

Religious Beliefs of the Lepchas in
the Kalimpong District (West Bengal)

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RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE LEPCHAS IN THE KALIMPONG DISTRICT (WEST BENGAL)

BY M. CORNEILLE JEST

All Lepcha terms are spelt as in Mainwaring's *Dictionary of the Lepcha Language*, Berlin, 1898. For Tibetan phonetic renderings see C. Bell, *Grammar of Colloquial Tibetan*, Calcutta, 1939.

THIS NOTE IS based on field research made during the summer of 1953, and I must acknowledge the valuable assistance of Fr. J. M. Brahier of the Catholic Mission, Tanyang, the best European speaker of Lepcha. It is by no means exhaustive and certain important aspects require further examination, but even within my present limitations it is interesting to give an account of the religious beliefs of the Lepchas of Tanyang, especially now that their traditions are changing so rapidly.

Lepcha beliefs were studied in various parts of Sikkim by Gorer, Siiger, and others, but the Lepchas in those areas were always in contact with other cultural groups (Tibetans, Bhutanese, Sikkimese), whereas in Tanyang they have been affected only by the comparatively recent arrival of Nepāli-speaking settlers.

Kalimpong in the Darjeeling District is the centre of important trade-routes between India and Tibet, and so provides valuable ethnological material. People of different races, cultures, and religions are all to be found there: Tibetans and Bhutanese, Limbu, Tamang, Gurung, Magar and Rai, Chettri, Kami, and Damai,¹ and finally the Lepchas.

Oral traditions make the Lepchas (who refer to themselves as *Roñ*² the first inhabitants of Sikkim, of which Kalimpong District used to form part. Living mainly by hunting and random gathering, they also cultivated the soil by "slash and burn" methods.

The earliest historical evidence of their presence in Sikkim dates from the seventeenth century, when a chieftain (Tib. *rgyal-po*) of

¹ The Lepchas normally refer to Chettri, Kami, and Damai as Nepāli, but since Nepāli is the lingua-franca of the whole Darjeeling District, even Limbus, Tamangs, etc., may be called by them Nepāli, in so far as these are Nepāli-speakers.

² We may presume that *roñ* is cognate with the Tibetan word *roñ* (valley), and so interpretable in Lepcha as "valley-dweller".

Lepcha is a corrupt anglicized form of the Nepāli term *Lapche*, only recently coined for these people. See L. A. Waddell, "The Lepchas or Rong and their Songs," *International Archiv für Ethnographie*, vol. xii, Leiden, 1899, pp. 43-57.

Tibetan origin displaced the local Lepcha chiefs. This change of rule was not brought about without important repercussions. So far as political organization was concerned, the Lepchas found themselves relegated to the lower strata of society.¹ As for religion the Lepchas continued in their ancient beliefs, but a network of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries began to overspread their country.

Later the Lepchas suffered further repression, firstly at the hands of the Bhutanese (1700–7), and then from the Gorkhas who invaded their country at the end of the eighteenth century (1779–80, 1789–92). Finally when Sikkim became a British Protectorate Nepāli immigrants were actively encouraged to settle in the Southern parts of the country by the British authorities.²

To prevent the total disappearance of the Lepchas, special protective measures were devised, reserving for them the Songbu area in the Northern Sikkim where 20,000 are still congregated. Another 13,000 live in the Darjeeling District.³ In the course of an ethnological study in the latter area it was possible to collect some information about the religious beliefs of the Lepchas of Tanyang.

This little village, situated about 10 miles south of Kalimpong, contains about forty Lepcha families, four Tamang ones, and three Rai.⁴

The Lepchas of Tanyang adopted Tibetan Buddhism about sixty years ago, but this has by no means involved the elimination of their earlier religious traditions. The chief functionary of their indigenous beliefs is the *boñ-t'in*, a kind of intercessor,⁵ chosen by the tutelary god *boñ-t'in-rüm* from a family where there have been *boñ-t'in* for many generations. He is initiated after a long

¹ They functioned as lower ranking officials. See *History of Sikkim*, Appendix 2, p. 40.

² See Edgar J. W., *Report on a visit to Sikkim and the Tibetan frontier*, 1873, Calcutta, 1874; Bell, *The People of Tibet*, p. 211.

³ *Census of India*, 1951.

