as a true རྒྱତྰ.

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