⁴ These Lepcha families came about a hundred years ago from Ilam (East Nepal), where they had fled after the revolt of their chief against the *rgyal-po*. See *History of Sikkim*, compiled by the Maharaja Thutob Namgyal and Maharani Yeshay Dolma of Sikkim in 1908: original MS. in Gangtok; typewritten translation by K. Dawa Sandup, preserved in the India Office Library MSS. Eur. 78, pp. 115–16.

⁵ *t'in* is an established Lepcha word for "lord". See Mainwaring, p. 152. *boñ* means mouth (M., p. 261), and one may consider the possibility of a connection with the Tibetan term *bon*.

illness which serves as a kind of preparatory phase. His secular occupations are the same as those of other villagers ; he cultivates his fields and looks after his goats and oxen. His religious position commands a high social standing, although he is not a member of the panchayat.

My informant, *boñ-t'in* Hobu, explained the main religious beliefs of his people as follows :

“ One day the god *tă-še-t'in* decided to bestow wisdom upon mankind.¹ The representative of the Tibetans spread out his copious robes and received all the sacred books available, including the Kanjur (*bkah-hgyur*) and Tenjur (*bstan-hgyur*). The poor Lepcha received only a single letter of the alphabet. Not knowing what to do with it, he swallowed it and just stood waiting. To console him *tă-še-t'in* said : ‘ That Tibetan will preserve my wisdom in his books, but you, Lepcha, shall preserve it in your heart.’ ”

The *boñ-t'in* explained the creation of the world thus :

“ After having made the world, the earth, the plains and the snow-covered mountains, *tă-še-t'in* produced the first human couple *fă-dun-t'in* and *nă-zoñ-nyo*. From them descended *t'i-kon-tik* and *nyi-kun-nal*, the ancestors of the Lepchas.² Many of the first men were eaten by the demon *la-so muñ*. So it was decided to kill him.³ Armed with bows, arrows, and *ban* (straight-bladed Lepcha sword), they followed his tracks. Every day they drew nearer and at last the demon sank down exhausted ; he had broken a leg and could go no further. The first hunter split open his skull, wherefore his family took the name of *só-t'a-mo*. The second hunter struck him in the eyes and his family was called *so-mik-mo*. The

¹ The name *tă-še* cannot be separated from Tibetan *bkra-sis* (pronounced *tra-shi*) “ good fortune ” ; it is used by the Lepchas to refer to Padmasambhava (M., p. 121). *tă-še-t'in* is also referred to as *tă-še-tük-bo-t'in*. *Tük-bo* is probably Tibetan *drag-po* (pronounced *trak-po*) “ fierce ”, introduced as part of the Lepcha name on analogy with Padmasambhava in his role of fierce protecting divinity (*guru drag-po*). Although there may remain traces of earlier indigenous beliefs (see for example de Beauvoir Stocks, *JASB.*, 1925, No. 4, p. 355, and G. Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, pp. 186-7), it is all but impossible to systematize them.

² *fă-dun-t'in* see M., p. 236 ; *nă-zoñ-nyo* see M, p. 189, goddess of procreation ; *t'i-kun-tik* see M, p. 151 : gr. gr. grandfather ; *nyi-kun-nal* see M, p. 110, gr. gr. grandmother.

This last pair made a blood pact with the Tibetan chieftain *gyad hbum bsags*, from whom descend the *rgyal-po* of Sikkim. See *History of Sikkim*, pp. 26-8.

³ Compare the legends concerning *la-so muñ* quoted by De Beauvoir Stocks, pp. 354-5, and Gorer, p. 55.

third hunter tore out the tongue, and his family was called *fok-li-mo*. The next one cut off the demon's buttocks and his descendants were called *so(m)-bur-mo*. Another hunter cut off the beard and his family was called *só-mot-mo*. Other hunters who had only the limbs to hack received no family names. Those who remained at home discussing the affair, received the name of *nañ-tsö-mo*. Those who had constructed a cane bridge in the course of the hunt were called *sóm-pŭ-mo*.¹

The flesh of the demon was thrown into the air and given as food to crows and ants. The marrow of the bones gave birth to new demons called *muñ*."

Kindly divinities are called *rŭm* in contrast to the malicious, the *muñ*, who cause disease, death, and disaster. The most important propitious divinity is *tă-še tŭk-bo-t'in*, also called *tă-še-t'in*. Many of the propitious divinities take the form of female spirits (*mit*), inhabiting springs and lakes. The evil divinities, the *muñ* are innumerable, haunting forests, bogs, torrents, and rocks. Being very powerful they are liable to interfere at any time in the life of the Lepchas and obstruct their projects. Only repeated sacrifices can satisfy their greed for flesh and blood.²

A double function devolved upon my informant. As propitiator he had to attract the attention of the chief god *tă-še-t'in* and other well-intentioned divinities by means of offerings; as intercessor he had to appease and drive away the *muñ* by blood sacrifices.

Periodically the *boñ-t'in* burns incense and recites the following prayer: "O great god, protect us from illness, influenza, winds of the south and lightning. Protect us from the evils that can come

¹ It is possible to interpret most of these names with reasonable plausibility: *só-t'a-mo*, killing-skull-folk; *so-mik-mo*, killing-eye-folk; *fok-li-mo*, tearing-tongue-folk; *só-măt-mo*, killing-beard-folk; *nañ-tsö-mo*, inside-discussing-folk; *só(m)-pŭ-mo*, bridge folk.

mo: see Mainwaring, p. 295; *só* for *sót* (M), Tib. *gsod-pa*, to kill; *t'a* for *t'yak* (M), Tib. *thod-pa*, skull; *mik* for *mik* (M), Tib. *mig*, eye; *fok* for *fok* (M), Tib. *hbogs-pa*, to pierce; *li* for *li* (M), Tib. *lce*, tongue; *nañ* (M), Tib. *nañ*, inside; *tso*, Tib. *rtsod-pa*, to dispute; *sóm-pŭ* for *sóm-pŭ* (M), Tib. *zam-pa*, bridge.

These names are still in use in Tanyang. The whole story is probably a piece of popular etymology to explain family-names which must have been derived from place-names. See also *History of Sikkim*, Appendix 2.

² In the Indian Office Library there is a Lepcha MS. listing the names of various evil divinities and the necessary sacrifices (Hodgson MS., Vol. 78, folios 128-155, and Vol. 80, folios 147-161).

from those who practise magic against us.¹ You, too, king of demons, restrain your followers.”

The most important religious ceremony (*rŭm-fat*) takes place once a year after the harvest. The *boñ-t'in* makes an offering to all the divinities with whom he has contact. The villagers bring rice, millet, eggs, butter, and fruit of all kinds, which are placed on a stone on a hilltop well in view of *koñ-čen ču* (Kanchenjunga), the mountain that dominates the whole region.²

The *boñ-t'in* invokes successively the different summits of the mountain, which are identified with the following divinities: *koñ-čen-ču* and his wife *koñ-lo-ču*, *pŭn-dim* and *pŭn-zoñ-ču*, their son and daughter, *ra-tat* and *ra-yot*, their grandson and granddaughter, *šin-mu* and *ko-lun-mu-ču*, their male and female servants. The offspring and the servants are the lesser summits on either side of *koñ-čen-ču*. Next the *boñ-t'in* addresses the spirits of the earth and the protectors of the village, *tsen-gog* a mountain divinity, *ta-lyañ-do*, divinity of the heights above the village, *so-moñ-poñ-di*, spirit of the hamlet of Somalbong. To these divinities, whose role seems obscure, he offers rice, millet, and oranges. Thirdly the *boñ-t'in* requests the chief of the demons to restrain his followers. Of these *tam-nok-muñ* and his partner *lyañ-šer* were mentioned as the most powerful. These two black demons come from the plains; having no children they are particularly self-willed and so more difficult to control than the others, who are named *tsen-dŭt* with his mate *tŭn-kuñ-mit* and *luñ-ji* with his mate *luñ-luñ-muñ*, dwellers in caves, rocks, and streams. The *muñ* receive offerings of *či* (millet beer) and rice.

In spite of such periodical offerings and sacrifices of cocks, the *muñ* still manifest themselves by causing diseases. The *boñ-t'in* is then called upon to identify the dissatisfied *muñ*. By means of divination he determines the kind of sacrifice required.³ A serious illness often necessitates the sacrifice of an ox. Before killing the

¹ The informant described how a clay effigy of one's enemy is made and pins or knives stuck into it.

² The Lepcha name *koñ-čen-ču* is probably a simple corruption of the full Tibetan name *gans-chen-mdzod-lna* "five treasuries of the great snows", M, p. 27. *pŭn-dim* (M, p. 217); remaining names untraced elsewhere.

The cult of local mountain gods is common throughout the Himalayas. See Tucci, *Secrets of Tibet*, p. 69; Snellgrove, *Buddhist Himalaya*, p. 176.

³ Divinations are performed by means of a rosary, grains of rice, or in other places by a horoscope-book.

animal invocations are made to the demons *gie-bu-muñ*, *čo-gye-muñ*, *tsen-düt*, and *me-so-muñ*, who takes the life of men. While the animal is being killed, the sick man is attached to it by a cord, and the *boñ-t'in* beseeches the demon to accept the flesh and blood of the animal in place of the life of the man.

The animal is cut up and the parts arranged ceremonially upon a bamboo mat. Six special offerings consisting of pieces of neck and lung, some rice and millet beer, are placed on bamboo leaves. The *boñ-t'in* begs the demons to accept them, praying that they may cease to cause illness of all kinds: head-ache, stomach-ache, pains in the limbs, etc.

Finally the *boñ-t'in* has an essential function to play at deaths. Since the soul of a man must return to the place of its origin, it has to find its way to the ancestors *ti-kun-tik* and *nyi-kun-nal* in the sacred land *rüm-lyañ*.¹ To make the soul take the right path the *boñ-t'in* has at his disposal suitable spells. If a man is killed in the jungle or eaten by an animal, this causes special difficulties. Great efforts are made to retrieve his body, for if his soul has not been properly despatched, it will hang around troubling members of the family. My informant also told me that a soul is judged by the god *čo-ge pa-no* (Tib. *chos-rgyal*) and sent either to heaven or hell.²

No *mun*, the feminine counterpart of the *boñ-t'in*, is to be found now in Tanyang. The *mun*, whose office passes from grandmother to granddaughter, is inspired by a tutelary divinity similar to *boñ-t'in-rüm*. Tanyang villagers say these *mun* have power over the divinities of streams and mountains. Their supernatural power is described in the following popular village tales:

“Two brothers had quarrelled about a piece of land. The younger appealed to a *boñ-t'in* in order to avenge himself on his brother. The elder fell ill soon afterwards, so his family called upon a *mun*. By divination she discovered the cause of the illness. A pig had been buried in the field which was the cause of the dispute. This pig was still alive, and the *mun* ordered that it should be dug up and placed near the house of the younger brother. Four days later he died together with seven members of his family.”

In earlier times the *mun* shared with the *boñ-t'in* the power of

¹ *rüm-lyañ*, the land of beneficent divinities (*rüm*); see M, p. 337.

² See p. 130, n. 2.

guiding the souls of the dead to *rŭm-lyan̄*. Moreover they could foretell the future and hold conversation with the dead.

“Three Lepchas went fishing. One left his companions and disappeared. His friends found his corpse in the river. On returning to the village the two men, although innocent, were accused of his murder. A *mun*, who was consulted, asked the soul of the dead man how he had died. He replied that a *mun*, whom he had offended by cutting bamboos in a forbidden place, had pushed him into the water. Through the mediation of the *mun* the drowned man asked his father to release his friends and also revealed the place where his savings were hidden. The parents found in fact eleven rupees and six annas in a bamboo near the hearth. The dead man entrusted his child to his parents and requested his wife not to marry again.”

There is a special set of divinities invoked by the Lepchas for hunting, their favourite occupation. The chief ones are *ču-t'in̄*, and his wife *ču-mit-nyu* and their son *lim-chikar*. Next come the local divinities *lian̄-düt* and *tsen-düt*, then *fo-dun-ču* and *lin̄-mu* (god of the wind), to whom thanks are due for the aconite poison of Tibetan origin used on arrow tips. Finally the gods of the plains *lyan̄-šer* and *dar-mit*, *pun-rŭm* and *šin̄-rŭm* may also be invoked.¹

Since the seventeenth century the indigenous beliefs of the Lepchas have been influenced by one form of Tibetan Buddhism (*rñin̄-ma-pa*). In fact the Lepcha alphabet was devised solely for the purpose of translating Tibetan religious texts, of which the principle ones are the *padma-thaṅ-yig* (Lepcha *tă-še-sun̄*), experiences of those who have come back from the other world (Tib. *'das-log*, Lepcha *de-lok*), judgments in the hells (*pe-ke roṅ-vom*), and horoscopes. It seems quite clear from my informant that Lepcha traditions and Tibetan Buddhist beliefs coexist with total disregard for contradictions.²

Nowadays for the major events of a man's life, birth, marriage, and after-death ceremonies, the Lepchas call upon the lamas. Lepcha lamas are few and most of them, not to say all, illiterate. They belong to the *rñin̄-ma-pa* order. One of the two lamas at Tanyang village told me that he had been sent at the age of eight to the old *rñin̄-ma-pa* monastery of Kalimpong where he learned

¹ See list of divinities, p. 132.

² The name and character of the chief divinity *tă-še-t'in̄* presents an example. As for contradictions, see how *chos-rgyal* the Tibetan lord of the dead, has intruded upon Lepcha afterdeath beliefs (p. 129 above).

to recite Tibetan texts for ten years and was initiated into the rituals.¹ After a retreat of three months he returned to his village where he married, since when he has lived much the same life as his neighbours.² He meets other lamas only for major religious festivals. His daily religious duties consist in filling with water the seven offering bowls on the domestic altar, in burning incense and reciting mantras. Occasionally he goes to recite texts in the homes of wealthier villagers.

The lamas are also indispensable for protecting domestic animals against diseases. For this purpose they distribute little charms (Lepcha *buti*, presumably from Nepali *buti*—Turner, *Nepali Dictionary*, p. 452), which are potent against demons. If the animals are ill, the lamas set up prayer-flags and perform a ceremony with recitations of mantras and offerings. A few lamas (not in Tanyang) claim the power of preventing hail.³ For their services they receive food and pay.

In this Lepcha community the functions of *bon-t'in* and lama supplement one another. The first protects the village permanently by dispersing all evil forces; the second presides over important events of social life. Their continual quest for efficacious means against trouble probably explains their ready acceptance of Buddhism; it explains too why the Lepchas do not hesitate to appeal to different intercessors at the same time, the *bon-t'in*, the lama, and the Tamang *jan-kri*.⁴

¹ There are just three monasteries in Sikkim where Lepchas are admitted, Lingtem, Zimik, Phagye, *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, "Lamaism in Sikkim," pp. 251-3.

² The few Tibetan books which he had collected over the years were:

(1) *kun bzañ smon lam stobs po che bzugs so* ("Powerful prayer to Samantabhadra"), Xy., 7 folios, 23 by 6.5 cm.

(2) *rgya nag po'i skag zlog (b)zugs so* ("Manjusri's removal of obstructions"), MS. 9 folios, 48.5 by 9 cm. Collection of mantras for removing ills of various kinds.

(3) *rtog chen kun bzañ gyi pho ba'i gsol 'debs bzugs so* ("Samantabhadra's invocations for the departed"). MS. 36 folios bound in European style, 20.5 by 8.5 cm.

(4) *(s)de (b)rgyad gser skyem bzugs so* ("Libation to the eight classes of spirits"). MS. 24 folios bound in European style, 17.5 by 6 cm.

(5) Xylograph 1st page and title missing, folios 2-16. Instructions in confessional invocations to the tranquil and fierce divinities, given by Samantabhadra to yogins and yoginīs.

³ See also R. de Nebsky Wojkowitz, "Le faiseur de beau temps," *Echo du Sikkim*, janv., fév., 1953, pp. 2-5.

⁴ The *ja-kri* or *jan-kri*, a kind of magician intercessor is well known throughout Himayalan regions, but so far detailed studies are lacking. Concerning the Sikkim area see Gorer, p. 216.

This superimposition of religious beliefs has had the most serious economic consequences. A family has but to have a series of misfortunes for ceremonies to become interminable and the expense insupportable, so that villagers often have to sell or mortgage their fields and houses. Kindly divinities receive far less attention than the evil ones, who get most of the propitiatory offerings. The ancient cult of *koñ-čen-ču*, still alive in the Songbu valley where it was studied by Siiger, now has very little importance at Tanyang.¹

During the last few years Christian Missions have been active amongst the Lepchas and this must inevitably produce further changes in their cultural and religious traditions.

LIST OF LEPCHA DIVINITIES

<i>Hobu</i>	<i>Hodgson Lepcha MS.</i>	<i>Mainwaring</i>	<i>De Beauvoir- Stocks</i>	<i>Gorer</i>
Main divinities				
<i>tă-še-tiñ</i>		<i>tă-še-'iñ</i> , 121	<i>ta-she-thing</i> , 337, 8	<i>tashetak-bo thing</i> 186-7
<i>tūk-bo-t'iñ</i> ²	<i>tūk-bo-rüm</i> 78, 11	<i>tă-še-tūk-bo-t'iñ</i>	<i>takbo thing</i> , 359	<i>takbothing</i> 225
<i>fă-duñ-t'iñ</i>		<i>fă-groñ-t'iñ</i> 236		
<i>nă-zoñ-nyo</i>		<i>nă-zoñ-nyo</i> 189	<i>nazungnyu</i> 337	
<i>t'i-kuñ-tik</i>		<i>t'i-kuñ-tik</i> 151		
<i>nyi-kuñ-ñal</i>		<i>nyi-kuñ-ñal</i> 110		
<i>la-so-muñ</i>			<i>lasso</i>	<i>lasso-go moong</i> 55
<i>koñ-čen-ču</i>		<i>koñ-čen-ču</i> 27		
<i>koñ-lo-ču</i>		<i>koñ-lo-ču</i> 27		
<i>pün-dim</i>		<i>pün-dim-ču</i> 216		
<i>pun-zon-cu</i>				
<i>ra-tat</i>				
<i>ra-yot</i>				
<i>šĩn-mu</i>				
<i>ko-lun-mu-ču</i>				
Local divinities				
<i>tsen-gog</i> ³	<i>tsen</i> , 80, 26			
<i>tă-lyañ-do</i>	<i>lyañ-dok</i> , 80, 26	<i>tă-liañ-muñ</i> 120		
<i>so-moñ-poñ-di</i>				

¹ See Siiger, "A Cult for the God of Mount Kanchenjunga among the Lepchas of Northern Sikkim," pp. 185-9.

² See note p. 126, n. 1.

³ Probably Tibetan *btsan*.

Hobu	Hodgson Lepcha MS.	Mainwaring	De Beauvoir- Stocks	Gorer
Evil divinities				
<i>tam-nok-muñ</i>		<i>nok-muñ</i>		
<i>lyañ-šer</i>	<i>lyang-sher</i>	<i>lyañ-šer</i> 367		
<i>tsen-düt</i> ¹	<i>düt t'in</i> , 80, 25	<i>düt</i> 174 <i>tsen</i> 308		<i>deut moong</i> 77
<i>tün-kuñ-mit</i>		<i>tün-kuñ-mit</i> 132		
<i>luñ-luñ-mun</i>				
<i>luñ-ji</i>	<i>luñ-ji</i> , 80, 26	<i>luñ-ji lüm-dañ</i> 352		352
<i>gye-bu-muñ</i>				
<i>čo-gye-muñ</i> ²				
<i>tsen-düt</i>				<i>deut moong</i> 170
<i>me-so-muñ</i>		<i>mă-zóm-muñ</i> , 277		
Hunting divinities				
<i>ču-t'in</i>	<i>ču-t'in</i> 80, 25-6	<i>ču-rüm</i> 81		
<i>ču-mit-nyu</i>				
<i>lim-čhikar</i> ³				
<i>lyañ-düt</i>	<i>lyañ-sher</i> , 80, 26			
<i>tsen-düt</i>				
<i>fo-dun-ču</i>	<i>fo-dón-t'in</i> , 80, 25			
<i>liñ-mu</i>				
<i>lyañ-šer</i>	<i>lyañ-šer</i> , 80, 26			
<i>dar-mit</i>	<i>dă-mit</i> , 80, 26			
<i>puñ-rüm</i>	<i>poñ-t'in</i> , 80, 25			<i>pong rum</i> 56
<i>siñ-rüm</i>	<i>šič-t'in</i> , 80, 25			<i>shing rum</i> 150
<i>pün-di-rüm</i>		<i>pün-dim</i> , 216		

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¹ Probably Tibetan *btsan-bdud*.
Probably Tibetan *čhos-rgyal*.
Note Nepāli *sikār*, 'hunt.'